

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Opinions Based Upon the Happenings of the Day—Miscellaneous and News Notes.

A MAN whose ideas are very vague concerning everything else, has a very clear opinion of woman's duties.

Age and experience are the best teachers. How much more we learn each succeeding day. A better way to put it would be to say, how much less we know each day.

WHILE Italy is reported upon the very verge of bankruptcy she goes right along expending millions for a great standing army, and millions more for armed cruisers. Europe never before so bristled with arms. The world of men will naturally ask, What does it all mean?

DID you ever stop to think that in less than one hundred years from now none of us will be worrying or bothering about the petty trials of life? I write these few lines for those who are continually fretting themselves about mere trifles. It don't pay; they don't amount to anything after all.

THE editors of morning papers in Germany leave their offices at 9 o'clock, and the papers are on the press at 11 o'clock. By 12 o'clock even the printers have gone home, and when Gen. Von Moltke died at 11 o'clock at night there was only one Berlin newspaper that had a line about it in its issue next morning.

PEOPLE writing abroad should never add "Esquire" after the name on the envelope. Foreign postoffice people are so ignorant that they frequently take the word "Esquire" for a place, the consequence of which is that scores of letters go astray in the course of a year. Don't use "Esquire" at all; it is bad form; "Mr." is the proper affix to an address.

ONE of Rudyard Kipling's neighbors in Brattleboro is William A. Conant, who might justly be called the "American Stradivarius." For more than fifty years he has made very excellent violins and cellos. He had a high reputation in Boston and New York for workmanship as far back as 1841, and since that time he has manufactured as many as 700 violins of fine quality. Mr. Conant is now 89 years old. Stradivarius made violins when 92, and it would be a proper thing for Mr. Conant to continue at his trade for three years to come.

THE Medical Record of New York is obliged to raise its voice demanding police protection for the doctors, who have been systematically robbed by sneak thieves in that city. The thieves assume the character of invalids, in which they enter the offices and residences of physicians and steal everything in sight. The Record says that "if the police would be a little more alive the doctors would not have to put combination locks on their front doors and chain their overcoats to the hall tree after having chained the tree to the balustrade."

IT appears from Lady Burton's life of her distinguished husband that when he was in the diplomatic service in India he grew tired of the society of men and collected about him forty monkeys of all ages, races, and species, with whom he dined every day, each simian having his proper chair, plate, and food. Sir Richard sat at the head of the table, with a pretty little monkey on a high baby-chair at his side. He gave each of the animals a title, as doctor, chaplain, aid-de-camp, secretary. What an opportunity this would have been for Garner to forward his study of monkey dialects and manners!

THE expense of having the unsold World's Fair souvenir 50-cent pieces recoined was \$40,000 and the commission has paid the amount. The Government declined to bear the expense, and had it not been paid by the commission the souvenir coins would have been put in circulation at their face value. As the coins unsold amounted \$1,700,000, the issue of this vast sum at the face value of each piece would have been a great injustice to the people who had purchased coins at a premium. Under the circumstances it was eminently proper for the commission to pay the cost of recoinage in order to protect those who had in good faith purchased the coins at a premium.

IT really appears very extraordinary indeed that in Great Britain at the close of the nineteenth century there can exist and agitate a considerable number of people who honestly believe that vaccination is not only not beneficial but positively injurious and often fatal. Yet such is the fact, for we are informed by the press dispatches that "anti-vaccinators," as they call themselves, actually over-

powered and beat back a large force of police which had been ordered to calm and, if necessary, to disperse a meeting of them. We in America have come to regard vaccination as unquestionable and to submit to it in perfect confidence that it will work us no injury and will infallibly protect us from smallpox contagion. In this view and in this confidence we probably are right.

THE cowardly discharge of a murderous bomb in the French Chamber of Deputies is but another proof that anarchy is everywhere the same brutal combination of a vile minority to slaughter its opponents. In France the liberty of speech runs to license. The discussion of the theory of anarchy has gone unchecked in Paris. Anarchy has had its candidates for the Legislature. It has assumed all the functions of a party. It cannot be urged in mitigation of the discharge of the bomb that there was a real or mistaken fear of police prevention of freedom of speech. The murderous conspiracy in Paris was of a piece with that in Chicago. It was the crime of men whose insane wickedness had been permitted to develop by careless authorities, and it stands as confirmatory evidence of the need of "short, sharp, and decisive" methods of dealing with anarchistic assemblies.

DR. JOHNSON says that no man ever became great by imitation, but the experience of Rev. Isaac Davidson, colored, of Alabama, shows that an imitator may obtain a certain degree of notoriety combined with more or less pleasurable excitement. Larson Davidson had heard Sam Jones at Birmingham address his congregations as dirty yellow hound dogs and imps of hell, and upon returning to his flock decided to adopt a similar style of oratory. He had an idea that it would stir up the brethren. It did. Mr. Davidson opened the campaign by announcing that his parishioners were black devils and imps of hell, whereupon the parishioners arose as one man and one woman with the avowed intention of killing him. He escaped only by pleading temporary insanity. This teaches us that though you may learn to squint by looking at squinting people, you had best be sure of your squintee before exercising your powers.

MR. CRUMLEY, the Yorkshire farmer who recently declared at the meeting of Lord Winchelsea's National Agricultural Union in London that he would not be a party "to any scheme by means of which the farmers are used to bolster up the decaying squirearchy," seems fully to comprehend the purpose of the gathering. The union was founded about a year ago for the special purpose of saving the landlords. Some of the wealthy farmers were admitted to the organization, but only that they might assist the landlords in their schemes. The landlord orators inveighed against the tax on land then as they did recently, forgetting that the heaviest tax levied was that for the landlords' benefit. It was noticeable too at this meeting that the resolutions were cut and dried affairs offered by Tory landlords and supported by Tory squires and landlords and some of their favored tenants. It is becoming difficult to prop up landlordism even in England.

ONE of the saddest mistakes ever made was when the devoted wife of John Tyndal administered to him an overdose of chloral for sulphate of magnesia. "My poor darling, you have killed your John," the dying man said when Mrs. Tyndal told him of her mistake while overwhelmed with grief. The chloral and the magnesia had been kept side by side, and mistakes in similar cases are frequent. No one has the heart to say a word which could in the remotest degree reflect on the poor widow, John Tyndal was an honor to this age. His scientific achievements are world-wide. His bad health would probably have carried him hence soon. The age will miss him. Among the mysteries is the departure, by seeming accident or mistake, from the earth life of really useful men. There does not seem to be a reason for it unless, indeed, they are wanted elsewhere. Otherwise blind Fate rules us. There seems to be some things which are permitted for wise ends.

BRANDING Criminals in China. Finding that long terms of imprisonment and flogging do not check robbery and piracy and systematic practice of imposition on strangers in the nature of thievery in the Sochow district, the authorities have resolved to try branding. For the first offense the thief is to be branded on the right cheek, and for the second on the left cheek. The brand is to be the Chinese sign for the word thief. As the Chinese have a superstitious horror of all facial disfigurement, the belief is entertained that the new punishment will check the criminal element.—Sacramento Record-Union.

ORIGIN OF LYNCH LAW.

It Began in Virginia and Was Not Violent or Moblike.

Lynch law had its origin in Virginia, according to the conclusion of a gentleman who has been investigating the early history of that State. It was not mob law, as it is now understood. It was orderly, methodical and fair in its process, and was strongly opposed to violence or mob rule. Its distinctive feature was simply that its decrees and findings were executed sternly and swiftly upon the spot of their delivery. Charles Lynch, whose name is associated with the summary proceedings now known as acts of "lynch law," was a revolutionary soldier, and after the war ended took up his residence in Pittsylvania County. The region in which he lived became at one period of the Revolution infested by bands of Tories and outlaws, whose depredations upon the defenceless people extended from the lower parts of North Carolina and Virginia to the passes of the Blue Ridge and the head waters of the James and other mountain streams. Deserters from both armies added strength and a semblance of organization to their operations. Wherever they appeared the terror-stricken inhabitants were plundered, harassed, and mercilessly subjected to every variety of insult and outrage. A remedy was needed for this insufferable state of things, a remedy that should at once strike a terror to these miscreants and would relieve a community airily suffering from the effects of hostile invasion. Col. Lynch was the man to take the lead in such an emergency. He succeeded in organizing a body of patriotic citizens, men of known character and standing. Having laid his plans before them, and securing their approval, he at once proceeded to put them into execution. At the head of his followers he promptly got upon the track of the unsuspecting enemy, captured many and caused the others to flee from the country. When any of these outlaws fell into his hands they were not taken at once to a tree and hanged or tied to a stake and shot, as is now done under the perverted system of the present day. This was not according to the code of Col. Lynch and his followers. So far from such a lawless procedure a jury was selected from Lynch's men, over which he presided as judge; the captives were tried separately, the accused allowed to make his own defence, and to show cause, if he could, why he should not be punished. If found guilty, the punishment was inflicted on the spot. The general impression has been that in all cases of Lynch law the penalty was death. This is a mistake. A writer who knew Col. Lynch well was assured by him that he never willingly convicted a criminal to capital punishment; that prisoners were frequently let off with a severe flogging and then liberated on condition that they would leave the country.

Bushire. Bushire is the capital of the English protectorate in the Persian Gulf. Here our resident lives, who may be styled King of the Gulf, and before whom all the petty potentates along its shores, be they on the Arabian or Persian side, bow down. He has his steam yacht and his steam launch provided for him, a British man-of-war is appointed to be always in readiness to do his bidding, and the British Residency, with its flag-staff and extensive compounds, is by far the most conspicuous building in the town. Bushire is a truly horrible place, built at the edge of a spit of sand running out into the gulf. Its population is very mongrel. Arabs, Persians, Hindus are all hopelessly mixed up therein. It has an English bank, what with its English Residency, English bank, English telegraph, English steamers' agents and English men-of-war. Bushire is as English as it could be with. Law tennis may be seen upon its quays, ladies may ride without incurring more than an ordinary amount of staring from the Mooleens. It is confidently asserted that if the Karoun route is opened out into the heart of Persia, Bushire will cease to be the seat of our Persian Gulf protectorate will be removed to Fao or some other spot which has not yet got a name. If that time ever comes, and Bushire ceases to be the chief outlet for the Persian caravan trade, the place will not long survive, for it has no pretensions whatsoever to call itself a harbor. Big steamers have to anchor at least two miles off land outside a sand bar, and, if the sea is very rough, landing is next to impossible. Bushire chances to be the outlet for the roads across the Kotalis, and if it ceases to be that its reason for existence will cease also.—The Fortnightly Review.

Rejected Manuscripts. Mr. James Payn has heard that the proprietor of an American magazine, wishing to test the literary taste of his editor, caused to be sent to him a short poem of John Keats', with a note saying that it was the work of a boy of 13. The editor, according to the story, declined the poem. Probable he praised it as showing "a promise of better things," but regretted that it was not adapted to the present wants of the magazine. Mr. Payn remarks with justice that the proprietor's trick was a remorseless act. "What can that editor think of his proprietor?" he asks. But he proceeds to say that there are many things in the British classics that have not deserved to be printed once, and much less twice. He remembers an "able editor" who rejected some lines out of Thomson's "Seasons" which a young man had sent him as original. The would-be contributor considered it a fine

joke upon the editor, and a friend of the young man took up the cudgels in his behalf.

"You didn't print the verse because, of course, you knew they were Thomson's," he said. "You had you didn't think it worth while to say so?" "No, sir," answered the editor, blandly, "they were not rejected on that account. I did not know that they were Thomson's, but I did know they were dull."

This, as Mr. Payn justly remarks, "was taking the bull by the horns, or rather the young ass by the ears."

Spoopeendike Outcome.

Memories of the immortal Spoopeendike are revived by an occurrence at our headquarters a few days ago, says the California Fruit Grower.

Incidental to our removal to new quarters it became necessary to put up a stove. The office devil being scarcely tall enough to reach the pipe hole in the chimney, and being otherwise engaged at the time, an order was given to a leading hardware house to send a man over for a few minutes to put up the stove.

The sequel proves that due consideration was not given to the fact that the hardware firm referred to deal in plumbers' supplies also.

Instead of one man coming, equipped to complete the job in half an hour, two able-bodied and leisurely citizens appeared upon the scene, the second one being brought along, as we soon learned, merely to remind the other one that he had forgotten his tools (an ancient and time-honored custom among plumbers).

There being three tools needed, it took of course three trips to bring them, by which time it was necessary to adjourn to the Palace Hotel we presume for dinner. When labor was finally resumed on the gigantic undertaking, it was unfortunately discovered that some rivets were needed which of course necessitated other trips of the entire force to lug them to the busy scene of industry. To make a very long story a very short one, a large part of the day was consumed, and a bill of \$5.90 sent in for putting up a stove that cost \$5.50, including the pipe.

The proprietor has therefore about decided to proffer the stove and pipe in part payment of the bill, and to dispense with the use of a stove altogether. He thinks the bill itself has made him hot enough to last all winter.

Good Lemonade.

"I learned a new thing," said a woman recently, "while visiting, last week, an English friend who is living in the country. We had a small dance one evening of my stay, and my hostess served the most delicious lemonade I ever drank. I spoke of it next day, and she told me that it was made with freshly boiled water—the secret, she said, of thoroughly good lemonade. 'I have a regular rule,' she further informed me, 'which insures success if I am making a quart or a gallon. For a quart I take the juice of three lemons, using the rind of one of them. I am careful to peel the rind very thin, getting just the yellow outside, this I cut into pieces and put with the juice and powdered sugar, of which I use two ounces to the quart, in a jug or jar with a cover. When the water is just at the tea point I pour it over the lemon and sugar, cover at once and let it get cold. Try this way once and you will never make it any other way.'"

A New Insect Enemy.

We have just received from a fruit grower in the Hawaiian Islands a box containing several specimens of a very destructive leaf-eating beetle. It is a species of the Diplotaxis, and as yet is unknown in California. Specimens of leaves accompanying the beetles show that they feed upon the peach, orange, grape, in fact any and all kinds of fruit trees. To destroy this beetle use twenty pounds of sulphur and five ounces of Paris green, or in like proportion: mix well and dust over the plants or trees, though we would not recommend the use of Paris green on peach trees. Our quarantine officers should watch importations from these islands and prevent the introduction of the insect pest into the State.

We are informed that this beetle reached the Hawaiian Islands from Japan, and it is there known as the "Japanese bug" or leaf-eater.—California Fruit-grower.

Will Be a Blessing.

The person who uses a telephone and hangs the receiver up without "ringing off" can have no idea to what extent his action works on the mind of Miss Central and suggests to her the hiring of a man to say things for her. There are also things to be said on behalf of the man whom Miss Central cuts off in the middle of a sentence; but perhaps most of these things have been said already. An invention is now being tested by the Metropolitan Telephone and Telegraph Company of this city, which is expected to do away with "ringing off." This device consists of a miniature incandescent lamp in front of the operator, which flashes whenever a receiver is hung up after the completion of a conversation. It was said by President Cutler of the telephone company, that the device is working very well and may be adopted for use on all the switchboards of the company.

Japan May Now Have Old Maid.

It has been the law in Japan that if a woman was not married at a certain age the authorities picked out a man and compelled him to marry her. The Mikado has just abolished this rule. Henceforth Japanese women may enjoy the privilege of old maidenhood. Whether they will or not is another question.—New York World.

Claude de Forbin.

About the year 1666 a dog went mad in a village of Provence, France. As he rushed down a deserted street persons who had fled to places of security were horrified to see a small boy run to meet it. Heedless of commands and warnings, the child seemed about to throw himself upon the animal's open, foaming jaws. There was a struggle, but it was quickly over, and the 10-year-old hero was unhurt. He had given his hat to the dog, and while the creature was tearing it, had seized him by the hind-legs and plunged a knife into his stomach. When a crowd of men reached the scene to render assistance the dog lay motionless and dying.

The boy was Claude de Forbin who as a young man achieved fame as a brave soldier and sailor, and who died a commodore of the French navy. His career was full of acts of audacity and impetuous courage.

At one time the French Government ordered him to attack a certain Venetian war vessel in the Mediterranean Sea. The vessel retreated to the port of Venice. Forbin, with fifty men, two boats, and a canoe, entered the port unperceived, boarded the vessel and took possession of it before the enemy realized what was happening.

He carried away the officers and crew, set fire to the ship, and before it was fully understood in Venice what the burning of the ship and the terrible explosion of its powder-magazine meant, he was well on his way to his own frigate, which he reached in safety.

In a terrific storm, which so frightened his ordinarily stout-hearted sailors that they yielded to despair and did nothing but call upon all the saints in the calendar, Forbin shouted, "All your prayers are good, my lads, but Saint Pump! Saint Pump! he will save you!"

The men went to the pumps, and the ship was saved.

When Forbin's vessel was anchored off Algiers, and he was negotiating for peace between Algiers and France, some Christian slaves swam out and begged him to rescue them. The treaty between France and Algiers forbade the French sending out gunboats to rescue slaves, but Forbin determined to save these unfortunates.

He put 400 fathoms of rope to a canoe, and told the coxswain to rescue the drowning slaves. If he was discovered by the Algerian gunboats, he was to order the men to ship their oars and to pull on the cable, at which signal the canoe would be drawn back to the vessel. The Algerians chased the canoe; but without success. They demanded the return of the slaves, but Forbin replied that all on board a vessel of the King of France were freemen. Then he set sail across the Mediterranean and carried the refugees to France.

Swapping Wives in Crackerland.

Twenty years ago the people of that section of country embraced in Western North Carolina and Eastern Tennessee were primitive in the extreme," said F. P. Dalton to a St. Louis Globe-Democrat man.

"Few could read; not one in a hundred had ever seen a railroad or a town of 1,000 inhabitants. I was tramping through the mountains making some sketches, and my wife, then an exceedingly handsome woman of 20, accompanied me. We stopped one night at the cabin of a squatter who was a typical mountaineer. His wife was a tall, raw-boned, slatternly woman with a snuff-stick and a sharp tongue. After supper of 'corn pone,' milk, and fat pork the host took me outside and, pointing with his thumb over his shoulder to our respective wives, said: 'How'll you swap?'"

"I had heard the people of that country sometimes traded wives, but regarded it as a foolish burlesque."

"Well," said I, inclined to get some amusement out of it, "make an offer."

"I kinder reckon," said the would-be swapper, "that my wife's worth the most. She's the biggest'n strongest. She kin milk cows, dig seng, and kin cook a 'possum to a turn. But I've had her high onto a year an' am gettin' tired of her old clapper of a tongue. I'll swap even."

"I declined the offer and he finally offered to give as boot a squirrel rifle and a dog warranted to be death on coons. This liberal offer did not tempt me, and as we were about to leave he offered to add a jug of moonlight whisky. This was too much for the temper of his partner."

"Well, Zack Jenkins," said she, with asperity, "I've been swapped four times, an' you're the first feller that didn't cacklerate that I was with a deal more in a trade than 'tother woman."

"We departed, leaving Zack to explain matters as best he could."

How They Fatten Brides in Tunis.

A girl in Tunis, after she is betrothed, is cooped up in a small room, with shackles of gold and silver upon her ankles and wrists. If she is to be married to a man who has discharged, dispatched, or lost a former wife, the shackles which the former bride wore are put upon the new bride's limbs, and she is fed till they are filled up to the proper thickness. The food used for this custom, worthy of barbarians, is a seed called drough, which is of an extraordinary fattening quality. With this seed and their national fish, cuscussu, the bride is forcibly fed, and many actually die under the spoon.—Eastern Age.

Soapbuds.

The best place for soapbuds is on the manure heap. A chemical reaction occurs in the heap by the use of the suds, and much of the ammonia will be saved. All liquid wastes can be added to the heap with advantage.

THEY ARE NOT SUICIDES.

Persons Who are Killed in Consequence of Absent-mindedness.

"It is doubtful if so many people, who are run over on railroads, or jump from precipices and bridges, commit suicide, as is generally supposed," said a physician, recently.

"When a man or woman steps in front of a train, or walks off from some steep place, it is ten to one put down as a case of suicide. You will notice often that 'no cause could be assigned,' and also, 'never had the person been in better spirits,' etc., and then all the friends go to raking up the dead man or woman's past to find out the cause.

"Now, if the dead could speak we would find that many of these cases are due to absent-mindedness," the doctor continued, "or fits of absorption or abstraction. In fact, a recent paper of my own leads me to suppose this to be true. I was standing on the platform of the elevated station at 67th street and 3d ave., waiting for the down train. I was very much worried about a patient who was not getting along as well as I had expected, and I was wondering whether or not I had better make certain changes in the treatment. Thus absorbed I heard a train approaching, and mechanically started to step aboard, when I suddenly felt myself violently pulled back. I looked about surprised, and saw an excited man facing me and the people looking curiously on.

"What do you mean?" said the man angrily. "Were you trying to kill yourself by jumping in front of the engine?"

I had nearly walked off in front of the train and for reply I quickly jerked myself away and stepped aboard, but my whole body trembled with mingled sensations of fright and shame. That incident set me to thinking. Many people are subject to sudden rushes of blood to the head that for the moment confuse them. A person thus affected may suddenly drop down or mechanically continue walking, according to the strength of the attack. In that condition one may have also a partial loss of the will, which may cause one to do queer things. Billious and dyspeptic people are also liable to dizzy spells, and amid the rush and whirl of business such folks may suddenly fall or stumble forward without seeming reason, and be recorded as suicides."—New York News.

Hint to the Speaker.

Doctor Hildreth, in his "Memoirs of the Early Settlers of Ohio," devotes a chapter to Abraham Whipple of Rhode Island. He was born in 1733, and was one of the first to take a hand in the Revolutionary War. In 1786 he was elected a representative to the Legislature from the town of Cranston.

The advocates of the paper-money system were then in power, and had chosen Othniel Gorton, a clumsy old man, for Speaker.

Gorton was in the habit of keeping a large quid of tobacco in one side of his cheeks. Most of the debates were on the opposite side of the hall from that on which Commodore Whipple sat, and the Speaker's face was commonly turned that way.

Once in the course of the debate Whipple had cogitated a speech, which he waited for an opportunity to deliver. At last, out of patience, he rose and called, "Mr. speaker!" The Speaker, whose face was turned the other way, did not hear him. He raised his voice to its utmost, "Mr. Speaker!"

Gorton started, and turning to the Commodore said, "I hear you."

Thereupon Whipple began: "I wish, Mr. Speaker, you would shift your quid of tobacco from your starboard to your larboard jaw, that it might give your head a cant this way, so that you could sometimes hear something from this side of the house."

Then he went on with his speech.

The Jewel-Finding Tools of Egypt.

A year's study at Gizeh has convinced Mr. Finders Petrie that the Egyptian stone-workers of 4,000 years ago had a surprising acquaintance with what had been considered modern tools. Among the many tools used by the pyramid-builders were both solid and tubular drills and straight and circular saws. The drills, like those of to-day, were set with jewels (probably corundum, as the diamond was very scarce), and even lathe tools had such cutting edges.

So remarkable was the quality of the tubular drills and the skill of the workmen that the cutting marks of hard granite give no indication of wear of the tool, while a cut of a tenth of an inch was made in the hardest rock at each revolution and a hole through both the hardest and softest material was bored perfectly smooth and uniform throughout. Of the material and method of making the tools nothing is known.—Shilling Journal.

Myriad of Rodent Navengers.

A man just from New Orleans says there is one peculiarity about that city which is never talked about. "It is," he said, "a city of rats. New Orleans is below the river bed, and it is at all times low and damp. The city is not clean, and large wharf rats multiply in the business portion of the city in great numbers, and the pests swarm about in droves. The people of New Orleans contend that the rats are good scavengers and help to rid the city of refuse matter. I don't think there is a city in the world, not even New York or Paris, that has as many rats to the square mile as New Orleans."—Atlanta Journal.

A CHURCH of the Good Shepherd is being built in Philadelphia, but it is in no way connected with the good shepherd who edits the Mail and Express.