

Topics of the Times

A phenomenon is a man who never loses a bunch of keys.

The favorite flower of Uncle Russell Sage is the touch-me-not.

"You can't tell the Russians that the 'yellow peril' is not real.

No fire drill on the Stocum, no fire drill in the Iroquois—the old story.

It is a good thing to lose your fence if it means the enlarging of your field.

The man who holds his head too high overlooks a lot of life's good things.

Man is a gregarious animal and settles in cities but when he gets there he has little to do with his neighbor.

The L. Z. Letter estate of many millions has been left in trust—that is one form of octopus that no one will want to smash.

It is just as easy to praise a neighbor as it is to find fault with him, but people seem to derive less satisfaction from it.

Mrs. Hannah Elias deeply regrets that she is a negress, but seems to be unconcerned about the things she ought to regret most keenly.

So long as men struggle for better prices for what they have to sell, so long will there be struggle for lower prices on what men have to buy.

When a village bank cashier's wife appears in a new dress the neighbors look at her as if they suspected her husband of having robbed the bank.

When Russell Sage travels he always takes the last seat in the car, so that the conductor will be compelled to let him save the interest on his money longer than any of the rest of the passengers.

Now that the Carnegie hero fund commissioners have met and organized, let the heroes come forward promptly. No need to push or shove, either; just come along quietly and in single file.

According to a new encyclopedia, poverty is caused by four things—drink, inefficiency and shiftlessness, crime and a fondness for roving. One other cause that might be mentioned is a lack of money.

"Milton received \$25 down for his immortal 'Paradise Lost,'" said a leading author the other day, "and to-day the manuscript of it is considered worth \$25,000. How many of our modern manuscripts which are worth \$25,000 to-day will, I wonder, be worth \$25 a century hence?"

A mean farmer claims that there used to be a fine echo on his farm that attracted numerous summer boarders, but one day his wife got into a controversy with it, and in its struggles to have the last word the poor echo strained itself so badly that it lost its voice entirely. It is a mean man that would make up this joke.

As a class, doubtless, mothers-in-law are too rudely treated by the purveyors of humor and satire and not sufficiently honored. They may be interested to learn that President Smith of the Mormon church, who was a conspicuous witness in the Smoot case, and probably has had as large an experience with mothers-in-law as any living American, is their ardent ally. He says the custom of ridiculing them is contemptible, and adds: "The best friends I ever had were my mothers-in-law. I loved and honored them and shall ever hold their memories sacred. They were true women and were worthy of their daughters." Perhaps some women will think this last sentence conveys a doubtful compliment.

It is not the least but one of the greatest advantages of higher education that the woman of to-day does know herself much better than did her mother or grandmother, and with that self-knowledge comes a better understanding of her relations to the world about her. The college girl of to-day is healthier, stronger, saner, more independent, more resolute and more useful than were the social butterflies or the household drudges of her grandmother's time. In the experimental stages of this new development there may have been danger, but the education of the body as well as of the mind is now looked after in all our girls' colleges, indeed, much better than in colleges for the other sex.

The biggest single industrial enterprise ever undertaken by the United States is the digging of the Panama canal. That makes John F. Wallace interesting. He is going to dig it. He has accepted the position of chief engineer. It was the natural thing to select a railroad man for the big job. A man who can build railroads as they are built in this country is equal to anything. Mr. Wallace is general manager of the Illinois Central Railroad. He worked his way up from the bottom. He has health, a magnificent physique, brains and the kind of patriotism that caused him to ac-

cept the government job, even though there is less money in it than in running a great railroad system. It is a tribute to Mr. Wallace and to the railroad profession that this great responsibility should have fallen on the shoulders of a railroad man. Few doubt that the big ditch will be constructed economically and well. The spirit that placed a steel band across the Rockies, that bridged Salt Lake, that is tunneling under New York City, that has been back of a thousand stupendous railroad enterprises, will successfully unite the Atlantic and Pacific. There is another side to this. The selection of a practical railroad man means that there will be few sinecures in the canal job. Men will be hired for their ability and made to earn their wages, and favoritism will stand little show of interfering with good service. That is the way most railroads are run, and it is as it should be. The government has plenty of money to invest, but none to waste.

One of the Boston newspapers, speaking of the "old home" movement which has renewed so much of good fellowship in many parts of New England, remarks the taking up of the same kind of celebration, inviting all one-time residents and their posterity to participate. In Ohio towns, and calls it "old-home week out west." The phrase recalls to a dweller in Chicago an occasion when during a sojourn of some months in Denver a friend of that city remarked that he was "going east" that night, but would not fall to keep an appointment for three days later in Denver. "How can you do that if you go east to-night?" asked the Chicago man. "Oh, that's easy," was the reply; "I could get back from Omaha in less time if needed." So to go to Omaha was to "go east" to the Denver man, and the Boston phrase "out west" reveals that the same kind of thing survives there. It is different only in form in California, where to return to the old home is to go to "the states," a phrase that recalls the once tremendous gap between the old western frontier in Iowa and Missouri and the scattered fringe of civilization along the Pacific. "Out west" to the New Englander, "going east" to the Denver visitor to Omaha, "the states" to the Californian, all are survivals of a time when there were localities with actual differences that justified the phrases, but are nearly outworn now. We have reached the point where some of the phrases have become absurd and others have nearly lost their meaning. It is time to begin to cultivate the habit of mere relativity as to points of the compass in a country rapidly crystallizing into homogeneity.

The Mania for Getting Rich.
The mania for getting rich—the mad, false idea that we must have money—has played worse havoc among ambitious people than war or pestilence. A member of the Chicago Board of Trade says that the men and women of this country contribute a hundred million dollars a year to the sharpers who promise to make them rich quick. They work the same old scheme of a confidential letter and shrewd baiting, until the victim parts with his money. Thousands are plodding along in poverty and deprivation, chagrined and humiliated because they have not been able to get up in the world or to realize their ambitions, for the reason that they succumbed to the scheme of some smooth promoter, who hypnotized them into the belief that they could make a great deal very quickly out of a very little. The great fever of trying to make one dollar earn five dollars is growing more and more contagious. We see even women secretly going into brokers' offices and "bucket shops," investing everything they have in all sorts of schemes, drawing their deposits out of the banks, sometimes pawning their jewelry—even their engagement rings—and borrowing, hoping to make a lot of money before their husbands or families find it out and then to surprise them with the results; but, in most cases, what they invest is hopelessly lost. Thousands of young Americans are so tied up by financial or other entanglements, even before they get fairly started in their life-work, that they can only transmute a tithe of their real ability or their splendid energies into that which will count in their lives. A large part of it is lost on the way up, as the energy of the coal is nearly all lost before it reaches the electric bulb.—Success.

Lincoln's Way of Teasing.
In his home city, Springfield, Ill., a story is told of Lincoln which has never appeared in print. His house had long needed a fresh coat of paint, but a political campaign was in progress and "Abe" had no time to look up painters. During his absence for six weeks of circuit-riding in his one-horse shay, Mrs. Lincoln had the matter attended to, and on his return when he drove up to the little cottage on 8th street she came out on the steps to welcome him. Paying not the slightest attention to her, Lincoln surveyed the house from foundation to eaves in a dazed manner and then drove to the next door, and called to his neighbor: "Say! Can you tell me where Abe Lincoln lives?"

"You old goose! come home and behave yourself," laughed Mrs. Lincoln.

Modern Improvements.
Day—I find there is a \$2,500 mortgage on the property you sold me. You never said anything about it.

Gay—Certainly I did. Didn't I distinctly tell you it had all modern improvements?—New Yorker.

EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

Germany and Tramps.

GERMANY has solved the tramp problem. It is announced that she is reasonably free from vagrants, and that such as are sinking about the byways are a relatively harmless lot, who seldom commit robberies and assaults of magnitude. And the way she has settled the difficulty is this: She arrests all tramps and puts them at work. She makes the work so much harder than the work of decent men that, after a trial of it, the tramps reform and quit the road. In our own country we have an army of the useless and vicious, from which is annually recruited a considerable addition to the ranks of the active criminals.

There is not so much in vagrancy itself which conduces to crime. Indeed some men would be in better health and morals if they occasionally allowed their legs to run away with them and carry them into the country, where they would renew the physical life that grows anemic at the bench and the desk. It is not the free and open air life that demerits; it is the effort to live without work; to get all and give nothing; to shift and sneak and steal in order to obtain food, instead of toiling honestly, even for an hour or two a day. Many of the tramps that are now idling along our highways and "hooking" rides on freight trains could pay for their meals by sawing a little wood, or weeding a garden patch, but they are extremely unwilling to do it, although not infrequently they work as hard at robbery as other people do at honorable employment.

Tramps carry moral corruption as they do physical contagion. Although mentally sordid and representative of a class that gradually eliminates itself, since it is an easy prey to the diseases that are invited by meager, un-governed life, with spells of dissipation and periods of exposure and hardship, they exert some influence over young people whose minds and habits are still unformed, and when a boy is found in their company prison authorities assure us that it would be better for him if he were dead. The boys who drift into the reformatories and jails of the land, after a season on the road, are among the most depraved that the authorities have to deal with. Our tramp army, then, is a missionary company that is going about the land preaching and practicing the most detestable of vices and often involved in crime.—Brooklyn Eagle.

Time to Close the Gates.

LONDON newspapers are gloating over the fact that the slums of that city are being depleted by reason of the \$9.60 steerage rate, which enables the riffraff of Europe to come to the United States. As a result this country is threatened with a deluge of the offscourings of the world. We are menaced with an overflow of the scum and dregs of pauperized humanity. The managers of the transatlantic steamship lines engaged in this despicable traffic apparently have no other thought in the matter than of the income it brings. Having landed a shipload of the refuse of Europe's population on our shores these steamship agents practically say: "Now, you beggars, shift for yourselves!"

The situation demands immediate and energetic action on the part of the immigration authorities at our Eastern ports. There ought to be a thorough sifting and winnowing of this horde of newcomers, a majority of whom are chronic beggars and professional criminals.

The steerage rate war, which has brought the emigrant fare from Liverpool to New York down to \$10, is the kind of a rate war which no thoughtful American citizen can regard with satisfaction. On the contrary it suggests a deluge of pauper immigrants of the most undesirable type. It is easy to see how, under a possible continuation of these rates, several of the old world governments can well afford to pay the passage of countless hordes of their poverty-stricken, ignorant and turbulent subjects to America, making this country a dump for the refuse of continental Europe. Here is a subject which should arouse Congress to speedy action. When a person can travel from the Rumanian provinces to New York for \$15, it is time to set about putting up the bars in earnest.

This country welcomes thrift, intelligence and loyalty to law and order from whatever land they hail. But our republican institutions are already taxed to the danger

point in the effort to assimilate the legions of illiterate immigrants that are coming to our shores from southern and far eastern Europe. There is a general feeling that the time has come to impose greater restrictions upon the importation of this class of persons.

Those who assert that this would be a violation of the tradition that this country is the asylum for the oppressed of all races should remember that with nations as with individuals, self-preservation is the first law of nature.—Chicago Journal.

"Passing of the Country Church."

THE Passing of the Country Church" is the title of an interesting article in the Outlook by James E. Boyle. From this article we learn, if we do not already know it, that the country, upon which we have been accustomed to look as the stronghold of organized religion, has lost its character as such in recent years. According to Mr. Boyle, the decay of the rural church is due chiefly to the tendency to schisms and divisions. The congregations divide and subdivide over some new religious fad or some difference in dogma, and with each division the amount of true religion decreases.

"The rural church," says Mr. Boyle, "seems doomed. Each time it changes name—now Baptist, now New Light, now Saint—it loses in membership and vitality. Its fire may be relumed temporarily, but its ultimate extinction is inevitable. Soon the little church stands by the wayside forsaken. The doorstep decked with tall weeds, the windows broken. Then it becomes a granary or a corn crib for some thrifty farmer, or is torn down and carried away. This process may take years, even decades, but it is inevitable."

Mr. Boyle does not think that the decline of the rural church is accompanied by an increase of vice and crime in the rural districts. The country school house is better and more influential than ever. The rural free delivery mail box is fast appearing at every front gate. Intelligence is more widely disseminated than formerly. There is less ignorance. The people are no longer interested by the kind of preaching that used to appeal to them.

The higher order of rural intelligence demands a better church than the old country church ever was or could be. In the future Mr. Boyle thinks the church people of the country will belong to strong and ably conducted churches in the towns and villages. Thus the building of good roads, the introduction of rural free delivery, the building of suburban trolley lines and the popularization of the automobile will have a good effect religiously as well as materially, for they will strongly tend to give the rural communities a better religious connection than they ever had in the old days of small country churches.—Minneapolis Journal.

What Kills Men in War.

IN the last issue of the Army and Navy Journal some data are given as to the number of wounds actually inflicted by the bayonet and saber as compared with firearms and artillery. Of all wounds treated by medical officers of the Union armies in the Civil War about four-tenths of 1 per cent, or 922 out of 240,712, were saber or bayonet wounds. In the Crimean War the English and French had 2 1/2 per cent of such wounds; in the Schleswig-Holstein War about 3 per cent, while in the Franco-Prussian War the records show that the Germans received less than one-third of 1 per cent.

A striking commentary this upon the advance of modern military science, showing that with the general adoption of long range firearms the saber and bayonet are rapidly falling into disuse, and the time is coming, if it has not already arrived, when those old and honored weapons will become obsolete.

But it is not the bullet or the artillery fire which strikes down the largest number of men. It is disease. In the Civil War one man out of every 6.7 was wounded in action; one of every 38 died of his wounds; one of every 42.7 was killed in action. Of the total mortality among colored soldiers 90 per cent was from disease. Of the total mortality among the white volunteers, 70 per cent was owing to disease; among the white regulars, 60 per cent.—Chicago Tribune.

ACCURATE RAILROAD WATCHES.

Companies Require Employees to Adjust Their Timepieces to Standard.

Absolute accuracy in timepieces is nowhere else so vital a matter as in the operation of railroad trains. If watches vary no schedule or time table is of any value. Where so many thousands of watches are in use it has been found necessary to adopt some system whereby perfect uniformity may be insured. All watches are examined at close intervals and kept in order by a staff of experts especially engaged for the purpose. There is no reason why a railroad man's watch should keep inaccurate time. It costs him nothing to have it regulated and it is part of his duty to see that it is in order.

The time by which the watches of an entire railroad force are set is telegraphed from Washington. At a certain time the operator at the railroad headquarters receives the time, records it at his own station and at the same instant sends the information to every "train-order" station along the line. It is the duty of the operator at the train-order station to set the clock right by Washington time and from this clock every employee attached to that station must set his watch.

At every station there is a clock that records standard time. At the larger stations there is a clock that records the correct time to a second. If it varies from the standard time a notice is affixed to the clock stating the exact variation. Upon returning from a trip or before beginning the return trip after a run, the trainmen must compare their watches with this carefully regulated clock. If it is found that the watch has lost or gained during the trip the timepiece must be handed in to the time-keeping department.

Here the railroad man receives another watch for temporary use while his own is being regulated, and the expert employed by the company overhauls the condemned watch and returns it later to the owner. With the watch is given a certificate showing that the department has regulated it

and it is again a good railroad time-piece.

Besides the watches of the train crews, there are still the timepieces of all the station employees, the signal tower men, the thousands of hands working along the tracks and in the shops, to be looked after.

For these a special force of experts is employed to travel up and down the line, stopping at all stations. To the expert come the railroad men, watches in hand. From constantly visiting the various points the watch repairer knows the timepiece as well as he knows the men, and a short examination determines whether or not the watch is ticking to proper railroad time.

Part of the duty of the repairer is to see that the station clocks and the clocks in the signal towers along the line are ticking according to railroad time. If they are not doing their duty he halts in his progress long enough to make them register time according to the Washington standard.

The railroad company will not permit the employee to carry any watch his fancy suggests. He must purchase a watch that meets with the favor of the management. If a certain watch comes again and again to the repair department and proves to be always behind or ahead of the time it is condemned finally and the railroad man must provide himself with one to the liking of the company, or carry a watch that the company will provide at his expense.

DANCES A DAY AND A HALF.

Somali Woman Infected with Religious Frenzy in English Town.

A Somali woman has astonished Bradford holiday-makers by dancing without a stop for thirty-six hours.

It was no part of her business thus to exert herself; she simply entered with excessive and unexpected heartiness into the spirit of the great Whitsuntide festival.

A number of women of the Somali tribe are proving a great attraction at Bradford exhibition, and it was ex-

plained to them that Whitsuntide is a great religious celebration, corresponding in importance with their Muharram, also an occasion of rejoicing.

The festival proved infectious, for one of the women broke into what is termed "the mad dance." Her companions unconcernedly became passive spectators of the woman's frenzied exertions.

A quick, eccentric and yet at times rhythmical step was maintained for the long period stated. Not for one moment did the dancer pause for refreshment or rest.

She collapsed at the close of the thirty-sixth hour. After an interval she was housed by the other Somali women, who, by beating their tambourines and by cries of exhortation, succeeded in encouraging her to another effort.

The second dance, however, did not last long and the woman again fell exhausted.

Following this had attack another of the natives—a man—lost his head and frantically threatened the holiday-makers, who were startled by his wild conduct. He was taken in hand by the police, however, and eventually calmed down.—London Express.

Andrew Gleeson's Eloquence.

For twenty years Andrew Gleeson, contractor and builder, was a member of the Republican National Committee for the District of Columbia. He controlled the Irish vote, and Perry Carson controlled the negro vote; and they were very successful, politically.

Carson, the negro, was a natural orator, but Gleeson, rich and powerful, could not make a speech. One evening at a political meeting, where one hundred Irishmen mingled with about two thousand negroes, Perry Carson did not appear, and the crowd called on Gleeson for a speech. He hesitated, shook his head, but finally arose and shouted:

"God bless the Irish, both white and black."

It was his first, last and only speech; but it pleased the crowd all right.

MAY BE LOST TRIBE OF ISRAEL.

Peculiar Race of People Living Underground in Central America.

Colonel J. C. Tucker, former United States minister at Martinique, relates a strange story of a race of people living in an underground city in Central America. Colonel Tucker some time ago received information about a race who live in cities cut out of the rocks in the mountains of Central America, in an out-of-the-way place, very difficult to reach, and which no stranger had visited before him and returned alive. He decided to investigate. After reaching a certain point Colonel Tucker had to travel 800 miles through wild jungles, carrying his provisions on a pack mule and enduring many hardships on the way. As he neared the hidden city his every movement was watched and reported to the high priest of the tribe dwelling there, but no harm was offered him. When he shot a pair of lions in the jungles, which had been killing the natives, he did an act that turned out to be the very thing that gave him their friendship and protection.

He was welcomed by the high priest, who spoke good English, and was shown through their wonderful city, hewn out of the solid granite rocks in the mountain side. To the uninitiated the surface of the mountain gave no clue to the city concealed within it. It was entered by secret passages, cunningly concealed by nature's handiwork, and which led to large, commodious rooms, handsomely furnished, mostly in old mahogany. Passages led to hundreds of other rooms, and to a large hall, in which the strange people met and held meetings, while smaller openings for ventilation went upward, ending among the rocks and jungles above, so arranged that the rain could not enter.

The tradition among these curious people was that they originally came from a country far away, and that their mission was to outwit their enemies, which, in the beginning, pursued them. At all entrances there were slide rooms, from which, at a moment's notice, deadly gases could be let loose upon any hostile invaders who might enter, and which would kill them instantly, while by sliding doors of stone the gas would be kept from entering the city.

The light of the sun, moon or stars never enters their underground city, except through certain openings, by which they study the mysteries of the night skies, but they use electricity for lighting purposes, a science they have learned by keeping in touch with the outer world through their young men.

The colonel says he was an attendant at their meetings and was surprised to find they were going through Masonic rituals, which he, being a Mason of high degree, understood. This was an inheritance of theirs from their ancestors of the unknown past.

Colonel Tucker has written many chapters about these people and their city. He has done so because he wishes to preserve the knowledge. He freely shows them to his friends, and has as yet made no effort to publish them. The proprietor of a well-known Eastern magazine, who visited the City of Mexico, and who was given the privilege of reading the manuscripts, with the proviso that he would not publish their contents, offered Colonel Tucker first \$5,000 and then doubled that amount if the colonel would pilot him to the city in the rocks. And he may yet do so.

Colonel Tucker believes these people are part of the lost tribe of Israel. He has many old parchments they gave him which he has been unable to find anyone to decipher for him, but which he hopes to have read by some one of the great scholars of the world, when the mysteries they contain in their time-stained hieroglyphics will be made plain, thus revealing to the world perhaps the strangest story that ever linked the dim past with the living present.

Was a Crabologist.

Booker Washington, in lecturing to his colored people, tells them this story, and it hits hard those of his own race who have tried to injure him. He says:

"Once upon a time there was an old colored man who was having great success catching crabs. He had a tremendous box more than half full, when a passer-by warned him that the biggest and best crabs were crawling out and would escape. The old man replied:

" 'Thankee, sir, much obleeged, but I ain't goin' to lose no crabs. I'se a crabologist, I is, and I knows all 'bout de crab nature. I don't need to watch 'em, 'nall. When de big crab fight up to de top, and when he is gittin' out, de little crabs catch him by de laig and pull him back. He ain't git out no-how.' "

And then Booker Washington says: "My friends, I have been informed that there is something of crab nature in human nature; but it must be altogether among white folks, and not in our race."

Teasing His Wee Brother-in-Law.
It was Synthe's wedding-day, and he was teasing his boy brother-in-law.

"Now, Johnny," he said, "I'm going to take your sister away and have her all to myself, and you won't see her any more."

"No, really—are you?" said the boy, curiously.

"Yes, I am. What do you think of it?"

"Nothing. I fancy I can stand it if you can."

Sometimes the girl's father strikes a young man favorably and sometimes he merely kicks him out.