

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

Never judge a maxim by the man who repeats it.

Reputation is a bubble that a man blows and then punctures.

A fool envies another man's luck and a wise man envies his pluck.

Most men would rather get the short end of an argument than keep quiet.

Beware of keyholes. It was Eve's dropping that caused Adam's downfall.

Never borrow trouble. Hit your friend for the cash and let him keep the trouble.

The man with an office on the top floor is no nearer heaven than the man in the basement.

It isn't what the average man knows about the hereafter that frightens him; it's what he doesn't know.

The war has, after all, its bright side. So far neither Rudyard Kipling nor Alfred Austin has written a poem about it.

The Japanese private soldier is a quiet, unassuming little fellow who lives chiefly on rice, and generally gets there.

A Wisconsin genius wants to mend the crack in the Liberty bell. He'd probably like to whitewash the capitol at Washington.

A man committed suicide this week because he could not guide his automobile. Most men guiding automobiles prefer to commit homicide.

Better late than never. You may have noticed, however, that the fellow who climbs into the band-wagon last is never allowed to handle the reins.

If you find, in looking through your pile of \$100 bills, one with a poorly executed portrait of Thomas H. Benton upon it, you may know it is a counterfeit.

A New York paper is offering a prize for the best vacation suggestion. We have heard that it is a good plan to remain quietly at home and take a rest.

Early to bed and early to rise makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise. It also makes him so insufferably anxious to be talking about it all the time that there's no living with him.

A French scientist says automobilizing cures consumption. He may not be altogether right, but it can be said that few automobile enthusiasts are likely to die of consumption.

Perhaps the latest rise in the price of beef may be accounted for by the fact that the cattle are much larger and fatter than usual this year, entailing additional work in butchering.

Andrew Carnegie has, in the estimation of Professor Goldwin Smith, taken the wrong way to die poor. There is but one Carnegie seeking to die poor. What has the professor to offer in the way of suggestion to the millions who want to die rich?

Perhaps the world will some time admit that patriotism was but a stage in human development. Perhaps humanity will grow out of it into something better and broader—more universal. But it is evident that it has not yet grown out of it. Few stronger motives now dominate the heart of man. It is an enlargement, a glorification, of the love of father, of mother, of home and friends, of the hills and woods and flowers of one's native land.

Ellen Thorneycroft Fowler, the well-known novelist, protests against the term "old maid" in connection with unmarried women. Spinster is the word she recommends for the class designated. She says, furthermore, the class as a class should be respected. There is no question as to the latter statement, but if Miss Fowler wishes to be exact she should allow the phrase "old maid," or "bachelor maid," to stand. The earlier term "spinster" is now wholly out of date and inappropriate. Maids, young or old, are no longer spinsters.

That Americans contribute in no inconsiderable degree to the material prosperity of Europe is evidenced by the number of tourists from this country that annually cross the Atlantic. The Statistical Abstract of the United States for 1903 casts some interesting light on this matter. According to the Statistical Abstract 168,211 cabin passengers were carried away from the United States ports during 1903. The showing is impressive, however, as giving a slight idea of the amount of money that annually finds its way into

European coffers. While the expenditures are as varied as the number of tourists, a conservative estimate places the average sum for each at \$700. This being the case, it will be seen that upward of \$100,000,000 is thus spent annually by Americans.

Russell Sage has dealt a telling and timely blow to the lamentable habit of taking vacations. His convincing argument will doubtless put the matter to many people in a new light. There is no doubt that a great many good business opportunities slip by a person when he is off on his vacation. A quick break in the stock market—a momentary slump in real estate—the underwriting of some new concern at tempting prices—all these golden chances may escape the man who is hid away in some far-off forest or mountain retreat. The man at home is the man who "gets in" and makes a neat little turn with the tide. In Mr. Sage's opinion the fishing on Wall street is better than on Lake Greenwood, and higher priced game is bagged in the stock exchange than in the forest of Arden. It may be all right for some people to tune their "merry note unto the sweet bird's throat," but for Mr. Sage the voice of the auctioneer calling down choice bits of property about town is much more enlivening.

Said President Roosevelt, in his address at Gettysburg: "The men who went into the army had to submit to discipline, had to submit to restraint, as the price of winning. So we can preserve our liberty only by exercising the virtues of honesty, self-restraint and fair dealing. We can make and keep this country worthy of the men who gave their lives to save it only on condition that the average man among us does his duty bravely, loyally and with common sense in whatever position life allots him." There is a lesson for us average men in the President's words which many of us need to take to heart and ponder carefully. For, in the failure of us average men to see our duty and do it bravely, loyally and with common sense is the source and the strength of the social and political evils from which we average men suffer most. For example, why is the government of our cities so wasteful, inefficient and corrupt? Why is it that we average men do not get what we pay for there? Largely, if not wholly, because so many of us average men, who would not think of swindling or stealing from our neighbors individually, are indifferent, are tolerant, are even amused, often applaud, and sometimes share in the plunder, when we and our neighbors are swindled and stolen from collectively. When one of us individually buys a carpet he insists on getting the carpet he buys. But when some hundreds of us collectively buy a bridge or a street pavement, few of us take the slightest interest in seeing to it that each of us gets what we all buy. Yet, when all of us are robbed in that way each is robbed. And so it goes all around. However personally honest we average men may be, we often lack that collective honesty through which alone is honest government possible. However personally self-restrained we may be, we often lack that collective self-restraint through which alone is efficient government possible. The greatest need of civilized society to-day is that its average men shall awaken to an abiding sense of their responsibility for each other and to each other, and shall exercise that responsibility with common sense.

ITALY IS ADVANCING FAST.

King Victor Emmanuel's Subjects Are Making Rapid Progress.

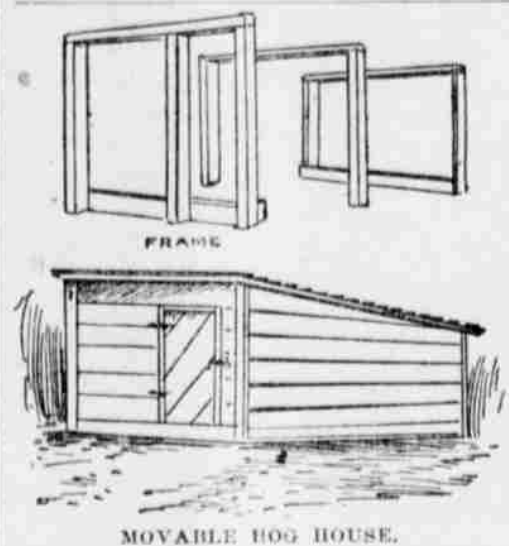
"If you want to hear of a country that is making gigantic strides along all lines of progress let me cite you to Italy," said L. Loria, of Copenhagen. "My business of conducting tourist parties through Southern Europe has caused me to visit Italy often in the past ten years and I have been amazed at the enormous changes that this decade has wrought in that kingdom. If the present rate of development keeps up, as I believe it will, it will not be many years ere Italy will leave France in the rear. One of the best proofs of this is that ten years ago the French money I carried to Italy was at a good premium; to-day only the gold of France is as good as that of her sister state, and when it comes to changing paper money from Paris it is reckoned below par. The French silver isn't wanted at all.

"In every sort of way the Italians are showing themselves cleverer, more progressive and enterprising than any others of the Latin race. They are adopting all the industrial habits of the Germans, are building factories everywhere, and the people are busy in every town. The hotels of recent construction are modern and luxurious. The French, on the other hand, are standing still. They ridicule the idea that they can learn anything of any other nation. Wrapped in the complacency of self-adulation, they do not realize how fast they are dropping behind the procession. Their sublime egotism is one of the surest evidences of the degeneracy of the country."—Washington Post.



Portable Houses for Hogs.

A stockman who has tried them, says of movable hoghouses: "I have used portable hoghouses one year, and like them first-rate, because they are easily cleaned—when you wish to clean them just move your pen; also, they are cheap. They are healthy, because you can keep them free from disease by frequent moving. They are a great saver of bedding—only a small quantity being required, providing, of course, that your pen is upon dry ground, that is, ground where water



MOVABLE HOG HOUSE.

will not stand excepting in a very wet time.

As to mode of construction, mine are built as follows: They are 7 feet long, 6 feet wide, 40 inches high in front, 30 inches high in rear. Weatherboarded with hard pine boards, 10 inches wide; ought to be tongued and grooved, although mine are not. The roof is of 10-inch hard pine boards, 7 feet long. Each pen has a door 30 inches high by 2 feet wide, with hinges and hasp latch; these hinges and hasp latch are 5 inches; use wrought nails to put them on. The roof of my pen, where there are cracks, is battened with half-round poplar pieces, or it can have the cracks covered with shingles. I can fasten door open or shut, as I desire.

The frame is made of beech 2x4's. First, make three posts for the front 28 inches high, then three for rear, 38 inches high, then 2 for sides, 33 inches high; then four pieces 7 feet long—three of these to support the roof and one to put along the front of the pen at the bottom to strengthen the frame. Now, take boards previously sawed the right length and construct two sides which are opposite to each other, then construct remaining sides, then put on roof; use 8-penny nails for weatherboards, and small spikes to put frame together.

These pens cannot be beaten for cleanliness, healthfulness, saving of bedding, and cheapness. They cost about \$3 each.

Strawberry Culture.

The method of strawberry culture shown in the illustration has been successful and profitable. Tight iron-bound barrels are used with all but four of the hoops removed. Holes are bored through the staves at proper distances as shown, plants are set in these holes and the barrels filled with soil to the top. The average yield of berries is over one-half bushel per barrel. The greatest advantages claimed for this method are that no mulch or cultivation is necessary, that the berries are always clean and free from sand, and are far more readily picked than when grown in the usual way. A tile is placed in the center of the barrel as it is filled with soil. This permits an even distribution of water from top to bottom, an abundance of which should be supplied at all times.



STRAWBERRY BED.

Forcing a Second Crop of Berries. A Vermont farmer reports success in producing a second crop of strawberries last year by cutting off all the leaves and stems close to the ground after fruiting the first crop and applying a dressing of nitrate of soda. They blossomed again in September and produced a crop smaller in amount than the first one, but very profitable. The plan, however, could not be expected to work well except in cool, wet seasons.

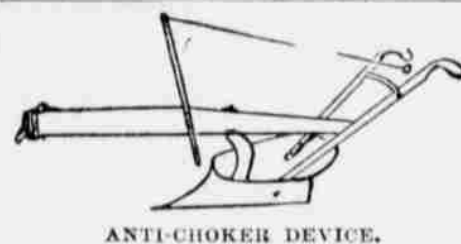
Using the Disc Harrows.

The disc as a form of soil cultivator is becoming constantly more popular; but it must be used right to be effective. An expert with the disc harrow says:

I want to say an encouraging word for the disc harrow. Not all soils are adapted for its use—exceedingly stony land is ill-fitted for its use, nor perhaps the heavy, sticky clays. But upon loamy soils that are loose and upon which sod quickly forms after seeding there is no tool to compare to the heavy disc. It seems a waste of money to buy the small light machines. Farmers often say, "My team is light, I cannot draw those big 20-inch discs, weighted." All right, then you won't do much business. These small teams always mean poor cultivation—upon these heavy sods there must be given the draft of three or four horses of good weight—not less than 1,200 pounds. Upon the machine besides the driver may be added an extra load of stone to put the discs down at least five inches, and if the sod is not torn up go deeper. The field may look uneven when finished, but a spring tooth or smoothing harrow will do the leveling and the soil will have been thoroughly mixed and the cultivation if prolonged for two weeks will approximate the old-fashioned summer fallow. And if carried along periodically for four to six weeks it will reduce the stubborn quack grass. Cheap disc sharpeners upon the market costing not more than \$2.50 to \$3 that will do the work effectually. These sharp discs will do more work with less weight and somewhat reduced draft.

An Anti-Choker.

The accompanying diagram explains itself and shows a simple method of relieving the plow of any kind of a choke. It can be constructed out of wood or iron and adjusted to any kind of a plow. If a reversible or hillside plow is used you must have one on each side of the beam. One bolt to go through beam is really all that is required, as the rest can be found in any barnyard, or it can be made of poles cut in the woods. In plowing under



ANTI-CHOKER DEVICE.

straw manure or any other kind of humus food, this is the most successful arrangement we have ever seen.—Exchange.

Science and Corn Silk.

Corn silk has received considerable attention from our corn scientists. It is a somewhat unusual manifestation of nature, the cavity to be fertilized by the pollen sending out this long, silky messenger to guide the pollen grain to its goal. The growth and development of the silk bears an important relationship to the crop of corn that is to be harvested. The silk at the butt of the ear appears first and is the longest, as it must grow the whole length of the cob to get to the light at all. Yet it does this and is waving in the air catching the pollen before the tip silks have appeared. The butt cavities or ovaries are therefore the first to be fertilized. It is generally believed that the shorter the ear the more likely it is to be covered with kernels, as the longer the ear the later will the tip silks be in getting out to the light where they can be of service. For this reason the tips of long ears are frequently found with no kernels on them. The silks did not get out till after the stalks had ceased shedding pollen. If an ear of corn that is sending out silk be covered with a long paper funnel, the silk will continue to grow in length till it has attained a length of 20 inches or more. At the Iowa station an ear of corn treated in this way seemed to despair of getting pollen and sent out two new ears near its base; and these two new ears developed a good mass of silk. The falling of the pollen on the silk is followed by the grains being conveyed to the ovaries, after the completion of which work the silk dies.

Cows Are Poor Walkers.

The cow is naturally a poor walker. Generally she walks only when she must. She never walks or runs for exercise. Sometimes she frolics, but only for a few moments. The dairy cow's business is eating, dozing and chewing her cud. Any cow that is compelled to travel over the parched and short-cropped pasture day and night in search of the straggling, crisp and browned blades of grass cannot be expected to return even a small profit.

Practical Pointer.

"I think," said the manufacturer, "it would be a good idea to advertise this new brand of soap as being absolutely ure."

"Don't do it, dad," protested his son, who had recently graduated from a school where advertising is taught while you wait. "Make it 98 per cent and the women will snap it up for a bargain."

Not a Safe Bet.

"Yes, my boy," said the parson during a call, as he laid his hand on the family Bible, "every word in this book is true."

"Well, I know the words are true," rejoined the wise youngster, "but I wouldn't advise you to bet on the figures sister has been monkeying with on her family record page."

Had Been Misinformed.

"They tell me," said the English tourist, "that you have female train robbers in this bloomin' country."

"Some one has been stringing you," replied the native American. "All the deeping car porters are men."

Natural Deduction.

She—So you danced with Miss DeLopper at the ball last night?

He—Yes. Did she tell you?

She—Oh, no; but I saw her going into a chiropodist's this morning.

Making a Long Story Short.

Husband—You have an exceptionally good dinner to-night, my dear.

Wife—I'm so glad you like it. I got it up expressly to please you.

Husband—Hum! How much shall I make out the check for?

Between Friends.

Fred—The girl I am engaged to is very poor; in fact, she hasn't anything at all.

Joe—That's tough. And she will have still less after she marries you.

As Classified.

Gentleman (in library)—Where can I find the book entitled "Man, the Ruler of the World," please?

Lady Attendant—You will probably find it just across the hall in the fiction department, sir.

As Defined.

Little Willie—Say, pa, what is a confidence man?

Pa—A confidence man, my son, is a man who separates others from their money and their confidence simultaneously.

Lost Opportunity.

Jim Jones—I met a ghost last night and it spoke to me.

Sansmith—What did it say?

Jim Jones—Haven't the least idea. I'm not familiar with the dead languages.

Wedlock's Blisters.

Miggles—There are times when it is advisable to listen to a fool's advice.

Mrs. Miggles—Well, go ahead, my dear; I'm listening.

Frankness.

"Am I the first girl you ever wanted to marry?"

"I'll be frank with you. You are not—but you're the first girl I ever asked. Am I the first man you ever accepted?"

"I'll be equally frank with you. You are—but you are not the first man I would have accepted if any of the others had asked me."—Chicago Tribune.

Recognized the Description.

Butters—Was that your wife I saw you with in the car?

Chester—Last evening? Yes.

Butters—And who was that queer, dumpy woman in the next seat? You seemed to know her.

Chester—The queer, dumpy woman was Mrs. Chester; the other lady, the good-looking one, was a friend of my wife.—Boston Transcript.

Something Terrible.

"Isn't it ridiculous of these scientists to say kissing is dangerous?" scornfully remarked the pretty young man.

"Why, of course, it's dangerous," replied the old bachelor.

"Nonsense! What disease could it possibly lead to if—"

"Matrimony."—Philadelphia Press.

The Way of a Woman.

He—I see you've finished the last chapter.

She—Long ago. I'm almost in the middle of the book.—Puck.

Conversation Big and Little.

Henry—Was the conversation good at your wife's dinner?

George—I guess so. The women all talked small talk and the men all talked big talk.—Cincinnati Commercial-Tribune.

A Broken Engagement.

They were uttering the tender nonsense that succeeds the great question. "And," said the girl, bravely, "if poverty comes we will face it together." "Ah, dearest," he replied, "the mere sight of your face would scare the wolf away." And ever since he has wondered why she returned the ring.—Tit-Bits.

What He Took.

Nora—Oh towid that installment man that he naden't call so often.

Mistress—Did he take the hint?

Nora—No, mum; he took th' plannay. Glasgow Evening Times.