

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

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.  
The automobile with all its perils seems to be less fatal than the bathing suit.  
"A stage held up." The city is that it does not happen oftener, for the stage so often needs such aid.  
The Japanese have disapproved the Russian boast that Kachow was a stronghold not to be sneezed at.  
Every little while somebody suggests that the United States annex San Domingo. Would it not be possible to sink it?  
Russia has a General Pflogg and Japan has an Admiral Hobe. The interesting question is, Can Russia Pflogg the Hobe?  
When Russell Sage hears about the young man who went crazy while on his vacation he will, of course, regard it as a clear case of just retribution.  
Scientists claim to have discovered the old-age microbe, but it is quite likely the varmint will continue doing business at the same old stand.  
What will the poor typesetter do when the legions of General Takabarkamabarahara begin to encounter those of General Shootemoffskymoffarroff?  
William C. Whitney's heirs object to paying an inheritance tax of \$22,222. Why can't the State of New York be generous and cut it down to \$22,999.99?  
Miss Jane Addams predicts the time when the servant girl will be a memory of barbarism. Begging Miss Addams' pardon, it's that way now in some suburban homes.  
Prof. Starr thinks that the Chinese, upon the whole, are superior to the Japanese. This will give everybody something to talk about during the professor's extended visit in China.  
Dr. Elias C. Swallow says that for twenty years America has been "ruled by Bunko, Hoodle and Boose." It must be admitted in all candor that these three Bs have improved each shining hour.  
Bishop Potter has assisted at the opening of a saloon in New York. Inasmuch as he has been able to get his articles accepted by the magazines without going to this extreme, some people can't imagine why he did it.  
A New Jersey man claims to have discovered a process whereby beautiful gowns may be made from asbestos. Whether or not this drawing upon the rocks of mother earth will tend to save the "rocks" of the head of the family remains to be seen.  
Switzerland looks well after its citizens, and its postal department and railway privileges have long been admired by the rest of the world. Now the government has decided to forbid parents from saddling their children with fantastic names. Two children, named by unmerciful progenitors "May First" and "Ribelio" (Rebel), have been legally christened, and the foolish names have been condemned by the courts. Switzerland has truly a "paternal" government.  
Captain Mahan told the Imperial Federation League in London that it was important that the various communities of English-speaking peoples should become so far capable of coincident action as to be able to exert their power as one great nation. Therefore it was important that the British colonies should be united with the mother country in some sort of a federation with a head that could speak for the whole. This view of one of the most profound students of the big questions of world politics deserves respectful consideration.  
Daylight is one thing that destroys the germs of disease—all of them—and publicity, bringing with it irresistible public opinion, is the sure cure for public unrighteousness. A shining example is furnished by the recent experience of the Western Union Company in connection with the collection and sale of racing news in New York City. The public realized and the directors of the Western Union realized what the company was doing, and immediately the transmission of racing news to poolrooms was stopped. Daylight, and yet more daylight, is the surest guarantee of continued progress toward better things everywhere, but especially in the financial community. Indiscriminate publicity has its faults, and, at times, works hardships and injustice—but it is better than secrecy.  
Senor Dupuy de Lome—he died in Paris recently—was a diplomatist who illustrated in his own person the effects of violating the good old-fashioned rule of courtesy. While he was Spanish minister at Washington the excellent over Cuba came to a crisis. In a letter to a friend in Havana he wrote that "McKinley is weak and catering to the rabble, and besides, a low politician." This letter was intercepted by the Cubans and sent to the Secretary of State in Washington. The Secretary took it at once to Minister De Lome, who admitted that he wrote it. The Spaniard knew that he had violated the rules of diplomacy, and called his resignation at once to forestall his expulsion by the American government. His offense was the same as if a guest should go about the house abusing or ridiculing his host.  
The arrest in Chicago of four boys, 16, 17, 18 and 20 years old respectively by, and their subsequent confession of various robberies and at least one murder, is a striking commentary on at least one phase of the life of to-day. It is the more striking because it is not the only recent revelation of the participation in crime of half-grown

boys and youths. For a man who has reached or passed middle age it is difficult to see how it is possible for boys such as these to engage in partnership in crime or to practice it even alone. A generation ago the number of boys of that age over whom no controlling influence was exerted was small. To-day the streets of every city, even of the third or fourth magnitude, seem to be swarming with them. Parental control, with the inculcation of any sense of moral responsibility or respect for human law, seems to be a thing of the past. The so-called principle of governing by love gained some headway in the growing years of the men who are now fathers of boys of 15 to 20. Unbacked by knowledge of and respect for authority, this has become family anarchy. Boys are not governed at all. Yet nothing is more certain than that parents must resume authority or that some power that will exercise it for the outcome will be tragedy on a large scale, wherein the undisciplined will go to the wall.  
A London dispatch says the present fad of many Englishmen is to take numerous minute precautions against the invisible germs of the earth and the air, which, if inhaled or handled, may cause disease. There are sterilized cigarettes, germicide doormats to kill the germs attached to the shoes of those who have been walking through dust or mud, and little silver spoons which are to hold money until it can be taken home and fumigated. There are little tubs in which the ends of canes and umbrellas are dipped to kill the clinging germs, and innumerable other devices for the protection of human health against the myriads of unseen enemies which menace it. The Bible tells men not to make themselves unclean. This is a case in point. The man who knows all about germs, and who feels himself obliged to be continually on his guard against their insidious attacks, is he really protecting his life that he has no time left in which to enjoy it. Furthermore, he cannot help knowing that in spite of all the pains he takes while he is awake some germ may take advantage of him during his sleeping moments unless he shuts himself up in a glass case where he can be supplied with a sufficient allowance of sterilized air. Such a person is in constant agony about his food, drink, and clothing, lest all the germs have not been killed. Nobody should court danger. Everybody should take reasonable precautions against it, but there is such a thing as moderation, even in defending oneself against disease germs. To be too much troubled on account of them is to give up all peace of mind.

There is a reflex side to the drift of the population to the cities. Love of country life is a natural and general feeling. The merchant who comes to the city as a youth to make his fortune often returns to the country when he retires, and dreams of doing it all through his business career. He would hardly be willing to admit the deep tenderness of the memories of the old farm. All the respect proceeds at an accelerated pace. Going to the city or taking a run into the country is a commonplace incident. How far the space between will eventually be annihilated is beyond the range of conjecture, but the old lines of separation are disappearing in so many ways that the future relations of country and city are full of hopeful interest.  
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QUEER STORIES

Out of every one thousand letters used in writing English, T is used eighty-eight times.  
The United States has now 38,065 locomotives on her railways. Great Britain has 21,304.  
Only nine men have been hanged in Kentucky in the last five years, although there have been 798 murders.  
Five hundred and sixty thousand persons in the United States are dependent upon the street cars for support.  
Owing to a decline in the Swiss watch market, many emigrants are leaving Switzerland for Canada and the United States.  
Manila has a population of something like three hundred thousand, about ten thousand being American and European born. The American population is estimated at about six thousand.  
The coal handling machinery at a Boston wharf recently lowered the world's record by raising coal from a steamer ninety feet to storage pockets at the rate of 320 tons an hour. The capacity of the shovel was two tons.  
The "trains de luxe" which now cover the distance from Moscow to the Pacific in sixteen days, and which rival in luxury any in the United States, each carry a physician and an inspector who speaks half a dozen languages.  
Milan was recently the scene of a remarkable "rain" or downfall of butterflies or moths. They settled in tens of thousands on almost every available inch of space on the ground and on the buildings of the central quarters of the city. The insects are described as perfectly black and marvelously active. Their presence is ascribed to an air current swept along in front of a hurricane.  
A Mexican cactus is eaten by Indians during their religious ceremonies to incite visions. An English naturalist, Dr. Dixon, has been testing upon himself its extraordinary properties, and reports that the air seemed filled with vague odors of perfume, a halo of musical sounds surrounding him, and a marvelous display of ever-changing brilliant colors passed clearly before his vision.  
After all other remedies fail, there still remains a way of getting rid of rats, and that is by depriving them of water. They can live for a very long time without food, but when hard pressed will not hesitate to eat each other, but no rat can go twenty-four hours without drink. Therefore, if every possible means of obtaining water is taken from the rats they will desert the vicinity.  
The Sakals, or tree dwellers, of the Malay peninsula build their houses in forked trees a dozen feet above ground, and reach them by means of bamboo ladders, which they draw up when safely housed out of harm's way. The house itself is a rude kind of shack, made of bamboo, and the flooring is lashed together piece by piece and bound securely to the tree limbs by rattan. These curious people are rather small and lighter in complexion than the Malays, though much uglier. They have no form of religion at all—not even idols—no written language, and speak a corrupt form of Malay.  
If you eat corn on the cob, don't aggravate your offense by mixing a mustard up in it.  
One of the funniest things in a little town is the smart set.

EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

Country and City.  
A PAPER published near the southern boundary of Missouri speaks of the great advantages to be derived from the improvement of the telephone system. The improvement, it is remarked, "places city and country in immediate communication, rendering unnecessary four-fifths of the trips that have been made on country roads." Highways may be muddy and weather stormy, but the world can be rung up according to the necessities of the moment, facilitating business and social life, and saving an immense amount of time and effort. A marked tendency of the age is to bring the country into closer touch with the centers of population. Electric roads are multiplying and making their way into neighborhoods that could not be reached by stage lines. Rural free delivery of the mails is being extended to the remotest corners of the land. Within a dozen years electric transit in the cities has more than doubled the area suitable for town residences. Cities themselves are spreading farther into the country. Labor on the farm has been rendered easier by ingenious machinery. All whose memories stretch back to pioneer days can bear witness to the enormous advance toward bringing country and city closer together. Progress in that respect proceeds at an accelerated pace. Going to the city or taking a run into the country is a commonplace incident. How far the space between will eventually be annihilated is beyond the range of conjecture, but the old lines of separation are disappearing in so many ways that the future relations of country and city are full of hopeful interest.  
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Leap Year Over Half Gone.

WE do not wish to urge anyone to rash and precipitate action, but it is our duty to call the attention of young ladies, and, indeed, of all unmarried ladies, to the exceptional privileges which immemorial custom allows them in the quarternary period through which we are so rapidly passing. The number of weddings shows no increase over ordinary years, and it is to be feared that the feminine world has not realized how little potential energy there is in water which has passed the mill. The decay of the peculiar customs of Leap Year is strongly evidenced by the almost complete lack of jokes on the subject in the newspapers, since it is well known that topical humor lingers long after the vanishing of its cause.  
So far from Leap Year sinking into noxious desuetude, it might be expected that its peculiar privileges would be more widely used than ever before, now our young women are becoming more adventurous and also much harder to suit. The requirements for admission to matrimony imposed on the young men by the opposite sex have risen as rapidly as the standard of scholarship in the universities, and a young man whose attainments a few years ago would have been considered sufficient to qualify him for the position of master of a household would nowadays have to be content with his degree of bachelor.  
Really, it is not at all certain that women do not do most of the proposing every year. Very little is known about this mysterious though important topic, anyway. Each person's experiences are limited to a comparatively few instances, and these are always regarded by both parties as exceptional in all respects. Novels are alto-

AND YE VISITED ME.

Your letter brought tears to my eyes," wrote the invalid to her friend of former years, as she lay in bed and painfully used her lead pencil. "I have been out of sight so long. You can never know how good it seems to be looked up and visited."  
Julia Graham—that was what every one called her who remembered her—had married and gone West. "Mrs. George William Osgood" was the name on her visiting card. But she returned for "Old Home Week" after an absence of nine years, and the return was far from being an unmixed pleasure. A pleasure it was, in many ways greater than she expected; but the changes were many and some of them no one can revisit the scenes of childhood or youth, or any locality where he has spent much of his life, without this mixed experience—the joy of renewing acquaintances—which were pleasant, and the sadness of finding those whom he loved less prosperous or less strong or happy. So it was with Mrs. Graham. The "week" was only a week for her, and it was a full one. There were relatives to visit, old friendships to be renewed, and ailments to be calmed. But the thing which Julia Graham did that endeared her to some old friends was the looking up of those whom she had known in other days who were unable, or timidly disinclined, to look her up. The letter was from one of these. Julia had learned that this old friend lived in another town, and was bedridden. It cost her a whole day to go to her, but she came back saying over to herself the words which her friend had said, "I know now why our Lord blessed those to whom He said, 'I was sick, and ye visited me?'"  
There was another old friend, a schoolmate, who had married a drunkard, and who did not appear at any of the festivities of the week. "I shouldn't call on her; she might be sensitive," said Julia's cousin. But Julia went to her in her poverty and sorrow, and her visit was like a ray of sunshine to her old friend.  
Most pathetic of all was her looking up an old man, feeble now and oblivious of most that had happened recently, but with a mind that came back when recalled by suggestions of former years, and whose life was brightened for many a day afterward by his memories of the visit of "little Julia Graham."  
"The pleasantest things about Old Home Week," said Julia to her husband, "were those which I was most reluctant to undertake. It cost me a

LET US ALL LAUGH.

JOKES FROM THE PENS OF VARIOUS HUMORISTS.  
Pleasant Incidents Occurring the World Over—Sayings that Are Cheerful to Old or Young—Funny Selections that You Will Enjoy.  
"How much will you charge me by the week?" asked the stylish young man, stepping over the stile in front of the rural boarding house.  
"Twenty dollars," responded the farmer.  
"You are rather steep. I might get even by running away with your wife."  
"Watch, stranger, if you propose to do that, I'll only charge you five."  
Depends on the Position.  
Hayner (giving it another shake)—I have often wondered why they call these things "fontain" pens.  
Shyne—If you accidentally put one of them upside down in your vest pocket you'll find out—Chicago Tribune.  
Lesson Was Useless.  
Sunday School Teacher—Lou's wife looked back and turned to talk.  
Tommy—Yes, an even now many men turn her robber.  
Her Beau.  
Vera S. Kalrd—Thieves seem to be active out this way.  
Elme Ousay—Yes, there was one in our house last evening.  
Vera S. Kalrd—You don't say! Did he take anything?  
Elme Ousay—Oh, a few kisses. It was my Jack.  
Strictly Unanimous.  
Myrilla—I never encouraged my brother, but he has proposed to me. I am sure he has no reason for wanting me to marry him.  
Micauda—No, he hasn't any reason at all; that's what we said when he told us about it.  
Sistered Them Up.  
"You will admit that education has been a great thing for this community?" said the stranger.  
"I'll admit nothing of the kind," replied the mayor of Bacon Ridge. "One of them pesky school-teachers came around here and told the children the earth was always moving, and ever since the whole town has been sea-sick, by he!"  
Lifting the Handicap.  
Gyer—There goes a girl who is a record breaker.  
Myer—A record breaker?  
Gyer—Yes. She lowered her record ten years by manipulating the figures in the family Bible.  
Resembled Her Mamma.  
Stagleton—Mr. Especk, I love your daughter, and have come to ask your consent to our marriage.  
Especk—Take her and welcome, my boy, and may the good Lord have mercy on your soul.  
It All Depends.  
"Do you like popular songs?" asked the pretty girl.  
"No," replied the egotistical chap; "not when anybody except myself sings or whistles them."—Chicago News.  
He Gave Himself Away.  
Kind Old Gentleman (to beggar)—Too bad! too bad! How long have you been deaf and dumb?  
Beggar (absentely)—About three years, sir.  
One Comfort.  
The poor man's got some things his way. Altho' the world may chaff— He don't have folks to dodge each day That want his photograph. —Pittsburg Post.  
Easy Money.  
Stringem—I'll bet you \$10 that I can kick higher than the ceiling. Nibbles—I'll take that bet. Stringem—And I'll take the money. The ceiling can't kick at it. See  
What He Required.  
"Give me a theme," said the poet with the unbarbered hair, "and I will do my part."  
"In order to do your part," rejoined his matter-of-fact friend, "all you need is a comb."  
How to Do It.  
Stringem—Ray, do you want to get next to a scheme for making money fast?  
Nibbles—Sure, I do.  
Stringem—Give it to the floor.  
Keeping a Secret.  
Patience—She's getting a divorce. Patience—Is that a fact?  
"It is indeed; but she's keeping it a secret."  
"How do you know?"  
"The girls at the cooking school told me so to-day."—Yonkers Statesman.  
As Others See Us.  
Green—Hear about Bilkins?  
Brown—No; what about him?  
Green—He married his cook last week.  
Brown—That's just like Bilkins. He'd rather fight than eat.  
Telling on the Tail.  
Mamma—Johnny, how many times have I told you about pulling that cat's tail?  
Johnny—I don't know, mamma; but from the way de tail is worn it must be a lot.—Philadelphia Telegraph.  
Wise Young Man.  
"I see you have a new reporter," said the doctor, as he stopped to shake hands with the village editor. "Has he had experience?"  
"That's what he has," replied the scissors manipulator, as he let out a deep sigh. "He insisted in getting his salary in advance."—Chicago Daily News.  
Failed to Make Good.  
Miles—Did you ever read that wonderful book, "How to Live a Hundred Years?"  
Giles—Yes; the author was an old schoolmate of mine.  
Miles—Indeed? Where is he now?  
Giles—He died at the age of 37.  
Mystery Solved.  
He—A scientist says the older a man grows the smaller his brain becomes.  
She—That explains it?  
He—Explains what?  
She—Why an old man knows so little and a young man knows so much.  
Promotion.  
First Clerk—I was promoted to the position of floorwalker last night.  
Second Clerk—What are you giving me?  
First Clerk—Facts. And the little fellow weighs just one pound.  
In After Years.  
"Before our marriage," she pouted, "you used to speak of my lovely golden tresses, but now you call me red-headed."  
"My dear," rejoined the man who had promised to love, honor and pay the freight, "love is blind, but marriage is a great eye-opener. Why, before we were affianced I was actually color blind."  
One Might Think So.  
"No," said the man who had recently made his fourth pilgrimage to the matrimonial altar, "I can't say that marriage is a failure."  
"Of course not," rejoined his bachelor friend. "With you it is merely a habit."  
Not the Real Thing.  
She—So your friend Jingleton is a brain worker, is he?  
He—Not necessarily. He writes words for popular songs.  
A Great Watch Dog.  
Hixton—Why do you look your watch dog in the house at night?  
Dixson—Afraid somebody might steal him.  
In the Blood.  
Adelle—Clarence, don't you think you could overcome somewhat your fondness for your club?  
Clarence—No, that would be impossible. I inherit it from my mother; she was a club woman.  
Prudence.  
Bumps—Why is it that you won't lend me \$5, and yet are willing to let me have a hundred?  
Stumps—Because, if I give you the hundred you'll remember that you owe it to me, and there'll be some prospect of getting it back.  
Not Practical.  
"Mrs. Gattum is going to give a stocking shower for her daughter. That's practical, isn't it?"  
"No."  
"Why not?"  
"Because after a shower there is no use for the hose."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.  
Must Be a Fan.  
Hyker—Mother Earth is careful to hide her richest gems from human eyes.  
Piker—Oh, I don't know. You see her baseball diamonds everywhere.  
Poor Consolation.  
"Madam," exclaimed Napleigh, as a lady seated herself in a chair in which his new silk hat rested, "you have destroyed \$10 for me."  
"Serves you right," she replied as she stood up and surveyed the wreck. "You had no business to blow in \$10 for a hat to cover a 10-cent head."  
His Explanation.  
"Why didn't you answer when I called you up over the telephone the other day?" said the angry Billville man.  
"My dear," replied the "old man" apologetically, "there is a standing notice over the telephone not to use it when you hear thunder."—Atlanta Constitution.  
A Ship of the Tongue.  
The narrator was growing excited as he entered upon the description of the shipwreck.  
"It was a fearful moment, gentlemen. We saw that we were lost. The life boats had been staved in, and there was no way to escape from the doomed vessel. Forward upon the bridge stood our noble captain, true to his trust to the last, while aft were crowded those of us who still remained alive after that fearful night.  
"Never shall I forget the last, awful moment as the vessel sank. My eyes were fixed on the mizenmast, where some one had bound a beautiful young girl, the belle of the ship, with whom, not twenty-four hours previously, I had been conversing gaily. And as the ship went down, she was borne with it into that seething gulf, helpless, doomed 'nashed to the last."  
Just So.  
"In some respects rats are much wiser than human beings. They— Really he did not look it; but then, you know, you can never tell when some people are loaded."—always gnaw a good thing when they see it.—Woman's Home Companion.

