

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

It is estimated that the Nansen expedition will cost \$125,000. Rather stiff pole tax.

There is reason to believe from the case with which they go through their victims' clothing that highwaymen are of the catholic variety.

The president of a bank in Ardmore, Mont., has married an Indian girl. His financial training evidently teaches him to look out for the coppers.

"The Future of the Horse" was discussed at a banquet the other day. It was the consensus of opinion that the horse would eventually get there.

A dispatch from Philadelphia says that the mind of a man in that town has been a complete blank for seven years. But how did they ever discover it?

A Philadelphia baby has slept six weeks. That child gives every indication of becoming a representative citizen of that community if he lives.

A special dispatch announces that an editor in Ontario County, New York, has been swindled out of a large sum of money, but the dispatch fails to state whose money it was.

In the United States 800,000,000 one-cent pieces are in circulation, and the call upon the mint for more is lively. It is plain that the little coin has an important mission to perform in America.

It has cost Fayette County, Ohio, \$25,000 to find out that Colonel Colt, who fired into a mob of lynchers at Washington Court House and killed several persons, did his duty. The lesson is well worth all it cost, however.

"A refined Parisian widow" advertises in a New York paper that she "would like to marry an elderly professional or business widower." It strikes us that a "professional widower" is a matrimonial partner to be avoided.

The naval program submitted in the British Parliament calls for an expenditure of \$47,500,000 in one year for new war ships. This sum will pay for four first-class battle-ships, eight cruisers and seventy torpedo-destroying gunboats. The next flying squadron will probably be an armada.

Who says that there is no real humor in this country? The faculty of the Ohio Wesleyan University at Delaware, Ohio, asked the students to condemn cheating at recitations and examinations. The matter was submitted to a vote, and was defeated by a vote of 428 to 194. There's Spartan bravery for you!

The American Consul at Leipzig, who has been inspecting the electric agricultural machinery manufactured in Germany, is under the impression that the United States is not up to date in this field of progress. He considers the electric plow a success and the digging of potatoes by electricity the best and cheapest plan.

We talk of forgetting. As a matter of fact, we never forget anything. An impression made upon the mind remains there for ever. The romance is gone that the young man adored, the illusion has perished that deluded the maiden; but the impress has in each case remained, and will remain beyond any effacing alchemy. Open a long-locked drawer and run your eyes over a letter which you have not read for years, and see how readily the voices of the dead and songs of other years come back to you. In many other ways the impressions of the past are easily reproduced.

A number of leading citizens of New York City have become interested in a movement to turn the surplus population of cities toward the country, and at the same time to improve rural conditions. The work will be confined at first to Westchester County, New York, where the first agricultural university school was opened March 4. It is assumed that there is need of greater skill and knowledge on the farm, and therefore the aim in the instruction will not be to increase the production as to obtain maximum yields on less acreage, reducing the cost and improving the quality. The lectures by professors of agriculture will be given at convenient points throughout the country, and when the course is completed another county will be taken up.

A great many farmers who are quite ready to spend money on labor-saving implements to be used on the farm do not see the matter in the same light when it comes to conveniences for the dairy which save the labor of the women folk. It should be the right of every farmer's wife who keeps three or more cows to insist on having a creamer, or if the dairy is larger, a separator. It is not merely labor that will be saved by these utensils. They make it possible to secure a larger portion of the cream product, while yet leaving the milk in better condition for feeding to pigs and other stock than that which has had its milk skimmed from it in pans. The saving of cream by either the creamer or separator will pay largely for itself. It is therefore a wise investment of money. With a separator run by a light steam power the use of the latter can be applied to

many kinds of work, such as running sewing machines or turning the grindstone, the latter a job that has made more than one boy so disgusted with farming that he never got over it.

Chicago Times-Herald: The coffin trust, which has been engaged in the grave business of cornering all things funeral, and whose operations have been largely shrouded in mystery, has at last struck an obstacle. The impediment presents itself in the shape of an outraged and indignant farmer down at English, Ind. The coffin in question was not the one in which the complainant was buried, but one which he purchased for another member of the family. He said to the credit of the rugged and common sense son of Hoosier soil, he did not violate any of the proprieties that usually obtain at the obsequies. He did not desecrate the solemn and sacred sentiments that appertain to the last sad rites by any unseemly controversy over the price of the coffin. He did not jar the peaceful sensibilities of the bereaved relatives of the deceased by any observation to the effect that he regarded the undertaker as a highway robber. He did not precipitate a vulgar wrangle in the presence of the somber trappings of woe. The Indiana husbandman may not know how to use his fork at a pink tea, but he knows how to behave himself at a funeral. He simply did his share of weeping and bottled his wrath, knowing that his day of revenge would come. He got the coffin and the other habiliments of sorrow on credit. Now that the obsequies are ended he proposes to go into court and prove that the coffin trust made a net profit of 200 per cent. out of the transaction. And there is little doubt but that he will prove it. And when he does thousands of families all over the land that have been invaded and plundered by this sad-visaged robber will rise up and call the Indiana farmer blessed.

An Eastern inventor has experimented successfully with a device for obtaining motive power from the ocean itself and the movement of the air. His device is a swinging apartment inside the boat. In a vessel of 3,000 tons burden this occupies one-third of the interior, holds one-third of the cargo, and is made of steel, being hung on trunnions in such a way that it meets every motion of the waves. At each rock the ship, whether pitching or oscillating, the swinging portion of the cargo acts upon air compressors, the condensed air is conveyed into an ordinary upright boiler, and thence passes to an engine which drives the screws or propellers. The cargo thus provides a part or the whole of the motive power needed to transport it, and when the vessel does not contain a cargo the compartment is filled with water. The inventor does not claim that his scheme is available for use by ocean greyhounds, but says it would be valuable for the slower Atlantic steamers and coasters, as the cost of fuel would be reduced to the minimum in the running of a freight steamer. It would not need to go into a coaling station, little fuel would have to be carried, and the services of an engineer could be dispensed with, as a common seaman could manage the new power. In the absence of arrangements for storing the compressed air, towing would be necessary in smooth water. The invention has been applied to other uses. It has shown at a recent trial that the force thus obtained can be utilized to run a dynamo, to light the boat by electricity, and to run the donkey engine. Evidently the power obtained in this manner will be valuable or not according to the cost of the apparatus and the loss of room per unit of available force developed. It is easy to understand that a slight saving would give little power, but it is a grave question how much a heavy roll would endanger the safety of the vessel and the lives of all on board. It may be these points have been taken into consideration, but it is also possible they will present practical difficulties for which sufficient allowance has not been made by the ingenious inventor.

A Peculiar Custom. It is difficult to say what form of burial service is the greatest indication of civilization. Almost any act which would be ludicrous taken on a dignity when connected with such a service, so difficult is it to rob these rites of solemnity. Margaret Stokes, in "Three Months in Forest of France," tells of a peculiar funeral service she witnessed at St. Fura's Monastery. She says: "When the coffin is supplied, the pieces of wood which remain are cut into small crosses about two feet in height. They are painted various bright and incongruous colors. They have jointed shafts, one of which is to be planted at the head of the grave, and is laid upon the coffin. The procession bears the others, and at the cross-road nearest the cemetery, there is always a tree at the foot of which the funeral train pauses, and the crosses are lifted to the branches where they fix and leave them."

An Order on a Postage Stamp. H. E. Dunlevy, a Philadelphia traveling salesman, tells this: "A friend of mine sent an order for goods to a Western firm recently, which he had written on the back of a postage stamp. It will go, unless it gets lost in transit. It was something like the man who mailed a hickory nut, addressed on one side, and with a one-cent stamp on the other. The nut was held, as it was claimed that sealed packages, the contents of which could not be readily examined, required two cents postage. All of which is lots of fun—for the sender."

STARTING A BALKY HORSE.

The Plan Works Like a Charm on the Fractious Colt.

Frequenters of what is known as the "Illinois Valley Trotting Circuit" will readily remember "Old Bill Reeves"—it is impossible to forget him. They will not know him by the above name because, for obvious reasons, it is simply borrowed for the occasion, but there is only one old stager of his ilk in the business and his inimitable style of story telling belongs entirely to himself.

"Boys," said he, "I've been sportmentin' in, an' you kin all bet yer Sunday clothes 'at 'lectricity'll start a balky horse."

"Been sportmentin' 'ith the Padget colt, Bill?" ventured his neighbor on the left.

"Ya'as," drawled the famous narrator.



"IT WAS THIS WAY."

or, spitting copiously, and changing the immense quid from the left to the right side of his mouth.

"Ya'as, the Padget colt. I tote you fellers I'd break 'im in. I reckon I hev, but mind you, I don't kalkillate ter use no more 'lectricity. It was this way:

"That there Padget colt hed 'bout stumped me; I never seed such a critter ter balk in my life. I've seen some, I reckon. Well, I made up my mind this mornin' that I'd jest take 'im out 'n drive 'im or kill 'im, one or t'other.

"I'd got 'im most hooked up when long comes that entirely useless idiot, Bob Smalley. Always sportmentin' 'ith prosoic acid or sulphuric acid or some sich conceitain drugs; 'n calls 'imself a chemist.

"Well, Bob see 'at I was hitchin' of the Padget colt 'n I s'pose he kalkillated the'd be a row; so he comes in 'n looks on kinder innocent like 'n sets down a little parcel hed been carryin' under his arm. 'n jes as I was climbin' into the cart he remarks in a kinder irritatin' way that he don't reckon as how that colt 'll start fer me, nor nobody else 'bout some sort of mechanical appliance.

"How'll ye do it?" says I.

"'lectricity," says Bob.

"Well, I was clean stumped 'ith that blame colt. 'n I didn't care a darn if Bob used dynamite; so I says, 'Go ahead!'

"Bob, it seems as on his way to put a 'lectric bell inter Hank Yape's mill, 'n hed what he called a battery in the parcel hed been carryin'; hed some wire 'n 'lectric buttons 'n other fool things, too.

"Well, I took a short run down ter the pasture lot to put the riders on the lane fence 'fore Smalley turned the mares out to water. 'n when I got back Bob hed his mechanical contrivance all rigged up. There was a piece of copper wire twisted tight



"I GIVE THE BUTTONS A SQUEEZE."

'round the colt's tail, 'n from there a wire run up through the reins 'n down to the hand bolts, where hed fixed a couple of them 'lectric buttons, one on each rein.

"Now," says Bob, 'you git 'n cluck to 'im; 'n if he don't start, which of course he won't, just press them buttons."

"Well, I felt kinder foolish, but thought it wouldn't do no harm to try the thing. So I gets in, 'n takin' a good stiff bolt of the reins 'n adjustin' my thumbs to the buttons, hollers 'at ter the colt; 'n he didn't move, of course.

"Now look out the way, everybody," yells Bob. 'He's goin' to start now!'

"It was right at this point that I gave them buttons a little squeeze. There was a curious, sizzlin', fryin' kind of a sound, 'n I could see a bit of bluish smoke come curlin' up from that colt's rump. This lasted a sixteenth of a second, maybe less, 'n then he started."

"Holy straps! how that colt went out the barn door 'n down the lane. Smalley hed the lane full of mares, 'n we went through 'em like a cyclone, knockin' 'em seven ways for Sunday. 'I kep' my seat in the cart, 'n I struck the gate at the bottom of the lane, 'n then there wasn't no seat to keep the cart betn a total wreck. I never let go of a bolt yit, 'n I didn't kalkillate to loosen up no more on this critter, so I hung on to them reins, 'n scolded to land on my feet when I could—but most of the time I didn't land at all 'ceptin' up agin things. 'All this time I could notice a cur-

ous kind of a smell, somethin' like fire in a tannery; but I was too near dead to locate it, and it wasn't 'till we'd thrashed through two more fences and toured the hull orchard 'n corn patch, that I heard Bob Smalley hollerin', 'Let go them buttons, yer darn fool! Well, it was 'lectricity that done it; 'n the Padget colt is standin' in my stable to-night 'ith his tail over his back 'n a ring 'round it thet's tried to a beautiful brown, all on account of thet fool Bob Smalley's mechanical injinooty."

WAS A DEFINITE REBUKE.

No Palliation of the Offense that It Had Not Been Committed.

"I feel impressed to warn you, my dear young lady, against the danger you are courting," began the good man severely. "It is bound to prove the deterioration of respectability—"

"Sir! What do you mean?"

"Oh, it is no use to add impudence to your offending. I expect you to be ashamed of it. It is a curse. It unwomanly woman. It creates a race of feminine tomboys—"

"Never mind! N-e-v-e-r mind! You can't explain it away. I must speak of it. You ought to be ashamed of it—indeed you ought—"

"Do you mean to insult me, sir?"

"Insult you, my dear young girl? Nay, verily! My heart bleeds for you. It is my duty to teach you ways of rectitude and social and spiritual worth and uprightness. And to think, the example of our noble mothers must be thus parodied, burlesqued, shamed—"

"But hear me—"

"Hear you! Would you dare profane reason and common decency by attempting a defense?"

"But will you listen—"

"Listen? No! Duty listens not to attempted palliation. You are flying deathward at a terrible pace, and in what a garb, too! Try to break off from them before it is too late—"

"From what?" (Screaming.)

"From those miserable, horrid, sinful, unsightly, disgusting, baggy bloomers—"

"Why, I never had them on! Never saw a pair—"

"Humph! Ahem! Yes—well, it would be just as bad if you had."

(And the lecturer gathered his frown together and started for the next house.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.)

An Indian Wizard.

The late Garrick Mallory, of the Bureau of Ethnology, once told me of something quite unaccountable which he witnessed at White Earth in 1890.

There was present a famous mystery man, who made a bet with a local Government agent that the latter could not tie him with ropes in such a manner that he would not be able to disentangle himself offhand. The agent, assisted by Mallory and other white men, tied the Indian up in the most elaborate fashion and put him inside a conical wigwam in the middle of an open space. Nobody else was permitted to come near him. As quickly as they had withdrawn, tremendous thumping sounds were heard from the hut, which swayed from side to side as if it would be torn to pieces. Two or three minutes later the Indian called out, telling them to go to a certain house several hundred yards away, where they would find the ropes with all the complicated knots untied. The tying committee opened the wigwam then, but found the wizard smoking a pipe, with his black magic stone on his lap. Neither pipe nor stone had been there previously. The head priest of the wizard's society, having heard of this exhibition, sent word that he would be killed if he repeated such a performance for gain. Evidently it was deemed improper that religious business of that sort should be thus prostituted.—Philadelphia Times.

Change in the Form of the Sword.

During the first twelve centuries of the Christian era the sword varied little, in the essential features, from the lines of the broadsword. The blade was lengthened, it is true, and less curved; but the cross-pieces of the hilt were usually straight, and the simple, workmanlike look was preserved. The change to the elaborate hilts of several centuries later were made gradually.

There were slight changes in the cross-pieces from time to time; the stiff straight lines little by little began to curve gently toward the blade. The knob at the end of the handle, usually a simple disk or ball of metal, was varied into a treflow, a fluting, or a small Maltese cross. Blades and scabbards were engraved with inscriptions, a practice which had indeed been handed down from ancient times, as swords bearing unmistakable Runic characters cut in the bronze blades. The cross-hilted sword the Crusaders carried on their pious errand to the Holy Land not infrequently displayed the sacred monogram, either carved or inlaid. An oath sworn upon the sword was held peculiarly sacred and binding, and it was a common custom in England and elsewhere to confirm a pledge in this way.—St. Nicholas.

Probably Born in Ohio.

At the time of his death last week Othniel Gayer, of Norwich, Conn., was the oldest Town Clerk in the United States in point of continuous service, and perhaps also in point of age. He was 98 years old, and had held office continuously for a little more than fifty years.

Uncle Jake's New Teeth.

A new set of natural teeth are pushing through the long smooth gums of 84-year-old Uncle Jake Lawrence, of Uniontown, Ky.

Hard on the Neighbors.

According to a musical journal there are in London at this moment 244,000 females who are learning music.

THE FARM AND HOME.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO FARMER AND HOUSEWIFE.

Where Sap Comes from, Its Uses and How It May Be Tapped—Care of Eggs for Hatching—Feeding Whole Corn—Spring Plowing.

The Sap of Trees. It is a subject of interest to maple-sugar makers where the sap in the tree comes from, and there is much difference of opinion about it. The sap does not come from the ground by the roots, but is in the tree, and has been all the winter, but in the form of starch deposited in the cells of the soft wood under the bark, says the Journal of Agriculture. When the weather becomes warm enough in the spring to set the vital process in the tree into action, this starch is changed into sugar, and the cells are filled so full of the sweet sap as to exert a great pressure on them. Then when the spring begins, the warmth of the sun starts this vital action, and the sap circulates through the cells on the way to the buds, which will swell and soon burst into leaf.

When the sugar maker taps the tree the pressure of the sap on the cells forces it to exude and flow from the opening made into the sap wood. There is no special current up from the roots or down to them; the tree is simply filled with sap all through the sapwood, and mostly at that part of it which lies immediately under the bark, and where the new wood will soon be formed of the matter held in solution in the sap. The sap will flow while the ground is frozen, for it is the warmth in the air that causes the flow, and not the action of the roots in the soil.

Thus it is quite useless to spread any litter or other non-conductive matter under the tree in the expectation that if the ground is kept frozen the budding will be delayed. If this effect is desired, the whole tree must be covered by a low temperature all over. Thus young trees may be kept in cold storage for months, and so kept for shipment to Australia, where the seasons are exactly the opposite of ours.

Care of Eggs for Hatching.

It is a common mistake to suppose that eggs kept always in a cold place may be kept indefinitely. It is true that keeping them too warm starts the germ into life, but even then the egg is spoiled quicker and more effectually by being chilled. The germ is sensitive to cold almost from the first. We have known poultry keepers who made a rule to set eggs the day they were laid, and if possible without ever having the warmth which they received from the hen impaired. The necessity of keeping the eggs reasonably warm until they are set is greatest in the early spring months. Many eggs are kept in cold rooms where the temperature at night goes down very near to the freezing point. If they are on earthen or metal vessels, which take away the heat from the egg very rapidly, the egg will be worthless for setting long before its shell is cracked by frost. Without doubt many early settings of eggs get chilled in this way. While the weather is cold not so many eggs should be put under the hen as she will care for and hatch in summer, when eggs will hatch with little more heat than the sun furnishes if covered with something at night to keep them from being chilled.

Feeding Whole Corn.

No kind of farm stock excepting sheep and poultry will eat whole grain of any kind without wasting more of it than the miller will take in toll. At the West whole corn in the ear is sometimes fed to cattle and hogs, but the waste is partially saved by turning in straw hogs to pick over the excrement and eat the undigested grain that passes from the first feeding. It pays much better to get a farm mill, which can be run by steam, and save both the waste of grain or of the time taken in a journey to the mill and waiting while the grist is ground. Some farmers like this job of waiting at the mill, but it is usually a sign that they are not thrifty and enterprising. This last class of farmers have no time to be wasted.

Spring Plowing.

Do not be in a hurry to plow; let the ground dry out thoroughly. Many farmers, especially inexperienced ones, want to above their work too fast. They plow, harrow and plant when the soil is cold and wet, and the result is the work has to be done all over again. Better spend the time in getting out the manure, or in turning it over and making it as fine as possible. Good land may be plowed, especially if it is of a gravelly or sandy nature, when quite damp; but heavy limestone or clay soils should be allowed to dry out. When the soil crumbles and falls away from the mould-board, it is in proper condition to plow. Have the plows in good order—an extra set of double and single trees, a dozen extra hame-strings and half a dozen large, open links. With these extras and a strong, steady team, the plowing can be done to advantage when the ground is fit to plow. The last of March is quite early enough to start the plows, unless the season is a very early one.—The American.

Fruit in Upraising Barns.

A great many farmers have learned that the room under ground gained by putting a new barn over the basement costs less than any other equal space in the building. The wall is not much more expensive than siding, and there is no extra roof to charge to the basement nor extra strength of timbers to support the structure. But if this is true of a new barn, it is still more so of an old barn which has stood for years in the same place. Under all such barns, especially if stock have been kept in them, are large accumulations of rich earth, which is the very best manure

to apply to fields lacking in fertility. We have known a number of farmers who raised old barns and put a basement under them, who declared that the rich earth they thus secured more than paid the expense. The old-fashioned barn floors were never made tight, and most of the urine from animals stabled above them passed into the soil below. As this was protected from leaching by rains, the deposits of urinary salts and ammonia will in a few years so strongly impregnate the soil that nitrate of potash or saltpetre can be procured from it. In olden times the soil under old buildings and in dark caves where bats and beasts had found a refuge was long regarded as the best source of saltpetre, and it is yet used for this to some extent. The farmer who has a barn that rests on or near the ground has a rich source of fertility when he is ready to use it.

Old Fruit Trees.

Old fruit trees that have ceased bearing profitable crops can in many instances be made productive by the following methods: First, if the trees are surrounded by a tough sod of grass, have it plowed up, or dug up with mattock; then mow the trees. Scrape the bark all around close to the ground, and wherever a reddish sward appears there you will find a worm. Take a knife, cut into the bark with small blade and dig him out, or punch him with a piece of copper wire; then stop up the hole with a rosin soap. The worm is a little white fellow about half an inch long; three or four of them working on same tree will soon kill it. They eat the soft white bark, through which the sap runs that nourishes the tree. Take a sharp saw and saw off all dead and all cross limbs; saw the limbs close up to the branch; then paint over the wound with a little shellac varnish to keep out water; it will soon heal over. The trunk and all large branches should be scraped to remove the old bark.

A garden hoe, ground sharp upon grindstone, and the handle cut one foot from hoe blade, will make a most excellent scraper. After scraping, make a wash of strong soft soap, and with a stiff brush scrub every tree; this scrubbing will kill insects and their eggs, and will cleanse the bark. Give each tree a good dressing of manure. If it is a large tree, apply half a cartload of manure. For five-year-old trees, use half the quantity. Spread the manure out as far as the limbs reach. With such treatment many an old tree can be made to yield fine crops of fruit.—The American.

Measured Nations for Pigs.

Recent experiments at the Danish Agricultural Station showed that young pigs weighing thirty-three to seventy-five pounds required three and three-fourths pounds of grain, or its equivalent in milk or whey, to make one pound increase in weight, while for hogs weighing one hundred and fifty pounds to two hundred pounds it took five pounds of grain, and for old hogs weighing over two hundred pounds six to six and one-half pounds of grain to produce one pound of increase. It also took nearly half a pound more grain for each pound of increase in winter than in summer.

Odds and Ends.

Piano keys when in need of cleaning should be wiped off with alcohol.

Don't sweep with your back. Use your arms and the broom, with not too long a stroke.

Yellow stains left on white cloth by sewing machine oil can be removed by rubbing the spots with a cloth wet with ammonia before washing with soap.

If an iron holder is attached with a long string to the band of the apron while you are cooking you will save many burnt fingers and scorched dish towels.

Chemists say it takes more than twice as much sugar to sweeten preserves and sauces if put in when they begin to cook as it does if the sugar is added after the cooking is done.

Where it is desirable to see the tongue of a very small child the object may be accomplished by touching the upper lip with a bit of sweet oil, which will cause the child to protrude its tongue.

Sore or inflamed eyes are relieved by bathing in tepid water in which a little salt has been dissolved. An individual towel should be used in all such cases—never one which is used in common by members of the family.

A housewife who has suffered from backache caused by leaning over the cook stove, which usually stands several inches too low for comfort in working, has had her stove placed upon a small platform a little larger than the stove, and about nine inches high, so that the cooking utensils on the stove will be within easy reach without stooping.

Soap tree bark makes an excellent cleaning fluid for removing spots from men's clothing or any kind of black goods. Put ten cents' worth of powdered bark in one quart of soft water and let it steep an hour or more. Strain through a fine cloth into a quart jar and add two tablespoonfuls of alcohol to it. Use a soft brush on a piece of black cloth to rub the soiled places.

To make Philadelphia scrapple stew two pounds of fresh pork until thoroughly done. Take the meat up and add enough water to the liquor in the kettle to make a quart. Remove the bones and chop the meat, then put it back in the kettle. Season, adding sage or summer savory and onion, if desired. Then stir is contained, boiling slowly and stirring as if for mush. Make it thick enough to slice when cold. Turn into a dish, and when wanted for the table slice and fry in drippings. The quantity may be increased, as it will keep a long time in winter.