

Topics of the Times

Contraband of war is stuff shipped by a nation with a small navy.

If a man is hard on his children he is usually an easy mark for his grandchildren.

An Eastern man has sold nineteen chickens for \$3,400. That is something to crow over.

A German scientist has discovered that the bite of the rattlesnake will knock out leprosy. So will a gun.

Russia has placed an order for 300,000 tons of coal, so we know where President Baer's sympathies will be hereafter.

The gatherings of the believers in universal peace are the finest things in the world; splendid optimism under difficulties.

The feathers on a hen were counted the other day. There were 8,120 of them. Score another triumph in the great onward march of human knowledge.

In three months the railroads of the United States have killed nearly 1,000 persons. Traveling is becoming almost as dangerous as celebrating the Fourth.

The statement telegraphed from Newport that Harry Lehr is suffering from brain fog is puzzling. It is easy to understand where the fog came from, but where and when did Harry get the brain?

A London doctor advances the theory that a great deal of the prevalent baldness is caused by smoking. We are skeptical about this. The indignant wife of a smoking husband may be tempted to jerk him bald headed, but she seldom does it.

A Chicago firm will install a telephone system in St. Petersburg. It is to be hoped that some scheme may be devised to prevent the crossing of wires. A collision on the wire between Peter Januskevics and Fred Sienewski would be too horrible to contemplate.

It is easy to take a proverb and turn it upside down or put a tail on it, so that it shall contain new nonsense or new wisdom. Mr. Thomas A. Edison has done the trick rather cleverly in making an American version of an old saying, "All things," he observes, "come to those who hustle while they wait."

That wheat is taking the place of rice as the principal article of food in Japan and China is a conclusion arrived at by consultation of statistics, and the reason is to be found in the development of wheat fields hitherto left to the growth of grass, as in Canada, Australia and Russia. The more wheat is raised the more will be used, the larger yield keeping the price down, and as it is the finest grain grown it is bound to take the place of all others.

Are balloon torpedoes to be the next? If so, what preparation has been made for destroying the balloon torpedo? The submarine destroyer and now the aerial ship pouring nitroglycerin and other explosives into a fort or city? But, of course, matters cannot remain at this stage of the game. Inventive mankind must again "get even" somehow and destroy the destroyers. For war has come to be merely the power to destroy armies, navies, cities, nations. How beautiful is this science of extinction!

Grandmother's garden was gay with peonies, which she called "pinies," but younger folk thought the big, sprawling blossoms vulgar, and got them out of sight whenever they could. Grandma has her revenge now, for the peony—which is even larger than it used to be, and aspires to have a perfume—has become a fashionable flower, and figures instead of the rose at "pink weddings." There were other blooms which the old lady cherished that deserve to take a turn at popularity. Blessed be the fashion that shall revive her herb garden also! That did not always pretend to beauty, but it was grateful and comforting, and contemporaries who disdained it and went farther—to the apothecary's, for instance—frequently fared worse.

It must have taken considerable courage in Andrew Carnegie to post his anti-tipping placards in Skibo Castle, for tipping in Great Britain is on as stable a foundation as monarchy and is as little likely to be overturned by the example of one man. If Mr. Carnegie could really abolish tipping or start a reformation which would ultimately abolish it he would easily be the most shining character of the twentieth century, but he cannot do it. There are certain evils that have come to stay and certain problems that can never be solved. Among these is the tipping practice. When every library that Mr. Carnegie has founded is forgotten and when every idea contained in all the books in these libraries has become obsolete the servants in Scotland will still be demanding and receiving tips.

Did you ever hear of John Henry Brodribb? Few persons have. You know him as Sir Henry Irving, the greatest living actor. There is comfort and hope for struggling young

men in the career of this man who came up from a junior clerkship in a London shop to be the foremost tragedian of the Victorian era. He was born John Henry Brodribb and poor. It was only after he had made a great name for himself that Queen Victoria made him the first actor-knight. Here is the encouragement to young men in the life of this illustrious actor and scholar: When he made his first attempt to act a part in a local lyceum he flunked. Stage fright prevented his opening his mouth. He retired in disgrace without speaking a word. Worse still: When he engaged to play a part in "The Winter's Tale" he was literally hissed off the stage. That would have settled it with most young men. But this young man knew what was in him and he was bound to give it expression. He studied constantly and spouted in his room before a mirror. He drenched himself in Shakespeare. And he would take any part, however low, in the cast to get a chance on the stage. Finally Dion Boucicault discovered the genius that was in him and the rest was easy. The story is the story—with variations—of every man who has got on in the world. Men make themselves great by persistence.

In recent years, as most persons know, there has been a great increase in the size of classes graduated from the higher institutions of learning. This is true both of the colleges and of the professional and technical schools, and the newspapers have found the fact a fruitful topic for discussion. How long can the country stand it? they ask. How long can these large numbers of college graduates continue to be "absorbed"? The pessimistic speculation, and, indeed, the question itself, is really a survival of the curious old notion that college graduates are different from other young men; that paths which are open to ordinary youths are closed to them, and that the struggle for success must be increased by the increase in numbers. The fallacy lies in the survival of the old view of the purpose of a college course. Preparation for law, medicine or the ministry, or perhaps for teaching, was once regarded as the only good reason a boy could have for incurring the expense of a college course. Now the purpose is recognized as a training of the faculties for whatever the young man chooses to undertake, whether it be farming, business, ship-designing or one of the so-called learned professions. In a sense education has always been the view of educators, but it has seemed not to be the view of the people at large. It is really the graduates themselves who have brought about the change. Their readiness to enter new callings has put the matter of education in a truer light and robbed the newspaper comments and jokes of much of their significance. The college graduate of to-day is most often merely a young man ready to go to work and looking for a chance; a young fellow with a healthier body and a better-trained mind than some of his fellows, but otherwise not different from them. There is no limit to the country's capacity to "absorb" this kind of youth, and there never will be any. Really, this is the only kind that is ever "absorbed."

SOAPSUDS AS A DRINK.

Millions of Glasses of It Dispensed at Soda Fountains.

A crowd of fashionably dressed men, women and children, four or five deep, stood before the elaborate bar of a soda fountain in one of New York's finest drug stores on a hot day, waiting impatiently for the dispensers to serve them with foaming tumblers of ice cream soda. A physician who had just entered the store remarked to a reporter for the Commercial:

"Just look at those foolish people drinking soapsuds. You smile! You don't believe it. Well, that's just what it is—soapsuds—merely sweetened, carbonated soapsuds.

Of course everybody has noticed the resemblance of soda water foam to soapsuds, but the general impression is that the foam is produced entirely by the action of the carbonic acid gas with which the water is charged. According to the word of this reputable physician, the popular belief is erroneous.

"Customers want the foam, because it looks nice and they imagine it adds piquancy to the flavor and makes the drink more effectual in quenching the thirst," he resumed. "Of course, the addition of foam increases the profits of the seller of the drink. In order to increase the amount of foam some druggists use a formula composed of four ounces each of quillaja, alcohol, and glycerine, and eight ounces of water. This is made into a tincture, and from two to five drams of it is added to a gallon of syrup. The quillaja and glycerine form a soap which is diluted by the water and alcohol.

"The two active principles of soap bark, quillaja acid and saponin, are violent local irritants, and in sufficient quantity are poisons. Some soda dispensers will not use soap bark on this account, but others say that there is no danger in its use because such an infinitesimal amount finds its way into a glass of soda that it is harmless. Still the fact remains that the foam on soda water dispensed in many of the drug stores throughout the United States is composed largely of soapsuds.

—New York Commercial.

His Information.

She—He has five marriageable daughters, has he not?

He—Well, I know he has five hugable daughters.—Yonkers Statesman.

His wife's tight shoes have caused many a man to regret having given up single blessedness.



EDITORIALS

OPINIONS OF GREAT PAPERS ON IMPORTANT SUBJECTS

Country and City.

A PAPER published near the southern boundary of Missouri speaks of the great advantages to farmers of the telephone where it has been introduced. The improvement, it is remarked, "places city and country in immediate communication, rendering unnecessary four-fifths of the trips that have been made on country roads." Highways may be muddy and weather stormy, but the world can be rung up according to the necessities of the moment, facilitating business and social life, and saving an immense amount of time and effort. A marked tendency of the age is to bring the country into closer touch with the centers of population. Electric roads are multiplying and make their way into neighborhoods that could not hope for steam lines. Rural free delivery of the mails is moving onward with great strides. Over 20,000 routes are in operation. Missouri alone has 1,200. Farmers get their letters and the daily newspapers delivered almost at their doors. Each day's events reach the country promptly, and the old rural isolation is disappearing. Means of ready travel grow better and keep on extending, and the good roads organizations gain constantly in active support.

Within a dozen years electric transit in the cities has more than doubled the area suitable for town residences. Cities themselves are spreading farther into the country, of which suburban sections are a pleasing modification. Labor on the farm has been rendered easier by ingenious machinery. All whose memories stretch back to pioneer days can bear witness to the enormous advance toward bringing country and city closer together. Progress in that respect proceeds at an accelerated pace. Going to the city or taking a run into the country is a commonplace incident. How far the space between will eventually be annihilated is beyond the range of conjecture, but the old lines of separation are disappearing in so many ways that the future relations of country and city are full of hopeful interest.

There is a reflex side to the drift of the population to the cities. Love of country life is a natural and general feeling. The merchant who comes to the city as a youth to make his fortune often returns to the country when he retires, and dreams of doing it all through his business career. He would hardly be willing to admit the deep tenderness of the memories of the old farm. All the remoteness of that quiet nook has passed away. You can "ring up" the farmer of to-day and find that he is abreast with the current news and that he has it in printed details, thanks to the rural delivery carrier.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Leap Year Over Half Gone.

W E do not wish to urge anyone to rash and precipitate action, but it is our duty to call the attention of young ladies, and, indeed, of all unmarried ladies, to the exceptional privileges which immemorial custom allows them in the quarternary period through which we are so rapidly passing. The number of weddings shows no increase over ordinary years, and it is to be feared that the feminine world has not realized how little potential energy there is in water which has passed the mill. The decay of the peculiar customs of Leap Year is strongly evidenced by the almost complete lack of jokes on the subject in the newspapers, since it is well known that topical humor lingers long after the vanishing of its cause.

So far from Leap Year sinking into noxious desuetude, it might be expected that its peculiar privileges would be more widely used than ever before, now our young women are becoming more adventurous and also much harder to suit. The requirements for admission to matrimony imposed on the young men by the opposite sex have risen as rapidly as the standard of scholarship in the universities, and a young man whose attainments a few years ago would have been considered sufficient to qualify him for the position of master of a household would nowadays have to be content with his degree of bachelor.

Really, it is not at all certain that women do not do most of the proposing every year. Very little is known about this mysterious though important topic, anyway. Each person's experiences are limited to a comparatively few instances, and these are always regarded by both parties as exceptional in all respects. Novels are also

"AND YE VISITED ME."

"Your letter brought tears to my eyes," wrote the invalid to her friend of former years, as she lay in bed and painfully used her lead pencil. "I have been out of sight so long. You can never know how good it seems to be looked up and visited."

Julia Graham—that was what every one called her who remembered her—had married and gone West. "Mrs. George William Osgood" was the name on her visiting card. But she returned for "Old Home Week" after an absence of nine years, and the return was far from being an unmixed pleasure. A pleasure it was, in many ways greater than she expected; but the changes were many, and some of them sad. No one can revisit the scenes of childhood or youth, or any locality where he has spent much of his life, without this mixed experience—the joy of renewing acquaintances which were pleasant, and the sadness of finding those whom he loved less prosperous or less strong or happy. So it was with Miss Graham. The "week" was only a week for her, and it was a full one. There were relatives to visit, old friendships to be renewed, and dinners to be eaten. But the thing which Julia Graham did that endeared her to some old friends was the looking up of those whom she had known in other days who were unable, or timidly disinclined, to look her up. The letter was from one of these. Julia had learned that this old friend lived in another town, and was bedridden. It cost her a whole day to go to her, but she came back saying over to herself the words which her friend had said, "I know now why our Lord blessed those to whom He said, 'I was sick, and ye visited me!'"

There was another old friend, a schoolmate, who had married a drunkard, and who did not appear at any of the festivities of the week. "I shouldn't call on her; she might be sensitive," said Julia's cousin. But

gether unreliable, and the government has not added questions concerning the methods of matrimonial negotiations to the census queries, although many more personal and less important vital statistics are procured. It may even be doubted whether matrimonial engagements are necessarily or even commonly preceded by formal declarations any more than are military engagements.

However that may be, we do not recommend our maidens, no matter how desirous they are, and should be to obtain the best men for husbands, to adopt the conventional form of proposal. Breaking the ice is a disagreeable process. It is better to thaw it. And let no one abstain from such maidenly maneuvers as she can advantageously use for fear lest the man should, through gallantry, accept her unwillingly. It is rare that a man is persuaded into doing anything he really does not want to do; much more rare than women think. A man's affection for the opposite sex is in the beginning general and diffuse. A man is naturally so altruistic that he normally loves all women, and on which one of them he ultimately focuses the full force of his affection depends on circumstances—and on the woman.—New York Independent.

Fraud Orders.

W HEN a business concern in the United States begins suddenly to receive a large number of letters daily, it may be sure that, although no ripple has disturbed the surface, a quiet investigation is going on, and if there is anything dishonest about the business a notice will soon appear from the postmaster, to the effect that the Department at Washington has ordered the retention of all letters addressed to that man or company.

The dishonesty which is held to justify the issuing of a fraud order may not be a mere barefaced attempt to steal—an effort to get something for nothing. The charging of an excessive profit, or misleading advertising, has called forth such an order. A recent case in point is that of a company which advertised to furnish seed for an agricultural product and to buy the product at market prices. The order against the company was issued because it was learned that it sold in small quantities, for a total of \$900, seed which it bought in bulk for \$3; and because it represented the product as easy to raise, when, in fact, it is difficult.

This fearless attitude and action of the Government is of the greatest possible benefit to the country at large in two ways. It checks, indeed it stops absolutely, one kind of fraud, and it protects innocent persons from loss through that fraud. The thing on which stress should be laid is the availability of this strong arm of protection.

There is always a large number of fraudulent schemes afoot, dependent upon the publicity which they get through advertising. When one's attention is attracted by such an advertisement, he has only to call the attention of his postmaster to it, and to ask him to notify the Department at Washington. To do this in every suspicious case is a duty which every honest man owes to his neighbor as well as to himself.—Youth's Companion.

Japanese Inventiveness.

I T has long been supposed that the capacity for initiation is the characteristic of Western nations alone. According to some leading anthropologists, as one goes from West to East he finds this capacity disappearing and the capacity for imitation taking its place. The Chinese and Japanese are imitators, not inventors.

But the present war between the Russians and the Japanese is rapidly proving the idea to be mere assumption. It is the Eastern rather than the Western people which, in this contest, are exhibiting the capacity for initiation and invention. Their strategy is almost faultless, and it is their own. Their artillery is astonishingly destructive, and, in some of its most deadly features, is the product of Japanese invention. Their naval tactics have been so unexpected and successful as to promise a revolution in the future methods of naval warfare. When peace comes and the Japanese carry their genius into the industrial world, they will demonstrate perhaps in a more telling way that the capacity for initiation does not diminish as one travels toward the rising Sun.—Church Standard.

A RUSSIAN HEROINE.



MRS. E. W. VORONOB.

Mrs. E. W. Voronoba, wife of the commandant of the maritime province dragoons, has organized at her own expense a transport system for the wounded. She has also joined the Sisters of Mercy during the war. She has even signified her willingness to go to the front and serve in the Red Cross ranks. Her purse is always open to any demand having for its object the promotion of deeds of mercy in connection with caring for wounded Russian soldiers.

Julia went to her in her poverty and sorrow, and her visit was like a ray of sunshine to her old friend.

Most pathetic of all was her looking up an old man, feeble now and oblivious of most that had happened recently, but with a mind that came back when recalled by suggestions of former years, and whose life was brightened for many a day afterward by his memories of the visit of "little Julia Graham."

"The pleasantest things about Old Home Week," said Julia to her husband, "were those which I was most reluctant to undertake. It cost me a real struggle to do it, and there were

so many things I wanted to do. I'm afraid I did it just because it was my duty. But I received a greater blessing than I gave."

The experience of one woman may be a suggestion to other people, returning for Old Home Week. Theirs, too, may be the blessing of Him who said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."—Youth's Companion.

When a woman puts on a black silk dress she hasn't worn in months, somehow it doesn't create the sensation she expected; it is full of creases, and doesn't hang right.

A DETHRONED MONARCH.

In his "Frontier Sketches," James Steele, writing of the days when the buffalo still roamed the plains, tells of a pathetic incident of which he was the witness. Mr. Steele, resting on a little hill at no great distance from a feeding herd, noticed a scared and shaggy old buffalo, which stood on the outskirts of the group.

He was a big old fellow, the hero of many a fight, but it was evident that now he had been defeated in battle and that his rule was ended. Reluctant to accept the fact, he hung about his former subjects, pretending to eat. The herd was busy cropping the grass with a continual rasping sound, and utterly ignoring the presence of their former king.

Presently a young calf came out toward the solitary grazer; a miniature and foolish slip of a buffalo, with his little black nose all wet and wrinkled. Curiosity and inexperience had moved him to come to his father, and the two touched noses amicably. As if encouraged, the veteran edged a little nearer the herd. Then a strong young bull made a sudden approach, giving utterance to certain ominous groans and snortings. The solitary one stopped chewing and the antagonists faced.

The old boy straightened out his whip of a tail to a line with his back, gathered his four black hoofs together, arched his spine and stood shaking his huge front. He was old and lame, but he never flinched. The young bull came on slowly, twisting his tail in circles as grand as that small organ could compass. His eyes rolled in redness and his nostrils were distended. Whack! The two curly foreheads came together. There was a long, straining push in which every tendon seemed stretched to the utmost. The vigorous thrust was followed by an easing off for another collision.

Such dead set of strength could not last long. The old crusader's foot slipped. There was a sudden lunge, a spring forward, and the horn of the young bull raked upward through his antagonist's flank. Again and again the buffalo tried to make his old ward of head to head, but in vain. With the agony of defeat in his eyes and the blood flowing from his wounds, he still refused to be conquered. Finally, with falling strength, openmouthed, with hanging tongue and pitifully panting, he stood motionless, unable to fight, unwilling to retreat. The others came about him and added their scornful snorts and digs to his humiliation. There he stood, whipped and sullen, but still obstinate.

The other buffaloes gradually dropped away, leaving him once more alone. Then the little calf pounced up with arched back and elevated tail, and gave his venerable parent to understand in plain terms that he held himself in readiness to give him a tremendous drubbing. It was exasperating to see this young milkop imitate its seniors. The poor old veteran did not so much as look at him.

Then his calfship poked his foolish head with a considerable thump against the old one's nose. But it hurt him and he ambled off to his mother. The old buffalo seemed not to notice his babyish persecutor, but I suspect it broke his heart. He turned sorrowfully, and slowly limped away.

Took the First Tow.

The late John H. Hamline, of Chicago, was one of the foremost advocates of civil service reform in that city, says the Outlook, and was instrumental in securing the passage of the law that established the merit system there. Although the mayor who appointed the first civil service commission was notoriously hostile to the measure, and planned to render it useless, Mr. Hamline did not hesitate to accept a place on it.

"How can you compromise with the opposition," he was asked, "by getting on a commission like that, which will have no power?"

"When I am going anywhere," he replied, "I do not wait for a star. I hitch my cart to anything which happens to be going my way."

It is worthy of note that having climbed aboard his cart he managed, to the mayor's amazement, to keep it straight in the path of municipal reform, and made the law effective, despite all opposition.

Miss Gentry's Curious Hat.

Miss Gentry has in her collection a ladies' hat which is strictly an agricultural product. The body of the hat is vegetable cream lace; the trimming is flowers made of grass rope and corn husks, parti-colored, and ribbons of cotton batting, natural color, the whole ornamented with peacock feathers. The gourd takes a beautiful finish, and Miss Gentry has varnished and ornamented her collection so as to make it exceedingly attractive as well as instructive. She has a banjo made out of a gourd and covered with buckskin, and on a large sugar gourd is a bar of music of the old negro reel, "Sugar in de Gourd." One who is familiar with the old-time negro would associate with it "Rabbit in de Pea Patch," and the old-time cotton picking and corn shucking and the dance at night in the cabin on the puncheon floor, or the summer time negro dances in the moonlight on the lawn.

It is unfortunate that this faith a woman has in a worthless husband can't be cashed at a grocery store.

If you eat corn on the cob, don't aggravate your offense by mixing a mus-tache up in it.