

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

The flattery of friends and enemies would do us very little harm, if we didn't unfortunately flatter ourselves.

Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, as he loves us better, too.

A clever young newspaper reporter, who has lately been engaged in chronicling fashionable society functions of various kinds, says it would not surprise him if some society dames he is acquainted with were to set apart a day on which to receive their children.

It seems that there is a considerable field yet left for the life insurance agent. It is estimated that out of the 10,437,041 insurable persons in this country, 7,993,414 are already insured in some form of company, mainly fraternal, while 3,070,627 are carrying no policies in anything.

Mrs. Hetty Green, who has earned that "much-envied epithet of opulence," a millionaire, is about as miserable as any poverty stricken person in the country. She is in constant fear of being poisoned by her relatives and goes about under an assumed name, living at cheap hotels and avoiding all the ordinary comforts of life.

Nocturnal creatures assume night activity for some other reason than that they cannot see by day, or that they see better by night. The bat sees admirably in the brightest sunlight, as any one knows who has ever teased one by poking a stick at it. It will open its mouth and make an angry grab at the stick, when it is not near it by several inches. I, of, Holles says it is the same with the owl. They see perfectly in bright sunlight, and better at night than most creatures.

Mrs. Bloomer, the lady who first gave conspicuity to the garments which bear her name, recently passed away at Council Bluffs, aged 76. It can be said in all seriousness that few women of the century have made a deeper or more evident mark upon their times. It required a bold and original thinker—a sort of a female Columbus—to concede that her sex had legs, and to put them even in muffled evidence. The reform is only beginning to take hold upon humanity. It is the complement of the bicycle, and it is growing. Mrs. Bloomer has built out of flannels a monument more enduring than brass.

Ten years ago the London Times told Mr. Gladstone to go down into his grave that he encumbered the earth. That was because he advocated self-government for the people. Gladstone lives and the conductor of the Times has passed away. Now the other Tory organ, owned by a recent American, denounces Gladstone and says he should be "muzzled." The defence these British publications show to the man most revered by the advanced thought and best morals of the nation is not precisely of the kind enjoined by the Scriptures from younger to elder, but the Grand Old Man, now dubbed the Grand Old Mischief Maker by still another Tory howler, can afford to smile and let it all pass.

The interesting information comes from Braddock that Carnegie has reduced the wages of the men in his blast furnaces from 5 to 59 per cent. The men are going to strike. "Few of them can speak English," says the dispatch. "The company learned of the trouble and has men ready to take the places vacated." Also, who can not speak English, Carnegie will be able to fill "places vacated" as long as the convict mines of Hungary and Bohemia give up their choicest sons to him. The contract labor law is as wretched a thing to him as the specifications of a government job or the verdict of an armor-plate trial board. There are few blowholes in Andy's methods of hiring "intelligent, free American labor"—that cannot speak English.

One of the essentials to success in business is attention to details. For a commercial enterprise to be sound it is absolutely necessary that its foundation shall be solid. If the base is flimsy it is only a question of time as to when the downfall will come, for come it will sooner or later. From the very start must this question of attention to details be carried out. As old as the hills is the saying, "Take care of the pence and the pounds will take care of themselves." With equal truth we say, "Take care of the details and the generalities will take care of themselves." As an example of this every large business concern may be instance. From small beginnings they became great; from small beginnings they gave evidence to the world that they were capable of filling small orders in a careful and proper manner the world soon entrusted them with large orders. Had they sneered at the small orders as too trifling for their attention it may be taken for granted they never would have obtained the large business for which they were anxious.

Sudden and unusual has been the termination of a lawsuit at Lawrenceburg, Ind. Miss Josephine Brand had \$10,000 in a safety deposit vault, and her sister sued her for it on the ground that it was money that belonged to an estate left by their father. This Miss Brand denied, and a right jolly legal

battle was the result. In the midst of it Miss Brand decided to take the money out of the vault and invest it in bonds, but she only accomplished half of what she had planned. She took the money out and a thief promptly relieved her of it. Now there is nothing to fight over, and consequently it is to be presumed that the lawsuit is at an end. Of course, it was a contemptible act, but if the thief could be found he would probably plead that he thought he might as well have the money as let the lawyers get it at the expense of considerable time of some court.

A peculiar legal complication, which is likely to puzzle lawyers all over the country, has arisen in North Carolina. A deputy sheriff in that State standing near the Tennessee line shot and killed an escaping prisoner who had crossed the line before he was struck by the bullets of the officer. The deputy was tried and convicted of murder in North Carolina, but the Supreme Court reversed the case and dismissed the charge on the ground that the officer was "in contemplation of the law" in Tennessee at the time of the killing. He was then indicted in Tennessee, and a requisition was made for him as a fugitive from justice on the Governor of North Carolina. He was arrested, but applied to the Supreme Court for a writ of habeas corpus, which was granted, the Court holding that as he was not in Tennessee at the time of the killing he could not be a fugitive from justice. It appears that he will be safe from prosecution as long as he keeps without the jurisdiction of the Tennessee authorities. The case is a novel one and is likely to attract much attention. It would seem to supply material for a powerful argument against the ancient doctrine of State rights. It may be called an interstate murder and the circumstances may be seized upon to justify the enactment of a law which will give the Federal authorities jurisdiction in such cases.

Milk Trees.
Dr. Spruce, the renowned South American traveler, mentions a tree, a member of the dogbane family, the juice of which is used as milk. On the bark being wounded the milk flows abundantly and is of the consistency of cow's milk, of the purest white and sweet to the taste. The Indian mode of taking it is to apply the mouth directly to the wound and thus receive the milk as it flows. Doctor Spruce says he has often partaken of it without experiencing any ill effects. In Guiana the natives employ the milk from a tree belonging to the same family as the last named; in the vernacular it is known as yahyah, and to botanists as Tabernaemontana utilis, so named after Jacobus Theodorus Tabernaemontanus, a German physician and botanist. The milk has the same flavor as sweet cow's milk, but is rather sticky on account of its containing some caoutchouc.

In Para a lofty tree, belonging to the star-apple family, attaining a height of one hundred feet, is used in a similar manner to the others mentioned. Incisions are made in the bark, and the milky juice flows out copiously about the consistency of thick cream, and if it were not for its taste, which is somewhat peculiar, could hardly be distinguished from it.

Disappointed.
A young lawyer consulted Mr. Paine in regard to the construction of a certain statute, and, after receiving that gentleman's interpretation of it, brought suit, depending on the legal acumen of his adviser. The case was tried before a Justice of the Supreme Court, and was decided against Mr. Paine's protegee. The latter was astonished, for he had the most implicit confidence in the construction of the statute given by Mr. Paine, and, smarting with disappointment, sought that gentleman.
"Mr. Paine," he said, "the judge ruled against your interpretation of the law."
"He did?" replied Mr. Paine. "Well, Judge M— is not so good a lawyer as I supposed."

A Lighthouse Parrot.
One of Uncle Sam's most faithful servants in Maine, but one that draws no salary, lives at Portland Head Lighthouse. This is a large gray parrot, brought from Africa some time ago and presented to the keeper of the light. The bird soon noticed that when the fog began to blow in from the ocean, somebody would cry out, "Fog coming in; blow the horn!" One day the fog began to come in thick, and no one noticed it, as they were all busy. Foll noticed this, and croaked out, "Fog coming in; blow the horn!" and now, whenever fog is perceptible, Foll never fails to give warning.

A Green Old Age.
"A green old age" is a phrase often grossly abused. It is a literal translation of Virgil's description of Charon, the ferryman of the nether regions. The poet speaks of him as "Jam senior; sed cruda deo viridisque senectus," (somewhat aged; but his godships old age was still fresh and green.) This we might say of a hale sexagenarian; but to talk, as we do, of the green old age of a nonagenarian, however hale, is sheer nonsense.—Macmillan's Magazine.

In Mythology.
The griffin is a species of vulture found in the mountainous parts of Europe, North Africa and Turkey. In heathen mythology the griffin is an animal with the body of a lion and head and wings of an eagle. Of course no such creature ever existed any more than the famous minotaur, centaur, or the winged dragon.

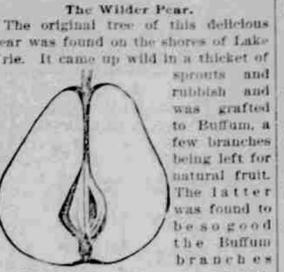
One very common species of ocean invertebrate is shaped like a bell.

TALKS TO FARMERS

ON TOPICS CONNECTED WITH AGRICULTURE.

How Large, Round Logs Are Quickly Knocked Into Firewood—Wooden Pump Protectors—The Wilder Pear—Sheep Should Have Shelter.

The Wilder Pear.
The original tree of this delicious pear was found on the shores of Lake Erie. It came up wild in a thicket of sprouts and rubbish and was grafted to Buffalo, a few branches being left for natural fruit. The latter was found to be so good the Buffalo branches were removed. Since then the tree has borne profusely each year. The illustration shows the fruit of half the average size. It resembles Bartlett in shape with smooth skin, pale yellow with a deep shading of brownish carmine. The basin is shallow and regular, the eye nearly closed, sepals long and reflexed, apex rather abrupt with slight cavity, stem short, core closed and small. Seeds small, flesh pale whitish yellow, the grained and tender. Its quality is very good, resembling the Bartlett, but the flavor is more sprightly and free from all muskiness.—Farm and Home.

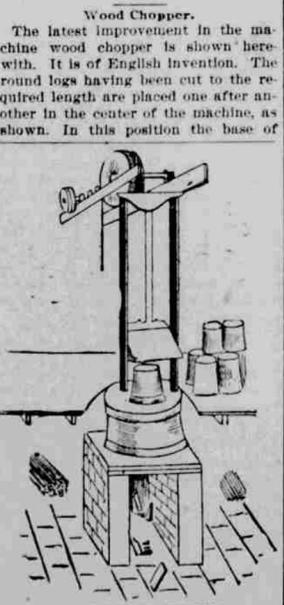


Varieties of Corn.
There have been as great changes in the type of corn as in any kind of cultivated plant. In New England and most of the Northern States flint corn is almost exclusively grown as a field crop. For the garden, and to some extent for general purposes, sweet corn and popcorn are grown. We have known farmers to have popcorn ground for meal, and they said that when cooked it was sweeter and better than that from flint corn. The popcorn grain is so small that it is seldom injured in curing. Sweet corn is, to some extent, grown as food for milk cows. The stalks, if cut early, are sweeter than those of ordinary corn. They are, therefore, more palatable and more nutritious.

The Dent corn is mostly grown in the West and South. Its stalks are coarser and less palatable for stock. Western people think the Dent corn makes better corn bread than does the Eastern flint corn, but our idea is that the flint corn is the best for all purposes. The weight of stalks of flint corn is less per acre, but the yield by weight of the grain is larger than the average of that grown at the West. Still, when an Eastern farmer wants to grow the largest possible yield of corn, he is apt to select some of the early Dent varieties to make a trial with. That shows his belief that it is the greater care which flint corn usually gets that explains its greater average prolificacy.—Philadelphia Press.

Lossing Use of Land.
Small fruit growers ought to fertilize their land thoroughly, and when this is done they should keep it always producing something. If the strawberry patch is running out, either the red or black cap raspberry can be planted between the rows. In this way the year after the strawberry plantation is cultivated under the raspberries canes will be in full bearing. It is the same with the larger fruits. A young apple or pear orchard will grow strawberries, raspberries and blackberries nearly as well as if the orchard were not planted until it gets fully into bearing.

Wood Chopper.
The latest improvement in the machine wood chopper is shown here with it. It is of English invention. The round logs having been cut to the required length are placed one after another in the center of the machine, as shown. In this position the base of



the log rests on the upright edges of the fixed knives, through which it is afterwards forced. The heavy weight indicated above the same is raised by belt power between guides. When released the weight strikes the log, driving it downward on the knives and splitting it in four pieces. The machine illustrated is designed to deal with logs five to twenty inches in diameter and about twenty-four inches in length.

Quantity of Seed Required Per Acre.
Wheat, 1 1/4 to 1 1/2 bushels, drilled. Wheat, 2 bushels, broadcast. Oats, 2 bushels. Buckwheat, 1/2 bushel. Corn, in hills, 6 to 8 quarts. Corn, in drills, 2 to 3 bushels. Peas, in drills, 2 to 3 bushels. Broom corn, drills, 1 1/2 pounds. Beets and mangels, 4 pounds. Rutabagas, in drills, 1 pound. Clover, red, 10 pounds. Clover, white, 9 to 8 pounds. Timothy, 1 peck. Red top, 1 bushel. Orchard grass, 2 bushels. Lawn grass, 2 1/2 to 3 bushels. Kentucky blue grass, 2 bushels. Barley, broadcast, 2 1/2 bushels. Barley, drilled, 1 1/2 bushels. Rye, 1 1/2 bushels. Potatoes, drills, 10 bushels. Carrots, 3 pounds. Turnips, 1 pound. Potatoes, in hills, 4 bushels. Oats, drilled, 2 bushels; broadcast, 3 bushels.

CURE FOR TRUANCY.

TEACHERS UNITE AND STAMP OUT THE DISEASE.

Visit the Parents of Absentees and Enlist Their Aid—Statistics from the Census Concerning the Schools of the United States—Notes.

Broke Up the Epidemic.
It was a town of about 4,000 inhabitants and the truancy bacillus which had first had infected only a few of the worst spirits had spread until truancy had become epidemic. A number of causes combined to aggravate the disease. It was an especially good season for fishing, rick-killing, and sundry other recreations dear to the truant's heart.

The usual remedies were applied. Every effort was made to increase the attractiveness of the school, and by interest to create involuntary attention superior to that for external things. But the magnets seemed devoid of power. There were half a dozen ring-leaders, large boys, who were not school children at all but loafers whose parents did not send them to school, and had concluded that they were incorrigible. These ring-leaders lay in wait for the school boys and by arguments more forcible than philosophical, persuaded them that it was better to "come along and have some fun."

They sat on dry goods boxes and wrote elaborate excuses and signed the parents' names to them for the delinquent to present the following morning. And so the disease increased with uniform acceleration. When mild treatment in homeopathic doses failed, the teachers resorted to corporal punishment but this failed utterly; in fact, it seemed largely to undo the few good results secured by the "attractive" treatment. Matters continued to grow worse until a teachers' meeting was called to discuss the situation.

It was decided at the meeting to adopt an entirely different treatment and heretically to focus attention on the evil. Every teacher agreed to visit after school during the next week the home of every pupil who had been absent during the day. This decision was announced in all the class-rooms the following morning, which was Friday. The reporters heard of it and the newspapers devoted a few interesting lines to it. The parents talked it over and some of the boys are said to have given it more than a passing glance.

On the following Monday morning the teachers were agreeably disappointed to find that many boys had suddenly recovered and that there were but few "vacant chairs." They called religiously upon the parents of all absentees and found that the parents were quite anxious to have their children attend regularly and were willing to lend a helping hand. The results exceeded the most sanguine expectations of those who made the experiment.

It took time for the disease to die out and it was not an uncommon thing to see parents accompanying convalescent children to school in the morning, but a genuine and lasting cure was finally effected, and parents and teachers were brought closer together.—School Journal.

A Good Move.
Yale University, says the Congregationalist, has decided to abandon addresses by students on commencement day and substitute a modification of the Oxford plan, somewhat like that now in use at Johns Hopkins. The only speaking will be an address by the president on the condition and progress of the university. This will be in English, but will not supersede the similar address at the alumni dinner. The candidates for a degree will all be required to be present. A new officer will be introduced, called the "Orator," who will perform the same duties a similar dignitary does at Oxford. It will be his place to introduce the various candidates to the president. The candidates for honorary degrees will have their qualifications for the honor put before the faculty and president by this officer, after which the customary conferring of degrees will follow.

New Educational Body.
A bill was introduced into Congress by General Black of Illinois, based on suggestions from General Lew Wallace and Librarian Spofford, providing for a college of twenty-five persons "distinguished in literature, science, art and invention," modeled somewhat after the Institution of France, called "The Forty Immortals." A committee of the Senate and House will name the first five members of the college, and these five members are to elect twenty other persons. The body will be a continuous one, and is to be provided with a meeting room in the new Congressional library building, with proper service, and have the use of all publications of the library. The college is to make reports from time to time to Congress upon language and literature. Great Britain, Germany and other countries have similar national bodies.

School Statistics.
Recent returns to the Bureau of Education show that there are 14,165,182 children in the elementary schools of the United States; 402,080 more are pursuing the secondary course of study in public high schools, private academies and preparatory schools, and 147,662 are taking courses of higher education in colleges, technical and professional schools. In other words, one person in five of the entire population of the United States is enrolled in some elementary school. There are also in the United States 4,000 public libraries with more than 1,000 volumes each.

The total expenditure in the United States for common schools last year was \$163,350,016. The largest expenditure was in the State of New York. The following are the States which invest more than \$2,000,000 a year in education and the amount each paid in 1895:

New York	\$13,111,984
Pennsylvania	10,410,997
Illinois	14,354,950
Ohio	12,186,794
Massachusetts	9,993,907
Iowa	7,551,488
Michigan	6,682,457
Missouri	5,705,110
Indiana	5,529,655
California	5,434,210
Minnesota	5,175,195
Wisconsin	4,349,767
Nebraska	4,243,638
New Jersey	3,593,879
Texas	3,225,000
Kentucky	3,385,000
Connecticut	2,376,625
Maryland	2,247,111

The Northern States pay a great deal more for education than the Southern States. For example, Texas has 528,314 pupils enrolled and spends \$3,925,000 a year for their education, while Iowa has 533,614 enrolled pupils and spends \$7,551,488. Tennessee has 483,861 pupils enrolled and pays \$1,647,769, while Michigan, with 455,568 pupils, spends \$6,982,657. North Carolina, with 556,958 children in her schools, pays \$7,900,329, while Kansas, with 382,225 pupils, pays \$1,346,967. South Carolina, with 225,159 children, pays \$483,189, while California, with 238,106 children, pays \$5,434,210.

Where Are the Boys To-Night?

I often think when seated at the table in my room

Of the joyous childhood days indeed, which passed, alas! too soon— Of the happy boyhood days I spent at home down on the farm. And listened to my mother's prayers that to me would come no harm. Then recollections come to me of times we had at school, 3,385,000. When seated at the old brown desks to do our sums by rule, Committed lessons from our books and learned to read and write, The question often comes to me, Where are the boys to-night?

I wonder if the little stream at the foot of Moorehead's hill, Where we used to catch trout after school, Is running on there still? And the "Long Swamp," where we played our old game, "fox and hound," Is now a smooth and fertile strip of cultivated ground? Where the smoke of Grand Trunk engines we watched from our school door, I wonder if they now get "stuck" as they did in days of yore; But I guess the railroad company has cut the grade away, For freight trains in these modern times must be hurried on their way. And the games we played at recess, sometimes ending in a fight, We forget, and often wonder, Where are the boys to-night?

Where the trustees sat with hat in hand to hear us read and spell, Then praised the teacher for his work if they thought we did it well. But the boys that studied grammar then are the trustees of to-day, And at annual meetings of the board have now their little "say." Most of the boys that sat there then have gone and settled down, While those of enterprising turn do business now "in town." As pathmaster or councilor they keep the township right; But sometimes think, as I do now, Where are the boys to-night?

Yet in my recollections I do not forget "the girls" Who made the school look cheerful with white aprons and their curls. And when the teacher's back was turned would pass notes to and fro, Or skip the rope at dinner time some twenty years ago. Some of them are married, and now they must attend To household duties, and perhaps have little clothes to mend. And some, I fear, are old maids now, who years ago looked bright; These are the ones who sigh and ask, O, where are the boys to-night? —H. R. Campbell, Buffalo Express.

Gifts for Public Libraries.
Within the last half century sixty Americans have given sums varying from \$30,000 to \$2,500,000 to establish or aid public libraries. The most important of these gifts, amounting to \$16,750,000, were made by eleven persons, as follows:

John George, Illinois	\$2,500,000
Walter L. Newberry, Illinois	2,000,000
The Astor family, New York	2,000,000
James Leno, New York	2,000,000
Samuel J. Tilden, New York	2,000,000
Mortimer T. Reynolds, New York	500,000
Dr. James Rush, Pennsylvania	1,500,000
Andrew Carnegie, Pennsylvania	1,100,000
George Peabody, for Maryland	1,400,000
Enoch Pratt, Maryland	1,225,000
Henry Hall, Minnesota	500,000

(Of this large sum New York received \$6,500,000; Illinois, \$4,500,000; Maryland, \$2,625,000; Pennsylvania, \$2,000,000; Minnesota, \$500,000.)

He Wrote the Sentence.
A teacher of a Virginia district school recently asked one of her little colored pupils to go to the blackboard and write a sentence thereon containing the word "delight."

George Washington Jackson went pompously to the front of the room and wrote, in a large, scrawling hand, these words: "De wind blowed so hard dat it put out de light."—Harper's Young People.

Notes on Education.
Education should lead out, not force on. There are over eighty colleges in the United States that publish annuals. A. the University of Berne there are women students of almost every nationality. Aristotle said: "The one exclusive sign of a thorough knowledge is the power of teaching."

The University of Michigan has a Japanese students' association, consisting of thirteen members. A publication called School is issued in New York, and Schoolmaster and Schoolmistress appear in England.