

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

If we are ever in doubt what to do, it is a good rule to ask ourselves what we shall wish on the morrow that we had done.

CHICAGO DISPATCH: John Ross was murdered yesterday for \$11. Life is very cheap in this town. Hangings should be even cheaper.

ST. GAUDENS is now at work on a statue of Gen. Sherman. We hope it will not be quite up to the St. Gaudens standard of World's Fair art. Fig leaves are cheap.

WHAT proposition is there respecting human nature which is absolutely and univ.ally true? We know of only one—and that is not only true but identical—that men always act from self interest.

A FELLOW countryman of Paderewski is surpassing that individual as a pianist. His hair is not so long as Paddy's—that is the new pet name for 'Revsky—but his fingers are a little longer and he sweeps the keyboard like a tidal wave or a Missouri cyclone. His name is Shlinski.

In a reg on chiefly famous for having supplied a rhyme for hymn books too, a French flying column has suffered the fate of certain unfortunate Englishmen in Matabele land. The French have been playing jingo in various parts of the Eastern world of late, and must expect an occasional reminder at Timbuctoo that that sort of conduct has possible drawbacks.

ACTIVITY is life, stagnation is death. Keep yourself actively occupied if you want to be healthy; husband your means if you want to become wealthy. Be liberal if you want to have friends; remember that friendship is often of far greater value than gold. To achieve great success, you must be courageous; a timid man is defeated at the very outset.

ENGLISH noblemen are the only ones in Europe who ever wear coronets on their heads, and the sole occasion when they do so is at the coronation of the sovereign. They hold them in their hands through the ceremony, and at the moment when the Archbishop of Canterbury places the crown upon the monarch's head every peer and peeress present dons his or her coronet.

A ST. LOUIS lawyer gives this advice: "Additions to rented premises, when made by the tenant, should never be fastened with nails, but with screws. The reason for this lies in the fact that should he wish to move away and take with him the boards and other lumber composing the improvements he has made, he can simply draw out the screws and take the planks. If he fastens them with nails, however, he can remove nothing, and the improvements become the landlord's property."

CO-OPERATION in shopping is the latest extension of the cooperation principle. It has taken root in Brooklyn, and blossomed in the Sociologic Society. The members of the society are heads of families living in the neighborhood, who buy their groceries, meats, books and other things through a purchasing agent. The agent calls upon them every morning, receives their written order and purchases at wholesale rates. It is an European idea that may prove popular in this country.

DR. FRANKLIN M. KEMP of the Long Island Medical College Hospital, gave blood out of his own body to resuscitate a woman dying of asphyxia. He declined to take an anesthetic and sponged his own wound while the operation was being performed. Had Shakespeare known how easy it is to cut the pound of flesh and even let a drop of blood flow with it, a certain famous criminal case, in which a pretty girl played judge to distill mercy on a debtor and wrath on a claimant of his bond, might have suffered some important alterations.

The Superior Court of Boston is trying to determine whether or not a corpse can be considered property in a legal sense, and if so, who is the rightful owner. Dennis O'Neil died in Brighton recently. He lived with his mother, having separated from his wife. When he died both mother and wife began preparations for the burial, each securing a different undertaker. The undertaker engaged by the wife appeared at the house, but the mother, aided by several relatives, barred the doors and dismissed him. Since that time the house of mourning has been practically in a state of siege.

SEVEN years of controversy money subscribed in this country for relief

or distress in Ireland is about to be released by the bankers in Paris with whom it was deposited, to escape confiscation by the "government." The delay has been due to failure of the opposing Irish parliamentary factions to agree upon a form of release which the bankers could accept as holding them blameless for its after application. The dispute has been discreditable, but it will be forgotten if further quarrels shall not block an equitable distribution of the hoard among those for whom it was intended.

EVERYTHING in this world of ours has its limits, time, place, opportunity, human power, life itself, all come to an end. One of the great arts of living well and successfully is to understand these limits and to adapt ourselves to them. For the want of this many excellent schemes come to naught, many worthy people fail in their efforts, much strength and energy and talent are wasted. Everyone realizes the importance of making a beginning, but few appreciate that there is an equal importance in making an end. How and when to do this is deserving of much more thought and care than is usually bestowed upon it.

THE shocking tragedy at Boston, when a young man killed the girl to whom he had been engaged and then killed himself, emphasizes the importance of adopting severe measures in dealing with those who threaten violence against those whom they profess to love. In this case the man had broken his engagement in a fit of anger because the girl would not marry him immediately, and when told by her father that he must keep away from the house, had threatened to kill the object of his affections. He should have been deprived of his liberty from the moment he made the threat, and it seems as if this lesson might be learned without the sacrifice of more victims.

SOMEBODY has been putting death warnings couched in Latin phrase on the doors of Cauncey Depew, John Jacob Astor, John D. Rockefeller, C. P. Huntington, and other New York millionaires. Of course the alarmed millionaires and the sapient police ascribe it to the anarchists and are confident that the execution of Vailant is to be horribly avenged. Until the scare dies down a man with a red necktie and untutored whiskers will hardly be safe on Fifth avenue. Careful study of the Latin, however, warrants the suspicion that the sophomore class in Columbia College knows more about the terrifying placards than do all the anarchists between Barcelona and Bloody Gulch.

The New York Court of Appeals holds that the law against Sunday fishing is not only in force, but also that it applies as well against persons owning or leasing private fishing preserves. This is a tighter legal rein than has ever been drawn on the anglers of New York State, a previous decision of the General Term having been that only such fishing and other sports are prohibited as are public and in some way disturb the community; and the fact that the recent decision having been by no means unanimous—the vote having been 4 to 3—suggests that the extension of the rule to private waters was probably the point of difference. The Sunday fishing law in its entirety has long been a dead letter in New York as well as in other States and it would not be surprising if the recent decision should result in its repeal.

They have just been trying in Birmingham, England, an exceedingly smoky but not foggy city, and invention for washing the smoke and making it clean before it is turned loose in the air. The idea is not a new one, but in this application of it there are some novel features. A the smoke proceeds from the furnace to the chimney shaft, it is drawn away near the point of connection with the stack by means of a powerful fan revolving at a great speed. It is then forced through a cylinder making 2-0 revolutions per minute, into a tank filled with water. The water is agitated by perforated heaters, and this process has the effect of washing the smoke, which is then allowed to escape, perfectly purified, into the atmosphere direct, or is conducted back to the chimney. The carbon is precipitated to the bottom of the tank, and is brought out in a thick, bubbling, black froth, forming a deposit the worth of which is put at about \$50 a ton, along with other by-products of an extremely valuable character. This device may be applied to factory furnaces, locomotives, steamboat engines, and, in fact, to all large furnaces. A company has been formed to work it, and there is a large call for its trial in London.

MANY people are disoriented because they never have a good time, and imagine that others do. No one has a good time.

OUR RURAL READERS.

SOMETHING HERE THAT WILL INTEREST THEM.

Fancy Farmers Have Done Much to Promote Agriculture—Improved Stable Floor, New Variety of Summer Apples—Location of Farm Buildings.

Grooved Stable Floors. It costs but a trifle more to fit open stalls with grooved or channeled flooring, and this works so satisfactorily that it should come into more

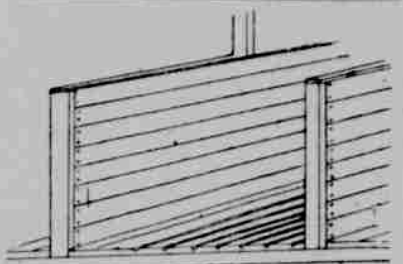


FIG. 1. IMPROVED STABLE FLOOR. The plank used should not be over eight inches in width, and for a two-inch plank the groove should be cut seven-eighths of an inch wide and one inch deep. This can be done with a groove plane with a common plane a V-shaped

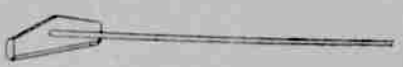


FIG. 2. TOOL FOR CLEANING GROUND FLOOR. The groove can be quickly made by taking a little from the upper edge of both planks where they join. Both grooves are shown in Fig. 1, and a stable tool for cleaning the groove is shown in Fig. 2. Stable floors should have an incline of two inches in six feet, and when the grooves are kept clean, there will be but little trouble with wet bedding. The grooves need not extend more than half the length of the stalls, and in the morning when the coarse litter is removed, it takes but half a moment to clean the channels in each stall.

"Fancy Farmers." Probably no other class of people in an agricultural community has ever been so severely ridiculed as those who are known as "fancy farmers." It is true that such men have made a good many mistakes.

Of these some were very laughable, and others, though less ridiculous, showed a remarkable ignorance concerning the proper methods of farm management. But it is equally true that these fancy farmers have, in many cases, been of great help to the more practical agriculturists among whom they came to live. There are various ways in which the fancy farmers have done much to promote the cause of progressive and profitable agriculture. These men have been enterprising and energetic, and have not only had the means for trying costly experiments, but have been willing to risk considerable sums of money in putting their theories into practice. They have been the pioneers who, at great cost to themselves, open in a new country the path of prosperity to all who choose to follow. They have been teachers who have given excellent instruction without expense to those who have profited thereby. Their successes have shown farmers how rich returns can be obtained, and their failures have warned others to avoid courses which can lead only to losses and disappointments.

It is hardly necessary to specify the various ways in which fancy farmers have benefited their neighbors. The introduction of improved breeds of animals, of better kinds of grains and vegetables, of cheaper and yet more efficient methods of cultivating farm crops, and various other useful changes which might be named, have been greatly facilitated by the efforts of these men who farmed for pleasure more than they did to increase their incomes. But there is one way in which their example and influence have been very helpful, which deserves special mention. This is in the improvement of the buildings and yards, and the beautifying of the home surroundings. Though not of as direct pecuniary advantage as some other things which they have done, this part of their work has been of great benefit to individual farmers and to farm communities at large. It has led to improvements, the value of which cannot be indicated in financial terms, but which have been both great and permanent. For this, even more than for the object lessons which have shown how more money can be made from the land, fancy farmers deserve the thanks and good will of all who till the soil.—John E. Read, in Agricultural Epitome.

Salt as a Fertilizer. This is a subject which has attracted a good deal of attention and been discussed quite freely by the farmers of this State. Recently a correspondent of the Mark Lane Express gave some interesting information as to the benefits of salt as a fertilizer, and the best methods of using it upon land. He said that although it was an excellent practice to put salt regularly and freely on the manure heap, this is not sufficient for dry and light soils, so that about two cwt. of salt should be applied with each cartload of manure; but it is generally agreed that the best time to apply salt is just before the land is broken up, when it gets plowed in and thoroughly incorporated with the soil and subsoil. For all produce, salt has been found to be more or less beneficial according to the conditions of the soil. If noxious insects, slugs, and weeds have been troublesome, and if the soil is light, friable, peaty, or marly, requiring moisture, salt is undoubtedly the best fertilizer to be got, and five cwt. per acre may be used to

great advantage, but upon stiff, heavy, wet land, it should be used more moderately, and only when the land is broken up. It has recently been proved that wheat, barley, oats, and rye have been considerably improved by salt dressings, as it not only strengthens the straw and increases the yield, but protects the grain from attacks of mildew, etc.—Michigan Farmer.

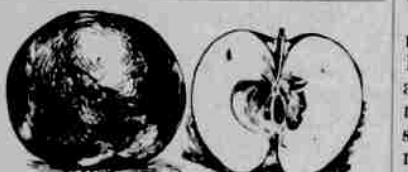
True Economy of Time.

A stock raiser often loses much by a mistaken idea concerning the use of his time. He continues to use poor animals for breeding purposes because he thinks he has not the time to hunt up and select better ones. The females need culling. Those sold must be replaced by others which will only be profitable when selected with care. The sire also must be of the best or profitable results will not follow. Ordinary work about the farm and barn often prevents a trip to some locality where better stock can be procured. How much better would it be to hire a man to look after the home affairs for a short time and attend to this important item. If a \$15 colt dies during your absence the time has still been well spent if the new sire produces progeny worth \$20 or more. Many farmers require more an better brood sows. Others have not yet selected their bear. A good stallion, which is profitable to any community, has not been purchased. The spare time now may well be spent in deciding these matters. Also read this winter all the available literature relating to your business, and as much besides as possible. This information is as important as the regular feeding of the stock.—Orange Judd Farmer.

The Excess of Straw.

On many farms the great excess of straw above the real needs of the farm make it important that every possible method should be utilized for turning it to some profit. Burning straw simply to get it out of the way is too great a waste. If there is no market for it many ways can be found for employing it on the farm so that it will be of some advantage. Straw is vegetable material, and it is this which much of our land most lacks. How to get it back to the land in the form of plant food is a matter to be considered. If all the straw cannot be used as bedding for stock, which is probably the easiest and best way of returning it to the soil, it is a good plan to spread some of it out in the yard where the animals stand during the daytime. Their sharp hoofs cut the stalks into small pieces and tramp them into a pulpy mass. When the straw gets pretty well trampled to pieces in the yard, a light layer of dark soil or leaf mold from the woods should be spread over it. The dirt is rich in plant food, and by tramping the straw into it very fair manure is made. If successively repeating the operation every month through the winter, the straw will decompose and be ready for use on the land in the spring.

The Starr Apple. The accompanying engravings represent a new summer apple received from Wm. Parry, Burlington Co., N. J., who informs us that the original



STARR APPLE. CROSS SECTION.

tree was an accidental seeding. It is a good, strong grower with rank, healthy foliage. Budded trees come to bearing very young, and bear every year, having no off years, though yielding heavier on the alternate years. The fruit attains a large size quickly, and will ship well and keep well in this unripe condition, rendering it valuable for shipments to distant markets. The samples sent measured from eleven to twelve inches around, were greenish yellow in color with handsome bluish sub-acid, of good eating quality, and would be excellent for cooking. Our engravings show a Starr apple and a cross-section reduced one-quarter in diameter.—American Agriculturist.

To Pickle Beef.

As soon as the beef has become cool or the next day after killing, put into a weak brine and leave it for three or four days to soak out the blood. Then for each 100 pounds of meat prepare a brine made of eight pounds of salt, two pounds of brown sugar, two ounces of saltpeter, two ounces of black pepper, and six gallons of water. Boil and skim the brine and pour it while warm over the meat after it is closely packed in the barrel. If the meat is to be kept over summer, in the spring draw off the brine, boil and skim and pour over the meat while hot.

Odds and Ends.

A LARGE, soft sponge, slightly dampened, makes a good duster.

For washing greas, kettles a little sal soda added to the water is a help.

The best thing for cleaning old brass is said to be solution of oxalic acid.

A LITTLE flour dredged over a cake before icing it will keep the icing from spreading and running off.

FINWARE may be brightened by dipping a damp cloth in common soda and then rubbing the tin with it thoroughly.

OLDCLOTH, when soiled, should be washed with a soft cloth in lukewarm water, without soap, but it should never be scrubbed.

SPOTS and dirt may be removed from paintings and chromos by using a cup of warm water to which a few drops of ammonia have been added.

THE CABIN ON THE CLAIM.

Lonely, you say? With mighty arch of sky so grandly bending?

By bright blue clouds and glittering stars A softer message sends?

Joyless? When out of crimson cloud The sunrise pours its glory?

Morn after morn repeating well Aurora's cheerful story?

Peaceless? When night with noiseless feet, From fields of herbs and flowers, Sweet odors in her mantle dark Bears to this cot of ours?

Like faintest sounds of distant seas, Pounding some castle hoary,

We hear the great world's roar and fret, And trace her changeful story.

As far away white gleaming sail, Turning a bend of river,

A sail-boat with radiant flash Makes every watching quiver.

So, thankful were the kindly stars, Spangling the blue with beauty,

We look—no breathe the fervent wish That all may do their duty.

—Boston Transcript.

STOLEN DIAMONDS.

Ah, Damon, old boy! Glad you drop ed in. I've got something that I think will interest you, seeing you are a newspaper man. What do you think of this?" and Mr. Wardsworth, of the firm of Wardsworth & Blank, manufacturing jewelers of Boston, placed a paper in the hand of the young journalist.

"Ah! a goodly find for some one," replied the reporter as he read.

"\$500 REWARD. For the apprehension of the criminals or the recovery of the diamonds taken from the safe of Jasper, Sturgis & Jaspur, London, on or about December 1st. It is thought that the gems have been smuggled to America, as no attempt has been made to dispose of them either in Great Britain or upon the Continent. Dealers and officers of the law are cautioned to be on the alert. The jewels stolen are of the first water, large stones, and the whole amount valued at \$20,000.

(Signed) JASPER, STURGIS & JASPUR, London."

"It would be like looking for a needle in the hay-mow, I should say," commented Damon, as he finished the perusal of the notification.

"Very much," replied Mr. Wardsworth as he refolded the paper and replaced it in his pocket. "Yet it would be a difficult matter for any one to dispose of such a quantity of diamonds even though they succeed in getting them into the country. Nevertheless, it behooves us in the business to keep a sharp lookout, and to be sure closely where a stone comes from, that is brought us to mount. If the rogues attempt to place their plunder on the market within six months or a year, they will stand a very good chance of being apprehended but if they can afford to wait, and have nerve enough to retain the diamonds in their possession until the excitement has died away, the thieves may be enabled to get rid of the gems in small lots without causing suspicion."

"Well, I hope it may be your good fortune to run across some of the sparklers, for I would like to see you capture the reward," replied the reporter, with a smile.

"Who knows but what it may come your way," returned the jeweler, laughing. "You board most of the leading vessels, and I should think might stand a pretty fair chance to hear of any smuggling game, and by working up your information be able to claim some of the Englishman's \$5,000."

"Not so much of a chance as you might imagine, my friend," replied Damon. "True, I have to report the arrival of vessels, and of course visit many of them, but if there was any smuggling detected, it would only be my duty to write the story for the paper, and I could not expect to receive any credit from the authorities for the apprehension of the guilty parties but it was not to talk shop," with you that brought me in. Do you see this?" and Damon held up a package, neatly wrapped in paper, yet not so disguised but what any one could see that it was a quart bottle. "This is some rare, old Burgundy. At least the steward of a British steamer affirms that it is. Now, I want you to come to my apartments to-night and take a hand at a game of whist, and you will have an opportunity to sample the wine. What say you?"

"I would be only too pleased to make one of the party, not wholly on account of the contents of the bottle, for you know I am somewhat abstemious, but to enjoy a quiet game of whist."

"Very well, I will look for you at 8 o'clock sharp. Good-by," and with little ceremony the bustling journalist turned on his heel and left his friend's place of business to complete the arduous labors of the day.

At the hour of 8 two reporters and two jewelers, all old acquaintances, were seated about a table in Damon's room, enjoying themselves hugely as they laughed and chatted over the topics of the day.

At length the host arose and said: "Now, boys, supposing we try the quality of the steward's present. I don't suppose that any of us are connoisseurs of wines, although we might be able to know what would make a good newspaper story when we ran against it, or tell the quality of a piece of gold when taking it in hand. However, we all have tastes, and in this free country, are at liberty to express our opinions. So, Mr. Wardsworth, yours, first," and the reporter essayed to fill the glass of his friend.

Although Mr. Damon had carefully removed the cork, yet to his surprise only a feeble stream of liquid issued forth.

"Ah," he remarked, "something has fouled up the neck of the bottle. Never mind, we'll soon fix it," and taking a long lead pencil from the breast pocket of his vest, he wiped it and thrust it into the aperture. With a gurgle the wine bubbled forth, then a hard substance struck the bottom of the goblet.

"Why, if the villains who put up this Burgundy have not left broken

glass in the bottle," exclaimed Damon, with ill-concealed disgust. "They must want to murder their customers."

Stepping to his bachelor cupboard the reporter took therefrom a silver spoon, with which he fished out the foreign substance and dropped it upon the table, exclaiming:

"There's the thing which might have been the cause of some one's untimely death, and the subject of a good article for the morning journals."

A cry of surprise escaped the lips of the jeweler-guests as each simultaneously stretched forth a hand to grasp the small object which had been the means of so disturbing the equanimity of their host.

"Why, Damon, it's a diamond!" cried Mr. Wardsworth excitedly.

"A diamond!" reiterated the reporters, almost with a shout. "If it is not a valuable gem, I never saw one," continued Wardsworth. "What say you, Richardson?" turning to his companion in the trade.

"It is a stone of the first water," conclusively replied the experienced dealer in precious metals. "How came it in the bottle, do you suppose?"

"Can it be one of the stolen jewels, think you?" asked Damon, his newspaper instinct leading him with lightning-like rapidity to trace their "find" to the steward who had given the wine, back across the Atlantic even to the vaults of its original owner.

"Perhaps," answered Wardsworth, his voice husky with excitement. "But, quick, Damon, bring us a basin, and we will examine the contents of the flask."

If the throats of the quartet had been parched with thirst, they would not for an instant thought to moisten their lips with a drop of the liquid.

His hands trembling, Mr. Wardsworth struck off the neck of the bottle by a single blow of a fruit-knife which he took from the table, then allowed the Burgundy to flow freely out into the china bowl. With bated breath, the men watched the glittering spray as it fell from the jagged edge of the shattered glass!

Diamond after diamond mingled with the ruddy wine, and sparkled with scintillations which dazzled the eyes of the beholders!

For a moment the occupants of the room stood about the table, speechless! Then the jeweler grasped the hand of his host, and exclaimed:

"Damon, your fortune is made! There are undoubtedly the jewels which were taken from the safe of Jasper, Sturgis & Jaspur, London, and the reward of \$25,000 is yours. A small fortune, my boy, a small fortune!"

"Then if the Englishman's gold comes this way, it shall be divided into four parts, and you, my friends, shall share with me," returned the reporter, promptly. "But what is to be done? I know a column of the morning paper," and the young man sprang towards his desk, with the intention of writing out a startling story of the wonderful recovery of the stolen diamonds, valued at \$150,000.

He was restrained, however, by his friends, who assured him that to publish the matter now would be to serve as a warning to the thieves and thwart the ends of justice.

"We will take that diamonds down to my store and lock them up," said Mr. Wardsworth. "Then notify the police, who will probably arrest the steward, and then cable across the news."

"I am sorry that I have been the means of causing trouble to the man, for we are old friends," observed Mr. Damon.

"The steward may be innocent," urged Damon's companions. "Do you think if he knew the contents of the bottle he would be likely to give it away? No, sir," added Mr. Wardsworth. "You may rest assured that some of the principals in the affair have blundered, and blundered badly. Nevertheless, it was a brilliant scheme to smuggle the diamonds into America by this means."

The jeweler's argument proved correct. The arrest and trial of the steward of the ocean steamer elicited the fact that he had been intrusted with a bottle of wine by an acquaintance in England, which he was asked to deliver to a gentleman, who would call for it in Boston.

There was no name attached to the package, and he supposed it was of no more value than others of a similar brand which he had in his charge, belonging to the ship's stores. He put it in his room, and never gave it a second thought, until on reaching port he was pre-ent with an order for the delivery of the wine. Being in a hurry at the time, he handed the caller what he thought was the right bottle. Then, a little later, when Damon came on board, he made the reporter a present of the one containing the gems.

The steward was consequently acquitted by the authorities, but received his discharge from the steamship company for his indiscretion.

Damon, the reporter, was given the reward, but could not prevail upon his friends to share it with him, they urging that it belonged to him, and him only.

Once a year, however, up to the present time, the quartet sit down to a little dinner together, and as may be supposed, the principal topic of conversation is that wonderful bottle of Burgundy, whose contents were never drank, though a portion of them served to enhance much of the feminine beauty both in America and England, although few of the wearers realize that their glittering gems were once eagerly sought for when they were "STOLEN DIAMONDS."—Yankee Blade.

Windows are not as romantic as they seem.