

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

Comments and Citations Based Upon the Mopping-up of the Day—Historical and News Items.

DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN, as long as ever you can, in every place you can.

A WILL just filed in New York consisting of twenty-four words, dispensed of \$300,000 and can't be broken. A lawyer-proof will is a pleasing and valuable curiosity.

TRUE power is calm, self-contained, seeking not for recognition, but willing patiently to bide its time, and anxious only to meet the demands, however arduous and trying, that may be made upon it.

MRS. CALVE has followed the example of her sister singers, Patti and Minnie by buying a castle, and until it is paid to the balance of trade will be against the United States throughout the opera seasons.

ATTORNEY MRS. ELLA KNOWLES of Montana does not seem to care whether or not she has jumped the hedge bounding woman's sphere. She has just pocketed a \$10,000 fee, and can pay her way in whatever sphere may happen to environ her.

LONDON has "reformed" its music halls by making stringent regulations as to the character of both performers and frequenters. In a selfish sense American moralists have little reason to rejoice over this much-needed reform. Unless proper arrangements for fumigation be made at New York this country will be devastated by noxious "Gaiety" and "Folly" theatrical camp lies as never before.

VEGETARIANISM is vegetating. A former officer of the German army, Herr Waethe, a wealthy man has gone to California to purchase ground to establish a vegetarian colony. His disciples, however, are to eat fruit and vegetables only in the raw state, live in unfurnished huts and wear as little clothing as possible. In the colony are twelve German noblemen. Query: At this rate how long will it require to convert the world?

ONION-GROWING farmers in Massachusetts are complaining of a law passed last winter making the standard weight of a bushel of onions 57 pounds, instead of 50 pounds, as before. Any one used to handling onions knows that 57 pounds cannot be got into a standard bushel measure, nor yet into two half bushels heaped with all the onions that can hold. The law is simply an outrage. It gives greater profit to the shipper, for the onions bought at 57 pounds per bushel are shipped to other States where the old standard of measurement is maintained.

Most substances occupy a less space in the solid than in the liquid state; some, however, expand on solidifying, and water belongs to the second and smaller class. An obvious result of this is that ice floats on the top of water, and another result known to us all that, when water freezes in a pipe, the force with which it expands on changing to its solid condition is very apt to burst the pipe, with effects which are often unpleasant, on the arrival of the thaw. This expanding force is of extraordinary magnitude, and hollow bombs made of strong and thick metal have been burst by being first filled with water, and then thrown out into the open air on a frosty day.

The great fortune amassed by the late Dr. Heinold was a powerful testimony to the benefits of advertising. It is said that he spent a million dollars in advertising his buchu, and the money came back to him ten-fold. But he could not stand prosperity, and so his money went almost as fast as it came. There are many startling stories about his reckless expenditures. He gave \$50,000 as a campaign fund, and spent \$20,000 upon a team of white horses and a barouche, in which he took Gen. Grant to the Moonmouth race course the day it was opened. He gave \$100 to a poor shoemaker for tapping the heels of his shoes, and to a poor flower girl in the lobby of a hotel he paid \$20 advice for all bouquets she had on her tray.

THE fitting of self for one's sphere is much needed in all business and in all life, yet it is grievously neglected. Position is confounded with service. How to get into the coveted place occupies the thoughts and efforts almost exclusively but how to meet its responsibilities and perform its duties is a secondary consideration. Thus are eagerly sought and welcomed all kinds of outside helps and lists that can through money or influence or other means push the aspirant up nearer to his ambitious goal, while he escapes the discipline and misses the benefit which would

accrue did he slowly and laboriously ascend the many steps of learning and preparation and practice that lie between his present condition and that which is needed in his hoped-for future.

COMMONLY, there is an objection to big ears. Polite people, with fancy theories in their heads, hold that large ears are vulgar; and the others object to them because they are so far away from the head that they are apt to be frozen off in the winter. But a case has just been decided in court in New Jersey, in which a piece of a man's ear was cut off by a trolley car, and the company had to pay the man \$200. If a man can sell his ears at that rate to the bloated corporations, of course the more pieces there are in his ears the grander are the possibilities for fortune thus opened to ordinary humanity. Any man or woman with only their little, elegant ears, like small sea shells could make nothing. Ordinary juries would hold ears of that sort as having, perhaps, not more than one or two cuts in each; but there is an easy fortune in those nobly developed appendages which make an ordinary head look like a jar with two handles.

One of the reports in regard to the value of wheat as a food for hogs is that it produces a much better quality of pork than corn. The fat of the hog is flatter, and the meat is a whole sweeter and of better flavor. This report corroborates the views of those who have held that European pork is sweeter than American pork, because in Europe the animals are not fed on corn. On the other hand, Prof. Chilcott of the South Dakota agricultural experiment station asserts from observation that the qualities of pork made from corn and from ground wheat are about equal. As to the flavor of the pork from wheat and corn, it is hardly worth while to speculate; taste differs, and in consequence reports would be worthless. The experiments with wheat as food for farm animals will be of great value to farmers. There is no reason why the farmer should not feed wheat to his hogs and his cattle when prices are low, if he can thus get better returns for his labor than by marketing it as grain. Moreover, in using wheat the "great American hog" may be made a better and a sweeter animal when he appears on the butcher's block.

THERE are few better uses for our millionaires than making them engine drivers. It is one of the most attractive of the occupations. The work, if work it may be called, is light, and though it calls for brains and keenness of the senses, our millionaires are not wanting in those qualities. What makes work of it in a real sense is the fact that engineers are paid for it. If it was a purely honorary position it would rank high among the amusements. Every boy who is worthy of being called a boy has longed to drive an engine. No doubt Mr. John Jacob Astor, when he mounted the cab of an Illinois Central locomotive the other day, and drove it a hundred miles from Fort Dodge to Sioux City, was simply realizing boyhood's grandest dream in the way the millionaire alone can realize dreams. Beside him lounged the real engineer, possibly sneering in his sleeve at "this yer amateur;" who was in the seventh heaven of delight while doing the engineer's "work." There was no accident. Mr. Astor survived, and now we may expect a rush of rich men to the throttle, and much knowing talk at the clubs about valves, cylinders, pistons, and the like. It will be a relief from the everlasting horse talk. Millionaires will own their private engines, and bets will be made on them. Talk about the solemn, slow function of tooting a coach; the sport of the future, the real thing with the thrill in it, will be to drive an engine like one's 100 miles and over in an hour. And the real engineers will flourish and increase and get higher pay than ever.

A Cruel Wretch.
It isn't fair to give a Detroit girl away, possibly, but truth will out, even in a newspaper. Detroit has one among its countless pretty girls who was in the country, and one day she happened out toward the cow lot about milking time and was asking the man several questions.
"Why don't you milk that cow?" she asked, pointing to one in an adjacent lot.
"Because she's dry, Miss."
"Dry."
"Yes, Miss. She's been dry for two weeks."
"You cruel wretch," she exclaimed; "why don't you give her some water?" and the man turned his face to the cow-house and shook with emotions he could not suppress.—Detroit Free Press.

If you want to know how the people speak of you behind your back, listen to the reckless manner in which they pitch into others.
If you want to learn something a man won't tell, ask the first woman you meet who knows about it. She'll tell.

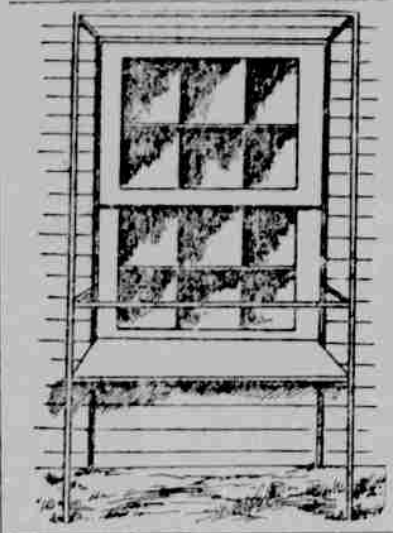
HOME AND THE FARM.

A DEPARTMENT MADE UP FOR OUR RURAL FRIENDS.

Description of a Weed Which Is Spreading Very Rapidly—To Pick Fruit Without Bruising—Crops that Pay—Take Care of the Tools.

Outside a Sunny Window.

The exterior of a sunny window may be made very attractive, and at the same time the interior may receive a grateful shade from the strong summer sun, by such an arrangement as is shown in the illustration, consisting of a light framework of iron or steel, with a broad table or shelf at the height of the window. Be-



tween the two uprights on each side, and across the top, is tightly stretched wire-netting, which can be procured of almost any width. The netting may also be stretched tightly across the outer edge of the shelf, between the shelf and cross-rail, or a regular window box may be constructed by making tight sides and ends to the shelf, to hold earth, quick-growing creeping plants and vines will soon run up over such a trellis and across the top, and if a denser shade is desired, they can be trained cross the upper half of the front of the frame—wire netting or strands of wire being stretched across for this purpose. The shelf affords opportunity for the setting out of potted plants.—Country Gentleman.

Cost of Wheat Raising.
It is a notorious fact, however, that the wheat crop of Argentina is very uncertain, and while some years she may export a large surplus, there will be other seasons when none will go abroad. This uncertainty of yield, caused largely by poor methods of culture, changeable seasons and the inability of the growers to protect their crops from parasites, diseases, and dry weather will give the American farmers an opportunity to make larger profits every few years. The relative cost of raising wheat in different sections of the country is as follows:

These differences are due to some causes as high as \$3 and \$4 per acre, and for no other reason than that some farmers practice intensive farming carefully and others let nature raise the crops for them to a large extent. It is also possible for those who think they have reached the rock-bottom cost of culture to bring down the cost per acre much lower yet, and the development of agriculture in the future will demonstrate this to them. The great question that wheat growers must consider is, how to cheapen the cost of raising wheat consistently with large crops and good quality of grain. Every farmer should figure out for himself just what it costs to raise a bushel of wheat, and then when this is done he can earnestly try to improve along two lines. One is to bring down that cost at least a dollar per acre a year as long as possible, and at the same time to increase the yield and quality. This can be done only with intensive farming of a high order, but as the question is tried one will be surprised at the difference in the yield and cost that can make out of his work. Improved machinery is necessary for this work, and as the cost of machinery is so great on the farm it is necessary to study the best methods of preserving the machine in the greatest length of time. This is a question generally overlooked. Seed which is improving in this country, and only the very finest of the heaviest grains should be used. Most of the seed wheat to-day sown in good seed-beds will yield 20 per cent. more per acre than the old seed. The cost of land, manures, cultivation and wear and tear on horses and other things must all be considered in a determined effort to bring down the cost. It seems like weakness to say that the present cost cannot be reduced.—Cincinnati Inquirer.

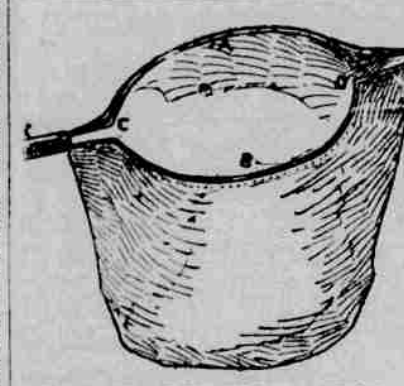
Value of Irrigation.
Prof. G. H. Fuller says lack of water is reducing the area cultivated in Kansas. The question is not simply of putting in one or two crops that have their long and regular periods of seed time, culture and harvest, but to select a variety that will most fully occupy both the farmer and the soil. Crops in which skill in growing, harvesting and marketing count or much are chosen. The farmer's of that portion where water is with a easy reach by windmill pumps seem to a fair way to rank the highest in the intelligent effort to make the most out of the forces and appliances with which they work. This is one of the compensations of irrigation. The same amount of land may be made to yield much greater returns, but to do this more thought must be given to the work. The people of such regions get me well-to-do, not to say wealthy; they are refined and educated. Irrigated

country sustain a greater population per square mile. The people are collected in villages and hamlets. Their greater variety of productions gives them a good living and an opportunity to make their surroundings pleasant and artistic.

Cultivating Plums.
My experience in cultivating plums for market extends over a period of forty-five years. A plum orchard should be planted on heavy clay soil. The trees do not need much care while young. The curculio is the worst enemy we have to contend with. How shall we manage it? Keep the ground perfectly clean, allow no rubbish of any kind to collect. Turning in hogs and poultry, jarring the trees and trapping the ground solid will do no good; but in all my experience I have found but one remedy that would save all the plums. For urethane brimstone, heat to a liquid, have ready some old rags, dip in the liquid and lay out to cool; procure a pole, make an opening in small holes in a rag match light and pass among and under the branches, being careful not to scorch the leaves of the plums. This is an infallible remedy if thoroughly applied. Regarding the black knot, it is no use trying to save an orchard after it makes its appearance. Better destroy it at once, and when the knot disappears from the locality plant a young orchard.—National Stockman.

Buy for Cash.
If farmers would get into the way of buying for cash only, they would do more to promote the prosperity of the whole country than could be accomplished by any other means. Long time and low interest is alluring when a new machine can be used to advantage, or some needed implement is ordered, but if the purchase is put off until the money to pay for it is at hand, these things can always be bought at a discount from the credit price that places the cash buyer in a position to save enough to make it an object. If the cash system is once put into practice the money for needful things is always ready when the need comes. The position of the prove but "load under the harrow" is not more unpleasant than that of the man in debt in time like these.—American Farmer and Farm News.

A Hand Apple Picker.
Orchardists will find the illustrated picker of great service in reaching apples on extended limbs. One man can stand under a tree and pick nearly all the fruit from the tree including the hardest to get at—that on the ends of the branches. The frame is made of heavy wire, or



light round iron and a sack of heavy cloth sewn to the frame, leaving the slots at each end so that an apple will be free to enter the sack. Then all you have to do is to push or pull the apple down in the sack. I have one with a fourteen foot and another with a six-foot handle. The wire from A to B is eight inches wide; from C to D ten inches. The slots at C and D are three inches long and an inch wide. The handle or pole may be of any desired length.—American Agriculturist.

Crops that Pay.
Many profitable crops are overlooked simply because the farmer considers that they require too much labor or their production. It may be stated as a truth that it is only the crops that are laborious to grow which pay best. Gardeners make large profits on a few acres only, but they are compelled to give careful attention to every detail, providing hot-houses and cold frames for certain plants. The potato crop on the farm pays, yet it is not a specialty with some farmers. It is the labor itself that pays—not the crop—as the price of an article is largely regulated by its cost for labor.

Farm Notes.
It is useless to waste time in the effort to reform sows that eat their pigs. They are unreliable, and their pigs should be killed by others.
The sheep is the only animal that is made vicious by petting. A young ram that is raised by hand at the house becomes bold and soon learns to attack cattle and persons.
Do not forget to save your seed corn from the stalks that are standing in the field, by selection of the most vigorous stalks and best ears next year's crop depends on this year's seed.

Pigs are ready to be picked when the stem parts readily from the spur. The fruit should always be picked by raising it up, instead of pulling it off. Aim to leave the stem on the pear.
EXPERIMENTS show that a grain of wheat reproduces forty-fold. Every pound should bring forty. It is the error follows that much of our seed is wasted when we sow one and one-fourth bushels an acre and get from ten to twenty.

The better condition in which the farm tools are kept the less effort is required on the part of teams and on the part of the workingman also, yet farmers will use their implements a whole year without sharpening them. No other mechanic would do this.

TO ADVANCE RURAL TASTE.

The Public Schools Should Do Active Work in This Line.

Some efforts have been made in late years in country places, to popularize rural life through the public schools, writes Phillip Snyder. Tree planting (on "Arbor Day") is in course of experiment, and flower growing and gardening have been suggested, and practiced occasionally. But no large results have been reported—and never will be under the present system of giving the bulk of the summer to vacations.
The system of closing the country schools in June and reopening in September has been acquiesced in, but really, it is hard to see any weighty reasons for it in the rural districts. Summer heat is not a continuous factor in summer life, and even when it is very hot children are quite as well off in the modern school building as at home, or such places as country children frequent in summer weather. Were the schools kept open at that season for at least four or five hours a day there would unquestionably be a fine chance to instruct them in such details of rural ornamentation as they generally fail to receive at home, and a love for country life installed that city temptations could not easily overcome.

One great difficulty, even yet, to combat is the want of land whereon to grow flowers, vegetables, hedges, trees, or grass, and to lay out walks and groves. Land is cheap enough, but to set apart an acre or two for school purposes strikes the average patron as mere waste and nonsense. But under a wise teacher, who is something of a landscape gardener as well as a teacher, it would be a very practical matter. Nothing is so wanting in country life as cultivated taste—the taste to appreciate the beautiful when seen, or to make a landscape beautiful in the mind's eye and then to develop it before the physical eye. Every country school-house ought to stand in the midst of a beautiful little park planned by some expert, but the work done largely by the children and kept in order by them the year round. Once taught how, they would delight to do it, and taste for it developed at school would be sure to find expression at home whenever the time was serious occasion for it.

The writer can remember a teacher, over half a century ago, who, understanding child nature and loving rural life himself, obtained the use of a few rods of land adjoining the school-house and made a little garden of it, to the intense delight of the pupils and his own pleasure. But what a little Eden he might have made of that spot, if he had had two, or three, or five acres under his control, in which to plant trees, flowers, evergreens, a hedge of evergreens to enclose it, fruit trees here and there, and shady arbors, and had been able to make use all that this was a permanent—the property of the district, kept up for the good of the children, a thing of beauty for them to enjoy while life and memory lasted. But at one short summer ended the dream; another district told for his services much more than my district would think of giving, with their views of liberality, and he went away amid a flood of tears such as gay and light-hearted children seldom shed.

There is no mystery about a school-house park that would puzzle bright children very long. Flowers they love from the start; fruit, perhaps even more than flowers; weeds they hate when they know their nature and once trees they admire for their imposing presence and majesty, and the green velvet of a rich lawn turf they would treat as gently as mother's carpet if only trained to appreciate its wondrous beauty. As to hedges and evergreens, and low trained and well-trained evergreens, there is a concentration of modest beauty about them that appeals to a sensitive nature with something like spiritual power. Awaken the admiration or love for these, and the city's enticing temptations will have small seductive power over them. Even if they leave the country at majority, a tie is formed that will be likely to bring them back at the first opportunity. In any case, country life will have a tinge of enjoyment to which thousands are now strangers, looking upon it as a sort of wide open prison they cannot well escape from.

A schoolhouse park, well cared for by children, teachers, and others who love it, would exert an incalculable influence on rural taste. Now, tens of thousands, even of grown people, have never seen a well-kept park, and the drear, barrenness of multitudes of rural homesteads, and the anxiety of the younger occupants to get away from them, attest the necessity for them. They would be object-lessons to revolutionize rural life and taste. What pupils learned there of flowers, trees, plants, and landscape setting they would endeavor to reproduce at home, drawing parents into it in spite of themselves. And that is exactly what is wanted. Country life, to be satisfactory, must minister to some other taste than that of bread winning—even that poorly supplied. A foolish idea prevails that beautiful grounds are unattainable except to the rich. The instruction obtained through the schoolhouse park and garden would dispel that idea, and awaken an interest in amateur rural adornment that would rescue the country from threatened depopulation.

It is the home and the school to which we must look for the advancement of society in morals and taste. Make them what they should be, and the rest is easy. This suggested improvement in school methods involves no question of sectarianism, and no large amount of cost. In many cases the land would undoubtedly be given, and such work as the children could not do—under proper supervision, of

course—would furnish employment to the poor laborers of the district, while the proximity of a beautiful little park would enhance all values near it.

Mrs. Beba and Nell Gwyn.
In the course of a search among the Lord Chamberlain's records, copies of the following warrants were found, which are not without interest to stage artists:

Whereas the Lady Slingsby Comedian and Mrs Aphaw Beben have by acting and writing at His Majesty's Highness Theatre committed several Misdemeanors and made abusive reflections upon persons of quality, and have written and spoken scandalous speeches without any license or Approbation of those that ought to perse and authorize the same. These are therefor to require you to take into your Custody the said Lady Slingsby and Mrs Aphaw Beben and bring them before me to answer the said Offence, and for seeing doing this shalbe your sufficient Warrant. Given under my hand and seal this 12th day of August 1652.

To Henry Leggett Messenger of His Majesty's Chamber, &c.
Who was the "omocidian" Lady Slingsby? She is not claimed as an ancestor in the pedigree of the Yorkshire baronets of that name.
The other warrant is dated June 8, 1652, and runs:
"There are to require you forthwith to deliver unto Madame Ellen Gwyn or whom she shall appoint these hangings, viz. one piece with the figures of King James and Queen Ann, one piece of King Charles and Queen Mary of blessed memory, and another piece of Christianus King of Denmark. And for seeing doing this shalbe your Warrant.
"To Phillip Innersley, Esq., yeoman of His Majesty's Chamber Wardrobe of the said Hangings."
The Athenaeum.

So Like a Girl.

It was in a Lewiston horse car of the up-town line the other evening, after the performance of "The Acre," when everything was crowded. Among the party who entered after the car was crowded were three young ladies. Each of them grasped a strap and stood. One of the girls who lifted her gloved hand had a beautiful bracelet upon her wrist. A middle-aged man jumped up and offered her a seat. She declined, waving one of her friends into it. Then a young man who is interested in the Lewiston Y. M. C. A. jumped up and offered his seat. The young lady bowed and told a lady back of her to sit. Then several gentlemen proffered her seats, but she declined them all with a sweet smile. After she left the car she said to her friend: "I'm awfully tired. I can hardly drag one foot after the other."
"You ought to be," was the reply.
"Why?"
"You should have sat down in the car."
"Yes, but you are not as strong as I."
"I know, but another seat was offered you."
"Yes, but that was Mrs. — and I want to make friends with her."
"I know, but even then there were seats offered."
"Mabel," said the pretty girl suddenly, "don't be a blockhead. Do you suppose I was going to sit down when my bracelet was showing off so lovely?"—Lewiston Journal.

Chinese Hospitality.
"Very few people have any idea of the great hospitality of the Chinese," said a Pittsburgh (Pa.) Chinese recently. "Chinamen coming to this country retain their ideas of oriental hospitality and always keep open doors for any of their race who may need shelter. A Chinaman arriving in Pittsburgh without money would never want for a lodging and boarding place. He would simply go to the first Chinese laundry or residence, feeling assured that he would find a welcome there. If after staying a couple of days, he should learn that the circumstances of his host were such that the latter could not well afford to keep him he would move away, making his home with another Chinaman. He would continue doing this, dividing himself up, so to speak, until he was able to get work and support himself. Of course, such wanderers usually endeavor to find the most wealthy Chinamen and become their guests. I have known some of the landladies in Pittsburgh to have ten and twelve transient visitors—to stay over night."—New York Home Journal.

Misadvised Assistance.
Two women sitting side by side in a street car the other day had an amusing experience. They were strangers to each other, and one happened to notice that her neighbor was having serious difficulty with a jacket she wore and at which she tugged, with the result that it would neither go on or come off.
"Permit me," said the woman who sat next to her, and she pulled up on one shoulder and jerked up the top of the collar.
"Still the woman with the jacket struggled with it, and the side that the other woman had so obligingly assisted up slipped down again, to be grabbed once more and pulled into place by the obliging passenger.
"Now, if you'll turn this way I'll help you on the other side," she said to the astonished wearer.
"Thank you, ma'am," snapped the other woman, "if it's all the same to you, I'm trying to get this jacket on," and with a final jerk she succeeded in freeing herself from the encumbering wrap.

And the woman who had tried to help her gazed into a blank futurity and recalled the example of the man who got rich finding his own business.—Detroit Free Press.

A MAN often pretends to change his nature, but he never does.