

Topics of the Times

It is too late now for the czar to take a course in jiu jitsu.

When the Igorrotes returned to their native land they put on clothes. Probably they quit eating dog meat, also. Their contract had expired.

Mr. Carnegie says the wealthy man is a slave. While we are pretty busy, we are willing to take a day off and help emancipate Mr. Carnegie.

Russell Sage and Mrs. Hetty Green can point to the fact that no college or missionary board has ever rejected any of their \$100,000 donations.

Now that Ella Wheeler Wilcox has concluded her autobiography, there will be some mean folk to insinuate that she is at the chloroforming age.

No, William, there will be no official celebration in Cuba over the pension with which Spain proposes to honor General Weyler for his past services on the island.

A Princeton man recommends religion as a cure for trusts. Once start the trusts in that direction and they would soon have all the religion there is in the country.

That hen-egg-sized diamond was sent through the ordinary registered mail at a cost of 75 cents. Such things are awfully discouraging to the industrious and hard-working train robber.

King Alfonso of Spain is credited with a desire to marry an American girl. But that's nothing. There are plenty of young men right around here who are entertaining a similar desire.

Mrs. Craigie, the English novelist, says women are unfit to sit on juries because their nature does not contain the element of justice. Every man who has been caught in wickedness by his wife will indorse Mrs. Craigie's declaration.

Dr. Wiley, the government chemist, says there is no reason why the average man should not be useful until he is 90 years of age. It is not difficult to guess who would be elected if Wiley and Osler were running against each other for the presidency.

Suppose the newspaper man, every time he hears anyone criticize him or his paper, should retaliate by holding up to the public gaze all the faults and shortcomings of said faultfinder, what would be the result? The editor may not know it all, but he does not live in a community long before he knows a great sight more than he publishes.

Perhaps no species of villainy is more cruel and reprehensible than the adulteration of drugs used in disease and which may murder the invalid they were supposed to benefit. It is fortunate that the Washington authorities have taken the work in hand and have succeeded in unearthing a gang of these scoundrels in Chicago by making raids on the places where bogus drugs were made, confiscating four patrol wagon loads of "medicine" and arresting five persons for misusing the mails.

By observing the laws of health an Ohio doctor assures man that he may live to be 150 years old. That may be true, but the trouble is to find out just what are the laws of health. There are so many lawgivers on the subject that the layman is bound to be puzzled and wonder if the old methodless plan is not as good as any. While it may be of no use to the present generation, doubtless it will attract some attention from the second or third succeeding ones if some man will give a practical demonstration of his theories. When truthful persons can write, "I have used your system for 150 years and never felt better in my life," the rest of the world doubtless will begin to sit up and take notice.

When Monsieur Coppee was shouting insults at the authorities in Paris not long ago in one of the petty political crises which frequently occur in the French capital, he declared that he was ready to sacrifice his liberty and even his life in the defense of the principles which he charged the government with disregarding. At the climax of his obstreperous denunciation of the powers that be he felt a hand on his shoulder, and, turning, saw the prefect of police. Instead of arresting him and hauling him to a dungeon, deep and dark, the prefect said, with a smiling face: "Shout whatever you like and smash windows if the fancy takes you. You can even, if you like, attack the police. My men have strict orders from me never to arrest you, no matter what you may say or do." The French have evidently discovered the best way to destroy the effect of

attacks on the government is to refrain from making martyrs of the attackers. A government has to be pretty sure of itself before it has the courage to pursue this course.

A Yale professor, the statistician of the institution, has made a comparative study of student expenditures and reached results that rich and fond parents desirous of giving their sons the great advantages of a liberal education should carefully consider. After all, the most important function of the college is moral. The mere information supplied by lectures and textbooks can be obtained at home; it is the discipline, the atmosphere of culture and learning, the associations, the traditions and historic background, the personal influence of professors, that combine to give "college education" the value and utility it possesses. In the familiar phrase, the mission of the college is to encourage plain living and high thinking. But in every college there are students who tacitly reverse the formula and proceed on the assumption that the right ideal is high living and plain thinking, or no thinking at all and very little work even of the routine sort. There are not many of these, it is true, but if any course or practice on the part of parents tends to increase their number it cannot be too persistently discouraged. And the Yale statistician shows that an extravagant allowance to a student is a source of moral danger. Poverty is bad for a student; it means, of course, extra work outside and little recreation and opportunity for assimilation and reflection and beneficial associations. But luxury is even worse for the student, because it is more insidious and demoralizing. It is a truism that "as the amount of total expenditures increases the percentage spent on necessities decreases." But it is certainly disquieting to find that "the wealthiest" class of the Yale students "spend more for drinking and smoking than for their room rent and furniture," and that while "under pleasure the highest (wealthiest) class spends more than twice the proportion that the lowest does," on music and charity the order is reversed. The parent who makes too generous an allowance for his college-attending son does him a disservice and an injury. He exposes him to temptation of a kind destructive of the essential mission of the college. The Yale professor says that "the men who take time to spend \$897 a year on pleasure and tobacco and intoxicants do not have time enough left for their regular work to rank high in their class." But this is not the whole of the mischief, nor even the greater part of it. The effect on character, on mental and moral discipline, is of infinitely greater moment. At college enough is better than a feast.

A SINGULAR EXPLOSION.

An Iron Rail Twisted Around the Trunk of a Big Tree.

That an ordinary steel rail can be hurled high in the air and twisted like a piece of wire around the trunk of a big tree seems incredible, yet such a thing recently occurred at Nanaimo, B. C. The explosion from which this curious thing resulted was disastrous in



EFFECT OF AN EXPLOSION.

its general effects. Twelve men lost their lives as a result of it. Great havoc was wrought, and the big rail, which was lying on the ground fully twenty-five feet from the spot at which the explosion occurred, was lifted in the air and wrapped around the trunk of a tree twelve feet away, as if it had been mere wire.

The explosive that did this is known as "gelignite." It is one of the most powerful of the various preparations from gun cotton, composed of blasting gelatine, collodion cotton, absorbent nitrate, sodium carbonate and wood pulp.

So tightly was the rail wrapped about the tree that it cut deeply into the green wood of the trunk and caused big splinters to start out on all sides.

Wanted to Compromise.

Judge Lueders—You are charged with loitering. What have you got to say for yourself?

The Hobo—Nawthin', Jedge, only I don't want youse ter be too bad on me, Dat's all.

Judge Lueders—Well, how will thirty days and a bath strike you?

The Hobo—Say, Jedge; can't youse make it sixty days, an' cut out de wash?

THE POPULAR PULPIT



A BOY'S VISIT TO HIS OLD HOME.

By Rev. Russell H. Conwell, D. D.
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me."
—Luke iv., 18.

When I read the chapter of Christ's home-coming it seems to express clearly how Christ, in His sensitive home-sickness, His love for His home, a part of His character, and His appreciation of all that was domestic and holy in life He must have felt that day when He was going home to Nazareth for the first time after His mother had taken her family and moved away with them years before.

Oh, to think of Him walking up towards that old home alone, forgetful of the past few years and unconscious, in a measure, of the change that must have come to the old people, thinking of the old folks who had grown up and married, and hardly realizing that a new generation had grown up nearly to marriage since He left. Yet He goes in to it with an idea somehow that the years amount to nothing, and that He would find them all the same—that those who loved him, those who cared for him, those who sang for him in the old days, would do the same again. The years had gone by and the boy was returning home.

As he entered the synagogue he was noticed by every one. There was something about his manner and his face which they recognized, and he became at once the center of attraction. Whispers went around the synagogue. "Who is that?" "That is Jesus, the man who has performed so many miracles; the young man who turned the water into wine at Cana; the young man who healed the sick at Capernaum and is now the idol of all people." As the whispers went around they stared at Him still the more.

Seeing Jesus present, the minister of the synagogue who had charge of the ark in which the scrolls were placed went to Him and asked Him, as a stranger, to take the roll of Isaiah and read. When He read the text He gave the scroll to the custodian, who put it back in the ark; and when He sat down all the eyes were fastened on Him, expecting Him to say something strange. They heard such great things about Him from Capernaum that they were curious. He could perform great miracles and they wished to see one. They looked at Him to see what He would do. But He still kept His seat as His custom was in the synagogue. Then He went on with His sermon: "This day is the scripture fulfilled in your ears." He preached a sermon altogether too broad for those sensation seekers. He said to those bigoted Israelites in Nazareth that when the prophet Elijah was sent by the Lord he was sent out to Serepta, unto a woman that was a widow. And many lepers were in Israel in the time of Elisha the prophet, and none of them were cleansed save Naaman, the Syrian, who lived in far off Damascus. He said unto them that no prophet was without honor save in his own country, among his own kin, and then he said: "I can do no mighty works here because of your unbelief." And when they found out that He would not perform any great miracles, and that He had practically spoken against Nazareth and His own people by saying that the Lord had people outside of Nazareth whom He loved as much as He did the Israelites, then indignation took place of their admiration and hate succeeded love. They arose in a mob and replied with angry words, and finally drove Him out of the synagogue.

I wonder if one, in that great congregation, still retained respect for Him and a recognition of His heavenly spirit and still retained love for Him. I think the subsequent historic events are confirmatory of the local tradition that there were two in that synagogue in that day who still held their faith in Him, who sympathized not with the rage of the populace and who felt that in Him was the divine, and who followed Him to Capernaum to become afterwards the founders of the great church in Nazareth which influenced the age from the time of Christ down to the time of the Crusaders. To them, as He should be to all, He became that day a citizen of the whole world.

FRIENDSHIP AND BUSINESS.

By Rev. Frank C. Bruner.

Friendship is born in adversity. Its motherhood knows the sorrows of the world. Much of the so-called friendship is merely whitewash. In theology it will show its white surface, with a heart as black as hell. Take a Cordova with domestic love, dead in its coffin, ready for interment. See it in bunches of men in black cloth with a

top of silk hat, first-class hypocrite, in conferences, conventions and ministerial gatherings, talking more denominationalism than Christ.

There are wells without water, trees without leaves, nights without stars, flowers without fragrance, fields without harvests, pulpits without sermons, gardens without flowers, soldiers without weapons, countries without a cause, furnaces without a fire, singers without a song, ships without a rudder, a religion without faith, homes without mothers, meals without food, a God without any heaven, a friend without a country.

Such is a picture of a friendship, which is as pretentious as the father of hell, that Christ put in a class by itself.

There is one who came to the world—"the friend that sticketh closer than a brother." He touched with his influence the perishing in humanity and cured it of its malady. It took tired hearts and put their weariness into everlasting sleep; went into the garden of humanity and killed the ugly weeds and left it blooming with the blossoms that will cast their fragrance into the centuries, never to die. That is the friendship of God.

ENVIRONMENT AND MORALS.

By Rev. R. A. White.

Place an honest man among commercial rogues, or where business is generally conducted dishonestly, and in



the majority of cases your honest man turns rogue or is beaten in business. Heredity as the prime factor in moral life has received great emphasis. It is no doubtedly significant. But it has been overworked. If man or woman went wrong society attributed it to a bad strain in ancestry somewhere. That settled the matter. Society was guiltless. The boy or girl got badly born, that was all, and the matter was left to the Lord and the child's ancestors. Society washed its hands of the whole responsibility.

There are signs of a wholesome reaction against over-emphasis on heredity. It is becoming increasingly apparent that environment has more to do with life, moral or physical, than heredity. We are the victims of surroundings. Where we live, how we live, the manifold influences, circumstances are the vital and effective forces in life-making.

Science has shown that the struggle for existence and the consequent survival of the fittest is one method of environment by which forms of life are shaped.

Human beings are equally subject to the law and equally susceptible to the influence of surroundings. Place a rogue where business is honestly conducted and he turns honest by force of circumstances or gets beaten in the game. All of which has its significance in our social problems. We shall have slum people so long as we have slums. We shall have vicious people so long as we permit vicious environments their baleful influence upon life. The good folks grow up out of bad conditions and bad people come from good surroundings does not vitiate the general sociological proposition that people are the result of environment more than of native instincts or hereditary tendencies.

Institutions for wayward children are well enough as a panacea, a makeshift, an easy way to get out of social responsibilities. But they do not go deep enough. Note where the majority of your bad boys and girls come from, the kind of homes they have, the streets they live in, the kind and amount of food they have, and then change the conditions so that at least the next generation of children from the same sources will not need the Bridewell. Scarcely a child that enters your penal institutions and graduates a criminal but might have been an honest citizen if his surroundings had been better.

Clean out your moral cesspools of one kind and another and the matter of personal morals will largely take care of itself. Are we not spending the most of our energy at the wrong end of the problem?

SHORT METER SERMONS.

All power is born of sin.
No prayer is lifted on stilted phrases.
Love is the blossom of the tree of life.

The best way to pity a man is to pick him up.

The wealth of a church depends on its work.

A man should not base his call to the ministry on the fact that his mouth waters whenever he sees a chicken.

PARABLE ABOUT CHARITY.

How the Twentieth Century Dives Gives His Crumbs.

Once upon a time, and not so very long ago, says the New York Press, a certain rich man, whom we may call Dives, received from a certain poor man, whom we may call Lazarus, an application for the crumbs that fell from the former's table. And Dives said: "Certainly. Help yourself." And Lazarus thereafter was a frequent applicant for crumbs.

Whereupon a representative of one of the organized charities, having heard of the case, called upon Dives and remonstrated with him for his injudicious conduct.

"Why not do this thing properly?" he said. "Capitalize the crumbs and send us a check for the amount. Then refer this person Lazarus to us, and we will investigate him. We have a corps of the ablest and highest priced investigators in the charity business. If they find Lazarus a worthy person he will get his share of whatever may be left of the crumbs after deducting the expenses of the management. It will save you a lot of bother, and if you have no objection to letting your right hand know what your left hand is doing you will see your name in the papers. Of course, if you prefer to contribute anonymously, that is your own affair."

Dives thought it was a good scheme and sent a check accordingly. Lazarus was duly referred to the organization, and being investigated was found guilty of chronic aversion to manual labor and turned down.

Dives did not contribute anonymously and in consequence overheard discussions of his generosity in various public places. One plain citizen, in a street car, perhaps, would say to another plain citizen:

"I should think he would contribute something! Why, he won't miss what he gave any more than you and I would miss a nickel. He's got so much money that he doesn't know what to do with it, and I suppose he has to get rid of it somehow. And when you consider how he got it!"

The other plain citizen, fully agreeing with his friend, would further proceed to criticize the manner in which Dives had disposed of his money and would state what he would do if he had lots of money and was going to give away some of it.

And Dives would go home in no very amiable mood and say: "Gee! You can't satisfy some people—not even if you give away the crumbs!"

EXCITEMENT CAUSES JAGS.

Emotionalism Is an Intoxicating as Strong Drink.

"Yes; in my opinion, it is quite possible for a man to become intoxicated in moments of great excitement, and sometimes a man will become just as drunk as he would if he emptied the contents of a gallon jug," said the observant man, according to the New Orleans Times-Democrat, "though it is, from my observation, very rare to find a man who will lose control of his legs in cases of this sort."

"Crowds, with the excitements that go along with these gatherings, the noise and hurry and all that kind of thing, will make some men drunk just as readily as booze. We have known the same condition to be brought about by great heights or distances, by some persons in reaching the top of high buildings. Seasickness, in my judgment, is drunkenness. Have you ever stood close to a railroad track while a passenger train whirled by at full speed? If you have you can understand fully what I am trying to tell you. The noise and swift motion of the train intoxicated you for the moment, and for the time being you are just about as drunk as you can be."

"Rapidly moving street cars will have the same effect on some persons. The temperament of the person, of course, has much to do with the degree of drunkenness resulting from these conditions. The crowd is probably the most prolific source of drunkenness of the kind I have reference to. Few persons can escape some sort of intoxication in a crowd. The most sedate persons imaginable will show the symptoms, and you will find the condition to exist, no matter what the character of the gathering. Crowds in the streets will cause it. We find it in the ballroom."

"Church gatherings are not exempt. I have seen preachers noted for their sedate, courtly and dignified bearing drunk with the excitement and fine emotionalism of some big religious gathering. No doubt almost every man can recall many instances of the form of intoxication I have been discussing."

"Hoist with His Own Petard."

The humorous writer he wrote
A poor joke of a "fighter who fote,"
But the gag was so old
That the joker was sold—
There was no other biter who bote!
—Cleveland Leader.

When a woman is unable to say anything nice about a man she tries to make up for it by saying that he comes of a good family.

If the average man had his just deserts the sheriff's boarding house would be overcrowded.