

## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

HAVE you ever noticed when you want to write a letter around home, that the ink is half water?

If you want to avoid disappointment, set your heart on something that other people don't want.

GIVING people money rarely helps them. True he lies in the matter of putting them in the way of earning money.

SOME fools do not know what to do with an education, but a man naturally smart is always smarter for having good educational tools to work with.

THE citizens of Indianapolis did not have such a dead cinch on those Coffin brothers after all. It looks now as though their cases would be buried.

A NOVEL table decoration consists of a transparent jelly in which is imbedded an incandescence light, and it is said to look the way it feels during the night after one has partaken of it.

THE E is a storm in the sun that is big enough to wrap itself three times around the earth and have 11,000 miles left to beat the pale moon. Inhabitants of this sphere ought not to fret about an occasional cyclone.

MANY Oklahoma farmers connected with a desperate gang of horse-thieves have been arrested. The news that they have deserted the gang permanently and become connected with a convenient tree may be expected by any mail.

SAV what you will about the development of speed by horse racing (and there is much to be said on that side), the fact remains that so far as the people at large are concerned horse gambling for that is the English of horse racing, does more harm than good.

A WILD man of gigantic stature, bewiskered, unkempt, and ferocious has been captured in Claremont Park, on the outskirts of New York City. It is believed that he is a member of the Grant monument fund committee who took to the woods in shame and despair several years ago.

SOME funny incidents happened in the run on the St. Joe banks. One woman scratched everybody with her elbows in her rush to the front of the crowd, and all she had on deposit was \$1.45. Another man drew \$17 he had deposited, and said triumphantly when he got out of the crowd: "No one is going to get ahead of me. You bet I got my money." He put his hand in his vest pocket to show it, and found he had been robbed of it in the crowd.

IT chanced that a man arrested for helping to loot a bank that would have been successfully looted without any assistance from him, met at court a young burglar whose crime had been that of preying upon the property of this banker in the hope of warding off starvation. The burglar pleaded guilty, but the banker, backed with money and an array of lawyers, and with bail in plenty was as innocent as a lamb. And Justice, had any one peered beneath the bandage around her eyes, might have been observed to wink.

AN alliance of the Knights of Labor and American Railway Union will make an organization of almost irresistible strength for the purposes of self-protection. The Knights are still strong in the East, the American Railway Union is a new but powerful society in the West. Each has been crippled by lack of allies outside of its own territory; this new union remedies that defect. Some credit must be allowed to Grand Master Sovereign, who found his order in so badly shaken a condition and has been able, against great odds, so effectively to rehabilitate it. He has chosen his time appropriately for this new coalition.

METHODS for the repression of Chicago bicycles appear to be increasing in severity. Not long ago persons who objected to the wheelmen found obstructions and shaking of fists a sufficient relief to their feelings. Then came Mr. Van Cleave, who expressed his disapproval of cycling by projecting brickbats at the cyclists. Mr. Burt of Rush street came next with a scheme to exterminate the tribe by felling trees upon them, and now we have Messrs. Kelly and Welsh, who empty revolvers at the voracity of the whirring wheel. This seems to be carrying the campaign a little too far. Capital punishment is

too severe for the offense of pumping a bicycle over the pavement.

CHICAGO TIMES: "Chicago," observes the Cleveland Leader in an unaccountable truculent article on the population of the largest two cities in America, "is not in New York's class at all. In fact, the boastful Illinois city, put to a fair test, was smaller at the time of the last census than Philadelphia, and hardly as large as Boston." "Boastful!"—there you go again with the revival of that foolish, wicked old charge against the shyest of American cities. Bless your silly old Western Reserve heart! Chicago never boasts of anything except of her modesty. For all you ever hear a Chicagoan say this town may be no larger than Cleveland—and not half so dirty.

THE Postoffice Department is still furnishing Columbian stamps of the large denominations to those who wish to complete their collections. Comparatively few of the two three, four, and five-dollar stamps were used in mailing. The great proportion of them were bought to preserve. But the collectors make complaint that the issue since Columbian year went out of date are not properly perforated, and are therefore not so valuable to preserve. The Department will not exchange stamps when they have once been purchased, holding that so long as the stamps will pay postage other defects do not matter. It is believed that the Columbian issue has added a million dollars to the postal revenues of 1893, that sum being paid by collectors to purchase stamps that the Government never was required to perform any service for.

THE Suez Canal Company has given a pension of \$12,000 per year to the family of a diamond De Lesseps, the great engineer. It can well afford to do so, as its revenues for 1893 were 76,513,092 francs. This leaves a profit of a little less than \$5,000,000 a year. These shares in the Suez Canal are the most profitable investment English capitalists have made. At one time a great part of them belonged to the Khedive of Egypt, but he was frightened into selling them at much less than their real value. All he received was \$20,000,000, but the shares to-day are worth \$85,000,000 and pay an interest of \$18 per share. Sometime when the Nicaragua Canal is finished it will be found a more profitable enterprise than the Suez Canal. There ought not to be any delay in beginning work on this, and keeping the Nicaragua Canal wholly under American control. English capitalists would be only too glad to get hold of this highway of commerce, as they have secured that through Egypt.

PROF. BELL is very sanguine of the early success of his experiments in the transmission of light waves by wire in a manner similar to that in which the telephone now transmits sound waves. The problem will present no insurmountable difficulty if a diaphragm can be constructed that shall prove as sensitive to the vibrations of light as are the diaphragms in the transmitter and receiver of the telephone to the vibrations of sound. Inasmuch as the undulations of light waves are enormously swifter than those of sound waves, however, the difficulty of finding a suitably sensitive material is not a small one. But the inventor expects very soon to perfect an instrument which will transmit images over great distances. The transmitting wire will receive the vibrations of light communicated to it by the receiving diaphragm at the other end of the line, where they will produce the effect necessary to convey the impressions of the human vision. The ability to "see through a millstone" was once upon a time considered a remarkable accomplishment; but it will be reckoned as of small account when in addition to hearing and writing by wire, as we now do by the phone and the electric telegraph, we shall also be able to see by wire through acres of houses.

SUBDIVISION of Labor. How unfitted many Southern slaves were to earn their own living after emancipation is comically illustrated by a story printed in the Southern Bivouac. It was related by a lady living in a village to whom two negro girls eighteen and twenty years old, applied for work. They had formed part of the establishment of a large plantation.

"Can you cook?" asked the lady of one of them.  
"No'm, we aint never been cook none. Phll allus cook."  
"Can you wash?"  
"No'm, we aint been wash none, neither. Aunt Sally, she wash."  
"Can you clean house, then?"  
"No'm, least we aint never been clean none."  
The lady asked question after questions, with like negative results.  
"Well," she said at last, "what have you been accustomed to do?"  
"Lucinda's dusky face brightened. 'Suky, here, she hunt for massa's speas, an' I keep de flies off ole massa's

## OUR RURAL READERS.

### SOMETHING HERE THAT WILL INTEREST THEM.

Many Objections to Surface Drainage—Making Butter in a Small Way—Milk Preserved by Oxygen—Points in Hay Making—General Farm Notes.

Nowadays there is so much said and written about creamery butter that one is apt to forget that in hundreds of homes women are making butter in a small way just as their grandmothers did. Last January I was visiting at a farm home, and my hostess, turned in the most primitive fashion—stirring the cream in a tin pail with a ladle. As she has Jersey cows it does not take her long to bring the butter, and she thinks it much easier to stir the cream than to bother with a churn. This churning produced ten pounds. My friend has two fresh cows and one that has been milked for some time. From these she made from fifteen to twenty pounds of butter per week, after using what milk and cream a family of four or five grown people need. The method of making this butter is as follows:

The milk is strained into four and six-quart pans, the latter filled quite as full as will be convenient for carrying. It is set on the stove and heated quite hot, but not scalding. To insure this heating without scorching the milk the grate from the oven is first placed on the stove. During cold weather there were about five milkings standing all the time. In warmer weather the milk is skimmed much closer. The churning is worked but twice, the salt—about a teaspoon to eight pounds—being put in at the first working.

#### Milk Preserved by Oxygen.

The New York Herald's European edition reports a new method of keeping milk by means of oxygen which has been adopted in France with very marked success. It has been found that when taken fresh from the cow and placed in a receptacle with compressed oxygen, and finally stored in twenty-five gallon cans at a pressure of two atmospheres, it will travel for months in perfect condition. It is said that milk thus treated and sent from Lyons to London develops neither germs nor ferments, while it will stand a temperature almost up to the boiling point without coagulating. It is claimed by M. Vilon, who has experimented in this way with milk on a large scale, that when so treated it is freed from germs of tuberculosis. But this has yet to be conclusively proved. It is probable that oxygen will destroy all bacterial germs, but will not also immediately sour the milk to which it is exposed? The souring of milk is due to chemical changes caused by the presence of oxygen in the air. Yet this oxygen must be diluted to produce these effects. Pure oxygen burns, and thus destroys what it is applied to, especially if it be injurious. As the compressed oxygen must necessarily be kept from contact with common air, it may well keep milk in the same vessel with itself, free from all changes.

#### Well-Treated Horses.

Horses many times are abused unconsciously by their owners. There are more ways of being cruel to a horse than overloading or beating him. Are the horses always watered in town before starting back over the hot, dusty roads? Doubtless the driver never fails to quench his thirst. Are the feet cleaned out every day? Is it too much to go to the blacksmith's about every three weeks to have the shoe reset? When your horses are very warm do you stand them in a draft and not cover them with a light blanket to prevent chilling by absorbing the perspiration? Do you use the overhead check? If you do, throw it away. If things do not go to suit you when on the road, do you jerk your horse? Do the collars always fit? Is the stable cleaned regularly and often? Not once a month, whether it needs it or not, but every day. If the harness chaffs, is it attended to at once, or is it put off till some other day? Are the horses always blanketed when left standing on a cold day? If you have to leave your team hitched in a storm, do you always see that it is not obliged to face it? By answering these questions to yourself you can see whether or not your horses are well treated.

#### Objections to Open Ditches.

Draining on the surface is, we are glad to say, going out of fashion. It unfits land for the profitable using of the best harvesting machinery, most of the breakages coming from going through the depressions left to remove surplus water. If there be a retentive subsoil the surface drain does very little good, for water will be stagnant up to the point where the ditch carries it away. The surface draining washes away particles of the soil which are always the richest in the field. Hence the open ditch is always filling up with the richest kind of mud, and when cleaned out this deposit makes the best possible top dressing. But in the underdrain all this labor is saved. The water as it filters through the soil reaches it with all the particles of fertility that it contains. Warm air follows as the water sinks to the underdrain, and this still further increases the effect of all the fertility that the drained soil possesses.

#### Points in Hay Making.

It is poor economy of time to keep teams and the man who loads the hay walking while one on the ground softly gathers it up. Practically

the whole work of putting the hay into cock has to be done several hours, and later a whole day, before the hay is ready to be drawn into the barn. This is especially true of cover hay, which has heavy stems and will not dry out thoroughly by exposure to the air. When green clover is put in cock the pressure of so much green herbage in a small space gets up fermentation and raises the temperature higher than June sunshine will do. It brings the moisture out of the stems, and when the cock is opened to air it will seem quite damp. But after once heating so much of the moisture has come from the stems and has evaporated that such hay may be put in stack or mow and be entirely safe from further heating.

#### Green Manure Sowing Land.

There is a belief that prevails among many farmers that many green manures are sometimes injurious to crops, causing the soil to turn sour instead of making it mellow and light. This is an only happen when the soil is full of stagnant water. If there are underdrains the surplus water will filter through the soil and warm air from the surface will follow, which will stimulate fermentation of the green manure still more. Something depends on the kind of green herbage plowed under. A growth of clover has a large proportion of nitrogen in it, causing it to give off much heat, when it decays, while a growth of sorrel rot more slowly, and may be said to sour the land, not because it is itself sour, but because it has too little nitrogen to get up much heat. A dressing of quicklime sown on the field after any green manure has been plowed under greatly adds to its effectiveness.

#### Building Up a Flock of Sheep.

On a farm one of the cheapest as well as one of the best ways of building up a flock of sheep is to select the best of the ewes and breed to a full-blood ram of a good breed—one that is best adapted to your locality and the purpose for which you are keeping sheep. Keep on selecting the ewes, selecting a new ram every two years in order to infuse new blood. There is five times as much profit in mutton as in fleece. A sheep may be fed one-seventh of the food that an ox requires, and will make a growth of nearly three-quarters of a pound a day for the first 250 days of its life, when it becomes excellent mutton. For 600 days it will make nearly half a pound at the farm, but such sheep, too, having a large carcass, will have a large fleece in proportion.—Colman's Rural World.

#### Odds and Ends.

CHEMICAL-dorming is the better way of getting rid of the superfluous horns. It is less painful than the saw, and with young stock is quick and sure in its effects.

BARLEY requires stronger soil than wheat for its best development, and where there is room for choice preference should be given to clay soil. In proper conditions a heavier yield an acre than of wheat may be expected.

If you let young stock shift for itself you will, of course, save the expense of providing shelter. This is cheap at the outset, but pretty dear in the final reckoning. It makes the production of beef, butter, milk, wool, etc., pretty expensive.

THREE years of experimenting at the Vermont station have shown the superiority of sour milk over sweet milk for pig feeding in every case, but pig feeding on skim milk, as an adjunct to the dairy, is pretty sure to be profitable, whether you feed sweet or sour.

THERE is no other plan by which pork can be made so cheaply as by making it mainly from clover and other good pasture, feeding some grain in connection toward the close of the season, and then finishing quickly with grain before carrying it very deeply into the severely cold weather of midwinter.

CUT oats when in the milk if you want them to feed in the dairy or for wintering horses. By permitting them to ripen and then separating the grain from the straw you add to the expense, but not at all to the value. Only by cutting and curing as hay can you procure anything like the full feeding value of the straw.

A SUCCESSFUL cultivator of gooseberries says that he had a row of twenty-five bushes that had clean culture for a number of years; they milled badly. He then quit the clean culture and the grass grew, and to his surprise he had no more mill-dew. The yield was at the rate of 6,000 quarts to the acre, the bushes being set five feet apart each way. The variety was the Downing.

POULTRY is nutritious and easily digested, and for these reasons the farmer who grows it should reserve a good supply for his own table. He can afford the best as well as anybody. If he goes wholly on the principle of saving by confining his waste to salt pork, it is ten to one that he loses more through inactivity of his mind because of this indigestible diet than he saves by its decreased cost.

#### The Tail of a Peacock.

As a matter of fact, the tail proper of the peacock has no beauty, being merely an ad to it. The feathers which form the part we thus name are not really tail-feathers, but answer to the much smaller ones that cover the base of the ordinary tail-feathers in most birds. They are what are technically called "tail-coverts." The real tail-coverts of a peacock are the short and strong ones that stand up and support the magnificent plumes of the "peacock in his pride."

## TEN THOUSAND TONS A DAY.

### The Enormous Quantity of Paper Turned Out by American Mills.

It is a curious and rather startling fact that next to the articles entering into food and clothing paper is the most universally used commodity in the world. It would be an almost impossible task to find in any civilized community a person or business concern that does not to a greater or less degree make use of paper in some of its various forms. Some philosopher has said that the civilization and prosperity of a country may be measured by its consumption of paper. If this is as fair an index as seems upon reflection to be reasonable, says the Philadelphia Times, statistics prove the United States to have distanced all the other nations of the world in the race of true development. Perhaps no line of business has had a more remarkable growth in the United States the past ten years than the paper-making industry. This is true in all branches, but especially so in the line of book and news print papers. The American people are a nation of readers, and the rapidly decreasing prices of books and newspapers have greatly increased the consumption of paper in these two lines. One or two cents will purchase a mass of reading matter in the form of our great dailies, consisting of from eight to sixteen pages, while 12 to 20 cents will purchase handsomely bound and attractive books of standard and popular authors. The daily output of news print paper in the United States is about 1,200 to 1,300 tons. Just think of 120 or 130 car loads of newspapers mentally devoured each day in this country. The production of news print is larger than any other grade. That of book paper is probably as much as 1,000 tons and of writing 450 tons each daily.

It will be interesting here to quote some of the figures of the paper industry in the United States as compiled by The Paper Trade Journal. The gross daily capacity of the paper mills of the United States in operation during 1923, or all kinds and grades of paper was estimated at about 10,000 tons. Of this amount nearly 2,500 tons represented news print and book paper, 1,000 tons of wrapping paper, 300 tons strawboard, 450 tons writing paper and almost 2,400 tons of the various other kinds and grades. The States which rank first in the production of paper are New York, Maine, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Illinois. From these seven States come nearly three-fourths of the entire supply of the country. By far the greater part of the output is consumed in the United States, the greatest paper using country in the world. In foreign markets, however, American paper is gaining a firm footing. The greatest consumption of printing paper is in the Sunday editions of the metropolitan dailies, which often require from sixty to 100 tons for a single issue. With the rapidly increasing output prices have as rapidly declined, until to-day a grade of news print paper worth twenty-five years ago, 13 cents or 14 cents per pound is now sold at 2 cents per pound—a decline in price unequalled in the history of any other industry. This enormous decrease in the cost of paper is due especially to the introduction of wood as paper stock. To-day it is the principal material used in the manufacture of paper for all but the highest grades of book and writing. News print and not only ordinary but even very attractive qualities of book paper are made entirely of wood. Another means conducive to this phenomenal reduction of cost has been the improvement in methods of making wood pulp. The perfection and greater efficiency attained in paper-making machinery, rendering much larger production easily possible in a given time, have added materially to this downward trend of price.

#### Letter Writing.

As a rule, women are better letter writers than men—perhaps because they can give more time to the discharge of social obligations. When a man goes to his office he finds a package of letters on his desk. There will not, in all likelihood, be a single one that is purely a personal letter. Yet, while he was at the breakfast table his wife and daughters received a number of letters, and everyone of them was a personal letter, a visit and a chat on paper. If, by chance the man has to write a polite note at home, in all probability he has to borrow a piece of note paper from his wife. So seldom does he write notes at home that he keeps none of the necessities for doing so about him. There are certain formalities to be observed in the writing of a social note. It used to be proper to address everybody as "dear sir," but now the social note usually begins: "My dear Mr. Blank." Similarly, our grandfathers signed themselves "Your obedient servant," or "our most obedient humble servant," but we of the present generation sign "Very sincerely" or "Very truly yours" or something of that sort. In official correspondence, of course, people "have the honor," but here it is strange how often a man makes the mistake of saying, "I have the honor to be, John Smith." Is it an honor to him to be himself? Then he, at any rate, is not the man who ought to say so. What he really means is that he has the honor to be your obedient servant, John Smith. In answering a note, it is well to follow the form your correspondent uses. If he wants to keep you at a distance by beginning, "My dear sir," you had better reply in the same way, and conversely, if he addresses you familiarly without any prefix to your name, as "My dear Blank," don't reply by calling him "Mr. Dash," unless he is a man much older than yourself, in which case you would not show him

proper respect if you omitted the prefix.

#### Racing on Ski.

Ski are Norwegian snow-shoes—strips of plank turned upward at the toes, eight or nine feet long, four and a half inches wide, and in the thickest part an inch thick. Mrs. Tweedie, author of "A Winter Jaunt to Norway," was in Christiania at the time of the annual ski races, and of course went to see them. It seemed to her as if nearly all the one hundred and fifty thousand inhabitants of the city must have gone out for the same purpose. About a hundred competitors entered for the race.

The course began with an ascent of about four hundred feet up a steep hill, mostly through the forest, where the men had to cross cliffs, ravines, hillocks and mounds. The road had been chosen for its obstacles, and was marked here and there by a piece of red stuff tied to a snowy pine tree.

After the climb came a longer descent, about a thousand feet, some of it almost perpendicular.

On a flat surface the skilobers, as they are called, shuttle along, accomplishing a distance of several feet at each step. Their feet as they keep together, keeping their feet as near together as possible, and bending their knees. The up-hill work is the hardest. The ski have a strong tendency to slide backward. The men in their toes out, and stamp the snow to get a bite.

In toeing out, the legs have to be kept well apart, else the long shoes overlap at the heel and trip the wearer. "To see a man go up-hill," writes Mrs. Tweedie, "his legs apart, and stamping the snow at each step, is most amusing from behind, the movement so closely resembling that of a frog with his little bent legs."

On the day in question, in spite of every obstacle, in spite of the steepness, in spite of the sudden turns and twists of the road, in spite of everything, the twelve English men were accomplished in one hour, forty-six minutes, thirty-six seconds. Only two of the racers gave out, and there were no accidents.

#### A Beggar's Imposter.

A beggar accosted a gentleman, and whined, "I'm paralyzed in both my hands, mister, an' can't work, for I can't grasp anything with 'em. Could you spare me a trifle, mister?" "I'm deaf," replied the gentleman; "you had better write down what you have to say. Here's a pencil and a piece of paper."  
"Deaf, is 'ee?" thought the beggar; "then he didn't hear the paralysis." So he wrote down—  
"I've got a wife and six children starving at home, mister. I've been out of work for six months, an' I am in a dreadful state of destitution."  
He handed the paper to the gentleman, who read it, and said—  
"I thought you said you were paralyzed in both hands and couldn't grasp anything, and yet you can write."  
"Did—didn't yer say yer was deaf?" stammered the beggar, who now really did feel paralyzed.

"Yes, just to find out if you were an imposter, when you are, as I suspected," replied the gentleman.  
"Well, of all the bossom' frauds, yer the biggest," exclaimed the beggar; "the idea of yer sayin' yer was deaf an' tryin' to impose on a poor teller."

And he shuffled off, sniffing the air with righteous indignation.

#### Remedy for Damp Walls.

The process consists in using two washes or solutions to covering the surface of the walls—one composed of castile soap and water, and one of alum and water. The proportions are three-quarters of a pound of soap to one gallon of water, and half a pound of alum to four gallons of water, both substances to be perfectly clean and dry, and the temperature of the air not above 25 degrees Fahrenheit when the compositions are applied.

The first, or soap wash should be laid on when boiling hot with a flat brush, taking care to form a froth on the brickwork. This wash should remain twenty-four hours, so as to become dry and hard before the second or alum wash is applied, which should be done in the same manner as the first. The temperature of this wash when applied may be 60 or 70 degrees Fahrenheit, and this also should remain twenty-four hours before a second coat of soap wash is put on. These coats are to be applied alternately until the walls are made impervious to water. The alum and soap thus combined form an insoluble compound, filling the pores of the masonry and entirely preventing the water from entering the wall.—Architect and Builder.

#### A Bad Time for Students.

It is a good time for some of the clever boys in our schools to-day that they did not live in the seventeenth century, when proficiency in one's studies was, if history speaks truly, a dangerous thing. It is said that in Germany in 1666 a student was sentenced to death for witchcraft because of his rapid progress in Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, his beautiful handwriting and the readiness with which one of his pupils became proficient in Latin. The unhappy young man would have had led to the stake without fall had not a certain influential nobleman, who knew and liked him, secured the commutation of his sentence. As it was, the unfortunate student was compelled to endure a long term of imprisonment.—Harper's Young People.

If this world ever becomes fit to live in, there will be a law against the man who is trying to raise money to pay a church debt.

A boy's idea of glory is to play base ball in a "sult."