

Topics of the Times

What is wanted is wreckless rail-roading, not reckless railroading.

That dark spot on this planet at which the observers on Mars are gazing in wonder is Pittsburgh.

America grows richer by \$10,000,000 a day. Seventy-eighths of the people naturally have to be content with ciphers.

A New York alderman has been caught taking money. The science of the thing is to take the money and not get caught.

British Columbia has a politician named Frost. Isn't he the man to succeed Lieut.-Governor Snowball, of New Brunswick when he resigns?

Perhaps it is a matter of no significance, but it is a fact, that railroad wrecks have been rapidly increasing since the passes were shut off.

Probably Senator Beveridge first became opposed to child labor when he was a small boy and had to follow the plow when he wanted to go fishing.

An Ohio man has been sent to prison for six years because he has thirteen wives. He ought to have known enough to stop when he had a dozen.

"There are 13,000,000 men in this country available for military service." And twice as many who could stay at home and criticize those in the field.

Several members of young Mr. Rockefeller's Bible class seem to take great delight in getting up in meeting and telling him what they think of his father.

Count Boni wants Mme. Gould to return to him and overlook the past. He specifies that she is expected. In case she returns, to be accompanied by her checkbook.

Those boys who accidentally hit the Kaiser with a snowball as he was passing have reason to be thankful that the result of the recent election left him in high good humor.

The crop of "hitherto unpublished portraits of Lincoln" is growing larger every year. How in the world did he ever find time to do any work, when he had his picture taken so often?

"Knowledge is the sunrise of life and the glowing sunset of hope," says the Baltimore American. And even at noonday some people are in no danger of suffering from sunstroke on that account.

Mme. Melba now charges a dollar for writing her autograph. Being a woman she probably has a good deal of satisfaction when writing a check for the payment of a \$50 debt in making it out for \$49, letting her autograph stand for the balance.

During the year 1906 property in the United States to the value of more than half a billion dollars was destroyed by fire. Of course this enormous total, which is said never to have been equaled in any country, at any time, was due in large part to the San Francisco disaster. Nevertheless, the executive officer of the International Society of Building Inspectors has declared that nine-tenths of the national fire loss is preventable.

A company which manufactures parlor cars and sleeping cars is to erect a plant for the building of cars constructed entirely of metal. The new cars will be stronger than those of the old type, and in railroad accidents will not take fire. The question rises whether those who cannot afford seats in parlor cars, but must ride in common coaches, are not entitled to equally safe vehicles. In the good time coming every car and the entire railroad equipment will be as good as human skill can make it.

A party of operating officials of a railway running out of Cleveland formed themselves into a surprise party the other night and visited a neighboring town to see whether engineers were paying proper attention to the signals. The result was illuminating. According to the published reports the inspectors turned out the lights intended to show that the track was clear, and in spite of the warning thus given twenty-four trains out of twenty-five rushed by, only one stopping to investigate what was wrong. Of four passenger trains only two even slackened speed on seeing the signal which meant danger ahead. The road in question is one of the best and most efficiently operated in the country, and if such a state of things can exist on it what is the condition on other lines

less completely equipped and less carefully operated?

We think of the savage tribe as living outdoors, and free from the restraints which come with civilization—the garment, the house and the cook. But there is a barbarian which spends its winters in huts and holes from which every breath of fresh air is shut out, and where the stifling atmosphere is heavy with "old shapes of foul disease." Akin to the life of the hut and the slum is the life of the home of whatever grade where cold is dreaded more than bad air. The farm house, the millionaire's palace and the village grocery alike shelter miserable sinners against nature's laws. The crusade against the ravages of consumption has awakened thousands to the fact that the need for pure air is more imperative even than the need for good food, although it speaks with a less insistent voice. But hundreds of thousands of housewives yet need to learn the danger of the comfortable double window and the air-tight stove, and the healing power of pure, cold air, steeped in God's own sunshine. A woman who was known as the queen of the Gypsies died recently in England. She was of great age and amazing vigor, and a real "character" in her reserve and her hatred of modern conditions. She seldom talked, but it was known that she considered education as rubbish, houses as no better than prisons, and the persons who died in them as the victims of their own effeminacy. In a phrase both telling and memorable, she boasted herself "free from the tyranny of the roof." That is truly a noble freedom and one which every wise woman may covet for herself and her children. Perhaps another hundred years may see the stuffy bedroom everywhere supplanted by the airy porch, and find civilized man again sleeping under the sky.

As a pleasant illustration of the value of the expert trade, attention may be called to the suit instituted in New York by a distinguished alienist for payment of \$6,500 balance of a \$23,500 bill for expert testimony. The defendant, a wealthy widow, demurs on the ground that the services were not worth the price. In view of all circumstances the wonder grows that so few men engage in the profitable business of what may be called experting. Why should a man toil and drudge for a mere livelihood when, with a fine appearance, a modicum of practical experience, and the acquisition of impressive technical terms, he can reap a much richer harvest? If a will involving the distribution of a large estate is to be broken on the ground that the maker was feeble minded, the expert appears ready to throw the weight of his testimony in the direction desired. If a rich man or a rich man's son is in danger of the law through reason of a serious infraction of the statutes, along comes the expert to prove conclusively that the shape of his head, the wildness of his eye, or some eccentricities of conduct demonstrate derangement of his mental faculties. The amount of compensation depends, of course, on the wealth of the parties interested. But, inasmuch as such expert testimony is sought chiefly by those who have the willingness and the wealth to pay, the compensation is usually of the most generous nature. The learned gentleman who receives \$17,000 for a deposition, or even for an hour agreeably spent on the witness stand, has excellent reason to be in love with his profession and to recommend it to those who are discontented with their humbler pursuits. Why he should go to law for the paltry sum of \$6,500 when he could more profitably improve his time in seeking another client is not so clear.

Reduced to the Ranks.



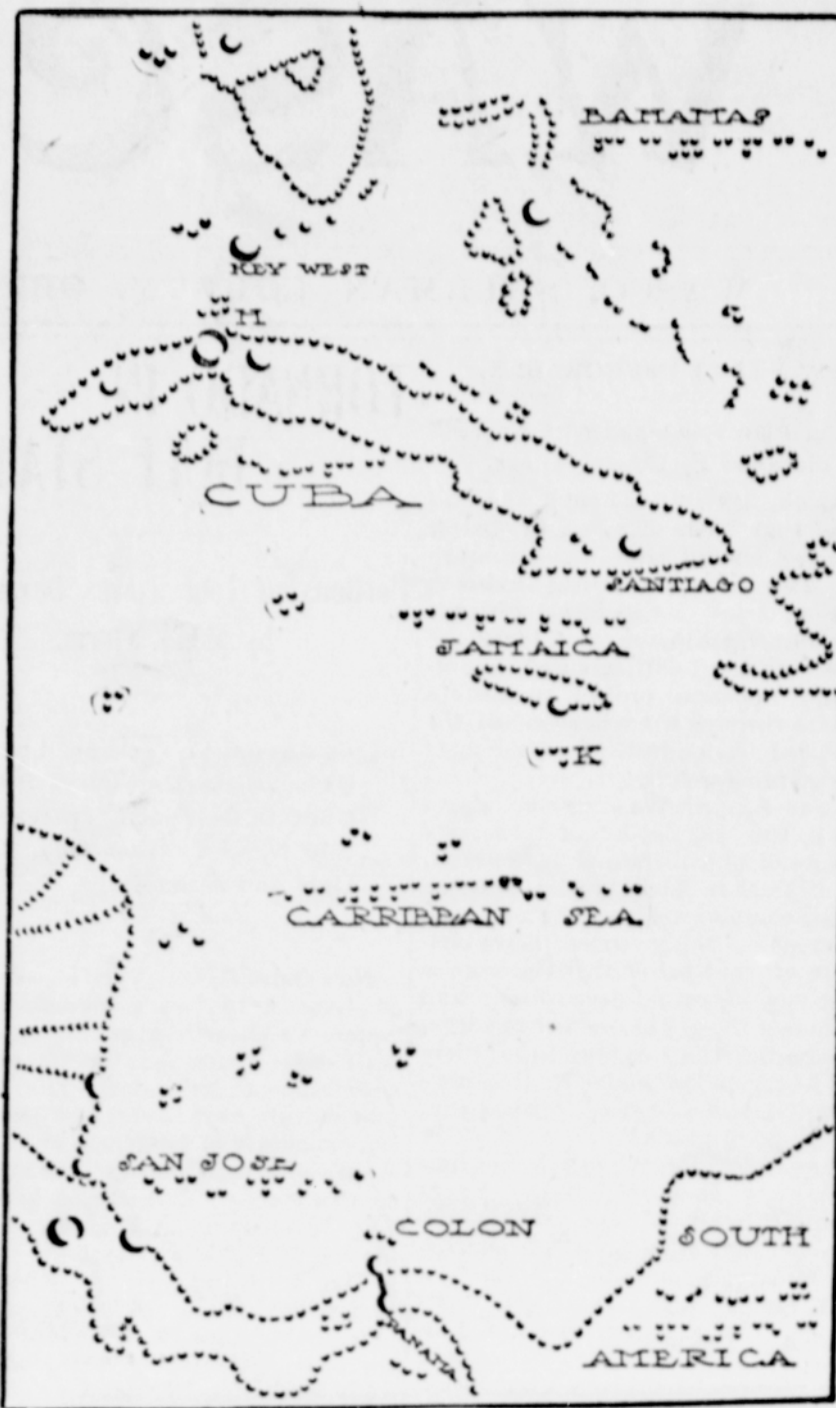
All Wasted.

"I wonder," said the man of a statistical turn, "how much powder is destroyed daily in useless salutes."

"There must be a lot," said the frivolous girl, "but I suppose women will go on kissing one another just the same."—New Yorker.

Cold facts from the pulpit frequently make the congregation hot.

THE BLIND NOW HAVE A MAGAZINE THROUGH RICH WOMAN'S BENEVOLENCE.



HOW THE BLIND WILL STUDY THE PANAMA CANAL.

The first magazine for the blind ever made is about ready to be sent out to the sightless thousands of America through the benevolent provision of Mrs. William Ziegler, who has donated the funds for the enterprise. It is estimated that the cost to the widow of the millionaire baking powder man will be between \$60,000 and \$70,000 a year. Pages of the new magazine are about 12x13 inches in size. The number of pages will vary from month to month, the first number containing about fifty sheets. Compared with other magazines it is bulky, and each one will weigh about one pound. The articles will be of all sorts, stories, news, achievements of the blind, poetry, a sheet of popular music, and some instructive articles. The moral tone will be high, although it will not be religious in any way.

The first number goes to about 6,000 blind readers among the general public. This figure does not include 4,500 students now in schools for the blind. A sufficient number of copies will be sent to the schools for these, and the magazine will go to the students at their homes during vacation, through Mrs. Ziegler's kindness. This first number is the largest edition of anything ever printed for the blind. Great care has been used in the character of matter. For instance, many beautiful songs and poems would be out of place for blind readers. Allusions to moonbeams, starlight, rainbows and clouds are not printed, as they serve to emphasize to the readers the sense of their affliction.

Above is one of the "illustrations" in the new magazine. A map is shown in raised dots. Underneath the map are the following words: "Map showing southern Florida, the Bahamas, Cuba, Jamaica, Panama and adjacent land and sea." Some of the points on the map are marked with only the dots representing the first letter of the name, but in the margin the name is spelled out. The first number of the magazine contains, besides minor contributions and maps, the following:

President Roosevelt's letter to Mrs. Ziegler, Helen Keller's letter to Mrs. Ziegler; first installment of "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch," which will run as a serial; a physical exercise for the blind; the Esperanto Hymn of Peace; comments on current news.

GIVES SAVINGS FOR MISSIONS.

Woman Saves \$1,000 and Gives All to Spread Gospel.

"Make all you can, save all you can, and give all you can." By following literally these three rules of economy laid down by John Wesley, Mrs. Emma Shirley, of St. Louis, says she has been enabled to give \$1,000—nearly every



MRS. EMMA SHIRLEY.

cent of ready cash she possessed—to endow bible work in Japan. Most of the money was saved 10 cents at a time. The rest of the amount was raised by keeping boarders during the world's fair of 1904. The interest on this sum will support a bible woman or deaconess in Japan.

Prince and Sailor, Too.

When the Prince of Wales was in active service in the British navy he was at Malta when a "P. & O." steamship came into the port. It was arranged that his royal highness should visit the steamship, but as the stay was to be brief, the captain and his men were so busy that there was no

time to waste in waiting about for the prince, so the captain sent for his first officer.

"As soon as you see the prince coming off," he said, "man the yards at once and send for me in the cabin."

Shortly after the captain's quick ears heard a boat alongside, and he hurried on deck just in time to hear, in the disgusted tones of the younger officer:

"I say, when is that prince chap coming off? I wish he'd look sharp. I've work to do, and I'm jolly well tired of hanging around."

"Awfully sorry," replied an amused voice, which the horrified captain recognized as that of the prince, "but I came off as quietly as I could, as I knew you'd want to man the yards or something of that kind. As I'm a sailor myself, I know what a bore that is when you're coaling ship."

Swish!

One of the first Secretaries of Agriculture was a man of great shrewdness and ability, which were not incompatible with a certain slow-footed ease. He was known to be late at Cabinet meetings, where tardiness is a serious breach of etiquette.

One day when he came into a meeting a minute or two late, one of the other Secretaries, thinking to give a helpful rebuke, said:

"Hello! Here comes the tail of the administration."

The Secretary slid leisurely into his seat, and then answered:

"Well, the tail may come in handy some day to brush the flies off the rest of the administration."

Mauna Loa 13,650 Feet High.

Mauna Loa, in the Sandwich Islands, 13,650 feet high, is the highest mountain which rises directly from the sea.

You can usually tell a man and his wife at a dance by the devotion they don't show for each other.

THE PERMANENCY OF PEGGY.

Her Kind-Hearted Employers Really Could Not Discharge Her.

"Do you like your maid?" asked Mrs. Bothwell, who took a motherly interest in the first housekeeping experience of her young friends, the Faxon.

"I don't find her very satisfactory," answered pretty little Mrs. Faxon. "The fact is, she doesn't know any more about cooking than I do."

"That is hard," Mrs. Bothwell laughed. "Such a situation places entirely too much responsibility on the receipt-book. Why don't you let her go, and secure an experienced girl who can take charge of things while you are getting broken into harness? Yes, if I were you I'd dismiss Peggy."

"I wonder if you would?" sighed Mrs. Faxon. "I've been trying to, but simply can't, and I expect she'll stay as long as she wishes for the reason that I can't succeed in discharging her."

"What a foolish child you are, Amy. It's a very simple matter to tell a maid that you will have to dispense with her services."

"Is it? I haven't found it so. I've tried over and over again, and she never lets me. 'Sure, Mrs. Faxon,' she said the first time, 'I do be wishin' all the mornin' to see your swate face in the kitchen. Is it going to stir up a cake yer are?' I hadn't thought of making a cake, but I went right at it. Then again, when I decided I must speak, she spoke first, and with shining eyes and flushed cheeks proudly displayed a batch of bread which I immediately complimented her upon, although when it came on the table Ned asked me where the bread was to be cut it with. She is always so happy and so sure that she pleases me that it makes it impossible to tell her she doesn't."

"Why don't you write her a note?" suggested Mrs. Bothwell, ironically.

"I did think of that, and I was just composing a kind and dignified dismissal which I hoped would settle the matter when Peggy came with a letter from Ireland for me to read to her. She can't decipher a word of writing."

"Then of course you decided to have Ned undertake the task."

"How did you guess it?"

"Well, I have known other young wives who shirked their responsibilities," smiled Mrs. Bothwell.

"Ned just hated to do it, but I insisted, and one evening last week he went into the kitchen, and I was sure that he, who is so forceful and stern when occasion demands, would make her understand that he wished her to leave, but I was mistaken. When he returned to the sitting-room, and I asked when she would be going, he said, 'Going? She isn't going. Why, Amy, Peggy isn't as old as you are, and when I spoke to her she cried.'"

"The case certainly seems hopeless," Mrs. Bothwell suppressed a smile and nodded brightly to the rosy-cheeked girl who just then entered the room with noisy briskness.—Youth's Companion.

FOUR ACES NO GOOD THERE.

Story of a Little Poker Game in the West Virginia Mountains.

There never was a poker player who has not had "hard luck" at some time or other in his experience, but the story told by Colonel Jim Butcher, of Hatcliffe, W. Va., who was a guest at the Bellevue-Stratford last evening, seems to eclipse them all.

"I was up in the West Virginia mountains a couple of weeks ago looking after some timber and coal lands and entered into a friendly little game with a party of mountaineers," said he. "If these people get suspicious of you they do not always wait to have their suspicions verified."

"It came my turn to deal and when I looked at my hand I found I had given myself four aces. Of course, I quietly raked in the pot. As I laid down my hand I noticed a queer look come over the faces of my opponents. Understand, I was a stranger in that locality."

"By and by it came my turn to deal again. I shuffled the cards awkwardly, grew nervous and seemed to feel that the crisis was approaching. When I looked at my own hand I found I had dealt myself four aces."

"I just looked around the table, sized up my friends and sadly discarded those aces. It was the safest play I ever made."—Philadelphia North American.

So Far Off.

"My sympathies," says a writer in the Boston Transcript, "were always with an old lady who lived way down in the Maine woods. One day a sportsman came to the door of her little cabin to ask for a glass of milk. As he drank the refreshing beverage they exchanged confidences. When in response to her inquiry he told her that he came from New York City she commiserated with him, saying, 'Laws, sir, it must be hard for you living so far off!'"

Finishing a Proverb.

Possession is nine points of the law—self-possession is the rest.—Princeton Tiger.