TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

OF the Greater New York it may be said in all seriousness that the raising of garden truck will be one of her principal industries.

BOSTON alderman, after watching a certain dance for three weeks with noble and unselfish pertinacity, have pronounced it immoral. The Boston mind does not under all circumstances leap to hasty conclusions.

A LECTURER at Kansas City came upon the platform armed with a rifle and revolver. He was listened to so respectfully that no one hit him with a brick until after he had left the hall. What a lecturer really needs in Kansas City is a Gatling gun.

A BOSTON man has made a wager that he can start penniless and naked around the world returning in a year with $5,000, which must be earned by the way. He begins the undertaking in the seclusion of his clubroom. The point definitely settled by the wager seems to be that a man may live in Boston and yet be a fool.

WELL-FED Edward Atkinson is lecturing to prove that $1 a week is all that a workingman needs to support himself on comfortably. Mr. Atkinson is much less useful to the universe than a workingman is, and if he really believes his own theory let him adopt it for personal use. If, unhappily, he survive, he may secure a few adherents, but not among men who toil and who have stomachs.

IT now appears that the screaming, pestiferous trolley is not only a menace to life and limb but that its evil effects are felt underground. The return current leaks from the rails and attacks water and gas pipes, producing electrolysis, or rapid rusting and disintegration of the iron. Boston's gas and water systems have already suffered and Philadelphia is threatened with the same result. The trolley is a danger and a nuisance everywhere.

CRUELTY in the prison should be made a crime. In the Ohio Penitentiary there is a Brockway who terrifies convicts. Charles Mitchell, who had only a few days to serve, stabbed himself with a broomknife rather than be disciplined for a slight violation of the rules by Deputy Warden Stackhouse. Said the convict: "The Deputy Warden is so cruel that I had rather die than endure the torture again." The ducking tub and an electrical-shocking apparatus called the "humming bird," are the instruments of torture. No Legislature should fail to see that inquisitorial punishment is disgraceful to our age.

THE prospects for a full crop of house flies next summer is not dependent upon such risky possibilities as a wise contemporary would have us believe. It is stated by this authority that "a few individuals, in the torpid state, survive even the coldest winter, and with the first warm days of summer lay their eggs." Nature makes no such mistake as taking the chance of losing a whole fly crop by freezing off the old survivors, nor is the rigor of the crop jeopardized by infirm propagating. The fly supply for next summer was provided for in the waning days of last autumn. Myriads of fly eggs are now safely tucked away, ready to be transformed into the familiar little pests by the incubating rays of the sun.

THE estimate of the area and product of the principal cereal crops, potatoes, tobacco, and hay for the year 1893, as completed by the statistician of the Department of Agriculture, make the aggregate of corn area 72,036,465 acres, product, 1,619,496,131 bushels; wheat, 34,629,418 acres, product, 396,131,725 bushels; oats, 27,273,033 acres, product, 638,854,850 bushels; rye, 2,038,485 acres, product, 26,555,446 bushels; barley, 3,220,371 acres, product, 69,869,495 bushels; buckwheat, 815,614 acres, product, 12,132,311 bushels; potatoes, 2,605,186 acres, product, 183,034,203 bushels; tobacco, 702,952 acres, product 483,023,963 pounds; hay, 48,613,169 acres, product, 65,766,158 tons. The average yield of corn an acre was 22.5 bushels, wheat, 11.4 bushels, oats, 23.4, rye, 13.0, barley, 21.7, buckwheat, 14.9, potatoes, 72.2, tobacco 687 pounds, hay 1 33-100 tons. The returns of the correspondents of the department make the acreage of winter wheat sown last fall 93.2 per cent. of the area harvested in 1893.

Cases of lynching grow no less in number, nor are they now confined to the Southern States. The brutal custom seems to be flourishing in Idaho, where it is said that a man was lynched last week for the crime of being a Mormon. It is simply an outrage on justice to say that the hangings which disgrace our Nation are done by the people to preserve law and order and the safety of people. They are prompted by brutality, and that is confined to no one place. The Springfield Republican thinks, in the name of some facts that it has collected during a week, that it is time for the Northern papers to preach to their own people instead of preaching to the South. "Ohio has no negro problem, yet the people of Winchester in that State lynched a 16-years'-old colored boy. A white man was lynched in Marion County, Ind. Three white men were lynched at Russell, Kan.; and as throwing a little more light on Kansas civilization, it should be added that a jury in Sabina allowed $2 damages to a negro whose son was lynched last April. Nothing worse happens in Tennessee, Mississippi, or Texas."

IT gives some indication of the progress of shipbuilding to note that at the time the entrance locks of the Manchester ship-canal were designed there was not a vessel afloat which could not enter the gates and proceed up the canal. These locks are at Eastham, between Runcorn and Liverpool, and vessels may enter them at any time irrespective of the state of the tide. This is a very great advantage over Liverpool, the docks of which are tidal. If two vessels cross the Mersey bar at the same time, one for Liverpool and the other for Manchester, the latter may actually begin unloading first from not having any delay but the transit of the canal. The largest lock at Eastham has a measurement of 600 by 80 feet, and the bottom is twenty-three feet below the sill of the old docks in Liverpool and nearly twelve feet below that of the newest docks. As the minimum depth of the canal is twenty-six feet, vessels of almost any size may navigate the canal, and very likely improvements will be made rendering it suitable for the largest steamers. A railway bridge, under which the canal passes, has determined the maximum height of masts allowed to be seventy-five feet. Any masts higher have to be lowered. This is an obvious disadvantage to sailing ships many of which have the tops of their lower masts about that height, but steamers are rapidly supplanting sailing vessels except for very long voyages. The canal is now one of the wonders of the day at a cost of $75,000,000, and it probably will pay.

THE death of Rosina Vokes, which occurred at Torquay, in Devonshire, entails the loss of a gifted woman and a beautiful character. Mrs. Vokes-Clay was an English woman, but for many years she had confined her professional career to this country. In addition her husband's family was closely allied to one of the greatest names in our history, so that the loss is felt even more keenly in America than in England. The professional charms of this gifted woman are sufficiently known to theater-goers of a generation past. As an actress she lacked the finish of some and the versatility of others, but she had a superabundant cheerfulness and vivacity, which, combined with sincerity and an obvious desire to please, won all hearts. The public abundantly testified their love of the actress and their appreciation of her charming and always inoffensive art. Not all the public knew the inner history of a private life which was even more admirable than the stage career. Rosina Vokes, without the almost offensive display which has prejudiced the public mind against some "British matrons" on the stage, was a model of all the domestic virtues. After her marriage she never played in England. Her children to whom she was most tenderly attached, never visited America, so that they never saw their mother on the stage. By the fruits of her labors, however, they were reared in luxury to inherit from her a competence. For some years the mother had known that her death was imminent. When the end came she went home to her children to die.

Sunny Italy Buried in Snow Drifts.

The oldest inhabitant of Rome is reported to have said that he never knew such a sight as the capital has presented this winter. The snow has certainly been a terribly thing in the streets, and the poor people seem to be quite broken-spirited and unable to compete against it. They have no notion of using shovels and a little muscular force to clear a way through, but lounge about in an abstracted and benumbed condition, hoping for a little benevolent rain to fall and do that which they are unable or unwilling to attempt. It may be said that all have suffered, from the residents of the palace down to the denizens of cellars and hovels. In the country the snow has been two or three feet deep in all directions.—London Court Journal.

THE police in New York have stopped the sale of lemonadade on the streets. They have evidently soured on it.

GRIN AND BEAR IT.

'Tis not a motto fine as some,
Perhaps in terms high-sounding;
But as from coal, rare colors come,
Truth richly worth expounding
Lies in this adage—truth sublime—
And I would here declare it;
And if a bore you deem my rhyme,
Why, simply "grin and bear it."

When cherished projects come to naught,
Or pain imbitters pleasure;
When banks and bonds you firmest thought
Bring loss to hoarded treasure;
When friends forsake, and foes increase,
Put on, though hard to wear it,
A sunny smile of perfect peace—
'Twill help—just "grin and bear it."

When woes come thick and still more thick,
Disasters gathering daily;
When hope deferred the heart makes sick,
While round you, jesting gayly,
The world knows not how sad your soul,
Dreams not what griefs do tear it,
Keep over self a calm control;
All bravely "grin and bear it."

Ah, 'neath these homely words there lie
Vast mines of deepest meaning;
Whole tomes of sound philosophy
Well worth most careful gleaning;
Yet not mere stole's lore I urge—
Forever I forswear it—
Let earth's and heaven's best wisdom merge—
Trust God, then "grin and bear it."
—Utica Globe.

WORKED BOTH WAYS.

Mrs. Delameter sat in her bay window sewing.

If any living soul had dared to insinuate to Mrs. Delameter that her husband was capable of a meanness, she would have arisen in her wrath and hurled indignation at the offending insinuator.

And yet there had been times in the course of their years of married life when she had almost admitted as much to herself, in her inmost heart, though she had always hastened to assure herself that he "didn't intend it" and was "only thoughtless."

The trouble lay in a nutshell—there was only one pocketbook in the Delameter family, and its abiding place was Mr. Delameter's pocket.

That morning she felt the last straw had been added to her load of humiliation. She had conceived the brilliant plan of asking for more money than her immediate necessities demanded, with the idea of sparing herself a few unnecessary humiliations in the near future.

She had screwed up her courage as she ate her breakfast to ask timidly, as Mr. Delameter rose from the table:

"Tom, can you spare me $10?"

"What's the trouble now?" asked Mr. Delameter, good naturedly.

"I—need a pair of boots."

"Whew! Ten dollars for a pair of boots?" and he arched his eyebrows, still good naturedly.

"No," stammered his wife, feeling and looking as guilty as though she had robbed a neighbor's clothesline over night, "the boots will be only $3, but—I thought it would be handy to have a little money by me, and—not have to trouble you so often."

And Mr. Delameter—her face grew hot, and she breathed fast every time she thought of it—Mr. Dalameter took a $2 bill and a $1 bill, and a silver half dollar, and laid them on the table, saying, in an offhanded way, "I guess that'll do you this time," and then put up his pocketbook and went away whistling.

Mrs. Delameter was a good little woman, and she endeavored, loyally, to find excuses for such atrocious conduct.

She was a forgiving little woman, too, so when the clock on the mantel struck the half hour after five, she folded up her work and set the teatable with the puffy cream cakes Mr. Delameter so loved, and which she had made in the morning, and put on the even slices of homemade bread, and opened a jar of the peaches she canned the fall before and made the tea in the precise manner he liked it made.

And Mr. Delameter came home and gave his wife an affectionate greeting, and looked at her admiringly across the table, and praised her cream cakes.

And after supper he drew her down on his knee and said how jolly it was to have a home of one's own, and not have to live in a horrid boarding house; and he was altogether in such a pleasant mood that Mrs. Delameter dared attempt a little serious talk, and paved the way by informing him that—

"Miss Southernwood came to see me to-day."

"Ah!—she's the millinery lady, I believe?"

"She wants me to trim hats for her in my spare time this summer."

"Indeed! The idea of my wife working in a shop!" said Mr. Delameter with considerable spirit.

"I wish you'd let me do it."

"For goodness sake, what for?" and Mr. Delameter spoke a little testily this time.

"Because I—it would seem so good to have a little money of my very own."

"Well, don't you have money of your very own? All that's mine is yours."

"I suppose so—but oh, Tom, you don't know I hate to ask for it."

"You silly little goose! Did I ever refuse you?"

"But, really, Tom, I think—I'm almost sure—you would feel the same way."

"Nonsense. I shouldn't, either. I'd just as leave ask as not."

"Would you be willing to prove it?"

"Well, I'll take that money I laid up before I was married out of the bank, and when your payday comes you will put every cent of your money into the bank."

"Well, I promise," said Mr. Delameter, laughing at her earnestness.

Then he looked thoughtful for several minutes.

"How long must the experiment last to convince you?"

"Well, I think a month would do, don't you?"

"I think it would," he answered dryly.

Mr. Delameter forgot his agreement till just as he was being paid off, the next day, and then, being a man of his word, he stopped on the way home and emptied his pockets into the coffers of the bank, carrying away with him a solitary nickel, which he had overlooked, in the pocket where he kept his car fares.

Then the whole affair slipped from his mind.

He was opening his lunch box at noon, when, as luck would have it, there suddenly appeared before him a friend of his boyhood days who had grown rich and aristocratic in the years since they had met.

Mr. Delameter, in an exuberance of hospitality, immediately conducted him to the high-priced restaurant in the vicinity, ordered a dinner in keeping with the place, leisurely discussed it with his friend, and at its close complacently drew forth and opened his pocketbook.

His feelings at that interesting moment may be better imagined than described, as the novelists say.

That night he was glum all supper time, and afterwards buried himself in the day-before's newspaper till bedtime.

When morning came he lingered about after breakfast was over, with no ostensible reason, at last made a feint at starting and then came back again.

"Oh, by the way," he said, with a fine air of carelessness, "I had to borrow some money yesterday."

"How much?" asked his better half, with a little blush.

"Five dollars."

"What for?" trembled on Mrs. Delameter's lips, but she did not say it. She simply handed him the exact sum.

"I guess you'd better let me have a little for car fares while you're about it."

A ten cent piece was carefully selected and laid in his palm.

Mr. Delameter did not forget his straitened condition that day.

He remembered it of course, when he sent the bill to his friend; he felt it when he passed a fruit stand on which were displayed some particularly fine oranges; it was called to his attention when the little lame boy with candy made his usual round of the office; it was painfully present to his mind when a man with a subscription paper, whereon figured the name of Delameter, came to collect the money subscribed, and the lack was keenly appreciated when he had to forego buying his usual evening paper.

The third day he braced up, and, with a reluctance he was wholly unable to conceal, requested the means wherewith to buy a pair of light trousers.

The fourth day was Sunday. Mr. Delameter thought of the contribution box and decided he wouldn't attend church. His head ached, he said.

The fifth day the grocer called at the office for his pay and Mr. Delameter mumbled something about "pocketbook in other pants," sent him to the house, though in former days he had pooh-poohed the idea of that being the more convenient way and had decreed that the grocer should come to the office for his money.

The sixth day Mrs. Delameter, with unlooked-for generosity, gave him fifty cents when he asked for car fare, and on the strength of this he hailed a man with strawberries on his way home at night, bought two boxes and found that he was six cents short.

The seventh day Mr. Delameter realized that the experiment wasn't working quite in the way he meant it should, so he pulled himself together and boldly asked for a $10 bill.

"What for?" queried his wife, as though with an effort.

"I—well, I want to get a pair of boots."

"Men's boots come high, don't they?" faltered Mrs. Delameter, with an artificial smile, as she opened her pocketbook.

"Oh, the boots won't be more than $4; probably, but I guess I can make away with the rest."

Mrs. Delameter hesitated, blushed, bit her lip, then slowly handed out two two-dollar bills and a silver half dollar.

"I guess that will do you this time," she murmured with downcast eyes.

Mr. Delameter glanced at her and made as though he would cast the money from him.

Then suddenly he seemed to recollect something, and a brilliant red color flamed up from the edge of his shirt collar to the roots of his hair.

He jammed the money viciously into his breast pocket, made use of some words indicative of extreme anger, and flung himself out of the house, slamming the door with great vehemence behind him.

Mrs. Delameter threw herself face downward on the lounge and cried and cried.

When Mr. Delameter did actually come home at the usual hour she hardly dared raise her eyes to his face. But he was very quiet and did not slam things and hardly looked up from his food at tea time.

When Mrs. Delameter had cleared up her dishes she slipped up behind her husband as he sat in the bay window with his elbows on his knees, his face between his hands, and his eyes on the carpet, and dropped the bone of contention, the pocketbook, into his lap and fled.

"Fannie," he said, with whimsical seriousness, "do you believe that there is money enough in this pocketbook to induce some muscular man to kick me all I deserved to be kicked?"

And then Mr Delameter proposed that whenever he was paid off the housekeeping expenses should be deducted from the amount received and the rest divided equally between himself and Mrs. Delameter.

And they followed this plan, and continued to follow it, and it worked like a charm, and—er—they lived happy ever after—of course.—N. Y. Mercury.

CAN'T LIVE WITHOUT DOGS.

Eskimos Find the Faithful Animal a Necessity of Their Miserable Existence.

"Without dogs the larger portion of the the great Eskimo family peopling the barred Northern coast of America would find it impossible to exist in its chosen home." So writes E. W. Nelson, in his "Mammals of Northern Alaska." They are used in the winter for hunting, sledge-drawing and the like, but in summer are mostly left to shift for themselves. They receive much hard usage, as well as do much hard work, but are described, nevertheless, as a rollicking set full of play, fond of human society and quarrelsome as school-boys. Mr. Nelson credits them with a vein of humor and declares that their varying characteristics can be read in their faces. They are worth from $2 to $15 apiece, according to age, size, and intelligence. For sledge-drawing they are harnessed in teams of either seven or nine—three or four pairs and a leader. The load is from 350 to 700 pounds and the course is mainly through unbroken snow or over rough ice. With a team of seven dogs and a load of more than 300 pounds Mr. Nelson made a journey of more than 1,200 miles in about two months. The last sixty miles were made over a bad road in a continuous pull of twenty-one hours. They are much affected by the moon. During full moon half the night is spent by them in howling in chorus. "During the entire winter at St. Michael's," says Mr. Nelson, "we were invariably given a chorus every moonlight night, and the dogs of two neighboring villages joined in the serenade." He speaks of its "wild, weird harmony," and seems to have found it agreeable rather than otherwise. The influence of the moon is also very apparent when the dogs are traveling. They brighten up as the moon rises, and pricking up their ears start off as if they had forgotten their fatigue. The fur traders take advantage of this fact, and sometimes lie over during the day and travel at night. The dogs endure an astonishing degree of cold. Mr. Nelson saw a female with two newly born puppies lying upon the snow near a hut, with no sign of shelter, when the thermometer ranged from 30 to 35 degrees below zero.

Boxwood.

Among a large class of craftsmen a wish has long been entertained for the discovery of a hard, compact and even grained wood having all the characteristics of boxwood and for which it would form an efficient substitute. For many years past the gradual diminution in the supplies of boxwood and the deterioration in its quality have proved serious facts in more than one occupation, including engravers, hardwood dealers, et cetera, especially the former, on account of the higher price asked for the material and the difficulty of securing it of the needed size and firmness of texture, so as to insure the artistic excellence of the engraving.

While by far the most important use of this wood is for the engraver's art, it is also applied to numerous other purposes, such, for instance, as weaving shuttles, mathematical instruments, turnery uses, carving and cabinet work. The fact is interesting as well as important that boxwood is the nearest approach to ivory of any wood known, and will therefore probably increase in value as it becomes scarcer. Small wood, under four inches, is used to a very great extent by flax spinners for rollers and by turners for various purposes, rollers for rink skates et cetera, and if free from splits cracks and other imperfections, is considered of equal value with the larger wood.

Live Peaceably.

It is really amazing to note and to feel the entire difference in people's dispositions. There are persons with whom it would be a dear bargain to dwell one month for the price of a thousand years added to one's life; and, again, there are those whose intimate companionship for a month would be worth all of one's subsequent life. It is said that it takes two persons to make a quarrel, but it does not follow that there is always fault on both sides when two people cannot live comfortably together. Even two well-meaning people may not be able to do so. Well meaning consists with most intolerable habits, and, when one has found that the ways of a companion are established in such a sort as grind and grate perpetually upon his feelings and keep him in a constant state of annoyance and distress, let him decamp, if he can. If he cannot, let him use his best endeavors to keep sweet-tempered under the aggravating irritation.

Welding Aluminum.

A new and improved method for welding aluminum has been discovered, and has proved so satisfactory that when subjected to a severe strain in testing, the welded joint proved of greater strength than the pure metal. The welding preparation is called a solder, though, properly speaking, it is not an alloy or solder, but a substance that unites with the pieces of metal to be welded, as it were, fusing them together. The use of aluminum has been restrained by the absence of some such method as this. A process of welding it has been known, but it was unsatisfactory, owing to the weakness at the joint. The invention will hasten the day when aluminum can be used in commercial quantites.

THE wiseman prefers to bet on the ocean races than to ride on them, and it is certainly the better way.

MEDICAL INSTINCT IN ANIMALS.

Their Diseases, and the Methods Adopted by Them to Effect a Cure.

Animals get rid of their parasites by using dust, mud, clay, etc. Those suffering from fever restrict their diet, keep quiet, seek dark, airy places, drink water, and sometimes plunge into it. When a dog has lost his appetite it eats that species of grass known as dog's grass, which acts as an emetic and a purgative. Cats also eat grass. Sheep and cows when ill seek out certain herbs. An animal suffering from chronic rheumatism always keeps as far as possible in the sun. The warrior ants have regularly organized ambulances. Latrellie cut the antenna of an ant and other ants came and covered the wounded part with a transparent fluid secreted in their mouths.

When an animal has a wounded leg or arm hanging on, it completes the amputation by means of its teeth. A dog being stung on the muzzle by a viper was observed to plunge its head repeatedly for several days into running water. This animal eventually recovered. A terrier hurt its right eye. It remained under a counter, avoiding light and heat, although it habitually kept close to the fire. It adopted a general treatment—rest and abstinence from food. The local treatment consisted in licking the upper surface of the paw, which it applied to the wounded eye.

Animals suffering from trumatic fever treat themselves by the continued application of cold water, which M. Delauncey considers to be more certain than any of the other methods. In view of these interesting facts, we are, he thinks, forced to admit that hygiene and therapeutics as practiced by animals may, in the interests of physiology, be studed with advantage.

Many physicians have been keen observers of animals, their diseases and the methods adopted by them, in their instinct, to cure themselves, and have availed themselves of the knowledge so brought under their observation in their practices.—Philadelphia Record.

"The Heart of England."

In the heart of the City of London stands an old house of worship, the Church of St. Swithin. It was rebuilt upon its former foundation by Sir Christopher Wren, who was also the architect of St. Paul's Cathedral. The traveler who visits it must pass through the crowd of hucksters of fruit and vegetables and of women with baskets of flowers, which surround it, until the foundation is reached, and there among the bluish stone slabs of which it is formed will be found a large, oblong, gray stone. This is London stone. It was erected by the Romans fifty years before the birth of Christ to denote the central part of their possessions in Britain. From it, we are told, all roads and distances were measured, and it has been called by many "the heart of England." There are fifty-one churches in Great Britain which bear the name of this excellent man, St. Swithin, who lived in the time of King Egbert, but it is the church in the wonderful old City of London which has this historic stone.—Goldthwaite's Magazine.

Riley's Profitable Verse.

No poet in the United States has the same hold upon the minds of the people as Riley. He is the poet of the plain American. They bought $30,000 worth of his verse last year; and he is also one of the most successful lecturers on the platform. He gives the lie to the old saying, for he is a prophet in his own country. The people of Indiana are justly proud of him, for he has written "Poems Here at Home." He is read by people who never before read poetry in their lives, and he appeals equally well to the man who is heart-sick of the hollow conventional verse in imitation of some classic.

He is absolutely American in every line he writes. His schooling has been from the school of realities. He takes things at first hand. He considers his success to be due to the fact that he is one of the people, and has written of the things he liked and they liked. The time will come when his work will be seen to be something more than the fancies of a humorist.—February McClure's.

Drawn with the Thumb Nail.

In picture collections to be seen both in China and Japan, are specimens of some most remarkable pictures of kinds drawn with the thumb nail.

The nails of the thumb on the left hand of these peculiar artists are taken great care of, and are allowed to grow to an enormous length, sometimes to ten or twelve inches. They are then pared down to a pen-shaped point, the point being scraped thin in order to make it flexible.

Dipping this oddly-constructed pen in beautiful vermilion or sky-blue ink, the only kinds used in "sacred" thumb-nail drawings, the artist gracefully outlines his work.

Occasionally the bold touches from the studio of a master in this department of "art," are life-size, and are sketched by a few sweeps of the artist's arm. Like other Oriental pictures and sketches, these sacred thumb-nail pictures are mounted and rolled up like scrolls.

In China.

One of the sights of China is the antique bridge of Suen-tchen-fow, 2,500 feet long and twenty feet wide. It has on each side 52 piers, upon which huge stones are laid, some of them twenty feet long. Many thousands of tons were used in the erection of this wonderful bridge, which is regarded by engineers as indicating constructive talents as wonderful as that which raised the Egyptian pyramids.