

TOPICS OF THE TIMES. A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

"Many a hubbub of listening to a waggin' tongue."

Some girls marry for money because it is necessary to have some excuse.

If you don't want them repeated, don't tell us good things about people.

In after years a man may regret the fact that he attended his own wedding.

The zarina has written a novel. She must have a good, careful nurse in the palace.

It's easier for a woman to love a man than it is for her to agree with another woman.

Anybody who attempts to dramatize Mrs. Chadwick will find that there is a limit to the public patience.

The New York Tribune says Governor Vardeman is very much in the public eye. Is he a mote or a beam?

Somehow, one gets an idea that notwithstanding their small stature the Japs would make pretty good football players.

Cassie Chadwick's husband is reported to be modest and retiring in his manner. Well, with Cassie in action he can afford to be.

The idea finally sifted into even the Casar's slow intellect that a man who is good enough to fight and bleed for his country is good enough to vote.

A new card game is known as the Sherlock Holmes game. Dr. A. Conan Doyle will doubtless object to having Sherlock Holmes made game of in this way.

Our faith that there is something good in this country is strengthened every time we think of the trouble Captain Hobson takes to keep it from going wrong.

A new comprehension of the vastness of this country is secured when it is set down in black and white that we got away with 4,000,000 bushels of peanuts last year.

Poetic license is a mile wide in Japan. The mikado dashes off a poem beginning "My heart's at peace with all," and then goes out and blows a Russian gunboat into smithereens.

A Pennsylvania judge has decided that a chicken is not an animal. This, however, does not interfere with the decision promulgated by the Treasury Department to the effect that a frog is a bird.

The daughter of Krupp, the gun-maker, has an income of \$2,400,000 a year. Here is a chance for some enterprising young American to avenge the United States for its loss of American heiresses to European fortune-hunters.

Injection of gold or silver is said to be efficacious in curing pneumonia, according to French scientists. That may do in Paris, but devotees of the great American game of poker can point to many cases in which the accumulation of gold or silver has caused cold feet.

A German who applied for registration as a voter in New York City was asked as to his birthplace. He replied that he was born in Germany, and was told to bring his papers. He hurried away, and reappeared with a trunk lid under his arm. "Here they are, gentlemen. I hope they are correct. You see, I do not want to lose them, so I pasted them in the top of my trunk." His name was promptly put on the voting-list.

Young women attending a Massachusetts college have formed a Cross-Country Club, to encourage the practice of walking. It is required that each member shall spend at least three hours a week out-of-doors, and members are asked to keep records of their strolls, so that others may learn about the places of interest in the surrounding country. But that involves another faculty than the talent for pedestrianism. If we all had the gift of seeing things, nobody would need to be invited out into a world of beauty and fascinating activity.

Lieutenant General Chaffee in his annual report suggests that deserters be deprived of their civil rights as a cure for the growing evil of desertions from the army. He can find no reasonable cause for desertions in the treatment given to soldiers, although he admits that the "inexperience of company officers affects the subject somewhat." The replies elicited from men in the guardhouse to the effect that "army life was not what had been anticipated" indicates that irksome subordination to superiors, who make up for their "inexperience" by a display of rigid, mechanical martinetism, may be more blamable for desertions than is conceded in the report. Of course, in numerous instances the fault is inherent in the man himself, and for such disqualification from voting would not be a punishment too severe. But for such the penalty would not be a deterrent.

Sooner or later there will be an irresistible movement for the elimination of grade crossings, in the country as well as in cities. The present carelessness of the public safety—for which the public itself is largely responsible—will in the end bring its own remedy. Self-interest as well as legal restrictions will some day convince railway companies in the United States, as it has in the old world, that it is more economical in the long run to place their tracks above or below other routes of travel and traffic, so that trains can be run at any rate of speed desired without the present alternative loss of time or danger of a

slaughter when crossing streets, roads or other lines, steam or electric.

"The farmers of this country have in two years produced wealth exceeding the output of all the gold mines of the entire world since Columbus discovered America. This year's product is over six times the amount of the capital stock of all national banks, it looks but three-fourths of a billion dollars of the value of the manufactures of 1900, less the cost of materials used. It is three times the gross earnings from the operations of the railroads, and four times the value of all minerals produced in this country." This is not a page from an Arabian Nights' tale, but is the calm, official assertion of the Hon. Jas. Wilson, Secretary of Agriculture. In his annual report Secretary Wilson imparts the comforting information that the corn crop of 1904 alone is so profitable that from its proceeds the farmer could have paid the national debt and left a big surplus in the treasury. The beans have produced during the year one and two-thirds billions of dozens of eggs—enough each month to pay a year's interest on the national debt. The value of the total products of the farms for the year is estimated at \$4,900,000 even after excluding the value of farm crops fed to live stock. This is 9.65 per cent more than the value of the crops of 1903 and 31.28 per cent above that for the census year 1899. The increase in capital invested in agriculture since 1900 is estimated at \$2,000,000,000. This is exclusive of the increase in farm land values. Bank deposits have increased, from 1890 to 1904, in Iowa 104 per cent, in Kansas 210 per cent and in Mississippi 301 per cent. The general increase for the whole country is 91 per cent. Agriculture used to be popularly looked upon as the backbone of American industry. Of recent years the enormous development of trusts and the almost fabulous figures used in connection with the railway and banking interests have blinded us to the solid industry that still furnishes the foundation for all other business.

HOW TO LEARN TO SHOOT.

Practice with the Rifle Declared to Be Best Method. I believe practice with the rifle is the true way to learn to shoot best with the shotgun, says a writer in Outing. The old idea was that shooting a rifle made you too slow with the shotgun, and that the shotgun spoiled your rifle-shooting. There is something in the latter, but not much in the former idea. If one were shooting continuously with either and should suddenly change to the other he might not at once do as good shooting as if he had tried both; it might take a few days' practice to get used to the new conditions. But rifle-shooting can injure shotgun-shooting only by making one too slow, and my experience is that one cannot be so injured except temporarily.

By beginning with the rifle you eliminate at once most of the trouble from excitement, because you know you can rarely hit a flying bird. If it makes you slow you will find little trouble in becoming quick enough. The man who begins with quick shooting and becomes a good shot after the expenditure of hundreds of ammunition does not become so by virtue of making a machine of himself. It is because in making a machine of himself he is unconsciously acquiring the habit of seeing the gun and game in the same glance, which he could not do at first. A quick shot thus becomes accurate with time, and a slow shot will become quick with time and with far less practice.

There is no reason why one should not learn in one season to get sufficient enjoyment out of the gun if one will but remember that the pleasure is not in the size of the bag or in the cleanliness of the score, and never was.

Epilepsy in a Tunnel. Maiden seated in the train. Pocket full of money. Down beside her sits a man—Maiden thinks it funny.

Quickly speeds the train along. In a tunnel enters; Maiden thought most anxiously "Oh her pocket centers."

Quietly her little hand, Toward the money stealing, Finds a hand already there, Robbery revealing.

Fiercely clutches she the hand On hysterics verging, Waiting till the train shall be From the dark emerging.

Into sunlight now at last Train shoots like a rocket; Maiden finds she has her hand In the stranger's pocket.

—Modern Society.

Translated into Vernacular. "Cap'n" Jotham Slow had strong objections to what he called "the new minister's high talk." Since his settlement over the Clamtown parish, Cap'n Jotham had been heard to say that "church was for them that needed it," and his conduct seemed to imply that he was not of that number.

Cap'n Jotham's own language was of a primitive and unadorned variety, and nothing pleased him more than a chance to translate the minister's remarks to Cap'n Wilson Pegg, the best Clamtown story-teller. Cap'n Pegg was deaf, and the minister's voice often failed to reach him.

One night at a neighborhood gathering Cap'n Pegg, in the course of a vivid narrative, had referred to "the big fire in '01."

"Was it the consensus of opinion," said the minister, in a mild and ineffectual tone, "that the conflagration was the result of some accident or the work of an incendiary?"

"Hey!" said Cap'n Pegg, staring dully at the minister and then turning to his faithful friend for light.

"What he wants to know," called Cap'n Slow, in his shrillest tone, "is whether the big fire was set or ketch-ed!"

An Unconscious Humorous. Ed-dits—Your friend Deeply left some verses with me to-day that were quite amusing. Ascum—Really? I didn't think he was a humorous writer. Ed-dits—Neither does he.—Philadelphia Press.

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The Louisiana Purchase Exposition at St. Louis, and the Lewis and Clark Centennial to be held at Portland, Oregon, in 1896, make this work peculiarly timely because written from the standpoint of actual knowledge of past and present conditions of the old trail and country.