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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.

Good, sound business judgment is one of the best collateral assets a bank can carry nowadays.

Lola Fuller has had many suitors, but Senator Cantor of New York seems to have won in a walk.

If the Spaniards had accepted Uncle Sam's offer of \$100,000,000 for Cuba forty or fifty years ago they would be now about \$300,000,000 better off.

A movement has been started by New York ministers to boycott the Gotham newspapers and "establish an ideal daily." This is indeed a freak country.

Just as the discovery is made that a lot of Tennessee negroes are turning white along comes a scientist with the announcement that "Americans are becoming Indians." The only real Americans are Indians.

A commercial contemporary asserts that patent medicines have become demoralized and prices have gone all to pieces. What else could logically be expected? A patent medicine always is a drug on the market, anyway.

A New York paper remarks that "Germany now objects to American sausages," and adds: "They are always growing over there." We can hardly blame Germany for objecting to a sausage that is continually growing.

The Treasury Department announces that a new counterfeit \$10 bill has been engraved recently. The fellows who did it probably will starve to death, for they will be unable to work off a bill of that size nowadays without exciting suspicion.

There is an old gentleman in Harrison County, Georgia, who is 80 years of age and has never ridden on a railroad train or taken a meal at any kind of public house. His son died in an adjoining town last week and he refused to attend his funeral because he would have to ride on the cars.

An extraordinary attack of conscience seized upon a young New York bookkeeper the other day. He had taken from a house which he visited for good business reasons a small package, which he found to contain diamonds, and he went to Philadelphia and pawned them. But learning that a servant had been arrested for stealing the diamonds, he returned and gave himself up to the police because he could not suffer an innocent person to be punished for his crime.

The New York Advertiser notes that the idiot who "did not know it was loaded," the woman who locks her children in the house while she goes to visit a neighbor, and the man who thaws out sticks of dynamite in the kitchen oven are doing their parts almost daily toward removing the surplus population. It will not do to say that these persons should have read the newspapers. Most of them do. Solomon had something to say of the impossibility of removing his folly from a fool even if he be brayed in a mortar.

The report comes from California that an attempt is to be made there soon to construct an airship on a large scale. It is to be made chiefly of aluminum, to be about 300 feet in length, and the money is to come from the sale of shares in a stock company. This will make the second California airship of the year. The other had no difficulty in sailing in the air, for it was constructed entirely of fevered imagination. It is not expected that the sailing qualities of this later craft will be any more notable or go beyond a sale of stock.

In an article in one of the New York papers on the late whiskers of John L. Sullivan, a prize fighter and absorbent of alcohol, portraits were given of the razor with which said whiskers were removed and also of the mug which held the brush and soap. To the unpracticed eye they looked almost the same as any other mug and razor, but the service to which they were dedicated gave to them a peculiar sanctity in the eyes of the editor of the newspaper. Pictures of Mrs. Astor's ash barrels and Mr. Vanderbilt's toothpicks are next to be expected.

Joseph Jefferson has taken up the cudgels against undue athletic training, which, he says, "kills off more people than it cures." The strain undermines the system, forces the heart to a task far beyond its powers, and as a result there is a collapse of the life machinery long before the appointed time." Mr. Jefferson says that he met Lawrence Barrett some years ago on a street corner in Boston, and Barrett said he was waiting for a car to take him to a gymnasium. "What's the matter with walking?" said Jefferson; "that's better ex-

ercise than you will get at the gymnasium and it will save you the trouble of going there."

The New York Tribune states that Uganda, the "Pearl of Africa," is making rapidly progress in civilization. A Parliament has been established, together with excellent police and postal systems, and the King has learned to read and write English. The credit for all this must very largely be given to Christian missionaries, who have been diligently at work there, often amid great discouragements, for many years. The favorite Radical cry in England, "Uganda should be abandoned," which has been repeated more often than Cato's demand for the demolition of Carthage, may now well be hushed.

To find on any good map of Asia the City of Kirin, which by the new treaty is to be the junction of the Russian and Chinese railway systems, draw a line west from Vladivostok, and another northeast from Port Arthur; the junction of the two straight lines will fall near Kirin. Now draw a straight line from Kirin northwest to Irkutsk; this will show approximately the route of the Siberian Railway through Northern Manchuria. The Chinese railway running northeast from Tientsin is to be extended to Kirin, and will have a branch to Port Arthur. As Manchuria is about as big as Texas, in about the same latitude as New York, has above 3,000,000 people, and plenty of fertile soil, the coming development will be very great.

Science has discovered an infallible test of typhoid fever in what is known as "the blood test." A drop of blood taken from the lobe of the ear, or the tip of the finger of a suspected typhoid patient, and sent to the laboratory on a card, is mixed with sterilized water and a fraction of it put on a microscopic slide. To this a drop, or a portion of a drop, of pure typhoid culture is added. The slide is then put under the microscope. If the bacilli move and keep separate, there is no typhoid in the blood of the person under examination. If the bacilli cluster and stay quiet, typhoid exists, or else has existed in the system within six years, a matter which can be very easily learned from the patient himself. No febrile diseases, no malaria, or any other malady in the blood will cause this concentration of bacilli. The test is therefore absolute.

Things have been looking up wonderfully for some of the old wood-engravers in the last year or so. When the various photographic processes of engraving began to be widely used seven or eight years ago, wood-engravers, who had been earning forty and fifty dollars a week, suddenly found themselves hard pushed to make twenty dollars, and many found it impossible to obtain any work whatever. At first, the photo-engravers expected light and acids to do between them all the work of making the plates. When this idea proved to be impracticable, they turned reluctantly toward tool work on the etched plates. When this stage had been reached, the times began to brighten for the old wood-engravers, and more and more of them were employed to work over the plates after they had left the etcher's hands. Gradually, too, a higher grade of skill came into demand. The consequence is that the incomes of engravers are on a rise. At present, in some cases, photo-engraving may be said to be used only to do the rough work of cutting out the plate. It is then handed over to a skillful engraver, and every inch of it is gone over with painstaking skill. The result is a combination of the best effects of photo-engraving, with all the light and shade and color that have been associated with wood engraving.

Joseph R. McCullagh was one of the old race of journalists, strong, determined, rudely vigorous, terrifically partisan, who have made history in this country. He possessed indomitable courage and those physical characteristics that in all ages have been found essential to successful and continued leadership. He had an unequalled capacity for hard work; his persistence at the tasks he took upon himself was something formidable; his sole thought was for his newspaper and his interest in affairs was more purely journalistic than that of any man of his time. To him the globe was a little thing compared with the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. He was a master of fence, knew the fierce and carte of public discussion thoroughly, but preferred the flail. He had a burly hatred of cant and humbug and smug double dealing and was cruelly destructive of convenient pretense. In the days before "journalistic enterprise" became a description of profligate expenditure he was a marvel of daring. Even in his declension Mr. McCullagh was an important figure in American public life, a strong, commanding man, who looked upon the world coolly, loved his work and performed it with power and courage. His death is a great loss to the public life of America, but a greater loss to single-minded and intelligent journalism.

A tear in your trousers will never worry you as long as you are in ignorance of it.

GOWNS AND GOWNING

WOMEN GIVE MUCH ATTENTION TO WHAT THEY WEAR.

Brief Glances at Fancies Feminine, Frivolous, Mayhap, and Yet Offered in the Hope that the Reading Proves Restful to Wearied Womankind.

Gossip from Gay Gotham.

New York correspondence:

CRITICAL attention is sure to be given to the new gowns of late February, and so plentifully that the transition period has come to be considered a test of a woman's judgment in dressing. About February the well-dressed woman begins to feel that her winter clothes are shabby, yet it is hardly time to go in for spring togs, especially as all our cold weather has been since Christmas. She wants something new, yet if she is wise she knows that as yet there honestly is nothing new. All she can do is to make some tasteful new adaptation of the styles already in hand, with a new eye, of course, to the probabilities. The probabilities just now are silk instead of silk for almost all purposes except linings, sleeves small, though that is settled, braiding, and skirts trimmed. Bright colors, sashes, overskirts distinctly on the horizon, tiny frills and dashes of

turned to lie downward below the waist line instead of up. The trick about this belt is that it must be very carefully made, so that though it seems to be just a matter of folds narrowing, all the extra fullness is really cut away, and there is actually hardly more than an inch width of goods in front or in the ends. Fullness is cleverly restored under the knot at the back, that the ends may fall with sash effect. The sloping line of the top of the belt from the back to the front is very becoming and restores a long-waisted effect that is lost in the all-around bodice belt.

Although common sense gives full endorsement to cloth for mid-season gowns, velvet is used a great deal more than it was in the beginning of the winter, and so much of it seen that the fact deserves mention. These dresses are almost invariably very handsome and it is not at all surprising to find in them the latest expressions of ingenious and tasteful dressing. This point is what leads to putting two of these costly dresses in the remaining pictures, for even if reproduction in velvet is not to be thought of there's a chance for contriving with less expensive stuffs, with the newest and best that the fashions afford as an easy winning. The first of these dresses—the fourth in the illus-

black, may also be regarded as little straws of fashion. And in fashion, as elsewhere in architecture, you cannot make bricks without straw, so look out for your straws.

In a street dress it may take the form of the gown at the head of this column, which was in light-gray cloth, the skirt taking tablier effect from its overlapping side seams. Its blouse waist was of emerald-green velvet, with high stock collar to match and a wide corset belt of liberty satin in the same shade. Over this was a novel jacket whose back was cut in the usual way, but whose fronts were pleated into the armholes in the manner indicated. Its very high collar flared at the edge and was cut in one with it. The jacket was made of the gray cloth, with green lining for the loose fronts.

Planned on a less elaborate scale for the same purpose were the second and third pictured models. The first of these was in dark heliotrope cloth, skirt and coat embroidered to match. The high collar was edged with astrakhan, and the lining was taffeta of the same shade. The other was of Havana brown serge, and its skirt was trimmed with lace medallions, bordered and connected by narrow silk marabout. Above this was a line of narrow brown cord. The bodice showed a band of lace across the

front, and lace points edged with marabout were added to the velvet collar. The wide corset belt and bow were of brown velvet, and a jaunty figure of

white peau de soie with cord garniture and marabout edging completed it. In all the lace used the design was outlined with gold.

The stock belt is a modification of the bodice belt, which is a little trying to a plump figure. The stock belt starts at the back, being laid in folds and reaching half way up the figure at the back back. These folds rapidly narrow as the belt passes about the waist, till in front the belt is only about an inch wide. Here the very narrow ends cross, returning to the back, and at the middle of the back they knot, the fullness of the ends spreading as they fall down the skirt, while the loops are

turned to lie downward below the waist line instead of up. The trick about this belt is that it must be very carefully made, so that though it seems to be just a matter of folds narrowing, all the extra fullness is really cut away, and there is actually hardly more than an inch width of goods in front or in the ends. Fullness is cleverly restored under the knot at the back, that the ends may fall with sash effect. The sloping line of the top of the belt from the back to the front is very becoming and restores a long-waisted effect that is lost in the all-around bodice belt.

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TOPICS FOR FARMERS

A DEPARTMENT PREPARED FOR OUR RURAL FRIENDS.

Best Time to Kill Timber—Making Good Butter in Winter—Wholesome Advice to Husbands—Mice and Rabbits in the Orchard.

Time to Kill Timber.

My experience in cutting bushes or healthy timber is that no time in the year will kill all, but I find a big difference in the time. I have best success cutting sprouts and deadening young sprouts in the dark of the moon. August is the best month, but July and September will do. Dry, hot weather is favorable for this work. The best success I ever had in my life in cutting bushes and deadening young timber was several years ago when the sign was in the heart in the dark of the moon in August. Very little sprouting was needed after that cutting. "But," says one, "what has the moon and sign to do with the life of trees?" Peel the bark from bushes in the dark of the moon, then again in the light of the moon, and see how much easier it peels; also, cut a few hoop-poles. Those cut in the dark of the moon will continue longer clear of worms and rot than those cut in the light of the moon; but many people have too much faith in signs and the moon. We all know the top of a tree dies without a root; much the same a root will die with no top to support. Thus we see by cutting an old or matured tree, if bushes are closely sprouted, they soon will die.—Jacob Faith, Missouri.

Making Butter in Winter.

With care in making the proper arrangements, good butter can readily be made in winter, and the cost be not materially increased. There must be fresh cows. Good, warm, dry shelter, plenty of good food and water, proper arrangements for handling milk and cream so as to secure the desired temperature from cream raising and butter making, and with these essentials good butter at only a slightly increased cost per pound can be made. But the quality must be good to make the most out of it, as the consumer demands good butter in winter the same as in summer, and the price is largely determined by the quality at all seasons.—Massachusetts Ploughman.

Husbands.

Do not judge husbands too harshly. I have looked the situation over very carefully, and I am convinced the blame is not so much of the heart, as some may suppose. These labor-saving appliances in the house are not provided many times simply because the farmer's wife really feels she cannot afford them; but all too often they are not procured simply because the husband has never given the matter a serious thought. "Good husbands," this is written for you. Consider how much money you have expended to make your farm work less burdensome, and then compare your labor-saving implements with those in the house and see if you have done all you can to save the strength of her who works on uncomplainingly.—Country Gentleman.

Mice and Rabbits in the Orchard.

In the winter season in periods of deep snows, rabbits and mice are apt to do a deal of injury to unprotected orchard trees. Where it is anticipated it can generally be prevented, but to those young in the business it often occurs that such a catastrophe is never dreamed of. In the case of mice, their work is always between the earth and the top of the snow, where orchards are clear of grass or weeds about the base of the trees as they should be. To prevent any injury from them it is a good plan to mound up earth about the base of the trees as high as snows usually cover.—Practical Farmer.

Poultry Points.

Plumage, symmetry and so on depends upon the sire. Observe which hens are the best layers and breed for them. It is from well-matured parents that vigorous offsprings come. Give fowls all the range and exercise that the weather will permit during the winter. Strong, stimulating food has a tendency to disorganize the stomach and produce indigestion. Better results can be obtained by giving a warm feed in the morning and warm water to drink.

Strawberry Culture.

There are many regions without a supply of home-grown strawberries, and for every such section there is an opportunity for some wide-awake farmer to build up, in a small way, a business that will bring to him much better returns for labor expended than he is wont to receive from any ordinary crop. I say in a small way, because few will find it profitable to grow more than will supply such a section as they can cover by wagon and realize retail prices for, unless exceptional shipping facilities are enjoyed. But the quantity of strawberries a small town will consume when furnished a continuous supply of first-class fruit is something astonishing. Many who consider the

gritty, half-decayed specimens usually offered by the dealers as luxuries quite beyond their reach, will buy well-filled baskets of fresh, clean, well-ripened berries by the dollar's worth.—Exchange.

Farm Notes.

Sunlight is a great tonic and health-giver. No stable should be without a window on the sunny side.

When it is time for any sort of work to be done push it along as fast as possible. Never let it push you. It costs no more to hire ten men one day than one man ten days.

The park commissioners of New York City have been spraying the tall elms, oaks and other shade trees of the city with an old fire engine, and the apparatus works so well and is so rapid and economical that many large orchardists who have seen it at work propose to adopt it. Spraying by steam will be a new wrinkle, truly.

Mutton can be produced at 50 per cent. less than the cost of beef. Experiments made in England with choice sheep and cattle showed that sheep stored in their bodies 12 per cent. of the food (demonstrated by increased weight), while cattle stored up only 8 per cent., thus proving that for mutton alone, leaving out the value of the wool, sheep are more profitable than cattle.

Hoard's Dairyman says: "The man who would set up a stove out of doors to keep himself and his family warm differs only in degree from the man who fails to provide adequate shelter for his stock; and the man who keeps two fires running where one would suffice is just as wise as the one who feeds stock that does not bring him a profit."

E. Williams advises the use of corn stalks as a shield for young peach and apple trees. He selects a large stalk, cuts off about two feet of the lower end, splits it in half, removes the pith, and clasps it around the young tree, tying on securely. If two pieces are not sufficient, add more prepared the same way. Rabbits will leave them alone, and it is the best kind of protection for the tree.

The German potash salts are not caustic potash, hence they do not dissipate ammonia by hastening fermentation when applied to manure. Instead, they form a compound with the ammonia, thus helping to keep it from washing. The nitrate of potash thus formed is the most powerful fertilizer known, and it is one that can be applied to nearly every kind of crop or fruit with benefit.

Pea and bean straw are much liked by sheep, and as they are somewhat more nutritious than hay, it is desirable to grow them for the flock. Beans are not eaten with relish at once, but the sheep soon get accustomed to them, and then eat them readily. It is the best way to chop or coarsely grind them with corn or oats. One pound a day will be excellent for the ewes right along from this time on.

The American Sheep Breeder says: Keep the sheep's feet dry and clean while they are in the stable. It is quite unnecessary to disturb the manure on the floor if it is kept dry and well littered. The packing of it under the feet will prevent decomposition, and keep the floor better in every way for the sheep than if it were cleaned every day. Plenty of common land plaster should be sprinkled or scattered over the litter. This will prevent all bad odor.

"Water Volcano."

The famous Volcan de Agua, or Water Volcano, with Pacaya and Fuego, are the three special features of the neighborhood of the city of Guatemala. Pacaya and Fuego are fiery volcanoes of the usual type, but Volcan de Agua emits torrents of boiling water and mud. In 1541, its first great eruption after the Spanish occupation took place, destroying the city of Guatemala, the ruins being still visible in places above the bed of hardened mud. Now known under the name of Ciudad Vieja, the walls of the old Spanish town suggest an American Pompeii. The water volcano is still active, at irregular intervals pouring out its boiling contents. Explanations are numerous, the most probable being the existence of a subterranean lake beneath the mountain, the waters of which take the place of lava in other eruptions. The mountain is 14,000 feet high, and the cloud of steam that always hangs over its summit gives it a very unusual and peculiar appearance.

Extras.

"Do you know," began the summer boarder, "that the pounding of the steak by your cook awakened me this morning at sunrise?"

"So?" said the placid landlord. "It was a real poster sunrise, but been as you didn't order it it won't cost you more'n \$1 for extra."—Indianapolis Journal.

A Masterpiece.

Jinks: "The death sentence was a beautiful piece of word painting. Blinks: Yes; I noticed how the doomed man hung upon the words.—Washington Times.

Cruel Revenge.

"I see you are able to be around this morning," said the axle. "Those puns make me tired," said the wheel. "If you start again I will have to turn on you."—New York World.