

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

So far as that \$40,000 check was concerned, Zella Nicolaus still insists that it wasn't paid, by George.

The dog tax of a Western town has been set apart as a library fund. This is a case of going to the dogs for a good purpose.

A New York girl saved her aunt from drowning, and the papers began calling her a heroine before they learned the aunt was poor.

In short, Dr. Nansen has successfully demonstrated that there are several more miles of sea water and ice up near the region of the pole.

That there is no more sensible animal than the horse was proved in Shelbyville, Ind., the other day when an uncaged bloomer girl caused a runaway.

Col. Phoebe Couzins, ex-United States marshal of St. Louis has come to the conclusion that the home is woman's proper sphere. Ah, Phoebe, if you had only spoken sooner.

The science of electricity as applied to torpedo defenses would at any time, at short notice, make the United States ports impregnable. Such is the judgment of Thomas A. Edison.

Uncle Sam is nothing if not gallant, but if the emergency arises and it becomes necessary to preserve his dignity, he will tell the queen regent kindly but firmly that she can no longer play even in the back yard of the western hemisphere.

Printers' Ink complains that the \$20,000,000 annually spent for chewing gum in this country is twice as much as is spent on churches. The comparison is a queer one, and suggests that if the people who eat missionaries had more currency perhaps the expenditures would be equalized.

A street sweeper recently gained notoriety in New York through his refusal to appear against the gripman of a car that had injured him. His broom was set up beside the tracks, and in an iron socket and topped by a American flag. His reason for refusing to appear against the gripman was that the latter was a workingman who needed his full week's wages to support his family.

The difference in size between England and the United States is hard to grasp, and many educated people have little idea how vast it is. Of course, a very little study of map and geography would show, but no one thinks of doing this. A fact that should bring the matter realistically before cyclists is that while the record man, John O'Grady's to Land's End is a little over three days, that from San Francisco to New York is over forty-three days.

The British campaign in the region of the Upper Nile is bringing out the effectiveness of the Maxim gun. The 9,500 troops of all arms which accompany the expedition seem to be needed for little more than a show of force, as the Maxim guns do most of the fighting. In the attack upon Firket, the Maxims mowed the dervishes down in swaths; and six men were found lying in a row, killed by a single Maxim bullet. A dozen careful and steady men with these guns can put a considerable army to flight. A correspondent says that "with the Maxim guns sufficiently supported, and with a road for supplies kept open, the British may recapture the Sudan." But he neglects to say what might happen if the dervishes also were supplied with Maxim guns.

A theory that has been recently advanced by Dr. Louis Robinson attributes the advantage gained by a change of air to a deep-seated hereditary instinct derived from nomadic ancestors. A change of climate has a beneficial effect, even when the change is from one bad climate to another. Dr. Robinson points out that the epoch during which our progenitors were savage hunters, with no fixed abode, was so incalculably longer than the most extended estimate of historic time, that it is impossible to ignore the influence of such a state of things on the constitution of Caucasian man as we find it to-day. That such habits, prevalent through so long a period, would be likely to leave a lasting impress on every cell and fibre of the human frame is pronounced more than probable.

The ladies of Connecticut are said to be growing more and more fond of the pastime of wading barefooted in the dewy morning grass—recommended by Father Knelp as being, in conjunction with a liberal use of cold water otherwise, a panacea for all the ills that flesh is heir to. And having found how pleasant it is to go barefoot in the grass in the morning, many of them have queried whether it won't be equally pleasant to go barefooted whenever else they can. Query has led to experiment, and ladies fashionably dressed otherwise are now discovered all over the State playing the part of the "barefoot boy" from morn to dewy eve. So common sense again winning the day, as in the case of the bicycle, against torturing conventionalities, and following in another era of Greek slavery in the matter of footwear.

The death of Joseph Wesley Harper, member of the famous publishing firm

of Harper Brothers, revives interest in the history of that remarkable house. The common ability, unity of purpose, mutual respect, forbearance and helpfulness exhibited by that family of brothers, and which have built up the largest publishing business in the United States, are almost unique in this country, where it is almost impossible to find a large family of brothers who will pull together in the same harness. Some centrifugal force seems always to send them in opposite directions, and make family unity in business enterprises impracticable. Perhaps, as the country fills up, and the choice of opportunities becomes more restricted, this American characteristic will vanish. And the example of the Harpers proves, not only how "sweet," but how profitable it is for "brethren to dwell together in unity."

Dr. Jameson has been found guilty in London of violating the neutrality laws in invading the Transvaal Republic with an armed force and sentenced to fifteen months' imprisonment without labor. All the other defendants were found guilty of the same charge, but were sentenced to shorter terms of imprisonment. The result of the trial will be a surprise to most people, who expected it would be long drawn out and would result finally in some form of "whitewash." There has never been any doubt in the public mind that Jameson was guilty of an overt act of hostility, but it was known that he had the moral support of the English people in the purpose of his raid, and it was believed that the Government would find a way to escape punishing him. The verdict must be accepted as a direct result of the diplomatic tact of President Kruger, who has worried Colonial Secretary Chamberlain from the beginning of the trouble. Jameson's punishment is the sop thrown to Oom Paul's protests.

The Health Department at Washington, presumably actuated by an expensive experience, has been finding out "what" the summer girl drinks. The investigations have covered a wide liquid field, but public interest naturally will be concentrated on the discovery that "ice cream soda" enters so extensively and frequently into the summer girl's daily program. Undoubtedly the common belief is that this seductive beverage consists of a little soda, a dose of sirup, a small lump of ice cream, and a generous filling of water. The wonders of science have been able to reveal that the ingredients in fact are butter fat, mineral matter, proteids, sugar, a distillation of coal-oil, water, carbonic acid gas, and in some cases rancid butter distilled with alcohol and sulphuric acid. It might be an economic stroke for the popular young man to study up this subject with care and share his knowledge with the summer girls of his acquaintance. It might prove a blow to the ice cream soda industry, but the valuable acquisition of facts should be ample compensation for all reasonable young women.

In one respect at least the Dominion Canada is far ahead of us. Since 1866 the Canadian Government has maintained a system of postal savings banks. In that country, with its population of less than 5,000,000, there were on deposit in these banks a year ago more than \$25,000,000 in small accounts. Wherever postal savings banks are in use, as they are in most civilized countries except the United States, the showing is similar. In Great Britain, for instance, the deposits in 1890 amounted to more than \$325,000,000. There is need in this country for an institution with which those persons of moderate incomes can deposit their savings with confidence that their money will be perfectly safe. Banks of this kind could very easily be established by the Government of the United States and operated in connection with the postal department, just as they are in other countries. The benefit which they would be to the people is very great. The United States ought not longer to delay establishing the system when it is necessary only to go across the border into Canada to find an example of its successful operation.

No More Midnight Falls. She watched him put the package away carefully, and, womanlike, she was curious. "What is it?" she asked. "Phosphorus," he replied. "What do you intend to do with it?" she persisted. "Last night," he explained, with dejection, in the tone of a man who felt that he had a grievance, "I came home late." "As usual." He paid no attention to the insinuation, but continued his explanation. "You may recall," he said, "that I fell over two chairs and a doll carriage and stepped on a wooden ball that threw me on the back of my neck." "I recall it," she admitted. "It waked up all the neighbors as well as myself. What of it?" "Nothing. Oh, nothing at all," he replied, sarcastically. "It was a small matter, but it annoyed me, and I made up my mind that if you couldn't teach the children to put their things away where they belong I would at least make arrangements so that I would know where they are when I come home after lodge meeting to-night." The phosphorus? "Pooh!" she retorted, contemptuously. "You'd have stepped on an electric light if it had been in your way last night."—Chicago Evening Post.

"One of the hardest things in making a speech," said the old campaigner, "is to say just what you mean." "Yes," was the reply, "that's pretty hard. But once in a while, it's a good deal harder to mean just what you say."—Washington Star.



Life is pleasanter and happy times come oftener. System preserves health, for we know that worry kills more persons than disease.

The Van Deman Strawberry. Some years ago an enthusiastic strawberry grower, realizing that a new strawberry was needed to take the place of the Wilson and Downing and at the same time prove a healthy, productive, firmmarket berry, sowed a lot of Crescent seed crossed by Captain Jack, well-tested berry, Sharpless and Crystal City. Of these but two proved valuable, one, named the Van Deman, and which was a Capt. Jack cross, and the Lady Jane a Sharpless cross. The Van Deman showed signs of superiority the first season, and for several seasons since has given very satisfactory results in many extensive commercial berry fields. It has been tested in twenty-seven States and with generally favorable results.—Farm and Home.

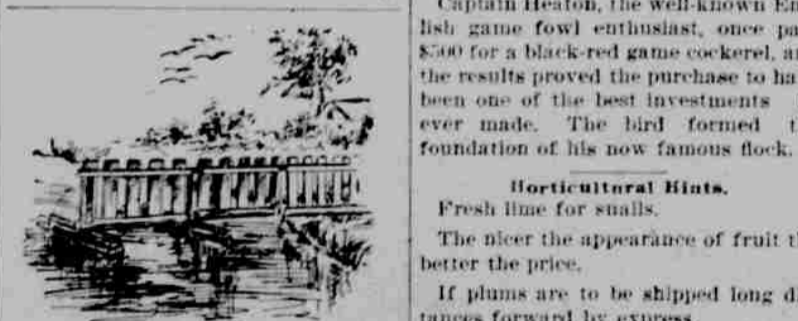
Loading Fodder Made Easy. Low wagons are a great convenience, greatly lessening labor in filling silos, hauling fodder, manure, etc. A number of low frames to be attached to ordinary wagons have been illustrated in these columns during the past year. E. N. Buckingham, of Iowa, describes in American Agriculturist the fodder loader shown. It has been used in Iowa with very satisfactory results. The timbers a are the hayrack supports on a wagon high or low. The loader is attached at b b, by means of a long bolt; c is a 2x4 which extends under the wagon and has a sharp iron point at d; e is attached to the loader at e e e by means of a long bolt forming a hinge joint. The shock is laid crosswise, and no matter how large the shock, when the team starts, the iron



point d catches in the ground and throws the loader up over the wagon, dropping the fodder on the rack. Two or three shocks can be put on at once. The loader is left on the field. Make of material sufficiently strong to hold the number of shocks put on each time.

Clip the Queen's Wings. From long experience in managing an apiary, we have come to the conclusion that clipping the queen's wings is a decided advantage. No swarms will then escape to the woods. The owner can go from home, attend church, without having his mind disturbed with thoughts of losing swarms in his absence. It is better to do this than run the risk of losing excellent queens and swarms. The bees will never leave for good if the queen does not accompany them. This, of course, has reference to first swarms, as second swarms may issue at any time, with a young queen fully fledged, like Minerva from the head of Jove, ready for flight and legitimate business. These latter can also be prevented by opening the hives after all queen cells, but one in each hive. If this is done no second swarm will issue.—Colman's World.

Floating Fence. An excellent water fence is shown herewith. Some short cross logs support one, two or more lengths of stout rails that form the bottom of the fence. Holes are bored in these, in which up-



right stakes are driven to support the upper rail. The lengths of fence are chained together. The outer log is anchored up-stream and down-stream with sufficient length of chain to permit the rising and falling of the fence. This plan is splendid for tide water rivers, and good wherever the rise is not likely to be so sudden as to wash it away.

System on the Farm. In every department of labor the essential to success is a systematic method. System is especially needed in farm work, because thrift of so many living things is in the power of the farmer. There should be a regular hour for feeding stock. Animals soon learn the hour for their meals when given regularly, and are impatient of delay. Bawling, bleating or squealing for an hour before each meal does not hasten the development of fat in calves, lambs or pigs. At other times the food is given too soon, the animal not being hungry and not prepared to make the best use of it. There should be a certain hour at which to begin feeding in the morning and a time at which to quit feeding at night, or rather evening, for we don't believe in feeding after dark except in the shortest December days. The farmer who feeds his stock by lantern light during spring and fall months will be apt to get crops in late and pick corn till holidays. The family meals should not vary ten minutes from the specified time, neither should the men ever keep meals waiting. Children should be off to school on time, neither too late or too early. They will be more apt to have their lessons on time if everything is regular at home. The work is so much easier to do when every one knows his time and place;



Vesuvius in Action.

A correspondent of the Companion who visited Mount Vesuvius last year and again this summer found that considerable changes had occurred in the flow of lava which broke through the side of the crater in 1895. He was informed by Prof. Palmieri, the director of the observatory on the mountain, that the same eruptive activity which produced the great eruption of 1872 is still going on, and that another powerful outburst of the volcano may take place at any time.

Another Early Man. Mention has been made in this column of the opinion of Prof. Marsh and other savants that the ancient human bones discovered in Java by Doctor Dubois a year or so ago must have belonged to a being of human characteristics, yet not so fully developed as the man of today. The name "ape-man" has been bestowed upon the creature supposed to be represented by the bones in question. Recently Prof. Nehring has discovered, near Santos in Brazil, a human skull of a low type, which is described as agreeing in some respects with the skull of the "ape-man," but as indicating, also, a much higher capacity. Some fragments of implements of artificial origin, the bones of fishes and parts of the lower jaw of a toothed whale, were found near the skull.

Wonderful Feather Work. Among the strange tribes of men about whom little is known are the Chamacoos, living on the upper Paraguay river. An Italian artist, Signor Boggiani, who visited these people not long ago, has given a vivid description of their appearance and customs. Like all wild tribes in warm countries, they wear very little clothing, but they excel in the art of making personal adornments from the feathers of birds. Their country abounds with birds of the most beautiful plumage, including parrots, toucans and trogons, whose feathers are dazzling in color, ruffs with gray plumes, musk ducks of a glossy black color egret with feathers of pure white, and spoonbills of a delicate pink hue. The Chamacoos combine all this wealth of colored and graceful plumage in an artistic manner, and some of these savages tall and of perfect shape, walk their forest glades in habiliments more brilliant, if less ample, than a Paris modiste could produce.

Tremendous Gun Power. Recent discussion of the best means of protecting our harbors in case of war has called renewed attention to experiments on the power of great guns. The result of one of these experiments has been used as an argument in favor of placing guns of 16 inches calibre at certain points on the coast. In the case referred to a projectile weighing 1,800 pounds was fired from such a gun. The target consisted of a compound plate of steel and iron 20 inches thick, and a second plate of iron 8 inches thick, backed by a mass of squared oak timber 20 feet thick, backed by a granite wall 5 feet thick, behind which was 11 feet of solid concrete, while the rear of the target consisted of a 6-foot wall of brick. The projectile, fired at close range, passed through the 28 inches of iron and steel, through the 20 feet of oak, through the 11 feet of concrete, and more than half way through the 6 feet of brick behind them all! What, say the advocates of heavy guns for coast defense, would be the chance of any battleship in existence against such a projectile as that?

Tipping Hudson Bay. A curious result of the slow changes of level going on at various points of the earth's surface has recently been pointed out by Prof. Bell of the Geographical Survey of Canada. This is a gradual tipping up of the shores of Hudson Bay, as if some gigantic power were engaged in an attempt to empty that great basin of water into the adjoining sea. One of the earliest indications of what was going on came to the attention of the officers of the Hudson Bay Company when they found that the water at the mouths of the rivers where their posts are stationed was gradually getting shallower and navigation consequently becoming more difficult. Examiner shows that the shore is lined with old benches of sand and gravel lying as high as fifty feet or more above the present level of the bay. When Hendrik Hudson, in 1610, discovered the great body of water that bears his name, he wintered with his ships on the east coast of the bay in a harbor which has now disappeared, or at least has been so far drained off as no longer to be recognizable from his description.

Napoleon After the Battle of Dresden. Prof. Sloane's "Life of Napoleon," in the Century, takes up the "Collapse of the Western Empire." In describing the end of the Grand Army after the battle of Dresden, Prof. Sloane says: "The night of the 7th was spent in indecision as to any one or all of these ideas, but in active preparation for the retreat; any contingency might be met or a resolve taken when the necessity arose. During that night the Emperor took two warm baths. The habit of

drinking strong coffee to prevent drowsiness had induced attacks of nervousness, and these were not diminished by his load of care. To allay these and other ailments, he had had recourse for some time to frequent tepid baths. Much has been written about a mysterious malady which had been steadily increasing, but the burden of testimony from the Emperor's closest associates at this time indicates that in the main he had enjoyed excellent health throughout the second Saxon campaign. There were certainly intervals of self-indulgence and of lassitude, of excessive emotion and of depressing self-examination, which seemed to require the offset of a physical stimulus; but on the whole, natural causes, complex but not inexplicable, sufficiently account for the subsequent disasters.

INDISCREET LETTERS.

Never Safe to Pen Matters Which You Want to Keep Secret.

Harriet Martineau, who was very deaf, always shifted her ear trumpet when any one asked her a question she did not wish to answer. The late Cyrus W. Field apparently did not hear a question that it would be indiscreet to answer. He had another good habit. Letters that if seen would cause others pain or might be misunderstood he destroyed as soon as he had read them. The following true story proves the wisdom of Mr. Field's practice:

A distinguished educator had, with considerable difficulty, persuaded a millionaire to found a college. The educator was to have been its president, but unfortunately he neglected Aaron Burr's advice: "Talk as much as you please, but don't write a word." The founder, an uneducated man, was full of crochets which, if expressed in the deed establishing the college, would have greatly interfered with its educational work. The educator, irritated by the labor it required to eliminate these whims from the founder's mind, one day wrote a complaining letter to a clerical friend, in which he narrated his trials, and ended by saying of the rich man, "— is an ass."

The clergyman, a careless, absent-minded man, put the letter into his hat, and called at the office of a law firm to transact business with one of the partners. While in the private office he left his hat outside, and one of the lawyers, seeing the letter, and knowing the handwriting of the address, read it. Of course he was not a gentleman, and was without moral principle; and his subsequent conduct showed him a mischief maker.

He retailed the contents of the letter to a nephew of the founder, who was bitterly opposed to his uncle's proposed disposition of his property. He reported it to the uncle.

The college was founded; but the educator was never its president. He died a broken-hearted man, through the carelessness of his clerical friend and the meanness of a legal parrot.

The Public Service in China.

Ex-Secretary John W. Foster, who was the confidential adviser of the Emperor of China in the peace negotiations with Japan, contributes a paper on "The Viceroys Li Hung Chang" to the Century. Mr. Foster says of the Viceroy: He does not regard the competitive educational system of admission to the public service as a perfect method, and more than once he has recommended to his Emperor material modifications in the existing system. But it must be confessed that it has stood the test of centuries with much benefit to China, and its practical operation has demonstrated that it possesses two merits of inestimable value to any nation: first, it brings all the offices of the empire within the reach of the lowest subject; and secondly, it diminishes the incentives to, and opportunities of, corruption and favoritism in securing entrance into official life. But in China the competitive examination ends with the admission; beyond that step promotion must come through other methods. Li Hung Chang secured the right of admission to office through his assiduous application to study, and every succeeding step in his upward career has been attained by his own genius and capacity.

Cowboy Way of Shooting.

For some years past the cowboys of the wild and woolly west have employed a process called "fanning the hammer" in using their pistols. To do this, they either take the trigger off or tie it back, and work the action by striking the hammer with the thick part of the palm of the hand. This method has the advantage of discharging six shots in the time required for the self-cocker to discharge two by the ordinary method. The requisites for use of the pistol in this way are a large hammer, a plant mainspring, extremely smooth action, and a cylinder-stop operated from the heel of the hammer instead of from the trigger. This style of pistol has become so popular that one of the big Eastern firearms companies is going to put a line of triggerless pistols on the market. The tools for their manufacture have already been completed, and the new type of revolvers will soon be on sale.

Suburban—What do you suppose I have raised in my garden thus far this summer? Visitor—Well, if you've had the same weather that we have I imagine you must have raised your umbrella oftener than anything else.—Boston Courier.

We refuse to feel flattered by the solicitude with which a man who has something to sell inquires about our health.

"They say a piano sounds best when it stands near a wall." "I think it sounds best out in a tea-cree lot."—Chicago Record.