

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

ONLY from the solid ground of some clear creed have men done good, strong work in the world. Only out of certainty comes power.

STUPID people, who do not know how to laugh, are always pompous and self-conceited; that is, ungentle, uncharitable, unchristian.

WHEN a retired railroad magnet started in the rent-furnishing goods business it seemed second nature to him to announce a great run on ties.

UNTIL the millennium comes we shall all have a deal to put up with, and had better bear our present burdens cheerfully than to run helter-skelter where we may find things a deal worse.

Those who carefully note the comparative value of lives in a community will soon learn that the element which counts for most is that subtle thing which we call personal influence.

NOW THAT Emperor William has taken to writing war poems the peace of Europe may be regarded as assured. Murdering the muse is a more engrossing pursuit than mowing down men with Maxim guns.

THERE are few nobler missions than that which Boston and Philadelphia have established in giving away flowering plants from the parks, instead of letting them perish with the cold. As the Newport Journal says: "Rich and poor are served alike. The first comes after an approach of frost gets the plants wanted, but their most merciful mission is realized when in the tenement house windows."

LONDONERS are laughing over a story about Mark Twain and his little daughter. Some one, it is said, asked the latter about one of her father's recent books, and was answered: "Really, I can't give an opinion. Papa's books bore me terribly. I haven't read half of them. Papa is the nicest thing in the world, but, oh, dear! I do wish he was not a famous funny man." Probably no one would laugh more heartily over such a criticism from such a source than Mr. Clemens.

JAMES ANTHONY FROUDE was one of the most facile writers of English in his time, and among his voluminous writings are essays and sketches which are likely to occupy a permanent place in English literature. Though he often showed keen historical insight, his warmest admirers will hardly call him a great historian. He was, however, a most interesting writer on historical topics. Perhaps his "Caesar: A Sketch" is not surpassed by anything in its class, and many of his shortest pieces are of almost equal interest.

THERE are no short-cuts to happiness. The only way a man can be happy is to be true to himself and his fellow men and do his duty. Such conduct leads through difficult and disagreeable ways oftentimes, but after all is the only road to happiness. The man who is willing to be a rascal to-day in order to get money he fancies will make him happy tomorrow is getting farther away from peace and tranquility with every breath and every heart beat. The man who is honest and doing faithfully his duty as he truly sees it, is the only one, rich or poor, who finds real happiness.

WHILE small-pox has been brought within comparative control by vaccination there are other deadly diseases over which, until within recent times, the science of medicine has been unable to exert any check. Among these are diphtheria and typhoid. A number of European scientists have been devoting their time to study of these diseases, as Pasteur, Koch and others have done in the field of bacteriology, working with more specific aim in different directions. The mortality among children from diphtheria especially is so high, often keeping up a pace of 25 per cent, that any preventive of so frightful a plague is hailed with eagerness. While it is not true that medical science yet claims infallibility for the group or diphtheria preventives, it is known by actual results that they are effectual to a large degree; it is only the durability of the protection they afford that is in doubt and that time alone can settle.

ONE of our recent accessions from the population of Europe, for which we have no reason to be thankful, is that of Reskin, the Russian. He is a fellow who goes and asks for employment, and if he does not get it proceeds to bombard with stones the office or residence of the person who

was so ill-advised as to refuse the offer of his services. Being beaten into helplessness by the police and taken to the station, he stated his platform thus: "He wanted it understood that he was a red hot Anarchist; that he would yet down all the rich capitalists of America, and also the American Government. He declared that America was compelled to feed and clothe him, and he was going to see that she did it. He admitted that he stoned the Pullman residence, and said he did it because Mr. Pullman refused to help the poor. Now, a vagabond, penniless Russian who comes along with a determination to conquer the United States, is a notable sort of person. It inevitably excites sympathy for the Russian Czar to consider that he has a country filled in great part with fellows like that."

The lively discussion of the certainty of death by electricity receives a new impulse from the testimony of Dr. P. J. Gibbons of Syracuse, N. Y. Dr. Gibbons maintained that the voltage of the current used in the execution of the death penalty in New York (1,700) is sufficient to produce death. He attended a capital execution in November, 1893. One thousand seven hundred and forty volts were used and the victim seemed to have been killed. Two hours after life had been pronounced extinct Gibbons gained access to the body and without instruments, but by the use of the common means for inducing artificial respiration obtained signs of lingering life in the body of the convict. He was interrupted by the warden, who forbade him to go on with the experiment, and shortly the body was given over to the surgeons for the autopsy. Gibbons' story is startling. It will require something more than a mere assertion of theories by electricians to disabuse the public mind of the suspicion that criminals subjected to the death sentence in New York are more frequently victims of the doctor's knife than of the electric current. The abolishment of hanging was regarded as a step in the direction of greater humaneness, but who can say that the electrical method, with its reported burning of human flesh and its possible accompaniment of horrors of the kind Dr. Gibbons suggests, has been serviceable as a substitute?

The downfall of a man like Fred W. Porter late auditor of the Rock Island Railroad, is one of the greatest shocks that can be given to man's faith in humanity. Here was a man who in his family, business and social relations was apparently above reproach, who now turns out to have been living a double life and leaves a most unenviable record blackened with theft on a large scale and together with tolerably strong evidence of suicide to avoid facing exposure. A robber and a coward. He was a man against whom no suspicion rested and whom his friends really loved for his apparent nobility of character, and yet it appears that he has been a veritable Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, for his stealings—there are politer terms, but this is good English—were going on through a series of years, while his neighbors and acquaintances were learning to love, trust and heap honors upon him. Such things are a great shock and are strong arguments for the pessimists who argue that every man has his price. However, the lesson of such a life is as strong an argument against double-dealing, living beyond means and the crookedness that inevitably follows as could be given. Such men sacrifice honor and conscience and risk reputation in the vain hope of taking a short-cut to happiness. Such rascality is rarely long concealed, and even if successfully hidden for a long time is any one fool enough to believe that there can be anything in it but hell on earth?

A Hot Ride. Probably one of the most thrilling rides ever heard of occurred on the Lebanon Valley branch of the Reading road. A young man crawled into the asphalt of a Wooten engine at Harrisburg this morning. The pit is divided into two sections, and both are directly beneath the firegrates. He entered through under the door of the fire-box and took a seat in the second compartment, unobserved by the engineer or fireman. Shortly after taking this position the engine was attached to the fast line, and started for this city. When the train stopped at Ebesonia, twelve miles west of Reading, the fireman was startled by seeing a tall young man, all covered with ashes, stick his head out of the opening below the fire-box door, and ask: "How far is it to Reading?" "How did you get in there and where?" asked the fireman. "At Harrisburg." "And you were not burned?" "Well, it kept me hustling to dodge the hot coals as they dropped down on me. It was a great ride, partner," he said, and hurriedly left as the train pulled away from the station. The engineer says the only thing that saved the man from being burned up was that the fire had been puddled with large coal before leaving Harrisburg—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

KISSED HIS MOTHER.

She sat in the porch in the sunshine As I went down the street. A woman whose hair was silver, But whose face was luscious sweet, Making me think of a garden, When, in spite of the frost and snow Of black November weather, Late, fragrant lilies blow. I heard a footstep behind me, And the sound of a merry laugh, And I knew the heart it came from Would be like a morning star In the time and the hour of trouble, Hopeful as a dove and strong. One of the hearts to lean on When we think all things are wrong. I turned at the click of the gate latch, And met his manly eyes, A face like his gives me pleasure, Like the page of a pleasant book. It told of a certain purpose, Of a brave and daring will; A face with promise in it, That, too great, the years fulfill. He went up the pathway singing: Like the woman's eyes, Grew bright with a woman's welcome, As sunshine warms the shies, Back again, as soldiers in their, He cried, and he to kiss The living face that was uplifted For what some mother's sake. That boy will do to depend on, I told him this in truth: From love in love with their mothers Our bravest hearts grow. Earth's egg-shaped hearts have been loving hearts, Some time and a risk began, And the boy who kiss his mother Is a very much a man. —Christian Intelligence.

NUGGET CAMP'S HERO.

The bridge over the ravine just east of Nugget Camp was finished. Gus Huyler, the young civil engineer having the work in charge, had left the camp with his men to build one at the other end of the railway, and trains had been running through Nugget daily for a week or more. The men in the postoffice were talking about the bridge. "To change the subject," said Hi King, "I wonder if we won't see the young engineer chap back here ag'in afore long?" "I see what yer drivin' at," exclaimed old Bob Coomer from his seat in the biscuit box—the postoffice was grocery as well—and he smiled good-naturedly. "The man next to the big miner—old Lee Harding—looked at him with a puzzled stare, then dropped his bloodshot eyes to the floor. "Don't believe the young feller could help lovin' Cathie Dana," Bob Coomer continued. "I've seen stacks of gals, but old Mark Dana's little daughter beats 'em all." "I bet he does come back," put in another. "I saw 'em say good-by. Couldn't help it, but I didn't let on I did." "Praps that's what makes the bridge take so long to build," said Hi King, jokingly. "Boys," cried old Bob Coomer, looking through the open door down the road, "here comes Bill! Wonder if Cathie gets a letter." "She hasn't got none afore," said Tim Lynch. "I've accidentally hung about here every day since the young feller's been gone, and when she'd come and ask if there mightn't be sumthin' fer her dad or her, Bill Reid never had a postal card even. This is near two weeks gone by." Just then the postmaster came in, mail bag over his shoulder. "Mail shu ed yet?" "In a minute," the postmaster answered. A short silence. "Mail sorted?" "This time old Lee Harding asked the question, and some of the men laughed. "Ye an't expectin' a love letter, be ye, Lee?" queried Hi King. The old man did not answer. "All done now, gents," said the Postmaster. "Letter for Hi, paper for Tim, letter for Bob." "Who else gets news in Nugget?" asked Bob. The postmaster mentioned three other men in the camp, and said that the rest of the mail was for the neighboring camp. "Well," said Bob, "time to go to work." And he left the building with the letter the postmaster gave him unopened. "Hard luck?" Hi King commented. "Wonder if the young engineer chap's forgot all 'bout Cathie?" Cathie Dana had entered the low-ceilinged room and was standing at that part of the counter where the Postmaster gave out the mail. Her head was uncovered and her dark hair fell over her shoulders. With one hand she brushed it back as she faced the postmaster. "Come suvar," he asked; "you must be 'bout out to day." "Is there no mail for dad or me?" she asked hopefully. Then when the postmaster told her there was none, Lee Harding saw her draw a letter from her pocket and leave it in the letter box. The next day and each noon after that he was there when the mail arrived. Cathie Dana would come a look of hope on her sweet face, then go away disheartened, for no answer ever came to the letter that Lee Harding saw her leave. By and by she would only ask for mail at intervals of two and three days; then came a time when a week would intervene. The summer passed. Autumn set in and a fire was kept burning in the postoffice stove. Two trains ran through the little camp then—one at 9 o'clock each evening. Nugget was growing. It boasted of a concert hall and tavern. These drew the men from the postoffice, only old Lee Harding remaining out of the coterie that formerly chatted and played cards on the boxes and barrels. He did the rough work of the place for a small weekly wage and a dram now and then of liquor from a barrel in his cellar. One night he sat dozing, with his head against the big desk.

The postmaster was on a tall chair behind it drumming with a piece of pencil on a piece of quartz. "That letter this morning said he'd be here to-night," the postmaster began, jerking talking to himself. "I'm in a pretty fix. I wished I hadn't meddled with their love affair." Then Reid was silent for a short period. "But Guy Huyler got the work was after," he began again, "and I wanted some revenge. I've got it, too. His letters sh we he loves the girl, and here he is coming out here again, leaving business, to see why she hasn't answered them. Another silence. "If I could only get out of this scrape!" he exclaimed. "I wish the train would run off the track—kill him! The bridge!" "I'll do it! I'll do it!" He had come from behind the desk, and at the sight of old Lee Harding he ceased speaking with a low curse. "Wake up!" he cried, as an idea seemed to strike him. "Here's a drink!" And he poured out some liquor in a glass for old Lee. Harding started up and took the glass, and he hurried out with a relieved look on his dark face. "Tarnation!" exclaimed the old man in a dazed voice. "What did he mean, anyhow? Guy Huyler—letters comin' to-night—the bridge—he stammered. Then he staggered to his feet and threw his liquor to the floor. Next he hurried out of the building and tottered off toward the railway. He gave a few cries that he hoped would bring them from the concert hall of the tavern, but they never heard him. The night was cold and all the windows of all resorts were closed. An hour passed. "Have you heard the train go through?" said Hi King, as he sat in the tavern with Bob Coomer and some of the other miners. "Come to think, I haven't," Bob exclaimed. "An' it's late! Look at the clock!" "Half after 9." "She an't been so late as this since she commenced running." Just as that moment the conductor of the evening train came in. "Boys!" he exclaimed, "one of your friends is about done for. But men are bringing him here. If you've a doctor about rouse him up." "What's happened?" asked Bob, excitedly. "You're as pale as death, man." "Why, the whole train load of us came near losing our lives just out here on the big bridge half an hour ago," the man returned. "There was an obstruction on the track. Your friend ran down and warned the engine driver just in time to save us." "And the man?" "The engine threw him into the ravine. It was a wonder he was not killed outright." As the conductor ceased speaking some railway men brought in a stretcher on which was the limp and apparently lifeless form of Lee Harding.

The men gathered about him, sympathy softening their faces, and Bob Coomer exclaimed: "Lee, old boy, you're here." "The in ured man opened his eyes and looked up at Bob. "Twan't nothin'," he declared. "An' Bob, the young surveyor chap's comin' to see why Cathie didn't answer his letters. You'll have to get another postmaster. He stopped their letters and tried to wreck the express, an' he's skipped." "Well, I'm flabbergasted!" growled Bob. "Doc," he added to the short man who had been examining Lee Harding, "if you don't pull Lee through—well, I won't answer for your safety round here." The frontier doctor said nothing for some time, but at last he told them there was little to fear. Then six or eight of the party left the tavern to see if they could find Bill Reid. But when old Lee Harding became postmaster, Cathie's letters came.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Moses' Burning Bush. One of the great wonders of the vegetable kingdom is the Welwitschia mirabilis. It grows on the barren land of the western side of Africa, where rain is almost unknown and the only moisture is that from dews which fall at night. This plant was discovered in 1869 by Dr. Welwitsch, an eminent scientific traveler. The Welwitschia is a tree which lives for many years, many specimens are estimated beyond 100 years old. Every year of its life increases its size, yet it never grows higher. Rising just above the ground, this strange plant, looking like a rough round table regular y enlarges by adding concentric layers to its circumference. The flat upper surface of the trunk is very hard and dark, resembling in color and texture the crust of an overbaked loaf. The trunk attains the size of from fourteen to eighteen feet in circumference, but is never but a few inches above the ground. The Welwitschia is remarkable in the fact that it never loses its first two leaves and never gets any more. These leaves increase in size year after year until they attain the length of six or eight feet or more. They are flat and leathery and frequently split into numerous straps. In India are many plants wonderful in their luminous qualities. The anthiskiria anathera is a plant luminous during the nights of the rainy season. A plant known in Europe as dictamnus fraxitella has the same quality and is also found in the Himalayas. Writers there speak of bushes burning and yet not consumed. Could that burning bush of Moses have been of that order?

REAL RURAL READING

WILL BE FOUND IN THIS DEPARTMENT.

Wheat More Valuable Than Corn—How to Avoid Overflowing Cisterns—Wheeled Platform for Driving Posts—Device to Prevent Waste of Lumber.

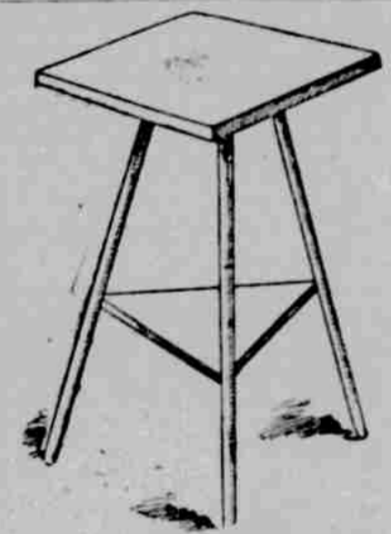
To Avoid the Overflowing of Cisterns. Farmers often have trouble during heavy rains in keeping their cisterns from overflowing. A dampness near the house causes a damp, wet cellar, which should be strenuously avoided. The accompanying illustration, from a sketch in the American Agriculturist, presents a plan for avoiding such overflowing cisterns. A forked pipe is fastened into the rain gutter or receiver from the roof. At the junction of the two arms or switch pipes there is a shut-off which is operated by a wire rod, which as it appears in the illustration turns the obstruction plate within the pipe and stops its entrance into the cistern when the latter is considered full enough. The other pipe carries the



Wheeled Platform for Driving Posts.

water away into a drain or ditch that is properly made and covered. This keeps everything dry about the house, and the annoyance so often seen on the farm in wet weather is avoided. The cistern is located back of the kitchen, under the platform and step of the porch, being at hand when water is wanted, adding much in the convenience to the housewife and saving the labor of carrying it from a barrel or other receptacle near the house, set out to catch the water.

A Broomstick Table. Very few boys might think that three broomsticks, a square and triangular piece of board and a few nails, if used in the right places, will produce a table. Saw the sticks from three old brooms of the same size, masting the cut close to the broom, obtain a square and a triangular piece of pine board; the square one should be twelve inches and the triangular one twelve inches on a side. With a bit the size of the large end of a broomstick bore three holes in the under side of the top or

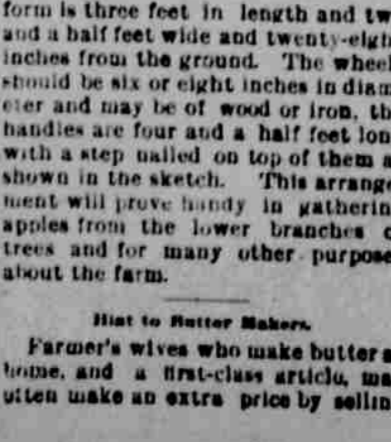


Broomstick Table.

square board at an angle, fasten the sticks in these holes and nail or screw them securely from the top with screws passed through the broomsticks; secure the triangular piece half-way between the top and the floor to form a sort of under-shelf, and, with a coat of paint, the finished table will look like the illustration.

A Wheeled Platform for Driving Post.

In driving fence posts a platform of some kind is required for the operator to stand upon when manipulating the sledge. This is usually a cumbersome box that is rolled and tumbled from one post to another as the work progresses, and if the ground is uneven the support is very unsteady rendering the work unnecessarily tiresome for the operator. It takes but a little while to construct a wheeled platform like the one illustrated herewith. The top or plat-



Movable Farm Platform.

to families who are unable to be butter salt enough for their. Some customers will pay a price for butter in small printed squares. It is also ad- per to wrap the butter in butter- per. It is not expensive and the- careful to use best of salt and- that dissolves easily, otherwise- butter may look streaked. Chur- ten and use a thermometer to- the temperature of the cream. 50- 60° to 65° F. is about right, de- pends partly on the warmth of- room the butter is churned in, partly on the kind of grain the- are fed. But also gluten meal- make the butter softer than- other feed and the cream need- as warm, unless cottonseed use- used to balance it, as the la- makes hard butter. Do not fa- give the cows plenty of salt. Ex- periments have shown that cows- ter salted daily, than less fre- quently salting done. Some keep a- of "horse salt" in each cow's- This she can lick every day if- likes.

Better Than Corn. Wheat is more valuable than pound for pound, as a where muscle and lean are wanted. It is not as valuable to feed to fatter- hours, unless steamed or soaked- oughly. But ground half and- with corn it will excel corn- straight feed, as it furnishes- necessary food to grow lean- making better pork for food than- too fat hog product. For nearly- other feed wheat is better than- It should be crushed for cattle- horses, though horses if the r- are good, will do well on entire- Sheep do well on it fed whole. of thousands of sheep in the- west are fed each winter on w- and fitted for the markets. Chick- thrive wonderfully well on whe- fact, I know of no better feed- hens desired to lay, unless it be- bone ground.—L. C. Wade, D- Dakota.

Device for Felling Trees. In felling leaning trees they- erally split and waste so much- ber that some way of preventing- splitting should be adopted, says-



Device for Felling Trees.

Orange Judd Farmer. Get- blacksmith to bend a bar of- about an inch thick and six- inches long in the shape of Fig- Cut the side of the tree at C, w- draw the saw, drive in the o- the points B B and the tree is- for sawing from the opposite- When the tree is sawed w- through the saw may be withdr- the iron removed and the saw- completed from the first cut.

Spring Crops vs. Fall Crops. Unless the season is unfavor- the markets are almost invari- glutted with fruit and produc- the fall and winter. Everybody- wants to sell, to realize money- current expenses, and prices are- often weak and unremunera- The production of early stuff—- agus, strawberries, and other v- etables and fruits, is not so com- as the staple crops, and when a- market is convenient this early t- is generally the most profitable. Spring and early summer mark- better paying one than the- market. This is a great point, well worthy the farmers' best co- eration.

Waste of Fodder. Nothing ever occurred to bring- Iowa farmer to a realizing sen- the wicked wastefulness he has- practicing in not saving his cor- der, like the drought of the pr- season. The early drought in- the hay crop very greatly, and- corn fodder is being sold in- streets of the cities and village- place of hay.—Hoard's Dairyman.

Farm Notes. BETTER hire a little more- than to keep the boys out of- It is well to remember that o- muscle rather than fat that is- by breeding stock, as fat leads- of energy, if not of health and- The bins cans filled with sweet- water and placed at various poi- the orchard of the Oklahoma Ex- tent Station proved very effe- bug traps.

Fill your hotbeds with lit- the fall so that the ground will- freeze. Replace this with ma- in the spring and the planting- proceed without delay.

It is authoritatively stated- the white pine of the Northwest- nearly exhausted that there is- tically no further supply for- We have certainly reached the- where timber culture holds of- fair promise of profit.

A WRITER in Home and Farm- that the best way to keep sweet- tater seed from rotting is to dig- after the first light frost and- them in a round heap; stack- still around them four inches- then cover about four inches- dirt and put a dry shelter over- never put over thirty bushels- him.