

**Topics of the Times**

If a woman is homely she always knows it; but it's different with a man.

Health and goodness are contagious and epidemic, as well as disease and crime.

Counterfeit \$5 bills in circulation are said to be rather short. The good ones, however, are not long with us.

Perhaps, after all, Governor Sweetnam merely wanted to advertise the superior quality of Jamaica ginger.

That thief who stole \$2,000 worth of diamonds from the Queen of Greece must have been a slippery customer.

Time was when the anti-pass bill was the best joke of the legislative season. Are the American people losing their sense of humor?

Having been greeted by the President as "fellow citizens," the Porto Ricans may now feel at liberty to think of Speaker Cannon as Uncle Joe.

Ethical passion is an excellent thing. The Christian Register is willing to admit, but ethical action is a better one, and by the latter the former is tested.

It no longer seems to be good form for a prominent business man in any of the States to receive an indictment with less than a hundred counts attached.

A man is reported to have discovered \$5,000 under an old carpet. But stories like this always get into circulation just before the carpet-beating season opens.

If the Swedish investigator has really succeeded in overcoming gravitation, then flying machines should only be a matter of buckling on a pair of 10-cent wings.

There is an old song which says a boy's best friend is his mother. 'Tis pretty hard to make the boy whose mother is approaching with a spoonful of medicine believe it.

Since it has been asserted that neither Shakespeare nor Bacon wrote the famous plays credited to the former, the man who discovered the fact may as well admit that he wrote them himself.

Cesare Lombroso gives it as his opinion that Harry Thaw is a degenerate because his nose is crooked. Cesare neglects to explain whether the degeneracy causes the crookedness or results from it.

The man who sought an interview with the mayor of Philadelphia on the subject of building a railroad from that city to heaven was insane, of course. Travel in that direction is not heavy enough to warrant the investment.

With three hundred million board feet of merchantable timber waiting the ax on the forest reserves, lumber alarmists are minus a vocation. This reserve timber, now ready to be harvested, alone would supply the lumber needs of America for ten years. Its conservation and foresting means a tremendous wealth for years to come.

Every year the statistician of a Chicago newspaper adds up all gifts and bequests to charity in this country for the preceding twelve months. Only sums of a thousand dollars or more are counted, and only those gifts that have been announced in the newspapers. The total for 1903 was a hundred and six million dollars. This is the highest since 1901, when the total was a hundred and twenty-three millions. In these big figures no reckoning is made of the humbler gifts which those who are not rich have been privileged to make.

Although he is described as being thoroughly contemptuous of his American father-in-law, the Duke of Marlborough, it seems, has reconciled himself to accept \$100,000 per year of that person's vulgar, plebeian money. Evidently his grace has no patience with the theory that money can be "tainted." Like a certain British sovereign who took toll of an unsavory calling, he believes that "there is no smell to a shilling." In this as in other thrifty characteristics the master of Blenheim shows himself to be a true descendant of John Churchill, than whom no thriftier Englishman ever lived.

The great heart of the American people throbs with sympathy for the oppressed in Russia and they have been gladdened by evidences of the coming of a better day for that long-afflicted country. But our people know that the killing of a czar would not kill czarism. Czars have been murdered in the past, but czarism has lived on. Two wrongs, no matter how great they may be, can not be so put together as to make one right. Murder is not and can not be a remedy for governmental sins. If the lower strata of the population in Russia can get on top is there any reason to believe the situation will be improved by the change? Time will bring about a wholesome compromise between the extremes, but assassination will not be promotive of that happy consummation.

Thirty-one years ago the country was made almost speechless with horror by a railroad wreck on the Lake

**Shore & Michigan Southern Railroad at Ashtabula, Ohio.** A train went through a bridge and a large number of fatalities resulted. P. P. Bliss, the noted evangelist, being among the victims. This was about the first experience Americans had with great railroad catastrophes. It happened before the development of the speed mania, and, for that matter, before the development of the railroad business into anything like the important industry it is to-day. Naturally, the "Ashtabula disaster" became almost a classic of the news. It was read and talked about for months as one of the most frightful events in the world's history. But how is it now? A few days ago, we read without deep concern of a frightful wreck in the Middle West, followed a day or two afterward by another disaster of equal extent and horror. Outside the immediate vicinity in which these accidents happened, reports of them were read almost with indifference. Twenty-five years ago they would have filled the newspapers for days. It is not that human suffering is more differently regarded nowadays, but that through familiarity with frightful railroad accidents we have come to look upon them almost as a matter of course. We are expecting them just about so often. If we ourselves escape, we think we are lucky, and beyond that there is only passing sympathy for the victims unless we are personally connected with them. We were horrified when the San Francisco earthquake occurred, considerably interested when Valparaiso was shaken to the ground, and not particularly concerned, comparatively, over the fate of Kingston. Possibly in this rushing age it will not be long ere we shall look on the downfall of nations and the obliteration of entire peoples with equanimity.

The days have passed when every woman had her knitting-work. Our grandmothers picked up the stocking when a neighbor dropped in, when the twilight fell, when the oven needed watching—and there is a New England tradition of one industrious woman who took up her knitting while the people were gathering for a family funeral. The complicated operations of "widening," "narrowing," "setting the heel" and "toeing off" were so familiar to feminine fingers that they could all be accomplished by firelight. Every family discussion was conducted to the accompaniment of the clicking needles. Mary's course at the academy, John's journey to Boston to find a market for mother's cheeses, the purchase of the wood-lot and the building of the new ell to the house were all worked into the fabric of the gray stockings and the white stockings as they grew under skillful fingers. All the plans were laid with a greater deliberation than to-day, when the woman's part in the conversation is often taken by matches, as she runs the sewing machine, looks after the separator, or welds the carpet-sweeper. Grandmother thought her way to many a wise conclusion over her knitting. It was a tonic for depression and a sedative for nervous irritability. It was the earliest diversion for the convalescent, and the last work which feeble fingers and failing eyes could do before the final rest. How many a daughter treasures with loving care "the last pair of stockings mother knit!" The pleasant, quieting, housewifely occupation need not go out of fashion because machinery makes stockings more cheaply than hands can make them. There is still call for the product of the needles. For example, the missions for seamen are always in want of warm knitted mufflers and hoods, with which sailors may brave their winter voyages. Hospitals are glad of shoulder shawls for patients, and bed-socks may help many a poor old woman to sleep warm. The knitting which the family can spare may now be turned into the great channels of charity, and so make the knitter the happier, and the world the warmer both in body and in heart.

**To Harness the Monsoon.** This is not the only country which has large water-power engineering plans on hand. There is a project under way in Bombay which literally aims at harnessing the Indian monsoon and utilizing the resultant energy in running the cotton mills of Bombay and other factories in the adjacent districts.

The Western Ghats, or mountains, forty-three miles from Bombay, are among the rainiest districts of the world; even during the famine years 1896-7, when thousands of people were perishing elsewhere because of the lack of rain, the inhabitants of the Ghats district were nearly ruined by a rainfall of from twenty-two to twenty-six feet for the wet season, June to October.

This speedily drains off to the sea. Hence it is proposed to build three great dams, thus utilizing three of the many valleys as reservoirs, an undertaking made all the easier by the stony formation, which does away with the necessity of artificial floors in the proposed reservoirs.

How steep the approach is appears from the fact that there will be a descent of 1,734 feet in less than two and one-half miles. At the base of the mountains will be a great power station, from which the electricity generated will be transmitted to Bombay and other points. The largest dam will be ninety-five feet high and 8,000 feet long; the second will have a length of 4,500 feet and the third of 2,640 feet.—New York Evening Post.

**Expert Opinion.**  
Dolly—What makes you think she is such an awful gossip?  
Madge—She told me all the things I asked her about.—Smart Set.

**ROMANS USED SAFETY PINS.**

**Collar Button Among the Artifacts Found in Ancient Tombs.**  
Every now and then it is discovered that some extremely "modern" invention is in reality exceedingly old. For example, the safety pin, far from being a novelty or even of recent origin, is decidedly ancient—a fact made certain by the finding of a great many such pins, fashioned exactly like those of today, in old Roman and Etruscan tombs, dating back to a period a good deal earlier than the birth of Christ.  
The safety pin in truth was an article of common use in Italy long before the Roman empire attained the height of its glory. Some of them were exactly like those of today, utilizing the familiar principle of coiled spring and catch, but the material of which they were made seems always to have been bronze. They took on a development, however, far more remarkable than our modern safety pins, many of them being quite large affairs, ten inches or so in length and hollow, as if designed to be attached to the gown in front and possibly to contain something or other—conceivably flowers. Not infrequently they were ornamented with gems.  
Another ancient invention was the collar stud. It is true that the ancient Romans did not use buttons to fasten their garments, but for this very reason safety pins were more urgently required, and the latter seem to have been supplemented by studs of bronze, which were in shape exactly like those of today. Of course, people in those times wore no collars, but the little contrivance in question was utilized in other ways. Probably—and indeed the assumption is not a rash one—it had in that early epoch the same habit as now of rolling under a piece of furniture on slight provocation for the purpose of eluding observation and pursuit, with the usual perversity of inanimate objects.—Scientific American.

**"MR. EDWARD."**

In 1883 the Prince of Wales was much interested in the creation and organization of the College of Music in London. He caused it to be intimated to the late Sir Henry Irving that it would show the interest of another and allied branch of art in the undertaking if the dramatic artists would give a benefit for the new college. The prince even suggested that "Robert Macaire" would do excellently for the occasion, with an all-star cast.  
Of course Irving was delighted to help, and the result was a splendid performance, at which the Prince and Princesses of Wales attended, and a sum of more than one thousand pounds was turned over to the college—the entire receipts. Irving himself, says Mr. Bram Stoker in his "Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving," paid all the expenses.  
In the first year of its working, when the class for dramatic study was organized, Irving was asked by the directorate to examine it, which he did cheerfully, and in due time made his report. Soon afterward he received a letter of thanks for his services.  
Although quite formal, it was a most genial and kindly letter, and to the signature was appended "chairman." In acknowledging it to Sir George Grove, the director of the college, Irving said what a pleasure it had been to him to be an examiner, and assured Sir George that he would gladly hold his services at the disposal of the college. He added: "By the way, who is our genial friend, Mr. Edward, chairman? I do not think I have met him."  
He got a horrified letter sent by messenger from Sir George, explaining that the signature was that of "Albert Edward"—then Prince of Wales, now his majesty, Edward VII.

**In the Surface Car.**

A fat Irishwoman, bearing a number of bundles, entered a crowded street car. The only semblance of a seat she could find was a small space at the right of a smartly dressed youth. Into this space, sufficient only for an individual of ordinary size, the fleshy Irishwoman squeezed herself, much to the annoyance of the youth.  
After a moment or so the Irishwoman produced a cheese sandwich, which she proceeded to devour with every evidence of relish.

At this the youth gave her a look of ineffable disgust and drew the skirts of his frock coat closer to him.

"I suppose, me lad," good-naturedly said the woman, "that ye'd prayfer to have a gentleman sittin' next to ye."  
"I certainly would," snapped the youngster.

"So would I," calmly responded the fat person.—Exchange.

**"Deprived of His See."**  
As an example of the ability of the juvenile scholar to evolve an unexpected meaning from his text, a correspondent relates that the following question was put to a history class: "What misfortune then happened to Bishop Odo?" The reply came quite readily, "He went blind." An explanation was demanded, and the genius brought up the text book. "There, sir," triumphantly, "the book says so." The sentence indicated by an ink stained digit read, "Odo was deprived of his see."—London Spectator.

**First Insurance Company, 1609.** The Society of Assurance for Widows and Orphans was the first known life insurance company and was established in London in 1629.

Education is a great thing, no doubt, but the best housekeepers didn't get their knowledge out of books.

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