

# Topics of the Times

Innocent men and bluffers court investigation.

But how can 1910 be a banner year if it ends in naught?

Sarah Bernhardt has joined the great majority. She tried to write a play and failed.

Every town has them, but the best way to get even with the knockers is to make good.

One trouble with opportunity is that it knocks at a man's door when he hasn't any money to invest.

Latest is the "auto knee." As the cure does not call for any expensive surgical operation the fad will soon run out.

It is generally admitted now that the cost of living is higher than it used to be. But this doesn't help to pay grocers' bills.

The railroads are to despatch trains by telephone. Think of "central" talking to her boss while two trains are approaching, head on!

Authorities on the subject say that drugs are not bringing nearly as much money as they did ten years ago. Neither are mules. Not much of either of them sold.

Already some of the people of Belgium are beginning to refer to their new king as Albert the Good. Here's hoping that Albert will do his best to live up to it.

Mrs. Thomas A. Edison is in a sanatorium suffering from nervous trouble. She probably fears that she may be asked to live in one of Mr. Edison's poured houses.

"In five years from now," says an eminent physician, "it will not be respectable to be ill." Does he think all the vermiform appendices will have been removed in the meantime?

One of the astronomers succeeded recently in obtaining a fine photograph of the rings of Saturn. The photograph fails to show that there are inscriptions of any kind on the rings.

In view of the conspicuous and important additions to the world's stock of knowledge during the last year, Dr. Edison may feel justified in adding an inch or an inch and half to his Five Feet of Books.

Anna Carnegie is credited with having expressed a willingness to give \$10,000,000 for the purpose of establishing permanent peace in Central America. It ought to be possible with a fund of that size to furnish a pretty fair police force for Central America.

"In what respect," says the Pittsburgh Dispatch, "is the world better off for the pole having been reached? The question comes unexpectedly, but if an answer is demanded immediately, we believe Dr. Cook is about \$50,000 better off than he was before Peary discovered the pole.

A new hotel called the Taft House is to be built across the street from the Yale campus in New Haven, Conn., according to Byron, used to consist in being killed in battle and having your name spelled wrong in the gazette. Nowadays it seems to consist in being elected to the presidency and having a hotel or a cigar named after you.

The report that Kermit Roosevelt is killed a bongo has stirred natural history to the depths. It appears that the bongo is almost a fabled animal. A bongo is a relative of the bush-buffalo as large as a pole pony and as intelligent. It appears that the bongo has a hide as beautiful as the seal's, and is quite as careful. He lives in the deep forest, and only at a presidential election such overwhelming event. The fact of this one appears to be a fact that he came out in an unexpected, no doubt, by the connoisseurs about the north pole.

Millie, who has recently married a man of large fortune and diverse talents, and a majority of men were far-sighted. The philanthropy was kind. They were for other cities. Men of means, and community of any size remain ignorant of the methods of administration assured their success. A man is an institution at which one who is seeking employment in a warm, comfortable setting for a very small expenditure of money. It is not a charitable institution, since it yields a modest return on the capital invested—about 10 per cent. It helps men to preserve their dignity, to escape the fifth, physical, and the degradation of the notorious lodging houses where one obtains work. Stock phobias

thropy elevates instead of pauperizing, and society cannot have too much of it.

Here is another important subject for the Secretary of Agriculture to investigate. In the Chicago stock yards recently hogs brought prices which were practically the highest since the civil war. To make matters worse, the supply in the west was said to be 40 per cent less than it was a year ago. This will sadden the frugal housewife. When beef went up she has fallen back on fresh pork, ham or bacon. If they, too, are to get beyond her reach she will have to resign herself to a vegetarian life. If hogs shall remain scarce and dear the American export trade in hog products, of which lard is not the least important, would suffer. The foreign demand for them would decline as the prices advanced. The Englishman would go elsewhere for the bacon he now buys of the United States. For the sake of the domestic consumer and the foreign trade Secretary Wilson should find out why hogs are scarce and prescribe a remedy. There ought to be a profit in raising them at present prices, even if corn does cost so much more than it used to. That is a sufficient explanation of an advance in the price of hogs, but not of a declining supply in the face of an increasing population and demand. Surely the secretary of agriculture, who is so much concerned over the higher cost of living, will pay some attention to one of the ways of bettering matters. That is the replenishment of the American pig pens. Fill them with plump porkers, and ham and bacon will not be the luxuries they bid fair to become.

## TWO OF TURNER'S CUSTOMERS

The great artist, Turner, is said to have been peculiar in his way of selling his pictures. At times nothing could induce him to part with one of them, and at other times he would receive a customer with the greatest affability of voice and manner, and readily settle upon the sum to be paid for one of his treasures.

On one occasion, when he was offered one thousand pounds apiece for some old sketch-books, he turned them over leaf by leaf before the eyes of the would-be purchaser, saying, "Well, would you really like to have them?" Then, just as the man proceeded to take possession of the books, Turner, with a tantalizing "I dare say you would!" suddenly thrust them into a drawer and turned the key in the lock, leaving the customer dumb with indignation.

On another occasion a rich manufacturer of Birmingham managed to secure an entrance into the artist's house, after considerable parley with the disagreeable landlady whom Turner employed. He hurried up-stairs to the gallery. In a moment Turner dashed out upon him with anything but a hospitable air. The visitor bowed politely and introduced himself, saying he had come to buy some pictures.

"Don't want to sell," said the artist, gruffly. "Have you ever seen our Birmingham pictures, Mr. Turner?" inquired the visitor, blandly. "Never heard of 'em," returned the artist.

The manufacturer now took an attractive package of crisp Birmingham bank-notes from his wallet.

"Here paper," said Turner, contemptuously.

"To be bartered for mere canvas," retorted the visitor, calmly, waving his hand in the direction of some paintings.

This ready wit and tone of cool depreciation had the effect of putting the erratic artist in a good humor at once. He changed his manner immediately, and not long after his visitor departed, having bought several fine paintings, and leaving the comfortable sum of five thousand pounds behind him.

**Astronomical.** Some curious and interesting astronomical phenomena are recorded in the old Chinese annals which go back to a great antiquity. In 487 B. C. a night is mentioned without clouds and without stars. This may perhaps refer to a total eclipse of the sun, but if so the eclipse is not mentioned in the Chinese list of eclipses. In the year 141 B. C. it is stated that the sun and moon appeared of a deep red color during five days, a phenomenon which caused great terror among the people. In 74 B. C. it is related that a star as large as the moon appeared and was followed in its motion by several stars of ordinary size. This probably refers to an unusually large bolide, or fire ball. In 35 B. C. a fall of meteoric stones is recorded.

**Early Printing Methods.** Bacon—This paper says that bees were unknown to the Indians. Egbert—So I believe. When the Indians were 'stung' in olden days they used to attribute it to a trader.—Yonkers Statesman.

**A Stationmaster's Tenor.** Country Opera Director—What do you think of our tenor? Stranger—If I were you I'd hire him out as an imitator of a phonograph.—Pittsford Blotter.

**A Limited Brother.** "What does you think of bein' up on high?" "It's all right, I reckon, but you runs a terrible risk of gettin' dizzy."—Apples Constitution.

## THINGS YOU MAY NOT KNOW

The greater part of Holland is eight feet below the level of the sea.

A single salt works in Brazil covers an area of almost twenty-four square miles.

Texas last year produced more oil by 2,400,000 barrels than the entire country produced in 1875.

A Massachusetts man worth \$10,000,000 is discovered to have hidden it all but \$500,000 from taxation.

In Rotterdam, with a population of 400,000, fires are so scarce that the city has practically no fire department.

An automatic time signal sent out from the Hamburg observatory by telephone to all instruments connected with the system of that city has been heard as far as Copenhagen and Paris.

An enterprising American undertook to establish a trade in burglar-proof safes in the Malaga (southern) district of Spain. There was nothing doing, for burglars are unknown in that part of Spain.

King Edward recently received four first prizes for his exhibits at the Smithfield cattle show. His majesty is a tenant farmer, not a landlord, and pays a large sum every year in rent and tax for his holdings.

In an address before the American Civic Association, Herbert M. Wilson, chief engineer in the United States geological survey, places the annual damage and waste by smoke in the United States at \$500,000,000 in the large cities alone, or about \$6 to each man, woman and child of the population.

One may read in a guide book of Venice, compiled for the benefit of strangers, this notice: "When visiting this palace strangers should show themselves especially generous in their tips, as the prince who occupies this palace has no other means of support than to share in the money given to his domestics."—La Cri de Paris.

At twenty-four William Pitt was chancellor of the exchequer, Ruskin had written his "Modern Painters," in five volumes, which established his reputation as England's greatest art critic; Sheridan had produced "The Rivals," Byron published the first canto of "Childe Harold," and Rossini produced his most popular opera, "The Barber of Seville."

In Devonshire any person bitten by a viper is advised to kill the creature at once and rub the wound with its fat. This practice has, to some extent, survived in this country, where the flesh of the rattlesnake is accounted to be the best cure for its own bite, but as a rule the leading superstition in the United States is of the efficacy of numerous potions of whiskey as an antidote for snake bite.

The Chicago Record-Herald says: "Plans are in contemplation for giving the University of Chicago the finest physical laboratory in the United States, if not in the world. It is said that before all the plans are consummated the plant will have cost \$1,000,000. All of the money is to be furnished by Martin Ryerson, president of the board of trustees of the university, who also was the donor of the present Ryerson laboratory at the university."

If an aeroplane flies faster than the prevailing wind it can, of course, make landings or headway as necessary or desired, but so long as the aeroplane is slower than the blowing wind it is more or less not under control and can not be brought down just anywhere. It is believed that when motors can be relied on for thirty-five miles an hour they not only can meet the wind almost every day in the year, but can rise from land or water at almost any open place.—New York Press.

Colonizers of all races seem to be careful savers of their earnings in the countries to which they emigrate. In recent years there has been a considerable migration of East Indian coolies to the island of Trinidad, 2,393 having landed there last year. There was a return to Calcutta of 726, carrying with them \$80,000 in money, besides a large quantity of jewels, in which the coolies invest their savings. In the year there were also remittances to India of about \$17,000.—New York Press.

Few people, I fear, nowadays, read Maria Edgeworth; it is a pity. She is one of the finest novelists that ever adorned English literature. It was her tales, it must always be remembered, that inspired Sir Walter Scott to the composition of the "Waverley Novels." He cried aloud and everywhere his admiration for her and his indebtedness to her. Her writings have, however, a high value as historical pictures, altogether apart from their merits as literature; and of all her novels her best is "Castle Rackrent."—T. P. O'Connor, in T. P.'s Weekly, London.

## DAD'S OL' FIDDLE

'Tisn't pulty, that ol' fiddle, hangin' there agin' the wall, But among my household treasures it's the dearest of 'em all; It is scarred an' scratched an' battered, but I've got an idee it, If ol' dad was here to work it, could perduce some music yet.

He was just a country fiddler of the Rack-Back-Davy sort, Had no virtuous trainin', all come to him as a forte, An' among his ripperitory there was one inspirin' tune That would start us all to dancin'; which was "Ol' Zip Coon!"

In the evenin' after supper, when the stock had all bin fed An' the modest skies was blushin' at the sun a-goin' to bed, Dad 'd set an' tune "Ol' Betsy," scrapin' in at the strings, I swear, Till he'd start of Towser howlin' like a death was in the air! Then he'd shet his eyes a minute a-re-lectin' what to play.

An' would start with "Camptown Races," take a whirl at "Ol' Dog Tray," Us a-waitin' with impatience, fur we knowed that purty soon He would start the strings a-quiverrin' with "Ol' Zip Coon!"



At the big corn huskin' dances in the country dad was there In his Sunday-go-to-meetin's, an' with bear's lie on his hair, An' he'd git to jerkin' music that 'd charm a eppycure.

With his cowhide boot a-beatin' to the measure on the floor, They would waltz an' they would shottish, dance the "Ol' Virginia Reel," Till they'd see him puttin' "Betsy" into stry careful tune, Then they'd pound the lumber lively to his "Ol' Zip Coon!"

He's a-layin' in the shadder of a willer tree back there, Where the music of his fiddle ust to 'lectrify the air, An' the instrument a-hangin' on the wall he left to me

As a every-day reminder of his blessed memory, An' I often git a-thinkin' if he had "Ol' Betsy" now Up among his feller spirits there 'd be a jolly row! He'd torgit he was in heaven an' would git her into tune, An' would have the angels raggin' to his "Ol' Zip Coon!"

—Denver Weekly News-Times.

## Diseases of Fear.

If you are afflicted with an unreasonable fear of anything, do not waste time being ashamed of yourself; hurry at once to a doctor, advises a writer in Success Magazine. A writer in the Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette has compiled a list of fear diseases from which it appears that everything, from screaming at mice to being afraid to go home in the dark, is a well recognized mental ailment.

The tramp is in reality a sufferer from ergophobia, or fear of work, often complicated with aquaphobia and apophobia, which makes him shun the bathtub. Siderophobia and astrophobia cause timid ladies to go into the closet when it thunders and lightens. Any number of people have cat and dog phobias. Phantophobia is what you would have if you were afraid of your shadow, while an all-around, unqualified coward might be called a phantophobia. The list is long and includes almost every human weakness except the actress' horror of publicity.

## What She Was.

Flossie and Mabel, touring the country on one of the famous see-it-if-you-can excursions, were tramping the streets of New Orleans. A comely brunette of delicate complexion and stately carriage swung graciously by them.

Flossie, excitedly nodding toward her, whispered loudly, "Oh, look, Mabel! There goes one of them beautiful octagons."

"Huh!" exclaimed Mabel, "what a goose you are, Flossie, dear. That isn't what they call them at all. She is a pronounced nectarine."—Success Magazine.

## The Point of View.

"Isn't it dreadful the way these frauds and ways to cheat and swindle are being discovered? Just look at this page of the paper—full of them!" "And here's a long article about the customs officers holding all travelers to a strict investigation."

"Isn't that just too mean! How is Cousin Anne going to get through to me those lovely gloves she bought for me in Paris?"—Baltimore American.

## Good Intentions.

Said Charon to Diabolus, "Your pavement's simply awful! To leave your streets in such a fix is surely quite unlawful." "The contract's let for street repairs," Replied the Prince Imperial; "But not till New Year's Day is past Shall we have good material."—Success Magazine.

## SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

Nearly 318,000 marriages took place in France last year.

Over 2,000 pounds of rose petals are used in the manufacture of one pound of attar of roses perfume.

During business hours the southern-most square mile of Manhattan island has a population of 200,000.

In a series of telephonic experiments a German scientist has made magnets, alternating current transformers, and even dynamos talk without the use of vibrating plates or membranes.

The United States capitol receives its annual bath a short time before Congress convenes, the toilet articles used consisting of about 2,500 feet of hose in the expert hands of one company of the fire department. Powerful streams of water at high pressure remove dust, spider webs, insects of all kinds, birds nests and other foreign substances from the many crevices.

The Archaeological Society has made five excavations around the walls of the amphitheater in King Arthur's round-table field in Monmouthshire, England, and the searchers found the main entrance, the sand which formed the bed of the arena, and a corner stone. From inscriptions on this stone they trace the date of the theater back to 110 A. D., or 1,800 years.—Popular Mechanics.

A close study of the water supply for the operation of the locks under present plans shows that the available amount of water on the isthmus is not sufficient to maintain, at all times, in the canal, the forty feet of depth stipulated for by the law. In dry years the modern Dreadnought of the navy, the large carriers of freight and the army transports will not be able to use the canal.—Julio F. Sorsano, in Van Norden Magazine.

The University of Pennsylvania was the first academic institution in America to have a professor of German. Even from the earliest days of the college the institution had a professor of modern languages which included German, and this professorship was occupied by Professor Creamer, who was himself of German descent. In 1780 a closer connection was formed between the University of Pennsylvania and the Germans by establishing the German institutes.

Sow a large white sponge full of rice, oats or wheat. Then place it for a week or ten days in a shallow dish, and, as the sponge will absorb the moisture, the seeds will begin to sprout before many days. When this has fairly taken place, the sponge may be suspended by means of cords from a hook in the top of the window where a little sun will enter. It will thus become a living mass of green, requiring only a little occasional moisture.—Suburban Life for January.

A record was established by the fish commission in the distribution of fish and fish eggs for propagation and hatching purposes during the fiscal year 1909, when the output aggregated 2,117,131,911. This is 240,000,000 more fish and eggs than were distributed during the previous year. Whitefish and several varieties of perch and fat-fish were used in greatest numbers. Vast quantities of the fry of the cod and the lobster also went out. Altogether the commission distributed the eggs, fry, fingerlings, yearlings and adults of almost forty kinds of fish.

The most luxurious prison in the world is in Japan, about fifteen miles from Tokio. In the midst of gardens, where flourish medlars and cherry trees, where are seen ornamental ponds with water lilies, arises the palatial prison. The cells are spacious and airy. The lighting throughout is by electricity, and the apartments are furnished luxuriously. Bathrooms with marble baths, hot and cold water being laid on; dressing rooms and reading rooms—nothing seems to be wanted to make the sojourn in this prison pleasant. In fact, it seems an ideal country residence.

In Ireland spiders are largely concerned in the cure of ague in many localities the sufferer is advised to swallow a living spider. This ought to make one shake nearly as bad as the ague, and no doubt the better way would be to get a large black spider in a box and leave it to perish, as is the vogue in Somerset and some of the nearby counties. A living faith in this old world superstition must have been alive until quite recently, for the making of spider pills is not an uncommon industry in New England, and Longfellow tells of a popular cure for the fever "wearing a spider hung around one's neck in a nutshell."—Chicago Tribune.

According to the legend, the Spaniard's inn, still in existence, was a rendezvous of Dick Turpin, and it is said that in the stable there he killed his Black Beat. But the innkeeper has other associations. He is the garden for the making of spider pills in New England, and Longfellow tells of a popular cure for the fever "wearing a spider hung around one's neck in a nutshell."—Chicago Tribune.

Irving makes Dribble, the poor scribbler of Grab street, say that during his rambles he visited Hamstead and occasionally took his dinner at the table. It is with Dickens, John Forster, MacLise and their friends, however, that Jack Straw's castle is most intimately associated. In a bedroom which Dickens occupied until he was seen the chair in which the great writer used to sit.—Westminster Gazette.

## RAM'S HORN BLASTS

Warning Notes Calling the Wicked to Repentance.



A broken promise is an unpaid debt. Even a fool may pass for a man of sense. A bald-headed man at the prayer meeting is worth two at the theater.

If you let a falsehood lie it will soon die. Wouldn't it be delightful if one had the compliments paid us were true?

We never know what our friends will do for us until we get into trouble. It is ever common to remember other peoples' faults and forget our own.

The shorter the step from one sin to another, the sooner one wears out his soul. Originality is a fragment of another man's thought linked with a bit of one's own.

What foolishness to live to pile up dollars if the devil is to be the only gainer by it.

Many a man's head has been turned by somebody else coming into church a little late.

Not everyone who goes to church is a Christian, nor everyone who stays at home a sinner.

Angels know how much we want the Lord to come, by what we are doing to help make the devil go.

God provided for the worst that could happen to man before He breathed into him the breath of life. A man's vices lead him into the broad way, and after that he takes the lead and drags the vices after him.

The man who would be worthy of honest praise must practice constantly the virtues which inspire honest men to praise their fellow men.

The "drys" think that if the saloon is not taken out of politics, politics will die. The "wets" fear that if the saloon is taken out of politics, both will die.

One may part with his health in the acquiring of millions—then health is not worth as much as money, but after that health is worth more, for his millions cannot buy it back.

## DIFFICULT CONVERSATION.

The American traveler, as a rule, is well informed as to all that concerns a stranger far from his own country; but he sometimes finds it difficult to understand why any other language than that of his native land should be used: Two Americans traveling to Germany wanted to send a telegram, and went to the office. The operator could not speak a word of English, the Americans were ignorant of German, and after a conversation in which each party politely explained matters to the further mystification of the other, one of the Americans turned to his companion and said: "Well, Jim, take one of those blanks and write out the message. Then he'll understand it well enough."

This "Jim" did, but the operator pushed back the paper with an amiable smile, but a convincing shake of his head.

The travelers looked at each other, puzzled, but "Jim" had an idea.

"I tell you what I'll do. I'll spell it out to him. The lunkhead can't help but understand if the words are all spelled to him, letter by letter."

Fortunately the message was short, and the clerk listened politely, but without a sign of comprehension. He evidently considered it another peculiar development of a strange language.

Seeing no signs of understanding, the men went in search of a friend who could write their message for them, and explained to him that the telegraph operator was evidently a stupid person.

"I don't blame him for not understanding English," said one, "but what I do blame him for is because he can't tell what a word is after you've spelled it for him. That's what I call more than ignorant!"

## A Long Felt Want.

An American once went to Windsor castle and insisted upon seeing Queen Victoria. He was told that 't was quite impossible, as an audience with the queen could be had only by appointment. Still he persisted, and then they told him flat-footed that before seeing the queen he must state the object of his visit. He said he wanted to show her a new piece of furniture, a throne bed—a perfect throne by day and a perfect bed by night.

## Her Sad Finish.

"Did you ever know a girl to die for love?" "Yes."

"Did she just fade away and die because some man deserted her?" "No. She just took in washing and worked herself to death because the man she loved married her."—Houston Post.

## Between Friends.

Miss Homeleigh—Perhaps you won't believe it, but a strange man tried to kiss me once. Miss Cutting—Really?—Well, he'd have been a strange man if he'd tried to kiss you twice.

The average man spends more money on a foolish habit than he does on his wife's hat.