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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 war flurry has settled down to the conviction that the Monroe doctrine is a sure thing.

If Utah's claim that it is the most delightful State to live in is well founded it should change its name to Matrimony.

The best evidence that New York realizes it is no longer a rival of Chicago is that its newspapers are scolding St. Louis for wanting the Democratic convention.

Greater Boston will have about 1,000,000 inhabitants, it is estimated. But the town will not contain any more wisdom than it does now. That surely would be impossible.

It will pay every American citizen to reflect carefully upon how much more securely the United States could "bluff" England if the Nicaragua Canal were open for business and we were in control of it.

Cripple Creek should be exceeding careful in advertising its gold mines. If England finds out there is gold there it will be almost certain to send Larry Godkin with a regiment or two out there to take possession.

Great Britain concluded that it would be no fun to run up against Germany in South Africa. After thinking over the matter a while Great Britain may determine not to run up against the United States in South America.

Kaiser Wilhelm is bound to get worsted in his battle with the German press. He has already had several warnings that the people of his empire are angry at his vigorous attempts to suppress the free expression of opinion. The sentence of imprisonment imposed upon Herr Hofrichter, an editor who exposed the barbarous punishments used in the House of Correction at Braunweiler, has stirred Germany to the depths, and Wilhelm may soon feel his crown shaky about his ears unless he speedily learns prudence.

Another of the old war correspondents, Col. Thomas W. Knox, died at his rooms in the Lotus Club, New York, where for many years he has lived a pleasant bachelor's life. Col. Knox was one of the best and most accurate of the war corps of correspondents of the rebel war, and did admirable work for the New York press. After the war he turned his attention to literature, and became a great traveler. Scarcely a part of the world was left unvisited by him, and the result was a series of most charming books of travel and adventure for boys, the income from which enabled him to live in ease and without the necessity of doing continuous work. Personally he was a genial, refined, courteous gentleman with a heart as big as his massive body. He will be sadly missed, especially by the thousands of young readers to whom his books have been a delight.

Cecil Rhodes, the Premier and biggest man of Cape Colony, has resigned, and his resignation has been accepted by Sir Hercules Robinson, the Governor appointed by the Queen. The Hon. Sir J. Gordon Sprigg, the Colonial Treasurer, succeeds him by the Queen's appointment. Cecil Rhodes, the deposed Premier, was a man of great executive ability and towering ambition. It is as yet uncertain whether he was cognizant of the purpose of Jameson when he made his foolhardy invasion of the Transvaal with only 700 poorly armed followers, without rations or sufficient ammunition, to meet 2,000 or 3,000 well-equipped and well-fed Boers, every one of whom is an accomplished marksman. It has been stated that Jameson was only his tool and again that he knew nothing about the raid. However that may be the English Colonial Government seems to have made a scapegoat of him so that it may climb down and get out of a bad scrape all the easier.

The Governor of Virginia makes a sensible suggestion for the prevention of lynching. After advising laws for fining counties in which lynchings occur, he suggests that the penalty for outrage on women be death in every case, and that an indictment for the offense have precedence in court of all other cases. The usual justification for the lynching that has been going on in the South, with such barbarities as burning and flaying, is that it is necessary to awe the negroes into leaving the white women alone. This may or may not be true, but it is easy to accomplish the same result by legal means. If the people are united in approving such summary punishments there could be no difficulty in passing laws to secure a short, sure and speedy punishment for the criminals. If the ordinary courts are insufficient it would be easy to set up a special tribunal whose decision should be beyond appeal and whose verdict should be carried out at once in effect a court-martial as a part

of the peace establishment. However objectionable such a tribunal may appear to the lawyers, it is much to be preferred to the lynching party that is usurping the functions of courts, and would avoid most of the dangers of getting the wrong man.

Americans have good reason to rejoice with the sturdy followers of "Oom Paul" in the neatness and dispatch with which they flayed the Jameson freebooters. They are, unless we are much mistaken, the first colonial people to wrest independence by arms from Great Britain since our own Revolutionary war. The similarity between them and the heroes of our struggle for independence is strong. They are a tough, deeply religious, pastoral people. They can fight and pray and keep their powder dry. They live simply, read their Bible piously and shoot accurately. They know how to mind their own business and how to teach their neighbors to remain at home. They love God, but they are not afraid of the devil. They go into battle crying "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon," and the hosts of the Midianites run like water before these leather soldier men. One result of their terrific defense of the republic has been the overthrow of Cecil John Rhodes. The rocket-like career of this man stunned the common sense and the conscience of the British people. Flown with riches and arrogance, there was nothing short of the conquest of Africa to the source of the Congo that seemed to satisfy his ambition. He was worshipped in London last week; this week he is a fallen star, with the murder of thousands of defenseless natives to answer for. Last week there were two great men in South Africa—Cecil John Rhodes and S. J. Paul Kruger. To-day there is but one.

GREAT LAWYER'S INFIRMITY.

He Generally Lost His Temper and Also His Case.

The late Chief Justice E. G. Ryan, of Wisconsin, was, in many respects, the most notably able man the State ever reckoned among its citizens. He had great learning, particularly in law. Among veteran lawyers who knew Judge Ryan there are few, if any, who do not concede that he was better versed in law than any other man in his profession in the State, but he was less fortunate in his practice than many of the first-class lawyers.

The late Matt H. Carpenter used to win most of his cases when Judge Ryan was the opposing attorney, but often lamented that he was not as good a lawyer as his unsuccessful opponent. Once Mr. Carpenter said: "Why, if I possessed E. G. Ryan's legal ability to go with my good nature and skill in controlling my temper, I would not be averse to meeting any lawyer in the world, no matter how important the case." Yet Carpenter seldom lost a case when the opposing attorney was Ryan.

"How is it, Matt, that you nearly always defeat Ryan, even when it is plain that you have a poor case and he a good one?" asked one of the great Senator's friends.

"By keeping my temper and helping Mr. Ryan to lose his," was Carpenter's prompt reply.

"That was so. Carpenter knew that his brother attorney was always well prepared when he went into court—well loaded, cocked and primed—and he also knew that if Mr. Ryan did not lose his temper he would win his case, so he was careful to see that Mr. Ryan lost his temper, and fired off his perfect load so that it scattered and its effect was wasted.

"Age took the rough edges from Judge Ryan's temper, so that when he became chief justice he filled the high station in as able and dignified a manner as it ever had been filled.—Chicago Times-Herald.

Poisoned Her Brood.

It has been claimed by observers of birds that some of the feathered tribe will feed their young if they are caged, and if they fall after a certain time to release them they will bring them a poisoned weed to eat, that death may end their captivity. About a week ago at the Holstein ranch, in Nevada, the children captured the nest of three young orioles, and they were immediately caged and hung in a tree. The mother was soon about calling her young, and in a little while brought them some worms. She continued feeding them regularly for several days, without seeming to pay much attention to persons about. But on Sunday came the tragic ending that demonstrated the theory relative to birds. She brought them a sprig of green on Sunday morning and disappeared. In less than an hour they all died. The sprig was examined and proved to be the deadly larkspur, a weed that will kill full-grown cattle. The little creatures lay dead in the cage and slightly foaming at the mouth, victims of their mother's stern resolve that her offspring should die by her own act rather than live in captivity.

Getting Even with Worcester.

The story is told of Oliver Wendell Holmes that when one of his friends announced his intention of delivering a lecture in Worcester Holmes cheerfully responded: "I'm awfully glad to hear it. I always did hate those Worcester people."

THE FAMILY STORY

...THE POOR DUCHESS...

IT was really very hard on the poor Duchess, especially after all the toil and labor she had been ungrudgingly expended on her unattractive progeny. Her lot had always been hard enough ever since she had been a duchess; even before her wedding cake had grown stale she had been coping with difficulties, brutal difficulties which it required all her strength of mind to face, and now, when a good share of those difficulties were laid to rest with her husband, the late Duke, in the family vault at Longlands; now, when she had just managed to retrieve the shattered dual fortunes by bringing off the engagement of her ugly, dissipated son, the present Duke, to Claudina Putnam, the richest American heiress of the season, now for this blow to fall upon her, it was really too bad. The only balm to her anguish was that it had fallen in Longlands, in the wilds of Yorkshire, and that the whole thing might be hushed up and hustled into oblivion without anyone being the wiser. She had gone to Longlands to recruit after her superhuman expenditure of energy during the London season; her only guest was Claudina Putnam, her son's fiancée, with whom she was busy planning alterations and renovations for the new regime.

But the moment was robbed of all its savor by the horrible catastrophe; this—what else could she call it?—this driving idiosyncy of the least plain and most hopeful of her six ungainly daughters. She would have kept the hateful story to herself if she could, but her heart was too full for silence; besides, Claudina had her fair share of Yankee shrewdness—she might suggest a brilliant solution of the problem—so, as they sat over a cup of tea in her boudoir, the Duchess opened her new trouble to her future daughter-in-law.

"I'm afraid, Claudina, dear," she began, "that we are going to have serious trouble with Henrietta." Claudina was very fond of the Duchess, so she tried to look sympathetic, though with Lady Henrietta, who was wrapped up in purple, and whose hair was impossible, she had no sympathy whatever.

"Dear me," she replied, "I'm sorry to hear it; I hope she's not sick."

"Sick!" repeated the Duchess. "I wish she were, or anything half so sensible. The fact is, she has been and got herself entangled in a most unbecoming love affair."

Miss Putnam opened her blue eyes very wide, and set down her teacup with a jerk. "My!" she exclaimed; "and who on earth has been making love to Henrietta?"

"The Duchess lowered her voice. "My dear," she said, impressively, "it is Mr. Gibson, the curate. She vows she will marry him. Isn't it awful?"

"Rather awful for the curate," thought Claudina to herself. "Aloud she said: 'Have I ever met Mr. Gibson?'"

"Certainly not, my dear; we do not invite him here. He is not a gentleman."

"Then where did Henrietta meet him?"

"Oh, in the cottages and at the school. You see, she likes parish work, and I encourage her; it sets such a good example, and we've always had a married curate before. However, when Mr. Gibson came I never thought of chaperoning her, because, you see, he isn't a gentleman."

"But, I suppose, Henrietta thinks he will make her a suitable husband?"

"My dear," cried the Duchess, "she can't possibly think so. Why, his father keeps a saddler's shop! He hasn't been to the university. Oh, it's altogether dreadful! And she's as obstinate as a mule about it."

She broke off as the door opened to admit a young man in a shooting suit. He was a plain, insignificant-looking personage, with an air of extreme self-approbation.

"I've just been telling Claudina about this stupid affair of Henrietta," went on the Duchess.

"And what does Claudina think about it?" asked the plain young man, who was Claudina's accepted lover and who deposited his long limbs on the sofa beside her and tried to bestow a furtive caress on the hand nearest to him.

"I guess I'm pretty well taken by surprise," said Miss Putnam, drawing her hand out of her lover's reach.

"So'm I," said the Duke, placidly. "I'm dashed if I can imagine what he sees in Henrietta. She ain't pretty; 't'other way about, rather; she's got no money, and she's years older than he is. I'm dashed if I'd marry a woman like Henrietta, even if I was a saddler's son. I'm dashed if I could even feel spongy on her."

Miss Putnam looked at him. She was going to marry a man very like Henrietta, and she did not feel very spongy on him; she had accepted him for sundry reasons, love being by no means the first or foremost.

"He must be an awfully susceptible

chap," went on his grace, "to lose his heart to a girl like Henrietta. And he's so obstinate, too, about it; seems as if he really cared about her. I thought, perhaps, it was mostly ambition—her title, and that sort of thing, you know—and I've offered him all my influence in the way of a leg-up to preferment, but he won't hear of it. Funny thing, ain't it? Now, if it had been a girl like you, Claudina—"

"Duchess," cried Miss Putnam, suddenly interrupting her lover, "I have an inspiration. You just send Henrietta away. She can go to Jericho, or anywhere else, for a month or so, and when she comes back the engagement will be broken off. I'll manage it, you bet."

She wouldn't answer any questions. She said she thought she understood the exact lie of the land. They might leave it all to her. So to her it was left, and the next day Henrietta was packed off to a married cousin in South Wales.

The following day, at Lady Henrietta's customary hour, Miss Putnam walked into the village school-room. She wore a dainty blue cambric frock, which fitted her as no frock in all Henrietta's lifetime had ever fitted her. The little boys and girls opened their eyes wide to look at her, so did the schoolmistress, who was hearing the whole school in its church catechism.

"Good-morning," said Miss Putnam, sweetly, "I'm staying at the Towers. I have come in Lady Henrietta's place this morning. She has gone away for a few weeks, and she would like you all to know it."

She looked round the room as she said it, and finally fixed her eyes on the curate's frank, simple face.

"I hope," he began, hesitatingly, "that Lady Henrietta is not ill. This absence is so un-forgotten."

"Guess not," said Miss Putnam. "She isn't ill, she never was better in her life; but the Duchess thinks a change will do her a world of good."

"Her grace is very cruel," murmured the curate.

"I beg your pardon?" said Claudina, blandly.

"I was about to say," resumed the curate, turning to the expectant children, "that as her ladyship is unable to come this morning you will be deprived of the interesting object lesson she generally gives you. I'm sure you will all be very sorry."

"Oh, they shan't miss their object lesson," said Claudina, still more blandly. "I've promised Lady Henrietta to give it to them for her."

The curate had been in the habit of staying for Lady Henrietta's object lesson—to keep order for her, he would have said, had the Duchess questioned him. So he stayed to keep order for Claudina, which was quite superfluous, for if her manner of administering instruction was not of a nature to keep the attention of restless children there were her fascinating gown and her pretty trinkets, not to speak of the charm of her face, to hold her audience spellbound. And when the lesson was over he had got into the way of walking with her ladyship along the school lane and through the park. He escorted Miss Putnam to-day, because he wanted to ask how long his liège lady's banishment was to last.

"I don't know," was Miss Putnam's reply; "I suppose she won't come back till the Duchess chooses."

"The children will miss her sadly," moaned the curate.

"Guess we must make it up to them," said Claudina graciously; "I've promised Henrietta to stand as much in the gap as possible."

He gave her a grateful look.

"When shall I come and give another object lesson," she went on; "to-morrow?"

"Oh, no," said the curate; "to-morrow's geography day. Her ladyship always gives a geography lesson on Thursday."

So Claudina put on another bewitching frock, varied her trinkets, and did her best with a geography lesson on Thursday, which was mainly devoted to a flattering but inaccurate description of the United States. On Friday she wrestled with sums, and by degrees she learned the whole school routine. She also visited, under Mr. Gibson's escort, one or two of Henrietta's old women, who, he thought, would feel themselves neglected in her absence.

Her fiancé laughed at her. "I see what you're up to," he said; "of course, it's a clever move, but it's rather rough on a susceptible ass like Gibson."

"Why do you call him an ass?" asked Miss Putnam, sharply; "because his father is a saddler?"

"It's a splendid opportunity for you to make yourself popular in the parish, dear," said the Duchess. "Of course, when you are mistress here you will like to be popular among the people."

"I suppose I shall," said Claudina, musingly.

But in spite of her incipient popular-

ity she would not have the marriage hurried on; she was equally deaf to the Duke's impatience and the Duchess' hints.

"There are such heaps of things to do and to think of before anything can be fixed," she said, vaguely, when her fiancé urged the matter upon her.

"Well, get on with the heap of things, then," he retorted, "and don't trifle away so much time at that confounded school."

And Lady Henrietta was still in banishment in South Wales.

Finally, Miss Putnam's stay at Longlands came to a rather unsatisfactory end, for she went away to London leaving the wedding day unfixed and the hangings of the new drawing-room unchosen.

The day after her departure there were two letters for the Duchess—one from the curate, the other from Miss Putnam. She opened the former first, because she felt more curious as to its contents.

"Madam," it ran, "although your grace did not seriously entertain my proposal for the hand of Henrietta, I feel myself in honor bound to let you know that my eyes have been opened to the folly and unsuitability of the marriage for which I would fain have had your sanction. I have written to Lady Henrietta, explaining, as far as I can, the folly of our past, and begging her to forgive me if she be in any way a sufferer by our mistake. I am leaving Longlands at once, therefore the embarrassment of any further meeting will be avoided. Yours, faithfully W. Gibson."

The Duchess heaved a sigh of intense relief. This was Claudina's doing. Claudina was a right down clever girl. She had certainly spent a great deal of valuable time in treading in Henrietta's footsteps, but she had disenchanted Mr. Gibson and lifted a horrible incubus off the family shoulders. She was really far too good for that stupid, middle-headed son of hers; still, she (the Duchess) supposed that a title was an infinite attraction to a born democrat, so things were, after all, not so very uneven. Then she took up Claudina's letter. "Dear child," she murmured as she broke the seal.

"My dear Duchess," she read, and with each succeeding line her dismayed astonishment increased; "I'm glad I came to stay at Longlands before I took the irrevocable step to the altar. I don't want to say anything nasty or mean, but, really, I never did care about the Duke. I only accepted him because I thought you'd make up your mind to have me for a daughter-in-law. I should have made him perfectly miserable if I had married him. Mr. Gibson finds, too, that he made a great mistake in thinking he cared for Henrietta. He explained it all to me, and I am quite satisfied before Advent. I shan't mind having a saddle for a father-in-law. Yours, always, Claudina Putnam."

The Duchess threw the letter across the table to her son. "Read that, South-down," she said. "We've got Henrietta out of her scrape most splendidly."

It really was too hard on the poor Duchess.—St. Paul's.

He Wanted the Best.

A little story, which emphasizes the fact that there is a great deal of human nature where one would scarcely expect to discover it, is told of an old Quaker. Many years ago, when church organs were regarded with disfavor by many people, it was proposed to introduce one into a New England meeting house, one of the pillars of which was an old man of Quaker blood.

He was one of the most violent opponents to the plan, and expressed his views so strongly that the person who was collecting money for the organ, when it was at last decided to have it, did not venture to call upon the old Quaker for a subscription.

He met him on the street one day, and was greatly surprised when the old man took out a substantial-looking wallet, and presented him with a most generous sum to add to his collection.

"Why," stammered the young man, "I am greatly obliged, sir; but I hardly thought you would care to be asked to contribute."

"My son," said the Quaker, with a suspicion of a twinkle in his serious eye, "if thee will worship the Lord by machinery, I would like thee to have a first-rate instrument."

Followed the Usual Course.

"Is there any way I kin git a receipt for this here letter?" asked the thin-haired man with the crocheted tie.

"You can get it registered for eight cents extra," answered the delivery clerk. "If the letter is one of importance and its delivery is of particular consequence, registration is advisable."

"Oh, the letter ain't of no particular importance—at least not eight cents' worth. I don't think. I merely allowed mebbe I could git some kind of a receipt to show I had mailed it to give the old woman. I guess I'll save the eight-pence an' put up with beln' called a ole liar, as usual."

Count Tolstol on a Wheel.

Count Leo Tolstol, the famous Russian author, is an enthusiastic bicyclist. So great a devotee of the wheel has he become that his daughters, fearing that the strain will prove too much for him, have also purchased wheels and accompany him on his trips to look after him. Tolstol is now 67 and is a tireless worker.



"As It Was in the Fifties," by "Kim Bilar," a story of a young Englishman's unsuccessful quest for fortune in British Columbia, has been published.

A little book, entitled "Ancestry," has been compiled by Eugene Zieher. It sets forth the objects and the requirements for membership of the hereditary societies and the military and naval orders of the United States, and contains a transcript of the acts of Congress relating to the insignia of the war-hereditary societies.

A new edition of Robert Louis Stevenson's "A Child's Garden of Verses" has just been issued, with new illustrations by Charles Robinson. The verses are well known; many have read them, not because they are good poetry, but because Stevenson wrote them. The illustrations do not add to the book; they are in Walter Crane's manner, but badly drawn.

How completely the Black Cat, Boston's new 5-cent magazine, has captured the story-reading world is shown by the fact that in three months it has already reached a sale of 150,000 copies. And the favor it has found with the press is equally well indicated by the editorial comments of leading papers throughout the country. The New York Mail and Express, for instance, refers to it as "the literary pet," while the Louisville Commercial says: "We predict that this delightfully original and interesting magazine will have the largest sale ever reached by any publication. Its cleverly told stories of mystery, exciting detective tales, and thrilling stories of adventure render the Black Cat a delightful new departure in story-telling."

Until the present day, the only occasion upon which the Monroe doctrine was actively asserted by the United States was when Napoleon the Third and the Austrian Maximilian attempted to found an empire in Mexico. It was destined to fail, even without the intervention of the United States, and its memory is kept green by the pathetic fate of the Empress Carlotta, who is now dying in the close confinement meted only to the hopelessly mad. The story of her affliction is told anew in the memoirs of the Baron de Malortie, a gentleman of her court, which has just been published in Paris. Much of it is the narration of his own experience, and what he did not see or hear was dictated to him by Mme. del Barde, a lady-in-waiting to Carlotta, who has remained with her Imperial mistress to the last. It is a book of unusual interest, and presents some startling facts about Napoleon's treatment of Carlotta.

Courteous Hints.

Perhaps there is no greater strain upon "neighborly feeling" than living next door to a poultryyard whose inmates are allowed to "run"—making exercise ground of the adjacent flower and vegetable gardens. A San Diego young lady who was subjected to this annoyance politely asked her neighbor to keep his pets at home. She asked it several times, and still no attention was paid to her grievance. Finally she hit upon an ingenious method of protecting herself.

She prepared grains of corn by tying to them, with strong carpet thread, small cards bearing the words, "Please keep your chickens at home!" and distributed the grain about her flower beds.

The chickens came to feast as usual, and greedily swallowed the corn, not perceiving the thread until the card was against their jaws. Then they could neither swallow the card nor rid themselves of the swallowed corn.

Twenty or thirty of the marauders ran home, bearing the polite request to their culpable owner, who, struck with the method of the hint, promptly cut the threads and cooped up the birds.

This was forcible, but a delicate hint upon a like offense was conveyed from one aggrieved relative to another where stronger measures would have been out of place.

The suffering victim of hens was taken ill, and the perhaps unconscious offender slew his choicest birds and sent them to the invalid. The invalid feasted thereon, and sent back a message of thanks to the effect that the fowl was delicious, and tasted of her violets!

The First Lawyer Lord Mayor.

It may be of interest to lawyers to know that although the ancient custom of the reception of the Lord Mayor of London has taken place regularly for the last 800 years, this last is the first known case in which a practicing member of the bar has been elected as Lord Mayor. Chief Justice Russell made an address to the new Mayor, in which he called attention to the fact that there is no longer any real ground for complaint of the law's delays in England.

An Error.

"I want to pay this bill," he said to the hotel clerk. "But I think you have made a slight error here in my favor. I've been reading over the extras, and I cannot find that you have charged me anything for telling me you thought it might rain."