

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

MANY people say they go away to get rid of their business letters, but the summer girl relies implicitly on the daily mail.

PRINCE BISMARCK has been cheering the Emperor. The old man does some funny things when the dinner has been better than usual.

EVEN in Boston, rich people put off their tailor bills for years. Until Boston adopts the cash system, what other American city will make the venture?

RUNNING down the Alva is a gentle hint to Mr. Vanderbilt that though he owns a good section of the earth he is liable to get befogged if he begins to crowd the sea.

EX-QUEEN NATALIE has had a streak of the greatest good luck which can befall an author anxious to sell his works. Her book has been suppressed by the Serbian Government.

AGAIN the effete Old World has been outdone by the New. Imperial Germany personified caught a whale, Chicago has caught the Prince of them, and will exhibit him at the World's Fair.

WHEN the Rev. Sam Jones has filled the measure of his usefulness as an evangelist he should go into politics. We confess we should like to see him in Congress stirring up the animals occasionally.

A DAPPER little fellow, who is the husband of a fine and well-developed wife, was at Ashbury Park, and for a bit of fun went out for a swim arrayed in her bathing suit. He was arrested for appearing in a nude condition.

CANADIANS seem to fail to see either right or reason in the retaliation bill. The proverbial British love of fair play appears to be slightly clouded in the present loud demand of our neighbor that we should repay good for evil.

SAMUEL SLOAN the railroad president, does all his writing with a big gold pen. If it doesn't suit him he can throw it through the window, which is more than he would care to undertake if the offender was a pretty type-writer.

THE Russian authorities are taking sanitary precautions against the spread of cholera. This is well; but with the advance of civilization methods, Russia will learn it is better in a race with contagion to give sanitation a good lead if it is to win with flying colors.

THE oyster commissioners of Maryland and Virginia are making able and eloquent speeches on the boundary question, but they have yet failed to do anything that would add a single oyster to the Chesapeake supply. Oratory is not oysters, and more oysters is what the bay needs.

TWO cases of drowning in a Chicago natatorium will make keepers of such establishments careful for a little while. Young swimmers need watching wherever they may be. If the water is deep they are liable to be drowned; if it is shallow they are in danger of breaking their necks by diving against the bottom.

IN their very zealous pursuit of knowledge some of the philologists are losing good manners. Following Prof. Garner's studies of the language of the ape, a Frenchman has been listening at the keyhole of a hen-house when the family was at home, and placing a phonograph there to gather in the cackle and catch all the gossip or plain home talk going on within. If he got anything there that was said about himself it probably was not complimentary.

DEACON, the slaver of his false friend Abeille, has been informed by the French authorities that he must serve out his sentence in full, which is no more than he had a right to expect. He deliberately violated the law of the land in which he was living, and thus rendered himself liable to punishment. No fault, therefore, can be found with the French authorities. They have done only what they ought to have done, and Deacon should patiently serve out his sentence and ask no favors.

CHEWING gum, usually regarded as the most useless and annoying commodity in the world, has at last served a good purpose. Jimmy Devlin the Wisconsin boy, whose throat was closed for forty-five days, managed to swallow some of the moisture extracted from a piece of chewing gum. The doctors say that his case will now progress rapidly toward recovery.

Modern medical science has utilized very many unpromising substances, but nobody would have prophesied that the doctors would some day save a boy's life by prescribing gum.

THE glory and greatness of Burns as a poet will shortly be known throughout Bohemia, where we have no doubt they will go as swimmingly, in spite of the report that Shakespeare assumed to exert in that inland country, since Prof. J. V. Sladek, the editor of a Prague newspaper, has translated some one hundred and fifty of his songs and ballads into Czech. In every instance, we are told, the Bohemian translator has preserved the metrical form of the original, which, if true, is certainly an extraordinary feat of skill and patience.

EIGHTEEN-year-old Harry Williams of Chicago, has made two attempts on his life because a pretty and sensible serving-maid would not marry him. His latest effort nearly succeeded. It is his custom when he goes wooing, to court intoxication, preliminarily, as an inspiration to courage and eloquence. Harry's sides are all wrong. One should not get drunk when going to court an estimable woman, neither should he kill himself because of her refusal. He should learn that a good girl, be she servant or mistress, is worth being a man for, and that the only chance of winning such a prize is by a display of manliness.

ALL the cholera news from Europe may not be reliable, but so careful an authority as the London Lancet says that the incomplete official returns admit that 550 deaths from the disease occur daily in Russia. On the same authority it is learned through its Paris correspondence that the true cholera bacillus has been found in twenty-nine out of forty-nine cases of illness reported in Paris as cholera. The distemper is evidently greatly on the increase, and there is increased alarm and preparation in consequence. But it is apparent that the French authorities are not taking all the steps necessary to quiet the public mind in Europe and America.

An eminent astronomer has recently written an article telling "when the sun must die," and placing that interesting event not more than five or six million years hence. Judging from the weather reported all over the country the central orb of the solar system has not yet lost much of his energy. He is pouring it out at a fearful rate upon poor, sweltering, suffering humanity. What he may be five million years or so from now is open to question, but no one may deny that if the sun is at present in his old age it is a pretty vigorous one. Surely the phenomenon cannot resemble the struggles of the shark near the end of his existence as a vitalized entity.

ALICE MITCHELL, the Tennessee young woman who killed her girl companion, Freda Ward, for whom she entertained an unnatural love, to prevent her marriage to a young man, has been declared insane. The verdict of the jury will doubtless meet with popular approval, for it is almost impossible to believe that a cultivated and high-minded young woman whose reason was not dethroned could deliberately cut another woman's throat on a public street in broad day-light, and then detail all the circumstances of the butchery on the witness stand in court, as Alice Mitchell did, without emotion or fear of the consequences of the crime. Nobody but a hardened criminal or an insane person could have done such a thing in such a way.

ONE of the most surprising things in connection with railroad travel in the Western States and territories is the frequency with which trains are boarded by robbers and the valuables in the express and mail departments are captured. Why do not the companies arm their officials, and also employ special police, for the protection of life and property? It would cost far less to do this than to make good the losses by robbery. The people generally will soon come to think—many are already so thinking—that the risk of traveling over those lines is altogether too great except at times of urgent necessity. It seems to lookers-on that passengers and property might easily be protected by the exercise of nerve and the timely use of powder and ball. If the present order of things goes on much longer the suspicion of some, that train hands are in collusion with train robbers, will grow into a belief that will not down at the bidding of road managers.

WHEN a woman tells a man that his offer of marriage is a surprise to her, she does it to be "coy." A man never surprised a woman yet by telling her he thought a great deal of her.

'A FLY' CANNIBAL.

The general curiosity of our entire town was aroused by the appearance upon our streets of a native of India, who was born upon one of the Fiji Islands, says the Atlanta Constitution. He wore a very red or cardinal-colored suit of clothes, knee pants and jacket trimmed with black velvet collar and cuffs. Over his shoulder he carried a cloak that was tied over the left shoulder and under the right, made of white and red flannel. His head was covered with a blouse that fell down his back, and still over this a sombrero. His shoes were tied under the instep with a one-half inch white braid that wound around the leg up to the knees. His general appearance was very gaudy.

This native was converted when twenty-three years old, and is now seventy-four years of age. His father lived to be one hundred and three and his grandfather one hundred and thirty years of age. His life has been spent in lecturing on the condition of his people. He speaks twenty languages fluently. When five or six years old he saw an Indian woman throw her child to a crocodile that weighed 1000 pounds. The animal missed the child and the mother caught it as it ran back to her begging for its life, when she threw it again; this time the crocodile struck it with its claws, tore it into two pieces, and ate it very quickly. She then reported her acts to the pagan priest, and he blessed her, saying to her, "Go and sin no more."

He also was a cannibal. When he was seven years old there were twenty-one ministers who were caught while traveling and prospecting for places to locate churches, and one of these ministers was beheaded every morning by their high priest and his flesh cooked, and the natives were made to stand in a row and each one was given a part of the flesh and they stood and ate it. This was continued every day for twenty-one days until all of the ministers were eaten up and he ate part of twenty-one preachers.

He says the natives never do eat one another unless one is taken in war or as a missionary. That it is a mistaken idea that they say one another to eat when this man and that is fat enough to eat. That the boasts of the field never say one of their kind to prey upon, and that the savages have never gotten to be lower than wild animals.

"This man says he remembers when Calcutta had only 60,000 inhabitants, and now she has nearly 500,000. Being a member of the Episcopal church of England, he is extravagant in his showers of praises upon the English government for their civilizing work upon his people, and being a preacher he loves to tell the Christian effect upon his people and how his heart goes out to all efforts made to civilize his poor heathen brethren. A mechanic commands \$5 to \$10 per day there, and he knows of a lady there from the city of Indianapolis who receives \$100 every month for teaching, and says there is a great demand for more of these teachers. He has one of the native women with him.

Mr. Lincoln was extremely interested in this view of the case, and when we explained that Lee's only chance was to escape, join Johnston, and, being then between me in Virginia, he could choose which to fight, Mr. Lincoln seemed unusually impressed with this, but General Grant explained that at the very moment of our conversation General Sheridan was passing his cavalry across James river from the north to the south; that he would with this cavalry so extend his left below Petersburg as to reach the South Shore road, and that if Lee should "let go" his fortified lines, he could not possibly fall on me alone in North Carolina. In a like manner expressed the fullest confidence that my army in North Carolina was willing to cop with Lee and Johnston combined till Grant came up, but we both agreed that one more bloody battle was likely to occur before the closed of the war.

"Mr. Lincoln repeatedly inquired as to General Schofield's ability in my absence, and seemed anxious that I should return to North Carolina, and more than once exclaimed: 'Must more blood be shed? Cannot this last bloody battle be avoided?' We explained that we had to presume that General Lee was a real general; that he must see that Johnston alone was no barrier to my progress; and that if my army of 80,000 veterans should reach Burkeville, he in Richmond was lost, and that we were forced to believe he would not wait that inevitable conclusion, but make one more desperate effort. I think we were with Mr. Lincoln an hour or more and then returned to General Grant's quarters, where Mrs. Grant had prepared for us some coffee or tea. During this meal Mrs. Grant inquired if we had seen Mrs. Lincoln. I answered, 'No; I did not know she was on board.' 'Now,' said Mrs. Grant 'you are a pretty pair,' etc., and went on to explain that we had been guilty of a piece of unpardonable rudeness. But the general said, 'never mind, we will repeat the visit tomorrow, and can then see Mrs. Lincoln.

Spinner's Signature. The signature of the late General Francis F. Spinner, ex-treasurer of the United States, was one of the worst stumbling-blocks for forgers and counterfeiters that ever was devised. He originated it when a harness-maker's apprentice in Amsterdam, N. Y., at seventeen, practiced on it in later years when he became a congressman, and perfected it as treasurer of the United States. The writing of the signature involved considerable labor and when General Spinner affixed it to many Treasury notes in a day it is said that his wrist became so swollen and painful that it had to be swathed in wet cloths. While treasurer Mr. Spinner earned the gratitude of the women of this country by being the first man to admit members of their sex to the government service. He was eighty-eight years old when he died in Florida from the cancer that had been slowly eating away his life. He was born in what is now known as Mohawk, N. Y., and his father, who had left the Roman priesthood to become a protestant clergyman, had him learn both the trades of a confectioner and a harness-maker. He followed neither, but became a merchant and then the cashier of a bank, holding various town, county and state offices in the meantime, and winning his military title in the state militia. General Spinner was elected to congress as an anti-slavery democrat and served on the committee that investigated the assault of Preston Brooks on Charles Sumner. He was re-elected as a republican. President Lincoln called him to the United States treasury in 1861, and he held the place for fourteen years, when he resigned. The general's precision in even the most minute matters was shown in his last official act, when, having discovered a deficiency of 1 cent in the money in the treasury, he ordered a receipt requiring several weeks found the discrepancy, balanced his books and retired.

Such a room is a growth, a gathering together, of household treasures little by little, and piece by piece. Each article, bought only when the need arises, or when something is happily found to just meet the need, will have a family history which makes it an entertaining as well as a valuable possession. Each couch and footstool is an achievement; each rug and curtain represents a triumph. Such a home, built up gradually, with careful planning in each part, with thought and loving consideration in all details, acquires a meaning far deeper than could be purchased by the longest purse from the most fashionable cabinet maker.—Harper's Bazar.

Screen for the Sick-Room.

A sick-room screen should be made very light, so it can be moved easily. A clothes-horse will answer for the frame. Buy a couple of tubes of dark green, thin with linseed oil and a little turpentine, and with a flat bristle brush paint the light wood frame. Dark green selesia tacked on one side firmly to the wooden frame will shut out light. If it is a child who is sick, a bright picture pinned on the screen, and replaced occasionally by another, will serve to make the weary hours

Lincoln, Grant and Sherman.

In the North American Review for March appear some hitherto unpublished letters of General Sherman. One of them describes the visit paid by him and General Grant to President Lincoln on board the Ocean Queen, near city Point, Va., on March 27, 1865. After telling how and where he found General Grant, General Sherman says: "We had quite a long and friendly talk, when he remarked that the president, Mr. Lincoln was near by, in a steamer lying in the dock, and he proposed they should call at once. We did so and found Mr. Lincoln on board the Ocean Queen. We had met in the early part of the war, and he recognized me, and received me with a warmth of manner and expression that was most grateful. We then sat some time in the after cabin, and Mr. Lincoln made many inquiries about the events which attended the march from Savannah to Goldsboro, any seemed to enjoy the numerous stories about 'our hummers,' of which he had heard much. When in lively conversation, his face brightened wonderfully; but if the conversation flagged, his face assumed a sad and sorrowful expression. General Grant and I explained to him that my next move from Goldsboro would bring my army—increased to 80,000 men by Schofield's and Terry's reinforcements—in close communication with General Grant's army, then investing Lee in Richmond, and that, unless Lee could effect his escape and make junction with Johnston in North Carolina, he would soon be shut up in Richmond with no possibility of supply, and would have to surrender.

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Manned by a Deaf-Mute Crew. There is a little two-masted schooner lying at anchor in the stream which, besides being a funny-looking craft, is manned by a strange crew. The vessel is the Mary and Belle of Newport, R. I., having arrived from Newport, and carrying a cargo of fish oil. The schooner has a square stern and a blunt bow and only one topmast. When a Mercury reporter went alongside he asked a man on deck, whom

MINING LEGENDS.

The Ladder Dwarf and the Famous Treasure of the Madre'Oro.

"Among the strange and weird demons and bogies which are believed by miners to haunt the workings underground not the least horrible is the 'Ladder Dwarf,' said a former prospector to a Washington Star man. 'I never saw the creature myself, but he is described as hunch-backed, with a short body, large head, and enormously long and powerful arms. In fact, he resembles an exaggerated gorilla. His favorite trick is climbing the ladders by means of which the miners leave the mines, raising himself with his long arms, and, as he passes the rungs kicking them out one by one. He is supposed to accompany me do this just before an accident of some kind in the mine.

"In the mines of Mexico formerly the descent and ascent of the shafts were made by the aid of tree trunks with notches cut out of them, in which the laborers rested the great toe as they stepped from one to the other. The demon in such places was believed to have on each big toe a huge nail or claw, with which he would gouge out the pieces on which the feet of the miners rested. According to either legend the fiend always left the ladders or tree trunks after having destroyed their usefulness to tantalize the unfortunate men who were thus imprisoned. Another Mexican superstition very common among miners in that country relates to the 'gold snake.' This species of serpent is perfectly harmless and very handsome, being green in color, with a golden iridescence in its scales. Faith is entertained that wherever a gold snake makes its nest there is a ledge containing the precious metal, and there are many miners who will locate a claim at once if they find a gold snake.

"The story of the famous treasure of the 'Madre'Oro' is an old one. It comes from the Arctes of Mexico. Somewhere in south-eastern Arizona there is a small valley about five miles long and two miles wide, walled in by towering mountains. The sides are so precipitous that it is impossible to climb down them, and there is only one entrance, through a cave, which is carefully hidden by Indians, who guard the treasure for the second coming of Montezuma. It is said that even among them the entrance is only known to the three most aged men, and is never communicated except when, on the death of one, it is necessary to give the knowledge into the keeping of another. The valley itself, though surrounded by inhospitable rocks, is a paradise. Watered by the stream which flows through it, its soil is covered with flowers and beautiful trees, through the branches of which fit bright-hued birds. The only reptiles seen are the gold snakes, with their glittering greenish yellow scales.

"Stretching across the valley from one side to the other is a ledge of pure gold, its masses of virgin metal gleaming and glistening in the sunlight. It is said to be five feet, ten feet, fifty feet, 100 feet wide. The gold lies in it in great veins and nuggets imbedded in clear quartz, the sharp angles of which glitter in the sunlight like gigantic diamonds. Across the ledge the stream flows, forming a little waterfall, below which the nuggets of gold can be seen in the water and out. Gold in the ledge, gold in the scales of snakes, gold in the stream, gold in the birds, gold, gold, gold, gold is the refrain of the golden story.

"The fearful precipices which surround the place, the strange ceremonies and horrid banquets which have served to keep the secret safe, the tribe of aztec living only to preserve for their mysterious ruler this treasure house of nature, have all aided in giving to the story a strange interest. Small wonder it is that the pulse should quicken and the eye grow bright as you hear the tale from the lips of men who more than half believed it. The lonely desert surrounding you, with the tall cacti looking like ghosts in the half moonlight; the long-drawn melancholy of the coyote's howl; the prospector's fire of grease wood, the men with their rough clothing and quaint language, all vanish as you listen, and in imagination you are transported to the wonderful valley in which is the 'Madre'Oro,' the 'Mother of Gold.'

"Nor are they content to tell the story as an Indian legend. They cite instances of white men who have seen the place, who have descended into the valley in some way and returned with all the gold they could carry. The location of the spot is always in a dangerous Indian country. I have been told twice that it was in the Chiricahua mountains. It is always said to have been found merely by accident by men who were either hunting or prospecting for ledges, about the only two occupations which will make unscientific men climb the mountains. It can only be seen from the upper end and after the morning mists in the valley have cleared away. Then, as one stands on the rugged peaks and looks down he sees the great ledge spanning the valley below him, the virgin metal glittering in the sunlight, and he knows that he has before him the place of which he has heard so much and dreamed so often."

Kind Fate.

Real life sometimes furnishes instances of good fortune which are remarkable as the story of Cristo. Some years ago, said an Irishman, I had in my employ a man, a clever but totally uneducated fellow, who did odd jobs about place in Helena. You remember what a feverish state that was in about that time over the finds in gold in the country about My Irishman caught the fever, astonished me one day by offering me to loan him \$200, which he wanted to buy a piece of my outfit. Well, I let him go and away he went. In about a week he came back with a mule load of richest ore. He bought more mules, hired three men, and back to the hills and strung shortly afterward with four mules loaded as the first one had been. A representative of an Irish syndicate happened to be in Helena about this time on the way out for mining investments. The Irishman's little packing train took a sample of the ore, had it assayed, went out and examined the claim and then offered the Irishman \$1,000,000 for his claim. Twenty-five per cent of the profits. Mike asked my advice, matter, and of course I told him to sell, which he did. It proved an investment for all concerned, as the Englishmen have taken millions of dollars out of the mine. It comes my point. Instead of making the usual follies that poor fellows in when they become rich, Mike set about to get the best benefits of his wealth. He lived in Helena an English lady of an English officer who was possessed of a high degree of culture, refinement, though in very poor circumstances. Well, sir, the thing Mike did was to go to the school and bargain for an education. He placed himself absolutely under the dictation, lived in the same house as the English officer, and took his meals with him. Then followed the routine of a literary education and so of travel. I met my Irishman in the parlor of a London hotel six months ago. You never saw more perfect gentleman in your life. He has acquired a classical education as easy and graceful in manner as a courtier, and, above all, had true instincts of a man and a gentleman in his heart. And could it be anything but a gentleman had evidently made it the duty of his life to be one at the first opportunity."

Tenacity of Life in snakes.

The tenacity of life possessed by snakes is very wonderful. Later some men were digging a well in the country and close to the main, in Missouri, when they came to a cavity in the ground which contained a nest of snakes. The well was bitter cold and the snakes apparently dead. They were blacksnakes and harmless. The men loaded them into the wagon and sent them to the top, just out of curiosity. They were thrown on the ground and in a little while frozen as stiff as so many of their bodies became so brittle that the frost that in hauling them were broken like icicles. The men when he went back to the well took two or three of the snakes along to frighten his wife. He succeeded very well, according to Globe-Democrat, and leaving snakes on the floor in the kitchen for the fire, sat down to eat his supper, forgetting all about them. The meal was in progress his wife who had left the room, suddenly uttered a terrific scream that made him up in a panic and run to see what was the matter. As he opened the kitchen door she fell against him, most fainting with fright. He had scared to tell what ailed her. He soon found out, for on going to the room he found a pile of snakes. Warned by the general snow on the kitchen fire, the frozen snakes came to life and were scurrying about the room with soul-chilling hiss. He did not care to tackle them, so he called them there, so he pushed out the door open and they were on their way out, and had not gone yards before they were struck by the cold. He followed them and finished them with a hatchet. He will never trust a snake again, no matter how hard they

he took to be the mate, who vessel was from. The man who went below. An elderly man his head through the compass and the reporter repeated the name. This man also shook his head and then the first man appeared a piece of paper on which was written in a very good hand, "What want?"

The reporter wrote out his and the answer was written.

Then the reporter learned both captain and crew were dumb, and that they work the vessel and make a living out of it. Her captain is George Bennett. He doesn't have to shout at his No speaking trumpets are used aboard this craft.—New Bedford Mercury.

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Dog and Snake.

A officious little dog, whose exceeds his prudence, but who the pet of Fred Schultz of Pa., espied a large blacksnake. Without waiting for a command dog rushed at the snake, wily serpent was too quick-witted moment the shiny black folds snake were about the yelping, whose barking grew fainter as the folds tightened. Mr. Schultz arrived the pet was