

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

INSANITY has been made to cover a multitude of sins, but the practice is becoming very tiresome.

The French crisis is ended. The reader should not, however, conclude that France is entirely out of crises.

The men who wear long coats, and who walk fast in them, are no longer in position to laugh at the way a woman runs.

PEOPLE whom we have thought all summer were very polite, are beginning to hold the door wide open when they go out.

THAT cigarette crusade, by which it is hoped to prevent boys from inhaling the noxious rolls, will probably all end in smoke.

A SINGLE man who never takes his mother or sister to the theater is very indignant when he sees a married man there alone.

AS THERE are none so weak that we may venture to injure them with impunity, so there are none so low that they may not at some time be able to repay an obligation. Therefore, what benevolence would dictate, prudence would confirm.

AT the Boston Schoolboys' society's recent reunion Joseph D. Jones gave his reminiscences as a schoolboy in Boston ninety-two years ago. He is 97 years old. Nobody can be a member of the society who has not been out of school a full half-century.

HUMAN wisdom makes as ill use of her talent when she exercises it in rescinding from the number and sweetness of those pleasures that are naturally our due, as she employs it favorably and well in artificially disguising and tripping out the ills of life to alleviate the sense of them.

SINCE the war began in Brazil the correspondents have killed more men, shelled more towns and destroyed more ironclads than could be found in any other country under the sun. The queerest thing about it all is that the royalists and revolutionists have still sufficient soldiers to carry on the fighting.

IN building the modern house, there is not enough attention paid to the cellar. Old-fashioned people had cellars that would hold enough potatoes, cabbage, apples, turnips, etc., stored in the fall when they were cheapest, to keep the family all winter. They not only saved money, but got the best.

UNUSUAL sequels of diphtheria have been made manifest in Renfrew County, Canada. Diphtheria was prevalent there last year and in every family where there are children who had been victims of diphtheria nearly all are suffering from an affection very much like whooping cough. Those suffering from it cough until they are black in the face.

A COUNTRYMAN took his seat at a hotel table opposite a gentleman who was indulging in a bottle of wine. Supposing the wine to be common property, our unsophisticated country friend helped himself to it with the gentleman's glass. "That's cool!" exclaimed the owner of the bottle of wine, indignantly. "Yes," replied the other, "I should think there was ice in it."

THIS country has become within three decades one of the most important olive-consuming countries in the world. When olives were imported into the United States they were a luxury of the rich. They are still consumed in cities rather than in the country districts; and New York, with its great population of people from the Mediterranean regions, is of all American cities, by far the greatest consumer of olives.

A SOMEWHAT unusual engineering feat has just been accomplished at the Bonsor Spinning Works, at Nancy, France. Without stopping the works for a single day the height of a chimney about a hundred feet high was increased thirty feet. The first workman to reach the top of the chimney gained that height by driving iron hooks between the creases of the bricks. He then hauled up his scaffolding. It occupied just eight days' time to do the work.

WHEN one paranoiac commits murder for the love of notoriety of being hung a dozen will commit it on the supposition that they will escape strangulation on the lawyer's plea of doing it under an insane impulse, while at the same time they will enjoy the notoriety of the bloody deed, the trial, and the acquittal on the insanity dodge. If they are executed

with promptitude and inexorable certainty other cranks will be so apt to be known by committing murder to acquire it; and the fact that those paranoiacs are removed from the earth the fewer such people there will be to go on marrying and breeding moral monsters impelled to take life for sake of morbid notoriety. Self-preservation of sane people is more importance to society than propagation of paranoiacs.

THE popular belief that the Indians are a doomed race and are rapidly disappearing is not borne out by the report of the Secretary of the Interior. He says they are not decreasing in number. On the contrary, that war and wars with the whites having ceased, they are increasing rather than decreasing. All the greater, therefore, is the need of their being educated for and so trained that they will become useful citizens. In many cases this seems a hopeless prospect, but if the children are rightly dealt with the outlook for the future is by no means altogether discouraging. Let politics be eliminated from the management of the Indians and let civil service principles prevail in the Indian service, and two most important steps toward the solution of the Indian problem will be taken.

THE ridiculously low prices at which World's Fair buildings are sold is a feature of the closing events of the fair which the most sagacious speculators in salvage values had not anticipated. It was supposed that the World's Fair structures proper would have brought at least a million dollars in the market, and that the State and foreign buildings would have brought something at least near the cost of the materials. Instead of that the Fair Directory offers to sell buildings and \$200,000 bonus to the South Park Board merely to get rid of them. The other buildings are sold at prices that are but a small percentage on their cost. The Midway palaces were bought for a count less than the value of the lumber for kindling wood. There was no demand—no market—for the materials of which the buildings were constructed. The wreckers bought them at nominal prices and will have to use up the rubbish gradually in their contracts with those erecting buildings.

THERE is a ways something coarse and vulgar in a breach-of-promise case. The nature of such suits is revealed by the old English pleadings; the father of the girl was the plaintiff, and he sued per quod servitium amisit, it being assumed as a matter of course that English girls did cooking and washing for their papas. Those who are curious about that branch of legal practice should read the reports of the cases in which Broughman and Erskine were usually pitted against each other; they will arise from the perusal with a curious impression of the English middle class a century ago. The notion of those days was that the sole honorable destiny of a girl was to be the wife of some man and the mother of his children. If she could not attain this destiny, her life was a failure, and if she could charge the failure on any one, she was quite right to sue him for damages. An idea has been gaining ground in this country of late years that women may possibly have other destinies; that there are avenues of usefulness for spinsters, with perhaps as much promise of happiness as is offered in the average married life. As fast as new occupations are discovered for women and self-support is brought nearer their reach, this idea acquires strength. When it becomes general, breach-of-promise suits will cease to encumber the court calendars. But the fact remains that the female reformers who demand "equality of the sexes" only want it when it comes their way. There is probably not a woman in the United States who does not agree with the doctrine just laid down by a New York court concerning engagements of marriage. But, correspondingly, there is probably not one, either, who would give damages to a man who brought suit against a woman for breach of promise. Where, then, does the "equality of the sexes" come in?

Women in America appear to be successful in making a business of gardening. One lady in Mississippi has started a good business in shipping rosebuds submerged in water, thereby making them retain their freshness. Another in California owns two orchards, of ten and twelve acres, in one of which she grows apricots and cherries so successfully that they net her \$5,000 a year. A widow in the same State, who was once the reigning belle in her town, is at the head of a cut-flower industry. She has twenty acres of violets and chrysanthemums; in her chrysanthemum plantation alone she has 18,000 blooms this year.

"I'm stuck on you," the chewing-gum said to the boarding-school malein, etc.

MEN OF MILLIONS NEAR DEATH.

Remarkable Escapes Since the Attempt to Blow Up Russell Sage.

"Quite a number of men of millions have had narrow escapes from sudden death during the past year or so," remarked a Wall Street man to a writer for the New York World. "I was reminded of the fact a few days ago by the report in the newspapers of the narrow escape George Gould had from a quick death by the premature discharge of his gun while hunting in the Adirondacks. Russell Sage started the ball rolling by escaping the bomb of Norcross. Mr. Sage had a narrow escape, indeed, but not more so than did William K. Vanderbilt, who barely saved himself a year ago when his yacht, Alva, went down at night. Cornelius Vanderbilt just escaped death from a train of cars about the same time. Then John W. Mackay, the California bonanza king, was shot at and wounded by Rippey, a San Francisco crank who fancied he had been wronged by the money king. C. T. Yerker, the Chicago cable king, was in a railroad wreck out West shortly after Mr. Mackay's escape from being murdered. A passenger sitting in front of Mr. Yerker was instantly killed, but the cable king got out of the wreck without a scratch. Eddie Gould is reported to have had a narrow escape from death at the hands of one of the Buffalo Railroad strikers a year ago while doing guard duty with the Seventh Regiment. George Vanderbilt was almost drowned in the private bath at Newport a short time ago. He was rescued by a young lady, the newspapers reported. John Jacob Astor had a narrow escape aboard his yacht in a collision with Cornelius Vanderbilt, Jr., who was so closely inured while following the hounds at Newport, his horse falling and throwing him against a wall. Men of millions are lucky in other things than making money, you see."

She Wrote Too Well.

In an after-dinner talk, as reported by the Boston Transcript, a lady, whose handwriting has never driven her publisher to request the use of a typewriter, told a most amusing story of what happened once, because she wrote a hand as finished and legible as copperplate. While she was in England, at a friend's country-house, a former maid-servant wrote to her hostess, requesting a written "character." The hostess was glad to comply with the request, but being for the moment much engaged, she asked her visitor to write the "character" for her dictation.

About a fortnight later, we were interrupted at an afternoon tea by the parlor maid, who said that Sarah—the one to whom the "character" had been sent—was in the hall, in charge of a policeman, crying bitterly and begging to see Mrs. — my hostess.

We went to the hall together, and found the girl in an agony of shame and distress.

"O ma'am," said she, "I applied at Lady Grayhawk's for a situation, hearing as how a maid was wanted. Her ladyship asked for my character, and I showed her, immediately, the one you was kind enough to send me, ma'am. And she looked at it, and she said, 'Well, then she touched a bell, and said to the footman:

"Send for a policeman at once!" says she. "This girl is using a lady's name without her permission," says she. "She has hired some professional clerk or accountant to write out this paper with Mrs. —'s name in it," says she. "No lady ever wrote such a hand as that!" says she. "Only people who write for a living write such a hand," says she. "And that's how I know it is a forgery!"

"Well, ma'am, I cried, and I stuck to it before her and the policeman that you'd sent me this paper just as she saw it. And at last she told the policeman to bring me down here, in charge, and get your word for it, ma'am. And O ma'am, you'll speak for me!"

My friend spoke for her to such purpose that the good-natured Bobby was soon on his way to London. The girl was comforted with the assurance that, in addition to the message which the policeman was to take, she should have a decisive letter, in my friend's own handwriting—"which is said enough to be a duchess's," said she.

The most truly English part of the whole queer matter is that after Lady Grayhawk's outrageous insult to the poor unoffending girl, the girl meekly and gratefully went into her service, and has continued there these ten years.

It was the policy of the pioneers, says the chronicler of West Virginia history, to cultivate as far as practical the friendship of the numerous tribes of Indians on the west side of the Ohio River. As a natural consequence of hospitalities repeatedly extended to the Mingo and Wyandottes, a feeling of good will existed in many instances between these tribes and the whites. In the case of the Zane brothers and the Wyandottes, this friendliness was increased by the adoption of Isaac Zane by the tribe, and his residence among them.

Among the personal friends of Jonathan Zane was a Wyandotte warrior of great size and courage, known as Captain Jack. One evening about bedtime Mr. Zane and his wife were surprised by an unexpected call from Captain Jack. Mrs. Zane, as was her custom, cooked venison and prepared a supper, but when the Indian was invited to eat, he refused and sat in grim silence. This unusual behavior foreboded ill, and aroused the most serious fears in the minds of the Zanes. Had they offended the Indian, and had he come

at that late hour to do them harm?

Mr. Zane moved near to his rifle, and with a glance of the eye intimated to his wife to have the butcher knife ready to aid in defending themselves.

Meantime, Captain Jack sat gazing into the fire for a full half-hour, speechless and motionless. At length he rose from his seat, and fixing his keen eyes upon Mr. Zane, he said:

"Brother, I eat salt in your house many time, and many time you give me blanket to make me warm. Indian don't forget. You my brother. I come to tell you be killed before morning. Indians come soon. I eat now."

He sat down, ate a few hurried mouthfuls of venison, asked for the pipe, took a few whiffs, and then exclaimed, "Go. Go to fort, quick!" and went hurriedly away.

Mr. Zane and his wife seized such things as were within easy grasp, and ran with all speed toward the fort. They were none too soon, for scarcely were they half a mile on their way when, looking back, they saw their cabin in flames. But for Captain Jack's timely warning, they would no doubt have lost their lives.

A Mining Opportunity Missed.

"Speaking of gold excitements," said George W. Deal in the presence of a little social gathering in West Park street a few evenings since, "reminds me of a chance I once had to purchase a placer claim in Confederate gulch. The men who owned the bar offered it to me for \$400 cash and were anxious to sell at that figure, but I hesitated. Finally I told them I would have an expert examine and test the ground and if it was what they represented it to be I would purchase it. This was satisfactory, and my expert made the test and reported unfavorably upon it. That settled the deal, and I went on my way in search of other fields. About two months later I returned to Confederate gulch and found a six-mile team and a wagon behind it containing two tons of gold taken from a portion of the bar those men wanted to sell me for \$400. The team was ready to start for Fort Benton with the gold and was surrounded by thirty armed men, who were to guard the metal on the way. After I refused to purchase the ground the men concluded to work it, themselves and from a space of 100 feet square had taken the two tons of gold. I have not seen the 'expert' since then."—Butte Miner.

How Do You Cross Your "T's"?

A graphologist has discovered that a character can be read from the letter "T" alone. He claims that the vertical line represents the fatality of life and the horizontal bar the influence human will exercises over this fatality.

In addition, he claims that the higher or lower a writer crosses the "T" is a guide to the amount of ideality contained in his nature and that the lower part of the letter corresponds to the practical and material part of the man's character.

For instance, the optimist crosses his "T" with a line that slopes upward—from the ground to the sky, as it were. The poet often crosses his "T" quite above the vertical line; in other words, in the sky.

The pessimist crosses his "T" with a downward sloping stroke. The line which is below the ideal portion of the letter descends little by little until it is lost among the sad realities of earthly existence.

The practical man, it appears, always steers a middle course, and crosses his "T" neither in the ideal nor in the material manner, but exactly midway between both.

Recognized His Figure.

The newbookkeeper entered Banker Rock's private office in a state of great agitation.

"There's a young man out there who says he's got to see you, sir, and refuses to state what his business is. I—I'm a—afraid he's a dangerous crank, sir."

"Tell him he can't see me unless he states the nature of his errand," said the banker nervously.

The bookkeeper returned a moment later and whispered hoarsely: "He says he must have some money." Banker Rock's face blanched and as he sat silently in the great vault and swung the heavy door nearly to, he gasped: "Ask him how much he wants."

There was a moment of awful suspense and then the trembling clerk returned.

"He says you better make it \$500, and be—quick about it."

The great door swung open once more and the banker emerging seized a checkbook, remarking: "Only \$500, eh? Let me see—it's the first of the month, too! Oh, that's my son BILL. Send him in. I want to talk to him."

Utilizing the Texts.

A house in Philadelphia formerly occupied by a Gospel mission is now tenanted by a shoemaker, who has turned the former character of the place and the signs still remaining on the walls and windows to queer advertising account. One sign, a sample of all, reads: "Cobbler's Mission. Soles saved and heels repaired." This sacrilegious transformation is paralleled in the case of a chapel in Brooklyn, recently torn down to make way for street improvements. It was occupied for a few weeks before its demolition by a cheap clothing concern, and one of the mottoes, chiseled in marble over the main entrance, was altered by the addition of a word: "Come (trade) with us and we will do you good."—New York Sun.

KING OF ELEPHANTS.

How He Beat Barnum's Wild Animal Catcher and the Deceys.

An interesting character sat chatting in the reading-room of the United States Hotel on Fulton Street one day last week. He looked about 60 years old and his bronzed face showed marks of exposure to the elements of many climes.

To a small group of friends, who knew him as J. R. Gaylord, for twenty-five years a catcher of the largest species of wild animals for circuses, and for many years Barnum's friend and foreign agent, he was telling of a thrilling experience while attempting to capture what he believed was the largest elephant in the world.

"I was in Hongkong, ready to leave for America with a cargo of lions, tigers, and elephants," said he, "when I received a dispatch from Mr. Barnum, informing me that Jumbo was dead and directing me to go to India at once and secure, regardless of cost or trouble, the largest elephant to be found. I met my partner, a native, in Calcutta, and we started away.

"We had received word of the discovery of the largest elephant ever seen in Southern India. He was said to be fifteen feet high, to have lorded it over a large herd for many years, and to be the most ferocious elephant ever encountered by the natives. I made up my mind to have that elephant, no matter what the risk or cost. But, as it turned out, I came near losing my life in the attempt to capture Jupiter, the name I gave him in fancy.

"We reached the elephant country well provided with natives, decoy elephants, and all necessary paraphernalia. We selected a spot near the stream to which Jupiter and his herd went to drink, and natives began building the trap in which we hoped to catch the king elephant. When the walls of the corral had been completed we cut a path, gradually widening it from the mouth of the corral until it was 100 feet in width a quarter of a mile away. Its sides were built up of trees and heavy underbrush in a natural manner. At the entrance of the corral a mammoth gate was swung high in the trees, ready to drop the moment the signal was given.

"Then we had to find our elephant. We started a number of herds, and finally located Jupiter, with twenty others of the finest and largest elephants I ever set eyes on.

"Now the real fun began. It took two days of the most skilful work to get the herd anywhere near our corral. Our four decoy elephants did their work splendidly, though it was most interesting to watch them coax the wild ones into the trap. They would rub up against them and trumpet and caper about, all the while leading the unsuspecting elephants nearer to the lane that led them to the corral.

"Near the entrance 100 natives were stationed in the trees and when the elephants entered they began a tremendous shouting and throwing of elephant spears. The herd dashed right straight ahead and were quickly in the corral. The big gate that closed the only aperture then was let down.

"Here began the artistic work. The tame elephants were mounted by professional elephant tamers, who, after the wild herd had quieted down somewhat, started to single out the leader, an exceedingly difficult task, for on the approach of the mounted elephants the big fellow would bow with rage, and endeavor to run the traitors down. Finally all of the tamed elephants got Jupiter in a corner. The four native tamers each lassoed a leg of the big beast, and their mounts started in different directions.

"Jupiter found himself in a surprisingly unpleasant predicament. He could neither go ahead nor retreat, and the four elephants pulled a little harder when he made an extra plunge. His trumpeting served to frighten the rest of the herd, and they made wild efforts to break through the corral. Unfortunately they found a weak spot, but before the entire herd could get through the natives killed several and captured some baby elephants. Then the entire force of natives aided in getting the shackles on the big fellow. This was accomplished in a few hours, though generally it takes several days, but the tame elephants aided very materially.

"The heavy chains once on Jupiter, we felt as though we had indeed secured the largest elephant in the world. While he was not fifteen feet high, we could readily see that he would measure at least twelve and a half.

"We had to starve him three days before we could do anything with him at all. Then we placed one of the trained elephants on either side, released him from the trees to which we had tied him and moved him about the corral. He made terrific plunges.

"We got Jupiter to Bombay, but there our troubles began afresh. He became more ferocious. We kept on starving him, and then we fed him for a time, but only made matters worse.

"I cabled Mr. Barnum that he could announce that I had captured Jupiter, an elephant larger than was Jumbo. But while waiting for a steamer that would take Jupiter to America I watched with uneasiness his increasing ferocity and extra shackles were put on him.

"One day I entered the paddock next to his and unthinkingly got within range of his trunk. I was seized and hurled aloft. My body struck the board ceiling, knocking me senseless. When they took me from the floor I had a broken arm and leg, three broken ribs, and was

arnised from head to foot. It was several weeks before I could leave my bed, and Jupiter becoming so ferocious that he could not be handled, I determined on his execution after cabling Mr. Barnum. He was an elephant it was simply impossible to tame, and was shot. His body weighed 15,000 pounds.

"See, here is a piece of his tusk about 8,000, and I never expect to see his like again."—New York World.

Good and Bad "Advice" to a Boy.

In one of the largest railroad jobs in this country is a comparatively young man, who is at the head of a large department. When he entered the service of the company, five years ago, he was green and awkward. He was given the poorest paid work in the department. The very first day of his employment by the company a man who had been at work in the same room for six years approached him and gave him a little advice:

"Young fellow, I want to put a few words in your ear that will help you. The company is a soulless corporation that regards its employes as so many machines. It makes no difference how hard you work, or how well. So you want to do just as little as possible and retain your job. That's my advice. This is a slave pen, and the man who works overtime or does any specially fine work wastes his strength. Don't you do it."

"The young man thought over the 'advice,' and after a quiet little struggle with himself he decided to do the best and the most he knew how, whether he received any more pay from the company or not. At the end of a year the company raised his wages and advanced him to a more responsible position. In three years he was getting a third more salary than when he began, and in five years he was head clerk in the department; and the man who had condescended to give the greenhorn 'advice' was working under him at the same figure that represented his salary eleven years before. This is not a story of a goody-goody little boy who died early, but of a live young man who exists in flesh and blood to-day, and is ready to give 'advice' to other young men just beginning to work their way into business. And here it is: 'Whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might.'—Youth's Companion.

An Ancient Teacher.

Charles Thompson, secretary to the first American Congress, on a board in the family of a school teacher named Dove, who with his wife, was much given to scandal. Wishing to leave them on account of their offensive propensity, but dreading their tongues, he adopted an ingenious expedient to prevent them from slandering him.

One evening he asked them if his conduct as a boarder had been satisfactory, and on their answering, "Yes," he said:

"Would you be good enough to give me a certificate to that effect?"

"Oh, certainly."

A certificate was given, and the next day he left their house.

This man Dove was a humorist, and in his school, instead of whipping an offending pupil, he made him ridiculous in the eyes of his schoolmates. The birch was stuck into the back part of the collar of the culprit, who with this badge of disgrace, was made to stand upon the platform.

If boys were late in arriving at school, a committee of five or six scholars was sent into the streets, with a bell and lighted lantern, to hunt up the delinquents, and escort them to the schoolhouse.

One day the scholars enjoyed the sport mentioned in "Hamlet," "to have the engineer hoist with his own petard." Dove had always professed a willingness to have his own punishment meted out to himself in case he transgressed the rules.

One morning the teacher was late, and a committee of boys, with bell and lantern, meeting him on his way to school, escorted him through the streets, to the amusement of the spectators. He had the good sense to submit quietly.—Youth's Companion.

Riding Down a Wolf.

It has been often noticed in India how fast a wolf travels by means of a louncing loping trot, that is by no means suggestive of speed. While one gallops after it as hard as a good horse can go, the wolf pursued, never apparently hurrying, lollups along at a pace that equals that of the following steed. I have heard it said that no horseman ever rode a wolf down; but to this statement I must demur, inasmuch as I have done this thing. Perhaps my wolf was sick.

Be that as it may, I did, when out pig-sticking in the Ganges country over against Colong, follow a wolf, and that wolf turned sharply when I closed with it, and the horse I rode (a rare good one) kicked it over with his fore feet, and made the matter of spearing my wolf simplicity itself. One of my companions of that day found explanation of this performance in the fact that I had ridden another man's horse with my own spurs.—Blackwood's Magazine.

Black Knot.

Black knot is a rough, spongy enlargement of the twigs and limbs, and is a fungous disease. The only reliable treatment yet known is cutting off the knots and burning them. This should be done as soon as the leaves fall at latest. It is essential to always burn the knots, else the spores or seeds will develop and spread—even though the knot may be detached and lying on the ground—not only through one orchard, but from one orchard to another.