

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

Living for one's land is greater far than dying for it.

The professional flirt ought to be happy on the battlefield, with arms all around her.

France will not approve of automobile racing until it can be made as harmless as dueling.

"Do angels eat?" asks the Cincinnati Enquirer. If the editor is in doubt, let him invite one of them to an after-theater supper.

The only people who are ever fooled by hair dye are the ones who use it. This teaches us the difference between hair dye and piety.

George Demetewekowles and Mary Geanapepoulos got a marriage license in Chicago the other day. Evidently the lady married for love alone.

Why should rainbow-chasing be so frowned on? It fills the hearts of the chasers with a joy keen enough while it lasts and it doesn't fade the colors on the rainbow in the least.

Somebody has invented an umbrella that can be folded up and put into the pocket. If it proves to be practical the rain may have to quit falling alike upon the heads of the just and the unjust.

A good many people who think themselves wise jeer at the persons who turn their fortunes over to Dowrie. Then they go and try to break the stock market when a little boom is manufactured.

Bully for Colorado Springs! It made three tourists from Nebraska come back and obliterate their names from rocks in the Garden of the Gods under threat of worse punishment. It has a big stick after the advertisers, also, who deface scenery by their signs. The news is enough to make lovers of beauty want to emigrate to the charming city at the foot of Pike's Peak.

From a Kansas paper we learn that the girls of that State have a new way of entertaining. They give "slumber parties." At these the girls stay up most of the night and then stay in bed the next morning until they are sure that their mothers have the breakfast dishes washed. Come to think of it, there's nothing so very new in that, except the name.

Divorce is one of the white man's tricks the Indian has been slow to learn, for the first application by children of the forest for legal separation of man and wife has recently been made to the United States district court at Vinita. The woman in the case seems to have advanced rapidly in the ways of civilization, however, for no sooner was the decree granted than she married a waiting aviator. The simple days of the noble red man and his squaws have gone forever, then.

When men defend the principle of war between nations or peoples they are very apt to assert that questions now and then arise that can be settled only by the test of physical force. There may be such questions, but are they ever the most fundamental to society and are the most fundamental ever really settled by the sword? Clearly, the great trouble with war is that even when it does settle some questions, such as political supremacy or political economy or territorial possession or control of trade routes, it almost invariably raises up other questions as harassing, perhaps, as the ones originally the cause of war.

In the good time coming there will not be any single track railroads nor any trains going in opposite directions on the same track; grade crossings will have been abolished, the road beds, tracks and rolling stock of all roads will be as sound and safe as science, skill and money can make them, and no effort to insure safety will be spared. Very few of our enormous aggregate of deaths and injuries by rail would have occurred had all of these conditions been present. It is the absence of most of them that piles up the appalling list. So long as that absence exists the slaughtering will go on. It will decrease in proportion to the extent to which the obvious causes are removed.

There is a strong prospect that this country will not much longer be an exporter of wheat. England, France and other wheat-consuming countries are already looking elsewhere for their supply, refusing to consider the American wheat at existing prices. India and Argentina are at present the only big wheat-producing countries that offer any show of competition with the United States, but the reduction of the export supply in this country will undoubtedly serve as a spur to the employment of the cheap lands and cheap labor in India and in South America in the production of the world's greatest staple cereal. It would be a novel experience to find America buying wheat and flour in foreign markets, but such a contingency is highly probable in view of existing conditions and the prospect that our demand for home consumption will soon be in excess of the home production.

The ability to make money is very common among men, but the peculiar faculty of retaining it is much more seldom seen. There is little suffering from inability to earn a living, but the same cannot be said of those who have never learned to save in time of plenty. The life insurance policies so popular at present are an acknowledgment of the fact that the average man cannot trust himself with money not especially needed at once, so to overcome this tendency the frequent and small investment plan has been introduced, to the benefit of many who would otherwise spend this amount in trivial ways. The installment plan of paying for household necessities, and

luxuries, too, is another example of the same thing, only of a more questionable benefit to the public. The many catch-penny devices in public places live on the same weakness of human nature. The man who spends his wealth for things outside of his natural and real needs, and which does not bring value received to him in some of the elevating phases of life, is as much of a hindrance to society as the miser. His trade, no matter how limited, will have a tendency to stimulate business upon an unnatural and unwarranted basis. What are our so-called hard times but the result of this very thing? During times of prosperity and plenty we invariably buy more freely of those things we could and do comfortably live without when times are close. Thus our real and honest needs have been misrepresented to the business and manufacturing world, only to rebound with increased force to the producer. Horace Greeley is quoted as saying, "The world as a whole scarcely makes a living." In all the world's history there is no record of any government failing on account of insufficient funds with which to carry on its affairs, but its abundance has brought destruction to many. It requires no uncommon ability to simply make money and hoard it; if one will make this his whole and only ambition in life, but it is the exception to find an individual who is equally talented along the line of "properly spending it. Wealth is seldom inherited in any great abundance by more than two generations of the same family. The honest labor and anticipation in connection with the earning of wealth has brought far more happiness into the world than its possession has ever done.

Interesting facts are brought out by a table published in a German industrial organ giving the percentages of persons in the leading countries of the world, engaged in the principal lines of "gainful activity." The table is instructive enough to be worth reproducing:

Table with columns: Country, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Commerce, etc.

Some of these figures are rather surprising, at least at first sight. How many of the best informed persons know that from the "percentage" point of view Scotland leads in manufacturing? Again, that Holland uses more men in transportation than any other country, not excepting the United States and that tight, busy little island, Great Britain, cannot be a familiar fact. Europe has had a good deal to say about the American industrial invasion, yet according to this table, even Italy's percentage of men engaged in manufactures and mining exceeds that of the United States. Our exports of manufactures are still in their infancy, and if our future progress in manufacturing shall in its rate be at all comparable to that which has raised the value of our exports in this line from \$183,000,000 to \$433,000,000, what will Europe say a quarter of a century hence? Finally, what a pitiful showing England makes in her 8 per cent of men engaged in agriculture and forestry! No wonder her statesmen and philosophers are agitating the question of physical deterioration and crying "Back to the land!" The contrast between England and France in this respect is striking. Has it not been said that the wealth of France is in the stocking of her peasant proprietors?

THE FORBIDDEN CITY.

L'Hassa is a Town of Fifth and Pollution. L'Hassa is a dirty town, according to the Englishmen who have seen it. "Black pools of water," writes a correspondent, "had flooded the wide, uneven space into which we emerged, and even the Chinese quarter to the right of us was dirtier than Chinese sections generally are. The main drain of the town runs fetidly between black mud banks, and in the open square before the Chinese amban's residence herds of black pigs rooted in rubbish heaps, which were more than usually repulsive in composition. To the left the houses of a few ragabas, or professional scavengers, were betrayed by the famous horn walls, which no visitor to L'Hassa has failed to notice. Perhaps the sight of these walls reminded one of that other duty of the ragabas—the cutting up and distribution to animals of the corpses of the dead. The cemetery is only a few steps away, and the reputed food of L'Hassa pigs became in a flash a disgusting probable reflection."

Record of Firing Cannon. The California batteries of United States heavy artillery recently gave a splendid illustration of accurate marksmanship in their mimic defense of San Francisco harbor.

Three or four miles out the little target bobbed up and down over every swell, a little white pyramid whose base was fifteen feet in length. This represented the heart of a great battleship. To strike near the target within half the width or half the length of a battleship meant a telling shot.

From Fort McDowell, on Angel Island, San Francisco bay, aiming straight out the Golden Gate, the percentage gained was 80, while from Fort Baker, not one shot failed, resulting in the remarkable record of 100 per cent, a degree of accuracy never equaled. One shot actually demolished the tiny white speck tossing among the rollers.

Force of Habit. Cupid was laughing. "I'd bet I'd make a good street car conductor," he chuckled.

"Why so?" asked Hyman.

"Oh, I'm so used to telling people to 'Sit closer, please.'"

You sometimes hear people say they do not hear gossip. It's a fib. We all hear gossip.

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