

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.
A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

SOMEBODY has sent an infernal machine to the Kaiser. It was too thoroughly anarchistic to be effective. It wouldn't work.

SUCCI, the faster, is insane, and is now in an asylum near Paris. His delusion has taken the form of a belief that he is Caesar and Napoleon in one.

In the matter of office-seeking a Pennsylvanian has set an example. Not getting what he wanted, he hanged himself, and everybody was satisfied.

A wise writer says: "More than half of the work of living comes in caring for superfluous articles of clothing or furnishings that in no way add to our comfort or happiness."

The ben'gn civilization in England is daily pressing back African darkness at the point of the bayonet. And in the sharp contrast that is necessarily drawn it is seen that African darkness possesses many moral advantages.

This is the season of the year when a taffy pull serves the same purpose on a boy's hand that a manicure brush serves on a girl's. If a boy's hands are clean in all the creases, it is a sure indication that he has either been sick, or to a taffy pull.

The "Kentucky Rosebud" is not a horse nor a high-bred heifer, a new society beauty nor yet a band of anything fit to drink. The title—essence of purity, sweetness, and beauty—belongs to a prize-fighter who has been borne to fame by the impetus of his own fist.

PASSENGERS on an overland train recently expressed a desire to lynch the conductor of a sleeping car, and that person hid himself, robbing an interesting spectacle of its legitimate climax. Mr. Pullman ought to teach his employes to be more accommodating, their aim to please.

KITHNE BEVERIDGE is said to have been deserted by Coblan. The latter's wife is said to be ready to welcome the baldheaded truant back to the fold. Meanwhile the ear that expects to hear expressions of sympathy for anyone concerned is apt to strain itself to no purpose.

A **RESIDENT** of Duluth put dynamite in an oven for the purpose of thawing it. It is believed that he succeeded, though neither the dynamite nor the stove can be found to be placed in evidence. There is a large hole in the ground, however, attesting that baked dynamite is unwholesome.

SPEAKING of her husband, the wife of Chris Evans says she has decided to "let the old man take his medicine." The sentiment will not perhaps promote her in public esteem, but it shows her possessed of a ripened judgment that does not propose to tire itself out in reaching after the unattainable.

A **YOUNG** woman who has been systematically swindling charitably disposed citizens when questioned about it remarked that San Francisco was a "distressingly inquisitive place." Since it staggered under the blow of being characterized as a "jav town" San Francisco has not received so crushing a snub.

LAWYER NEWMAN, who threatens to send a Chicago Alderman to Joliet, should be encouraged. One Alderman is not much, it is true, but it would be a beginning. It would encourage the public, and, perhaps, after the first experiment, Mr. Newman might be induced to send the city fathers down in job lots. He couldn't engage in a more pious or popular undertaking.

A **CORRESPONDENT** of the London Engineer propounds the theory that molten earth began to cool at the center instead of at the surface, as is generally thought, instancing the case of large iron castings, which always solidify from the bottom. If the globe cooled in this way, it is evident that near the end of the cooling there were on its surface molten seas and recently solidified continents. As the tide rose and fell the molten matter would solidify in successive layers on the continents, and thus stratified igneous rocks would underlie all the strata subsequently deposited from water.

It is interesting to note that though the Atlantic passenger-carrying trade is not done under the American flag the Americans are still as good shipowners in the world, and that the American flag is flying on a large number of commercial sailing vessels.

premacy. The first transatlantic steamer built in this country in twenty years is to be turned out by the Cramps for the International Navigation Company, the American line owning the Americanized New York and Paris. This new ship is to be called the St. Paul, and a sister ship the St. Louis, the two to be the largest ships ever built in America. They will be 534 feet long, of 11,000 tons, and adaptable to naval uses.

THE girls as well as the boys of the Oakland schools are signing the anti-cigarette pledge. There is rarely a case where girls are addicted to the use of cigarettes, but if the girls and young ladies would sign a pledge to use every effort to discourage the smoking of cigarettes; among boys and young men they would assist greatly in securing beneficial results from the present crusade. If the young ladies would look upon cigarette smoking by young men as a vice many of the latter would abandon the habit rather than be regarded with disfavor by the ladies.—San Jose News.

HYPHENS, when used in this country in connection with the family, may, in the majority of cases, be regarded in the light of a harmless but somewhat ridiculous piece of conceit. In most instances they are adopted for the sole purpose of endowing commonplace Anglo-Saxon patronymics with a glamour of gentility and aristocracy—just in the same way that so many people bearing Dutch or German sounding names coldly assume without any right the predicate of "van" or "von," and those possessing French, Italian, or Spanish names prefix thereto either a "de" or "di." The assumption of the hyphen is only justified when the bequest of landed estates or personal property is made conditional on the legatee's adoption of the name of the testator. In addition to his own, the two patronymics being in that event connected by the hyphen.

THOMAS McNALLY, Charles Kurth, and Edward Warren of Chicago, found guilty of a double murder committed while in the act of burglary, have been sentenced to imprisonment in the penitentiary—McNally and Kurth for life, Warren for twenty years. All three of them ought to have been hanged. The crime was deliberate and cold-blooded. The men were well-known professional thieves and they killed their victims in the way of business. Their escape from the gallows will furnish further encouragement to the murderous thugs of this town who long ago ceased to fear the noose. It may be, however, that the verdict of imprisonment is preferable to a capital sentence. In the latter case the murderer would probably have taken occasion to go crazy twenty-four hours before the time set for the execution and thus escape punishment altogether.

ONE of the things that make doctors and druggists rich is the disinclination of the average city man to take any exercise. The ruralite is compelled to stir his stumps, whether he wants to or not. The work of the farm must be done, and the doing of it involves some exercise. But the dweller in the city, unless he belongs to an athletic club, does without exercise altogether. He won't walk a block if he can help it. He rides to and from his office, and his time at either end of the route is passed in a sitting posture. He doesn't even climb stairs, for elevators are now all but universal. As a general rule he eats more than is good for him, drinks more or less whisky, and consumes unlimited tobacco. The result is disordered stomach, a torpid liver, unstrung nerves and a general smash-up. This country needs a society for the promotion of moderate, healthful, and simple exercise.

THE reluctance of the average "respectable citizen" to have anything to do with politics has been illustrated again at Oswego, N. Y. As in Chicago, the politics of that town is largely conducted by professionals, the solid citizens confining themselves to wringing their hands and gnashing their teeth after some particularly disreputable person has been elected to office. At the last city election the heelers turned out in full force, and chose a most unsavory individual for mayor. That has stirred up the "respectable" element to a pitch where they want to do away with the city elections altogether, and have the principal officers chosen by a select committee, to be elected by the people. How the professionals are to be prevented from electing disreputables to serve on this committee is not exactly clear, but the incident shows the disinclination of business men to go to the polls and do their duty as citizens. They want honest, reputable officers, but they won't take the trouble to elect such men. They stay away from primaries and elections, and then yell when the great candidates are returned to office.

A NOTED MENDICANT.

Boss Hickman Made Congressman "Chip" for His Acquaintance.

Robert Hickman, or "Boss" Hickman, for many years a noted character in Washington, was not a beau at all, except in one particular—like all English beaux he was a gambler, wit, and loafer. He belonged to a respectable family in Virginia, and went to Washington in 1845, at which time he had a considerable patrimony, and could have gone into the most exclusive circles of society, but he preferred the hotels, the public places of resort, and his money was soon lost at the gaming table. Then he began living by his wits. He had a shabby, genteel appearance, an inoffensive, cadaverous countenance, and a though commonly known as "beau," during the latter years of his life, he dressed almost the same in Grant's administration as he did twenty years before. He was a fair story teller, but his stories were not told for nothing. Indeed, all who went to Washington were expected to "chip" for the privilege of his acquaintance. If newcomers were not introduced he would introduce himself, and hint suggestively that they were expected to contribute something. Representatives to the Lower House were let off by paying \$2.50, while Senators were taxed \$5. He would represent to strange as that he was an institution at the capital, and the only fault he had to find with the constitution was that he was not recognized in it. Those who objected to the "chipping" he avoided in the future, but these were not numerous until his late years, when he became shabbier than ever, and was finally excluded altogether from one of the hotels. His family disowned him when they learned his mode of living, and allowed him a small annuity on condition that he remain away from them. His abiding place seemed to be a mystery, since he spent so much time at the public lounging places, but he probably lived over a restaurant near the Metropolitan Hotel, where he was gambling about a stalk of straw, turning alternately to avoid or seize each other, which forcibly brought to my recollection the sport and pastime of young dogs, when they are observed to rise on their hind legs, attempting to bite, overthrow, or seize each other, without once closing their teeth.—Pierre Huber, the Naturalist.

Destroyers of American Homes.

No one with the best interests of our American life at heart can look on with disfavor upon the enormous growth of boarding houses and apartment houses in our large cities, writes Edward W. Bok in "At Home With the Editor," in the Ladies' Home Journal. To a far greater extent than many suppose are these growing factors the destroyers of our American home system. Each year finds the apartment houses more generally patronized by families. It will indeed be a pity if our American women shall continue to chew housekeeping during the next twenty years as they have in the past score of years. Nothing bodes so ill for our children. What recollection does life in an apartment house, a hotel or a boarding house give to a child in after years? The sweetest memory to a man is the hum of his boyhood, and how little sweetness can there be in the memory of a childhood spent as a "cliff-dweller!" A child has a rightful claim to a home influence, and a mother is untrue to her highest trust when she deprives her child of that right. To offer the argument that a home circle can be established in our modern apartment houses just as well as in a home is simply to excuse what we know in our hearts to be an untruth. Home life is only possible in a home. A poor apology indeed for a home is even the most comfortable and gorgeously appointed apartment. Women excuse their resort to this form of life by the excuse of the freedom from the annoyance of servants. But the servant girl problem cannot be solved by shirking it. It seems to me that if some of our American women would trouble themselves less about municipal and suffrage problems, which men will take care of, and devote their much-flaunted capabilities for municipal executive ability toward the solution of the servant girl problem, which is theirs and theirs only, it would be better for our America.

Ustrich Feather Fans.

The handsomest feather fan on record is that owned by the Countess of Lonsdale, which consists of five wide white feathers, the longest twenty inches; with a handle of amber, having her monogram in diamonds, and costing \$1,500, writes Emma M. Hooper in an article on "The Use and Care of Feathers" in the Ladies' Home Journal. Pearl, shell and amber mountings and shorter feathers in the ivy-shaped fans cost from \$25 to \$100. Even for \$20 a dainty one, though simple, may be had. In the closing fans a really choice specimen costs from \$15 to \$25. From \$5 to \$15 c we may very stylish ones, but under that price they have a cheap look, though many are carried in black, light colors and the natural m. ed gray. The sticks or mountings have much to do with the price. A feather fan is supposed to last a lifetime and should always be kept in a box. It is quite a favorite bridal present and is never out of style, but remember that a handsome design of this kind is only suitable for full dress.

Result of an Artistic Concert.

About a year ago a clever artist, in mere caprice, made an ingenious picture of a canal boat being propelled by the trolley. He received a few dollars for the picture, and, so far as he was concerned, that was the end of it. Some coming follow up in

Albany saw the illustration and at once had a bill passed appropriating \$20,000 for experimenting. The results have proved successful and that politician is now on the highway towards becoming a millionaire. That artist is still making pictures. As this sort of power on canal boats is likely to become permanent, it is just as well to tell everybody the name of the poor, struggling artist so that he may get some measure of justice. His name is J. F. Burns.—Detroit Tribune.

Ants at Play.

"I approached one day to the formicary of some wood ants, exposed to the sun and sheltered from the north. The ants were heaped upon one another in great numbers, appearing to enjoy the temperature of the surface of the nest. None of them were at work, and the immense multitude of insects presented the appearance of a liquid in a state of ebullition, upon which the eye could scarcely be fixed without great difficulty, but when I examined the conduct of each ant I saw that they were approaching each other, each moving his antennae with astonishing rapidity, each patting the cheek of one of his fellows. "After these preliminaries, which very much resembled caressing, they were observed to raise themselves upright on their hind legs by pairs, struggle together, seize each other by mandible, foot, or antennae, and then immediately relax their hold, only to renew the attack again in a moment. They would fasten to each other's shoulders, embrace and wrestle, overthrow each other, and then raise themselves by turns, each taking revenge without producing any serious mischief. "They did not spurt out their venom as they do in their real combats, nor retain their holds upon opponents with such obstinacy. I have seen some so eager in these exercises that they would pursue and vanquish several in succession, only struggling with each a few seconds. "In one place two ants appeared to be gambling about a stalk of straw, turning alternately to avoid or seize each other, which forcibly brought to my recollection the sport and pastime of young dogs, when they are observed to rise on their hind legs, attempting to bite, overthrow, or seize each other, without once closing their teeth.—Pierre Huber, the Naturalist.

They Call Her the Storm Spirit.

"There is a storm spirit in Kentucky," said R. C. Babington of that State. "It is not a spirit in reality, but a woman who has become known throughout that section by the name of 'Storm Spirit.' She stands when a storm is impending upon a prominence overlooking the Kentucky river in Morgan County, and her appearance is regarded as an infallible sign that rough weather may be expected. I saw her once, and will never forget how she looked as she stood upon a rocky ledge, her face turned towards the sky as if beseeching some unseen power, her long hair floating in the breeze, her face pale and emaciated, but her expression firm and resolute. My guide, who was conducting me through the mountains, said sentimentally: 'I reckon we'll hev a storm.' That air the 'ere!' From several sources I learned her history—once the belle of the mountain side, she plighted her troth to the young man of her choice. He left for Frankfort on a raft and was never heard from afterward. For many weary months she awaited his return, and then they told her the truth, that he had been drowned in the treacherous river. Then reason deserted her, and ever since when a storm is impending she goes upon the rocks and appears to plead with the elements to stay their fury that her lover may return."—St Louis Globe Democrat.

Testing Nails.

Elaborate experiments made under the direction of the United States Ordnance Department to test the holding power of cut and wire nails respectively, shows a decided superiority for the former, both in spruce and pine wood. Thus in spruce stock nine series of tests, comprising nine sizes of common nails, longest 6 inches, shortest 1 1/2, the cut nail showed an average superiority of 47.51 per cent; in the same wood six series of tests, comprising six inches of light common nails, the longest 6 inches and the shortest 1 1/2, the cut nails showed an average superiority of 47.40 per cent; in 15 series of tests, comprising 15 sizes of finishing nails, longest 4 inches and shortest 1 1/2, a superiority of 72.22 per cent average was exhibited of the cut nails. In another six series of tests, comprising six series of box nails, longest 4 inches and shortest 1 1/2, the cut nails showed an average superiority of 50.88 per cent; in four series of tests, comprising four sizes of floor nails, longest 4 inches and shortest 2, an average superiority of 80.03 per cent was shown by the cut nails. In the 40 series of tests, comprising 40 sizes of nails, longest 6 inches and shortest 1 1/2, the cut nails showed an average superiority of 60.50.

Building a House of Buttons.

Clapton, the French musical celebrity is building a chateau composed entirely of buttons. The walls, the ceiling, the doors, the exterior, the interior, are all ornamented with this novel element of architecture. Buttons of every description, from the very origin of their invention up to those of the present day, have been employed in the arabesque and ornamentation of the walls. Every country has been ransacked, and some curious specimens have been brought to light. Those dating from the lower Greek empire are of the most curious manufacture.—London Tit-Bits.

THE FOREIGN GIRL.

Her gown is made by Feitl, Her shoes by Bonas, Her head's of tan and polka-dot fan Are from the Bon Marche, She drinks the Anglo-saxons, And punctures it with French, And shows the works of Meliere, and Derivatives by Treach.

At table d'hote all cater, To her gastronomic master; The menu hieroglyphic is art, In foreign lingo's grace. Vi andna serves her roll, Madras yields the wines—Figs and dates from foreign States, And grapes from Tuscany vines.

She chats of dear old Naples, Gondolas and guitars; The music-leech ride—the King's height—The Violins and Mary; The Violins she gathered, From Tuscany's lonely tombs The foot of Loreto, and bits Of keopaskas in her room.

She has a charming accent, A string that's Frenchy, too—She dotes on ballades and rondeaux, She cristles, a few, But should you probe one query She'll answer you, my man, With quite a saucy, injured air, With 'Yo American!

ONE WAY OF LOVING.

There was no use denying the fact that Rose Gary was a charming girl. Her laughing eyes declared it, her curly locks declared it, and most of all was it declared by the great host of friends she had won by her gentleness of manner and kindness of heart. She was the kind of a girl that girls fall down and worship. Many a heavy-hearted maiden went on her way happier for having confided in her, for her counsel and sympathy were very comforting. Another characteristic which won for her their adoration was her dislike for the masculine sex. Rather than undergo an introduction to an individual of that order she would miss an evening's pleasure, and although admiring glances were bestowed on her from a distance, the distance must be maintained. "Such a nuisance," she would say, "to think we can't meet a man but that he settles himself back in his chair very comfortably, and after uttering a few words of encouragement for our benefit, expects to be entertained. Excuse me; I prefer to leave the lords of creation to entertain themselves." And so far as she was concerned, they were left to do so.

So the rest of the girls had the good times, and likewise the headaches and laughingly told her that she would surely be an old maid.

"Never you mind, girlies, so long as I don't lose my heart and not be obliged to spend the remainder of my days in search of it, I don't care." And it was true. No one was more blithe and fancy-free than Rose as she lived these happy days of her maidenhood with her fond and indulgent parents.

The dear autumn days of a never-to-be-forgotten year were fast fading and the purring river which could be heard mingling its song with that of the distant water-mill, was bearing on its ripples the first falling leaf, when a change came into Rose's life. Her father died.

They tried to comfort one another in their bitter sorrow, but the tears would flow and the lip would always tremble when they spoke their loved one's name. As the days sped by, however, the terrible oppression was lifted a little from their hearts. They forgot their own sorrow in alleviating the suffering of others and in healing wounds which only they could touch.

It was during a siege of sickness in the Lawrence family that the two youngest children were taken to the Gary home and given into Rose's charge. And he it was that Harry Lawrence was often prone to turn his steps of a pleasant spring evening, just to see the children and see how the patients were thriving.

One evening after the little ones had been cuddled away to slumber, Rose went down-stairs and found him playing and humming a little ballad. As she entered the cosy parlor she could not but notice how manly his form, how massive and well set his head, and, extending her hand to him, she listened to his cordial greeting and thought: "What a dear, kind friend he is."

The evening passed quickly, as happy times do, and at last he said: "Just sing me one song and then I'll go."

"Tell me what to sing," she answered.

"Oh—anything." "Well, anything then. I'll take the first thing I lay my hand on. Here it is—'Beauty's Eyes.' I wonder if you'll like it." After running over a few bars she began to sing:

I want no stars in Heaven to guide me, I need no moon, no sun to shine; While I live, sweetheart, beside me, While I know that thou art mine, I need not fear what evil lies, For a night and we are my pathway lies, I want no stars in Heaven to guide me, While I gaze in your dear eyes.

She sung without the least affectation and with so much sweetness and so much simplicity that no one could help but enjoy it. As for Harry, a spell seemed to have come over him.

What was that feeling which was creeping into his heart so stealthily? What was that thrill that echoed and re-echoed in his heart and soul as she still sang on:

I hear no birds at twilight calling, I catch no fishes in the streams, While your golden words are falling, While you whisper in my dreams, Every sound of joy enravelling, Speaks to your dear voice alone, While I hear your fond lips calling, While you speak to me, my own.

Never before had he felt anything but friendship for this sweet girl, but now he knew that love had taken its place. She had captured his heart by her magnificent song. He was young, loving, impulsive. Upon the impulse of the moment he crossed the room to her side as she rose from the piano with a smile.

"What—must you go?" she was about to say, when he seized her hand in his own and bent his passionate gaze upon her now blushing face.

"Sweetheart," he whispered; "little sweetheart—I never knew before how well I love you. Tell me, my dearest, that you care for me. I can not bear it, if you do not."

Rose could answer nothing, for a storm was raging in her heart. "Did she care for him?" she asked herself. "Could she love him?" Oh, no; she had never dreamed of loving him—and yet—he was so noble, manly, and tender and no one had ever loved her in this new, strange way before.

Again her lover whispered: "Rose, believe me, I love you with all my heart. Say that I can call you my own."

"I cannot promise," she said, "for we are both so young and you cannot yet know your own mind. But if you love me when two years have passed—"

"And you will care for me?" "A little—but remember, if any pretty girl steals your heart from me I won't mind."

"As if such a thing could happen," and after a tender good-night, he left her to dream of happy days to come. Days and weeks hurried by. Harry was called to a distant city to enter into business relations with his uncle. Rose knew well that she would miss her bonnie lad, but she loved him now so truly that she could not bear to think that he might at some future time feel himself bound to her unwillingly. At parting she whispered:

"Remember, dear, if some charming city belle steals that heart of yours—I won't mind."

She said it bravely, but down in her heart of hearts she knew she would mind. As for Harry, looking back at her sweet face as she stood in the doorway, he thought, bitterly: "She can't love me, she doesn't love me, I know," and he felt a dark gloom oppress his heart.

Harry's life away in that bustling, noisy city was a busy one. He saw new faces, met new acquaintances, made new friends. He was popular among his companions and in society. Can it be wondered at, when news from home filtered came rarely, and Rose's letters were of the most silyly kind, he found himself seeking the society of the fairer sex and gradually that of one fairer one alone. He did not mean to be faithless; he believed that Rose did not love him, and did not want his affection. By degrees he felt that that affection was transferred from her to one just as good and beautiful and who, to crown all, gave him her whole heart in return.

It was nearing the approach of summer when he returned to visit the dear home of his childhood, and there he met Rose coming from the village in the twilight. They greeted each other warmly and then, looking up with that winning smile of hers, she said:

"And have you found a real sweetheart, Harry?"

He looked into her eyes with a questioning glance and something like a pang went through his heart as he answered:

"Yes, Rose, we are betrothed. You wouldn't care for me, you know."

What she said she knew not, but when he had left her she strove in vain to soothe the anguish which had taken possession of her. Her soul had had indeed loved truly, but she had lost.—Chicago News.

FEARED HIS WIFE THE MOST.

The Juror Knew His Spouse and Therefore Disobeyed the Court.

On one occasion Judge Andrew Ellison was trying an important case at Macou City, and was desired to rush it through in order to make way for another case coming up next morning, says the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. The court instructed the jury and court officials to return after supper that night, as it was intended to hold a night session. At 7 o'clock all the officers, numerous witnesses, and the jury, with one exception, were promptly on hand. Of course, nothing could be done without the absent juror. The minutes ran into hours, and still the prodigal didn't return. At a late hour court adjourned without having accomplished anything. Next morning, sharp at 9 o'clock, the twelve jurymen were in the box. His honor scanned the crowd, and asked for the truant. He was pointed out, and the court ordered him to stand up.

"Mr. —," said the Judge, addressing the derelict, "didn't you understand the order of the court last night requiring the jury to be on hand after supper?"

"Yes, your honor," said the juror, explaining, "but, you see, I live quite a ways out of town, and my wife gave me an order prior to the court's order, and her order was that I shouldn't stay in town over night. I considered the matter and concluded it was safer to risk your Honor's displeasure than her'n," because, he added, earnestly, "I know her!"

The court looked solemn a moment, as if weighing some mighty problem, then a smile started across his face, and the bar, court, officers, and spectators broke out into tumultuous laughter. The juror was forgiven; there were many there who could, perha, appreciate his position.

His Regrets and Thanks.

Perhaps the worst embarrassments of children come when they begin to receive formal invitations and have to answer them. Young Jimmy, for instance, was much grieved when, after he had struggled for an hour with this reply to an invitation, his mother actually laughed at it:

"Mrs. James Northup declines with pleasure Miss Dorothy Huntington's invitation for the 23d, and thanks her extremely for having given him the opportunity to do so."—Boston Transcript.