

## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

Old King Malletoa is dead, and the next thing to expect is Samoa troubles.

At Newport the latest fad is "a stable ball." Of course, the fashionable spectators all occupy stalls.

Advices from the Sudan state that a great many of the howling dervishes have stopped howling.

Lieutenant Peary is a true expansionist. He has the American flag with him and has gone north looking for the pole.

One consequence of the war is that the muse of history may close for good the chapter treating of Spain and the Western continent.

The President again showed himself to be a magnanimous and kind-hearted gentleman by refusing to notice Col. Hay's early poems.

Encircled by her soldiers, Holland's queen was enthroned. And what men wouldn't be willing to surround a pretty girl of 18 with their arms?

If the magazines begin telling how victories could have been won right in type, it partly keeps in countenance Blanco's winning them with a typewriter.

The Paris Figaro says the Star-Spangled Banner is older than any of the present standards of Europe's powers. And what's more, its the greatest flag of the age.

A contemporary asserts that "as a matter of fact throughout the entire war France was Spain's ally." And yet Spain evinced no inclination to run down her neighbor republic.

Since the railway disaster at Sharon the timorous Massachusetts people have become opposed to traveling in the rear car. That's easily enough fixed. Cut the rear car off the train.

A protocol meant originally a leaf glued into the front of a book. The United States, however, prefers to insert it at the end of the volume, and write there Finis to the Spanish-American war.

General Pando says General Toral should be court-martialed for surrendering Santiago. If Pando had not been so busily engaged in arranging for an alibi at that time he might now be in a position to figure in the court-martial appendix.

Two nations benefit by the fact that Admiral Cervera and his men have been our prisoners of war. We are the better for the opportunity to be magnanimous, and Spain must always cordially remember that the opportunity was nobly improved.

One thing most impressively taught by our short war with Spain is that war is a serious business and the art of war is a difficult profession that cannot be taken up offhand, but requires careful training and diligent preparation. The navy has furnished the most conspicuous example of this truth, but the army has taught it quite as impressively.

Extraordinary feats of bravery deserve recognition, and not an officer in the navy will be found to complain over the promotion of a Dewey, a Schley or a Hobson, but if the commanders and juniors of every ship that has had the luck to take part in battle are to be rewarded some method of doing so should be devised which will not in effect impose a fine upon their less fortunate comrades.

Side by side with bicycling, equestrianism grows in popular favor, though the man and woman on horseback may not always look with admiration on the bicycle, and the wheelman may sometimes choose to regard the horseman as snobbish and behind the age. In crowded cities the horse is not used nearly as much as it used to be, and there is room for hope that it soon will be used even less. But on track and speedway the horse holds his own, and animals of good breed and training are always in demand.

It may be taken as a gratifying sign of a healthy social evolution that the interest in out-of-door sports is evidently growing from year to year. More people ride the bicycle, row boats, go swimming or poke golf balls over the field than ever before. The colleges no doubt have had much to do with this, and were it not for the interest revived annually by such institutions as Yale, Princeton, Harvard and Cornell and the universities of the western states football, rowing and track and field athletics would be in a sorry condition. But any one who has watched certain tendencies of the last fifteen years must have noted that the increased activity in athletics is by no means confined to the colleges. Ten years' time has been the bicycle come into universal use, while football has become almost a fad. More significant than all is the rapidity with which golf has gained attention and popularity notwithstanding the obstacles which attend its acclimatization. The game has two advantages—it presents sufficient difficulties to enlist the attention and hold the interest of skilled players, and it affords a mild amusement for the bunglers who can merely promenade through it. It is a pity, however, that it should have divided so much attention from tennis, which is still near the head of

sports for developing grace, agility and endurance. The interest in public tennis contests is still alive, but the amateur enthusiasm in the sport which was manifested two or three years ago, when tennis courts everywhere were scenes of brisk activity, seems to have waned. With this possible exception the amount of time and attention given to exercises out of doors increases steadily. The eventual result is bound to be not only a physical improvement but a healthier mental and moral condition of the race. To a certain extent a people's sports are an index of their character. So long as the taste for athletics is hearty there is little fear of their succumbing either to slothfulness or morbid forms of dissipation.

Things have come to such a pass in France that if anybody says "justice," he is suspected of a desire to subvert the government. The Siecle reports an extraordinary occurrence in connection with the recent official celebration of the Michelet centenary. An ode written for the occasion by M. Maurice Boucher was objected to by the Minister of Public Instruction because the poet had been imprudent enough to put into it the word justice. In one of the stanzas he had invoked the shades of Michelet, Hugo, and Quinet to recall to the minds of Frenchmen and to the world that "France is the champion of right." M. Brisson saw at once that this would never do. The poet might as well have said outright that he thought Dreyfus illegally convicted, and what would become of society then? So he sent for M. Boucher and labored with him for an hour in the attempt to get him to withdraw two of his stanzas. But the poet concluded to withdraw the whole of his poem. "I see," he said, "that I am not made to sing at official ceremonies." And he declared that, under the circumstances, he was not sorry to have no part in a glorification of Michelet by the existing government of France. "The irony of it was too cruel."

Some of the newspapers on the continent are beginning to be concerned about the fate of Spain. They should not forget that Spain is a nation of 18,000,000 people, with habits, customs and prejudices of their own, and that they will continue to be a distinct community in Europe. The only change which has occurred in Spain is that she has gone out of the colony business. It took Spain four centuries to demonstrate to the world that she was utterly incapable of colony government. She failed to see the handwriting on the wall—that a colony must be governed for trade and not for tribute. She continued to govern on the old system of plunder and pillage, of oppression and taxation, and consequently bred more revolutions than she could quell. She has lost all of her colonies, and deservedly so. But there is yet hope for Spain. The hope lies within the borders of Spain itself. Spain must turn her attention to her home resources. She must develop herself internally. She is yet supreme in certain avenues of industry and she can make the world turn to her for certain of her commodities. She has much to do in the uplifting and enlightening of her own people. She has much to do in the reduction of the proportion of illiteracy. Spain's future will be brighter than her past.

Park Benjamin has recently summed up quite clearly the causes of Spain's naval defeats, both at Manila and Santiago, by an analysis of the condition and action of the two navies. These causes he assigns as follows: (1) Gun platforms which cease to be platforms as soon as ignited. (2) Machinery which failed to drive the ships at maximum speed because no one on board knew how to make it do so. (3) Guns capable of projecting 4,827 pounds of steel a minute throwing it into the ocean and not against the enemy. (4) This combination of inefficiency crushed by a weight of steel bolts hitting it at the rate of nearly 6,720 pounds per minute. Added to these causes of defeat Spain has no organized naval engineer corps. "This," Mr. Benjamin says, "is what kept the fleet at Cape Verde Islands, and when it sailed it did so with men who were without experience in the handling of the huge and delicate propelling machinery. What chance had such people of getting their ships away from the engineers who had carried the Oregon over its voyage of 14,500 miles without a broken rod, and who then there sent it flying through the water at a speed greater than that which it made on its trial trip?" Another element of weakness was the fact that the Spanish ships were contract vessels, built by foreigners, and accepted without intelligent supervision by the men who were to use them.

**Reviving Roman Customs.**  
The queen of Italy is going to re-establish an old Roman institution which has fallen into disuse for over twenty years. Its object is to give a dowry of 30 ducats to 150 Roman maidens on their marriage. Formerly a church brotherhood used to decide on the merits of the recipients, but her majesty intends now to have a committee of ladies for the purpose. Probably the procession of the selected girls through the streets of Rome on the first Sunday in October will be revived. The queen will herself provide the funds for the charity.

**Deft Smoking.**  
Japanese jugglers are deft smokers. Several of them will sit before a curtain, and, with the tobacco smoke which issues from their mouths, will form a succession of readable letters.

Whenever a man becomes wise he is the first to discover his wisdom.

A girl man becomes wise he is the first to discover his wisdom.

## IN THE BROOMCORN BELT.

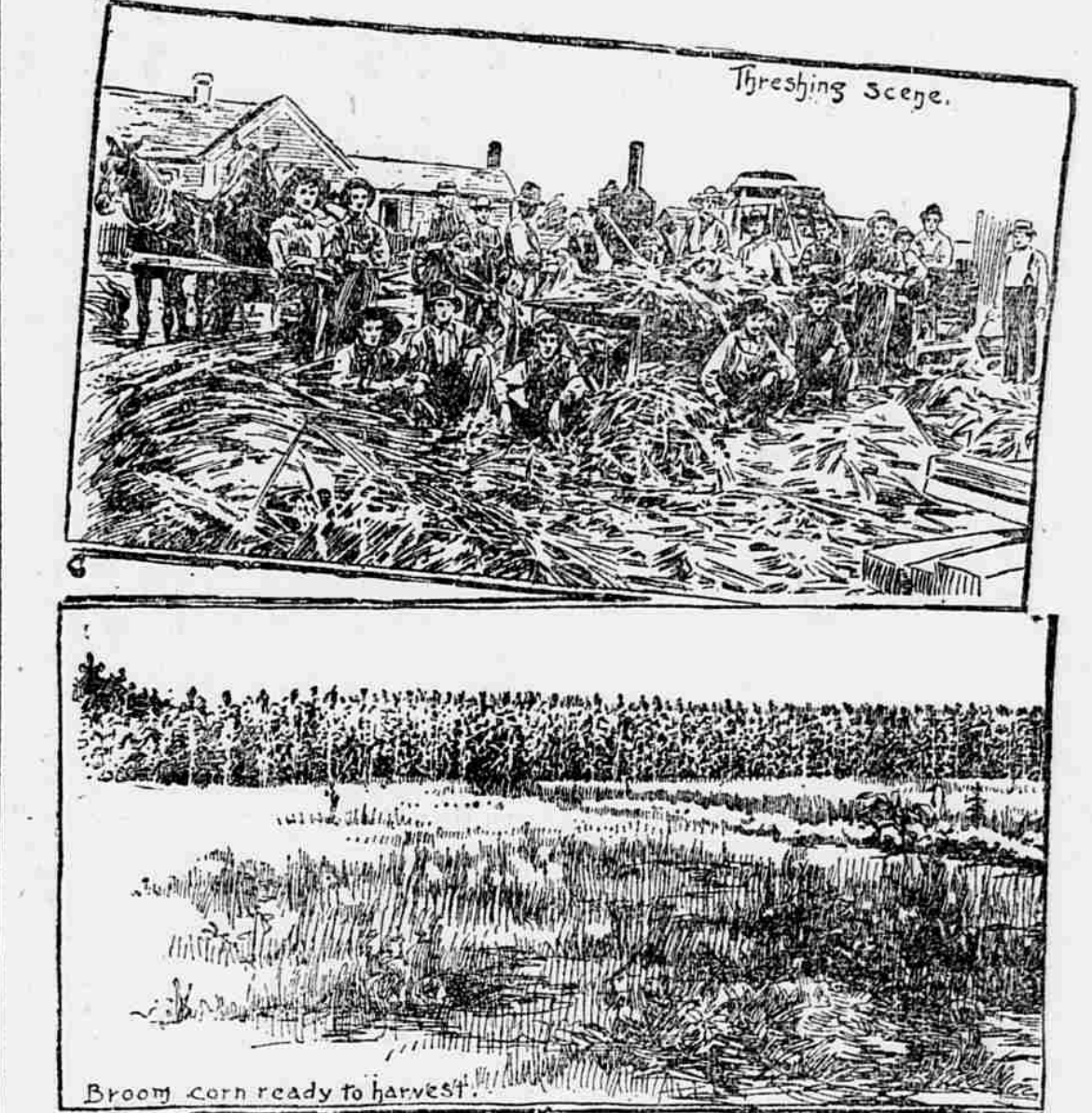
### Crop Proves Profitable in Certain Parts of Illinois.

The busy day for the broomcorn grower is harvest time. The time extends from the 1st of August until Oct. 1. This is arranged by the time of planting, which is during the months of May and June. The farmer plants his broomcorn so that it will ripen at different times during the harvesting period. Great judgment must be used in cutting or harvesting it. If it is cut before ready it will not weigh well and the fiber is not up to standard. Then if it is ripe, or nearly so, it will be colored and that will detract from the price. The ground is plowed and thoroughly pulverized before planting. The cultivating is after the manner of Indian corn. When ready to harvest the farmer gathers his force.

A man walks between two rows breaking the stalks and laying them across each other so as to form a table about three feet high. A man passes along on each side of the table and cuts off the heads or tops of the broomcorn. From four to eight inches of the stalk is left with each head. The tool used for cutting broomcorn is a knife similar to the ordinary shoe knife. The breaking of these tables serves two purposes. It places the heads in position so they may be cut off readily and form a place to lay the heads. Four rows of heads are placed on each table. Teams pass through the field between the table rows and the corn is loaded and hauled to the thrashing place. Here it is placed on long tables, which extend to the seeder. On these tables it is straightened out and placed on a carrier belt, which carries it through the seeder. From the seeder it is carried to a barn or shed prepared with shelving, where it is scattered out and left to dry from two to four weeks. When sufficiently dry it is placed in bales of 200 to 300 pounds each.

It requires a large amount of addi-

## BROOM CORN HARVEST OF ILLINOIS.



tional farm help and coming at a time of the year when the farm work of other kinds is slack a great body of men from the adjoining country flock to the broomcorn fields. The broom manufacturer visits the farmer and purchaser the crop. Sometimes he depends upon a broomcorn broker. It is sold by the farmer at so much per ton. The price varies from \$50 to \$100 per ton. A ton is the product of from two to three acres. In recent years a large part is manufactured in the broomcorn belt. This broomcorn belt covers but a small part of Illinois. It extends from Neoga on the south to Tuscola on the north, and from Shelbyville on the west to Paris on the east. Broomcorn is not the exclusive crop in this belt, for other crops are grown.

## ANCIENT STATUS OF ACTORS.

### They Were Classed Among "Rogues, Vagabonds and Sturdy Beggars."

There is a common idea that actors are by law considered as vagabonds, the historic basis being a contemplation of the statutes regarding vagrancy. These statutes, crude and general in terms as were all or most of the early enactments, having been made and renewed between the twenty-third year of Edward III. and the fifth year of Queen Elizabeth, were variously repealed and consolidated in 1572, the act being the 14th Elizabeth, chapter 5. In this act strolling players unlicensed are certainly classed among "rogues, vagabonds and sturdy beggars," who are in the preamble of the act termed "outrageous enemies to the common weal." The penalty on conviction being "that then immediately he or she shall be adjudged to be grievously whipped and burnt through the gristle of the right ear with a hot iron of the compass of an inch about"—a punishment only to be abated by some responsible household taking him, or her, into service for a full year under proper recognition. A second offense became a felony.

The cause of the act "expressing what person and persons shall be so extended within this branch to be rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars" includes the following: "Pretended prophets, gamblers, persons 'faining themselves to have knowledge in phisomie, palmestrie, or other abused sciences,' quasi-labourers who will not work, unlicensed jugglers, pedlars, tinkers, petty chapmen, counterfeiters, and users of licenses and

passports, shipmen pretending losses at sea." The following inclusion deals directly with the subject of actors: "All fenceers, beare wardes, common players in interludes, and minstrels, not belonging to any baron of the realme, or towards any honourable personage of greater degree . . . which shall wander abroad and have not licenses of two justices of the peace of the least, whereof one bee of the quorum where and in what shire they shall happen to wander."—The Nineteenth Century.

## A NEW POMPEII.

### Discovered by Excavators on the Site of Ancient Priene.

This title is perhaps an exaggeration, but it is certain that if the published reports are true, the German archaeologists who are excavating on the site of ancient Priene have made a discovery of the highest interest. It is well known that Priene is in Asia Minor, and that the modern city of Samsoun occupies its ancient site. Several years ago an English expedition unearthed and studied the temple of Minerva, the chief sanctuary of the city, built by order of Alexander; but its ruins, although interesting, were abandoned, and they have since been despoiled by the inhabitants of the neighborhood. In 1895 the Germans resumed the exploration of the region in behalf of the Prussian government and under the direction of a young architect, Wilhelm Wilberg. The work of excavation is already sufficiently advanced to enable us to judge of its rare importance; a whole city is being unearthed, in almost as good preservation as Pompeii. And this is the more important because up to the present no similar discovery has ever been made that gives precise indications of the general arrangement of a Greek city, of its public monuments, or its individual dwellings. The city thus exhumed is assuredly of the period of greatest Greek beauty; the streets cross at right an-

## DAUGHTER OF CONFEDERACY.

### Miss Winnie Davis, Whose Death Carried Grief Through the South.

In the death of Miss Varina Anne Jefferson Davis, one popularly known as "Winnie," the Southern people lost an idol and the nation a most charming, winsome and intellectual young lady. Probably no young woman in the United States was personally known to more people than Miss Davis. Certainly none was more generally admired for her splendid qualities of mind and heart. Popular everywhere, she was especially beloved by the men who had fought for that Confederacy of which her father was the President.

Miss Davis' illness had extended over a period of two months and developed into sub-acute gastritis. For years she had made it a point, whenever possible, to be present at the gatherings of the Confederate veterans, and the old soldiers always gave her their heartiest cheers. At the reunion in Atlanta last July she and Mrs. "Stonewall" Jackson



MISS WINNIE DAVIS.

were driving in the parade. A storm broke and the ladies were drenched and chilled. From this experience dated Miss Davis' fatal illness.

Winnie Davis was the youngest of five children of Jefferson Davis and was born in the Confederate White House in Richmond in the last year of the civil war. Tall and fair-haired, with an oval face and gray blue eyes, she was an ideal American woman in appearance.

She had a sweet Southern voice and a charming manner that proved the gentleness of her disposition. She was her father's favorite child. On his deathbed he said she had given him only happiness; her mother had often called her the "best and dearest of daughters." Her devotion to her father in his last years was not more fond than her devotion to her mother after her father's death. Her mother leaned upon her; she was her mother's prop.

As an author, Miss Davis wrote several novels, good, wholesome and entertaining, and from the sale of these she enjoyed a handsome income.

Always surrounded by admirers, she never married. A few years ago her engagement was announced, but it is said she could not bring herself to give up her beloved father's name.

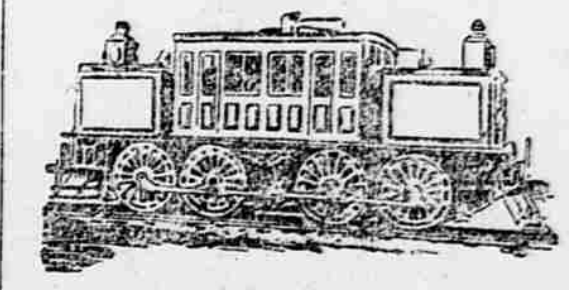
Miss Davis has for years been called the Daughter of the Confederacy. This affectionate title was conferred in the following manner:

In 1886 Jefferson Davis was making a tour of the Southern States. Everywhere he was greeted by cheering thousands. When West Point, Ga., was reached, Mr. Davis was so ill that he could not leave his berth. General Gordon went upon the rear platform of the train and explained to the 5,000 assembled people that Mr. Davis could not appear. Turning, he found Miss Winnie Davis at his elbow. Throwing his arms about her, Gen. Gordon cried out: "Countrymen, your late President cannot come out to see you; but here is his daughter, our daughter, the daughter of the Confederacy!" The multitude went wild with enthusiasm, and since that time Miss Davis has always been referred to in the South with the utmost affection as the daughter of the Confederacy.

## A FAST LOCOMOTIVE.

### Runs Eighty-two Miles an Hour on Small Fuel Consumption.

Three hours from New York to Washington is the record which the Baltimore and Ohio expects soon to establish by the use of a newly invented locomotive. This engine has been tested on the Erie road between Port Jervis and Jersey City, a distance of eighty-eight miles, which it covered in an hour and twelve minutes, including seven minutes for stops. It weighs



THE HAUB ENGINE.

sixty-two tons, has eight sixty-two-inch drivers and consumes less fuel and draws more cars than any other locomotive on the track. By an arrangement of the boiler flues what has hitherto been waste product of combustion is used as fuel. The smoke-stack is merely an outlet for exhaust steam, for it never emits smoke or sparks. The record between Port Jervis and Jersey City is vouchered for by the engineer who made the trip. The Baltimore and Ohio is to be equipped with these engines as fast as they can be built.

**Early Marriages.**  
The farther south one goes the earlier one finds marriages take place. A census was lately taken in Algeria, and it was found that the youngest Arab married man was twelve years old, and

that there were very many boys who were married at thirteen and fourteen, while some at fifteen years had several wives. There is a youthful Algerian widow of fifteen and a divorced husband of the same age. Girls are still more precocious, and are sometimes married when only eleven years old, though twelve is the more usual age. There are 180 widows of fifteen, and 1,176 divorcees of the same age.

## HE LIVES WITH HIS SNAKES.

### A Catskill Mountaineer Who Prefers Reptiles to Wife and Child.

Up in the Catskills lives one of those men who have an affinity for snakes. He prefers the companionship of any kind of reptile to that of the most genial man or fascinating woman. Wherever he goes he carries with him several of these pets, and on several occasions has sent women into hysterics and made men nervous and angry by taking from his pocket a shining black snake or poisonous copperhead and fondling it tenderly.

In a moment of abstraction from his devotion to snakes he asked a woman to marry him, and for some incomprehensible reason she consented. It was not long, however, until she began to make objection to the numerous reptiles which the snake lover insisted on bringing into the house.

Trouble began and continued. The sympathy of the neighbors was with the wife. They advised her to leave a man who could be little better than a snake himself to subject her to such indignities.

She bore it until there was a baby in the family. Then the fond father took to wheeling the baby out in its perambulator and bringing it back surrounded by snakes. This was too much for the mother, and she left the snake collector for good and all.

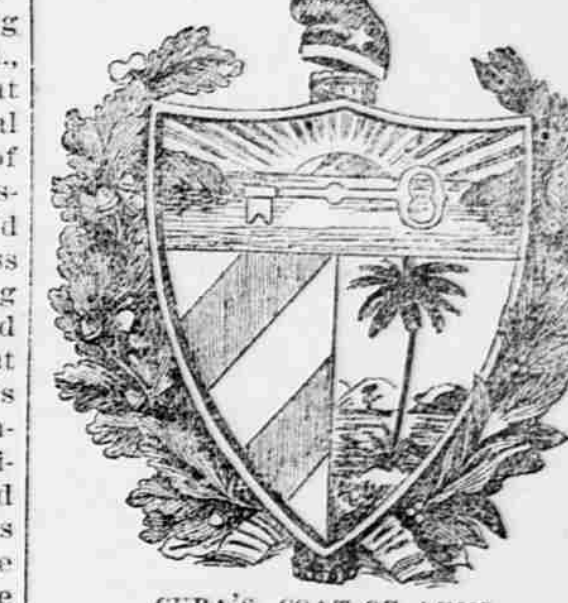
No one wanted to rent him a house, so he bought a little place of his own and lives alone with his snakes. The villagers give the house a wide berth and the summer visitors hasten the other way when they see him coming down the street with a snake coiled about his neck.

"Oh, yes, — is a beautiful place," said a girl who had just returned home from a two weeks' visit there, "but I wouldn't go again as long as that snake man lives there. He says the horrid things are harmless—as if that made any difference. The only compensation is that he has collected so many of the miserable things that there are fewer about the country than there would be otherwise."—New York Press.

## NEW CUBAN SHIELD.

### Coat of Arms Adopted by the Insurgent Government of the Island.

Cuba's new coat of arms is an interesting design, symbolizing all that is important in the liberated country. There is a cap of liberty, with the single white star of Cuba surmounting a bundle of fasces (meaning authority and power), before which rests a shield, on one side of which is a wreath of oak leaves, on the other a wreath of laurel. The sunrise of a new prosperity is rising over the sea, lighting up a bay into which commerce will soon stream. The key symbolizes Cuba itself, which has been called "the key of the West Indies." The right half of the shield pictures a tropical palm, the fertile valleys and sunny hills of the island—indi-



CUBA'S COAT OF ARMS.

cating agriculture—and the red and white bars on the left may possibly be intended as a compliment to the United States for the part this country played in the liberation of the island. Altogether it is a pretty design, though probably too complex.

**The Benedict's Lament.**  
Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight; Make me a "back" again just for to-night; Fix it so that I may come home once more Without catching fits as I enter the door! Take from my neck the sad yoke that I wear;

Oh, let me come in without losing my hair— The boys have invited me down to the club, But Time won't turn backward, and there is the rub! —Chicago News.

**Largest Hotel in the World.**  
The Sultan is said to have nearly completed the largest hotel in the world at Mecca. This establishment is to lodge 4,000 pilgrims at once, with, presumably, their camels and other beasts of burden, and promises to be one of the most picturesque places to stay at in the world, although, of course, infidel dogs are not allowed to approach it.

**Great Britain's Expenses.**  
The expenses of Great Britain are now about \$500,000,000 yearly, or nearly \$1,000 per minute, but every tick of the clock represents an inflow of a little over \$10 in the Treasury, thus leaving an annual surplus of about \$20,000,000.

**Ireland's Antiquaries.**  
This year the Royal Society of Antiquaries of Ireland celebrates its fiftieth anniversary. It was founded in Kilkenny, and now numbers on its roll 1,400 fellows and members in every part of the globe.