

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

The tailor who collects his bill is a successful suitor.

It will sadden some people to learn that O'Donovan Rossa is on his way back to this country.

A man's lift might be more tolerable if he only knew how his married neighbors could admire each other.

It was all right to abolish the Mosquito reservation. The Mosquitoes wouldn't stay on it, anyway.

Newfoundland seems to experience a good deal of difficulty in her efforts to annex some other country to her debt.

Any change Editor John R. McLean may make in the New York Morning Journal will be a distinct improvement.

Actress Minnie Palmer has fallen back on the divorce as the best form of advance theatrical advertising. Old friends are best.

Paper stockings are the latest invention of the day, but Jerry Simpson has a scheme to beat them hollow for cheapness and durability.

Japan has enough pigtail trophies and ruffled peacock feathers. China has enough corpses. There's no reason for going to war again.

If the St. Louis should prove to be the wonder she is expected to be, Chicago will probably build a better ship and present her to the American line.

The nursery tricycle has appeared in London. It contains two seats, one for the mistress and one for the maid and her charge, and has two pairs of pedals.

A young woman in Valley Forge, Pa., has just died from being poisoned by the dye in black stockings. If the black stocking is deadly, why, let there be light.

A minister at Portland, Oregon, read dime novels until he went out and robbed a bank. It is peculiar that bad reading is the only kind that ever takes hold of a good man, isn't it?

Midland County, Texas, has a new weekly called the Eye Opener. At \$1 a year it should prove a good investment. "Night caps" and "eye openers" up here come much higher.

The Railway Age of Chicago finds that in 1890 there were twelve train robberies by brigands or "hold-ups"; in 1891, sixteen; in 1892, sixteen; in 1893, thirty-three; and in 1894, thirty-four.

A Milwaukee woman who is a religious fanatic has been traveling about the country setting fire to church buildings of her own denomination. Something should be done to dampen her religious ardor.

Business men of Costa Rica think they would rather be annexed to the United States than to have another revolution. When the desire is analyzed it is not found to be very complimentary to the United States after all.

Again comes the assurance that the vast power of Niagara is to be utilized in the production of electricity. The country is surfeited with repetitions of this announcement. If any one really intends to harness the falls let him get at it and turn on the current just as soon as it can be produced.

A Frenchman must still obtain the consent of his parents if he wishes to marry. The Chamber of Deputies has rejected a proposal of Abbe Lemire to dispense with the consent when the man is 25 or the woman 21, but passed another doing away with the necessity of the grandparents' consent when the parents are dead.

The indictment of Schweinfurth and the breaking up of his "heaven" at Rockford, Ill., is a tardy application of justice which ought to have been administered years ago. It has been unaccountable to the respectable people of the country how this abominable impostor could go along from year to year carrying on his infamous practices and playing on the credulity of his weak minded dupes in the heart of a civilized and intelligent community. It is a reproach to Illinois justice that his criminal and scandalous career was not cut short long ago.

It is claimed that "what purported to be the Star of Bethlehem" was plainly seen one bright, clear day in November, 1887, by an observer at Grand Rapids, Mich. He says it was seen near the noon hour, and the object was where the sun would naturally be about 2 o'clock. The fact is that at the end of November, 1887, the planet Venus was near its greatest western elongation and earlier in the month was in the position stated, that also being near the time of her greatest brilliancy. In a clear sky the planet is easily seen under such conditions, and there is no reasonable doubt that the supposed Star of Bethlehem, seen as described, was the planet Venus.

It is reported that in consideration of the abandonment of all claims to the Isthmus Peninsula, including Port

Arthur, Japan will receive an additional indemnity of \$50,000,000. In the end this will be better for Japan than it would have been had it insisted upon occupying the peninsula. Even if there had been no danger of war with Germany, France, and Russia, it might have been an elephant for Japan. The administration might have involved the government in complications with the other powers having interests in that locality, and the cost of maintenance would have been heavy. If it had taken possession in defiance of the advice of the three powers war would have been inevitable and Japan would have been crushed. Fighting with China is a different thing from fighting with three or any one of the three western civilized powers. Japan would have lost its fleet at the first encounter, and it speedily would have been at their mercy and would have had to meet some heavy indemnity bills itself. As it is, its statesmen have shown wisdom in not pursuing its pretensions too far. It now has undisputed possession of the rich island of Formosa, so far as the other powers are concerned. Any resistance on the part of the Chinese in the island to the Japanese occupation will be of no avail. It has opened up China to its own and European trade and commerce. It has compelled the Chinese Government to take off its Ikin tax, which amounted to a prohibition of trade with the interior. It has possession of most of the Chinese fleet and an immense amount of munitions, ordnance, supplies, and other spoils of war. Finally, it has obtained a large indemnity, which will more than compensate it for the expense of the war, and it has secured for itself the respect of the civilized world by its rapid assimilation of civilized methods, by its skill and courage, and by its sympathy with modern progress. In a word, it has become the dominant power of the Orient. If its statesmen are wise they will allow nothing to prejudice or endanger that position.

WALKS UNHARMED IN FIRE.

German Fireman Wears the "Scaphander" and Secures Immunity.

There are some fire apparatus and appliances in which the firemen of Berlin, Germany, are undoubtedly ahead of us. Of these apparatus the most notable is the fire "scaphander." The word "scaphander," which means either "hollow man" or "hollow to receive a man," is generally applied to the suit of impermeable material in which the diver arrays himself before he goes down into the water. The fire scaphander is on the lines of the diver's scaphander, the only difference, in fact, being that it is made of a different material. The fire scaphander is made of asbestos and rubber, and is absolutely proof against fire. It neither takes fire nor is permeable to the heat of fire. A man in an asbestos suit or scaphander can take a leisurely walk through roaring flames or through the thickest volume of smoke with comfort, or at least with complete immunity from being burned or choked. The helmet is donned apart from the rest of the suit and is hermetically fitted to the suit, the riveting being so perfect that air is excluded. A plate of glass, specially prepared to stand great heat without cracking, is imbedded in the front of the helmet and allows the wearer to see plainly. To the fireman thus equipped air is supplied, just as it is supplied to the diver at work, through a tube, the one end of which is held at the earth's surface and the other end is in the helmet.

A Case in Natural History.

Many years ago Noah Webster classified a fish as an oviparous, vertebrate animal, breathing by means of gills or branches, and living mostly in the water. Now comes another Webster—surnamed Loper—who keeps a stall in the city market and who declares by his acts that a fish is either a fruit or a vegetable.

Because of this peculiar entomological classification the new Webster is in trouble. The fishermen at the new market are after him and the city may cancel his lease.

An Example of War Prices.

Gen. Gordon, of the late Confederate army, tells the following, which probably furnishes the high water mark as the wages of the "swipe," the incident of course, occurring during the war: One day a cavalryman rode into camp on a reasonably good horse. "Hello, cavalryman," said a foot soldier, "I'll give you \$3,000 for your horse."

To Napoleon's Troops.

Visitors to the battlefield of Waterloo can hardly have failed to be struck with the fact that the monuments upon that classic ground are exclusively devoted to men of the allied forces. Subscriptions have in consequence been invited for erecting—of course with the permission of the Belgian Government—a memorial of some sort to Napoleon's troops somewhere near Braine l'Alleud or Mont St. Jean.

Hiccoughs.

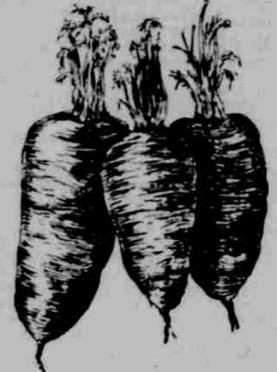
A man had hiccoughed steadily for seventy-two hours; chloral, morphine, and chloroform didn't stop it; finally a strong, subcutaneous injection of a solution of atropine and morphia put the patient to sleep, and on his waking there was no return of the trouble.

FARM AND GARDEN.

BRIEF HINTS AS TO THEIR SUCCESSFUL MANAGEMENT.

The Stump-Roofed Carrot Excellent for Family Use—How to Make a Farm Roller—A Movable Hen's Nest—Farmers Should Raise Everything.

Half-Long Stump-Roofed Carrot. There is much less attention paid to the choice of varieties of carrots for a given soil than the importance demands, says Farm and Home. For field culture the long orange was the variety in general use until within the past few years, since when several new



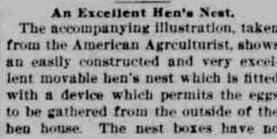
FINE CARROT FOR FAMILY USE.

types have been introduced, the tendency being for shorter roots, both on account of a saving of labor in digging and in greater productiveness. For most varieties, particularly where the soil is light and thin, the stump-roofed varieties are preferable. To grow to perfection carrots require a rich, deep, sandy loam, well pulverized and deeply cultivated. For an early crop sow in May and June in drills about one foot apart, thinning out to four inches in the row. Sow for the main crop in June and July. After sowing tread the rows firmly.

On poor, light soil, where the weeding and cultivation have been neglected, the half-long, stump-roofed carrots have yielded at the rate of 520 bushels per acre. This is more than double the quantity that could have been raised had long-rooted varieties been planted and not nearly as much as would have been produced had the soil been in good condition and well cultivated. Heavier crops can be produced in deep, rich soils with the long-rooted varieties, but in thin soils the shorter kinds give by far the greater yield.

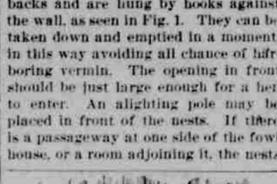
An Excellent Hen's Nest.

The accompanying illustration, taken from the American Agriculturist, shows an easily constructed and very excellent movable hen's nest which is fitted with a device which permits the eggs to be gathered from the outside of the hen house. The nest boxes have no



MOVABLE HEN'S NESTS.

backs and are hung by hooks against the wall, as seen in Fig. 1. They can be taken down and emptied in a moment, in this way avoiding all chance of hatching vermin. The opening in front should be just large enough for a hen to enter. An alighting pole may be placed in front of the nests. If there is a passageway at one side of the hen house, or a room adjoining it, the nests



REAR SLIDES.

can be hung against the partition, and the eggs gathered from the outside without going into the pen. Let round holes be cut behind each nest in the partition, and these openings covered by a slide as suggested in Fig. 2. The same arrangement could be used upon the outer wall of a hen house standing by itself.

Progress of Agriculture.

The average of wages has risen 60 per cent since 1870, and at the same time the accumulation of urban wealth per head has been 76 per cent, more than in the period from 1850 to 1870, which shows that the rise in wealth and the increase of wages go almost hand in hand. But the farmer has nevertheless a corresponding advantage, for his life is a healthier one, the statistics of mortality showing that the death rate in American cities, especially among children, is greatly in excess of that of rural districts. The farmer may make money more slowly, but he has a safer and less agitated life, and his children grow up around him in affluence and comfort. The census of 1890 showed that the United States had 4,565,000 farmers, the aggregate value of whose farms, cattle and implements summed up 15,982 millions of dollars, giving to each an average fortune of \$3,505, most of these men having begun on a capital of a couple of hundred dollars. The number of new farms created since 1860 has been 2,520,000, bringing into cultivation 195,000,000 acres, and the greater part of this work has been done by European settlers. In fact, if the United States had no urban population or industries whatever, the advance of agricultural interests would be enough to claim the admiration of mankind, for

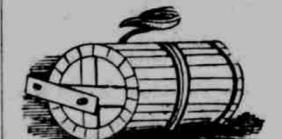
It has no parallel in history.—North American Review.

Unevenly Matched Teams.

The worst result of having the team unevenly matched in work is that neither is able to exert its full power in pulling. The slow and fast each hinders the other, and neither can do its best. This is a practical basis for the ancient injunction in the law of Moses that the ox and the ass should not be yoked together. There is also a need for due proportion between the team and its driver. The great majority of farm work requires that the driver shall walk, and a slow team limits the amount that an active, able-bodied man can accomplish. We will remember while a boy on a farm plowing with an ox team that could not be made to turn over an acre a day. A smart horse team with the same plow would turn an acre and a half or two acres. Such a difference as this explains why much farm help fails to earn its wages. The team for farm work should be active rather than plodding. This activity is not at all incompatible with superior strength and endurance.—American Cultivator.

The Farm Roller.

The value of a farm roller as an aid in preparing ground for planting, or sowing is not sufficiently realized. The function of the roller on most farms is to go once over a piece of grain that has been sowed with an accompaniment of grass seed, to put the ground into smooth condition for future mowing. This use of a roller is all right, but it is extracting only a small part of the value that can be got out of it. Nothing is better for making fine seed beds than a thorough rolling, followed by a thorough harrowing. The roller breaks up lumps and clods and firms the soil so it can be thoroughly pulverized by the subsequent harrowing. A roller should be made in two sections so that one may roll back and the other forward in making a turn, otherwise a bad gouging of the surface occurs at every turn. The illustration shows the best manner of constructing a roller. Two pieces of plank are halved together at right angles for ends, and pieces V-shaped are fitted in at the four cor-



A FARM ROLLER.

ners. These ends should be twenty-four or more inches in diameter, making the roller twenty-eight inches in diameter. The ends are covered with narrow strips of plank, with edges sawed somewhat beveling. This can be done at the mill. These strips are spiked to the ends, and over each end a stout iron hoop is put on, and allowed to shrink into place, as a wagon tire is put on. This makes a solid job. Get this ready before planting time, and use it before putting in the seed as well as after.

The Family Garden.

The family garden idea is the thing to be cherished just now. Farmers are much more apt, says the Nebraska Farmer, as a class, to give themselves over to the study of how best to meet the wants of their live stock through a variety of feeds best suited to building up the system and giving vigor to the constitution than they are to spend much thought or labor in meeting the same class of wants for the various members of the family. The garden spot should be the center of economy for every farm household, not simply in a money sense, but in the better sense of providing fresh from the soil all those delicacies of the table in and out of season that are never procured in so good form as when produced directly by the hands for whose use they are intended. Every member of the family can be made to feel an interest in the garden, and now is about the time to make that interest manifest by good deeds.

Early Spring Crops.

Early crops, such as asparagus, strawberries, etc., that can be sold in the spring and early summer, usually pay much better than stuff that is raised for the fall and winter markets. The great majority of farmers grow crops for the late markets, which makes competition keen and prices low, says the Farmer. More early truck is grown each year, but it will be a long time before the spring market is as well supplied as the fall.

The Guernsey Butter.

The Guernsey as a dairy cow has been more talked about since the World's Fair than she ever was before. It is undisputed that the Guernsey butter has the richest natural color of any breed. The Guernsey the world over has the rich, yellow skin which the old-time dairy people always said indicated a good butter cow.

Planting for the Hereafter.

Trees cannot usurp the place of a broader agriculture, but can often be worked in conjunction with it. That farmer is but "casting an anchor to windward" who plants an orchard, a vineyard, a nut grove or a tract of timber. If he cannot live to enjoy it to the full, his children may.

Black Knots in Cherry Trees.

How can we destroy black knots on our cherry trees? is often asked. Simply cut off the limbs and burn them, says American Gardening. The pest that causes these knots is in them, and fire alone will cause their destruction. But the work must be general to be useful.

Farmers, Raise Everything.

The farmer who keeps cows, poultry and hogs, who raises his own fruit and vegetables, and buys nothing that he can raise himself, is the most successful.

FINE FIGURES.

An English Statistician Gives Us Reason to Be Proud.

The English statistician, Michael G. Mulhall, publishes in the June number of the North American Review an article on "The Power and Wealth of the United States." Mr. Mulhall's conclusion is that:

If we take a survey of mankind in ancient and modern times as regards the physical, mechanical and intellectual force of nations we find nothing to compare with the United States in this present year of 1895, and that the United States possesses by far the greatest productive power in the world.

Mr. Mulhall shows that the absolute effective force of the American people is now more than three times what it was in 1860, and that the United States possesses almost as much energy as Great Britain, Germany and France collectively and that the ratio falling to each American is more than what two Englishmen or Germans have at their disposal. He points out by a careful comparison between the conditions in these different countries, that an ordinary farm hand in the United States raises as much grain as three in England, four in France, five in Germany, or six in Austria. One man in America can produce as much flour as will feed 250, whereas in Europe one man feeds only thirty persons.

Mr. Mulhall calls special attention to the fact that the intellectual power of the great republic is in harmony with the industrial and mechanical, 87 per cent of the total population over 15 years of age being able to read and write.

"It may be fearlessly asserted," says he, "that in the history of the human race no nation ever possessed 41,000,000 instructed citizens."

The postoffice returns are appealed to by Mr. Mulhall in support of this part of his statement, these showing that, in the number of letters per inhabitant yearly, the United States is much ahead of all other nations.

According to the figures of Mr. Mulhall the average annual increment of the United States from 1821 to 1890 was \$90,000,000, and he adds that "the new wealth added during a single generation—that is, in the period of thirty years between 1860 and 1890—was no less than \$49,000,000,000, which is one billion more than the total wealth of Great Britain."

Classifying the whole wealth of the union under the two heads, urban and rural, Mr. Mulhall finds that rural or agricultural wealth has only quadrupled in forty years, while urban wealth has multiplied sixteen fold. Before 1860 the accumulation of wealth for each rural worker was greater than that corresponding to persons of the urban classes; but the farming interests suffered severely by reason of the civil war, and since then the accumulation of wealth among urban workers has been greatly more than that among rural workers, a fact which Mr. Mulhall thinks explains the influx of population into towns and cities.—New York Sun.

Answering Questions of the Curious.

A gentleman who had been playing pool in Harvey J. Fueller's rooms, on Penn street, Pittsburg, Pa., the other night, by mistake walked through a big plate glass window, smashing it. A great crowd soon gathered, and the proprietor saw that he was about to be awfully bored by questions. To satisfy hundreds of inquirers, Mr. Fueller quickly wrote and posted the following answers:

NOTICE.
I will tell you all about it. It was an accident.
The man could not help it.
He was perfectly sober.
He was not hurt.
No; I will not prosecute him.
I don't know how much it will cost me.

It happened at 11:45 p. m., May 25.
I don't know his name.
The glass is insured.
I will insure it again.
A large crowd gathered with much excitement.
Many people thought it was a fight.
I always try to avoid fights.
I never had one in my place.
Don't know how soon I can have another glass put in.

Ask the insurance man.
I boarded up the vacancy at once.
He broke it going out.
The glass was 3/4 of an inch thick, 5 feet wide and 9 feet high. Yours truly, Any more.—Philadelphia Record.

The Kind He Fancied.

During the hot spell, when the mercury was banging around the brink of 95 in the shade, a pleasant-faced tramp rapped on a kitchen door, and the lady of the house answered it.

"Good-afternoon, ma'am," said the visitor, "I'd like to shovel the snow off the sidewalk for half a pie."
The lady looked at him, half afraid.
"You must be crazy," she said as she mopped her perspiring brow.
"No'm," he answered politely, "not crazy; only hungry and willing to work for material to appease my hunger."

The First Railroads.

The Stockton and Darlington line in England (the first complete railroad in the world) was opened for traffic on the 27th of September, 1825, and one of George Stephenson's engines was tried. It was attached to a train consisting of six wagons loaded with coal and flour; after these came twenty-one passenger coaches, and, lastly, six more

wagons of coal, making in all a train of thirty-eight vehicles. The first railroad in America was the Mohawk and Hudson railroad. The length of this road was sixteen miles, and it extended from Albany to Schenectady, N. Y. A charter was granted the company in 1826, but work was not commenced until 1830. It was finished in 1831. Both locomotive engines and horses were used. They were placed on the top of the hills, and the train was hauled up the hill or let down, by a strong rope. The brakemen used hand-levers to stop or check the train. The first steam railroad passenger train was run on this road in 1831. The engine was named John Bull. It was imported from England; its weight was four tons. The engineer was John Hampson, an Englishman. Among the fifteen passengers who rode in the two coaches were James Alexander, president Commercial Bank; Charles E. Dudley, of the Dudley observatory; Jacob Hays, high constable of New York; ex-Gov. Joseph C. Yates and Thurlow Weed.

THE WITHERBYS' PLANS.

They Will Spend the Summer in the Country as Usual.

Young Mr. and Mrs. Witherby had a consultation the other evening concerning summer plans and their financial aspect.

"I don't really see, my love," remarked young Mr. Witherby, "how it will be possible for us to go up to the Hillside House as we planned for June and July. You see nurse and baby are important and expensive additions to the family since last summer."

"Couldn't we take a dear little house somewhere in the country?" inquired Mrs. Witherby, vaguely.

"You may remember that we did that last summer, and that it took me nearly six months to get out of debt afterward," said her husband, coldly.

"I'm sure it wasn't my fault," began Mrs. Witherby. "You know very well—"

"Never mind," cried Mr. Witherby, hastily, "we can't do it this year, that's all."

"Do you mean to say that you wish to kill baby and me by keeping us in this vile, close, dirty, dusty, hot city all the summer?"

Mr. Witherby explained at some length that he was not planning murder, but that his financial condition was such as to render it difficult for the family to migrate to the country until the time of his annual vacation in August. Mrs. Witherby finally consented to make the best of the situation.

"But I may do what I can to make city life endurable, may I not?" she begged.

"Certainly, dearest," replied Mr. Witherby joyfully.

Armed with this permission Mrs. Witherby sallied forth the next morning. She visited numerous establishments and talked with the proprietors of many varieties of stores. She went to the upholsterer's, the forist's, the confectioner's, the livery stable and the swimming school, to say nothing of house-furnishing emporiums, dry goods shops and milliners. That evening as she sat cozily opposite her husband in the library she remarked:

"I really don't think that a summer in town will be bad, dear."

"I was sure you'd come around love," said Mr. Witherby, cheerfully.

"Yes," chirped his wife, "I'm going to in pale green. It will be so cool and pretty, don't you think?"

"Ye-es," said Mr. Witherby, slowly.

"Then I've engaged to take a swimming lesson two mornings a week," went on Mrs. Witherby.

"Yes!" said Mr. Witherby coldly.

"Yes. And I've ordered Driven & Hack to send me a carriage two afternoons a week to take me out into the country."

"Indeed, have you?"

"Yes. And I shall have less every day for dinner."

"You will, will you?" demanded Mr. Witherby fiercely.

"Yes," said his wife pacifically. "And I've ordered some plants to make the house pretty and some cool frocks—Wily, Harold, what's the matter?"

When Harold had sufficiently controlled his rage to speak, he said in stifled tones:

"Countermand your orders to-morrow and prepare to go to the Hillside House in June!"

And Mrs. Witherby, smiling to herself, went to the piano and played softly. "Tis better to rule by love than fear."—New York World.

They Won't Do.

Another Indian company of the army has been disbanded. Troop I, Eighth Cavalry. Only two companies now remain, I of the Twelfth Infantry and I of the Twelfth Cavalry. The Indian does not seem to fill the bill as a soldier. When the experiment was begun eight troops of cavalry and nineteen companies of infantry were ordered recruited and at one time 780 Indians were in the ranks.

A New Plan of Bimetallism.

Johnston Menley, of Howard Lake, N. Y., has invented a plan for stamping a gold half dollar into a silver half dollar, making the two worth together one dollar, making in this way a composite dollar and insuring bimetallism. He has applied for a patent for his discovery.

Browning's Graceful Compliments.

Mrs. Oscar Wilde, when Browning was calling on her at one of her Sunday afternoons, asked him to write something in her autograph album, wherein many famous people had written. "With pleasure," said Browning, and wrote: "From a poet to a poem."

Lo, the Thin-Skinned.

The skin of the Indian is thinner than that of either the white or the negro, and more easily torn.