



Topic Times

Farm hands in Norway receive \$40 to \$80 a year.

In New York city schools 1,000 children have trachoma.

Trust company deposits now amount to over \$1,500,000,000. This is an increase of \$1,000,000,000 in the last five years.

Chemulpo, the port of Seoul, the capital of Korea, looks out over a vast shallow bay, where the tide rises thirty feet.

Hetty Green sometimes rides in a \$12,800 automobile, but it is owned by her son, Edward H. R. Green, of the Texas Midland Railroad.

Since the campaign entered upon by the health authorities against the hordes of rats at the London docks, 255,372 have been destroyed.

The whistling by switch engines which work all night in the railway yards in and near cities is permitted in no country other than America.

James Stillman, president of the National City Bank, of New York, commonly called the Standard Oil Bank, is a director of fifty-two corporations.

A German physician recommends soap as a cure for sleeplessness. The soap lather must be allowed to dry on the skin before the patient goes to bed.

Lord Kelvin's estimate of the age of the world is: "Not so great as 40,000,000 years; possibly as little as 20,000,000 years; probably 30,000,000 years."

If the deposits now in the savings banks of this country were divided per capita, every man, woman and child would receive \$417.21. The total sum is \$2,935,204,845.

There were 144 German domestic servants last year who were awarded the servants' golden cross for having lived forty years with one family. Only one was found in Berlin.

As a protection against consumption, it is proposed to inoculate every calf in Germany with specially prepared tuberculosis bacilli, on the plan of vaccination, in order that the animal may not contract tuberculosis later.

Chuang Kuei Ti, the leader of the guard of the court at Peking, has stated that his troops are unable to shoot because they have never been supplied with ammunition, and so are quite unaccustomed to the sound of the rifle.

Nine-tenths of the external trade of the Bahamas, which amounted to \$1,275,000 last year, is with the United States. The principal exports of the islands are pineapples and sponges, and the imports flour and earthen and glassware.

The school savings bank system is now in practice in 797 schools in eighty-five cities of twenty-one States. The pupils have saved over \$2,000,000, of which \$1,500,000 has been withdrawn. The exact balance due depositors Jan. 1 was \$521,966.83.

Since Alaska passed into the hands of the United States the Government has received \$9,695,822 through its various departments there. The expenses of administration have been \$8,696,780, so that the Government has made a profit from its investment.

The Dogs' Protective League has arranged with veterinary surgeons throughout England to set aside a certain hour in each week when poor persons may present their dogs for advice and treatment. The league also trains nurses for attendance on dogs.

In a German factory, which employs 2,107 men, making agricultural implements and traction engines, 25 per cent get 71 to 95 cents a day, 59 per cent get 65 cents to \$1.31, and 16 per cent get above \$1.31. This does not include boys or apprentices, and is for a nine-and-a-half-hour day.

BELIEVE IN MANY OMENS.

Credulity of West Indians Gives the Planters Decided Advantages.

The French islands have two superstitions which are not to be found in some others of the West Indies. These are a belief in some sort of werewolf or vampire, which lives on the blood of wayfarers, upon whom it leaps when

they are abroad in the night time, or of sleepers whom it finds in lonely huts; and, second, a belief in what is known in the British islands as the "rolling calf," a monster with blazing eyes, which prowls at night, clanking a chain suspended from its neck, and at whose touch men die. The following description is given of the typical obeah man:

"There is something so indescribably sinister about an obeah man's appearance that he can always be picked out by one who has had much to do with his class. Dirty, ragged, unkempt, deformed, there is yet about him an air of cunning authority. His small, piercing eyes peer viciously at the witnesses arrayed against him in court, for all the world like those of a cornered rat. Black men may be seen to turn as gray as ashes under the terror of that baleful gaze, and often it is only with difficulty that incriminating evidence can be dragged out of them. The wizard's awesome presence, however, does not appall an unsentimental British judge. He orders him "twelve months' hard" and a sound flogging. Frequently the obeah man appeals against this sentence to the higher court, and in Jamaica it is not at all unusual for him to get off on some technical point, owing to the defective drafting of the law. Of course, he tells the ignorant negroes that he procured freedom by his magical powers and thus their superstition is strengthened.

British law punishes obeah with flogging and imprisonment. Nevertheless obeah is practiced by the white planters almost as a matter of necessity in order to frighten the negroes and prevent them from appropriating the produce of the plantations.

You may walk through your friend's banana plantation and notice a skull stuck on a top of a stick, a small bottle full of dead cockroaches tied to a branch, or a miniature black coffin placed on a little mound. "Hello, old man!" you say, "working obeah—eh? I'll come and see you flogged at the jail." He tries to laugh it off shamefacedly, saying there is really no other way to make "those wretched natives" keep their hands off the crops. That is true. It is needless, however to go to the trouble of placing these things about your plantation. If some night prowler has stolen your bananas all you need do is to say next morning in the hearing of the natives: "It's all right, I don't care. I've got the footprint." You will see them whisper among themselves in an awestricken way and presently one will come up to you, nearly weeping with terror, and confess himself the thief. The superstition is that if you dig out the earth upon which the robber has impressed his foot and throw it into the fire he will waste away and die unless he gives himself up and takes his punishment.—New York Commercial Advertiser.

American Made Dolls.

There is a big factory in the United States now, in New Jersey, which makes dolls, very perfect and durable ones, of sheet steel. They are light and strong, so strong they cannot be broken even if stepped on. Their smile is the kind which will not come off, for their complexion is of baked enamel, not to be rubbed or scraped away, says Good Housekeeping. They are startlingly lifelike, these babies from New Jersey, for they have ball and socket joints, even for their ankles, and strike all sorts of childish attitudes. The hands can be fitted with gloves, and the eyes are removable, to accommodate little girls who have decided preferences as to brown eyes or blue. The hair can be removed for a shampoo or a change of complexion. They will talk even, if one cares to pay for a phonograph attachment. Altogether, this pioneer American doll is characteristically smart and good-looking.

Equal to the Emergency.

The old sexton approached the pulpit. "Parson," he exclaimed in a hoarse whisper, "the church is on fire!" "All right, John, don't get excited," rejoined the good man as he stopped abruptly in the middle of his sermon. "You pass down one aisle while I go down the other and we'll quietly wake up the congregation."

Never crack a joke on delicate ground.

OLD FAVORITES

Sally in Our Alley.
Of all the girls that are so smart
There's none like pretty Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.
There is no lady in the land
Is half so sweet as Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

Her father he makes cabbage nets,
And through the streets does cry 'em;
Her mother she sells laces long
To such as please to buy 'em;
But sure such folks could ne'er bezet
So sweet a girl as Sally!
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

Of all the days that's in the week
I dearly love but one day—
And that's the day that comes betwixt
A Saturday and Monday;
For then I'm drest all in my best
To walk abroad with Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.

My master carries me to church,
And often am I blamed
Because I leave him in the lurch
As soon as text is named;
I leave the church in sermon time
And slink away to Sally;
She is the darling of my heart,
And she lives in our alley.
—Henry Carey.

The Pessimist.

Nothing to do but work,
Nothing to eat but food,
Nothing to wear but clothes
To keep one from going nude.

Nothing to breathe but air—
Quick as a flash 'tis gone;
Nowhere to fall but off,
Nowhere to stand but on.

Nothing to comb but hair,
Nowhere to sleep but in bed,
Nothing to weep but tears,
Nothing to bury but dead.

Nothing to sing but songs,
Ah, well, alas! alack!
Nowhere to go but out,
Nowhere to come but back.

Nothing to see but sights,
Nothing to quench but thirst,
Nothing to have but what we've got;
Thus through life we are cursed.

Nothing to strike but a gait,
Everything moves that goes;
Nothing at all but common sense
Can ever withstand these woes.
—Ben King.

ONE OF AFRICA'S WONDERS.

City of a Hundred Thousand People Skilled in Many Intricate Arts.

The next of Great Britain's wars is quite likely to be in Kano. Few people know where Kano is or what sort of people inhabit it, but all reading men will doubtless be familiar with it ere many years elapse. Not many will accept the description of the Hausas that it is "the center of the world," but Kano, without using the language of extravagance, must be ranked among the wonders of Africa. Its high walls inclose a population of 100,000 people, living in houses which, though built of mud, are not by any means to be despised and which line broad streets and roads which would put many London streets to shame. Most of the houses are shaded by trees, and one traveler has described the appearance of the town as being that of "a big beautiful garden."

The great market, says this traveler, who visited Kano a year or two ago, is one of the wonders of the world: "Almost anything can be bought there—sugar, is per pound; cotton, cloth, leather, needles, crockery, tinware, dyes, lime, charcoal, meat, slaves, camels, horses, food of every variety, including tomatoes, wheat, tamed gazelles and hyenas, wild cats, birds, anything and every thing. The money of the country is still the cowry shells, of which the king sent us 400,000 as a present, but the Maria Theresa dollar is taken, and the great men gladly buy up any quantity of gold and silver coins, for the Hausa is an adept at working in silver and gold and is as proud as he is skillful. Moreover, he smelts his own ore and works up his native iron in wondrous shapes. The city has thirteen gates (which are always closed at sunset), and is some twelve or fourteen miles in circumference. On the whole, it lies four square, but some of the walls are a little irregular."

There is dignity in majesty even in the heart of Africa. It is said of one African monarch that each morning after breakfast he leaves his hut and opens his great umbrella and then declares before all the earth that the sun may from that moment shine. Those who would visit the king of Kano on his throne must take off their shoes and even their stockings and bow their heads to the ground. Three hours an English mission waited at the palace gates, and then—"a low murmur arose, a pathway was suddenly cut and a magnificent warrior pranced up and drew rein at our feet. This was the

waziri, the second man in the kingdom. The palace, a splendid specimen of mud architecture, was a mass of people and the courtyards were crammed. While we stood in the judgment hall, which was thronged with well-dressed men squatting on the floor, suddenly all the instruments of music burst forth, our umbrellas were snatched from our hands and we were hurried into the king's splendid audience chamber. At the far end, on a rich red dais, was seated the king, wearing a black rawni, which covered everything but his eyes. He is said to be about 30 years of age and to be quite white, but he is more probably copper colored."

RAILROAD TIES OF LEATHER.

Massachusetts Man's Invention, to Take the Place of Wood.

The invention of a leather crosstie, designed to take the place of sleepers made of wood, is attracting a great deal of attention in railroad circles, writes a Springfield (Mass.) correspondent of the New York Mail and Express. T. W. Dunnell of West Warren, Mass., is the inventor. While studying the art of paper making he learned that there was a scarcity of lumber in the country and that the railroads used annually 120,000,000 ties for renewals alone. Ties of steel, iron, glass, stone and of grass and sawdust composition had been made, but there were objections to all of these. So he set to work and finally hit upon a formula which seems to answer the purpose.

In the manufacture of his crosstie, which weighs 125 pounds, the scrap leather from shoe shops is taken into a disintegrator, ground very fine, subjected to a refining process and molded. The tension of the molding machine can be so regulated that ties hard enough to take a spike or ties through which a spike cannot be driven can be turned out.

The three great essentials in a crosstie are apparently found in this leather, for it is guaranteed to hold a spike, the fishplate will not splinter it and it will not rot. It is expected to stand service for thirty-five years. Sample ties put down twenty-eight months ago in the West Springfield freight yard of the Boston and Albany road do not show the least wear. Roadmaster Sullivan of the Boston and Albany says the spikes hold as well as when first driven instead of working loose, as in the wooden ties. The ordinary chestnut tie now in use must be replaced every two years.

Mr. Dunnell proposes to turn out 5,000 ties a day for the present. The New York Central is planning to test the invention in its New York yards.

RANK POISON IN THE BODY.

Generated in the System It Frequently Causes Disease and Death.

The body is a factory of poisons. These poisons, which are constantly being produced in large quantities in the body, are imperfectly removed or are produced in too great quantity as the result of overfeeding, the fluids which surround the brain cells and all the living tissues are contaminated with poisonous substances which asphyxiate and paralyze the cells and so interfere with their activity. This fact explains, in part at least, the stupidity which is a common after-dinner experience with many persons.

When food is retained in the stomach beyond the normal time, either because of its indigestibility, the taking of too large a quantity of it or a crippled state of the stomach, these changes are certain to take place. This fact explains a very large share of the myriad symptoms which afflict the chronic dyspeptic. The giddiness, the tingling sensations, the confusion of thought and even partial insensibility which are not infrequently observed a few hours after meals in chronic dyspeptics, are due to this cause. Here is the explanation of the irascibility, the despondency, the pessimism, the indecision and various other forms of mental perversity and even moral depravity which are not infrequently associated with certain forms of gastrointestinal disturbances.—London Family Doctor.

Dressing by Lottery.

The girls employed in the potteries of England are good-looking and well-dressed. They have taste which is cultivated by the art work of the factories. Many of them are more stylish, perhaps, than their position seems to warrant, but this is easily explained. They buy their clothes by a system known as "Maxims." This means that twelve girls subscribe one shilling a week. The money is held by a forewoman, and when there is sufficient cash to buy a hat or dress the girls draw lots, and the winner has the new dress, while the other subscribers have to wait their turn. Then, in all the glory of ribbons and finery, the lucky girl appears on Sunday.

Thawing out an Oil Pipe Line.

An eight-inch oil pipe line from the Bakersfield region to San Francisco has to be heated at intervals so that the oil will flow.

When a number of poor cooks get together, what a lot of blame you will hear given the flour!



English Rolled Pudding.

Boiled pastry should be prepared with chopped and sifted suet instead of lard or butter, but otherwise in the same manner as pie pastry. Roll out or preserved fruit out into a thin sheet; spread over a thick layer of fruit, and then, commencing at one side, roll carefully until all the fruit is inclosed within the paste; pinch together at the ends, and tie up in a strong cotton cloth, then drop into a pot of boiling water. The cherry is the best for this purpose, or some other fruit possessing acidity. To be served with sweet sauce.

Peanut Candy.

After shelling your peanuts, take the same quantity of granulated sugar that you have of the nuts. Put the sugar into a hot spider over the fire, stirring it briskly all the time, and when it is thoroughly dissolved, take from the fire and immediately stir in the nuts, which have been chopped fine. Pour on a buttered platter and spread out thin. Any kind of nuts may be used in the same way, always measuring before the meats are chopped.

Glaze Nuts.

Make a sirup of a pound of granulated sugar and a gill of water. Boil without stirring until a drop put into cold water becomes immediately brittle. Take the saucepan from the fire and set it in an outer pan of boiling water. Add to the sirup the juice of a quarter of a small lemon. Run a thin skewer or a fine wire through each blanched and dried nut and dip it up and down in this sirup. Spread on waxed paper to dry.

Apple Snow.

Stew a dozen large juicy apples in just enough water to keep them from burning; pass the pulp through a sieve; stir in half a cupful of granulated sugar, and a teaspoonful of extract of lemon. Beat the whites of six eggs to a stiff froth, and then add the apples and beat, adding, a little at a time, two cups of powdered sugar; heap the "apple snow" on a large glass dish; add to it bits of high-colored currant or raspberry jelly.

Banana Short-Cake.

Banana shortcake is a very good substitute for strawberry shortcake and is made in exactly the same manner. The cake is baked, cut open and spread with butter. The bananas, sliced and sugared, are put between the layers and over the top if preferred. Like strawberry shortcake, this is much improved if whipped cream is poured over it, but, like strawberry shortcake again, it is delicious without the cream.

Chocolate Layer Cake.

Cream a half-cup of butter with a cup of sugar, add a cup of milk, four beaten eggs and three ounces of grated chocolate dissolved in a gill of cold milk. Beat hard, then add a pint of prepared flour and bake in layer tins. Cover for the first ten minutes with brown paper.

Baked Ice Cream.

Over a firm brick of ice cream spread a stiff meringue in a coating over half an inch thick. Set in a pan and place immediately in an intensely hot oven. It should be so hot that the meringue will brown in a minute. Turn upon a chilled platter and serve at once.

Muffins.

One quart of buttermilk, one teaspoonful of soda, a pinch of salt, flour to make stiff batter, and three tablespoonfuls of sour cream. Bake in gem pans in a hot oven.

Short Suggestions.

Milk will keep sweet longer in a shallow bowl than in a deep jug.

Keep parsley shut up in an air-tight tin and store it in a cool place. It will last much better thus than if put into water.

To clean the silver spoons, etc., in daily use, rub them with a damp cloth dipped in carbonate of soda and polish them with a wash leather.

Cayenne pepper sprinkled on shelves and blown into the cracks of walls in rooms where ants are troublesome will soon effect a clearance of the intruders.

To keep bread and butter fresh and moist put it in a cool place, cover closely with a serviette or clean cloth wrung out of cold water, and many hours after it will be as moist as when cut. Sometimes it will be found convenient to prepare bread and butter for afternoon tea in this way.

The shell of an Edam cheese, if scraped clean, offers a unique dish from which to serve macaroni, which, if washed and dried after each service, can be used more than once. After the macaroni is ready for serving, pour it into the heated shell and sprinkle grated cheese over the top.