

Topics of the Times

What is wanted is wreckless rail-roading, not reckless railroading.

That dark spot on this planet at which the observers on Mars are gazing in wonder is Pittsburg.

America grows richer by \$10,000,000 a day. Seventy-eighths of the people naturally have to be content with coppers.

A New York alderman has been caught taking money. The science of the thing is to take the money and not get caught.

British Columbia has a politician named Frost. Isn't he the man to succeed Lieut.-Governor Snowball, of New Brunswick when he resigns?

Perhaps it is a matter of no significance, but it is a fact, that railroad wrecks have been rapidly increasing since the passes were shut off.

Probably Senator Beveridge first became opposed to child labor when he was a small boy and had to follow the plow when he wanted to go fishing.

An Ohio man has been sent to prison for six years because he has thirteen wives. He ought to have known enough to stop when he had a dozen.

"There are 13,000,000 men in this country available for military service." And twice as many who could stay at home and criticize those in the field.

Several members of young Mr. Rockefeller's Bible class seem to take great delight in getting up in meeting and telling him what they think of his father.

Count Boni wants Mme. Gould to return to him and overlook the past. He specifies that she is expected, in case she returns, to be accompanied by her checkbook.

Those boys who accidentally hit the Kaiser with a snowball as he was passing have reason to be thankful that the result of the recent election left him in high good humor.

The crop of "hitherto unpublished portraits of Lincoln" is growing larger every year. How in the world did he ever find time to do any work, when he had his picture taken so often?

"Knowledge is the sunrise of life and the glowing sunset of hope," says the Baltimore American. And even at noonday some people are in no danger of suffering from sunstroke on that account.

Mme. Melba now charges a dollar for writing her autograph. Being a woman she probably has a good deal of satisfaction when writing a check for the payment of a \$50 debt in making it out for \$40, letting her autograph stand for the balance.

During the year 1906 property in the United States to the value of more than half a billion dollars was destroyed by fire. Of course this enormous total, which is said never to have been equaled in any country, at any time, was due in large part to the San Francisco disaster. Nevertheless, the executive officer of the International Society of Building Inspectors has declared that nine-tenths of the national fire loss is preventable.

A company which manufactures parlor cars and sleeping cars is to erect a plant for the building of cars constructed entirely of metal. The new cars will be stronger than those of the old type, and in railroad accidents will not take fire. The question rises whether those who cannot afford seats in parlor cars, but must ride in common coaches, are not entitled to equally safe vehicles. In the good time coming every car and the entire railroad equipment will be as good as human skill can make it.

A party of operating officials of a railway running out of Cleveland formed themselves into a surprise party the other night and visited a neighboring town to see whether engineers were paying proper attention to the signals. The result was illuminating. According to the published reports the inspectors turned out the lights intended to show that the track was clear, and in spite of the warning thus given twenty-four trains out of twenty-five rushed by, only one stopping to investigate what was wrong. Of four passenger trains only two even slackened speed on seeing the signal which meant danger ahead. The road in question is one of the best and most efficiently operated in the country, and if such a state of things can exist on it what is the condition on other lines less completely equipped and less carefully operated?

We think of the savage tribe as living outdoors, and free from the restraints which come with civilization—the garment, the house and the cook. But there is a barbarian which spends its winters in huts and holes from which every breath of fresh air is shut out, and where the stifling atmosphere is heavy with "old shapes of foul disease." Akin to the life of the hut and the slum is the life of the home of whatever grade where cold is dreaded

more than bad air. The farm house, the millionaire's palace and the village grocery alike shelter miserable sinners against nature's laws. The crusade against the ravages of consumption has awakened thousands to the fact that the need for pure air is more imperative even than the need for good food, although it speaks with a less insistent voice. But hundreds of thousands of housewives yet need to learn the danger of the comfortable double window and the air-tight stove, and the healing power of pure, cold air, steeped in God's own sunshine. A woman who was known as the queen of the Gypsies died recently in England. She was of great age and amazing vigor, and a real "character" in her reserve and her hatred of modern conditions. She seldom talked, but it was known that she considered education as rubbish, houses as no better than prisons, and the persons who died in them as the victims of their own effeminacy. In a phrase both telling and memorable, she boasted herself "free from the tyranny of the roof." That is truly a noble freedom and one which every wise woman may covet for herself and her children. Perhaps another hundred years may see the stuffy bedroom everywhere supplanted by the airy porch, and find civilized man again seeping under the sky.

As a pleasant illustration of the value of the expert trade, attention may be called to the suit instituted in New York by a distinguished alienist for payment of \$6,500 balance of a \$23,500 bill for expert testimony. The defendant, a wealthy widow, demurs on the ground that the services were not worth the price. In view of all circumstances the wonder grows that so few men engage in the profitable business of what may be called experting. Why should a man toil and drudge for a mere livelihood when, with a fine appearance, a modicum of practical experience, and the acquisition of impressive technical terms, he can reap a much richer harvest? If a will involving the distribution of a large estate is to be broken on the ground that the maker was feeble minded, the expert appears ready to throw the weight of his testimony in the direction desired. If a rich man or a rich man's son is in danger of the law through reason of a serious infraction of the statutes, along comes the expert to prove conclusively that the shape of his head, the wildness of his eye, or some eccentricities of conduct demonstrate derangement of his mental faculties. The amount of compensation depends, of course, on the wealth of the parties interested. But, inasmuch as such expert testimony is sought chiefly by those who have the willingness and the wealth to pay, the compensation is usually of the most generous nature. The learned gentleman who receives \$17,000 for a deposition, or even for an hour agreeably spent on the witness stand, has excellent reason to be in love with his profession and to recommend it to those who are discontented with their humbler pursuits. Why he should go to law for the paltry sum of \$6,500 when he could more profitably improve his time in seeking another client is not so clear.

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America is Music-Mad. America is going to the extreme in music, so far as financial extravagance is concerned. According to conservative estimates, the people of this country will spend ten million dollars on this form of amusement between November, 1906, and April, 1907. Included in this estimate is only the better class of music, the comic opera, musical comedies and so-called "attractions" of this type not being considered at all. America has become music-mad in its desire to hear music that it does not always understand, and musicians whom it does not always value rightly. A musical obsession has taken hold of the people, and, having the necessary money to pay the demands of those wise enough to realize the extent of this new-born craze, we are now hearing the best there is in music at Europe's artistic expense. As a matter of fact, there were not twenty really first-class singers and instrumentalists left in Europe on December first, for the "almighty dollar" is a patent attraction to even so impractical a being as the average musician.—Success Magazine.

All Wasted. "I wonder," said the man of a statistical turn, "how much powder is destroyed daily in useless salutes." "There must be a lot," said the frivolous girl, "but I suppose women will go on kissing one another just the same."—New Yorker.

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