

Topics of the Times

Singularly enough, the more light you get on Mormonism the darker it looks.

Even being baptized in the River Jordan will not keep some men out of a prison cell.

Uncle Sam now has the deed to the Panama Canal strip. Nothing more remains but to dig the canal.

The Hole in the Ground bank failed the other day for \$3,800. It is no safer than the Old Yarn Sock bank.

The author of the phrase, "What is the constitution between friends?" has just died in New York. But his spirit goes marching on.

The attorney for the defense has a hard time of it in Russia. The accused is usually hanged before a technicality can be raised.

Japan has made a government monopoly of the tobacco business. Having lighted the fires of war, she intends to control the smoke.

Score one for race suicide. Tennessee courts have decided that married men must support their mothers-in-law, or else their wives will be entitled to divorce.

Emperor William climbed Mount Aetna on foot. His wind must be all right, in spite of those stories concerning the condition of his breathing apparatus.

The Academy of Medicine at Paris has decided that excessive meat-eating causes appendicitis. It does more. It causes emaciation of the pocketbook and bankruptcy.

One of the mysteries of nature is the ease with which song birds and game can be exterminated as compared with the difficulty in getting rid of the boll weevil.

Winston Churchill collapsed in addressing the House of Commons because he lost his train of thought. He should adopt the plan of American statesmen and learn to talk without thinking.

A woman supporter of an "ism" advised her hearers to "concentrate their thoughts on what they wanted to obtain and they would get it." Good plan; try it on a ton of coal and you will get it—if you pay the money.

Looking over the list of tones in which a man's voice betrays his character, it is noted that the Woman's Literary Club sees nothing admirable in the male voice from low bass to high tenor. The only really good man must be dumb.

The example of the American Arbor day is the text for an appeal for tree-planting in Ireland. A writer in the Clare Champion makes a plea for the observance of such a day, and expresses the belief that it will be as successful as it is in this country. It may possibly enhance the value of Arbor day in the judgment of Americans to know that the suggestion is made to introduce the custom in the Green Isle.

Dissatisfaction with present conditions is a motive to progress. In speaking on this subject before the Church Association for the Advancement of the Interests of Labor in an Eastern city, a clergyman recently said that there was a part of the city where the "people are in the depths of brutalizing contentment." Unrest is a good thing because it is a sign of life. Did any one ever see a more restless creature than a growing boy?

The chief difficulty with the phenomenal high tide of immigrants has been in the fact that they are readily, but without good reason, induced to settle in the city and engage in peddling or in digging trenches or subways, while the West and South, which need immigrants, remain a sealed book to the great majority. In the country districts, where politics has not so completely been reduced to an art or a science, there would be fewer temptations because of politics, and better temptations from the greater probability of obtaining work at good wages and with more comfortable and elevated surroundings. It would be better for the country and much better for the immigrant if he could be induced to turn his steps westward or southward.

Russia in the past has never been the equal of some of the western countries in wealth, finance, industry, agriculture, education and culture. Yet somehow she has come up. Somehow, with her crude organization and general poverty, she has borne the successive economic and political shocks of great wars. Somehow, as her territorial march to the Pacific has proved, she has shown an incontestable superiority in force to the Asiatics with whom she has come in contact—except possibly the Japanese. Even the warlike Turk has succumbed before her. If wars are drastic tests of a nation's economic soundness and political coherency and national fiber, then has not Russia successfully met them from the time of Ivan the Terrible to the present day?

A prominent New England railroad has lately issued an order by which

baggage men and all other station employees are positively forbidden to accept "tips." The reason for this step, the president says, is the desire of the road to furnish equal service to all its patrons, a task which it cannot accomplish so long as the practice of tipping continues. This phase of the matter—the injustice which the man who tips inflicts upon the man who cannot afford or does not wish to tip—is one which is not always kept in mind, yet it involves a serious moral question. One accompanies his application with a half-dollar, the other offers nothing. Human nature would not be human nature if the employee did not feel a little inclined to favor the man who has tipped him. But what is it that the tipper has bought? Not service—he was entitled to that by right—but precedence and disproportionate attentions, things to which he was not entitled and which he cannot have without robbing his neighbor. The tip in such a case is but a bribe. One cannot, however, dispose of the whole matter of tipping in a word. The practice is too well rooted to be blown away with a breath, and even if that were possible, it is a question if it would be wholly desirable. Certainly it would work some injustice and perhaps some hardship. There is the tip which speaks of a cordial recognition of special service, performed, perhaps, at some sacrifice of comfort or convenience. That, surely, might remain. There is, too, the tip which serves as a cloak for worthy charity and an honest desire to assist. That, also, is honorable, at least on the part of the giver; and those who boast that they "never give a tip" may well be suspected of hiding meanness behind a mask of principle.

The development of the trolley system in New England, where it has made the greatest progress, is beginning to attract wide attention, especially as it promises to become a dangerous competitor with the steam railroad system. Already rails of the same weight are used on the electric as on the steam roads and well nigh equal speed is made in rural districts, while greater speed is made inside city limits. The cars are being made nearly as large if not so heavy as those on steam roads, and in nearly all country places mails and light freight are carried as well as passengers. Trolley lines are connecting country towns which only could be reached by wagons, and by bringing them into communication with railroad stations are developing their business. Nearly every State in New England can now be crossed, north and south and east and west by electric cars and in some cases cities as far apart as Portland, Boston, Providence, Hartford and New York have been connected by "the broomstick train." One of the latest developments of the system is the use for the first time by a steam and a trolley road of the same track. The New York Central is to use a stretch of track near Oxford, Mass., about five miles from Worcester, for delivery of coal to a section it cannot now reach easily. This track was laid and is used by the Worcester and Southbridge Street railway. The fact that a locomotive and freight cars can be run upon rails originally laid for trolley cars is opening up a wide field of speculative possibilities among railroad people. The Boston Advertiser says that "the New Haven road has already done something in the way of 'third rail' connections with steam road track, and of course everybody understands that the time will come when steam and trolley roads will be run as parts of one system, the street railways acting as feeders to the main line of steam track."

NEED NEVER APPEAR OLD.

Chicago Doctor Urges Friend to Stand Erect and Retain Youth.

"Don't imagine you must become stoop-shouldered because you are growing old," said a well-known west side physician to a friend on the Lake street "L" road. "Old people do not stoop because they are old, but they get old because they stoop. The stiffening of the tissues, which is the sign and accompaniment of age, is warded off by exercise. Self-indulgence in eating and in drinking and in lazy ways is the sure road to senility."

"I have often been surprised and gratified to find that regulated movements of the neck and upper trunk muscles, employed for the purpose of accomplishing something else, resulted in a conspicuous improvement in hearing, in vision, in cerebration and, as a consequence, in betterment in cerebral circulation, also in sleep. Persons who habitually maintain an erect position in standing or sitting are stronger than those who slouch. A person who stoops and allows the shoulders to sag down and forward and the ribs to fall back toward the spine shortens the anteroposterior diameter of the thorax anywhere from two to five inches. The lungs, heart, great vessels and other important structures in the thorax cannot live, move and have their proper being under such circumstances."

Wherefore, the proper thing for persons who are not so young as once they were is to brace up, dress young and feel young. Sitting "hunched up" over a fire won't do.—Chicago Chronicle.

An Affable Debtor.

"I guess there's no use of sending any more bills to that man," said the senior member of the firm.

"Does it make him angry to be dunned?"

"Not a bit. He invites the bill collector to sit down and tells him stories and prevents him from getting money anywhere else."—Washington Star.

EDITORIALS

Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

The Methodists and Amusements.

THE question as to what amusements may be permitted to the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church is one that has caused more discussion in church circles than possibly any other. "Times change, and men's manners and customs change with them," is an old and a true proverb. It is also true that this change in manners and customs—and the inevitable change as to how they are viewed—is as active in the churches as anywhere else. It is to this steady shifting of ideals and opinions that the question remains perennial with the Methodists.

In the early Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America, the whole matter was dismissed in a prohibition to members against "taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus." But along in the decades about the middle of the last century the inevitable broadening of ideas due to the rapid increase in population, the change from solitary rural life to the hurry and bustle of the city—all were liberalizing tendencies. Especially in the cities, Methodists in good standing indulged in amusements, etc., which were looked upon with horror by the more conservative, and hence more strict members in the country, especially the elder generation. But the liberals argued that they were well within the prohibition of the Discipline, and that there was no loss of true religion to themselves.

It became evident that the clause in the Discipline needed amendment; that the church must authoritatively specify what things could not be permitted to the Methodist laity. The change was made by the General Conference of 1872. The paragraph which has stood since then deals with conducting, and expressly forbids among other things, "the buying, selling or using intoxicating liquors as a beverage," and "dancing, playing at games of chance, attending theaters, horse races, circuses, dancing parties or patronizing dancing schools, or taking such other amusements as are obviously of misleading or questionable moral tendency," etc.

But this did not end the controversy. In very many churches, this regulation has become a dead letter. Methodist members attend theaters, visit circuses, send their children to dancing schools and play card games in their homes; and they do not feel that they thereby commit any sin. That is to say, they do not admit that the church has a right to prohibit any line of conduct that is not sinful; and feeling that these things are not, they ignore the precept. The matter was all threshed over again at the recent General Conference in Los Angeles.—Toledo Blade.

The Question of the Battleship.

HERETOFORE, when the public spoke of battleships, the breath was bated and there was a gleam in the eye that boded the kindling of destructive pride. Some spirited souls even went so far as to lift the hat when one of our navy's ornaments was named, but something has happened. It has become dangerous to refer to America as sailing the seas like a battleship. We dare to think of the ship of state as armored and carrying 12-inch guns. We cannot even remember that famous line, "She seems to feel the thrill of life along her keel," without sympathetic shudders.

The reason is as follows. Cesarevitch, 13,110 tons, disabled by torpedo and beached, Feb. 8, at Port Arthur; Retzian, 12,700 tons, disabled by torpedo and beached at Port Arthur, Feb. 8; Poltava, 10,900 tons, disabled at Port Arthur; Sevastopol, 10,900 tons, disabled Feb. 9; Pobieda, 12,674 tons, damaged by mine at Port Arthur, April 13; Petropavlovsk, 10,900 tons, blown up by mine at Port Arthur, April 13. Six first-class battleships, four of them undoubtedly destroyed by submarine engines of warfare, not to speak of the dangers within the ship itself, as we have learned in the cases of the Missouri and the Iowa.

It is told that the unfortunate Admiral Makaroff disapproved of battleships on the ancient ground of "all your eggs in one basket." The admiral is dead and a battleship holds his body, a battleship which sank within two minutes after a submarine was exploded under it. There are others along the shore of the bay at Port Arthur, all former prizes of the Russian navy, pointed at by the experts of other nations as perils to peace and warnings for war.

SOLDIERS OF THE CZAR.

The uniform of the Russian soldier is the simplest uniform in Europe. In winter a sheepskin coat goes on beneath the gray one. In summer, or during campaigns in hot climates, the Russians, like the Japanese, fight in white dress. To critics who say that this renders them needlessly conspicuous, they reply that it is better than khaki; for a man dressed in earth color or in gray is almost invisible, and behaves accordingly. He gets shot; whereas the man who knows he can be seen keeps under cover and comes off with a whole skin. A writer in the Boston Transcript describes the soldiers of the Czar as follows:

The Russian campaigner marches somewhat heavily laden. He has his kit-bag with clothing slung over one shoulder, his haversack with two days' rations of bread and salt hung over the other, his greatcoat strapped under one arm. Including his water bottle, arms and ammunition, a section of tent and the uniform he stands in, he carries something over sixty-six pounds. The advantage which offsets the burden is that at a pinch the Russian foot-soldier is practically independent of a baggage train. He can transport his modest necessities upon his own back.

The Russian cavalryman rides so laden with cornsacks and blankets and greatcoats and wallets and saddlebags and things that he puts one in mind of the much-incumbered White Knight in "Alice in Wonderland." Altogether his impedimenta weigh 110 pounds. Fortunately what would oppress another soldier is no burden to the Russian. He is sturdiness itself. Russian soldiers have been known to march thirty miles without rest, and then go directly into an engagement.

Severity is accounted the prime factor of Russian military discipline. But

now squatting drunkenly in the mud, their huge guns raking the affrighted stars. They have felt a shudder along their keels, and their glory has dwindled like a leaking balloon.

The American people are prone to ask questions when things happen. Something has happened. The colored pictures of our navy are singularly uninspiring just at present, and we desire to know why. If we cannot find out why, we, at least, wish to be sure that something was really wrong. So there is the question in the air. How much is a \$3,000,000 battleship worth? If a Japanese corvette's guard for the naval equivalent of the body) can take a rowboat, a cap pistol, and a torpedo and sink battleships, we desire to be allowed to look on, and possibly make a small bet on our own prospects. Further, some would like to know just how we are going to keep the upper hand if our battleships won't battle against the enemy's torpedoes. We are in a state of doubt.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Chinese Exclusion.

IT is expected that the new treaty regulating the admission of Chinese into the United States, now in preparation, will permit certain Chinamen, not of the coolie class, who are now excluded, to enter the country. Under the existing exclusion law, Chinese laborers are prohibited from coming to or remaining in the United States. Registered Chinese laborers may leave the country and return to it, under certain conditions, and Chinese officials, teachers, students, merchants and travelers may come into the country when properly certified. The law has been strictly construed by the Attorney-General, who ruled that not all Chinese persons might enter the country who were not specifically forbidden, but that only those who are entitled to enter who are expressly permitted to do so. The ruling excluded traders, salesmen, buyers, bookkeepers, accountants, managers, storekeepers, interpreters, physicians and agents. Persons falling within these designations are not manual laborers, against whom the exclusion law was particularly directed.

The classes excluded by the rulings are numerous, and the new treaty may provide for the admission of some of them. Our expanding trade with the East would doubtless be stimulated by a more hospitable treatment of what may be termed the Chinese mercantile and professional element. A discreet extension of the privilege of entry could be permitted. It is believed, without injuriously affecting the wages of labor. It is understood that the contemplated regulations apply to the admission of Chinese of the higher classes and that there is no intention to admit coolies.

Whether provisions shall be made for use of Chinese laborers in the construction of the Panama Canal is under consideration, and the more extended use of Chinese labor in the Philippines is urged by certain interests concerned in the development of the possessions.—Philadelphia Ledger.

The Price of Fame.

WHEN one considers how much the people love to be humbugged, it is surprising that there are not more people engaged professionally in the business. A man with a very brilliant mind may make a brilliant address before a brilliant audience, and there the brilliancy stops; but a man with a mind about the size of a shriveled walnut, may talk a lot of nonsense to an audience of no—or of average or unusual—intelligence, and immediately he becomes famous. An educator in a recent religious meeting told a fairly intelligent audience that dancing was the closest approach to Paradise, and to-day his name and theory is known from Maine to California. A University of Chicago professor tells wherein Rockefeller is superior to Shakespeare, and while the oil magnate modestly protests, the professor's mail is overwhelmed with requests for photographs and locks of his hair. A Harvard professor, who teaches Slavic literature, and who is a native of Russia, expresses the hope that his fatherland will be defeated in the Eastern war, and he gets half a column of attention, where his sensible utterances had never won him more than very moderate attention. And so, if a man must simply be foolish to become famous, is it any wonder that almost everybody to-day is famous?—Baltimore Herald.

something better than severity goes to make soldiers of Russian peasants, and that something is a powerful spirit of camaraderie. A high Russian officer does not hesitate to joke with his men.

When the commanding officer meets his troops for the first time in the morning, he calls out cordially, "Good morning!" The men reply with a peculiar, long, rattling shout, "Your good health, your excellency!"

When a maneuver is executed to the commander's satisfaction, he shouts congratulations to the men, and they respond all together, "We are glad you like it."

IS THE SUN HOT OR COLD?

Sun and a Hot Stove Have the Same Kind of Energy.

So far as I know, no reasons at all for doubting the high temperature of the central body of the solar system have ever been found. There are in general three distinct ways in which heat can be transferred from one body to another—conduction, convection and radiation. The first two are dependent upon the presence of matter, the latter will take place across a perfect vacuum. We may receive heat from a stove by all three methods. If we place our hands upon it we receive heat by conduction; if we hold them above it they are warmed by convection, the heat being brought to them by the rising current of hot air. If now we stand in front of the stove we will feel its warmth, the sensation in this case being produced by the heat waves which it emits. These waves are similar to the electric waves used in wireless telegraphy, differing from them only in their length. They bear the same relation to them which the ripples on a mill pond bear to the Atlantic rollers. With the instruments at our disposal at the present time we can measure the length of these waves as accurately as we can measure the length of a table with a

foot rule, and we can prove that they will pass through a vacuum, a plate of glass or a tank full of liquid air, without losing their ability to warm our hands. We find, however, that if we pass this radiant heat through certain substances, water vapor, for example, its intensity is diminished, owing to the fact that some of the waves have been absorbed. It is possible to determine the exact length of the waves of heat which have been removed by absorption in the vapor, and if we test the radiation which comes to us from the sun we find that waves of this same length are absent, the water vapor in the earth's atmosphere having refused to transmit them. This fact, taken alone, is pretty good evidence that the sun and the hot stove are pouring out the same kind of energy.—Harper's Weekly.

Wanted a Demonstration.

"John," said Mrs. Makepeace, coming out on the back porch, where her husband sat tilted back in his chair, his feet on the railing, "didn't I hear you tell the minister when he was here that you were deeply interested in temperance movements?"

"Yes," Mr. Makepeace replied, rather stiffly. "I said so, and you know that I am."

"Well," said Mrs. Makepeace, "suppose you go and make a few of them on the pump-handle. I want a pall of water."

What Made Him Ask.

Paying Teller—What is your name, anyway?

Indignant Presenter of Check—Don't you see my signature?

Paying Teller—Yes. That's what aroused my curiosity.—Baltimore American.

Daily Guide to Table Manners.

Never kick on the food except on the cook's day out. Otherwise you might lose her. It doesn't matter about your wife. She'll stay.—Baltimore American.

WATER IN DESERT CACTUS.

Natives Are Accustomed to Tap Plant When They Are Thirsty.

The marvelous strength of desert plants is well known, but we are at a loss to explain the source or reasons of their luxuriance in regions where only a few inches of water fall during the year, and that little is immediately drunk up by the torrid sun. What enables the yucca to thrust its head through thirty feet of gypsum and sand or the barrel cactus to store enormous quantities of water and to hold the water for months, perhaps years, or the sumach to cling so tenaciously to its ground when everything else is swept away, are questions which none can satisfactorily answer. No less marvelous and inexplicable is the mesquite shrub, which sometimes has roots over fifty feet long, and other desert plants whose hairy coverings and resinous coatings prevent the evaporation of moisture. These secrets may soon be discovered, however, as the Carnegie Institution has established a desert botanical laboratory at Tucson to study them.

It was among the desert hills west of Torres, Mex. The Indian cut the top from a plant about five feet high and with a blunt stake of palo verde pounded to a pulp the upper six or eight inches of white flesh in the standing trunk. From this, handful by handful, he squeezed the water into the bowl he had made in the top of the trunk, throwing the discarded pulp on the ground. By this process he secured two or three quarts of clear water, slightly salty and slightly bitter to the taste, but of far better quality than some of the water a desert traveler is occasionally compelled to use. The Papago, dipping this water up in his hands, drank it with evident pleasure and said that his people were accustomed, not only to secure their drinking water in this way in times of extreme drouth, but that they used it also to mix their meal preparatory to cooking it into bread.—National Geographical Magazine.

REBUFF WAS CUTTING ONE.

Fitting Retort of "Mad Poet" to an Ungentlemanly Remark.

Many stories are told of McDonald Clarke, known fifty years ago in New York as the "mad poet," which show that he had a vein of great shrewdness, such as is often possessed by people who are counted insane.

One day he was seated at a table in a New York hotel quietly eating his simple dinner when two young men took their seats at the same table. McDonald Clarke was a well-known figure, and the young men at once recognized him, though he did not know them.

They were not gentlemen in the best sense of the word, and it occurred to them that they might have some sport with the poor poet. Consequently one of them said in an unnecessarily clear tone:

"I have seen almost everything and everybody in New York except McDonald Clarke. I have a great admiration for his poems, and I would give a great deal to see the man."

When he passed the mad poet leaned forward and said with evident gratification:

"Sir, I am McDonald Clarke, whom you say you wish to see."

The young man stared at him with much rudeness for a moment, and then drawing a quarter from his pocket, he laid it on the poet's plate, saying, "That's for the sight!"

Clarke looked at the coin for an instant, and then placing it in his pocket, he took out a "York shilling," 12½ cents. This he handed to the young man, saying gravely, "Children half price."

Natural Ice Is Passing.

For several years past the business of the ice man of former days has been decreasing steadily, and at the present rate ere long he will find his occupation gone. It is no longer necessary to wait for cold weather to secure a supply of the refrigerating product; it can be produced easily and cheaply in the warmest weather by chemical processes.

In the State of Maine, where in former years the harvesting of ice for market in more southern latitudes was carried to enormous proportions, the total quantity cut during last winter, which embraced perfect conditions for the securing of a large crop, was but 485,000 tons, against 700,000 tons gathered in the winter of 1903.

The advantages offered by chemistry and modern machinery for the production of ice and the perfect control of temperature at whatever degree desired, when and wherever needed, irrespective of climatic conditions, renders their mechanical acquirements cheaper than can be obtained from natural ice when transportation from remote districts of storing and the great wastage of original bulk through melting is taken into consideration. In all manufacturing necessity for cooling and for maintaining uniform degrees of temperature, as well as certainty of control of such conditions, together with their greater economy, present systems of artificial refrigeration are crowding nature out of the field of competition and reducing the latter to chiefly local value.

Feats of Submarine Boats.

Two submarine boats made a sham attack on the French squadron at La Rochelle recently in the evening, and so smartly were they handled that it is said in actual warfare the whole division would have been annihilated.

Cincinnati has a deaf and dumb barber, but with the aid of a phonograph he manages to pull through.

We can't pronounce the Russian definition for war, but it's synonymous with Sherman's definition.