

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

ONE of the most popular public measures in South Carolina is the half-pint.

THERE is good reason to believe that the general benevolence and charity are creating a class of loafers who ought to be made to work.

A TOPEKA woman who applied for "aid" at Topeka, spent the dollar that was given her to buy coal for a pink wool fascinator that was going at a great bargain.

CALVE wishes it to be distinctly understood that there are two syllables in her name. We have heard it pronounced as though it signified the daughter of a cow.

If the well-disposed but wise left-making bestower of indiscriminate charity could look into the mind of the beggar to whom he hands his coin he would see what he is "succor" changed to "sucker."

SINCE experts have discovered that the Chicago Board of Trade tower is six inches out of line nobody has ventured to guess how much the Chicago treasury accounts are out of plumb.—Philadelphia Press.

A MAN with a troublesome memory says that whenever he is down in the village and feels as if his wife had told him to get something, he buys a yeast-cake, and nine times out of ten he hits the mark.

THINK of that Spanish Anarchist who had planned to blow up a building with ten thousand spectators seated in it. His upward movements would have caused more excitement than those of the "bull" ring in Wall street.

NOTHING on board a United States man-of-war strikes the visiting landsmen more forcibly than the seemingly almost constant sound of the loudspeaker, which, that instrument sends its thin and wandering strain of music up and down the deck every few minutes from sunrise to sunset. This means that somebody is busy all day long in one or another sort of active duty requiring summons by signal.

A LARGE field, as yet untouched, is the construction of electric lines for handling freight cars from the main line of steam roads, a few miles to inland towns. Where water power is available, the problem becomes one of easy solution. Such a line has been in very successful operation for some months past, in Maine, and in addition to the heavy work named does a good passenger and express business.

ACCORDING to Virginia law a person may get all the enjoyment possible out of measles in an unobtrusive way, but he is not allowed to display it in public. A case in point has just come to notice, wherein a commercial traveler was fined a thousand dollars by a local court for introducing measles into the County. Fortunately for the drummer the Legislature has passed a special bill for the remission of the fine.

THE English critic who distinguishes classes in America, placing the intellectual at the top and the wealthy and fashionable at the bottom, with the religious, industrial, and others between, has too much pudding in his pie. In these parts the wealthy and fashionable think they are also the intellectual, and instead of being at the bottom of the pastrty they deem themselves the upper crust. English critics never get anything right about this country.

IT is said that a large packing house in Kansas City has commenced poultry killing on a large scale and purposes to make this a regular branch of their slaughtering. If this example be followed by other houses, the poultry trade will be greatly changed. Butchers can buy their poultry of the same firms that supply dressed beef and provisions. The trade in live poultry will be increased and the trade of the smaller dealers who ship dressed poultry to the market will be hurt. In other words, the poultry trade will follow more or less in the steps of dressed beef.

ONE of the greatest difficulties that confronts the farmer is how to get good reliable farm help, and it would be well for the farmer to look after and employ his help at once for the ensuing year. He usually employs a hand from five to seven months during the year. Many times the help employed is a stranger, and as the time passes the employer becomes impressed with the fact that he is paying wages that should command bet-

ter work. However he is aware of the fact that he has made a bad mistake his help is indolent and incompetent. Seemingly intent upon performing as little work as possible for pay received. It would be well to say that there are exceptions to this rule, and there are men who are reliable and always work for the best interest of the employer, and these are the men the progressive farmers want to employ.

CONGRESS should not be palavered into loaning the carvels for exhibition round the country. The sojety that makes this absurd request has no claim upon them. Nor is it altogether above suspicion. Competent testimony is to the effect that in Russia it was a partisan and sectarian machine and many patriots of Poland and Russia look upon it with known distavor. Conceding, nevertheless, that it is all it professes to be, there is no good reason for placing property of the American people at its service. It is against constitutional principles to loan government property to private people or for purposes not within the purview of the government. If the carvels, while voted round the country, should be injured the government could not hold any responsible party to account for them. They cost too much for shabby indifference to be shown to them now. It would also be discourtesy to Spain, whose gift to us one of them is.

REALISM, as applied to the drama, was supposed to have reached the limit on the introduction of the pile driver, horse race, shipwreck, and other "realistic" scenes so common on the stage to-day. But evidently the wish was the parent of the thought, for now comes the great Bernhardt with a proposition to out-real-realist himself. Her attention has been riveted upon the suicide of a French family of several persons by the inhalation of charcoal fumes. She became entraptured with the dramatic possibilities of a salamander filled with burning charcoal in a room occupied by several sleeping persons. Nothing could be more pleasing to a crowded theatre than the depiction of death under such conditions. The funeral of the dead family was witnessed by the actress from a balcony and new "situations" and denouements were discovered by the trained eye of Sarah. Enough. She at once gave an order to a French dramatist for a play founded on incidents of the tragedy of the Caubert family. If this new play does not elevate the stage a few notches nothing on earth can—except a derick or dynamite. Should it not answer all expectations, however, the divine Sarah might find material for a drama in the modern way of disposing of the dead by cremation. A real crematory in operation ought to bring out the "standing room only" placards.

Evolution and Partridges. A striking example of the effects of environment and changed conditions of life upon the forms of animals is furnished by a species of partridge living in the Canary Islands. About 400 years ago the Spaniards introduced the red-legged partridge from Europe into these islands, and the bird has continued to flourish there; but, as recent examination proves, it has undergone modifications clearly brought about by the conditions under which it lives.

Its back has turned from russet-color to gray. This looks like a case of protective coloration, since the bird passes its life amid gray volcanic rocks. Then its beak has become one-fourth longer and thicker than that of its ancestors and of its European relatives, and its legs also have increased in length and grown stouter. These changes are exactly such as were needed to suit it to the life that it is now compelled to lead amid the rocks and on the mountain-sides of the islands, where a more vigorous physical development is required than was needed upon the plains of England and France.

As has been remarked, if such changes can be wrought by nature in the animal form in 400 years, what might not have been accomplished in 400 centuries.

Some Noted Bachelor Artists. It is a remarkable fact that the greater number of most distinguished painters have lived and died free from the thralldom of Hymen. Take, for example, the Presidents of the Royal Academy, Sir Joshua Reynolds was a bachelor; Benjamin West, his successor, was a bachelor; so was Sir Thomas Lawrence, so, too, Sir Edwin Landseer, for he, be it remembered, was elected President, and his refusal did not take effect until thirteen days afterward; so, also, Sir Francis Grant, and, as everybody knows, Sir Frederick Leighton, Mac-lise, too, who was offered the Presidency and a Knighthood and refused both, was no more amenable to the idea of marriage. Then Turner, Eddy, Sir David Wilkie, Sir William Bozal, Sir W. Gordon, and Sir W. C. Ross, all of them regarded matrimony with the same aversion as Reynolds, who, when he heard of Flaxman's engagement, exclaimed: "Thea he's ruined for an artist." The callacy of Raphael and Michael Angelo was to him a sacred example, as sacred as it is to the priesthood.—Westminster Gazette.

THE WILL MAKES THE WAY.

It was a noble Roman. In Rome's imperial day. Who found a corner'd snaker, before the "A" the way.

"There's safe in such a fortress—There is no way, 't'is snaker it." "You'll find a way, 't'is snaker it."

Is Fame your aspiration? Her path is a way, and both? In vain he seeks her temple. Content to give and sign? Who has the gift of knowledge? In His own way, snaker it. If he has still the Roman will To find a way, 't'is snaker it.

A PLUCKY WIFE.

Sage Bar was excited. Six horses were missing from Hill Hill six o'clock. Fifteen minutes after Bill had reported his loss at the bar a party had found the trail and ridden off toward the southwest. Presently as they were crossing a wet bit of land in a hollow, Bill, who led the party, looked sharply at the hoof prints sunk deep in the soil and reined up quickly. "Look at that shoe mark!" he exclaimed, pointing down at the trail. "By gosh! it's the easterner's boss shoe!" ejaculated Sam like after an instant's scrutiny of the hoofprints among which were several larger than the rest and showing the clear impress of a shoe. The others were those of unshod horses. Then the party scanned the marks closely. Then the men looked at each other with ugly frowns. "Well!" said Bill tentatively at last. No one answered for a moment. Then Sam remarked: "It looks bad for the easterner, sure! The 'ain't any one got boss shoes like them in the district 'cept him. I'm sorry 't' the feller's put his head in a rope's end, boys. But we'll have ter foller him up. Who'll go back?" A couple of the party volunteered. The men separated. Part of them moved forward on the trail. The others turned, their horses at right angles to the former line of march and lopez a toward the easterner's cabin.

The easterner, otherwise Jack Craig, of whom they had been speaking, had been in Sage Bar only a short time. He was a tenderfoot, out and out. When he came to the bar he brought his wife with him. She was a bright, pretty little woman, but they hardly knew her in the settlement. Craig always had been reserved, and the two had kept by themselves in the little cabin which stood a mile or more away from town. So Sage Bar had come to consider the pair a "queer lot," and to designate them as "the easterner and his wife," which was intended to be anything but complimentary.

When the trailing party reined up in front of Craig's cabin, they found the object of their search sitting on a log before the door smoking. From his dress, bespattered with mud, it was evident that he had just returned from riding. The party exchanged glances of understanding.

Sam Pike came to the point at once. "Craig," he said, "er wanted down ter the bar?"

"What's that?" demanded the easterner angrily.

"Yer wanted down to the bar!" Sam repeated. "Er boss stealing?" he added.

Craig's face was a flame in the instant. He sprang from his seat, throwing back his hand to his hip. But the others had him covered and his hand dropped loosely by his side again. "It's all right," he said, "and you know it."

Just then a woman's figure appeared in the cabin doorway. It was Craig's wife.

"What's the matter?" she questioned anxiously, seeing her husband's attitude.

Craig spoke up quickly: "Go back, Lolly! They've got up a dirty story about me and want me to go to the bar. But I'll come back in a little while."

Sam had a great fear of women's tongues and tears, and immediately ordered Craig to mount a horse which another man at a word secured from the stable near by. The woman had looked on dumbly, seeming hardly to comprehend what was taking place, but as she saw her husband walk over toward the horse, she ran to him and threw both arms about him, holding him tight to her. He unclasped her arms gently after an instant and mounted the horse and turning in the saddle waved his hand to her. Then they rode away, and after they had gone a piece Sam looked back and saw the woman still standing there, her hands loosely locked before her, watching them with wide open eyes. "She's grit ter 't' backbone," muttered that worthy and lashed his horse into a gallop.

All Sage Bar crowded around the party when they drew rein in town, and there were some who would have swung Craig up upon the spot when Sam had told the story. Sage Bar was in that stage of progress where horse stealing was a capital offense and a short shrift was granted to offenders. But Sam's protest that nothing should be done until the Hines party returned was heeded, and the prisoner was put in an empty cabin, tied hand and foot, several of the men agreeing to stand guard.

The afternoon waned away, and evening came, and the Hines party did not make its appearance. So Craig was given something to eat and then was fastened tightly once more, and the men rolled themselves up in their blankets in front of the cabin

about 11 o'clock, leaving only Joe Stetson on guard.

Stetson sat himself down on a stump and lit a pipe, and with his rifle across his knees fell to thinking about some "mavericks" he'd had branded that day. Presently he imagined he heard a soft step in the prairie. He raised his head and listened. Just then the moon showed a rim beyond a sailing cloud, and its light fell on a figure—a woman's figure—making its way toward the cabin. Stetson rose to his feet, letting his rifle butt drop on the ground, and curiously surveyed the woman, who was close to him now. It was the easterner's wife.

"Is he in there?" she said, her voice trembling a bit.

"Yes," answered Stetson. "Can I see him?" she asked. "Only for a moment," she added.

"Can't do it marm," said Stetson. For a moment she was quiet, looking longingly toward the cabin and clasping and unclasping her hands softly. The man hoped she would go. He had hated to say no, and he did not know how long his determination to refuse would last. "But they say they're going to try him to-morrow, and I mayn't get another chance."

"She looked at him so sadly and yet so bravely with that Stetson wavered and was lost.

"For five minutes, then, no more!" he said, half-repeating of his words the instant they were uttered.

at he unlocked the cabin door for her and locked it behind her again. Then he stood outside the door, cursing himself. Presently there was a rap from the inside of the cabin and, much relieved, he opened the door, but he kept his finger on the hammer of his rifle as he stood aside to allow her to pass.

She came out quickly. Stetson turned and bent to fasten the door. As he did so he felt a tiny ring of cold metal against his head and heard, in her voice, now without a tremble:

"Put up your hands and do it quickly!" The order was so distinctly put and so emphatically backed up by the cold metal which Stetson knew only too well was the dangerous end of a revolver that he did not hesitate. As he threw up his hands the door was pulled open from the inside, and a man dashed out and melted in the darkness of the prairie. A moment more, and the hoof-beats of a horse came back, sounding clear and sharp on the still air.

The man who had been asleep till now, awakened by the noise, sleepily raised himself on his elbows. The woman had not moved the pistol from Stetson's head, but now she dropped the weapon quickly and started to run. In an instant Stetson was after her, and with a bit of outwitted had run her down and caught her before she had gone fifty yards. As he grasped her by the shoulders the hoof-beats were dying on the air, and the woman looked into her captor's face with an exultant smile.

Stetson brought her back to the cabin and in a half-shamed way told his story. The woman was quiet and did not seem to hear what they said. Despite their chatter at having been worsted by a woman, the men could not but admit her pluck and skill. Then they argued as to what they would do with her, and finally decided to take her into town as soon as it was light. They locked her in the cabin and then sat up and talked the rest of the night. They felt that it would be useless to attempt to trail Craig in the dark, and, to tell the truth, they were just a bit fearful that the woman would escape them unless they kept a sharp lookout.

When morning came, a big party set off in pursuit of Craig. But they had scant hope of overtaking him with a horse under him and his many hours' start. The easterner's wife still remained locked in the cabin. Sage Bar once found itself nonplused. Law and order had been reversed by a woman, and the town had the offender in custody. But smoke and ponder as it might, Sage Bar was at loss to know how to proceed. All the laws of the settlement, unwritten though they were, had sprung from an acute sense of frontier needs and referred to men. "There was an indefinable feeling among the Sage Bar Solons that these laws could not be applied with much propriety to women, and so they talked much, smoked and drank much more and did nothing.

When the Hines party came in, tired, hungry, and empty handed, no solution of the difficulty presented itself, and so with admirable judgment the town decided to free itself of further responsibility by setting the woman at liberty. The easterner's wife was pale and evidently worn out when they brought her out of the cabin; but she said not a word when they told her she might go and walked off in the direction of her home with a smile, half of defiance, half of satisfaction. That night the party which had gone in pursuit of Craig returned, having made a fruitless search.

Two days later, just as Sage Bar was preparing its evening meal, two men were seen riding over a swell from the northwest. Five horses were driven loosely before them. When the men got nearer the town one of them was recognized as the easterner. He was riding bare-headed, and beside him rode another, dark and swarthy, his arms bound to his sides, his horse led by Craig. All Sage Bar assembled about the party, while Craig told the story of how he had ridden away that night, had struck the trail of the horses, and following it had brought the Mexican thief to terms with a shot from his rifle, and then came back. And when he had done there were cheers for the Easterner such as the town hadn't had a chance to relieve itself of for a long while, and to his day there is not a man in Sage Bar, but

touches his slouch hat to the Easterner's wife, whom Joe Stetson declares is "the sandest little woman in the West!"—Kansas City Times.

One of those strange chances which afterward seem to have been the design of Providence, occurred years ago at Christ Church, in Gardiner, Maine. Late at night the building was struck by lightning and one point of the roof was soon in a blaze. Every one within a possible radius rushed to the rescue, but no one could scale the height, and it seemed as if the church must go.

Suddenly a young man who had been a sailor, and who bore no enviable reputation in the neighborhood, appeared on the roof. Water was raised to him by buckets by the men below, and, agile as a cat, he ran about dashing it upon the flames. He worked with a will, and at length began chopping away at the roof timbers with an axe. Thus, however, slipped from his grasp, and fell crashing into the church below.

"There goes my ax right down into Capt. Kimball's pew!" called the sailor, and he accompanied the remark with a great oath.

Bishop Burgess, who was in the crowd, he rd the words and the oath, and as soon as the fire was under control he asked the name of the young man who had saved the church. The next day the bishop went to the sailor's home, talked with him familiarly about the sin of profanity, and gave him a little prayer book.

So warm was the bishop's love of mankind that no one could listen to him without being won by his sincerity. The sailor literally experienced the spiritual process, "a change of heart." He went to sea again, but a old the temptations of his former life, he avoided all its vices.

Years afterward he was stabbed while acting as peace-maker in a street fight, and died an honest and God-fearing citizen.—Youth's Companion.

Frank Confession.

Robert Chambers, the large hearted and honest publisher, one night appeared at his club, after a short absence, and there delighted at least one member—J. C. Jefferson—by a downright frank expression of opinion. Jefferson began the conversation by asking: "What have you been doing since I saw you last?"

"I have just been spending the time in Scotland with my ain people, and for my diversion I have been reading yet again Scott's novels. I went deliberately through the whole lot o them. What do you think of a man of my years spending the greater part of the long holidays in sic a way?"

"It was in that way that I first made acquaintance with the Waverley novels," was the enthusiastic reply. "In a brooding hot summer and autumn. How you must have enjoyed yourself!"

"Weel, weel, I canna say," returned the Scottish publisher and man of letters. Then he looked warily up and down the room to make sure of not being heard by any brother Scotsman, and continued: "I canna say I enjoyed the books so much as I did in my younger time. I would not say it aloud in Adinbro, but weel you believe me when I say that weel you Walter isn't what he used to be to me? To tale you the truth," he added, lowering his voice almost to a whisper, "to tale you the truth, I found him rather prosy! Ay, but dinna be laughing, or the lads there will be asking what I said to you. It is the truth that I tale you: I most contact I found him at times a leetle prosy!"

Aroused the Hired Girl.

"Maria" said Simpkins, as he looked up at the sunlight streaming through the window, "do you suppose the hired girl has got up yet?"

Mrs. Simpkins listened for a moment, and not hearing anything breaking in the kitchen, replied "No."

"I'll call her," replied Simpkins, as he slipped out of bed and into the hallway and shouted "Hannah."

But Hannah slept on, and Simpkins, after repeated calls, prayed softly to himself and braised the skin of his hand knocking on the door. Then he came back and talked vigorously to Maria about hired girls and her's in particular.

"I'll wake her up," he finally said, gleefully, and then he got out his forty-four-caliber revolver and broke his teeth getting the bullets out of two cartridges. Then he hustled out again into the hallway and fired a salute at Hannah's door, following it by another. In an instant he heard Hannah scream from the kitchen below. She was up and had been for half an hour. Consequently she it was who let the big policeman, the baker and the milkman in at the front door, and it took Simpkins ten minutes to convince them that he had not murdered his wife. Maria, however, as soon as she was visible, straightened things out, but somehow Simpkins feels that neither the hired girl, the baker, the milkman, nor the policeman look upon him as a man of great brain power.—Philadelphia Call.

Must Have Meant Him.

"I want Kurnell Breckenridge, who libs next door ter me, put under a million dollar bonds ter keep de peace," said Sam Johnson excitedly to an Austin, Texas, Justice of the Peace.

"He has threatened your life?" asked the justice.

"He has done that berry ting. He tole me dat he was gwinter lib de next night he caught after dark in his hen house plum full of buck-shot."

"Age sticks to a man," says a contemporary. So does mudlage.

CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE.

Tale of Two Coins and a Princely Numismatic.

Joseph Hutton, in his book of gossip-titled "In Jest and Earnest," tells an interesting story of one of the strange happenings at the British Museum. A Prince who was visiting at Windsor Castle went one day to the museum, to see a famous coin, the only one of its kind known to be in existence. The keeper took him into a private room, and with much solemnity drew forth the precious relic. The Prince examined it with the liveliest interest and a suppressed excitement which indicated that he, too, was a collector of coins.

The keeper turned away for an instant, and heard something fall.

"I have dropped it!" exclaimed the Prince.

The keeper, olded him in his search, but nowhere could the coin be found. Ten, twenty, thirty minutes passed. The Prince looked at his watch.

"I am very sorry," said he, "but I have an appointment, I must go."

The keeper walked to the door, locked it, put the key in his pocket, and so d, looking the Prince straight in the eye.

"Not until you restore the coin I saw lie in your hand, you cannot leave this room until you give it back."

"What! One would think, from your manner, that—"

"Not at all," interrupted the keeper. "Come, let us find it."

The Prince bit his lip, turned pale, and resumed the search. At the end of an hour, he declared his determination to leave the place.

"If you insist," said the keeper, "it will be my painful duty to call an officer, and have you searched."

The Prince leaned against the walls, overwhelmed.

"Do you mean that?" he gasped.

"I do."

"Then we must continue the search."

Every nook and cranny was reexamined. After a while the Prince sat down, the picture of despair, when suddenly he saw the coin packed away against the skirting of the room, and lying as if placed to the wood.

"Oh! oh!" cried the keeper, "here it is!"

"Thank God!" exclaimed the Prince.

"My dear sir," said the keeper, "can you forgive me?"

"Yes, certainly," was the reply.

"I was never more frightened, I assure you. I never realized until now how circumstantial evidence might hang a man for a crime of which he might be perfectly innocent. Stand a little away from me, please, and I will show you why I was so anxious to be gone. You say that coin in your hand is the only one in existence?"

The Prince put his hand in his pocket, and drew out its fellow.

"I came into possession of this a year ago. Ever since, I have had a burning desire to see the British Museum coin. But had I been searched, what would you have thought of my explanation that there were two such coins, and that I had come to com, are mine with yours? Would you have believed me?"

"I am bound to say, sir, I should not."

"And I could not have blamed you. Yet, you see, the claim would have been perfectly true, though I had suffered the reputation of being a thief."

Alaska Salmon.

An effort is being made by a number of interested citizens of this city, says the San Francisco Chronicle, to protect the salmon industry of the Pacific Coast. There is imminent danger, it is asserted, of the extermination of the salmon unless something be done, and a bill has been sent to Congress, and a petition to both houses of that body in favor of the bill is being largely circulated.

It seems that the favorite habitat of the salmon of the Pacific Coast is the waters of Alaska, and the salmon fishing of that Territory has become one of the most important industries of the United States. In twelve years there were packed in Alaska, 156,711 cases of salmon, the total value of which at the lowest average price was \$16,627,001. There are in Alaska, between 55 degrees and 66 degrees north latitude, thirty-four canneries, which have been constructed at a cost of from \$25,000 to \$50,000 each.

The present difficulty is that although the number of canneries in Alaska has largely increased, the output from the earlier locations has actually diminished during the last three years. The reason for this decrease is that there are fewer salmon, the streams which are their favorite haunts having been fished out on the one hand, and so guarded on the other with nets, fishracks, and other appliances that the salmon cannot get up stream to their spawning grounds.

A Wheat King.

One of the wealthiest men in the Argentine Republic is Senor Jose Guazone, the "wheat king." He owns 63,000 acres of land, according to South American papers. He went to Buenos Ayres in 1875, when 20 years old, with only a few dollars in his pocket. In the following year he saved \$5,000. He invested the money in land and in 1879 his estate was valued at \$18,000. With the money which he had saved he rented more lands, sowed them in wheat and borrowed machines to reap his crops. Guazone is said to be of Hebrew origin.

DRINKING a "bumper" to the health of a friend is all right if the drinking is not repeated often enough to make the friend bump the sidewalk on his way home.