

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Miscellaneous and News Notes.

Japan is sleeping these times with one eye open.

A Maine ice company has been sold for \$10,000,000. Cool sum.

The thrashing machine trust has fallen through. It went against the grain.

Talking of eloquence, is a good command of miscellaneous language preferable to a proper control of one tongue?

The horrible thought arises that but for the X-rays we should never have discovered the man-who-swallows-his-false-teeth.

A new century may justify the other kind, but as a delightful form of the new woman a great deal can be said of a girl baby.

Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett has married a man of half her own age. It is evident that she is a confirmed victim of the Little Lord Fauntleroy habit.

A Philadelphia woman trained a microscope on her walking skirt and saw 200,000 germs. Perhaps she had accidentally spilled some drinking water on it.

An Eastern lecturer was compelled to cancel an engagement because he was afflicted with inflammation of the ear. Usually it is the hearers that suffer.

The young woman who married for a joke claims to have discovered that a husband is not a choice bit of delicate humor. On the contrary, he is a serious serial.

It costs \$2 to take a bath at Cape Nome, but little complaint comes from there on that account. Comparatively few of the people up there have found it out as yet.

One Joseph Zotique La Jole, a Canadian trapper, claims to have found the north pole. There is a Munchausen flavor to Joseph's narrative. He is probably in training for a job in a dime museum.

How soon the electric car has become "the carriage of the people!" An official report says that in Massachusetts there is one thousand seven hundred and thirty-five miles of street railway, and that only four miles of track is now traversed by horses.

When field guns are made that will carry fifteen miles the chances are that the combatants will take up position sixteen miles apart. The men who fought at Bunker Kojpe got too close, and a large proportion of them were unable to trek when the battle was over.

Mrs. Hetty Green, the richest woman in the United States, has officially announced that she does not want her daughter to marry a Spanish duke. She would much prefer to become mother-in-law to "a bright and wide-awake newspaper man." As an example of "jolly," this puts Hetty in an unapproachable class by herself—a sort of feminine Petronous, as it were.

What etymological excuse is there for the substitution of "locomobile" for "automobile" as a name for a horseless vehicle? Automobile, though not an exact designation, closely approaches it. The word means that the vehicle runs itself—that is, that it is independent of attached power. Locomobile doesn't mean anything in particular. It is not as good a word as locomotive, which is likewise an inexact designation. Therefore, if we are to use either of the built-up names automobile is the better. But why run to Latinized appellations at all? Why not stick to "horseless carriage"—or truck or wagon—which is ordinary English and understood by everybody?

The last two years have seen about a dozen phenomenal successes in novel-writing. Each of the successful novels has quickly run into the hundreds of thousands. Yet not one of them is really a great novel. Not one of them compares in quality or permanence with "Vanity Fair," or "Pendennis," or "My Novel," or "What Will He Do with It?" or "The Newcomes," or "The Virginians," or "Gil Blas," or "Captain Fracasse," or "The Nabob," or "David Copperfield," or "Adam Bede," or "Romola." In this judgment we are sure that every critic and every intelligent reader will agree. What, then, does the phenomenal success of these novels mean? What can it mean except that the public schools and the newspapers of this country have extraordinarily increased the numbers of the "reading public," and that bright and well-constructed novels find a wider constituency than any books commanded a few years ago.

A young freshman, while waiting one day last autumn for a room to be assigned to her in a college dormitory, picked up an old newspaper and read in it an editorial upon escape from burning buildings. The suggestion was there made that by once thinking out a plan of action for an emergency, the action itself would become somewhat mechanical. The girl laughingly said to herself that an opera-cloak would be a good thing to have near in case of fire by night. When she unpacked her trunk, her warm evening gown was given a hook near the closet door. She decided also that her night slippers might reasonably be kept under the bed. A few weeks ago, on a bitterly cold night, that very dormitory burned to the ground. The young girl, aroused from sound sleep by the alarm, had only time to seize her cloak and slippers and flee for her life. Not another of her belongings was saved. Having to run some distance for shelter, the wraps saved the girl from an exposure which on such a night might have been fatal.

Someone in London feels so strongly

official is to be issued monthly as an organ for the anti. The second number comes out with nine challenges or problems which it would be pleased to have the vegetarians answer. Perhaps the most important one is a defiance to produce the names of fifty consistent vegetarians, living or dead, conspicuous for their vitality. The list may begin with Pythagoras and comprise anyone in the more than twenty-five centuries since his decease. Then there is the defiance to produce the names of twenty vegetarians besides G. Bernard Shaw famous for their beauty. No limit as to time or place is imposed in this proposition. Then it is demanded, "What would Nansen have done with only vegetarian diet permissible in his equipment for his polar expeditions?" And how would vegetarians have provisioned Columbus' vessel? Flanking all these defiances and inquiries are letters from any number of actresses famous for good looks as well as ability testifying that they are firm believers in the joys and sustenance to be found in a mixed diet, with small birds not too scarce. The most interesting thing about all this is that vegetarianism has reached such proportions that those who for reasons best known to themselves oppose it think it advisable to mobilize.

Many of the good, old, biblical injunctions are being questioned to an alarming extent, and Dr. Pentecost's suggestion that to be led into temptation is a better ordeal for the soul than forever to remain untested will cause some consternation among the godly-minded. This is, of course, the old Browning theory, the belief in growth through sin, and that evil is but a step towards the good. Of course, these are all well as theories, but to apply them might be a dangerous experiment. Yet sometimes there is borne in upon one the awful conviction that it is the godly-goody people who are responsible for much of the evil of the world, who unwittingly, by the example of their own narrow, arid lives, drive others to the opposite extreme. A story is told of how Thoreau's mother, a gayly-dressed lady of 70, went to call upon Emerson's aunt, an austere maiden of 84, and how when the former rose to go the prim hostess remarked: "Perhaps you noticed, Mrs. Thoreau, that I closed my eyes during your call. I did so because I did not wish to look on the ribbons you are wearing, so unsuitable for a child of God and a person of your years." Was not this enough to drive a woman of spirit into the most violent ribbon excesses? But this is the attitude of many would-be reformers, of many misguided preachers. They look at the sinner with mentally closed eyes, and wishing to show him the folly of wearing ribbons produce just the opposite result. In the final estimate of erring mortals it will not be the negative virtues that will count for most, and individuals will not be applauded for refraining from sins that they had no temptation to commit. On the contrary, perhaps, a man who has broken all the moral laws may have brought up his general average by innumerable "unremembered acts of kindness and of love" and proved himself a man for "a" that and "a" that. This is not arguing in favor of evil; it is merely demanding that judges should not close their eyes because of ribbons, but should try to discover if there is not something under these furbelows. Why should not grown people be treated in the same charitable way that the new educational theories demand the child shall be treated? You must not say "don't" to a child, but turn his activity for evil into the right direction. It is useless to say, "Don't go to the degenerates," but it is possible to make the regenerate more attractive. The reader who revolts against the wishy-washy literature of moralists may turn to demoralizing French novels as an agreeable relief, but if he chances upon Meredith and Barrie he may find the most elemental portrayal of passion of the Frenchman tame in comparison with the pliant morality of the English writer. It is perhaps well to be led into temptation—and it is still better to be delivered from evil, but both the leading and the deliverance must be wisely accomplished.

Wild Fowl Attack a Light.
One of the keepers of the Hog Island light on the Virginia coast relates a remarkable experience with wild fowls at that light on the night of Feb. 22. Between 7 and 8:30 p. m. the watch on duty was aroused by the "honking" of wild geese and brant, accompanied by the crash of breaking glass. He hastily summoned the other keepers, who responded with shotguns. They opened fire on the bewildered birds with every gun. The battle lasted for an hour and a half. The guns got so hot that it was dangerous to use them and the shoulders of the men became sore from the recoil.

The supply of ammunition gave out and the light ended. In the morning there were found 268 dead brant, geese and ducks at the foot of the tower. On the following Saturday morning the tower was again attacked by the birds. There being no stock of cartridges on the island, the guns were useless, but the keepers fought with sticks and captured 150 fowls, when a flock, apparently containing thousands, rushed upon them. They were compelled to seek shelter within the tower. So powerful was the flight of the frightened geese that the wire screens were penetrated, the light in the watchroom extinguished, and the panes in three windows destroyed. These fowls had taken wing because of the severe weather prevailing upon their feeding grounds and were blinded by the intense glare of the powerful light in the top of the tower.

Hog Island light marks one of the most dangerous shoals on the Virginia coast. It is an iron tower and stands 180 feet above mean high water. It is a first-class light and can be seen from the bridge of a steamer a distance of about twenty-five miles.

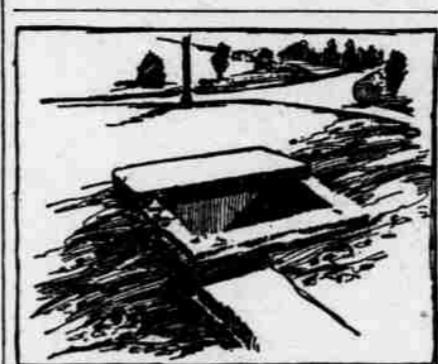
Duties.
He—it is a woman's duty to be beautiful, if she can.
She—it is a man's duty to make her think she is whether she is or not.—Indianapolis Press.

When a man wants to advertise his mine, he says that the Standard Oil people are looking at it, with a view to buying the mine.

NO REST FOR LINCOLN.

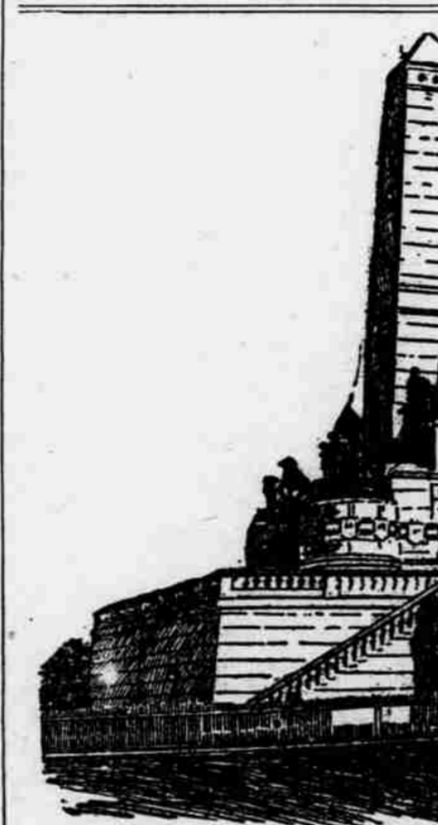
Remains of the Martyred President in a New Abode.

Fate seems to have denied rest to the great emancipator even in death. When the body of Abraham Lincoln was taken to a temporary vault in Oak Ridge cemetery, at Springfield, Ill., recently, it marked the eleventh removal of the remains of the martyred President. For thirty-five years the metallic casket has been shifted hither and thither to meet the exigencies of time and change. The following table gives



TEMPORARY VAULT IN OAK RIDGE.

the history of the unquiet remains of Lincoln, from the time of his death thirty-five years ago:
Died in a house near Ford's Theater, Washington, in which he was assassinated, April 14, 1865.
Removed to White House.
Removed to Capitol Building.
Removed to funeral car.
Removed to Capitol Building, Springfield, Ill.
Removed to receiving vault, Oak Ridge cemetery.
Removed to temporary vault.
Removed to sarcophagus, Lincoln monument.



THE LINCOLN MONUMENT AT SPRINGFIELD.

Removed to space between walls.
Removed to bed of cement.
Removed to temporary vault.
For several years the Lincoln monument at Springfield has steadily fallen into decay. It was completed seventeen years ago, after fifteen years of labor. Soon after it was finished the base of the knoll on which it rested began to shift. Gaping seams appeared in the masonry, and the monument, which was one of the finest in the country, has long been in danger of total collapse. Recently enough money was appropriated by the State Legislature to raze the old structure and rebuild it on a foundation which goes down thirty-five feet to bed rock. This last removal of Lincoln's remains was made necessary on account of the rebuilding of the monument. The metallic casket now rests in a crude wooden box in a temporary vault in Oak Ridge cemetery.

TO PROTECT RIFLEMEN.

British Soldiers to Carry Armor Shields of Bullet-Proof Material.

John Bull has seized upon the invention of a Chicago man—the Rev. Casimir Zeigler—and will use it in his army. Mr. Zeigler perfected a material that is bullet proof, and suggested the idea of weaving it into shields to be worn by soldiers. He presented his invention to the government and it satisfactorily met and passed all the tests



PORTABLE ARMOR SHIELD TO PROTECT RIFLEMEN.

It was regarded unpractical, however, because of its weight. It was said that rapid movements in the field were impossible to soldiers weighed down by the shields.

The material used in the manufacture of this shield was a composition, the formula for which was, of course, a secret. It was believed, however, that marble dust entered very largely into its manufacture. The new English shield is said to be similarly constructed except that it has solved the problem of weight. In aiming at lightness, impenetrability was sacrificed at first, but gradually the two requisites were secured.

The new shield is the product of a Scotchman, who, taking Zeigler's material as a foundation, has evolved a device which is said to be impervious to Mauser or Lee-Metford bullets at 400 yards, and to light machine-gun fire at 700 yards. It weighs thirteen pounds and cannot be overturned by the impact of any number of bullets. It is divided into two parts, hinged together, each weighing six and a half pounds, which can be made interchangeable.

It is intended for the use of marksmen only—not more than from 5 to 10 per cent. of the infantry. It is proposed to equip the expert riflemen of

the British army in South Africa with these shields, which will be used in the manner shown in the illustration.

WEDDING AMONG TAR HEELERS.

Shrewd Magistrate Who Did Business on a Strictly Cash Basis.

When Capt. Shaw was a Justice of the peace in a country place not far from Raleigh, N. C., while riding home late one afternoon he met a young woman and a young man who wished to be married at once. Now, the captain had never witnessed a marriage. He remembered having seen a book about the hours before with a form of marriage in it, but where it he could not remember. A less assured man would have been sorely perplexed, but not he. He lost no time in removing his hat, and ascending the split-bottomed seat of justice, remarked: "Hats off in the presence of the court." All being uncovered, he said: "I'll swear you in rust. Hold up yer right hands."

"Me, too?" asked the friend of the groom.
"Of course," said the wise captain. "All witnesses must be sworn. You and each of you solemnly swear that the evidence you shall give in this case shall be the truth, th' bull truth, an' nothin' but the truth. You, John Marvin, do solemnly swear that to the best of yer knowledge an' belief you take this yer woman ter have and ter hold for yerself, yer heirs, exekyters, administrators and assigns, for your an' their use 'n' behoof forever?"
"I do," answered the groom.
"You, Alice Ewer, take this yer man for your husband, ter hev' an' ter hold forever, and you do further swear that you are lawfully seized in fee-simple, are free from all incumbrance and hev' good right to sell, bargain and convey

to the said grantee, yerself, yer heirs, administrators and assigns?"
"I do," said the bride somewhat doubtfully.
"Well, John," said the captain, "that'll be about a dollar 'n' fifty cents."

"Are we married?" asked the other.
"Not yet, ye ain't," quoth the captain, with emphasis, "but the fees comes in here."
After some fumbling it was produced and handed over to the "court," who examined it to make sure it was all right, and then pocketed it and continued:
"Know all men by these presents, that I, Capt. Shaw, of Raleigh, N. C., being in good health and of sound and disposing mind, in consideration of a dollar 'n' fifty cents to be in hand paid, the receipt whereof is hereby acknowledged, do and by these presents have declared you man and wife during good behavior and till otherwise ordered by the court."—Utica Observer.

Cheerful Antipodean Trustbeller.
An ex-sea captain, now living in Sydney, many years ago was in charge of a ship carrying some convicts. The convicts mutinied, murdering the crew, and ordered the captain to navigate them to the islands, and, being a prudent man, he did so. When satisfied as to their course, the convicts deliberated, decided that he had behaved himself well, and put him ashore on the

first large island they came to. He was a musician, and took his violin with him. A threatening crowd of savages greeted his arrival, but Orpheus played to them till they thought him a god, brought him unlimited pigs and yams, and bowed in adoration. Finally he married the chief's daughter, succeeded him, and ruled the island for years, till a ship came in, and he sailed away.—Sidney Bulletin.

AWAY DOWN IS THE EARTH.

The deepest hole in the earth is at Schladebach, near Ketsch, Germany. It is 5,735 feet in depth and is for geological research only. The drilling was begun in 1880 and stopped six years later because the engineers were unable with their instruments to go deeper.

WOMEN MAKE GOOD PROMPTERS.

It has been discovered that the profession of prompter is more suited to women than to men, as their voices carry better across the stage, and are less audible in the auditorium.

There are lots of good women, who, when they get to heaven, will begin to watch to see if the Lord goes out night.

LAW AS INTERPRETED.

The fact that a person mortally wounded cut his own throat and hastened his death is held, in people vs. Lewis (Cal.), 45 L. R. A. 783, insufficient to relieve the person who inflicted the fatal wound of his liability.

Notes and mortgages owned by a person who is domiciled in another State, but kept within the State by an agent, are held, in New Orleans vs. Stemple, Advance Sheets U. S., p. 110, to be subject to taxation by the laws of the State in which they are held.

Guaranty of the prompt payment of a note is held, in Holm vs. Jamieson (Ill.), 45 L. R. A. 846, to be not annulled by a judgment declaring the note void for want of authority in the owner who executed it, as against one who took the note in reliance on the guaranty.

A statute retroactively vacating attachments is held, in King vs. Cross, Advance Sheets U. S., p. 31, inapplicable to attachments levied in other States at a time when by the operation of the insolvent law the insolvent had not been deprived of dominion and control over his credits.

Assessment of shares of stock in a national bank without any deduction for debts or for investments in nonassessable government bonds is held, in McHenry vs. Downer (Cal.), 45 L. R. A. 737, to be unlawful when State banks are not taxed on shares of stock, and are allowed a deduction of debts.

Constitutional provision against laws respecting the establishment of religion is held, in Bradford vs. Roberts, Advance Sheets U. S., p. 121, insufficient to condemn an appropriation by Congress of money to a hospital owned by a corporation composed of the members of a particular church or a monastic order or sisterhood therein, but subject to no visitation, supervision or control by any ecclesiastical authority whatever.

A statute compelling a county to pay three-fourths of the value of property destroyed by mob or riot, irrespective of ability or exercise of diligence to protect the property, is upheld in Chicago vs. Manhattan Cement Company (Ill.), 45 L. R. A. 848, on the ground that it is a police regulation for the better government of the State, and does not violate constitutional provisions against statutes imposing taxes upon municipal corporations for corporate purposes.

"Glencoe Modder."

One of the effects of the war in South Africa is to be found in the registers of births in the several districts of England, some very peculiar names, arising out of the Transvaal campaign, having been bestowed by patriotic but inconsiderate parents on their children. In a populous town in Lancashire, for instance, there is a little boy rejoicing in the uncommon name of "Mafeking," given him in honor of his uncle, who formed one of the garrison of that town under Colonel Baden-Powell, while in one or two instances the name "Volunteer" has been given to children as evidence of the intense interest which has been taken in the departure of the "citizen soldiers" to the front.

The names of several of the leading engagements which have up to the present been fought figure prominently in these registers, such as "Glencoe," a very popular name for a boy just now; "Dundee," "Eland" (the full name "Elandslaagte" having apparently proved too much of a mouthful), and "Belmont," the last a favorite name for girls, while one boy living near London will have cause in a few years' time to bemoan the hard fate which saddled him with the name of "Glencoe Modder." With what must be looked upon as a daring anticipation of events, a girl in North London has just been registered as "Roberts Pretoria." Speaking of Pretoria reminds one that several children already bear that name, though so far no one has had the courage to name his offspring "Bloemfontein," "Kimberley," however, has been utilized several times.

Helpmates.

Lord and Lady Roberts have always been a singularly attached couple, and during their long residence in India the great affection which obviously existed between them was often a matter of comment in Anglo-Indian society. They were constantly together, and Lady Roberts sometimes even brought her work into her husband's office, and sat with him there if no important business was being transacted. A tall, fine-looking woman, with an agreeable manner, Lady Roberts, despite her husband's high position, cares nothing for society. She shrinks from personal publicity, and has refused over and over again to be interviewed. Of Lord and Lady Roberts' six children only two now remain.

The Prisoner Was Mixed.

"Prisoner," said the Maryland Justice, as the case was closed. "You have been found guilty of stealing a pig belonging to Col. Childers. Have you anything to say before I pass sentence?"
"I has, sah," answered the prisoner, as he rose up. "It was all a mistake, Judge—all a mistake. I didn't dun reckon to steal no pig from Kurnel Childers. What I was arter was a hawg-belongin' to Mahaj Dawson, an' how dem two animals got mixed up and de constable found de meat in my cabin an' gwine to bodder me 'till I come out of 'jail an' lick de ole woman fur not keepin' better watch at de doah!"—Washington Post.

Sticks to an Ancient Custom.

The Queen (Victoria) at home is simply attired in a black dress, not always of silk, and wears a widow's cap with small lappets at the back, her silver hair plainly brushed on either side her temples. Upon her fingers are plain memorial rings, and she invariably wears a bracelet having the portrait of her latest grandchild or great-grandchild placed in it as a memento. The Queen always has a handkerchief, bordered with lace, resting in her hands as they lie folded in her lap, the survival of an ancient fashion.

Wags in New South Wales.

In New South Wales the government has fixed the minimum wages of railway laborers, at 7 shillings, or about \$1.75 a day.

Usually the harder a man works the more he earns for others.

THE LARGEST DUCK FARM.

It Is Maintained by A. E. Loomis on His Place Near Fort Dodge, Iowa.

The largest flock of ducks in the world is at the Loomis duck farm near Fort Dodge, Iowa. There are 13,000 of them. A. E. Loomis, whose extensive operations have earned for him the sobriquet of "the poultry king," has recently made a successful experiment that promises to revolutionize one branch of the poultry business. Large dealers whose energies are devoted to supplying the big cities with live poultry have experienced great difficulty in preserving the plumpness of fowls when removed into new surroundings. The refusal of the birds to eat results not only in shrinkage, effecting an immediate money loss, but makes them less marketable. After twenty years' experience in feeding fowls in large numbers for market Mr. Loomis has discovered that the ducks are the only ones that can be fed in large numbers with success.

"I have tried fattening every kind of poultry," said Mr. Loomis, "and I have never had any success with anything but ducks. Before the holidays I tried to fatten 5,000 chickens. They were bought from farmers in all parts of the country. We put them into a large in-



A LIVELY CORNER OF THE DUCK FARM.

closure and tempted them with feed by the barrel. It did not require long to see that they were shrinking every day. I soon found that they would not eat food that was greedily devoured while on the farm. Most of their time was spent on the roosts. The hens would not come down and the roosters were engaged in constant fight. The result was just as disastrous. One big gobbler that weighed thirty-six pounds when placed in the yards fell away to thirty-two pounds after being fed three days. With several thousand pounds of live turkeys at 7 cents per pound and shrinking one pound each day it does not require much figuring to show the financial futility of feeding them in large numbers for the market. All my experiments with ducks have proved different. They don't roost and seem to adjust themselves to new conditions very readily. We started with a flock of 5,000, which, proving a success, was gradually increased to its present dimensions of 13,000, that are now nearly ready for the market."

As Mr. Loomis does not breed fowls, only feeding them for market, he does not require very extensive quarters for his duck farm. A two-acre tract of ground surrounded by sheds and houses in the form of a hollow square constitutes the field of his operations. In this inclosure 13,000 ducks quack, eat corn and grow fat for dinner tables in Chicago, Philadelphia, Boston and New York. Troughs of shelled corn and water are placed at frequent intervals in the yard and two men are kept busy constantly engaged supplying the wants of the noisy fowls. One hundred bushels of shelled corn are required each day for their feeding. The large flock proves a good weather profit and on an evening previous to a change in the temperature the quack of the ducks is deafening and can be heard a mile away. When the ducks have accumulated sufficient fat to make them marketable sixty men are employed in slaughtering and dressing them for market. Some of the men become very expert in this work, one man holding a record of 182 fowls in ten hours, or one every four minutes.

FEATS OF HORSEMANSHIP.

Threading a Fine Needle While Going at a Fast Gallop.

"The greatest feat of horsemanship I ever saw performed was by a Riffian irregular cavalryman," said Capt. J. E. Rathbone, of Los Angeles, Cal. This was in reply to a story related by an ex-Confederate, who had served with Gen. J. E. B. Stuart in the valley of Virginia. The latter told how, on more than one occasion, Turner Ashby had ridden up to an opposing cavalryman, seized him around the waist, lifted him out of the saddle as if he had been a child, and taken him back on his own horse into the Confederate lines. It was agreed that this was more of a feat of strength and display of courage than horsemanship.

"I have seen Cossacks at full gallop snatch a baby from its mother's arms, toss it into the air, catch it, and repeat the performance," said Capt. Rathbone. "I once saw an Indian rider in the far West spring from his pony's bare back while the animal was moving at full gallop, pick up an arrow, and remount instantly in a standing posture. I have seen other performances all over the world, but for a neat, clever, clean-cut feat this Riffian exceeded them all, I think."

"Several of us had been at Gibraltar and found ourselves at the town of Millia on the Riffian coast. We were entertained by the Spanish commander, who did the honors finely. One morning we rode outside the town and reached a level stretch of sand, where there were a number of Riffian horsemen. They were fine-looking fellows, and attired in snow white burnouses. They were mounted on small animals, slight, but quick and wiry, of the thoroughbred Arab barb type.

"We were amused some time by their charges and evolutions. They would throw their swords and matchlocks in the air, catching them by the hilts and stocks infallibly. Finally it was announced that something of unusual interest would be accomplished. One of the men produced a needle and a piece of thread, possibly two or three feet in length. They were both handed

around for inspection. I suppose the needle was a cambric one, and the thread fifty to sixty fine. When we had fully inspected both, one of the men signified he would thread the needle. He galloped his horse down the sand about 400 yards or so. He finally wheeled his horse and remained stationary, facing us. The one who held the needle and thread waved them in his hand and rode toward the other. When he had covered about two-thirds of the distance he halted and waved his hand to the farther one. Immediately the latter spurred his horse into a gallop and came toward us at full speed. As he passed the other he took the needle and thread from his companion, bent over for a moment, and pulled up when he reached our party, holding the threaded needle triumphantly over his head."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

PORTO RICO'S PNEUMATIC FISH.

When It Appears Inflated the Young People Hasten to Marry.

With two horns on the front of its head, a feather on its back, and decidedly bovine expression of face, the coming of the cowfish is welcomed in Puerto Rico. It is migrating, usually



appearing in May in schools of greater or less extent. While it lingers on the coast it emits a sort of "mooing" sound, because of which visitors often call it a drumfish. Anyhow, it drums up the native population, who run to the beach to see if the schools are large, in which case they say: "There is milk in the cocoanut"—an expression equivalent to the promise of a fruitful season.

When there is this expectation of abundance of food many of the young people get married at once. A family can live on the fruit of the wild banana, which is twice the size of those exported and of much coarser grain, but roasted in ashes it is not bad eating. Science has yet to determine what the coming of the cowfish has to do with the fruitfulness of cocoanuts and bananas, but with its two black horns and the music it makes, and the little feather, which is iridescent, as it moves through the water it is very engaging. The preserved specimens are stuffed with air only.

The manatee of the Caribbean sea is sometimes called the cowfish because it comes on shore and eats grass. The manatee is becoming extinct, and is often found on the coast of Cuba and keys south of Florida than in Puerto Rico.

It is entirely distinct from the Puerto Rico variety, which is a true fish, running in schools, whereas the manatee is a mammal, nursing its young. This latter is hunted for its hide, which is manufactured into canes that look like tortoise shell. These canes are so elastic and powerful that they are regarded as deadly weapons, and by the Cuban laws a fine of \$50 is imposed upon any one who strikes another with a manatee cane. They cost from \$10 to \$25 each in Havana stores. The Puerto Rico cowfish has quite a tough little hide also, but as it is seldom caught weighing more than a pound or two, it has no commercial value in Puerto Rico, where there are such variety and abundance of fish. It has almost a balloon-like appearance when in the water, and the mooing musical sound it makes is supposed to be owing to the distention and contraction of the skin while inhaling and emitting air.

PORTO RICAN PEASANTS.

Their Wants Are Few, Simple and Easily Supplied.

The life of the peasant, the peon, of Porto Rico is not a dream of ease and luxury; neither has he ever passed through the nightmare of wretched hunger and biting cold which adds so vitally to the hardships of the poverty-stricken of northern climes. In equatorial and fifth, in crudity and ignorance, the larger number of the inhabitants go through their comparatively short lives; for one does not see many aged people among them. They die off from fevers, contagious diseases, and troubles handed down from sickened forefathers, at a comparatively early age.

At no period of the poor man's existence can he suffer the tortures of starvation because his job of work has given out, for, while during whole months of the year he may not earn a single centavo, he still has his little plot of vegetables on the hill; then, if worst comes to worst, or the land-owner turns him out, he may live on the profusion of fruits and roots of the forest, or, as is a common practice of the country, upon the fruits fished from his more opulent neighbor.

In the dry season he complains of the cold of the early morning, yet he needs but the merest rags to cover his nakedness, for on no day in the year is it colder than our mildest of autumnal weather. Shoes are a useless burden to his bare and sole-leather-lined feet, which have trodden the rocky, briery trails in their nakedness from infancy; and a hat, if he must have it, he makes in his own house from the grass grown around the doorway.

The house in which he is domiciled he builds in a few short days from poles and thatch and bark rolls of the royal palm; and a good house it is in spite of its primitive appearance, for it screens him from the colder winds of night, and sheds the water of the driving rains like a duck's back.—Harper's Weekly.

They say figures won't lie; they are the biggest liars on earth.