

TOPICS OF THE TIMES

Wonder if Mrs. Russell Sage has Count Boni on her list.

The "lone bandit" industry has experienced several serious reverses lately.

Even the easy-going Frenchman makes a wry face when he tries to swallow Count Boni.

Brigands are reported to be active in Sicily. Perhaps Sicily is trying to be known as the Wall street of Italy.

A divorced couple named Carr have been reunited by their baby. This is something unique in the line of Carr couplers.

The average man thinks he would have an excellent chance of occupying the presidential chair if the office sought the man.

A New York theater offers a free seat to every man who never lied to his wife. This is an absolutely costless bid for notoriety.

The man who insisted on tempting fate by going over Niagara Falls in a barrel has subsided, but the reckless balloonist is always with us.

A Massachusetts club woman wants a law prohibiting a man from marrying more than once. Why not make it to include pretty widows, too?

Miss Ida Tarbell is now engaged in a hand-to-hand combat with the tariff question. Has she exhausted all the possibilities of the John D. Rockefeller question?

The coal supply of the United States is said to be good for 5,000 years. That is, of course, if President Baer, the representative of Providence, doesn't become wasteful.

Countess de Castellane had to content herself with a divorce, the court, possibly through an oversight, having failed to order Boni to be taken out and drowned in a bag.

A New York church has secured a girl whistler in an attempt to increase the number of attendants at services. Why not a real whistler—an office boy or a telegraph messenger?

Notwithstanding the fact that a German savant has shown that the works of Shakespeare were produced by somebody else, Hall Caine continues to look as much like the immortal bard as possible.

Prof. Brander Matthews regards the English language as "violent, illogical, chaotic and absurd." Still, if the professor doesn't like it, he is at liberty to use any of the other numerous kinds on the market.

A New York Judge has rendered the opinion that it is no crime to bug a girl on a doorstep. Without touching upon the legality of the operation there are men who will cling to the opinion that it is exceedingly dangerous if the girl's father happens to be large and husky.

The Postoffice Department wants better roads for its rural carriers, better mail transportation on American ships and safe steel cars for clerks in the railway mail service. It ought to have all of these things. The work of the department in preventing frauds has become increasingly effective, and it may well be carried still farther. It is one of the most useful agencies on the side of sound public morals, just as the whole great postal system of disseminating knowledge is a priceless stimulus to national intelligence.

The fact that eight of the eleven members of the new French cabinet are or have been journalists demonstrates anew the importance of this profession in France. It is the avenue to distinction, as the bar is in England and the United States. The personal element in the French journals is of course the reason. The leading articles are signed, and a man may make a reputation through them in a few weeks, whereas the English or American journalist may write thousands of brilliant leaders and remain unknown. Which of the two systems is the better is a difficult question to decide, although many hold that the anonymous system is the more likely to secure a solid, well-balanced and responsible press.

Novelists, some of whom may never have owned a dress coat, used to be fond of drawing, in their tales, a sharp social distinction between persons who "dressed for dinner" and those who did not. Now the editor of a British medical journal has been discussing and commending from a hygienic point of view the habit of dressing for dinner. Every one knows that a change of

clothing is often refreshing. The English editor believes that the effect is physical as well as mental, or physical through the mental stimulus, and advises that even the hard-working clerk, the shopkeeper and the laboring man cast off their workaday clothes and put on clean clothing for the evening meal, when the toil of the day is over.

Like a good many other current discoveries and gospels, the high-voiced talk respecting the necessity for restricting the right of marriage to physically sound people is as old as civilization. Indeed, the theory goes back of civilization and extends to barbarism, for many savage tribes summarily killed off the unfit. So far from permitting them to marry, they would not permit them to live. In an age when fighting was the chief end of man physical perfection was an indispensable qualification. The weaklings, male and female, had to go—the males because they could not fight and the females because they could not bear fighters. In this stage of the earth's progress the war factor does not enter into the matter so strongly, but all humane and discriminating people must and do agree that the mating of physical or mental weaklings, and especially those affected with the so-called hereditary diseases, is strongly to be deprecated on grounds of humanity and expediency. No reflecting person desires the degeneration of the race. But the contemporary clamor over the matter by people who put the question upon a purely animal basis will lead to nothing save the disinclination of most persons to discuss it at all. There can be no proper objection to necessary plain speaking, but there can be and there is an objection to continual harping on a subject which is perfectly familiar to everybody already. Nobody defends the mating of the unfit. The marriage of consumptives, for instance, is obviously wrong and undesirable. But the evil results of such a marriage cannot be emphasized because everybody is fully aware of them already. The whole thing, in a few words, is the rediscovery by people who are always making such discoveries that two and two make four. The world has known it all along and to vociferate it in the market place does not make it either new or interesting.

Noah Webster, who was somewhat of a reformer in his day, would be gratified, no doubt, were he living, by the compliment of confidence paid to him by the House committee on appropriations, which has inserted a paragraph in the appropriation bill providing that the government printing office "shall follow the rules of orthography established by Webster or the other generally accepted dictionaries of the English language." This bill, when passed by the House and approved by the President, will put an end to the feeling of public unrest which has prevailed since the difference of opinion expressed by Mr. Roosevelt and Congress in the matter of the 300 words. Naturally it is not believed that the slight clash that has gently disturbed the delightful relations between the President and Congress in this diversity of view will extend to more serious matters. It is not feared that the painful disagreement which marred the administration of President Andrew Johnson will be repeated or that the country will be convulsed by another governmental wrangle. The acorn of dissent which has been born of so-called reform spelling will not be permitted to develop into a sturdy oak of distrust and wrath. Mr. Roosevelt has done what he could to mend—or to mar—spelling, and he still has it in his power by increased private correspondence to emphasize his convictions and repeat his conclusions. It is true that his messages will be printed in the Congressional Record with the antiquated spelling, but there is solace in the thought that, with the possible exception of the proofreaders, nobody will gloat over his discomfiture in the perusal of that medium of communication. It is pleasant to contemplate the settlement of this minor controversy accomplished in a manner so tactful, graceful and considerate, for, of course, in this instance Mr. Roosevelt will courteously yield to the wishes of Congress, just as he will expect Congress will in return defer to him in other matters of public policy.

He Is Welcomed.

"At last!" exclaimed the foreign statesman and man of letters, as he stood on the deck of the ocean steamship and gazed with kindling eye at the busy mart of commerce that lay almost at his feet. "Within an hour the dream of my life will be realized, and I shall stand on the shore of America, the land of the free, the home of the brave and the hope of the world."

Within an hour, however, he was standing before a red-nosed, glass-eyed inspector and indignantly denying that he was an anarchist, a pauper, a coolie laborer, a bigamist, a thief, a murderer or a fugitive from justice.

A shoemaker's main business is sole saving.

PAPERS BY THE PEOPLE

DON'T BE A SLAVE TO ETIQUETTE.

By Juliet V. Strauss.



JULIET V. STRAUSS.

Certain things have been invented for the use of people who are not born noble enough to do without them, two of which are law and etiquette. Neither is requisite for nature's nobleman, but unfortunately such individuals are scarce, so the above named institutions flourish. By law we do not mean those natural laws of chastity and honor, which institute themselves, but those other statutes and limitations, on the latter side of which our most popular citizens keep with difficulty. By etiquette we do not mean the common decencies and kindnesses of life, but those little quirks of conduct by which people of fashion demonstrate to the unthinking masses that they are very superior, but convince the respectable minority of thinking people that they are fools. If either of these things harass you, be sure you are not to the manner-born, and have numberless incarnations before you in which to learn what those who do not fret against such barriers know instinctively.

To do the naturally kind and polite thing is the first impulse of a real lady or gentleman. To do the showy and smart thing is the ambition of a perverse and forward generation, new to riches and to the elegances and refinements of life. Good horse sense is a tolerably fair guide to etiquette, and when this is supplemented by a kind heart, he who possesses both is not likely to make a serious blunder, even in the most critical society. There are a number of things done in the name of etiquette which are, to say the least of it, silly, if not positively rude.

The truth is, formal politeness is one of the most worthless things in the world, unless accompanied by a genuine feeling of kindness and good will. There is a kindly and human bearing that must go with it, else mere mechanical etiquette is in itself insulting.

SILENT GIRL IS ATTRACTIVE.

By Helen Oldfield.



There are few negative virtues which conduce more to the comfort of the possessor, and those associated with him or her, than a talent for holding one's tongue. To know when to speak, and equally when to be silent, is no small part of the necessary equipment for life. Many a man passes for wise simply by means of saying nothing and looking intelligent when others speak; while those who talk least make fewest enemies.

"A man who cannot hold his peace," says Carlyle, "is no right man." The strong man keeps his own counsel; the foolish babble. It is a weakness into which most people fall without reflection, and those who wish to please, being wise, endeavor to lead others to talk about themselves, to reveal their emotions, their thoughts, their hopes, and their feelings. Some wise man has said that such confidences are "the insanity of conceit and the feeblest species of self-display," which, while severe, is frequently true.

A woman, especially, to be attractive must preserve a

sense of reserve; she must, so to speak, keep up a certain amount of mystery about herself. To many persons this reserve is in itself a compelling charm. In a popular modern novel the imaginative hero wears of his bride because he discovers that she is "too transparent, too easily understood." Which, however unreasonable, is not an impossible state of affairs. There is an Arabian proverb, one of the seven sayings of Suleyman the Sage, "Never tell all you may know, since he who tells all he may know often tells more than is wise." The precept is one well worth keeping.

DANGER OF OVERPOPULATION.

By Dr. Charles A. L. Reed.



The overpeopling of our land is destined to be a very practical, indeed a very perplexing problem in the not remote future. The rate of increase in the density of the population in Great Britain for the seventy years from 1820 to 1890 was 250 per cent, and in France, Belgium and Italy it was less than 100 per cent. In the United States for the same period it was 650 per cent, and for the succeeding fifteen years the rate of increase in this country has greatly accelerated.

Take these facts in association with the additional fact that much of our great area cannot contribute to the sustenance of the people, and it requires no vivid imagination, no prophetic vision, to foresee the time not many generations hence when the family institution here will be subjected to the disintegrating Socialistic influences that are to-day assailing it under pressure of overcrowding in the countries of Europe.

In India and in China the population is too large as it is. The result is periodic famines and plagues and unduly low wages in towns. A dense population is no evidence of a nation's prosperity, but often the reverse.

TIME TO CALL A HALT.

By Rabbi T. Sennarfarber.



When certain men must starve while others live in luxury and extravagance, little mindful of the struggling sons of toil to whom life has become a burden and a curse; when employers treat employes as tools and machines and fail to see in them their brothers; when fraud, corruption, dishonesty, grab and graft and loot take place in the city, the State and the Federal legislative halls; when Senators are entrapped in land-grabbing schemes and unholy family relationships; when deacons of the church rent out their hotels for low and immoral purposes because this nets them a large income on their investment; when devotees of the church and synagogue rent out their tumble-down, ramshackle, uninhabitable tenement houses to the poor, because they bring them usurious returns; when the youth of this country are stunted and blunted and dwarfed through inhuman child labor; when factories and railroad crossings and the murderous railroads send thousands to an untimely grave, the time has come for every lover of humanity to cry a halt and to use every influence to have such legislation passed as will make these things an impossibility in the coming years.

THE JAMAICAN EARTHQUAKE.



Scene Picturing the Awful Panic Which Ensued When the City of Kingston Was So Mercilessly Destroyed.

WHY GIRL HELP IS SCARCE.

Allurements of the Chorus Prove More Attractive than Store Jobs.

A New York paper recently contained an article upon the growing difficulty of securing help for the large department stores, and the writer of this article wondered where all the men and girls who only a couple of years ago stood in line to apply for work at these very stores from which the complaints are now coming have gone, says Harriet Quilby in Leslie's Weekly. Hotels are complaining about the scarcity of maids and of waiters, and there is the everlasting wall about the lack of household servers. Do they vanish into thin air? Not at all. The secret of their mysterious and steadily increasing disappearance is solved. They go on the stage. The hundreds of musical comedies playing in New York and throughout the country swallow up these girls and men by the thousands.

There are at present being produced in New York alone twelve musical plays, in which from 100 to 200 girls are employed in the chorus, and at the hippodrome 400 or 500 girls and several hundred men find constant employment.

One reason of this stampede to the footlights is that it means more money. Few girls in shops earn more than \$10 a week, and the great majority earn considerably less, while the homeliest kind of a chorus girl commands at least \$15 a week, with costumes furnished. If she happens to be pretty and is a good dancer, she earns at least \$20 or \$25, and often more. From the writer's point of view the shop work, even with its low wages, is preferable to the life of the chorus girl, which is anything but beer and skittles; but to those who only see the glare of the footlights and hear the music of stage life, the chorus opens up a sort of perpetual fairyland to their mental vision. Despite the hard work and the hardships

which form a part of the chorus girl's life, there is undoubtedly a fascination in it and few that have once entered upon it care to desert it for other work.

Memory.

Somebody of a psychological turn of mind once asked Lord Rosebery, "What is memory?"

"Memory," Rosebery replied, promptly but somewhat pensively, "memory is the feeling that steals over us when we listen to our friends' original stories."

Farmyard Gossip.

First Rooster—Some of these humans are fearfully inconsiderate.

Second Rooster—I should say! Two of them have just been standing in front of me discussing which was best, the white or the dark meat.—Detroit Free Press.

The man who tackles farming because he thinks it is an "independent life" never plows a great deal of corn.