

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

WHAT Chicago really needs is fewer suspended lines and more suspended criminals.

RHODE ISLAND's penitentiary is run at a loss of \$20,000. Why don't they order a lock-out and shut down?

"SHOULD Christians go to the theater?" is a screaming headline in a New York paper. Yes, sometimes, if they will refrain from wearing unchristian bonnets.

TRY the effect of good will and hope upon the man who has wrapt himself in the covering of a reckless and sullen despair, and you will see verified the old apologue of the sun, the wind and the traveler.

INDEPENDENT is he who has no wants which he cannot gratify without the least risk of being overtaken by debt or tempted to dishonor a man ten times richer, but with twenty times more wants, is in reality twice as poor.

THE woman suffrage petitions in New York captured the men by wholesale. It remains to be seen, however, whether the signers will vote as they petition. Many a bearded voter will affix his name to a paper when presented by a charming woman and then, when he finds himself in the privacy of an Australian booth, will "vote her down."

ABOUT 300 Hungarians and fifty Italians have left Braddock, Pa., for their native land. They carried all sorts of traps in their bundles, and the steamship agent says that they had from \$300 to \$1,000 each in their pockets. The coal strike had driven them away, and as they will be wealthy at home, we shall not worry if they conclude to stay there and enjoy their otium cum dig.

THE boers in South Africa are about to initiate an order of knighthood to be called De Orde Van Verdienste. They are probably moved to it by jealousy of the numerous members of the titled aristocracy of Great Britain, who, having left "home" for their country's good, are now seeking fortunes in the virgin fields of the Cape Colony, Matabeland, and Mashonaland.

IT is said that engravers in Germany harden their tools in sealing wax. The tool is heated to whiteness and plunged into the wax withdrawn after an instant, and plunged in again, the process being repeated until the steel is too cold to enter the wax. The steel is said to become after this process almost as hard as the diamond, and when touched with a little oil of turpentine the tools are excellent for engraving and also for piercing the hardest metal.

CERTAIN progressive ladies of England have discovered that they have the same right to organize themselves into military companies that the men enjoy and have forthwith proceeded to enlist a battalion of fair volunteers. The actual service of the amazonian regiment will doubtless be confined to dress parade, and though its members may never be called upon to face powder it is assured in advance that not a soldier will ever flinch when confronted with a necessity to powder the face.

THE attempt of the Hungarian Ministry to force the passage of the Civil Marriage bill has been defeated. The bill was a flagrant attack upon ecclesiastical marriage. Under its operation no marriage performed by priest or clergyman, of any denomination, could be recognized as lawful, unless it was supplemented by a civil service. The measure was so strongly urged by the Government that its passage was regarded as reasonably sure when it was first presented. It was defeated in the Upper House by a small majority.

THE east is really waking up. The railroad from Jerusalem to Jaffa is to be extended to Nablus and Gaza, and there is a project on foot for the establishment of a line of steamers on the Dead Sea. The intention is to bring the rich produce of Moab across the sea in a few hours instead of carrying it, as now, around the North and South end of the sea by caravan, a trip of four or five days duration. The next we hear will probably be news of an uprising on the part of the camel drivers against the innovation, which is to take the bread and dates out of their mouths.

AN Italian deputy, who is not enamored of Europe's system of armed peace, recently gave in a speech some striking statistics about the blood tax in each country. He shows that, while it does not appear crushing when estimated per head

per annum, it really is so, because such a large proportion of it falls upon the very poor, and upon those who are hindered by the exigencies of military and naval service from producing wealth. An Italian family, for instance, the head of which perhaps, earns barely 20 cents per day, and that not all the year round, is ground to the very dust by the annual war tax of \$2 for each of its members. How long Europe can or will stand this imposition is a mystery. But it looks as if the end were not far off.

THE idea that a disease artificially communicated while the patient was in good health lost much of its virulence was not a new one. Inoculation with genuine smallpox matter was quite common among the better classes in England before Jenner's time, the matter being obtained originally from mild cases, and afterward from those inoculated. The originality of Jenner's idea consisted in the proposal that cowpox was really smallpox in the cow, and that, when communicated to the human system, it acted as a preventive of the more serious disease. Although Jenner experienced a great deal of opposition, his theory really made its way with great rapidity. He was first able to make the experiment of vaccination in 1796, and compulsory vaccination was enacted in some European countries as early as 1813.

A WOMAN in one of the inland cities of New York State, who has been sued by a lawyer for \$10 for professional services in recovering a seiskin coat, put in a counter claim for advice and assistance in enabling the lawyer to find a suitable spouse. If this claim can be sustained, the energetic dame has met the disciple of Blackstone on his own heath, and gives him a Roland for his Oliver. No one better than he should be able to appreciate the value of good counsel. That the counsel was effective in this case would appear to be proven by the fact that the lawyer is a recent recruit to the army of Benedictees. The woman declares that inasmuch as she "devoted much time and attention to the subject," she believes her services "reasonably worth \$50." On the score that he or she who findeth a good wife findeth a good thing, there can be no doubt of this if all that she alleges be true. It might even be conceded that her rates are ridiculously low.

NEW YORK PRESS: If the reports which come from the Wyoming region of Pennsylvania be true the Wyoming massacre of history has a rival in recent times hardly less atrocious and alarming in many features. The statement is made that during the last year over 200 assassinations have occurred in that section, while only seven of the murderers have been arrested. Within the last three months thirty-five mysterious murders have been reported. Not only has there been a wholesale taking of human life, but property to the value of millions of dollars has been destroyed. If the reports are correct such a condition of affairs is astounding. These crimes are said to have been committed by members of an oath-bound organization made up of ignorant and lawless men, who fly to terrorism and bloodshed to wreak vengeance for fancied wrongs. The State of Pennsylvania owes it to her fair fame to bring the lawbreakers to justice and to crush this latest outbreak of Molly Maguireism.

IT is said that a process has been invented for extracting nitrogen from the atmosphere so economically that sulphate of ammonia can be sold at \$22 per ton for fertilizing purposes, which is only about one-quarter of its present price. The cheapening is rendered possible by the fact that a good quality of illuminating gas is given off as a by product of the process. The gases and vapors of a hydro carbon, as coal or petroleum, are introduced into a retort having a temperature of 2,200 degrees. In this the carbon and the hydrogen separate. Air is introduced, and lime is sifted through the retort. The hydrogen passes off, and is collected and carburated for illumination. The carbon, nitrogen and alkali form a cyanide, which may be decomposed by steam, and sulphate of ammonia is obtained. If this material can be offered as cheaply as stated it should be in enormous demand, and may result in a great increase in what is known as intensive farming in the neighborhoods of the cities.

WHEN a man takes a cigar out of another man's pocket, and the man who loses the cigar is not mad, it is a sign that it is a five center.

NO ONE seems to have as hard a time earning money as the woman who marries for it.

WE hear occasionally the expression "milk white." All the milk we see is light blue.

OUR RURAL READERS.

SOMETHING HERE THAT WILL INTEREST THEM.

Points on Corn Cultivation—The Decadence of the Pumpkin—Controlling the Chinch Bug—Advantages of a Three-Horse Team—Agricultural Notes.

By common consent corn seems to have been given the right of way to the sod lands. There is only one difference of opinion—shall this sod be fall or spring turned? The best answer given was, it depends. Corn is a gross vegetable mold feeder, and the best growth of corn is attained in the most active decomposition of this sod. If fall plowing decomposes this sod before planting, the active principle of corn planting is lost, and the increase of soil temperature with it. It was shown that corn must be given, as closely as possible, a condition of tropical growth, and the decomposing of a sod increases this soil-heat several degrees and so benefits the corn. Sod-plowing where the furrows remain frozen through the winter is all right; otherwise spring turned sod was best.

How deep to plow. Since the experiment stations have shown that on average soil the corn roots completely fill the ground three and often more feet below the surface, the matter of an inch or two in the furrow's depth is inconsequential, and more it now seems that very shallow culture, keeping a fine earth mulch on the surface, conserves the moisture as well or better than a very deep plowing. The 4 or 5-inch furrow seems to have the favor of a great majority of those who practice what is known as shallow plowing, on its side. Another feature seems rapidly growing in favor—that of making the soil very fine and somewhat compact before planting, and not disturbing more than the immediate topsoil in after-cultivation, thus allowing the corn roots undisputed possession of the ground after they have begun to send out their branches, which is very soon after sprouting.

Corn cultivation is simply weed-killing—often including the corn as well—and the repeated experiments at the Ohio station and elsewhere that, other conditions being equal, corn without any culture gave best results both in stalk and grain, and that mulching with straw in the rows was preferable to any plan of cultivation, have set men to wondering if it is not a fact that all corn needs is to keep the weed growth down, and this is best done at the germinating stage of the weed, not after it has taken root. To this end, corn is being drilled in more each year, and a greater number of stalks planted per acre. If weeds can be killed at the germinating stage, then corn, as a plant, need no culture beyond keeping the soil clear of weeds and a surface mulch, there is no valid reason why it should be rowed out both ways, doubling the labor of culture and getting no return for it.—Ohio Farmer.

Growing Pumpkins. The decadence of the pumpkin in the land of pumpkin pies is rather remarkable. Not very many years ago it was a common sight to see the corn and potato fields covered with big, yellow pumpkins in the fall. Now it is uncommon and almost unknown. Is this a mistake of farmers? It may be. Fashions in all things change, and farmers, as well as other folks change with them, without always having a good reason, perhaps. Some argue that pumpkins should not be grown with other crops, because no land should be expected to support two crops at the same time. It is also claimed that they should not be planted with corn, because they need all the sunshine, and the foliage of the corn keeps it from them. Also, that the pumpkin is a plant that needs a great deal of moisture, which, in an arid season, it must either steal from the corn or be deprived of. But old farmers used to insist that they got just as much corn when they raised tons of pumpkins with it as when the corn grew alone. If it is the best way to grow pumpkins by themselves, and probably it is, there is nothing to prevent. The great improvement in winter squashes is, no doubt, one great reason why the pumpkin was lost much of its former popularity for cooking pumpkins. But the cattle and pigs could have their old-time pumpkins that can be raised in such abundance even if they are not quite so sweet and un-grained as their modern rivals. They come at the time when pastures and other crops fail, and will help to keep up the flow of milk at a time when it is apt to fall off. They may be kept, if the barn floor is slightly covered with hay, and fed until midwinter. Some farmers don't like pumpkins in the cornfield because the vines grow rapidly across the rows and make the later cultivation of the crops somewhat difficult. Better give them a field to run riot in exclusively. A light, sandy soil will do, if liberally fertilized. It will give farmers pleasure to see them cover the ground and defy the weeds.—Hartford Times.

Controlling the Chinch Bug. The chinch bug has been the means of destroying millions of dollars in crops of corn and wheat, and serious as this loss has been, it was made still greater by the fact that wherever one of these crops was grown it necessarily precluded the other. The crop of wheat furnished early feed for the first set of hogs which were propagated, and were then ready to fall upon the corn. Or if corn was grown one year it left a brood of chinch bug eggs in the fall, ready to be hatched out and destroy the wheat crop the following spring. The late Experimental Stations of Nebraska and Kansas now provide better ways of keeping the chinch bug in check. This is by propagating a disease among them. There are three separate and distinct diseases, but the one most fatal is a fungous mould which attacks the bugs, and in a week's time converts them into a white, cottony substance. The more numerous the chinch the better does this remedy work. It is not likely that hay, wheat, and corn crops will ever again suffer from this enemy as they have done. After it is once well disseminated, some of the disease germs will be likely to live through the winter in each locality, and check the increase of the chinch bug from the beginning.

Manure in the Green. If there were more forethought, as to what the result would be there would be less drawing of manure late in spring and immediately turning it under a deep furrow. The manure is drawn and spread while the sunshine and spring winds dry it thoroughly before being plowed. In the great majority of instances manure thus plowed under dry in May never gets thoroughly wet until fall rains come. It takes a good rainfall to wet down to saturation six inches of cultivated soil. If below this there is a mass of dry, coarse manure, what chance does it have of becoming moistened? One-half of this manure left on the surface and cultivated into the soil during the summer will do more good. But it will be urged that coarse manure will be in the way of cultivating the crops. The manure ought to be coarse. Four or five days after it is plied it will begin to heat, and in twice that time if forked over once its coarser parts will be dissolved and the mass will be reduced to one-half its former bulk. Then it can be spread on the surface, and even the slightest rains will carry its fertilizing elements into the soil.—Ex.

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SALMON PUT UP IN CANS

An Industry That Will Eventually Exterminate a Very Valuable Fish.

When one comes to think of it it seems wonderful that one should be able to buy a pound of salmon in a can from the Pacific coast for 25 cents. The frozen fish costs 10 cents a pound at least, while the unfrozen article ranges in Eastern markets from 81 up. Besides the manner in which each can is made to contain a segment of salmon perfectly fitted into it appears most surprising, the bones, even to the larger vertebrae, melting in the mouth without requiring so much as a crunch between the teeth and the red flesh separating in beautiful, clean flakes.

Yet salmon would be very much cheaper than at present, were it not that the great canners of Alaska have formed a combination to restrict the product. This is unfortunate for consumers perhaps, but lucky certainly for the fish, which would be wiped out altogether within five years at the most if the companies engaged in their capture had a market for all they could produce at profitable rates. The methods employed are the most destructive conceivable, inasmuch as the fishermen stretch seines across the mouths of the rivers and take the fish which are going up the stream to spawn. There is a law against this sort of thing but it is not enforced. Eventually, doubtless, the supply of this valuable fishery will run out and artificial propagation will have to be resorted to.

Thus far the United States Fish Commission has not extended its operations with respect to the artificial breeding of salmon into Alaska. Its attempts in this line have been limited to the Columbia and Sacramento rivers. In those streams the supply has been successfully maintained, and when the time arrives there is no doubt that similar methods will be applied with equally favorable results to the preservation of the fish in Alaskan territory.

One of the most astonishing discoveries achieved by civilized man is the simple process by which he is able to effectively create myriads of fishes, which otherwise would not have lived, out of a few handfuls of roe.

The salmon caught in the seines and gill nets are brought to the cannery wharf, counted and thrown into heaps. Chinese, their labor being cheaper, are mostly employed for subsequent operations. They take each fish, cut off the head, tail, and fins, remove the entrails and throw the rest of the animal into a big tub. Next the fish is washed and placed in a trough, where several knives, acting after the manner of a feed-cutting, slice it into sections exactly as long as the height of a can. These sections are set on end and split into three pieces each—one piece large enough to fit the can, while the others are smaller. The fragments are then placed on tables and the Chinese fit them into cans. Next the covers are put on the cans and soldered.

After being soldered the cans are put into hot water and watched, in order to see if any bubbles rise, indicating leaks. Those which endure this test successfully are placed in an iron tank and boiled in salt water. Salt water is used in preference to fresh, because it can be raised to a higher temperature. After boiling for one hour and a quarter each can is "vented." This means that a hole is punched into its top to permit the expanded air to escape. Then the hole is soldered up and the cooking is finished by further boiling in salt water for an hour and a half. If they were not "vented" this second cooking would burst the cans.

Finally each can is tested by tapping it on the head with a big nail. If leaky, it will usually give back a "tinty" sound. Great care is taken to avoid leaky cans, because any which are not hermetically sealed will inevitably burst. The meat-decays, pushing up to the top of the can. One so affected is called a "swell-head." If it bursts, it is likely to ruin the whole case. Three salmon will ordinarily fill forty-eight one-pound cans, making one case. The cans are made on the premises out of sheet tin.

Seals and sea lions are a great nuisance to the salmon fishermen. At the mouth of the Columbia river they watch the gill nets and grab the caught salmon by the throats, devouring those parts which they regard especially as tidbits. Bears are very fond of salmon and catch a great many of them in the streams. They eat only the heads. De gustibus—you know the rest. Chinese are forbidden to fish for salmon in the Columbia river on penalty of being shot on sight. Therefore they do not fish.

Shopping in Turkey.

Though the Turks cannot be called lazy, yet they like to take their time. Patience, they say, belongs to God; hurry, to the devil. Nowhere is this so well illustrated as in the manner of shopping in Turkey. This was brought particularly to our notice when we visited the Sivas bazaars, to examine some inland silverware for which the piece is celebrated. The customer stands in the street inspecting the articles on exhibition; the merchant sits on his heels on the booth floor. If the customer is of some position in life, he climbs up and sits down on a level with the merchant. If he is a foreigner, the merchant is quite deferential. A merchant is not a merchant at all, but a host entertaining a guest.

Coffee is served; then a cigarette is rolled up and handed to the "guest" while the various social and other local topics are freely discussed. After coffee and smoking, the question of purchase is gradually approached; not abruptly, as that would

involve a loss of dignity; but circum-spectly as if the buying of anything were a mere afterthought. Maybe, after half an hour, the customer has indicated what he wants and, after discussing the quality of the goods, the customer asks the price in an off-hand way, as though he were not particularly interested. The merchant replies: "Oh, whatever your Highness pleases," or "I shall be proud if your Highness will do me the honor to accept it as a gift." This means nothing whatever, and is merely the introduction to the haggling which is sure to follow.

The seller, with silken manners and brazen countenance will always name a price four times as large as it should be. Then the real business begins. The buyer offers one-half or one-fourth of what he finally expects to pay; and a war of words, in a blustering tone, leads up to the close of this every day farce.—The Century.

Counterfeit Money.

So much ingenuity is required to make a counterfeit bill, that it seems strange a skilled workman cannot earn money in an honest way but no legitimate use has yet been found for this particular sort of talent, which in numerous instances seems to be inherited. Of sixteen notorious counterfeiters, five were members of one family and four of another. In one branch of the Smith family, all the scions, from the great grandfather down, have distinguished themselves in their peculiar line. Now that it is unlawful to have in one's possession counterfeiters or even pictures of any coin, many long cherished curios have found their way to the Secret Service Division of the Treasury in Washington. Here also may be seen a framed sheet bearing facsimiles of the postage stamps of nearly every country and are, artistically grouped. It was originally intended for a wall paper design, but it was such an excellent imitation that it has never adorned any wall but this. The specimen is between two and three feet square and the work is so well done that it takes very close observation to see that it was not made up of single stamps pasted on a sheet. There are also a number of ingenious coin makers' tools, dies and presses. A gas generator and stove which would go into a moderate sized handbag, was yet large enough and complete enough to emit the hottest flame on record. This enabled its owner to work successfully and safely for a long time. It takes an exceedingly hot fire to coin money, and usually the plant is bulky, but this man was able to do his work in a summer hotel bedroom. A very little counterfeit money is ever in circulation. Frequent complaints of bad notes come from a certain section. It will seem as if there must be a lot of them in the neighborhood, when in reality the trouble may all proceed from a single bill, which people keep sending from hand to hand so rapidly that it seems to multiply. Few men who have unwarily taken a fraudulent note are honest enough to miss an opportunity to rid themselves of it at the expense of another. Counterfeit coin is much more plentiful, especially in silver, from a dollar down to the ten-cent piece. Even nickels and pennies are not too valueless to escape.

Ives and His Fateful Number.

The stories of the career of the late distinguished Henry S. Ives, Napoleon of finance, put King Midas, Monte Cristo and other gilded potentates into the shade in the line of startling effects. Ives started at eighteen, a green farmer's boy, on a salary of \$2 a week. It took him two years to force his salary up to \$10 a week. But after this cross-haul beat to windward he rounded the majority buoy, squared away, setting all sail, and in less than a year had scooped in \$30,000. Six months later he had "made" \$85,000, and before he was twenty-two had "milked" \$2,000,000 out of a single railroad. The next year his assets mounted \$31,000,000. All this was accomplished in just four years. Then began the decline, which ended in his death at thirty. Certainly all history has failed to produce another such protechnic display in the financial heavens as this. A very remarkable feature in this man's career will interest those who incline to the old Pythagorean doctrine that our fates are ruled by numbers. The fateful number of Ives was eight.

He first broke the eighth commandment just eight deals, and at the close of the eighth was arrested and imprisoned in 1888. He finished the eighth year of his career at exactly 8 o'clock on April 18. Of course, any assumed relation of our fates to numbers is fanciful and superstitious, though some of the ancients believed it. But as no man can know what his fateful number is until too late to recover from disaster, the safest way is to go easy, be honest, earn what one gets and exercise proper economy with it.—Boston Globe.

Lamps on Demand.

On the London underground railways, penny-in-the-slot electric lamps have come into use. It is two years since the first experimental lamps were put on a few trains. Since then arrangements have been made to fit the lamps to all trains and the work is now complete. They are four lamps in each compartment. The ordinary light is usually insufficient. A penny put in the slot obtains electric light which lasts half an hour. If more light is wanted another penny must be inserted. The lamps are placed at the back of the seat so as to throw the light on the book or paper.

A SLIP on marble steps has broken many a neck.