

Topics of the Times

People who are in the swim are not going against the tide.

The Santa Claus fires were comparatively few. Evidently Santa is not too old to learn.

Cotton planters are about convinced that the bear weevil is a greater pest than the boll weevil.

The movement for clean money means an alarming reduction in the per capita of circulation.

Let us sing "The Star-Spangled Banner." To oblige Sir Howard Vincent please omit the third stanza.

If the meddlesome courts continue to interfere they will utterly ruin white-capping as a gentlemen's pastime.

Dr. Lyman Abbott may be a good man, and doubtless he is, but he doesn't weigh anywhere near 300 pounds.

Concerning the "secret of old age," it isn't a secret any longer. The people have been told "How to Live a Hundred Years."

King Peter of Serbia is busy destroying the freedom of the press in that country. It will probably not take him long.

If the "Star Spangled Banner" doesn't suit the British members of parliament maybe they would consent to let Poet Laureate Austin dash off a few lines for Uncle Sam to sing.

As it has been decided by a Pennsylvania judge that the hen is not an animal, the hour seems to have arrived for the organization of a society for the prevention of cruelty to hens.

If any of our leaders have lent \$5,000,000 on notes signed "Andrew Carnegie," we advise them to communicate with the ironmaster at once, as the signatures may have been forged.

President Harper's assertion that not enough young men are entering the ministry will be disputed by many of the older ministers. Their experience leads them to think there are not enough congregations.

Sir Howard Vincent wants the people of the United States to cut out part of "The Star-Spangled Banner" because it is uncomplimentary to the English. Sir Howard probably forgets that "The Star-Spangled Banner" would never have been written if the English had not gone to the trouble of furnishing the inspiration.

Your old friend Aguinaldo, who used to raise something quite different, is now engaged in raising hemp, rice and potatoes on a little plantation near Manila. Whether Aguinaldo has gone to farming because he needs the money or because he wants to lay a new foundation for a political career is a question remaining to be answered.

Charity is symbolically represented in the figure of a benevolent man giving alms to the beggar who clutches at his skirts. Scientific charity approves the spirit of the picture, but not the scene it presents. Recently the secretary of the London Mendicity Society, Sir Eric Buchanan, said that he had never known a deserving case of street-begging.

Freshmen, even in their own country and State, seldom receive from other members of their college so cordial a welcome as has been accorded to the "Rhodes Scholars" by Oxford upper classmen. The undergraduate weekly has this to say of the newcomers: "They are likely to prove a most healthful cure for the blasé indifference which appears with ever-increasing frequency in the Oxford college captains. All branches speak of the enthusiasm with which the Rhodes Scholars are supporting every college interest. They contrast sharply with the apathy of many English freshmen."

Italians are industrious and thrifty and are as a rule excellent farmers, market gardeners and tradesmen. In the parts of the South where the Italians have settled they have achieved a decided success as truck growers and in other employments, and their condition in comparison with many of their compatriots who have remained in the great cities as day laborers under the guidance of the exacting padrones is striking. If this work can be done on a large scale for all classes and races of immigrants the gain for the country will be tremendous. The congestion in the cities will be relieved, the slums curtailed, many burdens lifted from the charities, the criminal class reduced and the jail population diminished.

The war between Russia and Japan has taught many lessons in warfare, both at sea and on land. On the land it is not unlikely that the most important instruction will be in the art of sanitation. On the sea there has been the most decisive test of modern naval architecture. This test seems to have established the superiority of the battleship over other classes of war vessels, and of big guns on such ships over smaller guns, known as the secondary battery. At the first naval battle in the present

war the great guns on the Japanese battleships put the Russian ships to flight before they had approached each other closer than four miles—a distance too great for the six and eight inch guns to be effective. That the Japanese could strike their adversaries at that great distance was an achievement in marksmanship which has never been excelled. Against such marksmanship and such guns vessels of the cruiser class carrying smaller guns would stand no chance. The battleship with its thirteen-inch guns manned by expert marksmen, could send a cruiser to the bottom before the latter could get within fighting distance.

The people who do not make it clearly known that they desire a greater degree of liberty, do not get it in Russia or in any other country. If it had not been for the appeals of zemstvos and town councils the Czar would not have been moved to take the measures which he says in his ukase are needed to strengthen civic and public life. The men who made the appeals can bear with equality the Czar's condemnation of their activity when they contemplate the results of their agitation. Although ordered peremptorily to refrain from further agitation, they may not obey. The Czar promises an extension of local self-government. That is the primary education in government which the Russians greatly need. The men who have learned to manage the local affairs of a municipality or a province are likely to be competent to take part in legislating for an empire. It is promised that the administrative authorities shall use their discretionary powers only "where the actual safety of the State is threatened." The administrative authorities remain the judges as to whether the safety of the State is threatened. It will be in their power to arrest men arbitrarily and hold them in prison indefinitely without trial. But the language of the Czar is in the nature of an assurance that not so many persons will be arrested and imprisoned because they are suspected of political offenses. There is a promise of the removal of "unnecessary" restrictions on the freedom of the press and of a revision of the laws dealing with the rights of all persons who do not belong to the Orthodox church. The Czar says also that "steps should be taken to assure independence of the courts." When such steps are taken and the judges when once appointed hold office during life or good behavior and are independent of the autocracy, Russians will have gained a degree of personal security they do not have now. The conclusion which many will draw from a perusal of the Czar's ukase is that he is granting little to his subjects; that some of the concessions he does make are accompanied by limitations and qualifications which make them of little value, and that the Russian government remains about as autocratic as ever. Nevertheless the reactionaries in Russia are displeased because the Czar has done so much. They would rather that he had negated every prayer for reform, and had proclaimed that improvement is impossible. On the other hand, the liberals, though thankful for what they have been promised and seeing in it a promise of brighter days for Russia, are disappointed because some of the reforms they begged for have been ignored. It may appear to some that the policy of the Czar has been a vacillating one—that he has leaned first to this side and then to that, and hence it is that he has been unable to satisfy either liberals or reactionaries. A more reasonable view of the situation is that he is feeling his way and seeking to strike a middle path between those who ask for more than it may be wise to grant at once and those who would concede nothing. Autocratic government in Russia cannot endure forever, but it cannot be suddenly ended without bloodshed. A gradual peaceful transition to a constitutional government is what is most to be desired, and that may be the end the Czar has in view. He may be of the opinion that small concessions gradually made will lower the rising tide of discontent, while if he were to lower the dam too much by making too many concessions the pent up waters would rush out so madly as to sweep everything away.

Dynamo Run by a Windmill. At Aikoo, in Denmark, a dynamo has been connected to a wind motor and 450 incandescent lamps run very effectively. Difficulties as to the steadiness of such power have been overcome by an ingenious American farmer in Kansas, who has installed a water motor or turbine, run from the tank of his large windmill and connected to a dynamo, thus obtaining lights for his residence and buildings. Wind motors and dynamos were carried on a recent Polar expedition for the same purpose.

Could Do Her Part. "Bridget," said the mistress, reprovingly, "this is absolutely the worst pie I ever tried to eat. You told me you could bake as good pies as any cook in the city."

The new kitchen girl placed her arms akimbo and faced her mistress defiantly.

"So I can, m'm," she said. "So I can. But all the laddies I iver wurked for mixed the pies themselves before I baked 'em, m'm!"

A Subtle Distinction. "Did the critics like your performance of Hamlet?"

"The critics," answered Mr. Stormington Barnes, "liked it. But a large number of persons who assume to be critics did not."—Washington Star.

Phonographs, like some people, are shy of originality.

EDITORIALS Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

The Dawdler is Bound to Fail.

DAWDLING is one of the chief sins of men and women that fail. There are only twenty-four hours in the day, and it is possible to dawdle away five or six of them while hardly noticing it. The dawdler commences in the morning before he gets up. His alarm clock rings at 6 o'clock, and that is the hour at which he ought to rise. But he lies abed, stealing catnaps, for a quarter of an hour, and then jumps out in a hurry and proceeds to dress. It was just as hard to leave the bed at a quarter past six as it would have been at six, and the result of the loitering has been the loss of fifteen minutes out of the day. Remembering that he is late, the dawdler pulls on his first garments in a great hurry, but his pace soon slackens. He yawns and stretches himself and spends half or three-quarters of an hour in his ablutions, shaving and attiring. At breakfast he reads the paper leisurely, and the meal takes up another half hour. Then he leaves the house to go to his office, where he arrives thirty minutes later than he ought.

Although late, he does not plunge briskly into his work. There are several other papers to glance through, and over these he wastes the major portion of an hour. And when, at length, he lays aside the papers and turns to his duties, he does not keep at them assiduously. * * *

Thrift is not an Egyptian mystery known only to a few favored initiates. Everybody sees in what thrift consists, but not everybody having the knowledge puts it into practice.

By dawdling two hours a day, one wastes a twelfth of his entire life. One month out of the year, one year out of twelve, goes for nothing. This waste, remember, is in addition to all holidays and vacations. What man, having his way to make in the world, can afford to drop a month out of his year? What man can afford, at the end of every eleven years, to cease all work for a twelve month? Dawdling wastes time in small portions, but the total loss is enormous and costly.—San Francisco Bulletin.

Naves of Today and of the Past.

WHEN one comes to think of it, nothing so eloquently emphasizes the meaning of evolution to a greater extent than the marked changes in the complexion of the world to-day with that existent a century ago. Naval warfare and naval construction has undergone a most complete change. From sails to steam, from wood-bulls to steel, from two, four and eight-pounders, mere popguns, to the terribly destructive twelve and thirteen-inch rifles, whose projectiles, weighing nearly 900 pounds, nothing can resist, save the great and massive belts of steel, toughened by scientific process, which line the vitals of the big warships of to-day. So destructive, indeed, have the big rifle guns of to-day been brought that a single cruiser of moderate tonnage and of the latest model could have, under steam, manœvered about the fleet of the great British admiral, Nelson, and destroyed every unit of it, without ever coming into striking distance of its guns. That tells the whole story of the revolution in constructing, propelling and arming warships.

Let us compare the navy of England at the commencement of the nineteenth century with that of Great Britain to-day. In 1803 England possessed 450 ships, with a tonnage of 461,000; guns, 24,500; men, 180,000, and cost 12,037,000 pounds sterling. In 1904 Great Britain has 472 ships, of a total tonnage of 1,867,250, armed with 1,800 guns, manned by 131,000 men, and the cost of the vessels footed up to the big total of 30,881,000 pounds. The most remarkable difference here, it will be noticed, is in the number of guns, and the cost of the vessels. The average number of guns to each vessel has dropped from fifty-five in 1803 to fifteen in 1903, which goes to prove and accentuate the enormous increase in the destructive power and range of the modern gun. Comparing Nelson's flagship, Victory,

with the newest 10,000-ton battleship of the King Edward VII. class, it will be found that while the Victory's heaviest shot was sixty-eight pounds, the twelve-inch guns of the King Edward VII. will fire a projectile weighing 850 pounds.

Taking into consideration another and decidedly important element of comparison, the relative cost of ancient and modern vessels, it will be found that a 100-gun warship of Nelson's time cost (excluding armament), but 67,000 pounds, while the King Edward VII., without guns and ammunition, cost the great sum of 1,308,512 pounds (over \$2,000,000), or twenty times as much as Nelson's Victory. Thus, if we have gained greater speed, projectile power and resisting strength, we certainly have paid a largely increased price for it.—Brooklyn Times.

The Heartlessness of a Big City.

HERE recently appeared in a New York newspaper the account of a man having committed suicide in that city because he couldn't succeed in getting employment. We do not question the hardship. There can be no more miserable plight than that of a man, able and willing to work for his livelihood, friendless, adrift in a great, noisy city; knowing not where to turn for shelter, food, or kindness. Indeed, it is quite possible to understand the ultimate surrender to despair under circumstances so intolerable. What we do not and cannot understand, however, is the persistent refusal of these unhappy wretches to leave the overcrowded town and look for opportunity in the rural districts. No one capable of performing useful service, even of the humblest kind, need ever starve in any agricultural region. It is safe to say, indeed, that no one willing to work, though temporarily unfit, would be left to perish like a dog by the wayside in such a community. There is nothing as callous and cruel as the multitude of a metropolis. Humanity prevails in wider spaces and among less concentrated populations. A starving wretch would be overlooked on Broadway. He would attract immediate attention in a country road. Men die in cities and their fellow-creatures neither know nor care. Groaning under a hedgerow twenty miles away they would at once command the sympathy and ministrations of every passer-by. We have never been able to understand the fascination of the big, careless, thronging city for the neglected castaway. Sometimes we are moved to think that such poor creatures must be mad as well as friendless. But suicide is an illogical remedy for these miseries. The conditions generally breed thieves and tramps and murderers.—Washington Post.

Canadian Immigration.

CANADA has been seeking settlers from this side of the line for a number of years, but has drawn most of these immigrants from the West. Now, a Canadian commissioner has been stationed in Boston, to carry on an emigration campaign among the farmers of New England. The site is well chosen, since for many years there has been a westward movement from New England. The settlers rounded up by this commissioner will do something to offset the movement of French-Canadians into New England. But what a testimony to the friendly relations existing between the two countries is to be found in this open appointment of a Canadian commissioner of immigration to serve in Boston! It is said that within the last fifteen months, 50,000 people from this side of the line have moved to the Dominion. Canada is to be congratulated upon the character of this element of its immigrants. It draws from nowhere else a class so well fitted to develop the Canadian public lands. But it would be interesting to know how many Canadians, in the same time, have come to this country to live. There is a continual movement to and fro across the border and there has been a Canadian loss as well as Canadian gain.—Buffalo Express.

PLANTS THAT DEFEND AND ATTACK.

Any one who has seen a thorn on a stalk knows that plants are armed against their enemies, which they have in common with all other living things. But plants are not content with defending themselves with spikes and thorns; they have other weapons of defense. Moreover, says John J. Ward in Harper's Magazine, many plants have weapons of attack.

Some plants, like the poison oak or ivy, have poisonous acids, which are a warning to animals to keep their distance. Others, like some species of cacti, have disagreeable smells, that punish the intruder for brushing them.

Not only do growing things shield their lives with suits of mail, but they form alliances and protect each other. The gorse, or furze, which is well armed, selects the most exposed situation it can find, open heaths and stony wastes, where it fearlessly holds up its yellow blossoms for the bees to fertilize. Straightway less protected plants seek its shelter, and so a mutually protective plant army arises.

Self-defense is abundantly exhibited in vegetable life. Sometimes, although less often, plants actually attack animals. A very pretty, simple example of attack is found in the English sundew. This insectivorous plant grows in bogs and on wet ground. The leaves are covered with glandular hairs, which secrete a sticky fluid to entrap various small, flying insects, which, on alighting, get entangled in the gummy slime. The hairs then bend over and pour out still further quantities of this digestive liquid, which dissolves out all the nitrogenous matter from the insect to serve as food for the plant. Nitrogenous matter is hard to get in boggy places, and so the plant is equipped with this mechanical means of obtaining it.

The pitcher-plant attracts animal life by a sweet liquid. The insect crawls down the pitcher, but cannot return, for the passage is barred by recurved hooks. As wonderful as any is the American Venus fly-trap. The leaves are hinged at the center and close rapidly enough to entrap an insect. They remain closed while the insect struggles.

gles, but when it becomes exhausted they open to catch other unwary prey. Occasionally plants make allies of their enemies. A tropical acacia, known as the "bull's-horn thorn," accommodates and provides for an army of ants, to check the depredations of ferocious, leaf-cutting ants. The branches bear hollow thorns, where the ant garrison lives and rears its young. The plant supplies not only lodgings, but board as well, in the form of a special honey, which makes the garrison a good breakfast, and, more wonderful still, solid food in the form of little, yellow, fruitlike bodies, which are developed on the leaflets and do for dinner. When an enemy approaches the hired mercenaries drive it away. Thus the plant hires and supports an army.

HOD CARRIERS JOIN THE DODO.

Wheel Bricks to Elevators Instead of Climbing Ladders with Load. If the hodcarrier who remarked that he had nothing to do but carry bricks up a fourteen-story building and watch a man up there do the work was satisfied with conditions that existed in his line when that joke was sprung several years ago, the hodcarrier of to-day must be convinced that life with him is one long drawn out dream of uninterrupted bliss. For at the present time the hodcarrier doesn't even have to carry up the brick. So, in the spirit of the joker's argument, he has nothing at all to do.

There are in Chicago at the present time about 4,000 men who make a business of carrying the hod. That is, they are styled hodcarriers, and in a general way the classification is correct, but in a great number of instances the hod is a wheelbarrow. Modern invention has done away to a large extent with the old time, trough-shaped burden loaded with bricks, which in days gone by, and even now on smaller buildings, was carted up and down ladders. Instead of this slow process of lifting building material above the street level steam lifters are used. These have been common in work on tall structures for a long time, and are now being used on smaller buildings.

The contrivance consists of two lifts, operated on the same principle as a elevator, and this invention performs

the heavy work which formerly was imposed upon the hodcarrier. One man below carts the material to the lift in a wheelbarrow, while another removes it when it has been raised to the floor on which the work is being done. One lift is going up while the other is coming down, and the system is much faster and much lighter on workmen than the old plan of carrying the hod up and down a ladder.

Thus it is that the old relic of early building days, with its long handle and padded shoulder piece, has become practically extinct among tall structures and has been relegated to smaller buildings in residence districts. The hodcarrier has lost nothing, however, through this revolution in his line of business. Hundreds of them continue to carry the hod and will as long as contractors build flat buildings and structures of the sort where height does not require speed and distances do not prevent a laborer from bearing his burden with satisfactory results. Many laborers who formerly carried the hod now are employed as helpers on big contracts, receiving from 25 to 35 cents an hour.—Chicago Tribune.

Prices Ruling Firm.

Old Joshua Martin was noted for his ability to make a close bargain, but once in a while he met his match.

"I say, mister," he began, as he walked into a barber shop one market day, while waiting to dispose of his load, "farming's mighty bad nowadays. You ought to lemme have a shave for 5 cents. Why, if I should tell you the price I had to take for my garden sass—"

"Mebbe," returned the barber, "but fact is, I ought to charge you double price now by rights, for farmers' faces are just about twice as long as they used to be. You ought to be thankful for being let off on one fare!"

LONDON'S POLICE FORCE.

Men Are Poorly Paid, but They Get Splendid Results.

Constable General Evans prints in the Consular Reports, says the New York World, some astonishing facts about the London police force in 1903.

The metropolitan district extends over a radius of fifteen miles from Charing Cross (exclusive of the old city of London, which is about one mile square), and embraces 683.31 square miles. The number of police available was twenty-five superintendents, 474 inspectors, 1,880 sergeants and 12,225 constables (parolmen); total, 14,620. The pay of the force amounts to \$7,110,628.

That is an average of only \$487 per year a man on all grades. Probationers get \$3.84 a week, patrolmen \$5.45 a week, rising to \$7.70.

But these ill-paid men "get results." The number of persons arrested in 1903 was 124,554, of whom 3,322 were convicted by the law courts and 18,583 by magistrates. There were 684 cases of acquittal, bills ignored by sessions, etc., and 21,887 were discharged by magistrates. Only one arrested prisoner in five escaped unpunished.

Most remarkable of all is the murder record. In 1903 only seven murders were committed, as compared with twenty in 1902. Nine persons were arrested in eight of these cases; in the remaining nine the murderers committed suicide. "The number of cases of manslaughter was twenty-two.

The way London policemen handle traffic is a wonder. Yet they cannot even arrest a disobedient driver. Says Mr. Evans: "When it is necessary to discipline any one of the thousands of licensed omnibus drivers or conductors, hansom or hackney drivers, or others, they are notified to appear at court. They appear, otherwise the license may be withdrawn, and if once withdrawn it is hard to get another. It is to the interest of the London policeman to do his duty, his whole duty, courteously, kindly, but firmly. In this the courts sustain the force. The result is a splendid street discipline, with far-reaching effects in the way of respect for the law."

JAPANESE WOMEN LABORERS ON TOKIO'S ELEVATED RAILWAY.

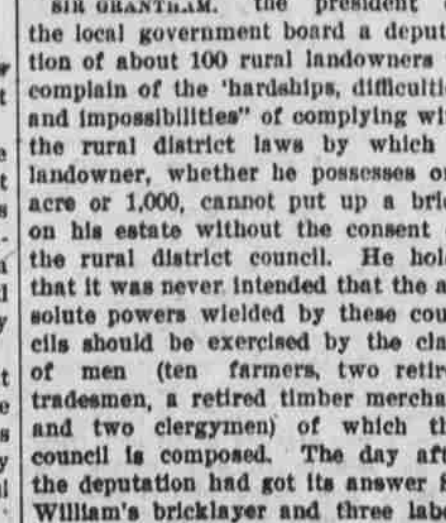


JAP WOMEN LABORERS.

The picture represents a scene which is by no means uncommon in Japanese cities. During the construction of the elevated railway at Tokio a great number of women were employed in carrying bricks and mortar to the masons on the walls. The women themselves did not look upon the service as either degrading or extra laborious, and there were more applicants for the work than could be taken. It has probably never occurred to the Japanese woman of the poorer classes that she is in any way less capable of doing heavy work than is her husband or performing the duties of housemaid, which is also the custom in that remarkable land. There is no physical inequality of the sexes in the island empire.

JUDGE DEFIES THE LAW.

Sir William Grantham, judge of the King's Bench Division in London, is occupying the curious position of a dispenser of justice who is defying the law. Sir William, as the squire of Barcombe, Lewes, wants to build some new cottages of his own design. The Challey rural district council rejected his plans, so he is introduced to the president of the local government board a deputation of about 100 rural landowners to complain of the "hardships, difficulties and impossibilities" of complying with the rural district laws by which a landowner, whether he possesses one acre or 1,000, cannot put up a brick on his estate without the consent of the rural district council. He holds that it was never intended that the absolute powers wielded by these councils should be exercised by the class of men (ten farmers, two retired tradesmen, a retired timber merchant and two clergymen) of which this council is composed. The day after the deputation had got its answer Sir William's bricklayer and three laborers started work on the cottages.



A Chilly Proposition.

The man who's wrapped up in himself, Whether he's young or old, Must find his wraps of little help, Because he's always cold.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

What a different world this would be if the rule could be reversed, and rich kin hunt for poor kin in order to help them.