

Topics of the Times

It's impossible to buy a man off if he is on the square.

Still it might be well to suggest that Nicholas may have a little money put away in a stocking.

A lobster trust has been organized. Bet the Floridors girls are among the heavy stockholders.

Civilized humanity is coming rapidly to the conviction that Gen. Sherman understated the case.

When two persons tackle a duet it looks as if they ought to sing it in half the time one could—but they can't.

The vermiform appendix has been found to be useful. But the discovery comes too late for the expeditious generation.

If a young man lets a girl have her own way during the courtship he will find it difficult to break her of the habit after marriage.

According to a girl essayist in a Philadelphia school, "Boys wear out everything but soap." She must have had some brothers, else she could not have been so familiar with her subject.

"Dr. Osler," remarks the Charleston News and Courier, "has aged rapidly in the last few days." Dr. Osler may not be as young and handsome as he was, but he knows more than he did.

A Berlin physician says no girl under 16 should practice daily on the piano, and that no girl over 16 should devote more than two hours a day to such practice. Papers everywhere please copy.

"In the streets of St. Petersburg every third person wears crepe," says the Associated Press correspondent. And all because of their ruler's desire for more of a frozen land on the other side of the world.

To write the first draft on a slate, that erasures might easily be made, to copy in pencil on soft paper, and make more changes, and finally after many days and alterations to arrive at a neat and flawless manuscript—this was the painstaking method of the late Gen. Lew Wallace. But "Ben Hur" was worth the trouble.

A writer in one of the magazines says: "Children already born may walk dry shod from the mainland of the New York reservation to Goat Island and across the present bed of the Niagara river." There seems to be no reason to doubt that this country will in the not far distant future have the ruins of what was once the greatest sataract in the world.

Paraguay would seem to present the smallest chance for woman's rights progress to be found on the earth. In that country there are seven women to one man. Consequently the men are petted and taken the greatest care of. Everything that is unpleasant or risky is done by the women. The streets are cleaned, ships loaded and the oxen driven by them and they even go to war as substitutes for the men. It is only an application of the law of supply and demand and some lazy men will probably think it a beneficent one.

The stomach proper has ceased to be a serious problem to the surgeon. He can invade and explore it with impunity. He can even, if circumstances demand, relieve the owner of it entirely, and so arrange the loose ends that the functions of nutrition are successfully maintained. To be sure, the patient can never thereafter derive much pleasure from his meals; he must restrict himself to a rigid diet, but for all the other affairs of life he may be as competent as before. There are today several stomachless men who are earning their daily predigestion ration in occupations varying from clerk to expressionman.

Experiments with automobiles, motor boats and flying machines will flourish in summer time, but since any winter is liable to "tie up" any vehicle, perhaps we should employ a part of the open season in planning roads over which it is possible always to travel. We pride ourselves, and with reason, on our systems of transportation. Yet an ordinary blizzard stops trains, wrecks ships, leaves travelers stranded anywhere short of the places to which they wish to go. Street cars become as powerless as the rest. Only in cities which, like New York and Boston, are provided with subways, can local lines of communication be kept open. The underground routes are the only ones that never fail us. Subways under the sea may appear more desirable than feasible, but a tunnel across the English Channel seems a smaller undertaking than it would have been twenty years ago, and a hundred years hence projects for sending trains beneath the ocean may not be laughed to scorn. Although it is now impossible to do away with the discomfort and danger attending sea voyages in winter, money and annoyance may be saved by methodical burrowing on land. In large cities tunnels might extend from the railroad stations to the manufacturing and wholesale districts, and shipments might pass between shops and cars

without getting in the way of persons who have no interest in them. To fill busy streets with drays and crowded sidewalks with packing-boxes, as at present, is to make a senseless misuse of common conveniences. Chicago already has a freighting subway that will relieve much of the street congestion. As to building local subways for passenger transportation, New York and other cities that have passed the half-million mark in population need little prompting. But it is conceivable that subways will yet be carried far beyond the limits of one city, and the railway company that tunnels some cold and tempestuous region will be safe in announcing itself as "the popular winter route."

Rubbish of all kinds is being written about the awful strain of modern life and its disastrous effects upon those who are forced to dwell within the limits of a busy civilization, instead of flying to a lodge in some vast wilderness. In fact, there has been so much said by one person and another about the degeneracy that is certain to follow life lived in the thick of things that any number of men and women are beginning to feel sorry for themselves. Feeling sorry for yourself, it is worth while saying, can invest more time and sympathy with less profit than any other occupation a man can take up. If a man drinks cocktails before each meal, highballs between meals, tea and coffee at regular intervals, smokes numerous strong cigars, eats too much, is out in the open air not at all, and ends his day with a bottle of wine and a midnight supper, something disagreeable is coming to him if he will only keep it up long enough. But he need not lay the result of his own gluttony and abuse of alcohol and tobacco and other habits of the sort to civilization or to the awful strain of life in the twentieth century. The proof of it lies in a decreasing death rate all over America and Europe. A really degenerate race begins to die out—it does not go on living longer and longer. It may be true that there are more men and women in rest cures than there used to be—but as there used to be no rest cures for them to go to, it is reasonably clear that there are lives being saved now that had to be given up heretofore. It is also said that there are more insane persons than formerly. Insane persons used to die in a comparatively short time, and comparatively few of them were ever restored to health and usefulness. Many more used to die before insanity showed itself who are now preserved. Statistics of that kind are generally misleading, since they take only one aspect of the case into account. Men who do not eat and drink to excess, who make play a part of their work and who stick to life in the open whenever they get a chance, need not worry about stress and strain in modern or any other life.

Splicing Twine. It has been said that Henry Clay achieved success so easily that he quite misunderstood others and over-estimated himself. But he was eager to learn the best way to do whatever he had to do. In "The True Henry Clay," the author gives an instance of this: At fourteen Henry became clerk in a store in Richmond, whether the family had removed. Stories are told of his willingness to do his duty, although the work was distasteful to him. Once he was reproved by the storekeeper for wasting too much twine. Thereafter he saved every scrap he could get and tied the pieces together. Again it was explained that using this sort of twine might be offensive to customers, as it made the packages look untidy by reason of so many knots. So he consulted with a sailor at Richmond, who showed him how to splice strings with a smooth joint. From that time he spent his leisure hours making short pieces of twine of the same size into a continuous cord. When his employer discovered this he was so much pleased that he had all twine saved, and turned the task of splicing it over to young Henry, with the result that the young man's enthusiasm rapidly abated.

Odd Names for Newspapers. The names of American newspapers are a study in nomenclature. In Arkansas are the Buzz Saw and the Back Log; California, the Condor, the Wasp and the Tomahawk; Colorado, the Rattler and Yesterday and To-Day; Iowa, the Postal Card, the Unit, the Nucleus and the Firebrand; Kentucky, the Salt River Tiger, the Push, the Boomer; Missouri, the Missing Link and the Cyclone; Nevada, the Rustler. Oklahoma rejoices in the Dinner Bell and the Plain People. South Dakota has a Plain Talker. In West Virginia is the Irrepressible. Missouri has the Crank and the Entering Wedge. Wyoming reads Bill Balon's Budget—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Lunar Oceans. Dr. Voigt suggests that what are called volcanic craters in the moon may be the coral islands or atolls of a lunar sea now dry. The Pacific Ocean, if evaporated, would, he says, have mountains resembling volcanic craters.

Russia's St. Andrew Cross. Russia's Cross of St. Andrew has a remarkable peculiarity attaching to it. All who are decorated with it have the right once to demand a pardon for a Russian subject condemned to death.

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