

**TOPICS OF THE TIMES.**

**A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.**

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

Of the thirteen original States New Jersey remains the most original.

CONGRESSMEN should not lose their tempers. Men in bad humor never make good laws.

The Matabeles have laid down their arms and Johnny Bull is in full possession of another adjoining farm.

It is the man with the quick-motived jaw that is forever talking about the rapid tongue of women, remarks the Martha's Vineyard Herald.

The difference between stealing and kleptomania seems to be that in the first instance the thief is in need, and the second in easy circumstances.

PRINCE COLONNA squirms at the idea of a separation trial before a French court. If he were in Italy he might hope to "squeech" unpleasant testimony.

EVEN the Japanese have a political crisis and their parliament has been prorogued. But the charming little people have no dynamite, profanity is equally unknown to them, and a crisis is as aesthetic as a peach-blow vase.

PARISIAN editors will learn with horror that Wright Mimm of Evergreen, Ala. has been sentenced to two years in the State Penitentiary for challenging Sam Coker to fight a duel. The statute covering the case is an old one, but only one other conviction under it has ever been recorded up to date.

It is well known that, in freezing, water congeals in a crystalline form, and its volume is thereby increased by about one-eleventh. This expansion of its bulk is effected with such overwhelming force that even rocks are split in the process, and all bodies containing water which freezes must perforate, for good or for evil, be swelled out to the same degree as the water swells in freezing.

JOHN PALMER, the inventor of the railroad check system, died a few days ago in a little town in Michigan. He was a fiddler years ago, and took charge of the hats and wraps of those who came to dancing parties. He gave numbered checks for them, and some railroad men who attended one of his dances appropriated the idea, and in a little while the system was adopted all over the country.

An English schoolmaster once said to his boys that he would give a crown to any one of them who would propound a riddle he could not answer. "Well," said one of them, "Why am I like the Prince of Wales?" The master puzzled his brains for an answer, but could not guess the correct one. At last he exclaimed, "I am sure I don't know." "Why," replied the boy, "because I'm waiting for the crown."

In Southern Europe the peasants always can fruit in its natural shape and never think of treating it to sugar, salt, or other seasoning. Around Naples and in Malaga the people bite a hole in the orange, suck out the juice and then throw the orange away. Small American people often do the same, but the American must try his hand at improving nature, so he puts a lump of sugar in it. An orange planter thinks such a thing disgraceful.

To be photographed while you doze in a corner of your pew at church is one of the latest terrors. The kodak has made its way into the pulpit. An Irish clergyman, the other Sunday, during the service, took a snap shot at his congregation. To thus steal a march upon sleeping members may be keenly resented by drowsy worshippers. Many persons regularly in the habit of sleeping during sermons stoutly deny the charge. In these disputed cases appeal may be made to the minister's handful of negatives.

Here is a good story. It sounds new, but if it isn't, well, it was once. A play was produced out of town that was a dismal failure. So bad was it that the audience actually hissed. There was an actor in the audience who kept rigidly quiet. The man next to him, who was making a great deal of disturbance, asked him why he didn't hiss. "I feel delicate about it," replied the actor, "because I came in on a pass, but if it gets much worse, I'm hanged if I don't go out and pay for a seat."

Europe is pessimistic as the seeming approach of war. Great and small powers appear persuaded that 1894 is to be "the terrible year." If we may believe those enthusiastic gentlemen who regulate the fate of

nations in their cable dispatches, England anticipates a lightning stroke out of the blue almost immediately. Russia is about to establish a naval post in the Mediterranean. Italy is to see revolution in a dozen places at once in a few days. The political ground rocks with the throes of the hidden volcanoes.

A NOVEL system of fire alarm signals by rocket bombs has been established in the suburban districts of San Francisco, to enable the remote engine houses, quickly to summon assistance from the city forces in case of great emergency. A bomb, some thing like a rocket, is thrown three hundred feet straight upward from a mortar, where it bursts, making a brilliant white light and a very loud explosion. At the trials of the system, recently, all San Francisco was excited and alarmed, fearing dynamiters were at work. The system is arranged so that the precise locality where aid is needed is made known.

The little band of college men who are working to bring about needed reform in college football have been accused of deliberation by a few thoughtless individuals. The reformers are working slowly but surely, and when they are ready to issue their report somebody will be surprised. Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and the University of Pennsylvania are now considering the proposed reform. Their decision will be final as well as satisfactory, and all the minor schools and colleges will follow in their wake. The idea is to make skill take the place of brute momentum. It is a good idea, and if it is carried out, the rough features which have characterized football during the last few years will be eliminated.

THE ever-ready and ever-busy Kearsarge, which was hurried of some time ago to San Domingo, has already investigated the Azua affair, which seems to have resulted from a coincidence of mishaps and mistakes. An American trading schooner, the Henry Crosby, when near the port of Azua, mistook the locality, and, not finding any customs officer coming out to board her, sent a boat toward the shore to make inquiries of a group of men observed there. It happened that at this very port Gen. Campos, the Governor of the Province, had shortly before been assassinated, and that an insurrection had broken out. The boat hailed the group, which proved to be one of armed men, perhaps a patrol, and got a reply, but on turning about was fired at, and two of its three were wounded. It can only be surmised that the boat was suspected of aiming to aid the fugitive assassin or the revolution, and that its turning about was viewed as an attempt to escape. Commander Heyerman of the Kearsarge has sent the particulars by mail, and meanwhile telegraphs that the firing was "a mistake." No doubt President Heurieux will make the proper amends. As for the insurrection, it is already over and all is quiet.

An English newspaper says that a good example of American conceit is shown by the affectation of some newspapers in calling their mother tongue "the American language." Why not? Our language to-day differs nearly as much from the English at the time of the early colonial settlements as it differs from Greek or Choctaw. Even now there is a wide difference in the orthography, orthoepy, and, to some extent, meaning of words. For instance, such words as labor the English write with an inserted "u." They put two "g's" in wagon and four syllables in jewelry, writing the latter jewelry. In pronunciation, and more particularly accent, there is wide differences even among well-educated people. Languages undergo constant change. The average reader would fail to understand Shakespeare as it was originally printed, and the English of Chaucer's time is a sealed book now. New words are constantly being coined to meet emergent need, and old words are dropping out as obsolete. Several thousand words have been added to our language within the last few years solely to meet the requirements of electric science. Yes, we surely have an American language, and a vigorous, robust and promising language it is.

**Advantage in Being Redheaded.**  
Nobody ever heard of a redheaded man being sunstruck. Why a red head should afford any protection from the rays of the sun or give its owner immunity from one of the most singular affections that humanity is heir to is one of those mysteries that even the doctors cannot fathom, but the fact remains that men with red hair can stand almost any amount of exertion in or out of doors during the hottest weather and never feel any serious results from it.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

More men know more about women than women know about themselves.

**HIS PROPER ATTITUDE.**

"You know I love you," he observed. His words were curt, his tone incisive; a saucy smile her red lips curved.

"But me no silly romance rules. And if you think to find me pleading, Down on my knees, like other fools, You'll find your hopes are quite misleading."

Said she: "Although you are so rude, I can't help wishing that I knew, sir, Whether your stern resolve precede Your kneeling down to tie my shoe, sir."

He knelt to knot the loosened bow: "And are you sure you love me dearly?" She gently breathed, still bending low: "With all my heart," he answered clearly:

"And wish you to become my wife?" Her laugh rang out: "Yes, if you please, sir," she said: "I'll gladly share your life, Now that you've asked me on your knees, sir."—New York Mercury.

**POOR SANDY!**

How cheerless was the night out on the desolate marsh, whose inky pools had a scum of glistening ice upon them! Not a sound of beast or bird broke the monotony of the whistling blast. A treacherous surface-hardening of the spongy ground had come with the frosty night, but woe to the wayfarer who trusted it. Yet, in the half-glimmer of the cloud-darkened moon, a figure could be seen staggering slowly along, breaking through the thin crust of ice, sinking knee deep in the slime, then drawing himself slowly out and struggling on, with the persistency of a drunken man, to make for the lights of the town.

The man had been drunk to begin with, but the many immersions in ice-cold water and the struggle through the marsh sobered him. Now he was thinking of what had gone before. His child was dead—little Robbie—and he had shown his grief by getting drunk. He had loved the little fellow; the baby had loved him, too, miserable drunken wretch though he was. Its heavenly blue eyes had lit up when he rested upon him and the pretty rose-bud mouth had learned to form the word "papa," as fondly as if he had sheltered the little treasure as other fathers were wont to do.

Thus thinking, he stumbled blindly forward, until at last, covered with slime, which dripped from his ragged



BESIDE THE FIRE SAT A WOMAN.

clothes, he stood before the last wretched house of the town. After hesitating a moment, he gathered himself together and then climbed the rickety staircase to the little room which he and Polly called their home. He opened the door timidly and stole in like a frightened school-boy. He tried to form some word, but his lips were dry. He glanced at the bed. It was covered with a decent white sheet, beneath which lay the dead baby form, covered from sight. Beside the fire on the hearth sat a woman. She was wretchedly clad, but her dress was clean and neat. Her dark, handsome face was turned to the fire, you could see that her eyes were fine, that her hair was silken and black. She never looked up nor spoke when the door opened and shut. She felt who had come in. And what an object he was for that room, poor as it was! It had been made as clean as its wretchedness would allow—it for the presence of the angel of death. Sandy, looking around helplessly, saw this and how the muddy water from his clothes was running down and making dirty puddles on the floor. But he had no other clothes to put on, so he crept nearer the fire, humbly, too, like one who had no right. For a few minutes the silence continued. Then he could bear it no longer.

"Are you hard on me, Polly, for going off?" he asked. "I'm a wretched fellow, weak, weak as water. I couldn't stand it. I couldn't stand it. I loved the little fellow, Polly."

"Yet you murdered him." She turned her flaming eyes upon her husband. "It's too late now to talk, or cry maudlin tears over him. The child is dead—dead of want, of cold, of hunger, while you have to turn away your time with boon companions and we have starved on the pittance I have earned."

"Not—not starved, Polly," muttered Sandy, his lips quivering. "Don't say starved. You were not without bread."

"I read!" he child needed other things—ellies, beef tea, chicken, all those delicacies which other fathers would give to give. They would have raised him up. I told you weeks ago."

Sandy groaned: "O you did, Polly, so you did; oh, what a miserable wretch I am! But, Polly, I'll turn over a new leaf now. I will, so help me God. I'll kneel down by my darling's bed and take an oath that never—never—"

"No, you need not. It makes no difference to me. I shall not be here to see the reformation. If you stand or fall, it is to yourself now."

"Why—what—what do you mean, Polly?" Sandy faltered.

"I mean that when my darling is laid in the ground, I am going away. I mean that I never wish to see your face again. You have killed my love and now you have killed my child."

"Don't say such cruel words, Polly," pleaded the man. "I've been weak and unlucky, but cruel, never. I never lifted a hand against you. If you'll only forgive me this once—"

"I'll never forgive you," was her passionate reply. "If you lay dying before me, if it were your last prayer, I would not forgive you."

Sandy then sank into silence, but the words of his wife burned in his heart. He saw that no pleading could avail, he realized that, henceforth, no friendly hand would be stretched out to keep him from going to the dogs. With these thoughts, he fell into a half-doze.

And the woman! Throughout the long night as she kept her weary vigil by the side of the dead child, she thought of the past, of the time when she had invested the wretch before her with ideal charms. His handsome, blonde, innocent face, his



AT LAST A MAN CAUGHT THE REINS.

kindly blue eyes had won her, in spite of the rumors of his habits. She had scorned all warnings and had reaped a harvest of wretchedness ever since. But the end had come. Her heart was dead, and now her thoughts wandered into the future. She knew that she possessed a voice of purest tone and quality. She would go on the stage; she could make a living that way, once free from the horrible clog that had dragged her down. She would rise. Socially and by education she was far above him. People had wondered at her choice. She wondered at it now.

The morrow came and with it the child was laid away for its last slumber in the bed of mother earth. It was the tie that had bound Polly and Sandy and with it removed, they separated.

Three years passed and the same season came again. Through the streets of the city sleighs flew like birds and their bells rang a ceaseless chime. In one of the handsomely furnished parlors of the principal hotel sat Madam Pauline Montmorency, whom the bills announced as the great cantatrice, who was to sing this night at the concert room. Three years ago she had left this town on foot. No one knew her then, but now she was famous. Then she was Polly, the drunkard's wife, without a friend in M—; now all delighted to do her honor. She had accepted the invitation to M—, with some hesitation. It stirred up the ghosts of the past unpleasantly. Not that she ever forgot. Oh, no! In her greatest triumphs she had never been able to forget, for often in the glow of the lights, with music and laughter about her, all had floated away, as at a wizard's touch, and instead rose a vision of that bare and wretched room, with Sandy's weak, handsome face, and her dead boy. Poor Sandy! He had no doubt drunk himself to death ere now, she thought. And never a regret entered her heart with the thought of the miserable fellow.

Her reverie was suddenly disturbed by a rapping at the door and a servant girl announced a visitor. He was shown in. She gave a start, for it was a visitor who seemed to her like one from the realms of death. It was Sandy. The reception which she gave him was cool.

"What brought you here?" she demanded.

"I read of you in the papers," he replied, "and when I learned that you were coming here, I made up my mind to see you again—just to see you again."

Polly's reply was cold and cruel and it put a weight on Sandy's heart. He was not the sandy of old. His clothes were not ragged; instead, he was neat and clean. Not since the day that Robbie died had he touched a drop of liquor. It had been a hard struggle for sickness had come to him, too, and altogether his lot had been most unhappy. Yet one ray of hope had helped him to win. He had lived through the three long years with the fond belief that his victory would be rewarded. He had said to himself that if ever he found Polly, he could win her back and together they would live in a little cottage, where roses grew in the summer, and their joys should be as sweet as the scent of the roses. All this he told her, and then what?

"If you offered me a palace instead of the white cottage," she answered, looking calmly at him, "it would be all the same. You can never be anything to me again. I told you that dreadful night that you had killed my love. There is no resurrection for a dead love, do you know that?"

"I—I think I understand you, Polly," answered the poor fellow. "You were always cleverer than me, and grander in your language; but I gather your meaning, although there is such a buzzing in my head. Don't be afraid. I'll go away quietly, now I've got my answer. No one knows that you're my wife, and I'll not make them any wiser. Good-by."

"I'm glad you take so rational a view of things," Pauline answered. "Good-by."

And the slow, heavy step echoed along the hall, showing in its very sound a heavy heart. And Polly turned back to the pretty white dress, with its vaporous folds, with a shiver, as if her coldness had made the very air chilly. The dress looked like a shroud. But that night, in the lighted hall, the glow had come back again. Her cheeks and lips were like her coral ornaments. Her voice soared up clear and sweet as a bird's; flowers fell around her, cheers rang about her, and the triumph

seemed to sweep away every vestige of the dull pain which had been gnawing at her heart. To go back to that poor, dull life, it would have been madness. To put aside the full, sparkling draught of flattery, which had become the wine of life to her, for the common drink of water. No; even if Sandy did all he promised, she could not be content. And then he was so weak—who knew that he would not fall again?

Yet, somehow, when the songs were over, and the surging crowd had poured out into the street, and she was wrapping the furs about her in her sleigh, the plaintive voice and simple words echoed on in her brain, instead of the cheers of the crowd. She had just seated herself, and the driver was helping to tuck in the warm robes, when some street boys, who had waited to see the last of the songstress, set up some unearthly yells, meant for cheers. The horses did not so understand them, but started at once, frantically, and dashed off with Pauline alone.

For a moment she did not comprehend, and then she saw the danger. The reins were dragging on the ground; she could not reach them. Madly they flew by the houses, over the white, shining streets, on, on, while Pauline, with white lips, murmured a prayer. She did not dare to jump. She sat still, trembling convulsively, for she felt that she was dashing straight on to her death. The frightened horses were making straight for an embankment now, and one plunge there would be fatal. Pauline did not know how near death was to her, but her frantic shrieks were heard many out, who tried to stop the horses in vain. At last, almost on the dizzy verge of the embankment, one man, plunging through the snow, caught the reins and hung on them. He was dragged a few paces. He fell on his knees, but still he held on. The sleigh was stopped. Kind-hearted ones pressed around. Pauline stepped out, dizzy and faint.

"Where is he?" she asked—"the man who saved me?"

Some inquiry was made in the crowd. Yes, the man had been hurt



POOLY SHRIEKED AND RAN FORWARD.

a bit. Tim Sanders had helped him into the store yard. So Pauline made her way into the "store yard."

"He's in a room within," said the proprietor. "I've had him made comfortable, and sent for the doctor, but I fear he's mortal bad hurt."

Pauline went through the open door, feeling sick and faint. The room was neat and comfortable. A white bed stood in the corner, and on a table near, a light threw a ray upon that bed and its occupant. A woman stood near, bending over. She looked up, as Pauline entered, with a surprised air.

"I am the lady whose life he saved," she said, simply.

Then, with a glance at the injured man's ghastly face, with the pain convulsing it, she shrieked, ran forward, and knelt beside the bed.

"Oh, Sandy!" she cried. "Did you do it for me? Oh, I have not deserved it—I have not deserved it!"

"Polly, I am glad," he said, a smile chasing away the pain in his face, and a look of content shining in his childish blue eyes. "I am glad God let me do some good thing before I died—glad that He let me do it for you. You'll forgive me now, Polly, all the evil things I ever did before—won't you, Polly?"

"Oh, Sandy! forgive me: I am the one who needs it. I have been so cold and hard."

"You know you said, Polly,"—he spoke slowly and with effort—"you said that night, 'I'll never forgive you—if it was your last prayer, if you lay dying before me, I would not do it.'" These words have haunted me, Polly; and now—"

"Impious wretch that I was to speak them!" Pauline cried, seizing the hand of Sandy, and covering it with kisses and tears. "Only get well, dear, and we will have that white cottage and the roses, and forget all the bitterness of the past!"

"Ah!"—what a look of sick longing came over the still handsome face!—it can't be. Maybe it would not last if it could come. You know me of old, Polly; you could never trust me. God is doing the best for us both to take me away now, before I have broken my vow, and fallen away from his grace."

"And the hurt, Sandy? Oh, why don't the doctor come?"

"Ah!"—in pain: the words came slowly—"the horse kicked me in the breast. I can scarcely breathe now. Do not weary for the doctor. He can do no good."

Pauline sat there a moment, thinking of the man's true heart and constant love. How coldly, a few hours ago, had she cast them away, trampling on her vows before God and man at the same time! She had cast him away, and he had lain down his life for her.

"Sandy," she whispered, for his eyes were closed, "it has all been wrong. I should have stood with you, and tried to help you to do right. I hope God will forgive me. I think I can never forgive myself."

"Never mind, Polly," murmured the dying man. "He has made it all right now. I was a miserable

wretch. I am glad He gave me grace to do better, and He did not let me fail. What is that Robbie? Why, he's dressed in white, Polly, as you were to-night—all in white."

And with this vision of beauty, poor Sandy's eyes closed on every earthly sight forever.

**Strange Story About a Toy.**

Students have often wondered how little, trifling matters—a game, a toy, a song, or a legend—have come to be scattered widely among the most remote people. Thus the same designs have been found on pottery unearthed in Mexico and from the site of ancient Troy, while patterns of decorative work found in ruined palaces of Egypt have also been dug up in Ireland, Norway, and New Zealand.

In a museum at Oxford, England, there is an Egyptian toy, which was found in the cemetery of Hawaia, a city of middle Egypt. The cemetery is only about as old as the Christian era. The toy, which is of wood, represents a bird on wheels. There is a hole in the neck, through which a string was tied, and some child of Hawaia doubtless drew his toy about by the string. In toy shops to-day we often find animals set on wheeled boards, but in this Egyptian toy there is no board, the wheels being under the wings and level with the body.

The Kooril Islands, in the North Pacific, which extend from Kamshatka to Japan, are partly inhabited by the Ainoo, an inoffensive race of people but little elevated above the savage state. They have very heavy beards, and believe that they are descended from bears, which they worship. A toy, almost precisely similar to that found at Hawaia, was recently discovered on one of these islands. It is believed to be about 200 years old.

The strange things that the Ainoo have never known anything of wheels, and never used them. The wheels in this toy are irregularly formed, and this makes the bird hop when it is dragged. The hole for the string is in the tail. Here, then, we have an Egyptian toy nearly 1,900 years old; and away almost at the ends of the earth a similar toy in use by savages, scarcely 200 years ago.

In the World's Fair, at Chicago, there was a collection of articles which were found in the graves of the ancient people of Peru. In one grave was found a spinning-wheel, almost identical in shape with one which was brought from China and is believed to be 2,800 years old. In what unknown way did those patterns reach two continents?

**Saving Their Young.**

While Mr. E. W. Nelson was making his natural history collections in Alaska, he came suddenly upon a female widgeon with a brood of ten or a dozen little ducklings in a small pond. As he approached, the mother bird uttered some low guttural notes, addressed to the young ones we may suppose—and then suddenly fluttered across the water and fell heavily at Mr. Nelson's feet. At the same moment the ducklings swam to the farther side of the pond and began scrambling out into the grass.

For the sake of observing the old bird's tactics, Mr. Nelson continued to "poke at her" with his gun as she fluttered about his feet. She managed to elude the blows, and then, just as the last of her brood left the water, she edged shyly away, and all at once took wing and flew off to another pond.

Mr. Nelson now ran as quickly as possible to the point where the young had left the water, but though only a few moments had elapsed, and the sparse grass was only three or four inches high, they had hidden themselves so successfully that he failed to find one of them in half an hour's search.

At another time he visited an island on which he found some Aleutian terns, old and young, of which he desired specimens for the National Museum. He secured several, but one young one he was not sorry to see get away.

He fired at and missed it, and it flew wildly out to sea. There it was joined by an old bird, presumably its parent. Soon it grew tired, and turned toward the shore, whereupon the old bird met it and forced it to turn back. Again and again—more than a dozen times—this man over was repeated, till the young bird was literally forced off to sea out of sight.

"A striking instance of bird sagacity," Mr. Nelson calls it.—Youth's Companion.

**Saws.**

Steel plates for saws are prepared from ingots carefully made to secure uniform quality, and, after being rolled, they are slit into shapes designed for the different kinds of saws. Hand saws in England and America have the teeth pointed from the handle, while in Asiatic countries and in Greece they are made with the teeth pointed the other way. The latter must be operated by pulling them; the former by pushing. For delicate work and where very fine small saws are used, the Eastern saw is the best. The space between the teeth of circular saws if hollowed out and resembles very much the bend of a fish-hook. This precaution prevents them from clogging. The Orientals also differ from us in setting the teeth of the saw. They turn a group of a dozen or so one way, and the next group the other, while we alternate one on one side, the next on the other. There are saws made so small and minute as not to exceed one-fiftieth of an inch in width, and less than that in thickness.

ALWAYS think what you are saying, but do not always say what you think.