

TOPICS OF THE TIMES

Says a woman: "I care not who does the thinking so long as I am permitted to do the talking."

Lincoln Steffens is looking for a model city. It is a pleasure to refer him to the New Jerusalem.

Is married love an illusion? Not so long as the grocer and the butcher understand that everybody is prosperous.

King Leopold thinks he is a much abused man. He ought to be thankful that there is no international whipping-post.

Sir Thomas Lipton speaks in high praise of the American hotels. This may be accepted as a sure sign that he is coming back.

A New York man who lived on 35 cents a day left a fortune of \$200,000. His heirs will doubtless agree that he is better off dead.

The man who cut off his right hand because it offended him, it is needless to say, was a Bible reader who accepted all statements literally.

A Cincinnati church congregation has decided to pay the pastor's wife a monthly salary. Hereafter there ought to be no buttons missing from his clothes.

One of the dramatists threatens to write a play around the fuel famine in the Northwest. It is a safe guess that the villain will have a beard and be bald-headed.

Even the heroine who by waving her red petticoat saved the fast express from destruction has had to give up her pass. Thus do the sins of the unjust fall upon the just.

The Chinese, it is said, make it a point of honor to pay all their debts on the first day of January. That's the day we begin inventing new excuses for not paying ours.

A French professor says he is following up clues that will reveal to him the mystery of the creation of plant life. He followed up a strong scent when he chased down the onion.

"Don't cheer, boys," plaintively exclaims the New York World, "poor 'thru' is dying!" Still, let us not mourn. It was too feeble and deformed to have withstood the buffetings of this rude world.

Some statisticians have found that burglars stole from the various banks in this country during the past year a total of \$4,127. He, of course, refers only to the thieves who broke in from the outside to do their stealing.

Although said to be "richer than Rockefeller," Mr. Weyerhaeuser seems to be permitted to pursue the even tenor of his way, principally because he refrains from lecturing his fellow-men on how to be happy though struggling for a living.

"Veterans of industry." A pretty phrase and prettily employed. It is what the Danes call the old people of good record who are forced to apply to the authorities for help. No shame attaches to such application; no ignominious dependence, corrosive of self-respect, attends the life which follows. Such a person enters the home as a sort of government pensioner.

Dreadful stories are told about the Czar Nicholas suffering nervous prostration, but there is not a syllable of well-authenticated evidence that the numerous assassinations of the Russian terrorists have ameliorated in any way the condition of the Russian people. The only effect seems to be the adoption of sterner and still sterner repressive measures. Assassination is something that people seem to get habituated to so that they do not mind it.

In the library of the Navy Department is a vast quantity of valuable documents waiting for the man who shall write the history of the American navy. Here are many unpublished letters of officers and secretaries and all manner of technical information about the growth of the battleship and the development of naval ordnance. Captain Mahan, the greatest authority in the world on naval history, has said that he is too old to begin the work. Perhaps it will not be begun, perhaps all that material will lie untouched, until some one of our young readers is grown up and competent to do justice to the subject.

Never in the history of education was there such a frenzy among educators to add courses of study in the public schools as to-day. That has had the natural effect of physical and mental injury to childhood which it is now the desire to overcome. Educators have found that little bodies and little brains succumb to the strain the theorists have put upon them and the public school gymnasium is the result. Children instinctively resort to the kind of physical exercise best suited to them if they are allowed to play out in the open air. This is the very best bodily training they can have. If the modern educators would not require so much home study of the children the latter would not need physical culture

during school hours. But this appears to be entirely overlooked in present-day systems.

Tragically appropriate as the climax to a year of appalling railroad mortality was the catastrophe of Dec. 30, 1906, wherein more than fifty passengers were killed. The explanation was the usual one, with which the traveling public is expected to be meekly content. The night was foggy and there was a mistake in the signals. Hence the collision. The much praised block system lends itself too readily to mistaken signals, with their grim sequel of lives sacrificed. Safeguards that do not safeguard are coming to be a pretty costly and gruesome farce. "Operating efficiency" is a bragword with the American railroad magnate, and it is true that, as factories for concentrated profits, our railroad systems have reached a wonderful perfection, equalled only by their achievements as a universal juggernaut, says Ridgway's. With grain rotting on the ground in the Northwest for lack of shipping facilities, with half a dozen States freezing for coal while cars for the carrying of that commodity are tangled in extricable confusion, with high railroad officials bawling out explanations that explain nothing, and excuses that a schoolboy could excel for inventiveness, with the slaughter of helpless passengers going on day after day, the present methods of operation as devised and controlled by the "master minds" of railroading are matter, not for glorification, but for mourning and repentance.

Didn't it sound as though the father were speaking through the son? To an eager Sunday school class in Cleveland John D. Rockefeller, Jr., said: "You should thank God that you have to struggle along for your daily bread and thus avoid the temptations and responsibilities that the possession of wealth creates or produces." If the young and wise Mr. Rockefeller thinks poverty is such a blessing why, in the name of all the saints at once, doesn't he try to get rid of the more than just proportion of the world's money which he possesses? If wealth is such a curse why is he training himself to add to the inordinately large holdings of his family? The trouble with young Mr. Rockefeller is that he is trying to ape his father and with long drawn face and sanctimonious deprecation denies the possession of wealth while bending all his energies to add to his golden store. How does the young Mr. Rockefeller know it is more blessed to be poor than rich? If he imagines the squalor of the garret is preferable to the luxury of a mansion why doesn't he try it for a while? If he can find more joy in gnawing tough flank steak than porterhouse smothered with mushrooms, why doesn't he order flank steak from his butcher? Of all the mushy talk about the sorrows of riches and the joys of poverty the Rockefellers deal out the mushiest. Poverty is not a crime and it's a long way from being a blessing. We are all—that is, if we are worth the powder to blow us up with—striving to escape from its gaunt clutches and lay up a competence for old age and for our children. We are striving to earn a little more and save a little more to-day than we did yesterday. We want our children to be better dressed than we were in our boyhood days. And up and down this sad old earth there isn't a normal man or woman who would not gladly forsake the Rockefeller theory of joy in poverty for the temptations and responsibilities that the possession of great wealth produces.

The Touch of Nature. There is a cleanliness which is too clean, and is then bareness. This is recognized by the artist-philosophers in Japan whose aim is to make the home life sweet and beautiful. Artistic manners in Japan began with the etiquette of tea-drinking, round which has developed a domestic ritual. Its expert devotees are called tea-masters. Some of the tea-masters have been very great artists and the founders of schools of painting. One of these was Rikku. A story, told of him in the little "Book of Tea," written by a Japanese author, Okakura-Kakuzo, illustrates the tea-masters' idea of cleanliness. Rikku was watching his son Shoan as he swept and watered the garden path. "Not clean enough," said Rikku, when Shoan had finished his task, and bade him try again. After a weary hour the son turned to Rikku. "Father, there is nothing more to be done. The steps have been washed for the third time, the stone lanterns and the trees are well sprinkled with water, moss and lichens are shining with a fresh verdure; not a twig, not a leaf have I left on the ground." "Boy," chided the tea-master, "that is not the way a garden path should be swept." Saying this, Rikku stepped into the garden, shook a tree and scattered over the garden gold and crimson leaves, scraps of the brocade of autumn. What Rikku demanded was not cleanliness alone, but the beautiful and the natural also.

Cash Better than Time. "Have you a few moments to spare?" "Young man," said the capitalist, severely, "my time is worth \$100 an hour, but I'll give you ten minutes." "If it's all the same to you," thoughtfully replied the visitor, "I believe I would rather take it in cash."—Philadelphia Ledger.

The good die young—especially good resolutions.

WIT OF THE YOUNGSTERS.

Teacher—Johnny, what is the future tense of "He drinks?" Johnny (promptly)—He's drunk.

Teacher—Willie, can you tell me why the multiplication table stops at 12? Willie—I guess it's because 13 at a table is unlucky.

Teacher—Now, Johnny, you may give me the definition of "exercise." Johnny—Exercise is work that a fellow likes to do because it isn't work. "They say that I have cut a tooth," said the babe with mournful glee; "But if they'd only tell the truth, they'd say the tooth cut me."

Teacher—Why, Freddie, this excuse doesn't look like your father's writing. Freddie—Well, the next one will look more like it, I guess. He says my penmanship is improving.

Small Tommy after being severely chastised by his mother for disobeying her ran to his father and said between sobs: "Papa, how d-did you c-come to m-marry such a w-woman as m-mamma is?"

Mamma—If you had two pennies, Willie, and I was to give you three more, how much would you have? Willie—Make it dollars, mamma. What's the use of being stingy with make-believe money?

A little fellow, age 4, accompanied his father to Lincoln Park one day, where he saw a diminutive monkey with whose playful antics he was greatly pleased. "What did you see, dear?" asked his mother upon his return home. "A funny little boy with a tail," replied the small observer.

"What's the matter, pet?" asked a mother of her 3-year-old daughter, who was crying. "S-somthin' d-dreadful happened," sobbed the little one. "Well, what was it, darling?" queried the mother, anxiously. "My d-dolly dot away f-from me an' b-bwoked a d-dish in ze p-pantwty," she sobbed.

JEWELS IN BOOT LEATHER.

Diamond-Set Dancing Pumps Will Soon Be Fashionable Again.

It is said that a manufacturing jeweler in New York has invented a device for setting gems in boot leather; that diamond-set dancing pumps will soon be the rage; that diamond-toed boots will eventually be so common as not to attract attention in Broadway or in 5th avenue.

Here is merely a return to ancient luxury. The "campagus," the most ordinary footgear of the Roman emperors, was often enriched with pearls and diamonds. Roman women had shoes with soles of solid gold, shoes that sparkled with precious stones. Heliogabalus, who never wore a pair of boots twice, insisted on exquisite cameos as decorations, but he forbade women to wear gems attached to their shoes. High priests were coquetish also in this manner. Alcibiades invented a boot that became the fashion, but we believe it was gemless.

Let us go through the centuries. Charlemagne wore shoes adorned with gems and richly ornamented foot coverings were worn by the nobility of Europe, both by lords and noble dames in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. In the time of Charles I. of England the extravagance was shoe strings edged with gold. Louis XIV. wore at his wedding boots adorned with fleurs de lis and decorations of gold, but how did they fit him? For the shoemaker, Lestage, disdained to take the royal measure. Toward the close of the eighteenth century in England shoe buckles dazzled with jewels.

A millionaire is now a person whose income is a million. A capital of a million is nothing. When General Jung Bahawter took his seat at the ball given in London by the Peninsular and Oriental Company—

Bedad his trout, his belt, his coat, All bleezed with precious minerals.

Why should not the suddenly rich, the heroes of the American nights, more wonderful than the nights of Arabia, break out all over with diamonds as poorer mortals with measles or the shingles?—Boston Herald.

To Be Replied.

One of the suburbs of Chicago is the site of a well-known school of theology, from which go out each week-end many members of the senior class to try their voices as "supplies." A passenger on a Monday morning train was surprised at the number of them who got off at the station.

"What are all those chaps getting off here?" he asked the brakeman. "Them?" asked the brakeman. "Oh, they're returned empires, for the college."

Histrionic.

There was on the stage a realistic scene in which a surgical operation was apparently performed. "Hold on" cried a voice from the audience. "Aren't you going to give us some of that chloroform?" Of course the management was displeased, but there is a point at which realism fails.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Hereditary.

"Your son is a great football player." "Yes; it is hereditary." "I never heard that his father was a football player." "He isn't, but he is a chronic kicker."—Houston Post.

Women can always see the point of a pointless joke.

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