

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.
A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

To err is human; not to jump on the man who errs is divine.

Few men are appreciated until they take up their residence in a cemetery.

Getting into debt is like dropping from a balloon. Getting out again is like climbing a greased pole.

The venerable Mr. Fitzsimmons does not seem to be in any hurry to settle down in a home for the aged.

Panama will doubtless see to it that that \$10,000,000 does not give rise to any popular agitation against a treasury surplus.

A German professor claims to have found redium in petroleum. Now watch the price of kerosene go where you can't see it with a telescope.

The per capita circulation in this country on December 1, was \$30.21, breaking all records. Evidently the Christmas shoppers began early.

A Boston educator is arguing for teaching the school children more fairy tales, in spite of the fact that there are too many politicians already.

A New York preacher became the father of triplets a few days ago. If he can go on preaching peace on earth now it will have to be admitted that he's a wonder.

A man has discovered a process whereby he can make cigars out of straw. If he tries to use it he is likely to find himself buried under suits for infringement.

A statesman is advocating the doctrine that the tramps should build the roads. Weary will be too strong to be found in the vicinity where road building is going on.

A Cincinnati man refused to marry the girl because she cried on her way to the church. This should be a warning. It is always best for the girls to leave the crying to be done by their mothers.

In all of England there are said to be but two matrimonially available dukes left. Considering the large number of available would-be duchesses we yet have on hand, this news is really distressing!

An Alaskan child bearing the name of Leon Edward Seattle No. 3 Yukon Woodpile Bartlett is in trouble. Its father recently killed its mother. Let us hope their quarrel was not a result of the naming of the baby.

Mr. Carnegie professes profound sorrow and sympathy for young men who were born rich. Up to date the young Vanderbilts, Goulds, Rockefellers, and other sons of rich men have failed to express any hearty appreciation of Mr. Carnegie's sympathy for them.

German engineers, backed by American capital, have started for Portuguese East Africa to work what some persons believe to be the redoubtable mines of Ophir, from which King Solomon obtained his gold. If the mines contain gold no modern capitalist will care very much whether Solomon knew of them or not.

When a friend told the late Theodor Mommsen that his books contained twenty-four million words the great historian remarked, "I did not know I was so wretchedly verbose. I am sure no person has read them all." Modesty seems to be characteristic of some types of greatness, even if we do not admit that no greatness can exist without humility.

Men slave to accumulate fortunes for their boys when in many cases they might as well give them poison. They deliberately contrive the ruin of their sons by allowing them to grow up in idleness, luxury, and self-indulgence. Poverty would be better than that, because poverty would discipline the character. But the character can be disciplined in other ways if the father will take enough trouble. By enforcing hard work and self-denial he can leave wealth to his son with an assurance that the fortune will belong to the boy, not the boy to the fortune.

It perhaps would be extravagant to say that there never was a time since the days of King Arthur's round table when physical strength and health were so highly regarded as now. But nevertheless it is a fact not successfully to be denied that physical culture during recent years has been given more than ordinary attention, and many men who are healthful and strong have been remarkably successful in the various vocations of active life. The days of the top, the dude, the lackadaisical dandy are past. The popular society man nowadays must be a huntsman, a golfer, a horseman or famed for some particular athletic quality.

It is doubtful whether the army of any country on earth could fight its hardest were there no flags to symbolize their cause, no drums and bugles to speak for it, and again. Just so the students of a college are held together, are reminded of their duty to the institution of their character of students, by the fluttering of the steamers, blue, crimson, orange and black, olive and blue, whichever the case may be; the tooting of the horns and the stentorian recitation—swelled by the throat of each of them—of that peculiarly unilitary and unmusical composition, the college yell.

There was a time when the greatest crop that the United States was considered fit only for hog-fattening purposes. The farmers grow corn as they grow no other cereal. They measure the crop in billions of bushels, not millions. And every year this crop, that asks so little care but much sunshine, is growing more valuable, because sel-

ence is at work, and the people are beginning to appreciate what a good and cheap food it is. We have corn foods by the dozen. They are palatable and easily digested. America has found them good and Europe is learning, as the export figures will testify. We have corn syrups that are a table necessity. They taste good. They are good. The cheapness of the product almost does away with the temptation to adulterate. And if you would know something about the growth of this one item of corn product, know that in one year the production of corn syrups aggregated 1,350,000 barrels, for table use alone; five times the amount of cane and sorghum syrups produced for table use. And really this is only the beginning. The experimenters have not stopped working. We will have new corn dainties, new things that at present are undreamed of, toothsome and healthful; and out of them will come more prosperity for the farmer and for all of us. Other countries can raise wheat to a greater or less degree, but corn is an American crop, a Yankee asset—almost a monopoly. It does not take readily to foreign soils and climates. There have been millions made in corn. The future will show more millions in a cereal that was once discredited and now occupies a throne.

Nearly every city and town has in it one or more men engaged in business, who seek to profit by the enterprise of others, without bearing any of the burdens they can by "hook or crook" avoid, which the really enterprising business man has to assume. "Patronize your home merchant" is the slogan of many a newspaper that means well and is endeavoring to boost for its town. Such a slogan is a mighty good one in many towns and a mighty poor one in others. By all means patronize your home merchant—providing he is worthy of your patronage. If he is a hustler who gets around early in the morning, keeps his store and stock clean and up to the times, charges a reasonable price for his goods, runs an ad. in the newspapers and pays his share to everything that goes to help the town, patronize him and boost for him for he is helping to improve the town and enhance the value of your property. But if he is a drone in the hive of industry and keeps a dingy, dirty store, pays his help starvation wages and works them as many hours every day as possible, refuses to advertise and positively declines to contribute what he should to public enterprise and votes against every measure that will help the town in order to keep his taxes down, sit down on him hard and withhold your patronage from him until you starve him out. Such fellows are not worthy the name of "merchant," and are on earth to get all they can and keep all they get. They are a curse to any town and many towns that have good natural advantages are killed off by such skinflints. Many of them are continually howling for patronage because they are "home merchants," but never think of patronizing their brother business men when they can save a few cents by sending away for anything. They are in the same class as the fellow who depends upon the local community and tries to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs by sending away to catalogue houses for everything that he can scrape up the cash to pay for. The way to "patronize" such fellows is to carry a good, big hammer for them.

CITY OF CROCODILES.
Curious Village Is Said to Have Been Built by Pharaoh.

The crocodile, one of the most sacred animals of the East, has given its name to several ancient rites. Of the various "Cities of Crocodiles," the names of which have been handed down to us by Herodotus, Pliny and Strabo, perhaps the most striking was the Crocodilopolis of the ancient Egyptian Province of Fayum, which, according to tradition, was built by that Pharaoh who "made the lives of the children of Israel bitter with hard service."

This province lies within an almost complete circle of hills—a little oasis in the midst of the desert, where roses and grapes mingle with figs and olives and palm trees grow almost into forests.

Its capital is Medinet, and a little to the north of the city are a number of irregularly shaped mounds. Beneath these are the ruins of the Pharaoh-built Crocodilopolis, the City of Crocodiles, later called Arsinoe, and the shrine of the sacred crocodile of the neighboring Lake Moeris, which was then 450 miles in circumference.

This lake held the sacred crocodiles, and as each died in turn it was buried in one of the 1,500 underground sepulchers of the world-famed "Labyrinth" at hand, side by side with the embalmed bodies of successive Pharaohs.—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Had Earned Their Help.
Many years ago, when the revivalist, E. P. Hammond, converted nearly the whole population of Lawrence, there was an old shoemaker in the town who was noted for his profligate habits. He came to grace in the course of the revival and regularly took a prominent place on the mourner's bench. One night Mr. Hammond invited him to lead in prayer. He responded with alacrity and said:

"Oh, Lord, Thou knowest what a wicked man I have been. Thou knowest that I have neglected my family and my business to travel the paths of sin. Thou knowest that I could not be counted on to do the work of my customers. But now, O Lord, by the power of Thy sanctification, I am turned from the paths of wickedness and walk uprightly before all. And Thou knowest, Lord, that under Thy mercy I will be at my bench from morning till night, ready to mend shoes as cheap as any man in town."—Kansas City Journal.

Fragrant.
"I want a dog license," said the man in the Chicago city hall.

"All right," said the clerk.

"You might as well give me a marriage license as well. Two for a quarter, I suppose?"—Yonkers Statesman.

EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

Coarse Efforts to Be Funny.

THE editor of an Indiana publication, in an effort to make a coarse jest on the subject of a local wedding, ran afoul of the United States postal laws, and as a result thereof pleaded guilty to a federal indictment. The incident calls attention to the fact that a very large class of people throughout this country carry the time-honored wedding jocularities altogether too far, and while they seldom go to indecent lengths in their efforts to be funny, as in the present instance, their "humorous" attempts usually smack of a coarseness that is entirely out of harmony with the civilization of the day.

The charivari, or "shiveree," as it is commonly called, is an institution of historic antiquity, and when confined to a drumming that compels the returned groom to produce a barrel of cider and the pipe of peace, is interesting and harmless enough, but the efforts to embarrass the newly married couple before strangers is a different proposition. Starting with the harmless old custom of throwing rice for good luck, it progressed to the matter of playing tricks with the groom's clothing, to tacking ribbons on the traveling trunks, and, finally, to the "send-off" at the train, where some humorist announces to the assemblage of traveling men and other strangers that these people have just been married, and another idiot distributes handbills to the same effect, embellished with remarks more or less impertinent or imbecile, as the case may be. The only possible effect of such performances is to make the bride and groom miserable and cause all other passengers blest with good sense to feel foolish.

The line between laughter and disgust is a very narrow one, and the amateur comedians essaying great jocularities on the occasion of their friends' marriage almost invariably overstep it. It seems a pity there is no way for the aggrieved ones to reach the great majority of them as this editor was reached.—Indianapolis Journal.

Publicity of Modern Life.

THE fierce light that was supposed to beat exclusively upon a throne has come, in our modern conditions, to beat with almost equal fierceness upon a kitchen. The doings, sayings, and portraits of the cooks of the truly rich are nowadays matters for public record. Meantime our American court calendar includes not only the daily doings of the presidential family, but also of the families of those of our millionaires who are in, and by some supposed exclusively to constitute, "society." Not only this, but there is a system, especially in what would be called in England the provincial press, of recording the doings, movements, and visitations of pretty much every body in pretty much every community in the country.

What effect is all this publicity to have upon the average man, woman and girl? But, particularly, what effect is all this familiarity to have upon the world's sentiment with regard to royalty and high ecclesiastical authority? As to these latter matters, surely there will be palpable effects. Can the sense of awe continue as great when there is so little left of the unknown? One thing is sure; the sentiment toward kings and courts and Vatican can never remain the same in these new and remarkable conditions. The relation between the former and their subjects and followers may be none the less affectionate, even reverent; it may become more human, more close. But the mystery having departed, there can hardly be the old stress. When the mind is no longer awed and clouded by the dim and the unknown, the appeal to reason must be reinforced.—Century Magazine.

Do Not Worry.

WE should worry less if we were fully conscious of our own freedom; if we realized that nothing can hurt us except our own false actions, that no one can hurt us except ourselves. We should worry less if we looked neither too eagerly toward the future nor too soberly toward the past, but concerned ourselves chiefly with the duty of the moment. We should worry less if we could always say to the jeering god Failure: "I tried to do my best, and that was the best I could do." We should worry less if we turned our backs on every Satan of excessive luxury, excessive work, excessive duty, excessive anything. We should worry less if we ate simple food, if we took plenty of sleep, if we developed our minds with

our bodies and our bodies with our minds.

We should worry less if we would frankly meet our ideals with temporary, just compromises, aiming simply to gain more with every new compromise.

The Boston Globe says: "The investor who carries his steel coat to bed with him every night, and in his dreams sees it falling, falling, falling, is not the man who watches the ticker tape with a sharp eye looking out of a clear head the next day, prepared to grasp the hand of fortune."

"The merchant who permits himself to suffer long from the blues because his profits this year are less than last year, will always keep a little store around the corner, so long as his brain is active. His show windows will never grace the main street."

"The mechanic who continually nurses the fear that he will be left penniless in time of sickness, because his earnings all go for the family food and clothing, it but weakening his capacity as a workman and hastening his day of expected misfortune."

"The housewife who eternally frets lest the cake fall or a speck of dust be overlooked in the parlor, not only loses the pleasure of the present, but mortgages the joys she might naturally expect for the future."

Don't worry, and the result will be fewer overwrought minds, fewer exhausted nervous systems, less recourse to bracing drugs, and a marked reduction in the number of cases of insanity.—The Week's Progress.

To Make Bad Boys Good.

IT is not strange that there should be a good deal of sentiment among public school principals in favor of the restoration of corporal punishment, under proper restriction, in the schools. The rule that the teacher who cannot secure discipline and order in his class without resorting to physical force is not fit to teach sounds very well in theory, but in practice there are exceptions. There are refractory pupils, whom nothing but the fear of physical punishment can keep in subjection, and it is unfortunately true that the example of one or two such boys is more potent as a demoralizing force than the example of the good boys can counteract. Boys are naturally lawless, if they are healthy, and the forceful young rascal who defies his teacher is likely to be regarded as a hero by his schoolmates. There are doubtless many occasions when a good, efficient caning would do more to maintain order and discipline in the classroom than the most earnest appeal to the dormant sense of honor of the boys.

In the case of the boy who drew a knife on his teacher in one of the Brooklyn schools recently, it certainly seems that an earnest application of the cane would have been more efficacious than the arrest of the boy. Imprisonment tends to confirm the vice that there may be in a boy, while the incitement to virtue of a good thrashing, from which there is no honor in the sight of his fellows to be derived, would prove much more efficacious as a reformatory measure.—Brooklyn Times.

Average Marriage Age.

THE average age of marriage for men in the United States is 26 1/2 years, which, according to the New York Sun, is lower than in any other country in which accurate marriage records are kept. In Sweden the average is 31 years. Whether it is better, on the whole, that the average age of marriage in a country should be low or high is a moot question, and the answer must vary according to the character of the country. Early marriages naturally are followed by large families of children, but young parents with many children are very likely to be poor and unable to give the children much care. The young ones are forced to leave school and go to work at an early age and thus their minds and bodies are prevented from attaining the highest development of which they are capable. True, a moderate measure of wholesome neglect is good for a child. True, also, that many great men rose like Lincoln and Garfield from the humblest and poorest of early environment. But when talking of general averages it is a safe proposition that extreme poverty is a detriment to children. The advantages of money, good schools, books and a reasonable amount of comfort and even luxury at home are beneficial. They make a finer quality of men and women.—San Francisco Bulletin.

Immigration has a marked tendency to become permanent.

ANDRE PRISON HOUSE.
Historic Structure Is Now Used as a Bar and Tavern.

In the little village of Tappan, near the border line between New York and New Jersey, about twenty-one miles from New York, is the historic prison house in which Major John Andre, of the British army, was confined in September, 1780, and from which he was led to execution on Oct. 2, 1780, says the New York Tribune. The house is practically the same now as it was 123 years ago, although a storm in March, 1897, destroyed part of the structure and leveled a side wall, which has since been rebuilt, however.

The house has long been an object of interest to tourists, and it has lately attracted some attention because of the resurrection of the theme of Andre's death by Clyde Fitch, the playwright, who has laid the scenes of his last act in the play "Major Andre," now running at the Savoy Theater, in this celebrated house.

The building is of stone, and it has been known for nearly a century as the "76 house." Presumably it was built in that year. It was a tavern when Andre was confined there, and it is a tavern still. For many years prior to its partial destruction, in 1897, it had been unoccupied, and it was therefore in poor condition to withstand the strong winds. Immediately afterward it was purchased by Charles A. Pike, a native of Tappan, who restored the house as nearly as possible to its former state. One room, however, has been converted into a bar-room. Directly across the hall is the Andre prison room, which is carefully preserved for the inspection of visitors.

Mr. Pike, the owner of the building, is proud of his property and the Andre room is filled with rare prints and reproductions of documents relating to the young British officer who was tried there and hanged in the rear of the house.

Obeying the Law.
"Why did you let him get away from you?" thundered the chief.

"He—er—took a mean advantage of me," replied the green detective. "He ran across the grass in the park and—"

"Well, there was a sign there, 'Keep off the grass.'"—Philadelphia Press.

Land Is Redeemed.
By means of irrigation something like 3,500,000 acres of land in Dakotas has been increased in value over \$230,000,000.

Wedded in Modern Style.
There was a wedding yesterday in Graceless Church.

Lord Baldknob of Kiltshire, England, married Miss Sallie Panhandle, of East Pittsburg.

The bridal party, including the attorneys for both sides, forced in the alcove promptly at 11:30.

At 11:45 the real estate in the bride's name was transferred to his lordship.

At 11:50 a million dollars in legal tender changed hands.

At high noon all the railroad first mortgage bonds known to be the bride's possession were handed over.

A vote of thanks was then passed for his lordship for leaving the bride's father enough to live on comfortably until the next rise in Wall street, which is predicted for next spring.

SUPPOSE WE SMILE.

HUMOROUS PARAGRAPHS FROM THE COMIC PAPERS.

Pleasant Incidents Occurring the World Over—Sayings that are Cheerful to Old or Young—Funny Selections that Everybody Will Enjoy.

Mother—I don't hear the canary singing this morning, Osten. Is he in a good humor?

Osten—No, mamma, I think he's in a pet.

Mother—You do?

Osten—Yes, the Persian cat swallowed him.

Then He Ran.
"George, you don't love me any more."

"Oh, yes, I do."

"Then, George, you have been deceiving me. Last night you said it was impossible to love me any more than you did."

"Well, er—confound it, then I don't."

"Oh, George, how can you! Boo-hoo!"

Getting On.
Teacher—What is this word?

Tommy—I don't know, ma'am.

Teacher—What does a gentleman remove when he enters a house?

Tommy—Well, if ma is awake pa removes his shoes.

Scathing.
Angry Patron (to waiter)—Here! Take away this lobster. Why, it's as old as I am.

Very Appropriate.
"Did you hear about Lever? Went fast to sleep while speeding in his automobile."

"Yes, and he slept like a top."

"How was that?"

"Spinning."

Dinner Repartee.
"Ab, this spring chicken is a toothsome morsel," said the sweet singer.

"Excuse me," said the comedian boarder, "but it cannot be toothsome."

"Why not?"

"Because chickens have no teeth."

An Unreasonable Request.
Wife (timidly)—Can you let me have a dollar, dear?

Husband (testily)—No, I can't. Haven't I just spent \$2,300 on an automobile?

There's Something in the Wind.
"Oh, well, it's not so bad. I thought you'd been playing football."

A Loan Felt Want.
Casey—Oh, see there's bin another railroad wreck due to an open switch.

Cassidy—Ay, 'tis a pity some wan don't invent a switch that'll stay shut when its open.—Philadelphia Press.

More Proof.
Ernie—Some learned professor tells us that sunspots cause people to lose their tempers.

Ida—I don't doubt it. I saw several girls the other day who were mad as hornets because they had freckles.

One Drawback.
"Tis love that makes the world go round," whispered the pretty girl as she nestled closer.

"Yes," sighed the young man as he glanced at the time, "and it seems to make the hands of the clock go around, too."

Platform Repartee.
"Did you ever see a chimney sweep?" asked the solemn man with the black cane.

"No," responded the conductor of the car, "but I've heard a college yell."

A Clear Conscience.
"Who was that young man hugging you last night?" asked the girl in the new fall hat.

"Oh, he is a book agent," responded her chum.

"Looked to me more like a press agent."

Dead Easy.
"How," asked the very young man, can one tell when love is only platonic?"

"When it develops into the other kind," replied the charming widow, "one can look back and see the difference."

It All Depends.
"How gratifying it must be," said the sentimental youth who had the matrimonial fever, "to be the owner of one's own little home."

"Yes, it's gratifying enough, I suppose," rejoined the man who had just failed in business, "but it's a whole lot safer to have one's wife own it."

Old as the Scissors.
"Telegraphing without wires is no new thing," remarked the gray-haired passenger.

"It isn't, eh?" queried the drummer.

"Not by a jugful," continued the old man. "Why, sir, when I published a newspaper forty years ago I got nearly all my telegraph news that way."

Chicago News.

Didn't Escape.
Von Blumer—"I had the most singular thing happen to me the other day. Did you ever go into a man's place to pay a bill you owed him, and find him out?"

Plankington (emphatically)—"No, sir. Did that happen to you?"

"It did. I had a notion, or rather I nerved myself up to it, to settle up some bills that I owed. So on my way form the office I dropped in to see my fish-monger."

"And he was out?"

"Correct. Then I tried my grocer."

"He was out?"

"Right. Plenty of shopmen, but no proprietor. Of course, I left word that I called in to settle up, but wanted to see the proprietor first. Dispute about bills. Do you twig?"

"Oh, yes, that strengthens your credit."

"Exactly. Then I called to see my butcher, and I'll be hanged if he wasn't out also!"

"By Jove! but you were in luck!"

"No I wasn't."

"Why not?"

"When I got home I found them all waiting for me."



Well, Tommy, how are you getting on at school?

"First-rate. I ain't doing so well as some of the other boys, though. I can stand on my head, but I have to put my feet against the wall. I want to do it without the wall at all."—Punch.

Lesser Evil.
"Ma," wailed the small boy, "I've lost two teeth, a lock of hair, scraped my shins and tore all my clothes up."

"What have you been doing, sir?" demanded the angry woman. "Tell the truth."

"Fighting."

"Oh, well, it's not so bad. I thought you'd been playing football."

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