

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

OUR national cemeteries, eighty-three in number, contain 350,700 honored dead. Every individual grave is marked by a stone tablet of granite or marble.

SOLOMON'S temple was 107 feet long, 36 feet broad, and 54 feet high. Though deemed a wonder of the world it was not larger than many private houses of the present time.

WHILE a student at Cambridge, University, Coleridge, the poet, affected a peculiar style of conversation. At the dinners in the hall where the students dined, the veal served up was large and coarse. Speaking of it, Coleridge said, "We have veal sir, tottering on the edge of beef."

INCREASE MATHER, once the President of Harvard College, believed firmly in the influence of comets upon human destiny. It is hard to believe that such superstitions survive. Yet an English exchange says: "The rector of Harthill, in his parish magazine, informs parents that the conjunction of certain malign planets makes it more unlucky to have children's parties on a Thursday for years to come."

NO MAN ever succeeded in life who did not put his conscience into his work, whatever it was. If you agree to perform certain labor in return for certain wages, however small, you have sold your time and ability. Do that work the best it can be done. Form the habit of putting the best of yourself into all you do. Work with enthusiasm over the small tasks that are your lot at present, always in hope that greater ones will come to you by and by. They will be sure to come.

It has been supposed that the waters of the Dead Sea are absolutely destitute of any living vegetable or animal organism. A French investigator, M. Lortet, has found that this is wrong. He finds innumerable numbers of species of micro-organisms, and they are of a very malevolent character. Animals inoculated die in a few days from the blood poisoning brought on through the agency of these minute bodies. The River Jordan, which is so popular with pilgrims for bathing, is said to be full of these micro-organisms.

THERE has been considerable interest aroused throughout the world on account of Bismarck's visit to Emperor William, showing that "all has been forgiven." The London Times has found the explanation: "So far as it is political at all it is intended to disarm Bismarck's hostility during an important national crisis, for as such the Russian treaty is recognized. Nobody knows better than the Kaiser and Capri that the coming year is likely to be one of uncommon difficulty, and Germany's position will be an uncomfortable one. The first thing, then, is to close the ranks and, as far as possible, conciliate the sleepless critic of the last four years. As Bismarck, with all his faults, is above all things a patriot, this will not be difficult."

WHILE the farmer has suffered during the past year, he has suffered less than any other class of men in the community, and should therefore take a rosate and hopeful view of the situation. It would not surprise us in the least to see next year one of the most prosperous years that the farmer has ever enjoyed. There is likely to be no glut from old stores, unless it be perhaps in wool, of any product of his farm. Heavy exports and heavy feeding together with the short crop are fast cleaning up his granaries and there is likely to be no surplus of wheat, corn, or oats, and with a short supply of hogs and a decreasing supply of cattle, the outlook, except for the lack of confidence, which is fast being restored, really seems better than it has for a number of years past.

The Hawaiian language is composed mainly of vowels, and a few consonants put in to vary the monotony. And the beauty of the system is that there is no waste. Every vowel is pronounced. For instance, when the American eye winks at the appearance of the simple word "nanao," the glib native rolls out the five syllables with neatness and despatch. This means "enlighten." Double vowels are very frequent, but never a diphthong. Three vowels are not uncommon, and, as above, four and sometimes more are found unseparated by consonants. In the mouth of the uneducated native, the language is apt to be explosive, but the higher classes speak it with a silent grace that surpasses the French or Italian. In sound it somewhat

resembles the general flow of the continental European languages, for the vowels all have the French quality, and the accents are not dissimilar.

The excessive sowing of wheat on large tracts with small yields has, the American Farmer thinks, run its natural course. The wheat sower in the future must sow fewer acres and get large enough yield to give him some profit, however low the price. But when this time comes the price of wheat must advance to a point where it will pay to increase the permanent fertility of the soil. It will be slow work to retrace the steps by which much of our cultivated land has been depleted of its fertility. But with the use of clover and the combination of wheat growing with other crops, and the keeping of a greater amount of stock this change can be made. But it can only be by an improvement in the character of stock so that its keeping will be more than paid for, leaving the manure pile as the profit. The improvement of the character of farm stock meets us as the first necessity in any discussion of the means to secure better farming.

Why do merchants encourage the credit system? You answer that you do not. Yes, but you do. If the system were not encouraged by merchants it would not be in existence to-day. Did you ever stop to think that the mercantile community of the country is the only body of men who tolerate the credit system? Let's see you buy postage stamps, postal notes, money orders, etc., on credit. Go to the theater, and you pay cash. Express companies demand cash, and railroad tickets are cash on delivery to the purchaser. Why should not the merchant demand and receive cash? Simply because he encourages the credit system. It may be an impossibility to completely eradicate the credit system, but a strict limitation upon credits is a step on the right road, and its evolution will be practically a cash basis system, of doing business. It is worthy of a trial, and should begin among the jobbers. It will quickly spread among the retailers, like measles in a country school, and when it does it has solved the dead-beat problem for all time. When sifted down, it will be found that the credit system is the progenitor of and responsible for more evils that affect the financial and business world than all other agencies combined.

SAYS Trade: If the hard times will prove a restraint to the excessive immigration of laboring people and mechanics into this country, it will have proved itself an evil with mitigating circumstances. Why we should present inducements to foreigners to come here and compete with our own people in their own fields of labor is hard to understand. Our laws not only encourage the immigration of cheap labor, but of paupers as well; the restrictions upon the latter have not proved efficacious in keeping them away. It is just as senseless to ask these people to come here, offering them work to do, as it would be for a merchant to ask another to start an opposition store across the street. And yet the American people have been doing this for a century, and we are now reaping the reward of their senseless generosity. The law of supply and demand regulates the price of labor, as well as of material. If there has been an excess of laborer the cost of labor is reduced, until some of these are pauperized and become a burden upon the State and their fellow men. This country cannot afford to support half a million competitors to its workingmen annually without bringing suffering among its own people as well as those who come. It may be said that we cannot forbid the landing upon our shores of honest and industrious men. No, nor would we; but these do not compose by any means the bulk of this immigration. The paupers of the old world, the socialists, the anarchist and the criminal seek here a larger and wider field for their peculiar operations. Already this country has had a foretaste in the crimes of anarchists and the threats of socialists. To these freedom and lawlessness are synonymous. They must be taught differently, and taught by penalties that will cause them to believe that this is a land of freedom to the law-abiding man, but an inferno to the criminal. The poor we may take care of, if deserving; the criminal we must exterminate.

Weak Productions.
The term "namby pamby," which has come to be applied to a person of vacillating character as well as to weak literary productions, was originated by the poet Pope. He applied it to some puerile verses that had been written by an obscure poet—one Ambrose Phillips—addressed to the children of a peer. The first half of the term is meant as a baby way of pronouncing Amby, a pet nickname for Ambrose, and the second half is simply a jingling word to fit it.

DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

TOPICS OF INTEREST TO FARMER AND HOUSEWIFE.

Farming is a Science that Requires a Lifetime of Study—Profits in Home Markets—Making Use of Straw—General Farm Notes.

The Profession of Farming.

Not many years have transpired since it was believed that "anybody could farm it well enough." The farm became the "catch all" for persons who failed to make a living at any other or all other business. The bright young men of the farm were sent to learn professions, but the mediocre and the numbskulls were kept at home to till the soil. How poorly they have done is proved by the fact that, as a rule, with exceedingly rare exceptions, farming up to date in this country has only been a system of exhausting the soil of its plant food, as witness the abandoned farms of New England, where tilling the soil first commenced. As this territory filled up farmers pushed on to New York State, where the same system of soil exhaustion was pursued, and where now abandoned farms are numerous. The farmer leaves a trail of impoverished soil behind him as surely as a snake leaves his trail in the sand. Most of this comes of the best talent seeking other channels of business, leaving the poorest to till the soil. It would be better for the country were there an equitable division of talent among the various kinds of employment. In two years' time a young man can become a full-fledged lawyer or doctor; but farming is so much more intricate that a lifetime is scarcely sufficient to comprehend it fully. Sir J. B. Lawes has devoted over half a century to its study, and now laments that he knows so little compared with what there is to know. There is no business or profession that requires so bright an intellect and so deep study fully to comprehend as that of agriculture, and this fact is just beginning to be realized. To be a successful farmer at the present day requires constant reading and experiment. Such a one must be a studious, reflecting man. So many conditions and circumstances confront him from day to day, that often hundreds of points should be considered before a wise step can be taken.

These prefatory remarks were induced by reading an article in a late English paper in relation to lean pigs and bacon pork. Millions and millions of hogs are grown in the West, and much of the pork in the form of bacon and otherwise finds a market in Great Britain; yet how few pork producers know just what quality of meat that market demands, and if this quality is not furnished, of course, the grower must be content with an inferior price. A combination of English dealers issued a circular which embraces the following statement: "In consequence of so many feeders continuing to make their pigs too fat, and the great difficulty we find in disposing of over-fat bacon, we are obliged to take some very definite steps to obtain leaner pigs." Then the circular proceeds to state a scale of prices which has been adopted, and which is dependent on the leanness of the pig as well as on the weight, the leanest (but plump) commanding the highest price. The circular then continues: "We would impress on feeders the desirability of breeding only such swine as are of good frame and growth and refusing to feed for bacon purpose all short, thick pigs which must prove unsatisfactory to them as to us. They will undoubtedly best serve their interests by studying the public taste, thus creating an increased demand and a higher standard of prices for their pigs." I commend these remarks to the consideration of the pork growers of the West, adding that the best pigs as herein described bring in England about two cents a pound more than the short fat pigs, and, of course, this ratio should prevail here. There might not be any difference in price in a small quantity, but in car load and larger lots any large slaughterers would pay more.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Choice of Soils.
In selecting farms and gardens in new places, purchasers often make the mistake of giving preference to light, sandy soils, which can be worked with less labor than clay, and never become muddy. But such light soils, although good for some special crops, possess much less strength than others, and are enriched at more expense, and while a clay soil will retain for years the manure that is washed into it, a sandy soil can never be permanently enriched.

Some years ago a gentleman called on the late Mr. Barr, for advice, whose extensive nurseries had given him an excellent opportunity for testing the value of his previous wide knowledge on the subject. Mr. Barr, in order to convey his estimate of the value of each, said: "If you can give \$100 an acre for the sandy ground, you can afford to pay \$200 an acre for the clayey loam. Underdrain it and manure it, and your improvement is permanent; but the fertility is soon worked out of the sand." These views have been strongly confirmed to us by our cultivation of both kinds of soil.

This subject was thoroughly discussed some time ago at a meeting of the Fruitgrowers' Association of Ontario, when Mr. Race said that on visiting the exhibitions of the finest fruit, he found the best were grown on a clay loam that had been underdrained; and in many cases where samples were found that came in competition with the best, they were

found to be grown on underdrained clay.

Mr. Patterson said on clay the fertility is not easily exhausted, and can be kept up with a moderate supply of manure, while on sand it is fed, fed, fed all the time. A great many orchards do not bear upon sand; this is nothing less than soil exhaustion. The clay will retain all the fertility you can supply it with. He said that grapes, pears, plums, apples, quinces, and red and black currents can be grown profitably on clay or loam, which, of course, must be well underdrained if needed.—Country Gentleman.

Good Roads Without Stones.

The advantage of properly built and well maintained dirt roads seems to have been largely overlooked in the movement for the improvement of our country roads, and it has been said, with some reason, that the movement in favor of good roads has been hampered to some extent by a somewhat too enthusiastic advocacy of broken stone roads, either macadam or telford. The cost of such stone roads is also very prohibitive of their adoption in many parts of the country where, perhaps, improved roads are urgently needed.

Comparatively little is said about dirt roads in the discussion on improved construction. Both surface drainage and sub-drainage are essential in obtaining a durable road, and intelligent maintenance is another essential, which latter is rather difficult to insure.

The mere dumping of piles of earth in wet spots or low places is not maintenance, but is a waste of energy due to carelessness or misdirected zeal. With a good dirt road once completed, it would probably be found economical and advantageous to intrust its maintenance to a few skilled and intelligent men paid for their services, instead of leaving the maintenance to the spasmodic attention of the farmers and their hired men.—Colman's Rural World.

Sandwiches for the Children.

Until a mother has tried it she will not know what an essential edible on the children's luncheon table are sandwiches. A plate piled up with these appetizing dainties will fade before a group of hungry children like snow before the sun. It is also an excellent way to disguise unattractive cold meat that would be refused by the youngsters if offered in its normal state. Two or three kinds of meat, the accumulation from several meals, can be utilized in this way more palatably. Remove all fat, coarse and gristly pieces, add a bit of tongue or ham, if possible, to flavor, or chopped parsley if the children like it, and after seasoning with salt only, spread between pieces of home-made bread, brown or white, or both. The success of sandwiches, to children as well as to elders, is in their making. Thick pieces of alum-risen bread choke little throats as quickly as big Jam, raisin, stoned and split, date and fig sandwiches are all acceptable to small fry, and are wholesome sweets; maple sugar is considered an especially delicious filling by them, and even plain granulated sugar has done duty, by way of variety, with great success.—Pittsburgh Chronicle-Telegraph.

Making Use of Straw.

It is a great waste to use straw only for bedding, as is done by many grain-growing farmers. With a little ground grain mixed with cut straw stock may be kept as well as on hay, and much more cheaply. Even without cutting the straws a good deal will be eaten as a change of food. The chaff of wheat and oats is especially valuable. It has more nutriment according to its weight than has ordinary straw, and it will be picked out if animals have a chance at it. The refuse will be what grows near the butt, and this can be used for bedding after the stock has rejected it.

Farm Notes.

If your cattle drink from a brook, follow it up some day to see if there are any dead cats or dogs in it.

The farmer that does not care to take the pains to learn his business should not grumble if his neighbor profits by what he loses.

A good plan with the teams is to let them run out on good pastures two or three hours every time that the farm work will permit.

One way of getting clear of diseases is by not growing the same crop on the same soil for a few years. This is one advantage of crop rotation.

The great trouble a few men know how to manage flocks; they seem to think that sheep like shrubs, grow without care or cultivation—and they will, and be about as valuable.

One inexcusable source of disease comes from scattering food on filthy runways. When food is scattered on bare ground it should first be swept clean. An occasional application of fine lime or clean sand will always be in order.

The stimulative feeding of bees early in the spring, with a view to producing many swarms, is successfully practiced by many breeders. The honey thus used contains much pollen, and is therefore a great stimulant to brood raising.

Much research and investigation warrant the assertion that man is not the only animal subject to dreams. Horses neigh and rear upon their hind feet while asleep; dogs bark and growl, and in many other ways exhibit all their characteristic passions.

We Have All Observed It.

"One of the most singular things in life," said a philosopher, "is the ease with which many men settle great financial questions when they find it so difficult to settle the grocery bill."

CAMELS FOR FARM WORK.

How He Is Used at the Plough, Where Horses are Practically Unknown.

Col. Dodge in his Riders of Many Lands has pointed out the curious fact, not generally understood, that the horse is a comparatively recent factor in Egyptian labor or transportation. He was unknown on the banks of the Nile until the coming of the Shepherd Kings about 1,700 years before the Christian era, and no representation of the war steed, or of the horse in any capacity, is to be found in the more ancient mountains in the land of the Pharaohs.

Even to this day the camel is a much more familiar object on the plains and in the cities of Egypt, both for riding and as a beast of burden; and he is not infrequently seen dragging the plow, sometimes hitched to an ox, sometimes hitched to an ass, now and then hitched to a man servant, but generally hitched to one of his own species. He is in every capacity in which he is found invariably more useful than ornamental, and he is never available. Whatever he does is done in an ungainly and ill-tempered manner. His driver does not find him a tractable object before the plow, and how uncomfortable he is under the saddle nearly every living American witnessed for himself last year in the street called Cairo as it was exhibited at the World's Fair.

It is all very well for travelers to talk of the docility and of the sagacity of the camel on his native sands; to say that he is to the Arabs what the reed deer is to the Esquimaux and the Laplanders—the principal source of their happiness. No doubt he does furnish them with food, with raiment, with fuel, with tents, with domestic utensils; unquestionably he does transport them from place to place, carry their merchandise, plow their lands; he certainly does enable them to make war upon their neighbors, and assist them in defending their wives and their children and their household gods.

But he is anything but docile, even if he is sagacious; and the unsuspecting American traveler, whose coat has been eaten off his back, and whose flesh narrowly escaped being consumed, by the principal source of happiness of one particular Arab in the streets of Luxor last winter, is inclined to believe that the docility of the camel is greatly exaggerated, and that his sagacity is somewhat misapprehended.—Harper's Weekly.

Points About Girls.

Nobody has ever yet discovered a girl with a small waist who didn't think she could have it smaller without feeling uncomfortable.

Some girls take first-class happiness in having a burned finger, or a cold sore, or a sprained ankle, because it is so comfortable to receive sympathy.

It takes an artistic woman to hold up the skirt of a gown gracefully. Not one woman in ten can grab her dress so that it hangs prettily around the hem.

It isn't always nervousness that makes a girl bite her lips. Sometimes—very often, in fact—she does it to give them a nice color.

When you see a girl with her hair all mussed up you must not think she has not combed it. It takes her many weary moments to fix it in that tangled fashion.

When a girl is ill she says that she'd give everything she owns to be well, and when she is well she scolds and frets because she can have only one hat.

Whenever one girl tells another girl about her troubles with her dressmaker, the other girl has a tale of woe twice as long and twice as harrowing to tell in return.

The superstition regarding opals evidently has gathered itself together and shuffled off. Every girl that can secure an opal ring appears to be wearing one just now.

It is a very easy matter to tell whether a girl is expecting a man or a girl caller. If a man is coming, she looks in a mirror every few moments. If it's a girl, she doesn't.

Not What They Were.

Since the veil has fallen into partial disuse, the Turkish woman has also arted. Marion Crawford tells us: "The yashmak is not what it was ten years ago, and has almost ceased to hide the face at all. Strict as the Sultan's ordinance is, there is not the slightest pretense of obeying it, and, in the great majority of cases, a thin white veil barely covers the forehead, and is but loosely drawn under the chin. The cross-band which used to cover the nose above the eyes has entirely disappeared, or is worn only when ladies appear in public at such places as the Sweet Waters, or in their walks on the Golden Horn and the Bosphorus. It must be admitted that, with the disuse of that old-fashioned veil, a great illusion has disappeared from the streets of Constantinople. There was something very mysterious about it. Black eyes never looked so black, and deep, and liquid as when seen by them-selves, as it were between two broad bands of opaque white. In those days, every yashmak veiled an ideal beauty, very different from the ugliness of the pale and flaccid features which its absence now generally discloses. One is inclined to doubt whether the mirror is in common use in the harem of to-day."

Not Labeled.

It has been decided by an English court that it is not libellous to call a lady a woman. This recalls the fact that in a Western town, a couple of years ago, a young woman who worked as a clerk in a dry goods store threatened to sue a newspaper for libel because it referred to her as a saleswoman, and not as a saleslady. She did not carry out her intention, however, as she was advised that she had no case.

AGE AND MARRIAGE.

The Girl of To-day Does Not Wed Until She Is Nearer 25 Than 18.

The observant mortal must certainly have noticed among other things that the marrying woman of to-day defers her wedding until a much more advanced season in life than did her grandmother or even the girls of a decade ago, says the Philadelphia Times. The question arises: What is the cause of this putting off that time so many declare is the end of all women's existence?

Perhaps mothers are more sensible in these days and the young daughter is not thrown upon the world, either in a social or more workaday fashion until she has had a thorough schooling, which means in these days of long terms a communion with books until she is over twenty-one. The girl herself may be wiser in her day and generation and realize that gayeties and the happy-go-lucky existence before marriage must of necessity come to an end when she is led to the altar.

Then, again, this is an age of independent women. They enter the field of labor with men and find in such occupation less time for sentiment than was allowed the lackadaisical girl of the past. It is our earnest conviction that many girls have been led into the error of a foolish marriage through a lack of occupation. Busy, active, intelligent women have no time and less inclination for the making of romances. They are absorbed in art, in music, or in more humdrum occupations that return an excellent remuneration and which they are too wise to give up until they are certain that the man who asks them is able to compensate for all that they put away for his sake.

Many a woman defers marriage because she feels that her duty lies at home in the care of an aged father or an invalid mother or helpless brothers and sisters who depend upon her alone for support. Perhaps some one argues that all this tends to the establishment of a vast spinsterhood, but let us whisper that after all when the right man comes along, when real love creeps into the heart and wily Cupid makes his presence felt, then it matters not what specious argument may have been advanced heretofore, engagement and marriage appear to be the truest art and the noblest duty, for after all we are but women and are governed more by the heart than by the brain, independent and self-reliant though we think ourselves.

Over the Parlor.

It is the worst possible arrangement in the world for the old people to lodge directly over the parlor, especially when there is an eligible daughter in the family. It was quite late in the evening, stealing, in fact, towards the wee sma' hours, and Charles and Georgina, two youthful lovers, were alone in the parlor communing in that tender way known to true lovers, when thump, thump, thump was heard on the ceiling overhead.

The lovers exchanged looks of surprise and embarrassment. Charles was confounded and Georgina was vexed and chagrined, but neither knew what to say.

Thump, thump, thump, came again, and things began to look serious. It was evident that the old gentleman was admonishing Charles to go. He had stayed late frequently before without being insulted. Thump, thump, thump.

"I guess I'd better be going," said Charles.

"Well, if you must," said Georgina, not knowing what else to say—more thumps; and the couple separated at the door without exchanging their wonted favors, sweet and precious. And then Georgina dusted for the parental dormitory, greatly excited.

"Father, you insulted Charles, and you have abused me, by your impatience, and I never was so outraged in my life!"

"Why, what is the trouble, child?" inquired the old gentleman, looking over his glasses in great surprise.

"A pretty piece of business, I am sure," returned Georgina, "or you to drum on the floor to send Charles off, as though he did not know when it is time to leave, and as though I was a baby."

"Why, mercy on me, girl," returned the old man. "I never thought of you and Charles. I was interested in reading, and my foot fell as eep, and I rather think I have a right to stamp a little under such circumstances."

Georgina retired relieved, and the next morning Charles received a note from her explaining the matter.

Modest Appreciation.

Notwithstanding her wonderful gifts, Madam Sand was sincerely modest. On one occasion a discussion arose about the latest work of a writer who, though rapid and full of a rule, had flashes of something a proaching genius. "The book is not good throughout," said Madam Sand, "but it contains at least a description of Venice which pleases me greatly." Several of her hearers agreed with her, but were under the impression that they had already met with this desert, life place somewhere. "Egad, I know where!" suddenly exclaimed her son, and off he rushed to the bookshelves to find a novel written by his mother, in which he found the very description, which had been copied almost word for word. "What, is this by me?" Madam Sand repeated, astonished and startled. "I had no idea of it. After all, it is really not so bad." An opinion which was warmly endorsed by her friends.

Ask a man what wages he gets, and he will tell you what he thinks he deserves.