

## Topics of the Times

Plenty of land in this country yet.

No woman ever expects glad tidings to come by telegraph.

We observe that President Diaz will "virtually retire." The emphasis is on the "virtually."

Indeed, my boy, the man who won't get up in the morning can't expect to get up in the world.

Collector Loeb says people are becoming more honest. Mr. Loeb has done what he could to show them how.

Is there a Santa Claus, or isn't there? If you leave it to us, we say "yes," and a reckless old boy he is getting to be, too.

A University of Wisconsin professor believes schools should be kept open all year. He doesn't seem to care what the boys think of him.

Professor Hyslop wants \$50,000 to carry on the work of psychical research. This must be an appeal to a philanthropist with the right spirit.

Hereupon arises the necessity of reconstructing the statue of Liberty Enlightening the World, or of taking it down. Gee-bernard Shaw does not like it.

The dukes are not at all afraid that the English people will decide to abolish the House of Lords. No house of lords has ever been abolished in England.

The \$5,000 paid by a New York yachtman to a sailor for saving his life represents the average value of a life as estimated for American jury awards.

In the sugar scandal they are after "the men higher up." When last seen the said men were climbing hastily over the ridgepole and dropping off into the alley.

A Philadelphia preacher has arranged matters so that half a dozen of the prettiest young women in his congregation act as ushers. A largely increased attendance of men is reported.

A New York widow who possessed many millions and might have married some foreigner with a title has become the wife of an American who isn't even a colonel on any governor's staff. Aren't some women strange creatures?

It is one of the most scandalous facts in our national life that it is not the ignorant and degraded elements of society that are the most serious menace to our institutions and our common life, but representatives of the intelligent and educated classes.

Canada talks about an army of 50,000 men for her prairie provinces. Such an army would be too little to be a menace to the United States and too big for any other purpose. In either case it will be too expensive for a country that needs all its money to develop its resources.

The race has outlived all its threatened dooms. Physicians tell us that we waste a billion dollars annually because potential laborers are needlessly sick with fevers and tuberculosis, which can be prevented. We are threatened with lumber famines, pulp famines, food famines and coal famines. And still we survive. Whole races have been wiped out through the ignorance of the past, by disease, and by the failure to husband natural resources. But the race thrives again, and nature still proves inexhaustible. We "rise on the stepping stones of our dead selves" to better things.

To a degree that men of the early nineteenth century never dared to hope, society is being internationalized, and all the serious aspects of human endeavor and speculation are more and more being faced by men as men, and not as members of races or as citizens of nations. They agree in intellectual aims, social desires, human feelings; but they differ radically in the speech with which they define their aims, their hopes and their desires. Are they to be forever debarred from complete interchange of their ideas and ideals by lack of a common speech? Are the records of their united action always to be written in diverse tongues? Is the language of science to be shaped by Babel?

The demonstration made this year of the agricultural possibilities of Alaska may serve to quiet the alarm of a failing food supply. Vegetables raised in the Tanana valley, within two degrees of the Arctic circle, have been placed on exhibition in the Eastern States surpassing the products of some of the famous market gardening regions, both in quality and yield. There are potatoes weighing three pounds each, which would take the premium for quality at most any county fair. The yield is said to be as high as 540 bushels to an acre. There are cabbages, turnips, beets, mangels, carrots and parsnips, all larger and finer than the average. There are also fine specimens of wheat, oats, barley, timothy and red-top hay. Although the growing season up in that latitude is short, the

crops can be raised in much shorter time, owing to the prolonged sunshine of the summer day. It may be said that the products of Alaska will never make much impression upon the world's food supply, but Alaska is not the whole story. There are immense northern areas in Canada and across the straits in Siberia that will, with proper cultivation, produce food in great abundance. The distribution of this food will be a question of transportation, which is in the way of being solved by the projection and construction of railroads, through regions which were formerly supposed to be regions of eternal snow and ice. A large percentage of the arable surface of the earth is as yet unworked by the plow. The time when the population will outrun the means of subsistence is many generations ahead of us, and may perhaps never come, as by the time the land is all occupied intensive cultivation may indefinitely increase the yield of the soil.

The discussion of the lists of "best sellers" that are published monthly has been renewed owing to some interesting "confessions" of a popular novelist, who admits that he manufactures harmless but "thrilling" fiction for this great market. It is intimated that many authors and publishers would like to see the lists discontinued, for in many instances they represent wishes rather than facts, and in some cases they create false impressions. However, the honest lists of best sellers have never given any support to the assertion of some hasty critics that only ephemeral and worthless novels figure in these lists. The fact is, as the anonymous writer who has confessed his sins points out, that "the best novels by the best English and American writers have generally been included in these lists." Even so "old-fashioned" a novelist as De Morgan, who makes no concessions to the fads and fancies of the day, has "shared the ignominy of popular success," to say nothing of Mrs. Wharton, Mrs. Ward, Churchill, Owen Wister, Hewlett, Wells and others. Undoubtedly many of the best sellers are not literature at all, but the qualities which please in them—romance, plot, adventure, humor—are generally wholesome and natural. "There are not enough novels of the first order," to quote the "confessions" further, "to satisfy the popular demand, and while the people wait they take inferior books, which have no aim but to amuse." And there is this difference—the really good novels are steady sellers after they disappear from the lists of best sellers, while time made-to-order variety is short-lived and has no hope of resurrection. And this latter fact suggests an adjunct to the system of ascertaining and publishing lists of best sellers. These lists, apart from the element of dishonesty that has been charged against some of them, merely indicate the state of the market. What publishers and lovers of letters might do to encourage good work and artistic education is to prepare and furnish semi-annual lists of steady sellers, of novels and volumes of essays, biography and history that have survived and that stand out as works of merit and value—works that the great public should not forget. How many books deserve praise and commendation in a retrospective survey of literature? These are interesting questions, and the proposed lists of steady sellers, books "crowned" by the consensus of critics and thoughtful readers, would answer them to some extent.

### GOD HAD HELPED HIM.

Ruse Adopted by Rabbi to Cure Moral and Physical Sufferer. A story is told of Rabbi Wilderwitz, who is well known on the east side, the New York Press says. A recently arrived skeptic and cynic came to see him once with a "case" intended to put the reverend gentleman "up a tree." He called and begged to be healed and consoled. "I suffer," said the skeptic, "from two maladies. I have a great weakness—I cannot tell the truth, and that hurts my soul terribly. And I have lost the sense of taste in my mouth; something is wrong with my tongue." Mr. Wilderwitz studied the man a moment, seemed to be perplexed, and said: "Come again to-morrow. It is a difficult case. I shall have to reflect upon it. If God wills, I shall be able to help you."

When the patient returned next day the rabbi brought forth a pill he had prepared, told the doubly afflicted man to open his mouth and shoved it in. The pill was of considerable size. Scarcely had the patient allowed it to dissolve in his mouth when he began to spit, with an expression of the greatest disgust, and exclaimed: "What do you mean? That's tar and sulphur and kerosene you gave me. Do you want to poison me? Phui!"

"Well, what are you making so much noise about?" laughed the rabbi, with great heartiness. Hasn't God performed a miracle? You have told the truth; it is really tar and sulphur and kerosene. And you have actually recovered the sense of taste in your mouth!"

### A Doubter.

"I have just had an idea." "Excuse me, you'll have to produce your Eskimos and submit your data to Copenhagen before I can credit your assertion."—Houston Post.

When the coal supply is low, one member of the family stays in bed longer in the morning to keep warm, and refuses to worry about it. That member is an Optimist.

### REMINDED.

After She Had Heard the Story Miss Cordelia Wanted to Telephone.

"We're all upset here this morning," said the young woman who was showing ready-made suits to Miss Cordelia Grant. "One of the girls in our department lost her mother very suddenly. I've been trying to get together some black things for her to wear."

Miss Cordelia looked disturbed. She had suddenly remembered a hurt expression on her own mother's face. It had been just before she left the house that morning. Then, with a murmur of sympathy, she gave her attention once more to deciding between the gray stripe and the small brown check.

Half an hour later, when she had chosen her suit and was waiting for the fitter in a small mirror-lined room, the saleswoman, who was waiting, too, spoke again of the matter that was filling her heart.

"One of our girls lost her mother last night," she said, quite forgetting that she had told it. "I had just finished getting together some black things for her when you came in."

"Yes; you were telling me," Miss Cordelia answered, with the same troubled look that had come before.

"Was it? Well, I can't think of much else. It was so terribly sudden. Her mother had supper all ready, just as usual—they two lived together,—and then she dropped dead, a few minutes before the girl got home."

"Oh!"

"Wasn't it terrible? Heart failure, I suppose. And Frances was telling me only yesterday she didn't know how she could ever live without her mother—they were so wrapped up in each other. Wasn't it strange that should happen on the very day? One good thing, though. She told me that if either one of 'em should be taken, there'd be nothing but sweetness for the other to remember—no hard words, ever. I'm glad of that." She wiped her eyes. "What is it, madam? Something missing?"

"No," said Miss Cordelia, who had been searching through her bag. "Only I must get a nickel somewhere and send a telephone message."

"I have one right here. Yes, and welcome. I tell you, as soon as I heard of Frances' trouble, I couldn't do a thing till I got a dime changed and called up my mother, just to make sure she was safe. All I could think was what if a certain remark I made before I left the house should be the last word I'd ever have a chance to speak to her. When I got to the telephone, there I found two other girls waiting to do the same thing."

A gleam of sisterhood lighted Miss Cordelia's face. "It's exactly what I want of this nickel," she confessed, as she took it.—Youth's Companion.

### SQUIRREL AND THE PLAGUE

Rodent Is Shown to Be an Incubator of the Black Death.

One hot day in the summer of 1903 a German blacksmith in the country town of Pacheco, Cal., wanted a mess of ground squirrel for his dinner. He banked his forge, hung up his leather apron, took the old shotgun from its pegs on the wall and had an excellent afternoon's sport in a nearby field. That evening he feasted on fat, tender broiled squirrels. Three days later he was taken violently ill—so ill, in fact, that the physician who was called sent him to the German hospital in San Francisco. The doctor, a man of keen intelligence and acute observation, realized that he was dealing with a disease which he had never met before and the exact identity of which he was unable to determine.

At this time bubonic plague existed in Chinatown, San Francisco, and the task of eradicating it had been assigned to a young officer of the public health and marine hospital service who was afterward to take foremost rank among the world's authorities on that disease. His ability was already recognized by the medical profession, and he was called to diagnose the strange disease which had attacked the country blacksmith. He saw at once that the patient was suffering from bubonic plague—the black death—and was able to prove this bacteriologically after the death of the man.

Passed Assistant Surgeon George W. McCoy of the federal laboratory in San Francisco, whose bacteriological work on the ground squirrel marks an advance in plague investigation, finds that many of the ground squirrels sent in for examination have the disease in light form or are recovering from a severe attack. William Colby Rucker says in Harper's Weekly. Usually when the germs from such a case are injected into rats or guinea pigs they die quite as rapidly as if they had been given a dose of the most virulent plague bacteria known. In other words, although the disease does not seem to kill off all of the squirrels after it has traveled through several generations, it retains its virulence when injected into another species. The squirrel, then, is the animal in which the disease is kept alive, a sort of natural living incubator, as it were, and when plague leaves the squirrels for another species widespread death and suffering follow in its train. Dr. Blue's officers and men have scoured the city of San Francisco and ridden it of plague. The present movement looks to the eradication of this outside focus, the extermination of the disease from California.

It keeps the State legislatures busy making new laws as fast as the old ones are broken.

The man who makes a specialty of looking wise usually isn't.

# PAPERS BY THE PEOPLE

### BEWARE OF THE MAN WHO TELLS.

By Bart Kennedy.



If you have a brick handy, present it without ceremony to the man who is always telling you what other people say about you. You will injure him with the brick, and you will doubtless be locked up for assault; but you will gain in the end. For you will have rid yourself of a friend who is more dangerous than the most dangerous foe.

Gossip in itself is not a bad thing at all. And even scandal is shorn in a vast measure of its power to injure when the person about whom it is circulated knows nothing of it. If you don't know what people are saying about you, the thing largely is, in effect, not said. And, even if you do know what is said, absolutely the best way of dealing with it is to wear a bold, unconscious front. If you do this you will always find people to take your part. This is as true of human nature as it is true that it loves gossip and scandal.

It is the one who tells who really causes the trouble. This dealer in the truth that is necessarily in part a lie causes more mischief than any other kind of criminal. I say criminal advisedly, for the man or the woman who is in the habit of telling people what others say about them creates far more mischief and causes far more misery than the more honest and bolder type of criminal who is sent into penal servitude. The law is unable to touch them; I know; but their crimes are those that the law is unable to punish.

### COMPETITION AND BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

By Prof. George B. Foster.



How does it come that weaker man has maintained his place upon the earth, while much stronger animals of the primeval world succumbed to their fate long ago? Only through social life, only through the bond of common, if so be, primitive order, the first traces of civilization! And the higher humanity has ascended the ladder of development, the clearer is it to be seen that the power which makes man strong to triumph in the battle of life, thus to fill the law of social progress, consists in increased capacity to serve the interests of other men, to understand the problems of other men, and to serve other men's lives.

In fair competition man sees all the foolish scheming and striving which goes on around him and makes him sorry for the people; he tries to be strong so that he may not be upset by the general confusion of moral ideas; he feels that he must be better, even if he stands alone, than all his so-called competitors. If he remains strong, he will become ever stronger, ever freer, a fountain of life, a stirring example for others, showing them new paths of life. It is ours, then, to seek the best, to excel all who lag behind in that which is

truly human, good and great. The truest love, the finest sense for truth, open righteousness, magnanimity, and gentleness—in a word, brotherhood—all this secures a victory in which the vanquished share in the triumph!

### POWER OF MORAL COURAGE IN WAR.

By Lieut. Gen. Reginald C. Hart.



It is instructive to study the moral forces that contributed so largely to the Japanese victories. It is sufficient to say that religion, call it any other name you like, enters into the daily private and public life of the whole nation. Boys and girls alike are brought up to treat their parents with honor, respect and unselfish devotion, and to revere past generations to whom all living men are so much indebted. In Japan the young men and women of the nobility and wealthy classes would think it dishonorable to devote the best years of their lives to idleness and the result of selfish pleasure, because they are taught that it is wrong not to work.

The causes of courage are mostly moral. There is some mysterious working in the minds of ordinary men that gives a force of character that determines them to ignore or control the strong natural instinct of self-preservation and to accept self-sacrifice more or less completely.

Religious feeling is a moral cause that produces an almost irresistible moral force. We need only recall the religious enthusiasm of the followers of Moses, Joshua, Mohammed, Cromwell and scores of others. Indeed, the greatest things have been done by armies of God-fearing men.

### FATHER THE BEST ADVISER OF THE BOY.

By John A. Howland.



As a matter of stern, hard common sense truth, most of the advice which to-day is given to the young man in person, long before ought to have been impressed upon the father, in order that the growing boy and young man might have been made open to all else that may come to him in spoken advice and personal experience.

It isn't easy to train the normal boy, who is overfull of high spirits and lightness of heart and feet and full of high spirits and lightness of heart and feet and hands. But when it is brought home to him that some of his heedless actions just a little later in life may "put him out of business"—the application is direct and indisputable.

Hold that boy to his accountability as you would hold the stranger boy. If you won't do this, don't ask that son to do anything. Open, irresponsible idleness is the better for him by far. He will have a better show, wholly without training, than if lazily and indifferently half trained.

### THE SPEED OF THE PIGEON.

Racing pigeons are the fleetest of all creatures. They have maintained a speed of a mile and a half a minute for a hundred miles, according to a writer in Collier's, and they have flown seven hundred miles between the rising and the setting of the sun.

Pigeons have flown a thousand miles back to the home loft. In 1904 a bird covered that distance in five days, two hours and fifteen minutes, proving how unerring is the mysterious homing instinct that will drive them across the continent without swerving. But this test is not true sport. The birds simply hurl themselves against time and space till they are played out. They can never race again.

The racer rises into the air with heavy, slow wing pulsations, then, once poised over the starting point, there is a swifter, shorter beat, and the time is "hit up" to the third and permanent wing rhythm, rapid and steady as a pulse beat, which carries them home.

They fly three hundred feet high over land, but low over water. Their enemies as they fly are wind, rain, gunners and hawks. They do all their flying between sunrise and sunset. If caught out overnight, they fend for themselves till dawn.

The homing instinct is lifelong. During the Franco-Prussian War the Germans caught a homing pigeon which was on its way into beleaguered Paris. The bird was kept prisoner for ten years. It was then released. It immediately returned to its old home.

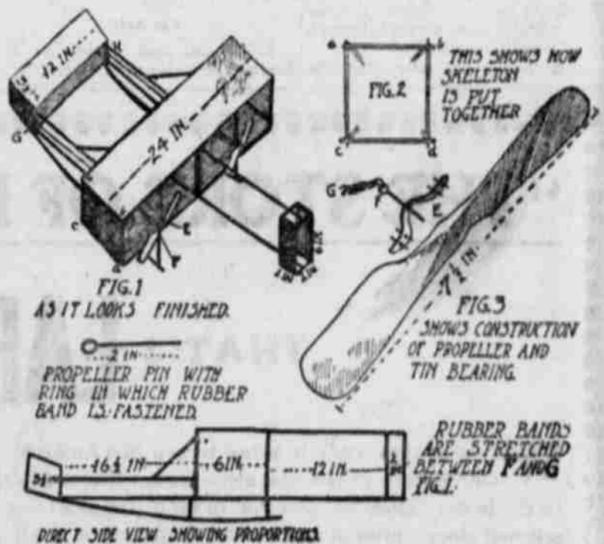
### GREAT NORWEGIAN POET.



BJORNSTJERNE BJORNSON.

Bjornstjerne Bjornson, who has been seriously ill in Paris, may be called the Grand Old Man of Norwegian literature and drama. He was born in 1832, and in 1857 became director of the theater at Bergen. From 1860 to 1862 he lived in Denmark, Italy and Germany, and from the latter year to 1872 was director of the Christiania

### ANY BRIGHT BOY WITH TOOLS CAN NOW MAKE AN UP-TO-DATE AEROPLANE ALL BY HIMSELF.



Boys, if you follow these plans, you can make an aeroplane that will fly: First, buy a bamboo fishpole. Study the plan and cut pieces of the proper length. Split the pole to get pieces a quarter of an inch wide. This gives very stout and light rods.

Make three box forms, according to the scale in the plans. Don't drill holes in the bamboo, but bind the ends together with heavy linen thread, moistened with glue. Cover the tops and ends of these boxes with a light linen cloth, tightly stretched. Glue the cloth to the framework and then paint the cloth with a mixture which you obtain by shaving a paraffin candle into a pint of benzine, allowing the mixture to dissolve over night. Now you have three boxes. One is the forward rudder. It is 12 inches long and 3 1/2 inches square. The largest box is the main biplane. It is 24 inches long and 6 inches square. The smaller box is the rear rudder, which stands upright. The larger box ought to be well braced with six uprights, three in front and three in the rear.

Any boy who will study the plans carefully can see how the boxes are fastened together in their proper relations. The forward box, which does the lifting, ought to be tilted upward.

Underneath the aeroplane fasten two runners, which will take up the shock when the flyer alights. The next thing is to carve two propellers. Fasten on the middle of these, with small tacks, a tin plate and solder strongly to the plate the wire propeller pin, which is shown in the drawing. A glass bead ought to be placed between the propeller and the frame at E to act as a washer.

Get two long, light rubber bands—they ought to be at least eighteen inches in length. Attach one end of the rubbers to the propeller pins and the other to the framework at G and H. Twist the rubbers about 150 times, being careful that both propellers are equally "wound." Release the aeroplane when holding it above your head, holding the propellers with your thumbs until you are ready to allow the plane to fly. By adjusting the fore and rear rudders you will finally be able to direct your aeroplane in the air as you please. By keeping the rubbers covered with talcum powder, they will last longer than otherwise.

Theater and editor of the Norske Folkblad. In 1874 he bought a farm in the heart of Norway, where he has since generally spent the summer, at other seasons living much in Paris, Rome and the Tyrol. Among his works that have been translated into English are two novels of Norwegian peasant life, "A Happy Boy" and "The Fisher Lass," and among others "The Heritage of the Karts," "Paul Lange" and "Laboremus." He is the author of nu-

merous plays, his latest having only recently been in rehearsal at Dresden.

The Explanation.

Fred—There seems to be a lot more fuss made of Miss A.'s singing than Miss K.'s, and I am sure Miss K. has by far the richer voice. Jack—Ah, yes, but Miss A. has by far the richer father.

What the man with a good job needs is a fire-insurance policy.