

Topics of the Times

If you want to make a thief angry call him a thief.

Happiness has a peculiar way of appearing and disappearing unexpectedly.

The boy who was tied to the rails felt he was bound to wait for the train.

The most expensive bouquet on record is the one that cost 18 lives in Madrid.

The mosquito is a cheerful collector. He always sings when he comes with his bill.

Thomas A. Edison comes to our relief with a discovery that will reduce the cost of automobiles.

There are just as good brides in the matrimonial sea as ever were caught in the June fishing.

It will be an expert physical trainer that can put Chancey Depew's smile back where it used to be.

Senator Tillman says he loves music, flowers and women. Nobody will be likely to think less of him for that.

Something precious has gone out of American life when a Montana man refuses an invitation because he hasn't a dress suit.

The tangle cobbler who was walled up alive after murdering thirty-six women may be said to have met his fate at the last.

From the way it is flopping around it really looks as if some one had been tying knots in the tentacles of the Standard octopus.

Doctors have found eight causes for headache. This will surprise those persons who were of the opinion that there were at least eighteen.

As the regular navy of Guatemala consists of a couple of rowboats, the insurgents look upon that San Francisco tug as an invincible battleship.

A French socialist declares that eleven minutes' work a day is enough for any man. Why that odd minute? Splitting hairs is too much labor. Make it ten.

The Chicago man who regained his speech after 25 years of silence wanted to know whether it was "hot enough for you." Twenty-five years of wasted suffering!

Canada is bragging of the increase in her foreign trade. However, if her imports from the United States were deducted from the total it would leave a pretty large hole.

There may be worse crimes than holding up and robbing a lot of raw emigrants, but in point of unadulterated meanness that particular crime ranks well down near the bottom.

If the inhabitants of Mars are trying to tell the people of this planet what type of canal should be constructed across the isthmus of Panama, they may as well give it up. That matter is settled.

A hard blow has been dealt the British army. A decree has gone forth that no officers will be allowed to wear a monocle unless he can show the requisite optical defects. An English officer without a monocle is an unthinkable proposition.

There are so many men nowadays with Darius Green ambitions that when some unknown person announces that he is soon to solve the human-aerial problem, little attention is paid to such a declaration. However, when John P. Holland, the inventor of the successful submarine boat, now in use by the navy, says he is sure he has an invention all but perfected that will make birds of us all, we naturally think that possibly fly time is near at hand. If a man can make a boat to navigate under water, why shouldn't he make wings to enable a man to fly—and yet we are skeptical.

The exclusion of an American crew by the Henley stewards is an unpleasant reminder of our low standard of amateurism. The difficulty lies not so much in the lack of genuine sportsmen as in the existence of too many prosperous athletic clubs that will stick at nothing to turn out a winning team or crew. These clubs are largely in the control of persons who are not themselves sportsmen and who are not above giving direct or indirect inducements to promising athletes. Our national tribunals of amateurism are too often made up of persons whose standard of sport is low. The disqualified crew was even provided with affidavits asserting its amateur character. We need rather a more scrupulous individual sense of honor. That would prevent a genuine amateur from sitting in the same boat with one who had made underhand sale of his services.

Not long ago a man of national importance characterized an attempt to beautify the city of Washington as "spending money for scenery." The phrase may be taken as a sneer, as it was intended to be taken, or with approval, as expressing a truth and a wise policy. Spending money for scenery is

one of the most hopeful signs of a re-awakening to natural possibilities. It is not confined to any one region. San Francisco is already talking about the Burnham plans for beautifying the city, which have long been in abeyance. The rebuilding of the Gateway of the West now affords an opportunity to put them in practice. Niagara Falls, the White Mountains, the Appalachians and the Palisades are Eastern scenery, but they are also national possessions, and it is with a sort of wonder that commercial interests have discovered how strong the feeling is against destroying them or encroaching seriously upon them. The Old State House in Boston and Independence Hall in Philadelphia are more local examples of the same quality of public interest which lies in sentiment. They are "scenery" of a sort which appeals to a pride as stubborn as the power of money, and more creditable. The man who cares for his father's grave and preserves the family home is "paying money for scenery," too, but more persons understand that kind of sentiment. The other kind—the larger, more common and fraternal kind—is just as surely coming into its own.

The period of violently intermittent railroad construction in this country seems to have passed and to have been succeeded by one of comparatively steady progress. The spasmodic period culminated in 1887 with the construction of 12,876 miles of road. During the eighteen years following the half of that construction has been exceeded only once—in 1888, when the construction was 9,000 miles. In only three other years since has it exceeded 5,000 miles—in 1889, 1890 and 1905. Only two years before the maximum construction of nearly 13,000 miles in 1887 it was less than 3,000 miles. In 1882 it was 11,599 miles. The interval at that time between the crest of one wave of construction and the crest of the succeeding one was only five years. The next preceding crest was in 1871, when the construction was 7,379 miles. The minimum during this interval of eleven years was 1,711 miles in 1875. The crest next preceding 1871 was in 1856, when the construction was 3,642 miles. Here the interval was fifteen years, including the four years of Civil War, and the low level of 600 miles was in 1861, the first year of the war. The next high mark before 1856 was only three years earlier, in 1853, when the construction was 2,452 miles. Prior to that time from the first recorded construction, about 1830, the growth may be described as progressive but not spasmodic or intermittent. During the most of that early period of about twenty-three years the carrying of passengers, the mails and freight of much value in small bulk was regarded as the chief and practically the only business of the railroads. It was only after the great possibilities of railroading began to be perceived that the progress of construction took on its noticeably intermittent character, which was productive of serious financial disturbances. Now, since the possibilities of railroading have come to be pretty well understood, there seems to be a return to a more evenly progressive development of the general railroad system. Construction has become less speculative and more businesslike. As the demand for capital for railroad purposes has grown more uniform the perturbations of the money market due to the fluctuating demand from this quarter have been much less. The construction reports for the first half of the current year indicate a continuance of evenness in this field, with a tendency which has been noticeable for three years toward a continuous increase in construction, not so much of extended lines as of connecting links and short spurs and extensions necessary to the completion of the great system the main lines of which have already been provided so far as they are yet needed.

His Word for It.
Mrs. Brown is a woman equally remarkable for kindness of heart and absence of mind. On day she was accosted by a beggar, whose stout and healthy appearance startled even her into doubt of the need of charity in this case.
"Why," she exclaimed, "you look well able to work!"
"Yes," replied the suppliant, "but I have been deaf and dumb these seven years."
"Poor man! What an affliction!" exclaimed Mrs. Brown, opening her purse and handing him a quarter. On returning home she mentioned the occurrence, and remarked, "What a dreadful thing it is to be deprived of such faculties!"
"But how," asked her daughter, "did you know that the man was deaf and dumb?"
"Why," was the innocent answer, "he told me so."

A Simple Cure.
It is said that John Wesley was once walking with a brother, who related to him his troubles, saying he did not know what he should do. They were at that moment passing a stone wall to a meadow, over which a cow was looking. "Do you know," asked Wesley, "why that cow looks over that wall?"
"No," replied the one in trouble. "I will tell you," said Wesley. "Because she cannot look through it. And that is what you must do with your troubles—look over and above them."

A Beauty Exercise.
"What makes Miss Stiff laugh so much of late? She doesn't act as if she really enjoyed it."
"She doesn't. Some one told her laughing would prevent wrinkles and she is testing the theory."—Detroit Free Press.

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