

TOPICS OF THE TIMES

The Russian government is willing to let the people have elections, providing they vote for the government.

The price of gasoline has gone up again, and owners are almost beginning to wish that their automobiles ate hay.

A famous physician is experimenting with the effects of music on cats. Paying them back in their own coin, so to speak.

The man who is paying 20 cents a gallon for gasoline isn't able to figure out wherein 35-cent denatured alcohol will help much.

The Governor of Cuba will receive a salary of \$25,000 a year. It should be remembered, however, that he will have to live in Cuba.

The man who seeks divorce because his wife doesn't talk enough will be considered a fit subject for an inquisition de lunatico.

A man always finds it hard to conceal his satisfaction when he picks up another man's hat and finds that it is too small for him.

It is surprising to read that a new revolt is threatened in Russia. Many had supposed that a continuous revolt was good enough for the Russians.

In Pennsylvania there is a man who declares that his wife hasn't spoken to him for seven years. Some people will be unable to understand why he is making a fuss about it.

If James J. Hill were younger he might have hope of some day being in a position to buy the earth and sell it again at a profit of 40 or 50 per cent when the population doubles.

Mr. Oliver Lodge tells us that the sun will be cold in 20,000,000 years, and what is turning our hair gray with worry is the fact that the coal supply will last only half that time.

Honor is being paid to the memory of Madoc, the Welsh prince, who is said to have discovered America in 1270. Christopher Columbus, however, does not recall hearing anything about it at the time.

Smokers who have been fearing that the disturbances in Cuba might curtail the output of genuine Havana cigars will be interested to hear that the Connecticut tobacco crop is unusually large.

Italians have erected in New York City a monument to Verdi, the grand old man of Italian music. This is the third memorial which the Italians have presented to New York. The others are the monuments to Columbus and Garibaldi.

A hoodlum is a boy whose mother and father "have no time to fuss" about him. They "guess he is big enough and smart enough to take care of himself." If a neighbor complains of his mean acts the parents think that neighbor too low down to live. The hoodlum begins his course by running wild in the street; he ends it on the gallows. But, as a general thing, his parents deserve hanging better than he does.

Marquis Ito and Field Marshal Yamagata and Oyama have been created princes by the Japanese Emperor in recognition of their services in the war with Russia, and Vice Admiral Togo has been made a marquis for the same reason. All that we can do in America to reward our military heroes is to advance them in rank, and even then the promotion of successful officers over the heads of men who have been longer in the service is fiercely criticized.

In recent years, as all readers of the papers know, it has become too common among a certain class of people to have the marriage ceremony performed under strange and unusual conditions, as on platforms at county fairs, on the top of a smokestack, etc. The cheap notoriety that attaches to this sort of marriage destroys the sanctity that should pertain to the ceremony and gives the unthinking occasion to regard it as a joke rather than a serious transaction. There is altogether too much trifling with the marriage tie already without turning the ceremony into a monkey show.

There isn't much question that most of us would get along better if a little more attention were given to mastication, if we ate less meat—indeed, less of everything; but there are so many other offenses against good physiology more serious in their results and almost equally prevalent that the layman may be excused for skepticism as to the necessity for political economists deserting their own field to push the cause of the chewers. A man who consistently chews each mouthful of custard forty-seven times through life may have a chance of living to be a 100 a fraction of a point better than the man who bolts batter cakes whole, but the latter during his shorter earthly sojourn, having his attention less closely fixed on his stomach, may actually do more good in the world than the human hashing machine.

Among the cherished memories of a certain charming old lady is that of a

teacher of her childhood, whose theory of life was reduced to a simple principle: "Learn to read well, young ladies—to enunciate distinctly, to modulate the voice pleasingly, to interpret the words of the author with sympathy and understanding; learn to read well, and all other virtues will follow." It is possible that the acquirement of all the virtues seems a slightly more complicated matter than it did to the old gentleman of seventy years ago. Nevertheless, the advice is not to be laughed away, if only because it recalls the days when reading aloud was counted one of the most desirable of the fine arts of life. This is no reflection upon the art of reading as taught in these latter days; the question is not of the actual process, but of the place that reading aloud used to hold in family life. Many a gray-haired man or woman who never heard of "round tables," and never discovered that authors had early or late styles, yet knows his Scott or Thackeray or Shakespeare as few young people of to-day ever know them. In part, this is due to the fact that the field of reading now covered by young people is much larger than it was half a century ago. A deeper cause lies in the decline of the habit of reading aloud. We have no time now to read aloud, we say. Perhaps not; yet before we decide, might it not be well to consider whether any other recreation offers more permanent pleasure or greater enrichment to the life. Books read aloud winter evenings about the fire, with the whole family sharing the interest and the discussions, will hold a warmth of color which time will not dim. Between their pages will lie countless happy memories—a treasure whose value will deepen through all the years to come.

While certain elderly gentlemen of athletic proclivities were disputing on the links of a New York golf club in competitive endeavor to reduce records, a Chicago doctor of theology was inveighing vigorously against the humorous Dr. Osler, whose merry jest at the expense of 60 bobs up occasionally to plague the supersensitive. The theologian pointed out that Moses did not begin to preach until he was 80 years of age, and from this undisputed assertion he drew the conclusion that there is no age limit until a man's vigor has gone. If any argument were permissible it might be contended that much of the great work of Moses was performed while he was yet young—young not merely from the ancient but the present way of looking at years. But nobody now takes seriously the limitations prescribed by Dr. Osler except possibly a few over-wrought gentlemen who are, unhappily, devoid of the saving grace of humor. To calm the feelings of these sensitive few we may speak not only of the preaching Moses but of the elderly golfers who went forth to battle amid "wintry blasts and furies of snow." It is recorded that of this goodly array of competitive ancients and honorables not one was under 55, while most of them had passed the Osler age of usefulness, and several of them were over 80. A merry young fellow of 78 carried off one of the prizes, and a strapping of two and seventy figured proudly in the running. And in order to accomplish the task presented it was required of these husky athletes to cover ground to the extent of seven miles, a mere bit of attendant exercise which they considered hardly worth mentioning. In all likelihood Moses thought nothing of walking seven miles a day, even after he began preaching, for he was a pedestrian of large experience and was in excellent training. But the conjunction of the patriarch and the contemporary golfers, for illustrative purposes, is felicitous chiefly as showing that in all ages of the world's history decrepitude, physical and mental, is usually not so much a matter of years as of temperament and mode of life. The octogenarian on the golf links and in the pulpit is constantly with us to remind us of the humor of Dr. Osler's quips and fancies.

Demand for More Furs.
Samuel Leon, who represents large fur interests and has charge of supplying the trade, reports greatest demand for fur in the history of the country.

"In the last three years the demand for fur in the United States has increased more than 200 per cent. The demand is so large that it cannot be met at all, and the result has been to increase enormously the price of skins.

"A large amount of the furs of the United States are being imported from Russia, which shows a great change, as formerly we relied in this country to a great degree on the furs of our own continent. The seals have been slaughtered in recent years in large numbers, and although there seems to be no sign of an early extinction of the animals, the skins are not so common as formerly. More and more the trade is looking to the countries of northern Europe for their fine skins.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Dame Nature's Poor Taste.
An Englishman who has been visiting in the suburbs recently is hypercritical, to say the least. "Ever since he has been visiting this gentleman he has been finding fault with everything. The other evening they were on the host's beautiful lawn. 'This would be charming, Mr. Blank, if it were not for the color of the grass.' 'Why, what is the matter with the grass?' inquired the surprised host. 'Too green, too green,' sighed the Englishman; 'it spoils the color effect.'—Boston Record.

To say a man lacks tact is a polite way of saying he is impolite.

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