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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 New York interviewers agree that Sarah Bernhardt is still "about thirty."

The Valkyrie is said to be for sale. Anybody want a yacht which can't sail unless she has the whole course?

Despite the fact that half of the Central American town of Colon has been destroyed by fire its name will not be changed to Semicolon.

A Boston contemporary affirms that a man is not necessarily weak intellectually because he is unable to tie a necktie gracefully. Can this be true?

Spain finds it would stand without European assistance in the event of American intervention in Cuba. This is the only thing it has learned in some centuries.

One of the items of keeping up Blenheim palace is \$4,000 a year for putty. The young Duke may have made a mistake after all in marrying a girl with only \$5,000,000.

Murderer Holmes told Hall Caine, the novelist, that he had read a number of his books. Still, he doesn't think that Mr. Caine's books are wholly responsible for Holmes' crimes.

Oom Paul Krueger announces that he will be unable to accept Secretary Chamberlain's kind invitation to go to London for a visit. The old man is a pretty smooth Boer.

A cablegram announces that the British forces on their march up the Nile have taken Akasheh. Never heard of the place before, but it evidently is a town which isn't to be sneezed at.

A Cleveland scientist has succeeded in photographing an editor's ribs. It has been reported that he had also photographed the editor's stomach; but of course, there is nothing in that.

The reason the Prince of Wales has declared himself in favor of peace is doubtless because he does not want to discourage Queen Victoria in her willingness eventually to rest there.

Perrine's new comet has been slandered. It isn't a bob-tailed affair; on the contrary, it has a tail 10,000,000 miles long. If there is any doubt about that you can measure the tail yourself.

The Duke of Marlborough's English solicitor, in an interview, says that he "sincerely hopes the American people will not regard his distinguished client in the light of a fortune hunter." Oh, dear, no; the idea!

This war scare may pass by, but it would be well for the European powers to reflect that they need not expect always to get off so easily. Some time they will play with a war rumor a little too carelessly and there will be trouble.

The cable brings the interesting information that a French scientist has invented an instrument which he calls a "glassary," for measuring the tongues of bees. We are glad somebody has found time enough to attend to this highly important matter.

Of all the English colonists on American soil the English sparrow is easily the most impudent, overbearing, and disagreeable. It has few if any redeeming traits. It drives away better birds, it has no moral character, and it can't sing. It is the Russian thistle of the feathered tribe. Drive it out.

The dynamite shells experimented with for naval defense at San Francisco are found to be entirely effective within a distance of three miles. This destructive agent is as yet an unknown quantity in warfare, but there is an increasing dread of it among the Spanish troops in Cuba.

The British people consume every year \$150,000,000 worth more of grain than they produce, and in view of possible war complications it is proposed to keep not less than one year's supply of cereals on hand. When the Briton can sing that he has the men, the ships, the money and the corn, he may be considered in good shape for all contingencies.

The Lieutenant Governor of California recently died, and there is no provision in the constitution or laws of the State for filling the vacancy. Accordingly, the Governor has appointed a man to the place under his general authority to fill vacancies, and this unusual proceeding on his part will probably be allowed to stand because there is no legal way to undo it.

The story of European rule in America has been mainly one of oppression and bloodshed. England treats Canada with moderation because the United

States taught her a lesson. But Cuba is still in the toils, and the tyranny of foreign government is working her ruin. The Monroe doctrine means that there has already been too much of this curse laid upon the people of the new world.

The bill introduced in the Ohio Legislature by Senator Garfield to prevent the corrupt use of money in elections, primary as well as regular, is now a law. Candidates are limited to an expenditure, for personal expenses only, of not more than \$200, and of \$100 if but 5,000 votes are concerned. The law will at least enable candidates to gracefully ignore some of the demands made upon them.

It is said that only three herds of fur seals are left in the world, and that these are threatened with early extinction. One statement about our Alaska seals is that they consume every day 50,000,000 pounds of fish, mostly codfish. But there is no scarcity of fish, and no good reason why the seal should not be intelligently protected. When the last of any tribe of animals disappears that is the last of it as far as this planet is concerned, and mankind should not strike the final blow without comprehending its full meaning.

Mr. Andrew Carnegie has written a letter to the London Times in favor of arbitration of the boundary dispute with a fixed price upon such territory as has been settled by the British should their title be found defective. This will not do. If the English have settled upon territory that does not belong to their nation all they have to do is to get out of it or take out naturalization papers and become Venezuelan citizens. They have no right to a mile of Venezuelan soil. It is a question even whether under the Monroe doctrine fairly interpreted Venezuela has the right to sell her American territory to a foreign monarchical nation under the pressure of bribery or bullying. It would be a violation of the spirit if not of the letter of that doctrine at least that America was for Americans.

The Supreme Court of Illinois has affirmed the conviction of Frank R. and Charles J. Meadowcroft, of Chicago, for illegal banking and has decided in favor of the constitutionality of the law under which they were sentenced to one year's imprisonment. A different decision would have created surprise. The law was framed to correct a recognized and a growing evil. The Meadowcrofts case was its first test. They had a fair trial, were defended by the best lawyers money could hire, and were found guilty. They sought to escape the penalty for their crime through legal technicalities. That they have not succeeded is matter for congratulation to every man and woman who has a dollar on deposit in a bank in this State. The crime for which the Meadowcrofts must suffer punishment was neither more nor less than embezzlement. The funds they squandered were trust funds. Reckless of the consequences to themselves or their clients, with the daring of confirmed gamblers, they plunged deeper and deeper into the vortex of speculation until it overwhelmed them. They knew the law, but if there had been no such law they knew it was a crime, morally, to speculate with the money of others which, if lost they could not repay. The case is particularly striking because of the character of the men. Neither was an adventurer nor a hardened criminal. Both were young, the bearers of an honored name, and favored by fortune with good birth and breeding, and high social connections. They inherited ample means for the enjoyment of life. With this they were content. One step in the wrong direction led to another, and at the end of the path stands an open prison door. To the lowest classes imprisonment is not a great hardship. The ordinary thief loses little else than his liberty when he dons the stripes. He neither knows nor cares for the respect of his fellow-men. It is different with those like the Meadowcrofts, who have always thought the penitentiaries as being intended for another race of beings than themselves. The mantle of disgrace will be worn by them with keen suffering. It is difficult to avoid sympathizing with these two young men, and they are to be pitied sincerely. The way of the transgressor is hard, but it is the one they chose voluntarily, and their punishment will be a wholesome warning to others.

Byron's Pun.
Byron was as fond of puns as Macaulay. In one of the poet's letters sold in London the other day occurs this passage: "I am living alone in the Franciscan monastery with one friar (a Capuchin, of course) and one friar (a bandy-legged Turkish cook)." This letter sold for \$40. It is interesting to note that there are many signs pointing to a Byron revival in the near future.

Big Pane.
What is claimed to be the largest single pane of glass in the country was received at Hartford, Conn., from Belgium recently. It is 12 1/4 feet high, 15 1/2 feet wide, 1/4 inch thick and weighs 1,800 pounds.

BLUE AND THE GRAY.

BRAVE MEN WHO MET ON THE FIELD OF BATTLE.

Thrilling Stories of the Rebellion—Old Soldiers and Soldiers Relate Interesting Reminiscences of Life in Camp and on the Field—Incidents of the War.

A Thorn-Thicket Charge.
"Did you ever charge through a thorn-apple thicket?" asked R. O. Jeardeau, the St. Paul conductor with a hitch in his step, for which he owes a chunk of Confederate lead.

"Our brigade had that experience," he continued. "Dec. 9, 1864, when we were about fifteen miles from Savannah, we reached one of those dismal and seemingly endless swamps so often found in that part of the country. It happened that there was a very good pike through that particular swamp. It was straight and narrow. On the pike the going was first-class, but step from it and down you went. We swung along cheerily in the belief that we would have comparatively free sailing to Savannah. Suddenly we ran upon trees that had been felled across the pike. The pioneers and engineers, with their axes and pikes, were called to the front and directed to clear the way. They had been at work only a minute or two when a shell came tearing down the pike slinging the old familiar song and exploded, killing several men and scattering the fallen trees more quickly than a regiment could have done it with axes and pikes. The enemy had perfect range and made it, oh! so hot for us. We got orders to stand aside and let a battery go through on the keen run. We felt that it was certain ruin to those boys, men and battery. I remember saying: 'It is a shame to risk the lives of such brave men and beautiful horses where they will have little or no chance for their lives.' The battery opened fire and sent in a few shells, but was obliged to retreat.

"Our colonel, the late General Francis H. West, who was commanding the brigade, was ordered to take three regiments and make his way through the swamp, flank the enemy and charge his works. It was impossible to ride horses through that swamp, so the officers went on foot, brigade commander and all. Some of the time we were in water and mud up to the knees, and now and then a man would stumble in up to the armpits, rendering it necessary for two or three of us to stop and pull him out. We were literally soaked and covered with mud when we emerged from that swamp, but quickly re-formed and started for the Confederate fortification. After going a few steps we came upon one of those thorn-apple fields that was a veritable hedge, the bushes and trees being so close together that it was next to impossible for even a rabbit to squeeze through. An officer reported to the brigade commander that they would have to abandon the charge. Colonel West, one of the kindest and mildest-mannered of men, was furious at the suggestion, and ordered an immediate advance, taking the lead himself. The thorns on those bushes were anywhere from an inch to two inches long and as sharp as needles. Volunteers were called for to cut down the bushes as best they could.

"When the brigade emerged from that thorn-apple hedge, which was at least a quarter of a mile wide, and I don't know how long, our clothes were torn in scores of places, and the trousers of some of the men were actually stripped off to above their knees and their legs were red with blood from numerous scratches. Colonel West wore a long, flowing beard during the war. In going through the hedge nearly all of that beautiful beard was pulled out and left for the wind to whistle through on many a thorn-apple branch. We still had about 300 yards to go before reaching the fort, and most of that distance was through a rice field, where the water was knee-deep. The enemy did not discover our move until we opened fire and were charging. They were so dumfounded that most of the force fled in dismay, leaving their battery, many muskets, knapsacks and other articles. We captured quite a number of prisoners. Our tall, handsome brigade commander, Colonel West, was about the raggedest, muddiest, bloodiest, most disheveled soldier I ever looked upon when that charge was completed, but he had led in one of the most remarkable short contests of the great struggle. He had accomplished what his division commander scarcely hoped could be accomplished. For it he and his troops received the thanks of the division and corps commanders, and a little later the colonel was made a brigadier general.

"I saw several striking evidences of pride and bravery in that movement through the swamp and thorn patch. Charley Weed, our color-bearer, who was by my side, fell while we were going through the thickest of the thorn hedge. It was no time to stop and care for the wounded. I did not know how badly Charley was wounded. I only knew that the flag had fallen, and at once seized it and plunged ahead for the fort. A moment later something struck me and knocked me

down. At that instant old Charley Weed snatched the colors from my hand and resumed his place in the line. Instead of being wounded he had caught his foot on a root and fallen so as to partially stun him. He was furious to think that anyone else than himself should think of planting our flag on the fort. Hence the moment he came to be sprang to his feet, charged after me so vigorously that it knocked me down. He was 6 feet 2 inches tall and weighed 220 pounds. A man might as well have been struck by a ten-pound shot as to have Charley Weed run against him. As we reached the fort Weed jumped into the ditch, but could not climb the muddy parapet. I stepped to his side, stooped down and told him to stand on my shoulders, which he did. I thought that the two of us spliced might succeed in planting the flag on the fort. I raised up with Charley on my shoulders, but he could not yet reach high enough, so he gave a spring, which landed him on the fort, thus being first to plant old glory on the captured works, but where was I? Struggling to recover from what I thought must be at least a broken neck, as a result of Big Charley's spring on my shoulders. How rapidly I recovered as I looked up and saw the flag of our regiment proudly waving over Fort Harrison! The day was won. How proud we were!"

"How many heart-breaking things occurred in the war," said my friend Jeardeau. "Our regiment participated in the capture of Milledgeville. We had a right sharp skirmish, hurting them and they hurting us, some. While passing a church I noticed a woman and several children kneeling by the side of a man lying on the step in front of the church door. Boy like, I was curious and wanted to know all about it, and ran out to ask. The man over whom they were weeping was dead. He was clad in gray, and as fine a looking man as I ever saw—tall, fair-faced, dark-haired. A bullet had gone through his breast, killing him instantly. The body was still warm. He lay like one sleeping. The woman was his wife and the little ones his children. He had breakfasted with them only half an hour before. I never witnessed such hopeless despair as was exhibited on the face of that new-made widow, the mother of those little children. I have often wondered what became of them. I hope God has always smiled upon them."—J. A. Watrous, in Chicago Times-Herald.

Running the Batteries.
Admiral Walke, who has just died, was in command of the gunboat Carondelet, which, in the battle of Fort Henry, held the position in the front line of the battle throughout the entire engagement, eventually winning a decisive victory. Gen. Grant ordered Walke to attack Fort Donelson with the Carondelet, and although three gunboats which had been ordered to join in the attack failed to respond, the Carondelet went to the front alone and bombarded the fort all the day preceding the battle. He kept the Carondelet at the front in the two days' fight, his loss of officers and men exceeding that of all the rest of the Union flotilla.

At Island No. 10 Walke's bravery and skill sent his name around the world. The gunboat flotilla was operating with Gen. Pope against the rebel batteries, and Island No. 10 was finely fortified, and barred the passage of Gen. Pope's troops. Pope had cut a canal through the swamps for his transports, but dared not attempt to go through while the gunboats were above the island. Commander Walke volunteered to take the Carondelet through. Flag Officer Foote twice refused to allow the trial, saying it was impossible. Gen. Pope applied to Secretary Stanton for two gunboats to make the passage. Before the answer came a council of war was held and Walke offered to take all the responsibility for the trial. Foote consented. At 10 o'clock on the night of April 4, 1862, the battle-scarred Carondelet, with her boilers buried in cord wood and her wheelhouse wound with hawsers, started on her perilous mission. A large loaded with barrels of hay was lashed to her port side. Her guns were withdrawn and her ports closed.

A thunderstorm raged and the night was unusually dark. Every light was out and an escape pipe had been laid from the smokestack to the pilot-house, so no puffing should be heard. Just as the island loomed up the soot in the smokestack caught fire. It was quickly "doused" and the rebels did not see it. Again it blazed up, and a picket gave the alarm. Then for an hour the little boat received a storm of shot and shell such as she never before had encountered. Walke and his men kept on down the stream, coolly taking their soundings, and at the end of an hour and a half the Carondelet was safe and Walke made his report to Pope. Not a man was killed, and the boat was not badly damaged. Admiral Walke was commended by Gen. Pope, the Secretary of the Navy and by Flag Officer Foote, but not by Congress, which thanked Foote and gave him \$4,000 and all the credit for the transaction.—New York Tribune.

The most expensive army of the world is that of Germany, which costs from \$80,000,000 to \$105,000,000 per year.

AGRICULTURAL NEWS

THINGS PERTAINING TO THE FARM AND HOME.

Intensive Farming in Practice—Two Uses for Corn—Our Barnyards Too Large—Gypsum Not Good on Strawberries—The Dairy Cow.

Results from a Quarter Acre.
Two years ago I planted one-fourth of an acre in early potatoes. As soon as we were done working the potatoes we planted tobacco between the rows of the potatoes. When the potatoes were dug for market the stalks were carried off and the ground cultivated, when the lot had the appearance of a tobacco field, writes a correspondent to the Orange County Farmer. It was then sown to turnip seed, and after the tobacco was taken off it was a complete turnip field. The result was fifty bushels of potatoes, average price \$1 per bushel, \$50; 400 pounds of tobacco at 12 cents, \$48; forty bushels of turnips at 30 cents a bushel, \$12; total, \$102, or about as much as would be realized at present prices from five acres of corn at eighty bushels per acre, or seven acres of wheat, or four acres of hay. And yet the taxes were paid for only one-fourth of an acre. This, in my opinion, was intensive farming.

The best crop of corn that I ever raised was grown on a four-acre lot, on which the second growth of the previous year's clover crop was left standing and then plowed down. The ground was thoroughly prepared before planting, for I held to the theory that ground cannot be prepared after the crop is planted. The field was check-rowed, or marked two ways, and the corn planted very thickly, and after it was cultivated eight or ten times with a cultivator, we went over the field and thinned down every hill to not more than three stalks. I do not think there was a vacant hill in the field. The result was 600 bushels of corn ears (50 bushels per acre), six large two-horse loads of corn fodder and half a dozen loads of pumpkins, equal to about as much as is ordinarily raised on twice the number of acres. The next year the same field produced over 200 bushels of oats.

Uses for Corn-cobs.

I utilize my corn-cobs in two ways—by grinding with the grain, and by kindling fires, says a writer in the Country Gentleman. The experiment stations have shown beyond discussion that cob meal, when fed to cattle, is fully as valuable, measure for measure, as clear meal, owing, it is presumed, to the fact that the cob so separates the particles of grain that the digestive secretions of the animal can more thoroughly act on them. I also kindle my coal fires with them. By dropping a few chips of paper, and then filling up the stove with cobs, and when these are well on fire, adding a few more, and on these immediately pouring the hot oil of coal, I have no trouble in kindling the hardest of coal. I use more or less also in my fireplace, where they make a heat more intense than any hardwood fire. I have on hand some cords of cobs, left from the shelling of my seed sweet corn. These I propose to have ground up with the common yellow corn of the market, and so practically change it into meal value, and so practically change it into meal value. As the farmer in the closing days of winter is busy scraping up the scattered manure in his barnyard to draw away to the fields he will almost always admit that his barnyard is larger than it should be. Our large barnyards are a relic of the times when stock was mainly fed out of doors, and the large surface was intended to make it convenient for feeding so that stock would not crowd each other. Nowadays stock are all stabled at night, and are always fed under cover, wasting less than by the old method of throwing the fodder on the ground or in the corner of a crooked rail fence. Where stock is kept up at night it needs a very small yard for it to exercise in during the day. The practice of dehorning is also making it less necessary to have large barnyards, so as to prevent vicious horned stock from killing or injuring those that are weaker than themselves.

The Size of Barnyards.

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The Dairy Cow.

The modern dairy cow is an extremely artificial development, and as such should be entrusted only to the expert breeder, feeder and handler, just as a complicated machine is placed in the hands of some but skilled mechanics. The best dairy cow is of an intensely nervous nature, and needs to be treated with great consideration, says M. B. P. in the Ohio Farmer. Kicking a cow is a wicked habit that results in much loss. A cow kept in constant fear of being punished cannot prove profitable to her owner. Give the dairy cow a quiet, sensible, intelligent keeper. Such a man's services are worth money. Do not withhold food. It takes a good deal of food to produce a liberal flow of milk. The more food the greater the product up to a certain

limit. Feed not only a liberal ration, but compound the same with care, taking pains to have it well balanced. Of course, it is always well to know just which grains and fodder are most easily and cheaply obtained, and as much of these should be used as possible without injuring the quality of the ration. Gluten and linseed meals are now very cheap, and as they are exceedingly rich, they can be profitably mixed with bran and cornmeal in compounding rations that are not only nutritious, but of a quality to produce excellent manure.

Gypsum on Strawberries.

It is not a good plan to sow gypsum on strawberries. It will usually encourage so large a growth of clover that it will be nearly impossible to keep the rows clean open for the first year. The gypsum has besides no special effect in making a large growth of the strawberry vines. The mineral fertilizer that strawberries most need is potash. If this were applied more freely the crop of berries will be large, and they will be of better quality and color. All the highly colored fruits need large supplies of potash.

Apple Orchards as Windbreaks.

Wherever forests are cleared off there soon comes a demand for a windbreak of some kind to shelter buildings and stock from cold blasts, and to protect the farm from the severest winter winds. It is a good practice to set an orchard either on the windward side of the farm or of the house and other farm buildings. It is true the trees are bare in winter, and unless there is a close fence to obstruct the wind near the surface it will blow under the trees nearly as strong as if no orchard were in the way. This can be remedied by planting a row of evergreens on the windward side. This will also hold the snow from being blown away from the orchard. Most fruit trees suffer from lack of water in the summer season when they are perfecting their fruit. It is abundance of water that enables their roots to take up the mineral plant food which is essential to seed production. It is the lack of water that causes so large a proportion of fruit to fall soon after it is formed. The time comes for forming the seed, and the mineral element needed is either not in the soil or is unavailable, because there is not water in the soil to dissolve it.

Oats and Peas.

One of the best early feeds for stock, especially breeding animals, may be secured by sowing oats and peas somewhat thickly, either to be pastured or cut for soiling. For this purpose it is best to sow fully three bushels of seed per acre, while if the crop is to be grown for its grain two bushels of seed is a great plenty. The crop should be sown at different times, so that it will come in order for cutting in succession. This soiling crop may be grown on rich land where a later crop of cabbage, celery or other vegetables is to be grown.

Odds and Ends.

One part acetic acid to seven parts water rubbed well into the scalp once a day, will, it is said, induce a new growth of hair.

To remove a grease spot from wall paper, hold a piece of blotting paper over the spot with a hot flatiron for a few moments.

Try using a piece of stale bread in a white muslin cloth and dropping it in to your kettle with your boiling cabbage. It will absorb all the offensive odor.

According to a wholesale furniture dealer, the best furniture polish is made of one-third alcohol and two-thirds sweet oil. Apply it with a soft cloth and rub with another cloth.

When your stove has burned red and your blacking won't stick to it, put a little fat fried from salt pork into the water in which you dissolve your blacking and try again.

Try chopping your bread instead of kneading it so long. It is a great help. Put plenty of flour on your bread board and on your dough, when it has been stirred very stiff, and turn your bread often as you chop it.

Try to avoid having the bread and cake crack open while baking. This cracking on the top is caused by having the oven too hot when the loaf is put in, and the crust formed before the heat has caused the dough to expand.

You may remove the tightness caused by a cold almost instantly by mixing ammonia and sweet oil, or fresh hen's oil will do, shaking it thoroughly and rubbing it on the nose and forehead. By adding lanolin you have a splendid liniment.

Fruit is not a complete dietary in itself, but it is excellent to accompany a meat diet. The acid contained in the fruits assist digestion, and it is for this reason that apple sauce should be served with roast pork or goose, the fat of which is rendered more assimilable by it.

It is perhaps as cheap to buy cotton seed meal, to be applied directly on the soil, as to purchase some fertilizers that are mixed. Cottonseed meal enters largely into the composition of fertilizers intended for tobacco, and if the hulls are also used the land will receive potash, phosphoric acid and nitrogen in fair proportion.