

TIMELY TOPICS.

The spleen is an organ of the body which for years has been a piece of resistance for the learned, as its precise uses are a puzzle.

Elisha E. Everett, a cabinet maker and inventor, of Philadelphia, who has taken out twenty or thirty different patents for mechanical appliances, is now at work on an invention that, if successful, may completely revolutionize ocean and railway travel.

A human relic of Pompeii has been discovered among the ruins in an exceptionally well preserved state. It is the full-length fossil of a man who was probably struck while in flight at the time of the destruction of the city.

Khartoum is a name that is known among the wildest savages of equatorial Africa who never heard of Paris or London; to them it is the center of all that is great, and it is the capital of everything.

It will be remembered that in the spring of 1883 it was announced by Queen Victoria that the royal household would not eat lamb during the season. This edict had the effect, according to the official statement of live stock for 1884, to place the proportion of lambs to sheep at fifty-nine per cent.

Richard A. Proctor, the eminent astronomer, says that the age of the earth is placed by some at 500,000,000 years, and still others of later time, among them the Duke of Argyll, place it at 10,000,000 years.

"From the frontiers of Guatemala to those of the United States," says the Mexican Financier, "we have a vast domain whose growth of precious woods is truly enormous.

A New York paper asserts that "the nun of Kenmare, Miss Cusack, has opened a school in connection with a convent at Nottingham, England, for the training of domestic servants, and her enterprise suggests the need of schools for servants

in New York. The difficulty of obtaining competent servants is the cause of much aggravation to metropolitan housekeepers, and they would be delighted to have a school for the proper training of servants established in our city.

A great many people have perhaps considered that cleanliness had little to do with the cholera and that the ravages of the disease are as likely to be as great in cleanly cities as in uncleanly ones.

The New York Financial Chronicle has compiled some elaborate statistics in regard to the production and manufacture of cotton in the world in the last eighteen years which show that in the last twelve years there has been an increase in the average annual production of 59 6-10 per cent.

A Gum Game. The finest grades of crude rubber come from Para, the trees being tapped and the sap gathered by means of paddles which are dipped in the tub of sap and held over a smoky fire that the coating may harden.

The origin of the word "mugwump" is thus given in the New York Critic by J. Hammond Trumbull, who is said to be the only man in the country who is able to read Eliot's Indian Bible.

Chinese Soldiers. The Chinese troops are uniformed in the hues of the rainbow, beside black and white. Imagine one hundred laundrymen in scarlet blouses and royal purple trousers drawn up in line, adjoining them a company in pure white, then a company in bright green, then one in light blue, and you have a Chinese regiment.

Washington's tomb, at Mount Vernon, Va., is seventeen miles south of the capital.

Magnetized Watches.

Some very curious things concerning watches come under a watchmaker's observation at times. A watchmaker says: I remember a lady who used to bring me her watch sometimes as often as once a week—it was either too fast or too slow with her; while it hung up in the shop it ran as steady as the State house clock.

Horrors of Former Warfare.

In Anton Gindely's "History of the Thirty Year's War" we find the following: Such were the atrocities committed upon their victims by these robbers, that the old chroniclers have produced nothing more frightful even in regard to the Huns, Avars and Mongols.

Agriculture in Alaska.

Alaska has very little to offer in the shape of agricultural resources, as there is very little flat ground near the seashore. In some of the towns small vegetable gardens are kept, and the products are quite as good as those in any part of the Pacific slope.

The Armies of Europe.

Table with columns: Country, Soldiers, Cost. Lists data for Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Roumania, Russia, Serbia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey.

A New Word Frequently Seen.

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In a Paris restaurant: "I say, sir you are carrying off a silver sugar bowl!" "Oh! a thousand pardons; I thought it was my hat!"—Le Figaro.

Forty years ago there was not a telegraph office in existence. To-day the number is 51,840.

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"MOUNTAIN OF PITY."

The Great National Pawnshop of Mexico—Its Origin and Methods.

Everybody who knows much about Mexico has heard of Senor De Peter Romero de Terreros. Peter Terreros, a shop-keeper of limited means, conceived what was at first considered the wildest of ideas. It was to drain the abandoned Real del Pasos by means of a tunnel through the hard rock a mile and a quarter long from the level of the stream till it should strike the Santa Brigada shaft.

He it was who founded the celebrated Monte de Piedad in the City of Mexico—one of the most beneficent institutions in the world—and in the year 1775 endowed it with \$300,000. The name Monte de Piedad, means literally a "Mountain of Pity"—and was not misapplied, for more than a hundred years this national pawnshop was a sure protection to the public from the ruinous extortions of usurers, by whom, no doubt, Peter Terreros had suffered in his days of obscurity.

The directors of the Monte de Piedad determined to increase its capacities for usefulness by adding to its pawnbroking business the operations of a banking establishment. Under the new charter then obtained it was authorized to issue notes of circulation, called certificates, of denominations from \$1 to \$1,000.

The Stomach and the Conscience.

The theory that the stomach dominates the conscience through the appetite was unfolded by Carlyle. He prophesied that the kitchen-range was to be throne and altar of the future. He said that the grid-iron would be brandished as a censor in the coming temple of humanity.

Governor Fish's Diplomacy.

Governor Hamiton Fish was noted for his department, and he took great pride, while secretary of state, in sending to the courts of Europe in a diplomatic capacity gentlemen whose dress and manners would not excite comment. He was much concerned, however, when it became his duty to commission Horace Maynard, of Tennessee, as minister to Turkey, and Godlove S. Orth, of Indiana, as minister to Austria.

"Mr. Orth, I have a favor to ask of you." "Anything I can do for you, Mr. Secretary, I'll be glad to." "Thank you; Mr. Orth, thank you, sir, you are very good. Mr. Maynard, you know, is an excellent gentleman, but he is not accustomed to the ways of society as you or I are."

The hint was taken, and Mr. Orth was noted among the diplomatists at Vienna for his faultless attire. Mr. Maynard, with his long black hair and Indian features, was not so apt a scholar.—Benz Perley Poore.

Feminine Navigators.

The Washington correspondent of the Providence Journal relates the following funny incident: Mr. Key, the agent of our society with the long name, who has to look after abused animals used on the canal, impounded, a few days since, a sorry-looking old sore-backed mule, but it was not long before three women entered the society's office—an elderly dame and two young mademoiselles, all robust, tanned and hardheaded.

"But—" interjected the stationkeeper. "No buts about it, sir. The mule is my property, and I must have it, and have it quick, too."

Key looked nonplussed. He knew he couldn't convince the woman that she had violated the law, and, after a short conversation with the stationkeeper, Mr. Key said: "Madam, your mule is in the back yard. Go, take him; the charge against you will be withdrawn."

Empress Eugenie and her Son.

I have seen the ex-Empress Eugenie at table perhaps a dozen times, and I never saw any one eat so little that seemed to be in as good health as she did. Her son (poor boy!), however, made up for her, for he had a very healthy appetite. While at Shoeburyness Military school he had several photographs taken by one of the soldiers, who had some talent that way, and he gave me a copy with his autograph on it.

Cremation has been adopted by authority at Lisbon, Portugal. In time of epidemic it is made compulsory.

A writer in Nature says he saw a wasp attack a fly and cut its head off.