

Topics of the Times

If we take the Atlatics, of course we must take their cholera.

A current article on "Justice in France and America" shows that there is some of it in both places.

Building the biggest battleship seems to be merely a matter of commencing after the other fellow has finished his.

The Methodist preacher who stopped service to help put out a fire can't justly be tried for heresy or neglect of duty.

Philadelphia has decreed that girlhood passes at 35, but it does not follow that this age marks the limit of girlishness.

Hundreds of begging letters come to Mrs. Russell Sage every day. A position as the widow of a multimillionaire is no sinecure.

Think what a difference it would have made in the histories if the people of the olden time had been provided with telephones.

It can plainly be seen from Russell Sage's will that if the old man could have taken it with him his money would not have been left to anybody.

It must be highly diverting to the Japanese to watch the Russians smash up that part of their argument that did not get into the late unpleasantness.

Another soothinger has been heard from. He says there will be a financial panic seven years hence. Seven years is a long time. Make your game, gentlemen.

In France they use the knife to cure criminals after the crime. The Philadelphia surgeon's way of using the knife to cure the potential criminal is a big advance toward the millennium.

Divers have found a good deal of damage was done to the Illinois and the Alabama when those two battle ships collided the other day. It is really unfortunate that the ocean isn't bigger.

Our soil is now producing radium, diamonds, gold, silver, copper and nickel. With a little more training it may be that we will be able to grow automobiles, cash registers and agricultural implements.

A New York physician says people can get along without stomachs. At last reports, however, he still maintained possession of his, not caring to go to the bother of presenting any evidence of good faith in his theory.

Admiral Rozhdestvensky played the willing scapegoat by taking full blame for the loss of his fleet in the Sea of Japan. He satisfied Russian officialdom by saying, "I alone am guilty," but was acquitted on the ground that when he surrendered he was incapacitated by his wound and not in possession of his full powers.

In spite of the growing condemnation of burning gunpowder on the Fourth of July, twenty-eight persons were killed as a result of the celebration this year, and more than two thousand were wounded. Although public sentiment against the toy pistol and the cannon cracker grows stronger every year, the number of deaths and wounds caused by them increases also. Why? Because those who allow their children to "celebrate" with the murderous articles are not those whose thinking apparatus is affected by public sentiment.

Every little while we hear a story about "persecution" by the Cuban government of Americans in the Isle of Pines. We should not close our ears to truth, of course, but it will be safe to take these stories with plenty of salt. We should remember that certain Americans have set up an unfounded claim that the Isle of Pines is American territory and it seems to be their determined purpose to keep up an irritation until they involve the government at Washington in trouble with the Cuban government and get that island away from Cuba in one way or another.

There is an interesting report to the effect that somebody has discovered a process by which the stalk of the cotton plant, heretofore a waste product save as it may be devoted to fertilizing uses, can be converted into paper of excellent quality by the same processes that are now applied to wood pulp and other materials and with little or no modification of paper-making plants. It is estimated that general use in this way of the cotton stalk will add \$100,000,000 annually to the product value of the cotton States, will put an end to the boll weevil, bring along with the paper made four or five byproducts of paying value and greatly check the destruction of forests in paper-making. If these claims shall be half justified by the event the discoverer will deserve to be ranked among the great benefactors of humanity.

None of the exhibitions held to mark anniversaries of national events has celebrated a more significant historical date than the fair which is to be open-

ed at Jamestown, V., in 1907. The recent appropriation by Congress of more than a million dollars for the exhibition serves to remind us that 1907 will be the tercentenary of the founding of Jamestown, the first permanent English colony in America. Most American fairs have commemorated events in history, national independence, the landing of Columbus, the purchase of Louisiana, the Lewis and Clark expedition, but they have been exhibitions of modern art and industry, displays of the wonders of the present. The Jamestown fair will be the first to be historical not only in occasion, but in character. It will be designed to afford a study of our national beginnings. Looking out upon Hampton Roads toward Fortress Monroe will stand a group of buildings of finely executed colonial architecture, ranging from the administration building, which will resemble a colonial or early State capitol, down to the smaller buildings designed like colonial dwellings. In the Arts and Crafts Village will be reproduced the industries and home life of early Virginia. Every obtainable relic that will reveal the Southern forefathers of the nation is to be placed in ordered collections; and at forge, bench and loom, workers representing the daily labor of the old colonists will produce wares like those that have survived from the elder days. In the department of education and social economics will be revealed not merely the instructive continuity of Virginia life for three centuries, but the development of the entire nation. The exhibition will do good in forwarding acquaintance and sympathy between people of widely separated parts of the country. No American, whether or not he is fortunate enough to visit Jamestown, can fail to benefit by the patriotic embodiment of a great national story.

Perhaps it is just as well that men should not be allowed too great authority in disposing of the wealth they leave behind them, but if the power of devising is to be limited the limitation should be direct rather than by subterfuge. It would be easy enough to frame a law providing that a man may not leave more than a certain portion of his possessions to any one person and such a law would forestall nine-tenths of the will contests. But to grant the testator unlimited discretion in the matter and then to upset his will by appealing to technicalities is neither fair nor honest. It is "whipping the devil around the stump." The will of Russell Sage is to be contested because a scrivener, copying the document from the lawyer's rough draft, ran his pen through a figure which he had mistakenly written. The act did not alter the purport of the will; it did not affect the rights of any of the heirs to the extent of a penny. It was an obvious correction of an insignificant clerical error.

Yet it is announced that upon the strength of this trivial lapse of the pen the will is to be contested. It is predicted that the struggle will last for several years, unless there is a compromise, and that the will finally will be "broken." Now, the meaning of this consummation will simply be that public sentiment—to which judges and juries are susceptible—does not approve of Mr. Sage leaving but \$25,000 to each of his other relatives and devising \$90,000,000 to his wife. Theoretically, that is, we admit that a man may leave his money as he chooses; practically, we deny him that right by upsetting his will on the minutest technicality when he does not leave his wealth as we should like him to leave it. There can be no doubt as to the strength and potency of this phase of public sentiment. The wills of rich men are contested and invalidated upon the flimsiest pretexts. The courts will liberally construe other documents, but they are inexorable when they deal with wills. Any excuse is good enough for defeating the testator's purpose. This, we repeat, is the wrong way of doing a very simple thing. If we want to limit the testamentary powers of wealthy men we can do so by legislation. It is an absurd and rather hypocritical false pretense to grant unlimited testamentary rights and then nullify them by an appeal to fine-spun legal quibbles.

"Seein's Believin'." Senator Bailey was once staying for a short time at a country place, when he received a telegram urging his immediate appearance in Washington. The place was about two miles from the railroad station, and as the schedule had been recently changed, and his host did not know the new hour for the train—there was but one a day—a negro was hastily sent to inquire of the station agent. It was perhaps three hours later when the negro ambled to the yard. "Where have you been, you rascal? Does it take three hours to ask when a train is due?" the Senator's host demanded angrily. "Now, Mars Jeems," the negro protested, "yo' know hit don't take no three hours ter ax when er train gwine pass. But, Mars Jeems, dat station man am slich er liar yo' can't take his word fer nuffin' an' Ah stayed ter see for mah-self. An' fer once in his life he tol' de truf—she sho did pass dar des' when he say she would!"—American Spectator.

Bottle. Gunner—They say he is a man of clay. Now what use is a man of clay, anyway? Guyer—Well—er—they might make a pipe out of him.

In the average house when father takes up the cream pitcher the women folks hold their breath for fear he will drain it.

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