

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

You are right about asking the Lord to take care of you at night if you are going to sleep in a folding bed.

An English writer describes Poe and Emerson, "the one as the artist of the beautiful, and the other as that of the true."

A Kentucky woman claims she was married while she was asleep. That's all right. There is nothing like marriage to open one's eyes.

Visitors to the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky are less than they were ten years ago although the cave has been explored to a depth of eleven miles.

A WHILOM distinguished and now extinguished gentleman from Kentucky is the latest proof that a man may lose many opportunities by taking a fool advantage of one.

That baseball umpire who committed suicide was undoubtedly driven to his fate by the fear that he would sooner or later encounter the Chicago club in the performance of his official duties.

What a tragedy was that of the three poor little children who perished in a wardrobe closet in a box car in a Connecticut depot yard, where they had gone to play. Like Ginevra of the old legend, in her trunk, they were suffocated!

REV. CLEMENT W. LEWIS of Tennessee has retired from the pulpit for a vacation of twenty-eight years. During this period he will have time to reflect upon the futility of trying to lay up treasure in heaven while working fraudulent pension schemes of a decidedly earthy flavor.

SOMEBODY has discovered that the law in Massachusetts permits girls to marry at the age of 12 years. Striking variance between the law and the facts is shown by the census figures, which report that something like 200,000 girls in Massachusetts have failed to get married at all.

It has been computed that about 28,000,000 babies are born into the world each year. It will probably startle a good many persons to find, on the authority of a well-known statistician, that, could the infants of a year be ranged in a line in cradles, the cradles would extend round the globe.

HUMAN bones are much cheaper than those of many other animals. One can buy a nicely articulated skeleton of a man for \$10, or of a woman for \$15—sex makes some difference in the price—whereas the skeleton of a gorilla costs \$300, of a whale, \$1000, of an elephant, \$400, of a lion, \$750, of a horse, \$250, of a cat, \$12, and of a pig, \$7.

Tax Bureau courts have reversed the previous received local assumption that when a husband and wife are drowned in the same disaster, the wife dies first. The assessor doctors have testified unanimously that the man would be the first to die, because the woman is more agile and keeps herself longer above water. In fact, she is the hardest kicker.

TWENTY-FOUR-CARAT GOLD is all gold; twenty-two-carat gold has twenty-two parts of gold, one of silver, and one of copper; eighteen-carat gold has eighteen parts of pure gold and three parts of silver and copper in its composition; twelve-carat gold is half gold, the remainder being made up of three and one-half parts of silver and seven and one-half parts of copper.

If you cannot spend \$1,000 a week in advertising spend \$500. If you cannot spend so much spend \$100; and if your business will not allow more than \$10 to be so invested spend that. Seed will grow just as well when bought in 5-cent packages as when bought in bushels. Remember that novelty is the great charm of advertising. Originality is what the world sighs for.

A WOMAN is to be made crier for the United States Courts at Portland, Ore., thus displacing one more man. It is remarkable that this province of man has not been before invaded by woman. The development of the feminine voice in the hundreds of years that it has been calling Johnny and Jimmy to "come straight into this house" must have rendered it highly useful in the business of a crier.

BUFFALO BILL'S romantic story about the young woman he has been hunting in a deserted van has been so completely covered by an advertiser to the point of advertising purposes. He says that he found her on

the plains a babe, the sole survivor of a murdered band of emigrants. She says that he found her in London, full grown. With this apparent discrepancy adjusted the young woman will be ready to star.

The way in which the criminal law seeks to meet the common enemy of humanity seems to be improving all the time. When a man in New Jersey "stands charged that he is under serious danger of murdering" a man who has been dead for six weeks, it will be realized that justice gives promise of regaining her eyesight. If from no other cause than wonder, New Jersey law always has been something different.

ENGLISH paper manufacturers now acknowledge the superiority of American ground wood pulp over that produced in Scandinavia. One prominent manufacturer is quoted by an English exchange as saying that the American article is better because the wood is ground longitudinally, instead of across the log, as is the case with most Swedish pulps, and because nothing but spruce wood is used in the manufacture.

PEOPLE are growing tired of the false logic of criminals and the spurious plea of lawyers. It has been considered horrible by many people to hang a lunatic. But inasmuch as the doctors are persuading us that everybody is more or less crazy, and that all criminals have "hereditary lesions" in the brain impelling them toward drunkenness, arson, or murder, let us overcome our horror of hanging crazy people. Let us hang a few of them, in order to see what effect it has on the rest.

NEW YORK'S constitutional convention has declared against the \$5,000 limit of damages which may be collected from a railroad for killing a human being. This declaration does the delegates and the State of New York more credit than any other action which has marked the sessions of the convention. Now let all the other States in whose statute-books that iniquitous \$5,000 limitation has place follow the example of the Empire State, which in this case is worthy of the position she claims at the head of the column of American commonwealths.

MARLENE POLLARD will not go on the stage after all. This latest report is said to have come from her manager, who gives as the reason for her withdrawal that provincial managers refused to permit her to play in their theaters. If such is the case and the laxity of preparations makes it probable, the provincial managers should receive credit for a great service to the drama. It is the popular idea that managers of country theaters will accept whatever is proffered them, an idea which Neilson Roberts seemed to share when he took upon himself the unsavory job of exhibiting Miss Pollard.

The unfortunate Chicago man who committed suicide to get rid of the torture of a carbuncle must have been employing the ancient method for curing that affliction—namely, poulticing and oddling it in order to keep the scource alive as long as possible. Had he known the scientific method, instead of the grandmother's—namely, touching it with a tiny drop of carbolic acid—he might have been rid of the pest in a day and survived to render his life useful to others, if not tolerable to himself. If Job had only known the properties of carbolic acid he would have made a much more cheerful contribution to the scriptures.

WILLIAM SHINN of Chicago, arrested for the larceny of a new suit of store clothes, claimed that he stole the garments because his sweetheart made fun of his shabby attire and he wanted to dress better to please her. Mr. Shinn and his story supply convincing evidence of the evolution of man toward the standard fixed by the idealists. Had he lived 5,000 years ago and found himself in a similar predicament he would unquestionably have claimed that the woman stole the clothes and gave them to him. Although he still charges her with responsibility for his crime he does not accuse her of being a guilty participant. Truly the world moves and proud man gradually approaches that lofty plane which it was intended by nature he should occupy and adorn.

Carried in a Canoe. An inventor has produced an electric canoe lamp. The handle of the canoe contains an incandescent lamp, the two poles of which are connected with the plate of a battery. Below this is a small chamber to carry the battery fluid. When it is desired to use the lamp the cap is taken off and the canoe inclined so that the liquid it contains comes in contact with the electrodes. A current is thus produced that will, it is asserted, keep the light going for an hour.

Those that least fear death are the last to seek it.

DID NOT LIKE THE TELLER'S EYE.

As a Direct Consequence, He Lost a Night's Sleep.

A young man who is employed in a big establishment in this city went to the cashier recently and asked him to put a small sum of money in the safe for him, so that he could be sure of knowing that it would not get lost. The next morning he appeared before the cashier looking very nervous.

"Can I have my money back?" he asked, anxiously.

"Certainly," said the cashier, "if you want it. It's yours, and yours only."

The young man took his money and went away much relieved.

This incident related to an up-town group, reminded a man, who is a millionaire, of an early experience in his life.

"When I was young," he said, "I went out West looking for gold. I landed finally in a mining camp in Idaho in pretty bad condition financially, but here I had a little luck and began to save. When I had accumulated gold dust worth a couple of hundred dollars I tramped down the valley to a mining town and deposited it in the bank there. Then I trudged back to my cabin.

"I got to thinking that evening and the more I thought about it the more I knew that I did not like the look in the eye of the chap who had received my money. It was impossible for me to go to sleep so I got up somewhere around midnight, dressed and walked back down the valley, getting to the town about 5 o'clock in the morning. There I sat down on the steps of the bank to await developments. I had thoroughly made up my mind by this time that there was not one chance in a thousand of my ever getting back my money. I did not believe that the man would be in the bank when it was opened. He had taken my money and fled. But I had brought my revolver, and I was determined to kick up a terrible rumpus with somebody about it. I sat there until a man came along in the morning and opened the doors. I asked him for my money, and he said he couldn't give it to me; that I would have to wait for the teller. That was just what I had expected. The teller was the man with the bad eye, and I knew he would not turn up.

"All right," I said to the man, "I'm going to wait here, and if some one doesn't produce my money pretty quick there is going to be trouble."

"Well, that man with the bad eye did appear, much to my surprise. I watched him enter the bank, go behind the counter, and get ready for business. Then I went up to him, holding out the slip of paper which he had given me as an acknowledgment of my deposit.

"I want my money," I said, in a tone that meant business.

He looked at me, evidently recognizing me, with a smile on his face.

"Now," I said, "don't try to make excuses. I want my money, and I'm going to have it."

"At that he burst into laughter. 'My son,' he said, 'you may have it, if you want it, but there is no need to worry about it. See here,' and he threw open a vault door, showing me whole sacks of gold.

"He finally convinced me that my little \$200 was safe, but that night of worry over my deposit was the worst I ever spent over financial troubles."—New York Tribune.

RULER OF THE NAVY.

Secretary Herbert Has Power Which Cannot Be Outlined.

"There is one man in the United States who has more power than the President and all the federal courts combined," said a naval officer recently. "The Secretary of the Navy is the man. His power over officers of the navy is autocratic. He can, without the aid of a court, fine an officer all the way from \$100 to \$1,000 a year, according to his rank, and simply to suit the whim of the Secretary. Unlike officers of the army, officers in the navy are not paid a uniform and fixed compensation. In the army the salary of an officer is fixed by law, and no one, not even the President, can deduct a cent from that pay without a court-martial. In the navy there are three regular grades of pay. In the case of a rear admiral, which is the highest rank in the navy, the pay at sea is \$8,000 a month shore duty this is reduced to \$5,000, while if the officer is on sea or absence or 'waiting orders' this is reduced to \$4,000.

"Now suppose a rear admiral is ordered to the command of the fleet in the North Atlantic. The Secretary of the Navy proposes to visit the fleet. He is received on board the flagship with all the honors due his station, and the admiral does his best in the way of entertainment. Suppose again, when the secretary sits down to dine at the admiral's table he finds that a cheap brand of American wine is served instead of his accustomed Chateau Lafite. The secretary determines to resent this indignity. He goes ashore and decides to relieve an admiral, who knows nothing of the first principles of hospitality. He issues an order detaching the admiral and placing him on waiting orders. Then on the following day he determines to punish him still further. He calls in the Chief of the Bureau of Navigation and directs that Admiral Bowline be given an indefinite furlough. That means that instead of drawing \$8,000 a year as he was yesterday, the late admiral of the North Atlantic finds his income suddenly reduced to \$4,000, and all because he has offended the ruler of the navy in some slight matter.

"Cannot the admiral appeal? Certainly not. There is no one to whom he can cry out. The President has no power to review the decisions of the Secretary of the Navy in matters

of this kind. This is an extreme case, of course, but it would not be difficult to point out where lieutenants have had their pay cut from \$2,000 to \$900 by a Secretary who had a grudge."

Rather Too Smart.

A person who attempts to do something that is not strictly honest may happen to be the one who gets created. In the effort to be tricky there is a chance that he will over-reach himself, and fall a victim to his own shallowness.

One day lately, as a man was walking in a retired part of a certain city, where there are still wooden sidewalks, he chanced to look down through a crack in one of the boards, and saw the gleam of a silver coin.

Seeing another man approaching, he got down on his knees, and began to peer very earnestly through the crack. The stranger came up, and, seeing the man in this position, naturally asked him,—

"What's up?"

"Of course, it would have been more correct to say 'What's down?' but the man understood, all the same.

"Why, you see," he replied, "I was walking along here, and happened to take some loose change out of my pocket. A half dollar slipped through my fingers and rolled down through this crack."

"I see," said the stranger. "But why don't you get it out?"

"Well, I haven't anything to pry up the boards with, and I can't get it out with my cane. Tell you what I'll do. If you'll go to that house over there, and borrow a hammer or an ax, or something I'll sit here and watch the place, and go shares when we get the half dollar."

"All right," assented the stranger. And he started off for the ax or the hammer, while the other man sat down on the edge of the sidewalk and smiled slyly.

The stranger, soon came back, carrying an ax, and under the directions of the first man, who seemed willing to let him do all the work, a board was taken up. Then the man with the ax reached his arm down through the opening and brought up, not a half dollar, but a dollar, which he coolly put into his pocket, saying,—

"I believe you said you lost a half dollar. Then this can't be yours, can it?"

Then he nailed the board in its place, and walked away to return the ax, whistling "Comrades," while the other man sauntered thoughtfully down the street, saying to himself,—

"It was mighty stupid of me to guess at the denomination."

An Alarmed Critic.

When Robert Browning's poem of "Sordello" appeared, it astonished his friends and amazed the public. Douglas Jerrold's first perusal of the poem furnishes an amusing anecdote. This distinguished contributor to Punch was recruiting his over-attendant had forbidden Mr. Jerrold the luxury of reading, but as he happened to be alone when the parcel arrived there was no one to remind him of the ban placed upon the enjoyment of which he had been so long deprived.

A few lines of the poem put him in a state of alarm. Sentence after sentence he read without comprehension, and suddenly the idea flashed across his mind that in his illness his mental faculties had been completely wrecked.

The prespiration rolled from his forehead, and he sank back, crying: "I am an idiot!"

When his wife and sister came in, he pushed the volume toward them, demanding that they read it, and tell him what they thought of it. He watched with anxious interest as his wife read the beginning of the poem.

A look of intense relief came over his face, as he saw his wife's steadily deepening expression of perplexity. At last she said with perfect sincerity: "I don't understand what the man means; it is perfect gibberish to me!"

The Bloodiest Battle Ever Fought.

We suppose that the battle at which Marius conquered the Teutons and Cimbri was the bloodiest in history, but that was really a massacre after a fight. More than 200,000 men, women, and children were slaughtered by the Romans. The bloodiest battle of civilized times was that of Lepanto, on October 19, 1571, and 10,113. It was fought between the French on one side and the Austrians, Prussians, and Russians on the other. The French had 30,000 men in the field, the allies 40,000. More than 9,000 men perished—that is, one in every five, a very heavy proportion. The French were defeated.

The law of precedent should not be allowed to supplant that of principle.

USE OF MULES IN THE MINES.

They Are Often Hurdled for Years in the Cavernous Depths.

It is a common thing for mules to be imprisoned for years in the limited light of the mines. Our acquaintance, "China," had been four years buried. Upon the surface there had been the march of the seasons, the white splendor of snows had changed again and again to the glories of green springs. Four times had the earth been adia with the decorations of brilliant autumns. But "China" and his friends had remained in these dungeons from which daylight, if one could get a view up a shaft, would appear a tiny circle, a silver star aglow in a sable sky.

Usually when brought to the surface these animals tremble at the earth, radiant in the sunshine. Later they go almost mad with fantastic joy. The splendor of the heavens, the grass, the trees, the breezes break upon them suddenly. They caper and career with extravagant mullish glee. Once a miner told me of a mule that had spent delirious months upon the surface after years of labor in the mines. Finally the time came when he was to be taken back into the depths. They attempted to take him through a tunnel in a hillside, but the memory of a black existence was upon him. He had all the strength of a hind for which his race is famous. No edgelings could induce him. The men held conference and discussed plans to budge that mule. The celebrated quality of obstinacy in him won him liberty to gambol dumsily about on the surface.

After being long in the mines the mules are apt to duck and dodge at the close glare of the lamps, but some of these have been known to have piteous fears of being left in the dead darkness. They seem then, somehow, like little children. We met a boy once who, said that sometimes the only way he could get his resolute team to move was to run ahead of them with the light. Afraid of the darkness, they would trot hurriedly after him and so take the train of heavy cars to a desired place.—McClure's Magazine.

George Eliot.

The letters of the late Prof. Edward L. Youmans give an interesting glimpse of the great novelist, George Eliot, through the eyes of the equally great biologist, Herbert Spencer, who was one of her most intimate friends.

Spencer regarded George Eliot as the greatest woman living, if not the greatest female intellect that ever appeared in the world.

The novelist lived very quietly, receiving few friends, but Spencer was a mitted at all times. He called there one day as she was finishing the "Mill on the Floss," and Mr. Lewes, who was just leaving the house, met him on the steps.

"Ah, Spencer," he exclaimed, "do go in and comfort Polly. She is crying her eyes out over the death of her children," meaning Tom and Maggie Tulliver.

On another occasion Lewes had arranged to take a ramble in the country with Spencer and Youmans, but instead of him appeared the following note:

"As your philosopher—Polly is ill, and as husbands see indivisible (and for that reason probably no matter), I am sorry to say that I shall not have a leg or corselet at your service.

Faithfully yours—G. H. Lewes."

The quip on the divisibility of matter is a fair specimen of the puns and jokes with which Lewes was always bubbling over.

Sensible and Practical.

Some time ago an appeal was made in England for funds with which to raise a memorial of some kind to Gilbert White, the naturalist who, by his writings on out-of-door subjects, made his village of Selborne famous, and founded a school of writers on natural history.

The appeal resulted in the raising of the sum of about twelve hundred and fifty dollars. This would not have procured a very magnificent monument of marble; and through some one's ingenuity, a hydraulic ram to bring water to Selborne has been substituted for the usual honorary memorial.

This is a strange monument, but it is a very sensible one. By means of the ram, water will be forced from this spring above the village to which the villagers have had to journey for water from time immemorial, into a reservoir, and then through pipes to the houses or near them.

How They Ran.

Michael Flaherty was in court as a witness, and with each succeeding question put to him his never brilliant mental powers became more and more confused. At last he was asked to tell about the situation of a certain flight of stairs.

"How do those stairs run?" asked the examining counsel, whose patience was well-nigh exhausted by his efforts to elicit information from Michael.

"What is it ye're askin' me now?" inquired that bewildered young man.

"I asked you how those stairs run," repeated the counsel, with great distinctness of enunciation.

"Them stairs?" muttered Michael, evidently in a slough of doubt. "Ud denly I'm stupid face brightened.

"Why, sorr," he said, with his eyes fixed on the counsel, whose gaze he felt sure would now be approving, "if you is at the fut o' them stairs, they jist rin up, but stand at the top o' em, and they fir down, sorr."

THE MAN WITH A CALF.

He Was Red-Headed and Vigorously Defended His Rights.

On top of a load of hay which came into the western haymarket the other day, was a man of 60 and a young man of about 23—father and son. The vehicle had so soon come to a halt than both scrambled down, and it was then seen that the young man's nose was about twice its normal size and his eyes were blackened and puffed until he could scarcely see daylight. There was blood on his face and shirt-front, and of course there was a natural curiosity among the men lounging around to know what had happened.

"No, William had no sooner agin' a bridge or have a tree fall on him," said the father, as he wet his handkerchief at the drinking trough and wiped away the blood. "The fact is that he met with a disappointment on the road as he was comin' in."

"What sort of a disappointment?" queried a policeman who intended to recommend raw beef and perfect quiet for three or four days.

"Well, you see, William was drivin' when we left home. We had come along about three miles when we meets a red-headed man leadin' a calf. A feller with a calf orter turn out and give the road to a load of hay, but this one wouldn't. He jist turned out half way and stood still and yelled that he'd be durned if he moved another inch. Then I says to him, says I, 'Bill, he's a peppery cuss, and you'd better jist run out.'"

"Yes; you ought to have turned out for a red-headed man," said the officer.

"I says that to Bill, but Bill he says to me, says he: 'I'll be hanged if I do! If he don't turn out I'll get down and make him wish he'd never bin born into this sinful world.' Then he bolters at the man and warns him of what is to come, but the red-head don't skeer with a cent. He ties the calf to a bush and spits on his hands and screams for both of us to come down to once."

"Then you gave the road?" asked the officer.

"Nope. I wanted to, but Bill he says to me, says he: 'Dad, you hold the lines and I'll git down and gin that cuss one bat on the nose and put him to sleep for two hours.' I didn't want Bill to do it, but he was sot; and down he went. He off with his hat and gin a yell and bore down on the man with the calf."

"And put him to sleep?"

"Nope. He never closed an eye to sleep. When Bill lighted on him suthin' happened—suthin' happened to Bill. He stopped all of a sudden and laid down, and when he got up again he was as you see him now. The red-headed man invited me to come down and light on him also, but I didn't accept. He had been gone about ten minutes when Bill woke up."

"What did Bill say?" asked the officer.

"Nawthin' that I heard. Bill, did you say anythin' when you come to?"

"Num," replied Bill with a solemn shake of the head.

"And you didn't say anythin' for the next two miles, did you?"

"Num."

"And then all you said was to ask me if you'd been struck by lightning?"

"Yum."

"That's all, as far as I kin remember," continued the father, "and now if you'll sorter look out for my hay, I'll lead Bill to a doctor and see whether he's mortally injured or only crippled for life. Come on, Bill, you hain't bin sayin' a word since you was struck, and all you've got to do now is to step high and lean on daddy's arm."—Free Press.

Corrupt Police.

In the recent investigation of the police of New York City witness after witness gave evidence as to the corruption that prevailed throughout the force. Saloonkeepers, "green goods" men, the keepers of the vilest resorts, all testified that they made regular payments to the police, and in return were protected in carrying on the most unlawful occupations.

Not only the patrolmen but the officers also were implicated in these offences. To be sure the witnesses were not men and women whose word, even whose oath, was good for much; but when we remember the fact that it would be their interest to deny that they had been protected, rather than to prefer false charges, their testimony becomes more credible. Moreover so many persons told the same story that it is almost impossible not to believe it.

No one needs to be told how the police force of New York is chosen—that the men are selected for political reasons, by party bosses; and that the object is not so much to secure public order as to control the politics of the city.

But the purpose of a police force is to see that the laws are obeyed and respect. The force should be made up of good men. If any system of selecting them results in the choice of bad men, the system is bad. And it is ten times as important to keep the force pure as it is to secure the financial right of any person, or of a hundred thousand persons, to a voice in the election.—You'll Companion.

They Were There. It was aptly said of the Columbian Exhibition that one might almost elbow his own grandmother and never know it.

A Massachusetts gentleman, having his camera along, took a snap shot at a certain scene.

When he reached home and developed his photograph, there in the foreground were his brother and sister-in-law, near neighbors of his, whom he had not supposed to be within a thousand miles of Chicago.

Never read anything as a duty; only read such looks as interest you.