

Topics of the Times

Mark Twain died a millionaire. It pays to be cheerful.

A good garden and a well-kept yard are sure indications of thrift in the home.

In running a school or in curing disease the fresh air is immeasurably better than hot air.

It is rumored that the Nicaraguan naval forces will be doubled by the enlisting of another sailor.

Five suspected crooks have been shot to death in Chicago this season. Prudent crooks will avoid being suspected.

The idea of putting in meters to measure telephone talk is good, but will it be possible to devise meters that will stand the strain?

The man who takes an upper berth hereafter will be under the terrible suspicion of traveling "on the cheap." This will make the top bed more unpopular than ever.

A poor woman in St. Louis put all her money in the oven, and then, forgetting what she had done, made a fire in the stove. But it was silver money, and wasn't hurt a bit.

The nation paid out \$16,000,000 for tuberculosis last year. Fresh air comes high, but we must have it. No one has yet suggested a patrolman to go about smashing in all closed bedroom windows.

Congress has had some stormy sessions this spring, but inkstands have not yet taken the place of arguments. The Hungarian parliament must be a sight for laundrymen to rejoice over after one of its political crises.

A New York man 85 years of age has refused to enter a home for old people because his mother-in-law, aged 115, is an inmate of the institution. We declare without fear of successful contradiction that this is carrying prejudice against the mother-in-law too far.

A surgical operation was performed on the head of a California boy recently for the purpose of curing him of evil tendencies. It is reported to have been a failure. There may still be a chance, though. Perhaps an operation with a serviceable slipper would have the desired effect.

Professor Jespersen, who, although a Dane, knows more about the English language than most of those who speak it by inheritance, insists that "It is me" has become correct through usage. This will send cold shivers down the backs of strict grammarians; and yet do not the precise and logical Frenchmen say, "C'est moi?"

The desirability of the United States owning its embassy buildings in foreign capitals was again emphasized when the American ambassador to Germany was forced to vacate his Berlin house, at the height of the social season, because it had been let to a permanent tenant. It is not in accordance with the dignity of this country that its ambassador should be at the mercy of a foreign landlord.

Floating debts are familiar to treasurers of churches and other societies; all of us have floating ribs; a floating population is the joy of hotel proprietors; and now Alaska is to learn what a floating judiciary is like. The United States court for the district is to take possession of a steamer this summer and make a cruise along two thousand miles of the coast, administering justice as it goes. If it were not for the fact that the justice administered will be well grounded and anchored in the federal statutes, there might be some dissatisfaction with the prospects of a judiciary all at sea.

The familiar formula which tells us that a woman is as old as she looks goes on to advise us that a man is as old as he feels. How old, then, are some of our modern boys? What is the real age of a college student of 11 who deals in the fourth dimension and in flights to Mars? What is the real age reached by a boy who begins on the stock market at 16 and, compressing a lifetime into a single year, gives up this restless, anxious being at 17, a suicide? Many parents are troubled by backward boys who cannot show results to reward parental sacrifices, or by heedless boys who ignore the sacrifices altogether. But dull boys and thoughtless boys may cause less anxiety and distress than precocious boys. Such a one was George Dabo, who, forced to maturity and fortune in the Wall street hot-house and chafing under restraint put upon him by his physicians, sent a bullet into his head and so left the "floor." Most fathers and mothers will

prefer to take their chances with the normal boy, however trying certain of his stages may be. Even the slow one may wrest from life what he may have been unable to extract from books. Even the careless selfish one may reach, by slow process or by sudden shock, some notion of the world and of his place in it. It is trying when one's offspring seems to be loitering through some his most vital years with few thoughts beyond haberdashery, calf-love, sport and fraternity pins; but it is more trying still when he runs through thirty years in seventeen and ends in disgrace a career that should just be beginning in hope. The real age of an organism is determined by its experiences. The precocity so often developed by the stimulus of modern living merely cuts from one end of a career what is saved at the other.

A British scientist, insisting that the first born of the family is rarely the best in quality and is likely to have defects the younger children escape, argues that the Peers should be selected from all the children and not sit in the House of Lords by virtue of being the first-born. This serves to recall a peculiarity of English nobility which does not obtain upon the Continent. Only the eldest born of an English peer's family is noble. Even the second son of a duke is by law a commoner and bears only the courtesy of Lord, his children not being accorded even that. Winston Churchill, although the son of Lord Randolph Churchill, a younger son of a Duke of Marlborough, is plain Mr. Churchill. Even the blood royal in England carries no nobility to the third generation. The Duke of Connaught's second son, although a Prince by courtesy and likely to be made a Peer, would nevertheless be a commoner in law and his children would of themselves possess even no courtesy titles. Elsewhere in Europe all the children are nobles. In France under the ancien regime if a count had ten sons, each was a noble in law. So in Germany. Prince Bismarck had two sons and a daughter. The elder became Prince von Bismarck, the younger was Count Wilhelm von Bismarck, the daughter Countess von Bismarck. This legal and social peculiarity has had much effect upon English history. It prevented any such indurated caste as obtains upon the Continent. The easy transition downward from nobility to commonalty facilitated an equal ease in transition upward from commonalty to nobility, with the consequence that the House of Lords has been continuously renewed with large quantities of fresh blood ever since the Wars of the Roses so nearly exterminated the old Norman barons. Thus the English law of primogeniture, which to-day we regard as a relic of feudalism, an absurdity and a wrongful privilege, represented in time past an amelioration and in a sense an exemption from the principle of caste that oppresses the Continent even to-day. Compared with the nobiliary principles of Germany and Austria, the English primogeniture is democratic.

WOOD IN USED AIRSHIPS.

Two Reasons Why It Is Preferred by Builders of New Dirigible.

The new dirigible designed by Prof. Schutte of Dantzig is now in the course of construction at Rheinau, near Mannheim. The wooden framework is already nearly complete. Wood has been used in preference to metal for two reasons, the *Kölnische Zeitung* says, to save weight and to minimize troublesome atmospheric electrical phenomena.

The airship is to be somewhat larger than the last Zeppelin. The balloon proper is 138 meters long and its greatest diameter is 17 meters. It is cigar-shaped, having its maximum thickness in the first third of its length and then gently tapering behind. This form is said to offer a minimum resistance to the wind.

The wood is prepared in small sections free from knots a few millimeters in thickness. The sections are glued over one another crosswise to form thin, narrow but extremely strong planks. The whole framework will be concealed from view by the outer covering of the balloon. There will be eleven inner balloons, just as in the Zeppelin.

The steering gear will be placed immediately below the balloon and consist of a rudder governing lateral movements and two elevating rudders. The two propellers will be directly connected with the motors in the car. Each propeller shaft will be driven by two motors. The motors will be able to develop in all 600 horse power. The car is to be so suspended that in the air it will be rigidly connected to the framework of the balloon, but as soon as it touches the ground the connections will become slack, thus taking off part of the weight and guarding the body of the balloon from injury by shocks.

Don't worry if you can't always have your own way. Sooner or later every man bumps up against a stone wall.

In some families you are always placed in the position of having to "take sides."

LONG TRAVEL FOR MAIL

Where Letters Are Carried 290 Miles in Order to Get Across a 10-Foot Hall.

POSTOFFICE ON THE BORDER.

Beebe Plain, Vt., and Beebe Plain, Que., Joint Owners of a Peculiar Institution.

The queerest postoffice in North America is probably located here, where a simple wooden building shelters the offices of two countries, a Beebe Plain (Vt.) correspondent says. The structure is cut diagonally by the Canada line, being almost equally divided by the imaginary boundary. The northern half contains the postoffice of Beebe Plain, Que., and the southern half the office of Beebe Plain, Vt. They are separated only by a ten-foot corridor, using this passageway and the same door in common. George H. House, postmaster, looks after the mail of the two offices. As a result of red tape in the postal regulations regarding the transfer of mails, a letter mailed at the Vermont office for the Canadian office across the hall travels 290 miles before delivery.

Previous to 1899 the United States postoffice was located in a dwelling house and the Canadian office in a store. In neither case was the service wholly satisfactory, but it seemed to be the best arrangement that could be made. However, in 1899 the idea was conceived of utilizing the old stone store, located right on the line, for both offices, and finally the present arrangement was perfected so that a most satisfactory service has been provided.

Patrons of the double postoffice can do their postoffice business by making one call. Two doors, one on each side of the line, open into the lobby. The distance between the postoffice boxes of the two countries is ten feet, the international boundary line running through the space between the two sets of boxes. If a letter is by mistake dropped into the wrong letter box, it is passed to the right office and sent on its way.

A letter posted at Beebe Plain, Vt., for Beebe Plain, Canada, will go south on the Boston & Maine railroad from Beebe Junction, Vt., to White River Junction, 111 miles on the same route, and then continues on its way to Sherbrooke, P. Q., 34 miles farther. There it is again transferred and returns to Beebe Plain, P. Q.

That is, after having a ride of 24 hours and going 290 miles, it arrives at its destination, ten feet from where it started.

Or, perhaps, it goes on another train south on the Boston & Maine to Wells River, Vt., 80 miles. There it is transferred and goes back via Beebe Junction to Sherbrooke, P. Q., 114 miles, to be transferred again and returns to the building it started from 32 hours before. It has traveled 228 miles.

The village has a population of about 100 on the Vermont side and about 600 on the Canadian side. All of the places of business are on the Canada side, so most of the patrons of the office are Canadians, but they are very willing to avail themselves of the unique arrangement and use either office that will give the best results.

The "line" itself is quite narrow here—in fact, it is so narrow that it cannot be seen except where the iron posts appear. Some persons have stood in one country and written their postcards or letters in the other.

WEAVERS OF NEW YORK.

Ancient Aubusson Looms Making Tapestry in Manhattan Island.

The looms we visited are new in the city of Gotham. They are tapestry looms of a pattern unchanged after centuries of use. And the art of the weaver of these fabrics, we are told, is far too ancient for record.

The art we beheld is almost absolutely unaltered. The looms are installed in a studio place that was once a palatial stable, says Philip Verrill Mighels in Harper's. They are copies of what are known to the craft as the Aubusson looms of France. The men engaged in making tapestries upon this old device are foreign craftsmen, trained to their guild and wondrously skilled in the art.

It provided a singular sensation to leave the busy, noisy thoroughfare of modernity and ascend to that clavier of looms so allied to the past. There were two great apartments devoted to this enginery of beauty. Enginery seems the only adequate word. The looms we saw are combinations of huge wooden frameworks, beam-like levers, twining ropes and tightening devices, the whole resembling those monstrous stone-heaving catapults inseparable from ancient war.

Unlike the tapestry looms at the Gobelins workshops in Paris, these are made to stretch the warp horizontally,

about waist high to a man. At the rear of each loom, on a slanted bench, sit the weavers who work the design. Beneath the warp, and readily visible through its many tight-stretched strands, the pattern lies close underhand. It is drawn on a monster sheet of paper and colored with painstaking skill. Above it bend the weavers of the cloth, each softly supported with pillows. One pillow to sit on and one on which to lean, each workman adjusts to his needs. His colors (the wools) are wound on spools, and resemble a heap of large-sized, brightly colored and differently hued caterpillars, ready to spin out their substance. There are frequently as many as twenty or thirty of these shuttles beneath one workman's hands.

It is wonderful and utterly bewildering to see these craftsmen weave. Their hands out-machine a machine as they grasp at the warp, to lift two, four, five or any number of strands, shoot a bobbin in and out, and make a singular tie, to drop that particular caterpillar, clutch up another, tie in its thread, and pounce upon a third or fourth, and return, perhaps, to number one. They keep those red, green, gold and purple caterpillars in a constant state of agitation. They grasp at the warp and play in a strand and finger new strings, as if the cords were the wires of some silent harp on which they play a ceaseless composition that expresses itself in color. Yet fast as their fingers seem to play upon this soundless instrument, it is slow, hard toil with eyes and hands to sit in those units of the scheme.

POPULAR SCIENCE

An electric elevator has been installed in the stairway which leads to the cupola of St. Peter's cathedral in Rome. The elevator has a capacity for carrying ten persons. It bears an appropriate Latin inscription.

Peter the Great, Russia's famous czar, when he was staying in England, had a particular liking for the companionship of Halley, after whom the comet is named. After carousing with him at Deptford one evening Peter wheeled the astronomer in a barrow through a yew hedge and did such damage that he had to pay handsome compensation to John Evelyn, the owner.

Ingenious Germans have experimented successfully with the fiber of the kapok or "silk cotton" tree of tropical Africa and Asia, and believe they have a useful substitute for cotton. If that is the case, they will have furnished additional proof that no substance, however valuable, is absolutely indispensable to man. Cotton long seemed to be almost so, and there are few things without which we should get on so badly, if there were nothing else to which to turn.

It is proposed to establish a wireless telegraph station at the meteorological observatory on Mount Mirador in the Philippines, to give warning of typhoons to vessels in the China sea, and points along the China coast. A similar station will probably be established later at Santo Domingo de Basco on the island of Bata, for communicating information of the presence of typhoons in that vicinity to the headquarters of the Philippine weather bureau at Manila.

Dr. G. F. Becker, discussing the possibility that petroleum may be derived from carbids of iron or other metals, points out that Bauer's map of magnetic declination in the United States "proved" that petroleum is intimately associated with magnetic disturbances similar to those arising from the neighborhood of minerals possessing sensible magnetic attraction, and he adds that, henceforth, no geological theory of petroleum will be acceptable which does not explain this association. A writer in Nature remarks that if these conclusions are confirmed, a new and important sphere of usefulness for magnetic surveys will be opened.

Modern chemistry enables man to make over some of the most useful metals very much at his will, and greatly to his profit. Dr. W. Rosenhain, in England, recently made a report on the properties of new alloys of copper, aluminum and manganese, which show remarkable peculiarities. An alloy of 88 per cent copper, 9.99 per cent aluminum and 2.01 per cent manganese showed enormous tensile strength, a cold-drawn bar having a yield of 40.88 tons per square inch, and an ultimate stress of 52.08 tons per square inch. Another alloy is so hard that it can take a cutting edge sharp enough to sharpen a leadpencil. The British Admiralty is experimenting with these alloys to determine their resistance to corrosion in seawater.

Wears the Unmentionables.

Jack—Who was the best man at your wedding?

Tom—My wife; but I didn't know it.—Boston Evening Transcript.

Even a truthful man is occasionally guilty of exaggeration.

THINGS WORTH KNOWING.

Only 5 1/2 per cent of the total area of the world is tillable.

The mines of Butte, Mont., have a combined pay roll of \$3,000,000 a year.

The Argentine Legislature is considering the construction of underground railways for Buenos Ayres.

It is just being realized that the Trans-Siberian Railroad was a poor job from an engineering standpoint.

The observed rate for the sound of "a" in "great" is 420, and for the sound of "a" in "ma," 770 waves a second.

The telephone and telegraph wires of the United States would encircle the earth at the equator more than 600 times.

To prevent the alteration of checks or other valuable papers an inventive genius has brought out an electric apparatus which burns tiny holes in the paper as the inscription is written.

Electricity has at last been applied to the Teddy bear, a Maryland man having patented one that opens its jaws and flashes lights from its eyes, nose and mouth, when a battery in its interior is pressed.

The work on the Jungfrau Railway is progressing so rapidly that it will probably be opened next year to Jungfrau Joch, where a station and hotel accommodating 200 persons have been hewn out of the solid rock.

Though hydrophobia has been stamped out of Britain, it is still rampant in Germany, where every year over 2,500 dogs and cats afflicted with the disease are destroyed.

A patent on a horseshoe designed to prevent the stumbling of horses was granted in Panama four years ago.

FASHION HINTS



One of the prettiest models for a dainty little afternoon gown of batiste, is shown above.

The wee yoke is of fine ecru lace, the batiste being of that color, and there's just a touch of light blue in the embroidery.

"A Mite Too Frying."

Bushby had many natural advantages and beauties, but Mrs. Abner Crane, who was a brief sojourner in the place, having been there only a matter of ten years or so, never appreciated it. "She was aching to get back to Nashua the whole enduring time," said one of Mrs. Crane's Bushby neighbors, "and I was glad to see her go, feeling as she did."

"What was it she didn't like about Bushby?" asked one of the summer residents, curiously.

"She said she 'didn't get the news of the day quick enough to suit her,'" quoted the neighbor, with as near an imitation of Mrs. Crane's air as she could manage.

"As I said to my Asy, what on earth she wanted more than we have in the way of news-spreaders here, I don't know."

"When you consider that there are five telephones in town, a grocery wagon driven by Lucy Grant's boy twice a week, Lucy Grant herself to sew for everybody in town by the day, and all taking milk from Jed Kimball, I don't know how we could be any better fixed. I call anybody that wants more news 'o the day than Bushby folks get a mite too prying myself."