

Topics of the Times

A little boost to the living is better than many bouquets to the dead.

It is out at last! The price of campaign cigars has been determined in court at Boston. It is 3 cents a piece.

It might be as well to remember that the "higher critics" will always leave enough of the Bible for all practical purposes.

The Emperor of Korea has a hundred wives, but never mind. There probably isn't one in the whole lot that any brisk American would have.

A Chicago woman secured a divorce the other day 36 minutes after filing her bill. This may justly be regarded as rapid transit to single blessedness.

Hetty Green never tries to organize any trust or merger. She feels that she has done pretty well if she holds what she considers her own against the tax collectors.

Banker Benedict observes that Wall street is not a locality, but a prejudice. This sounds something like a redefinition of the heathen definition of Boston as a state of mind.

The average citizen has great difficulty in pronouncing the geographical names in the war news, but his perplexity is nothing to what it would be if a war should break out in Maine.

A St. Paul man has died as the result of being bitten by a fish that he was trying to take from his hook. Let the man who sits hour after hour without getting a bite cheer up. He may be lucky.

The Japanese treat their servants as they do other members of their households, and everything is serene. The greatness of the Japanese will not depend upon the way they battle with Russia—they have solved the servant problem.

The "Thumball edition" of the Bible, which is so small that it cannot be read without the aid of a microscope, is in great demand in England. It has not been discovered, however, that there has been any increase in the sale of microscopes.

Peace societies ought to take heart. An instructor in "Jiu Jitsu" is to be engaged to teach the naval cadets at Annapolis how to fight in the Japanese fashion with their arms and legs. When international contests are refined down to wrestling matches the dawn of arbitration for all disputes will begin to flicker across the sky.

"English spoken here; American understood," is a sign recently seen in a Venetian shop-window. Does this mean that English customers listen, but Americans talk? Or is our speech so much more difficult than the parent stock that the Venetian has got only far enough to understand it? His announcement would call for an explanation were it not obvious that his purpose was merely to recognize politely that both nations speak the same tongue.

Will there ever be another Homer, Virgil, Shakespeare, Dante, Tasso, Milton, Schiller, or even a Tennyson? Will there be any more great masters of music like those who have so completely passed away and whose compositions are visibly declining in public favor? These are questions which nobody can answer, but the promise at least is far from favorable. We have entered an age in which men are more than ever concerned with the material things of life, and when they seek relaxation and diversion it is in the direction of extreme frivolity and triviality.

Creeches and dogmas have been considerably modified in the last 50 years. With the advances made by science intelligence has been obliged to accept these advances and dogmatic religion has been driven backward, while practical religion has been more and more in demand. The result is that the necessity for maintaining synods and councils and districts has diminished, while the needs of the people for a simple religion has increased. John Calvin would find himself to-day a tolerated stranger in some Presbyterian churches, while Cotton Mather might wander vainly among the Congregationalists seeking the spiritual food he once administered so freely, and John Wesley would certainly be astonished if he met some of our modern Methodists.

Endowed churches have long been demanded by the religious workers in the older cities. As the cities grew the residence neighborhoods change character, and churches which, a generation ago, were surrounded by the homes of the well-to-do are now in the midst of a tenement population frequently unable, even when inclined, to support a large church. Many churches have moved with the population that sustained them; others are trying to do missionary work among the people about them. Still others are preparing to carry on their work when the change in the character of the neighborhood shall have become complete. Such a church in Brooklyn asked for \$50,000 to complete an endowment fund of \$100,000 and received \$30,000 more than it asked for. A few days later another church in the same

city received a bequest of \$500,000 for carrying on its work downtown in the field abandoned by many other churches.

We are all familiar with the system of pensioning soldiers for disabilities acquired in the service, and are aware that officers of the army and navy must retire on half pay when they reach a given age. Those who live in the cities are familiar, also, with the practice of allowing policemen and firemen who have served 20 or 30 years to retire on a pension. Indeed, in New York all teachers, when they accept employment, agree that a small percentage of their salaries shall be retained by the Board of Education to swell the pension fund. The pensioning of government clerks, common in Europe, has not yet been approved by the American people. It has been suggested, however, as a way of relieving the departments in Washington of the old men who are incapacitated because of their infirmities, in order to make room for younger and more efficient men. The national civil service commissioners have recently taken a census of the clerks in the executive departments, with their age, status under the rules, length of service, and military service, if any, so that those considering the matter may have the facts at hand necessary to the drafting of a bill to meet the situation. There seems to be no disposition to turn out the clerks who have grown old and feeble. The civil service commissioners think that they ought to be taken care of in some way, and many Congressmen agree with them. What ever disagreement has manifested itself is chiefly upon the method to be employed.

The old fight over what music is proper for the church is on again. In fact, it has never been entirely off. Now and then some clergyman breaks out in a philippic, sometimes against the kind of music, sometimes against the kind of people who make it, and not infrequently against both. Occasionally the preachers say unreasonable things, as did one who declared that unless carefully guarded "music leads to licentiousness." Association, propinquity, may sometimes lead to it, and as the performance of music demands association it may have a kind of secondary responsibility, but that music as music so leads is a charge nobody can sustain. Not music alone demands association. The same critic maintains that church singers should be Christians. Now and again it has been discovered that some preacher was not just the right kind of a Christian, but his preaching never had any bad effects till after the discovery. How can the singing of one of the wrong kind have any ill effect so long as the kind is not known? One may admit this contention and agree that the singers ought to be Christians, but certainly they ought also to know how to sing. There is nothing more exasperating than to be forced to listen to the nerve-racking noises made by one who knows nothing of singing, unless it be the joint efforts of two or more of the same kind, and the more there are of them the worse it is. There is congregational singing that might be suppressed as calculated to incite to disturbance of the peace. The same critic strikes nearer the truth in the remark that "music is one of the greatest factors for good or evil that exist to-day" and if this be true why give it over exclusively to the service of evil? Whether the church uses a choir or the congregation sings, in either case those who try to sing should be taught how to sing. The test of all human things is the use that is made of them.

Show Bottles.
Apothecaries were once in the habit of using a red light as a sign of their trade. It so happened one night that a druggist found himself without the necessary red light, so as a substitute he placed a bottle of red liquid in the window with a candle behind it. He was so well pleased with the effect that he placed another bottle of red liquid in another window. This sign made such a brave showing that an envious rival cast about for means of improving the sign. He hit on the scheme of placing a bottle of yellow liquid by the side of the red one, and then surpassed his previous efforts and carried all before him by placing a green bottle by the side of the yellow one. The three made a sign which caught the approval of the town, and all the druggists quickly followed in the footsteps of their more original rivals.

The bottles were later replaced by the handsome colored vases which are now such a familiar sight all over the world.

Queen's Robes.
Royal annals have never recorded a more varied and extensive wardrobe than that which belonged to the "Virgin Queen." Even at the age of 68, when she might be supposed to have outlived her youthful vanity, she possessed ninety-nine complete official costumes, 102 French gowns, 100 robes with trains and 67 without, 126 antique dresses, 138 bodices, 125 tunics, not to mention such trifles as 96 mantles, 53 dressing gown and 27 fans.

It is possible that she had an ugly foot, for she possessed only nine pairs of shoes, which, considering her extravagances in other articles of apparel, must have some meaning. At her death 3,000 articles were found duly catalogued in her wardrobe which had adorned her proud person.

The Power of Money.
"My, that ugly Miss Elder is actually going to be married!"
"Yes, it's all the outcome of her income."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

The Practical Joker.

THE practical joker, the person who laughs at the discomfort of others, who gets fun out of his neighbor's predicaments, who lays awake at night planning some piece of devilry that will cause sorrow or at least chagrin, always has been with us, is now and probably always will be.

Last week a girl in a Scranton aquib factory threw a squib into a stove, just to scare her companions. Result, six dead, as many more seriously hurt, and factory wrecked. It was in Pennsylvania also that a small boy lighted the escaping gas from the exhaust pipe of a natural gas line, to furnish light for a wedding. Result, one life lost and valuable property destroyed.

These are only two of many cases taken at random from the news columns. Neither of the young people intended harm. The girl wanted to see her companions jump when the squib exploded. The boy purposed to surprise the serenaders by furnishing an impromptu bonfire. They were simply heedless. If everyone who is about to play a practical joke would stop to think about it, to study out the possible consequences, there would be fewer jokes of this sort perpetrated. It is ludicrous to see a man who is comfortably seated in a chair suddenly find himself sprawling on the floor, through the dexterity of the practical joker, but the odds are that the victim's spine has been injured and that the effects of his fall will cling to him through life. Play the same trick on the practical joker, and he would be furious. Strange as it may seem, the practical joker is the most ill-natured target on earth. He doesn't like his own medicine.

The fault lies largely with parents. They don't teach their children to respect age, to respect others' rights, to be thoughtful and considerate. There is innocent fun that hurts no one and causes no damage, but it is not strenuous enough to suit some people. They want to break a leg or burn buildings. Such as these are criminal in instinct and should be placed under restraint. The practical joker ought not to be tolerated in any community.—Toledo Blade.

Eating into the Western Forests.

THE reports of the lumber cut in the West show that the paper-making concerns of the country are turning their attention to Wisconsin and Minnesota as a source of supply of spruce timber. There are hundreds of thousands of acres tributary to Duluth, not reached by railway lines, which are covered by spruce timber suitable for pulp. Unquestionably there is enough spruce in this country, notwithstanding the enormous quantity used by the paper mills, to maintain a pulp supply indefinitely, provided proper reforestation is carried on. Here, however, is the rub. The customary method of the pulp-mill owner who is seeking a supply of spruce is to buy the stumpage and cut off the timber indiscriminately, allowing the denuded land to grow up with any species of wood that happens to be left. Hard woods commonly succeed soft woods on deforested areas, and vice versa, and, therefore, a spruce forest once cut down is not naturally renewed for many years. The experience of the Eastern paper mills, which have cut over most of the available area of spruce forest, is likely to be that of the Central West. The systematic attempt at reforestation has been insignificant compared with the tremendous slaughter of the forests.

The West should take time by the forelock and insist, by legislation if necessary, upon proper methods of cutting and reforestation. The State has an interest in the preservation of its forests which is paramount to the right of the private landholder. Here in the East what is being done is largely in the way of locking the stable door after the horse has been stolen. With the great forest areas in Minnesota and Wisconsin yet untouched these States

JUST WORN OUT.

Story that Wanted a Rest After a Very Hard Worked Life.
The worn-out story collapsed at the feet of the Father of Fictions.

"What's wanted?" inquired his Satanic majesty with his usual warmth. "Oh, I'm worn out," gasped the wretched creature. "I never pretended to be a good story, but that doesn't justify the way I've been treated on earth. You will remember me if you happened to see a copy of last Sunday's Behind-the-Times. I was among the Gossips of the Stage, dressed this way:

"Blanche Walsh has a country home on Long Island and is occasionally bothered by tramps. One day a small, thin specimen of hobo honored her with a call. He told a hard luck story that would have brought tears to the eyes of a Japanese idol."

"And do you call yourself a man?" demanded Miss Walsh. "'No, ma'am, not entirely. Just now I'm only an outline. All I need is a little fillin' in.'"

"And he got it, too, after that admission of his incompleteness."

"When you turned to the Literary Chat, there I was again: 'Irving Bachelier, the author, has a country home at Sound Beach, and is occasionally bothered by tramps. One day a small, thin specimen of hobo honored the novelist with a call. He told a hard luck story that would have brought tears to the eyes of a Japanese idol.'"

"And do you call yourself a man?" demanded the writer.

"No, sir, not entirely. Just now I'm only an outline. All I need is a little fillin' in."

"And he got it, too, after that admission of his incompleteness."

The Woman's Page had me served in this style:

"Mrs. Roosevelt, when spending the summer at their simple country home at Oyster Bay, is occasionally bothered by tramps, etc."

"I also posed among Anecdotes of the War:

"Owing to the scarcity of provisions at Port Arthur, begging is discouraged; but, having eluded the vigilance of the guards, a small, thin specimen of hobo the other day accosted Viceroy Alexieff, etc."

"One page further on, the Tokio correspondent had his little say: 'Notwithstanding the splendid discipline of the Japanese navy, a small,

should adopt a forest policy before it is too late to make it of any value. Denudation should be made impossible without some reforestation. The greatest benefit, however, will be derived from a control of the cutting in such a manner as to make denudation impossible, and the State can do this now better than later.—Boston Transcript.

Asia for the Asiatics.

WE look upon it as a war between Japan and Russia—not so the Chinese, the Burmese, the Persians or the Siamese. To them this is a conflict between white and yellow, between the forces of the West against those of the East, between Europe and Asia. A Japanese victory would send a mighty wave of independence and pride throughout the populations of Asia, a wave of self-confidence, of contempt for their European rulers, which would bear fruits of which no one can foretell the exact consequences.

Furthermore, Japan would receive a great prestige, her influence over the Chinese Empire would become supreme, and no obstacle would lie in the way of the realization of her racial aspirations.

To any person who has even slightly followed the course of Japanese feeling and policy, there can be no doubt that these ambitions can be summed up in the phrase: "Asia for the Asiatics, under Japanese hegemony." For several years past Japan has been flooding with her agents the remotest parts of Asia, to rouse the sleeping patriotism of the people and prepare the way for liberation. Asiatic princes and statesmen have been flocking to Tokio; among them we might name besides several Chinese and Korean dignitaries, a deputation from Lhasa, the Siamese Prime Minister, the Persian grand vizier, a high priest from Afghanistan, and several Indian maharajas under British rule.

These men have had long conferences with the Ministers of the Mikado, and the object of these visits, in spite of all official denials, is well known to and in full sympathy with public opinion in Japan.—Westminster Review.

The Black Man's Burden.

THERE has been a good deal said and written about the "white man's burden," and not a little of it has been pure cant. But there is another side to the picture, and this reveals that the dark man also has a burden, and a most grievous one.

In the Congo Free State he has been robbed, mutilated and murdered in a wholesale way that has shocked civilization. In German Southwest Africa his property has been seized, he has been flogged, imprisoned and shot, his wife has been made a beast of burden and his children have been tortured.

In China he has been robbed of his territory until his integrity as a nation is threatened. In America he has been enslaved, whipped, burned at the stake and lynched. In the Philippines he has been introduced to the "water cure" and other "civilized" inventions.

Look where you will on the native heath of the man of dark skin, or in foreign countries where he has sought asylum, and you will find the black man and the brown man carrying a burden compared with which the "white man's burden" is a featherweight. If the dark man has been the white man's burden, the white man has been and is the dark man's curse.

And if the dark man finds his burden greater than he can bear, and attempts to turn on his barbarous taskmaster, it is called a "native uprising," and soldiers are sent to show him his proper place in the white man's scheme of civilization and progress.

The white man's burden is largely a myth; but the dark man's burden is terribly real, oppressively heavy, grossly cruel and unjust. In a word, it is the white man's selfishness and avarice.—Chicago Post.

thin specimen of stowaway was lately discovered aboard the flagship, and brought before Admiral Togo, etc."

"But the climax came, your majesty, when I found myself in the clutch of the Babbar of the Boulevard, who said: 'At the dinner given to Carnegie on the eve of his departure, a story told by Chance—'

There was silence. The Father of Fibs summoned a minion, and, indicating the miserable wreck, said in pitying tones: 'Put him in the hottest fire you have. Nothing can hurt him now.'—New York Sun.

TRADE IN THE WAR ZONE.

American Commerce Now Amounts to Large Part of the Trade.

In his article in the World's Work on "Our Trade in the War Zone," O. P. Austin, chief of the bureau of statistics of the Department of Commerce and Labor, presents some striking facts and figures. He says: Japan's total commerce now amounts, in round terms, to \$250,000,000 a year, about equally divided between imports and exports, and that of China to a little over \$300,000,000 a year, of which imports considerably exceed exports. Korean commerce amounts to \$15,000,000 a year.

From 1883 to 1903 our imports from the countries named doubled, while our exports from China, Japan and Hongkong amounted to \$37,000,000; in 1903, to \$72,000,000. The amount from Korea and Asiatic Russia was a mere trifle. In 1883 our exports to these countries, including Korea and Asiatic Russia, amounted to \$50,000,000.

This makes clear that our trade interest in these quarters is very great. We buy a very large proportion of the unmanufactured silk and practically all of the tea exported by Japan and we also buy large quantities of raw silk and tea from China, as well as many other articles, such as opium, matting, rice, wool and manufactured silks. Of the exports of \$50,000,000 value in 1903, \$21,000,000 went to Japan, \$19,000,000 to China, nearly \$9,000,000 to Hongkong, and \$1,500,000 to Asiatic Russia. As regards our trade with the two countries now at war our exports to Japan in 1873 were \$8,000,000, in 1903 \$21,000,000; to Russia, our exports in 1873 were \$12,000,000, in 1903 \$15,000,000. Thus in thirty years our exports to Russia increased 25 per cent and to Japan 150 per cent.

Commerce of the United States with Japan, Korea, China, Hongkong and Asiatic Russia, 1843-1903, was as follows: Imports into the United States from the countries named: In 1843, \$4,385,000; 1853, \$10,573,000; 1863, \$11,034,000; 1873, \$36,445,000; 1883, \$37,159,000; 1893, \$49,349,000; 1903, \$72,294,000.

Exports from the United States to the countries named: In 1843, \$2,410,000; 1853, \$3,736,000; 1863, \$6,355,000; 1873, \$17,776,000; 1883, \$11,000,000; 1893, \$11,464,000; 1903, \$49,964,000.

Next to the United States comes Great Britain, yet its commerce with the territory in question has only grown from \$50,000,000 in 1853 to \$100,000,000 in 1903—that is, doubled.

STORY MAY BE QUESTIONED.

Diner and Dined-Upon Crawled Swiftly to a Creek.

Near the Canaucta Creek a watersnake met a blacksnake. The reptiles did not immediately clinch, but hissed fiercely and circled around each other, as if seeking for an opening. The blacksnake pressed the argument, and in a few seconds succeeded in getting the tail of his opponent into his mouth, and, to preclude all possibility of escape, began to eat toward the head.

This was exactly what the watersnake wanted. It started on a straight line for the stream, and his consumer following him and dining upon him simultaneously, was, of course, obliged to travel a little faster in the same direction. The watersnake was a rapid mover and the blacksnake a quick eater, and for a short time it seemed doubtful whether one reptile or two would be visible when the stream was gained.

About half of the leading snake had been devoured, and the edge of the water was only a few feet away, when the blacksnake suddenly realized that a shabby trick was being played on him at meal time.

He hastily attempted to disgorge his repast, but the effort was made too late. Not more than five inches of watersnake had been yielded up when both reptiles plunged into the stream and sank at once. A hundred bubbles rose, and the only spectator of the contest is inclined to believe that the blacksnake's life floated to the surface in one of them.—New York World.

Self-made men and eggs are too full of themselves to hold anything else.

INDOLENT BY NATURE.

Thousands of Porto Ricans Live Like the Peons of Mexico.

Nature has put a premium upon indolence in Porto Rico, writes John Ball Osborn in the World's Work. For as an American official has remarked a native, while lying in his hammock, can pick a banana with one hand and at the same time dig a sweet potato with one foot. The natives are nevertheless warm-hearted, law-abiding and intelligent, honest and capable in business, public-spirited, and appreciative, for the most part, of the blessings bestowed by their new government. Race prejudice and religious strife hardly exist. There is no alarming intemperance. There are no serious disputes between capital and labor, and there is no marked tendency toward socialism.

Two-fifths of the Porto Ricans are colored, either pure negroes or mulattoes, a proportion which is a trifle larger than in Cuba (one-third), but much smaller than in the sugar producing British West Indies Islands.

With low rent, light cotton clothing, charcoal for cooking, and no heating problem, abundance of cheap native fruits and vegetables, fresh fish on the coast, and the dried, salted fish in the interior, and with temperate habits,



A NATIVE HOUSE OF BARK.

the Porto Rican laborer finds a bare subsistence easily assured unless he is handicapped with an unduly large and unproductive family. Fresh meats are too expensive for him, however; he relies for food on bananas, beans and rice. In fact, 50 bananas or plantains are frequently accepted as the equivalent of a day's wages of about 30 cents.

This condition of the laboring class is far from satisfactory. Thousands are upon a level with the peons of Mexico. They are anemic in appearance; they live in squalid and vermin-haunted huts, constructed of cane or boards, with front and rear doors, and a shutter window, and often with a dirt floor. They dress scantily in the cheapest cotton stuffs, while their children below the age of 7 or 8 years run naked. They use primitive household utensils, and cook with a simple charcoal outfit; and at night their only light is the tallow candle, though, being unable to read, they have little use for better. Such, then, are the masses of Porto Rico, whom the Americans have begun to uplift to a higher status.

A GIANT CARVING KNIFE.

The biggest carving knife ever exhibited is on view at the Exposition. This monster blade is 30 feet in length, and has an edge as sharp as a razor. It is made out of the finest steel, and the handle is a masterpiece of the



MONSTER BLADE OF THIRTY FEET.

cutler's art, elaborately carved and beautifully polished. It would take a veritable giant to wield a knife like this.

The blade is a lot of American manufacture, and it shows for the first time that American cutlery, which was formerly not as good as that made in other countries, but now reached a point of perfection where it fears no rivalry.

All in the Family.

Brigadier General Fred Grant, who is now in command of the Department of the Lakes at Chicago, was recently the guest of the public school principals of that city at luncheon. The chairman, rising to introduce him, made what he considered as a neat little speech.

"When Fred Grant was a boy at West Point," he said, "his father, the famous general, wrote to the commandant inquiring how the son progressed."

"You need have no worry was the reply. 'Your son is getting better marks in everything than you ever had in anything.'"

"That is a remarkably true story," said General Grant, when he rose to respond. "I remember the incident perfectly. But, gentlemen, I will not deceive you. There is a mistake of one generation. I am the famous general who wrote to the commandant, and my son is the one whose father had such poor marks. But never mind, Mr. Chairman. It is all in the family."

Grotesque Violin.

A violin owned by a resident in North London consists of the greater part of a human skull, over which is stretched a piece of sheepskin acting as the soundboard. The finger-board is formed of a human thigh, the pegs, were once the small bones of the hand of a South African native.

Even a professor of mathematics is seldom able to figure a woman's age correctly.

Some men's wealth is fabulous and that of others a mere fable.