

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Criticisms Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Historical and News Notes.

Religion is never worn out by everyday use.

Two often cease to be company after they are made one.

No man has the heart to say "No" when a girl asks if he really and truly loves her.

Canada wants to buy Greenland. All right, if she will put her torrid little bumper on cold storage there.

Boston is pleased to note that the period of intense frigeration has passed. In other words, the beans have thawed.

A Philadelphia skilographer has discovered that the X-ray will bleach the blackest negro. Farewell, then, to the color line.

Poet Laureate Austin continues to demonstrate that an author with sufficient influence can manage to get on without inspiration.

This year's cotton crop is reported to be worth \$700,000,000. How is it that Mr. Rockefeller hasn't taken over the cotton business?

Why we smile. The rain-making hoax, which has run its course in this country, is being worked extensively by "drought-busters" in Australia.

Perhaps after reading about the Iron-quois theater horror the Chicago carn- barn murderers may feel that they were hopeless amateurs.

Emperor William's voice is as good as new again. He has, however, demonstrated his ability to run things just about as well without as with the use of it.

A New York man committed suicide rather than undergo an operation for appendicitis. He must have been afraid the doctors would do something worse than kill him.

The skeleton of a man eleven feet high is said to have been found in Nevada recently. He must have gone there in an early day and grown up considerably beyond the country.

The Pope has promulgated the somewhat caustic comment that there is too much operative singing in the churches and too little real worship. No sinner may climb to heaven on the chromatic scale.

A scientist has figured it out that 5,000,000,000 years hence the days will be fifty-five hours long, but the laboring men who are now clamoring for an eight-hour day should not allow this to worry them.

The personal tax list for 1904 was issued in New York not long ago. It shows that J. Pierpont Morgan will pay on a valuation of \$400,000 this year as against \$300,000 in 1903. Notwithstanding the bump Mr. Morgan appears to have a tidy sum left.

A man isn't necessarily a preacher because he wears a sanctimonious face and has an abnormal appetite for fried chicken. The most ministerial-looking man we ever saw swore till he scorch- ed all the paint off one side of a freight car just because his train was late.

The habit of swearing is not as common as it used to be in this country. Gentlemen no longer use the language with the unvarnished freedom of the days of Sheridan, when a gentleman was accustomed to consign himself, collectively and in sections, to the lowest depths of perdition in the presence of ladies while paying tribute to their charms. Undoubtedly many youths who were not brought up to swear do swear now and then under provocation, but there is, all things considered, an increasing respect for the English language.

Plainsmen on Western cattle ranches have called attention to a new illustration of the adaptability of animal instinct to emergencies. The cattle of former days were of the long-horned kind. When the herd was threatened with an attack by wolves, the calves were placed in the middle of the bunch, and the older animals formed themselves into a solid phalanx about them, all facing outward. The cattle of to-day are largely hornless. If, as occasionally happens still, the herd is attacked by wolves, the calves are guarded as before, but the herd faces in instead of out. Their horns, not their horns, are now their weapons.

"The average woman" does not sound like a phrase of high compliment. Yet the average woman is doubtless the most needed woman in modern civilization. It is interesting and inspiring to see that she has made marked progress during the centuries. She is much more capable and more

Her advance is somewhat due to the work of those few leaders who make new paths, and encourage more timid souls to follow them. But for the most part it can be traced to the steady, slow improvement all along the line—an improvement traceable directly to the average woman herself. She makes better bread and better soup than she used to make; she reads more books and better ones; she has a firmer hand and a more understanding heart with children; she gives more discriminatingly in charity; her household, small or large, is better ordered; her love has more purity and more fire; her religion is more Christlike in its wisdom and its compassion.

Of all the exhibits of the early year none is more imposing nor of wider interest than that of the life insurance organizations. These annual showings of what life insurance really is, what it means, how it stands and what it is doing are the source of attention and pride to hundreds of thousands of families directly interested in the statements in question. Great arrays of figures, remarkable lists of responsible managerial names and high official endorsements of the grand total footings characterize the tabulated statements, while sound logic and good, vigorous English are features of those which have assertions or arguments to present. They tell of a remarkable yearly story of protection to the family; of vast sums disbursed just at the time when the heart is heaviest and the brain most distraught; of the alleviation of distress to bereaved homes and of comfort to advancing age. They show how mighty are the sums yet to be distributed and the certainty of their distribution as soon as due. Whatever else happens in the realm of business and finance, it seems to be certain that men are determined to insure their lives. This is something they are doing in and out of season and, though their fellows are of course dying day by day, the growth of the companies continues and the new insurants are ever greater in number than those who pass from the scene.

Congress virtually decides each year what the salaries of the government officers shall be. Few matters require more care than the adjustment of these salaries in the appropriation bills. If they are made so low that no man without independent means can afford to take a public position, only the rich will be officeholders. Members of the British Parliament serve without pay, but to apply that system in this country would necessarily deprive Congress of much of its best material. On the other hand, salaries which are too large become prizes for persons looking only at the pecuniary inducement. Uncle Sam has accordingly adopted a compromise policy. He underpays the occupants of his more responsible positions; he overpays the lower grades. The supervising architect's salary would be small return for an architect of the same rank in New York or Chicago. The routine clerical work in his office is better rewarded than similar service in private establishments. Although the public properly objects to large salaries, it has never adopted the principle laid down by a woman who wrote an open letter to the newspapers at the time a bill for raising the Governor's salary was under discussion in the Legislature of a certain State. She asked if the State had found difficulty in getting men to take the place at the existing compensation. Until there was some trouble on this score she saw no occasion for a change. In private life we rarely hire the cheapest person we can get, whether it be to whitewash a fence or to set a broken leg. There are some curious anomalies in government salaries. The sub-treasurer at New York has a larger salary than the treasurer in Washington; collectors of customs in the great cities receive more than the Secretary of the Treasury; important consuls more than the Secretary of State, who usually selects them. Such facts as these emphasize the fact that the government officer is the servant not of his immediate superior, but of the whole people.

Arabic School Troubles.
There is a large school at Bechtikash to which are sent Arab pupils from Yemen, Hedjaz, Syria, and other Arab places. Just lately there had been a large number of new arrivals and considerable discontent had been noticed among them. After fighting among themselves they made an attempt to lay their grievances before the Sultan by proceeding to the palace in a body, but were stopped by soldiers and confined to the college after some rather rough treatment. An inquiry was opened, and it turned out that all these students in their own country have different social positions, according to their family, tribal and caste positions, and these are observed very minutely. At the college they found that their position depended entirely on their educational abilities, so that a prince in Arabia might come after the lowest of his own retainers. They failed to understand this reversal of the proper position of things, and tried to fight it out.

Singular Idea Which Is Finding Believers in England.

Can man live for 500 years? There is a large number of people who believe that they are going to live that length of time.



E. J. KIBBLEWHITE.

Their leader is one of London's well-known editors, E. J. Kibblewhite, a man ordinarily credited with wisdom and common sense.

The people who have not been converted to the new theory and hope of longevity are standing aside and pooh-poohing the whole idea. The biologists and chemists—all scientific men, in fact—are advising the undertakers to get coffin measurements for these people at once, for they are dabbling with dangerous drugs and doing other things that are called unwise if not perilous.

But Kibblewhite and his friends expect to be here when the millennium begins. They are enthusiastic. They declare the doctors, the preachers, and the grave diggers are facing sorry times. These men have not been stamped up to date.

The people who hope and believe they will live as long as they want to have been studying the habits of the whale, the pike, frogs, and lizards. The whale lives 300 years. The pike often lives to be 250 years old if some hidden hook does not draw him from his favorite stream. Frogs live an indefinite period. They are found sealed in rocks that must have been centuries in forming. Lizards, likewise, have an almost eternal lease on life.

Why not man? That's the question the live-for-ever theorists are asking. The secret of long life lies in the liberal application to the skin of glacial acetic acid, according to the unscientific Britishers. Persons who have dabbled in chemistry are aware of the fact that acetic acid has an effect upon the epidermis. Acetic acid baths restore the hardened and wrinkled skin of octogenarians to the freshness and softness of a child's skin, say the believers. It rids death and all the signs of approaching death. In short, it makes a man over. It is a revised idea of the fiction for which Ponce de Leon sought in vain.

Kibblewhite claims to have cured various cases of disease which were pronounced "incurable" by doctors and really believes that glacial acetic acid is capable of prolonging life.

THESE BOYS WORK.

Raise 540 Acres of Corn, for Which They Receive \$4,154.52.

By industriously tending a patch of corn all last summer three Missouri boys earned not only the handsome sum of \$4,154.52, but sufficient distinction to have the fruit of their industry selected to be one of the features of Missouri's exhibit at the World's Fair, and to cause the commission to place their photographs in a place of honor in the Missouri building.

The boys are John, George and Joseph Christian, aged 18, 16, and 12 years respectively. They are the sons of C. A. Christian, and their home is in Tarkio, Atchison county. The work was all done between May 1 and Nov. 1, and the boys are now in school.

The Christian boys accepted an offer from Davis Rankin of Atchison county, Missouri, who is the most extensive cattle feeder in the world. Mr. Rankin has 30,000 acres of land in Atchison county, and each year he raises corn on from 15,000 to 20,000 acres.

When the Christian boys applied for a tract of land on which to raise corn Mr. Rankin promptly turned over a tract of 540 acres and agreed to pay the boys 12 cents for every bushel of corn they would raise.

Hitching six Missouri mules to a lister the boys went to work. This machine plows, harrows, and seeds all at one operation. They worked like Trojans and soon the 540 acres were all planted. Then the boys had a breath spell. When the corn began to grow another task appeared for them, and three times the growing corn had to be cultivated. Again was a requisition made on the Missouri mule, and six were attached to each of three-two-row cultivators. The weeds were kept down, the soil loosened, and the corn grew. This corn was gone over three times. Meanwhile the grain grew and ripened, and when November rolled around the harvest was begun.

Up to this time the work of making the crop had been done altogether by the three boys. Extra help was employed in the harvest, however, and when the corn was gathered and measured into Mr. Rankin's great corn bins it was found that the boys had grown 34,321 bushels of the grain. At 12 cents per bushel this netted the sum of \$4,154.52, and Mr. Rankin gave them a check for that amount.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

When a woman imposes on her husband with kin, how the people roar! But the woman never knows it; they are very careful to do their talking behind her back.

MARCH BRINGS MUCH STUDY OVER SPRING COSTUMES.

Many Late Winter Gowns Are Advanced Tentatively as Forerunners of Later Modes—Their Reception Will Settle Their Fate.

New York correspondence:



MARCH brings much study over shirt waists and of the pretty suits named for the waists, but considering how large an item these garments and suits are in summer wardrobes, there is mighty little in the new ones that is outright new. No lack of popularity for them is hinted, yet there are few changes of fashion in them, no change that is at all radical. Shoulder slope is aimed at, but that is not new, and in all the simpler waists there is no novelty about the ways of suggesting it. In some shirt waists of the fancy order there is a yoke, usually reaching over the round of the shoulder, but there is nothing strikingly new

and not assertive in the matter of color matings. As to colors in these materials, while it is asserted positively that all the current offerings will retain good standing, and that there will be no especial favorites among the many shades, yet it should be noted that some of the new violet shadings are advanced persistently, and that grays are likely to renew to the full their recent favor. Browns, too, although many do not like them for summer, as being too warm coloring, are here and there in all manner of materials. It would seem as if they must count as newer than the violets and the grays, and so win acceptance from those to whom newness is the first consideration.

Some of the fine calling and reception dresses being worn now are, in effect, spring styles put on trial. Some of the wearers of these fancies might be indignant if charged with being the subject of experiment in this way, but more would be flattered. And of course the new reception or calling dress is entirely suitable to its purpose no matter how much of advance fashionableness it may foretell. Such get-ups are of especial interest for this look ahead they furnish. Four gowns of the reception sort are put in the first two of these pictures. The first was iridescent blue taffeta, one of the new silk weaves, and was finished with chantilly lace and hand embroidery in white. Next comes a gown of mauve English satin, with gull-pure yoke and chantilly ruffles. Let it be noted here that for spring and summer two or more kinds of lace will often be employed on the one gown. The next one of these dresses in the pictures was



IN NEWLY STYLISH FABRICS AND TRIMMINGS.

about this, and simpler cut is more favored. The number and variety of fabrics offered for waists and suits is as large as it was last season. Practically all summer stuffs are available, and the lack of new features in the waists themselves may result in some straining after novelty in the material chosen. Suggestive of this are waists of serim, with no pretense of being anything else, but embroidered with cross stitch in colors.

Nozige attire is especially a timely consideration just now, and ranges all the way from what should fairly be classed as wrappers to affairs hardly less than evening dresses. Many tea gowns are of the latter class, and are the product of very skillful makers. There are simple tea gowns, too, and no end of simple jackets.

Among the new fabrics are some very novel ones, and others of remarkably loose weave. Gauzes and velings are especially filmy, and silk foundation for them is an absolute necessity. The shop-

a princess affair of pink silk, the skirt box-pleated, the yoke tucked white chiffon, with hertha of embroidery. At the right of this is shown a cream white silk, with shoulder caps of white lace and with much heavily beaded embroidery.

Embroidery for the summer is much marked by raised designs and by weight generally, this even on materials of very light, almost filmy nature. There is to be a deal of perforating, too, the edges finished heavily and in ways that will employ deft fingers for much time. Cross-stitching in color is to be a favored form of handwork, and what is styled Bulgarian embroidery is to be very stylish. Embroidery will be as much favored as ever, but its winter use on velvets hardly will be continued. Chiffon velvet, for example, will escape this ornamentation. It is so finely adapted for shirtings that much of other embellishment is hardly needed. An example of it set for spring copyists is at the right in the third of



SPRING FASHIONS OFFERED TENTATIVELY.

er is confronted, too, by many fabrics of basket texture or of mesh apparently of little removed from common burpees, and finds that these stuffs are adapted as new and at the prices usual with unfamiliar fabrics. Softness and pliability are noticeable in practically all the new silks, and the range of colorings is large, with little to furnish surprises. Figured silks that seem especially attractive after a winter's supply

these pictures. Here the chiffon velvet was plum colored, and the yoke was white silk and passementerie. The continued stylishness of voile is impressed on the shopper everywhere. Here are shown two handsome dresses of it; a gray, with cluny lace and bandings, and a fuchsia, with embroidery of black cord and sachings of black tulle. The newer weaves of this fabric are remarkable for openness and looseness.