

## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

**AN onion weighing over four pounds** was raised in the State of Washington. Could anything be more affecting?

**AN American in Vienna** claimed to be one of the Vanderbilts. He was believed until he swindled a banker and took only \$3,000.

**SOME girls take first-class handiness** in having a burned finger or a cold sore or a sprained ankle, because it is so comforting to receive sympathy.

**THE desire for a purer press** has touched the minds of the Gothamites. If it doesn't cost any more than the sort they are getting now the citizens of New York will insist on having it.

**THE latest sea serpent** appeared off the New Jersey coast. It stayed only long enough to realize where it was, and then put madly out into the vasty deep. The sea serpent is evidently as intelligent as rare.

**LATE advices by cable from Berlin** are that Major Francois has defeated Chief Wilbool. When the first excitement has subsided somewhat later news may explain who Chief Wilbool is and why he should be defeated.

**NEW YORK business men** will make war on cigarettes by refusing to employ boys addicted to them. The crusade is partly based on moral grounds, but the difficulty of collecting rent in case of fire possibly is not without weight.

**A WASHINGTON squaw** has secured a divorce. She did not take the necessary action until she had reached the age of 90, showing that the Indian, even if a little slow in mastering the details of civilization, is still approaching the point of actual culture.

**THE University of Chicago** is reported to contemplate starting a magazine to rival the Century. If the university go into the magazine business it is earnestly to be hoped that it will draw the line on the Century somewhere. Say on Century poetry.

**AT last a sea serpent** has ventured near enough to man to have had his tail cut off with a broad ax. Unfortunately the severed tail wriggled from captivity back into the uncommunicative deep, but for the instruction of doubters the broad ax can be placed in evidence at any time.

**If Washington correspondents** were under instructions to wire nothing but what they knew to be true there would be a good deal more space in the newspapers for matter worth reading. The Washington correspondent is usually an ass who is under the impression that the public is one.

**MR. SPREAD** says that when an American girl sells herself to a miserable scion of British nobility, instead of eulogizing her we should point at her the finger of scorn. Mr. Stead is in error in thinking Americans eulogize these women, but as for the finger of scorn, providence so uniformly punishes the victim of ambition or vanity that the scorn part may be foregone by her countrymen.

**SO MR. EDISON** thinks sleep is a habit that men can get over. Thinks the electric light will revolutionize our notions about it. Thinks we will stay awake all the time after a while. Thinks we are wasting one-third or (if we are lucky) one-half our lives in bed, does he? Well, Mr. Edison is a clever man and he may be right, but all the inventions he has given to the world are not a grain of benefit to suffering humanity compared with one corner of that beneficent contraption which Sancho's friend refused to take out a patent on. Let the wizard putter over his thimble-bobs. We shall dream not the less pleasantly on that account with the covers over our heads. Besides, we need sleep if only to forget about the phonograph.

**GLORY, hallelujah!** Arnold the World's Fair photographer man, the Lord High Executioner and court of last resort at Jackson Park, has been knocked out by the United States Circuit Court at St. Louis. The Court decides that he is not entitled to an injunction restraining publishers from issuing World's Fair views. What a change has come over the spirit of Arnold's dream since he used to stride around the court of honor ordering Columbian guards, who trembled at his frown, to arrest people whom he suspected of having kodaks concealed about their persons. Arnold the mighty is fallen, is

fallen! But yesterday the word of Arnold stood against the constitution of Illinois; now lies he in St. Louis knocked galley west. And all the people say Amen.

**GOVERNOR HOGG** of Texas, is misnamed. He has a good deal of the milk of human kindness in him, and what is equally valuable, he has the courage of his convictions. The railroad company that undertook to maroon several hundred half-starved recruits for the Coxe army in a desert with the idea of provoking them to a breach of the peace got no sympathy from Gov. Hogg. He notified the railroad people that he would not call out the militia at their request. "No armed force," he said, "while I am Governor will be permitted to shoot down men who commit no greater offense than to tramp and beg to keep from stealing." This has the right ring to it. Some other governors might profitably imitate the Texas executive in his independence of impudent and autocratic railroad companies.

**THE Mexican revolutionist** is very like a ward bummer in politics. At one time he belongs to one party, at other times he belongs to other parties, and he is used and distrusted alike by all parties. It is announced that Catarino Garza, who was at the head of the guerrilla war on the lower Rio Grande a year or two ago, indignantly and contemptuously repels the allegation that he instigated the present disturbance on the Mexican side of the upper Rio Grande. Mr. Garza declares that he is in regular business in Costa Rica—his regular business probably being that of a border revolutionist. However that may be, it is the duty of the United States officers, of all grades, to do all in their power for the suppression of the periodical bushwhacker uprisings on our southwestern frontier.

**A GOOD deal of sympathy** is being wasted over the farmer by people who don't know what they are talking about. The low price of wheat and the decline in the price of live stock are pointed out as reasons why the farmer is crying himself to sleep every night. As a matter of fact, the farmer who has his farm paid for is the most independent man on earth—dependent of panics, of "financial stringencies," and political experiments. He may not have a great deal of ready money, but he is as sure of a comfortable living as any man can be in this uncertain world. There may, it is true, be a failure of some crops, but all the crops won't fail. His hogs may be decimated by cholera, but his sheep and his cattle are left. Times may be dull, but if the worst comes to worst he can live and live fairly well on the produce of his own farm. Clothes he must have, but fashions don't change rapidly in the country and a few bushels of potatoes or a few hogs will produce the money needed for absolutely essential clothes. The farmer is all right. He is not at the mercy of labor unions or capitalists. All the mills in the country may shut down and he is still certain of three meals a day and a bed at night. As he is the mainspring and foundation of all material prosperity, so he is independent of all the minor disturbances that trouble the people who are, after all, dependent on him for subsistence.

**IN Southern California,** a horde of vagrants left the line of the Santa Fe Railroad at Monrovia, and followed the line of the Southern Pacific. This action was caused by the threat of the Santa Fe Company to ditch their trains rather than haul these tramps across the desert.

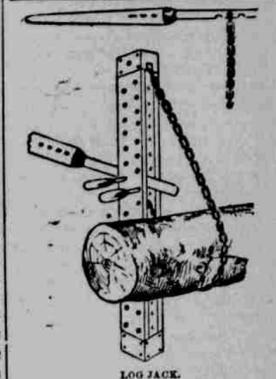
**There is a valuable hint** here for the railroads. Their submission to the trespass of loads of loafers upon their trains is caused by the fear of injury to their property. The tramps threaten, if not allowed to ride free, to ditch the trains. Why should not the railroads take a hint from the tramps? Ditching trains is a game that two can play at. If the companies were to run occasional trains of empty box and flat-cars while the "industrial army" is on its way, and offer no opposition to their being seized, the train would soon be loaded with vagrants. When a favorite grade was reached, the engine and caboose could be cut off, the train crew abandon their posts, and the train allowed to run down the grade. At some point on the grade where the train would be running about sixty miles an hour, a missing rail might ditch the train and put an end to some scores of worthless vagabonds. This, of course, is very wicked, but is very much better than having revengeful tramps ditch passenger trains, and put an end to the lives of honest men. This project is an expensive one, and would cost the company something for smashed freight cars. But after a few such "accidents" to trains loaded with loafers, tramp travel would decrease.

## DOMESTIC ECONOMY.

### TOPICS OF INTEREST TO FARMER AND HOUSEWIFE.

**Farmers Should Use the Whitewash Brush Freely—Care of Early Plants—How to Keep Pasture Springs Pure—A Powerful Log Jack.**

**A Powerful Log Jack.**  
The cut here shown illustrates a log jack that any ingenious farmer can make. It consists of two hard wood planks nailed nearly close together. Holes are then drilled in which two iron logs should slide easily. A lever of hard oak wood or of iron is then required with a short chain and hook. A chain is then hooked to the top of the plank passed under the log to be raised and hooked to the chain on the lever. The lever



is then worked similarly to a pump handle. When lowering the handle and allowing the weight to rest on the outer pin, move up the pin in front to a hole higher. When the handle is raised with the weight on the front pin, raise the back pin. By this plan a ton may be easily raised by a single person, as the leverage is only about half an inch with a six foot lever.

**Hints for Sugar Makers.**  
As a rule we believe a sugar orchard inclining south and east will produce the most sap, while those with a northwesterly slope produce the best quality of sugar.

No sugar maker can afford to use any but the best apparatus for boiling. The quicker the evaporation the less the expense and the better the quality. Do not wait until your buckets are full before gathering. I think it a good rule to gather often and boil immediately. Do not have too much storage, for with a modern evaporator and good dry wood a man should be able to boil nearly as fast as a team and two men can gather. Always make your plans to have the works well cleaned every Saturday, even if it does require extra labor.

Strain your sap through a flannel strainer as it runs from the tub. Skim often while boiling and reduce to the required density before drawing from the evaporator. Do nothing by guess. Test your syrup by an accurate thermometer or hydrometer. 219 degrees by the thermometer while boiling and 32 degrees by hydrometer will give you syrup of 11 pounds net to the gallon, the standard syrup. Strain through a heavy flannel or felt strainer and can at once while boiling hot and screw the top down tight to exclude air. Put up like this syrup will hold its flavor and will not crystallize. Use none but full-size gallon cans and never practice any deceit in regard to your product.—Farm and Home.

**Grading Comb Honey.**  
The method of grading comb honey, adopted by the last convention is, perhaps, a good one, and may stand. However, it amounts to nothing in the transaction of business, and is of no practical value, though it gives employment to theorists. I have no use for the word "fancy" in relation to dark honey. The fact of comb honey being dark excludes all "fancy." I prefer to use its proper names, such as White Clover, Alfalfa, Basswood, Mangrove, Sage, Goldenrod, Aster, Holly honey, etc. These and other distinct varieties sell according to their qualities. Others are classed as dark honeys. Buckwheat belongs to the latter, of course, but being of a distinct variety, it is called "buckwheat honey." By these means it is possible to convince buyers that the flavor and color of honey is determined by its source. The result of this is that customers do not doubt the purity of the article when a strange flavor is discovered. Sugar syrup tastes unmistakably like sugar syrup honey for it has no other flavor. Producers who ship honey, extracted or comb, should endeavor to prevent leakage, for it is a loss to all concerned and an injury to trade.—Ex.

**Lime Water.**  
The uses of so homely an article as lime a out the household are almost innumerable. One sees the hodman on a new building keep his drinking water in a pail coated with lime and one thinks it is a poor receptacle for the universal beverage. Yet it would not be so good or so pure served in a silver ice pitcher. A tea-spoonful of lime water in a glass of milk is a remedy for summer complaint. It prevents the turning of milk or cream, and a cupful added to bread sponge will keep it from souring. Allowed to evaporate from a vessel on the stove, it will alleviate the distresses due to lung fever, croup, or diphtheria. It will sweeten and purify bottles, jugs, etc.  
Lime itself, as every one knows, is invaluable as a purifier and disinfectant. Sprinkled in cellars or closets where there is a slight dampness it

will not only serve as a purifier, but will prevent the invasion of noxious animals. It is one of the notable instances of the economy and the bounty of nature: that this article, so common and cheap, is serviceable in so many ways.—Philadelphia Record.

**To Destroy Lice on Cattle.**  
A correspondent writes the Breeder's Gazette that ordinary water lime or cement dusted over and rubbed into the hair of animals is a cheap, easily applied and safe remedy and an absolutely sure preventive of lice. This is doubtless partly true. Lice cannot thrive among hair that is filled with lime dust, but the dust will not stay upon all parts of the animal, particularly the sides of the neck and the under parts of the body.

A bit of rubbing with kerosene or other oil over these parts will be needed to make a thorough job of it. And, by the way, it is not necessary to wait till water lime can be procured, which is not always readily obtained, for any kind of fine dust, sand or clay from the highway will answer about as well. Lice cannot live long in either dust or oily surroundings. But one application is never enough. It should be repeated frequently till the difficulty is removed.

**Early Plants.**  
However desirable it may be to secure early vegetables by setting out these started in the hotbed or in the living room of the house, the work of setting should not be attempted too early in the season. It must be remembered that house or hotbed-grown plants are tender and not susceptible to such a degree of cold as is frequently experienced in the early part of the season. It is therefore safer to omit transplanting until the weather is quite uniform in temperature. Potted plants may be hardened by putting out of doors and so on prepared for transplanting. Earliness of product is governed largely by uninterrupted growth, the setting should therefore be so attended to as to prevent any shock to the growth.

**Points in Driving.**  
To drive well you must keep your eye and your mind on the horse. Watch his ears. They will be pricked forward when he is about to shy, drop when he is tired, fly back just before he "breaks" into a gallop, and before he kicks. Before kicking, too, a horse usually tucks in his tail and hunches his back a little. When you observe any of these indications speak to him and sharply pull up his head.

**Keeping Pasture Springs Pure.**  
Too many of the sources of the water supply of our pastures are contaminated by cattle wading in the springs and dropping their excrements within the basin in which the spring is situated, into which all loose material is washed by the rains of summer. Such contaminated water supply is highly undesirable for



any stock to drink from, but most decidedly undesirable for the use of dairy cows. There is almost always a descending stretch of ground, or a descending open ditch, from pasture springs, which permits the keeping of the water supply pure. The spring should be completely enclosed and roofed over, and the water conveyed by a pipe to a tub or trough below, as shown in the accompanying illustration. Such a plan not only serves to keep the water pure at all times, but also to keep it cooler in summer and warmer in winter, if the spring is ever used for the winter watering of stock.

**Odds and Ends.**  
**Pudding bags** should be made of heavy jean.

In packing bottles or canned fruit for moving slip a rubber band over the body of them.

**GREAT improvement** will be found in tea and coffee if they are kept in glass jars instead of tin.

**COLD cream** is apt to make pimples and vaseline used on the face will give one a disfiguring growth of hair.

**STAND a wet umbrella** on the handle to drain; otherwise, the water collecting at the center, will rot the silk.

**A LARGE rug** of linen crash placed under the sewing machine will catch threads, clippings, and cuttings, and save a deal of sweeping and dusting.

**WHEN your face and ears burn** so terribly bathe them in very hot water—as hot as you can bear. This will be more apt to cool them than any cold application.

**THERE is false economy,** which costs more than it returns, such as saving old medicine bottles, partially used prescriptions, the tacks taken from the carpet, or working days to save or make that which can be bought for a few cents.

**FOR pimples on the face,** bathe it occasionally in a soothing lotion composed of a weak solution of borax and warm water. At night use very warm water on the face; then dry, and rub in the pores an ointment made of flower of sulphur and lard.

**ALWAYS use cotton holders** for iron. Woolen ones are hot to the hand, and if soiled, as they often are, the smell is disagreeable. In ironing a shirt or a dress turn the sleeves on the wrong side and leave them until the rest is done, and then turn and iron them.

## SMUGGLED CIGARS.

### The Expert Fell a Victim to an Old Trick.

The especial value attaching to any article that has come into the country through some other entrance than the custom house is well illustrated by a story that is now going the rounds at the expense of an eminently respectable but innocent young physician over in Georgetown. The young gentleman in question is an inveterate smoker, and, what is more, knows a good cigar when he gets a hold of one. Some time ago one of his friends dropped in on him for an evening call, and was greeted with a knowing smile, as the young disciple of Esculapius pushed a freshly opened box of cigars across the table to him and said: "There you are old man just try one of these, and observe that they are a great deal better than you have been in the habit of smoking." His guest lighted up, and the doctor, twirling an unlighted weed between his own fingers, settled back in his chair to en of the sight of a practiced smoker getting hold of an unusual treat.

The party of the second part pulled away for a little while with evident emotion, and when the doctor asked what was the matter, suggested that a prescription ought to go with the cigar. On being asked for the symptoms, the smoker said that he thought a drawing plaster on the back of his neck would answer better. The host was about to enter a remonstrance against this revilement of an expensive Havana, when a little spurt of fire chased a spiral around the outside of the wrapper, and then smoldered out with an unmistakable smell.

The host said he was sorry, that he guessed there had been a mistake of some sort, and each of the connoisseurs tried another weed with no better result. And then the story came out.

The doctor had been in his office that morning when a sailor came in and asked for treatment for a burn on his arm. The physician looked at the hurt, which seemed to be merely superficial, and gave the son of the sea a prescription for some ointment that would help to heal it. He declined to make any charge and the sailor man, after expressing his gratitude for the kindness begged his benefactor to accept some cigars which he took from the inner part of his sacker, done up in a black wrapper, with the Cuban arms in gold on the outside.

The doctor lighted one, and as he afterward declared it was a smoke for the gods, of course he asked where it came from. What it smoked wouldn't?

The wily naval man was a trifle reticent, but finally, by dint of questioning, allowed the doctor to draw his story from him. He had just come up on a bark from the Indies, and touching at Havana, he had been tempted to do a little free trading on his own account. Of course it was not right, but then sailor's wages were small, and he had a family to support, he did not say in how many different ports, and—well the upshot of it was that the doctor agreed to take the whole of the 500 cigars that he had with him for \$25.

The sailor was afraid to bring the cigars up through the town in daylight, but agreed to have them at the house by dark. He had just brought them.

**GETS HIS QUARTER AFTER MANY YEARS.**

**A Pennsylvania boy's due bill** on a Chicago House promptly honored.

A due bill for 25 cents against a certain Chicago firm was collected recently. It had been credited to a boy by the firm over thirteen years ago.

In the winter of 1880 a Pennsylvania boy decided to invest his savings in a pair of skates. He sent a sum of money to a Chicago firm and received in return the skates and with them a letter, stating that 25 cents too much had been remitted, and that the amount was credited to the boy on the books of the firm. A blue slip of paper was enclosed which bore the information that the firm whose signature was attached would—

Pay to the bearer or order the sum of twenty-five (20.25) cents on demand.

The boy forgot the due bill and wore out and outgrew the skates. But his old mother found the faded paper in an old jacket-pocket among the fish-hooks, dried worms, dried apples, etc., and laid it carefully away, saying:

"I may go to Chicago some day."

The boy joined the busy ranks of men who gain a livelihood in the pictures of Western counties of the State by extracting petroleum oil from the bowels of the earth. He reached the years and average size of manhood, little having occurred in the meantime to distinguish him or his life from the ordinary boy of the average boyhood. Finally he was induced to study law. Falling in that he became discouraged and began to travel. He went to St. Louis, thence to the Rockies. He dug ditch on the snow-clad side of Carbonate Hill. He "punched" cattle in the valley of the Arkansas, ran a faro bank in Salt Lake City, pumped water out of a silver mine in Leadville, and nearly died of typhoid fever in Pueblo. He returned to Pennsylvania, where his old mother cursed him back to life and health and gave him money

enough to go to Ohio and start an w. He is owed one long year for the Standard Oil Company in the swamps of Wood County. At the end of the year he had one suit of clothes, liable for the amount of \$400, malaria and rheumatism, fever and ague. Then he studied medicine for three years and worked one year as a night-watch in a lunatic asylum. Finally he drifted into Chicago and the newspaper business.

In the course of time his mother wrote she was coming to visit her boy. Then she went to the china closet in the corner and took from the top shelf the yellow sugar bowl with gilt stripes and from it the blue slip of paper placed there by her own hand thirteen years before.

The other day she collected the money, which was given to her in the shape of a 25-cent piece bearing the date of 1865. She placed the bright coin in her wandering boy's hand.

### Pleasure in Affronting.

Dean Swift was a whimsical misanthrope, who took a morbid delight in humiliating his social inferiors because he himself, when young, had been outrageously affronted by his superiors.

When Swift was a young man he acted as Sir William Temple's private secretary. Once, while Sir William was confined to his bed with gout, William III visited him, and Swift officiated as his guide through the beautiful gardens of Moorpark. The King taught the secretary how to cut asparagus in the Dutch way, and Swift also saw him eat the vegetable.

Years after, when Swift was Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin he published, Faulkner, called at the deanery on business connected with some proof-sheets. Having been detained until near dinner-time, he was pressed by the Dean to dine with him. Asparagus was one of the vegetables, and the guest asked for a second helping.

"Sir," said the host, pointing to the publisher's plate, "first finish what you have upon your plate."

"What, sir, eat my stalks," asked the surprised guest.

"Aye, sir; eat your stalks, or you will have no more. King William always ate his stalks," replied the Dean in his most imperious manner. Whereupon the publisher, yielding to the Dean's will, ate his stalks submissively.

Shortly after the Dean's death Faulkner told the incident as an illustration of Swift's insolence.

"And were you blockhead enough to obey him?" exclaimed Leland, the historian, who was listening.

"Yes," Faulkner replied, briding up; "and doctor if you had dined with Dean Swift, you would have been obliged to eat your stalks, too!"

When grown in the old fashion, the slender green stalks eaten by King William were a little inferior in texture, but superior in flavor to the heads of the vegetable. But before Swift became Dean of St. Patrick's the new horticulture had made asparagus stalks uneatable, and by forcing a plate of them down his obsequious publisher's throat the misanthrope had the satisfaction of goading him into self-humiliation.—Youth's Companion.

### Plenty of Paint.

Alma-Tadema, the eminent artist, is a great advocate of work. "Nothing can be done well without taking trouble," he says; "you must work hard if you are to succeed." The writer of an article upon this artist in the Century says that he has no patience with would-be dilettanti, who pester all busy professional people with fatuous inquiries about their ways of work, such as, "Now, what color would you use if you were going to paint a bluebell?"

He has a broad and genial sense of humor, and possesses a fund of amusing anecdotes astonishingly large; and his friends are frequently amused at his aptness in bringing out of his treasury an appropriate anecdote or bon mot for every occasion.

I have heard Mr. Alma-Tadema tell a story of the fate of two unsuccessful pictures of his student days. One of them was returned unsold by the committee of the Brussels exhibition in 1859—the subject, I believe, was of a house on fire, with people rescuing the victims.

His fellow-students were asked into the studio of the rejected painter, and were invited to jump through the canvas, the owner of it leading the way by leaping, head first, through the oily flames.

The other story was of a large-sized, square picture which came back hopelessly, again and again to the easel of its creator until at last it was cut out of its frame, and was given to an old woman to use as a table cover.

The picture was praised by at least one person who appreciated its excellence, for this old lady remarked that it "was much better than those common oil-cloth things that always let the water through, for this one of Mr. Tadema's painting was a good thick one, with plenty of paint on it."

### Business is Business.

Jacob Tome, the Philadelphia millionaire, began life as a hostler. Some time ago, according to the Philadelphia Record, a friend of his, who had been a fellow hostler in Tome's early days, and who had never risen above that, approached him for the loan of \$250. He was informed that he could have it upon producing proper security. This demand for security incensed Mr. Tome's hostler friend, who, turning to him, said: "Why, dang it, Jake, weren't you and I hostlers together?" and received the reply: "Yes, and you're a hostler still."

In winter you can put on enough to be warm, but in summer you can't take off enough to be cool.