TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

Father Time will carry his scythe until he is no mower.

Many of the streets of Chicago are as dirty as a hot tomale.

People with money to burn can always find a red-hot time for the purpose.

Here's another word for the dictionary makers. A bicycle store is called a "wheelery."

Keep the State prison out of politics. Omaha World Herald. And, if possible, vice versa.

By continually taking even short steps in the right direction men make great progress.

Oklahoma announces a shower of mud. But the dispatches fail to say who was elected.

Pugilist Fitzsimmons has all the earmarks of a champion. He writes as well as Corbett can.

The Governor of Arkansas has been fined $50 for carrying a concealed pistol and not using it.

It isn't always easy to foretell the future, but the trusts nowadays are fast making profits of us all.

Poverty and a vigorous appetite find that revolution is the only ground upon which they can meet as friends.

If Lillian Russell's voice goes back on her we advise her to sign a new husband and play matrimony for keeps.

A correspondent wants to know "the size of China's standing army." China has no standing army; it is always running.

The new cup defender will have a fin keel. No one cares whether she has a fin or not provided she is in first at the finish.

Don't be too hasty wanting to fight and daring another to take you up. He may not only take you up, but may walk away with you.

A clever fellow remarks that he isn't so clear about women's right to vote, but he thinks that every one of them ought to have a voter.

Mr. Fitzsimmons declares he can stand a large amount of punishment. He can not only stand punishment, but he can inflict it—on the public.

Advertisers get the cash trade. When a man wants to beat a merchant he will take that miserly fellow around the corner who thought advertising a luxury.

Beef trust beef is not as high now as Mr. Armour expected to keep it. It is never well to reckon without your host when the host is some 65,000,000 Americans.

A bank clerk has been appointed Court Examiner of Stage Plays in London. The next thing will be to make a stage villain president of the Bank of England.

Miss Mary Bennett, who wants man disfranchised "because he is too emotional," probably has overheard some fellow communing with himself about the weather.

It is said that a new paper to be called the Kick is to be started in Philadelphia. This may be merely a joke, but we always thought that town had a Kick coming.

The man who writes the best biography of Alexander II. of Russia will be awarded $1,000,000. Let us hope that this bait will tempt some of the Napoleon biographers.

The Chicago paper that intends to "picture the world as a thing of sunshine and goodness" may be able to do so. But it can only succeed by being a tremendous liar.

The dual life business as daily exposed begins to pall. It would really be a pleasant relief to discover somebody leading it to be simply two different kinds of a scoundrel.

A New York hospital superintendent asserts that crying benefits a baby. That may be true, but why in the name of science should a baby insist on benefit performances at 2 o'clock a. m.?

It is technically true, as a London paper says, that "the Monroe doctrine has been a doctrine for sixty-two years, and has not been acted on yet." But it will be enforced the first time an occasion arises.

It looks as if we had clung too long to old models and old ideas. The inventive genius of the age will fall short of its mission if it fails to invent a life-saving device which will save life in cases of shipwreck.

The late trouble between the United States and Spain, growing out of the assault made upon the American merchant ship Alliance by a Spanish gunboat, has at last been settled. Spain has made a frank apology, expressing the fullest disavowal of the conduct of the commander of its gunboat. The reply is entirely satisfactory, and pleasant relations between us and the Dons are now restored and will continue until some other hot-headed Spaniard ruffles up the feathers of the bird of freedom.

The proprietors of passenger steamers on the lakes are invited to remember that while there is no law against racing there are plenty of legal stipulations against doctoring the steam gauge or sitting on the safety valve.

The grandson of an African king announces his intention of going to Liberia and opening a drug store. He expects to break the world's record on the sale of paregoric and Sedlitz powders as warm weather drinks.

Would it shock you to know that the favorite adjective of a certain class of young women in the Four Hundred is "bully?" The word is applied to gowns, operas, girls, to any subject under consideration, and signifies "remarkably fine."

A Columbus pastor married three couples in sixty minutes the other day. A Chicago judge heard a divorce suit a while ago and granted a decree within fifteen minutes. When it comes to matrimonial speed the balance of trade is still in Chicago's favor.

Altogether the Chino-Japanese war has come to a very unsatisfactory ending, thanks to the jealousies of the European powers, who have brutally and for selfish ends checked at least temporarily the advance of Western civilization toward the darkest East.

Horace Greeley's idea was that the most ignorant creature in the world was the callow alumnus of a college, fresh from commencement triumphs. The announcement that one-half the senior class of Yale have determined never to marry will go far toward strengthening this opinion.

A New York man who was sent to an insane asylum has been in the habit of smoking from 150 to 200 cigarettes a day for many years. The suspicion that "his brain was affected by the cigarettes," however, is hardly credible. Any one with a spoonful of brains would not smoke 150 cigarettes a day.

That was a very graceful act of Brown University at its recent commencement—the conferring of the degree of Doctor of Letters upon Julia Josephine Irvine, President of Wellesley College. The venerable Providence seat of learning is growing chivalrous in its old age. Forty years ago it would not let a woman across the college campus.

A man who looks upon the American hen from a purely business standpoint says: "The hen is a machine to be worked according to the laws of her being for results. She must be kept clean and comfortable, and have a sufficiency of good egg-making material. We feed bone and animal meal twice a week, cooked carrots, beets, potatoes and kitchen refuse, with grain once a day; plenty of pure water and grit; my hens lay by the bushel."

Bishop Doane, one of the State University regents, in an address to the graduating class at St. Agnes School, Albany, made some remarks very pertinent to the woman suffrage question. He said: "One gets sick and tired of the way in which the talk of the woman's vocation fills the air; not merely in the wild vagaries of its blatant assumptions, but in the parade and push of its claims for recognition of what is called its rights. When constitutions shall have been altered to disturb the equipoise of the relation between man and woman; when motherhood shall be replaced by mannishness; when neglected homes shall furnish candidates for mismanaged offices; when money shall buy the votes of women, as it does now themselves, then the reaped whirlwind of some violent political reaction will be gathered in tears by those who are sowing the wind in the mad joy of the petroleuse of the French revolutions."

Letters Written by Grant.

The letter which Grant wrote when he accepted the Presidency of the United States has been added to the State historical collection at Des Moines, Iowa. It is the original letter and is very valuable. A joint committee of the two houses of Congress called on Grant to notify him of his election as President. He wrote the following letter which was taken by the committee and read to the two branches of Congress:

Gentlemen: Please notify the two houses of Congress of my acceptance of the important trust which you have just notified me of—my election as President of the United States—and say to them that it will be my endeavor that they, and those who elected them, shall have no reason to regret this action.

The letter is unsigned. Lincoln's letter of acceptance was also unsigned.

A Little Oversight.

Jones was absent minded, and as he was about to sail for the continent with his wife and family, a friend came down to see him off and make sure all was right. The friend was late; it was within twenty minutes of sailing time, but he found Jones smiling and happy.

"Hello, Jones!" he cried. "All right?"

"Yes," nodded Jones, "trunks, tickets, letter of credit, steamer chair—everything. Flatter myself that all is right this time."

"That's good," was the answer. "Where's Mrs. Jones and the family? Have to tell them adieu and hurry ashore."

"Jove!" cried Jones, sitting down suddenly. "I think they're waiting at home for me!"—Harper's Magazine.

All big things have a small beginning, except the vanity of a fool.

Hints on Road Improvement.

Says a writer in the Michigan Tradesman:

I shall endeavor to give some practical hints or suggestions as to the desirability and practicability of the permanent improvement of highways. My interest in this subject extends back to my earliest experience in farm life. The limitation of value of the farms of the locality in which my boyhood was spent was the distance and inaccessibility of market, and while the region was fertile, with favorable climate, the farms were almost worthless as to immediate remuneration for the labor expended upon them on account of the impossibility of selling the produce. In the case of the farm on which my experience was obtained it was found that the most valuable crops, as to money returns, that could be raised, were wool and maple sugar. These had the most value as to quantity, and the former was ready to market when the roads were most passable and the latter could be kept for the most convenient season. As these were scarcely sufficient to make a promising outlook for the time to come, better prospects were sought by emigration to a locality more accessible to markets. The interest caused by this early experience has led me to give considerable attention to the subject, and my familiarity with the operations of the old methods of road tax work has kept me on the lookout for practical methods of doing the work those did not do.

The magnitude of the undertaking of securing permanent or easily maintained highways is beyond comprehension. In European countries the task may be said to be well advanced, but it is relatively much smaller there on account of the much greater density of population; and again, the work has been much longer in progress. This undertaking in this country is far greater than any other economic undertaking before us.

The idea has obtained quite largely that the older portions of our county are becoming worked out, that opportunities for work, for improvements, for industrial enterprises, are becoming scarce. It was in the light of this idea that the capable, though at times somewhat erratic, economist, Horace Greeley, advised the young man to go West and grow up with the country. He has taken the advice and done so with a vengeance. The best opportunities of the East have been left scarcely skimmed, while the new and untried enterprises of the far West, irrigation and development of arid regions, receive the attention that should have been given to the far more practicable resources of the East. It is a fact well known but scarcely realized that in many localities in the so-called garden of the country, the Eastern prairie States, as Indiana, Illinois, Iowa and even in the southern counties of our own State of Michigan, the larger portions of the small towns and villages have declined in population and have lost most of their manufacturing industries, as shown by the Federal census. The rush to the West accounts for some of this decline, but the greater cause is the lack of highways to make the surrounding regions tributary to these towns. The all too great supply of railroad facilities has reduced the more accessible ones to shipping points from which to send the products to the great centers, while the less accessible have not even the consolation, if such it be, of seeing their rightful tributes pass their doors. The quality of a prairie road is proverbial and in the country, tributary to the towns referred to, they are still deserving of their reputation. Had these towns been provided with suitable roads in place of the region being so overdone by railways they would have continued to be centers of prosperous trade and manufacture.

Now these conditions as to development of the resources of the East are temporary. The tide of emigration to the West will stop and roll back from the foot of the Rocky Mountains and the increase in population will demand that the neglected resources of the East shall be exploited and this question of roads will be the first and most important one.

Reference has been made in recent numbers of The Tradesman to the importance of this subject to the country merchant. This feature of the question cannot be too much emphasized. The condition of trade in the towns referred to above is a sufficient indication of this. Examples of merchants who have embarked in trade in new and promising localities who have met disappointment and failure simply because the town failed to become a center of trade for want of roads are familiar to every one. In varying, but not small, degrees, this question is a factor in the problem of success or failure of every country merchant.

WOMEN MONEY LENDERS.

Some of Them Unable to Read—Hard Terms to Borrowers.

"Perhaps you will be surprised when I tell you that there are such people as women money lenders, as some of my poor parishioners know to their cost," remarked a hard-working London curate. "These women—there are two in my parish—out Shylock Shylock. Two pence is the usual charge for the loan of a shilling for a week, or, rather often, it is not a week, but for a shilling borrowed any time through a week 1s 2d is expected on the following Saturday. Women are their only customers, and they make the very few bad debts, as those who borrow generally do so without their husbands' knowledge, and, consequently, are only too anxious to repay as soon as they are able, or else the lender would soon threaten to 'split' to their husbands. Besides, some of these people are so in the habit of borrowing two or three shillings every week that they are afraid, if they did not repay the borrowed money on the Saturday, their borrowing powers would be at an end. For a sovereign lent a shilling a week interest is charged until the money is all repaid, and not less than two shillings a week is taken by way of installment toward repayment of the loan. If any week the installment is missed, the interest must be paid, and no reduction is made in the interest as the principal is reduced. A woman is often cajoled into taking some article of finery from the irrepressible tallyman, thinking she will be able to pay for the article by the 'easy' installment plan, so glibly explained to her. Getting behind for two or three weeks in her payments, the credit draper threatens to summon her husband. To avoid this, the woman goes to the money lender, who 'obliges' her with a sovereign, on condition that she repays three shillings a week for ten weeks.

"It is not often that these female usurers will lend more than a sovereign at a time. However, in the case of a person dying, and pending the benefit of insurance money being received, they will lend three or four pounds to the bereaved family, frequently demanding as much as a pound for the use of four for a week.

"One of the money lenders to whom I refer deals only with female hawkers and street sellers. Owing to the precariousness of their calling, these people constantly find themselves without the wherewithal to purchase their stock in trade. On a Friday evening as many as ten to fifteen women will borrow sums varying from five to thirty shillings in order to make their purchases at the early markets on the following morning. On a Saturday evening, toward midnight, the money lender makes the rounds of her clients' stalls, often taking every penny from the stallholder, which forces the hawker to trade on Sunday morning.

"It hardly seems credible, but one of these money lenders can neither read nor write, keeping account of all money due to her in her head with unfailing accuracy. This woman is an unbeliever in the stability of banks, and always carries her stock in trade on her person, a not inconsiderable sum, seeing that one week, she told me, she had lent $135 in odd shillings."

The Exact Quantity.

An Irishman was hauling water in barrels from a small river to supply the inhabitants of the village, which was not provided with water works. As he halted at the top of the bank to give his team a "blow" before proceeding to peddle the water, a gentleman of the inquisitive type rode up and, after passing the time of day, asked:

"How long have you been hauling water for the village, my good man?"

"Tin years or more, sor," was the simple reply.

"Ah! And how many loads do you make a day?"

"From tin to fifteen, accardin' to the weather, sor!"

"Yes. Now I have one for you, Pat," said the gentleman, laughing. "How much water have you hauled altogether?"

The Irishman jerked his thumb in the direction of the river, at the same time giving his team the hint to start, and replied:

"All the water what yez don't see there now, sor."—Judge.

The Jersey Mosquito.

In the town of Quantuck, N. J., which lies in a low, hot nook, surrounded by swampy land, the mosquitoes have been so thick this season that, when the breeze is gentle, they form a thick, black cloud over the town. On several occasions of late this has been so noticeable that the hens have gone to roost at noon, under the impression that it was already nightfall, and without performing their daily task of egg laying. As the poultry business is a leading one in the town, the fanciers suffered for a time considerable financial loss, until the device was hit upon of sending up small dynamite cartridges among the thickest swarms of mosquitoes, by means of a kite, flown by a wire, which, at the right moment, conveys a current of electricity to discharge the dynamite. After a few discharges the air is so cleared that the hens can resume operations, and the gory remains of the dead mosquitoes, falling to the ground, are plowed in as fertilizers.—New York Recorder.

Local Color.

"What made you write this story in red ink?" asked the editor.

"You see, it's a story of New York, and you've been kicking for more local color in my work."

"Yes—but——"

"Well, that's the way New York looked to me when I was there."—Washington Evening Star.

An Exception.

Newed—Yes, my wife is a fine cook. She can beat my mother.

Mack—That's rather strange, isn't it?

Newed—No, my mother never knew how.—Harlem Life.

Two pigeons recently flew from London to Liskeard, 220 miles, in six hours.

THE FARM AND HOME.

MATTERS OF INTEREST TO FARMER AND HOUSEWIFE.

Cattle Without Horns Are Much More Quiet—Hoeing Is Now Done with the Cultivator—Balanced Ration Will Prevent Dyspepsia in Hogs.

The Dehorning Question.

In the cattle they are to handle people seem to have a leaning of late years to the [illegible] horns. It is a conceded fact that cattle are much more quiet without horns than with them, says the Nebraska Farmer. It is a fact, too, that this disposition to be quiet among themselves goes a long way toward securing the comfort and good condition that leads to profit in the handling of cattle. This preference for cattle with the horns off is evidenced in the growing popularity of the hornless breeds of beef cattle, and also in the disposition to remove the horns from steers that are to be fed in bunches for the market. We may be allowed to venture the opinion, too, that this new departure would have taken a still faster hold upon feeders in the last few years if low prices had not cast a gloom upon the feeding industry. With better prices and a better feeling pervading cattle circles, we predict that the dehorning practice will receive a new impetus. The question does not resolve itself into one of breeds, but into one of methods only. If it be true that cattle do better with their horns off, it has been demonstrated to be a thoroughly practical business transaction to remove them, and at small cost, so that we may expect to see the practice more than ever popularized in the next few years to come.

Hoeing to Kill Weeds.

We hoe merely to kill the weeds. The land has been, or should have been, properly and thoroughly prepared before the seed was planted. Now nothing of that is to be done, no digging, no pulverizing, no making of hills, only killing the weeds, says the Maine Farmer. Much of the hoeing is now done with team and cultivator, though there is still some work to be done with the hoe. Simply stirring the surface soil and cutting up any stray weed that may have become rooted is all that is called for. Do this early and often, and the weeds will be mastered. Never wait for a field to get weedy. It is just as effective to stir the soil before the weeds have had time to get rooted, and it is much easier doing it. It has been a pet theory to run the cultivator through the field often and keep it up as long as practicable. Experiments at the stations, however, have shown that frequent cultivation, unless needed for the destruction of weeds, is no advantage to the growing crop in an ordinary season. Work the field, then, as often as needed to kill the weeds, and no more. Clean culture should be the aim. The weeds must be destroyed.

Dyspeptic Hogs.

The acidity of the stomach, which is the result of feeding hogs exclusively on corn, may be temporarily corrected by feeding charcoal. But in this case, as in most others, prevention is better than cure. The hogs fed with a properly balanced ration, including some fine wheat middlings and a few roots each day, says Colman's Rural World, will not be troubled by acid stomach. Acidity is a sign that fermentation has progressed to its second stage, the first being alcoholic. It is not possible to cause food to ferment in even the slightest degree without some waste of its nutrition. When fermentation progresses so far as to make acidity of the stomach the loss is much more considerable. This is in addition to the loss by impaired digestion.

Repairs for Harvesting Machinery.

All kinds of mowing and reaping machinery are much cheaper than they were a few years ago. But in some cases the manufacturers put inferior material into their work, so that more repairs are needed, and these always come very high. The separate pieces cost enough more than they should to make up the deficiency in price of the complete machine, which competition obliges them to submit to. When they have sold a machine the buyer can get his repairs from no one else, and they can make charges without limit. Worse than this, the buyer often finds that he must send for repairs hundreds of miles and wait perhaps two or three days while they are coming. If the machine is out of date it is sometimes difficult to get repairs at any rate. This is a matter that farmers should think of in buying harvesting machinery. Find out, if possible, whether repairs will be sold reasonably, and deal only with houses of such established reputation that there need be no fear that they will go out of business.

Sprouted Potatoes.

It is well known that seed potatoes which are stored for late planting often become soft, while much of their nutritive matter is exhausted in developing sprouts which must be broken off in planting. The first sprout is always the strongest and thriftiest, but it often happens that these sprouts have to be removed several times before the potatoes are planted, and each time some of the vitality of the tubers is lost. A comparative test was made by Prof. Tatt at the Michigan Experiment Station last year, when two equal lots of potatoes were taken, one being left in the cellar, the other spread in a dry, well-lighted, moderately warm room. On April 20 both lots were planted side by side, and the plants from the unsprouted seed came up first, looked the best throughout the season, and produced a greater amount of potatoes and a greater proportion of large ones with fewer ill-shaped tubers. Of course, it hardly needed an experiment to demonstrate the superiority of unsprouted seed, but since no one can afford to grow anything but the very best crops it would seem to be worth while to take every precaution to prevent sprouting, or to secure second crop seed from the South, which is rarely affected in this way.—Garden and Forest.

Evaporated Apples.

In Wayne County, New York, which is not a very large county, says the American Cultivator, something like a million bushels of apples were evaporated last year, yielding a product worth $500,000. As most of this was from fruit that could not very well have been marketed in any other form, and some of it probably was just good enough and large enough to have tempted the growers to try to work it into the barrels if they could not have utilized it as they did, and thereby lessened the market value of the better apples among which it would have been put, we say blessings on the man who invented the evaporator, and hope to see them in more common use in New England soon. They save fruit that would go to waste, or to worse than waste, the cider barrel, and improve the quality of the apples sent to market. If those who use them will stop the artificial bleaching of their evaporated apples, the product will soon be more popular. While farmers color their butter and bleach their apples they should not make much outcry about the shoddy goods sent out by manufacturers.

Cotton-Seed Meal.

English farmers have learned to use cotton-seed meal, and it is very largely taking the place that linsed meal used to have. It was the English demand for linseed meal for feeding that raised its price for many years, so that American feeders could not afford it. The English farmer feeds meal with roots. This enables him to use richer meal than the American feeder can feed with profit. The English farmer does not have corn except by importing it, and it is, therefore, for him not so cheap feed as it is for us. Nor does the English farmer have such large supplies of bran, as much of the grain now imported into England comes in the form of flour. Bran is even better than roots to give with concentrated foods, like cotton-seed and linseed meal.

Milking on the Ground.

There is a belief among dairymen that to milk on the ground dries up the cow. One reason for this is that milk is not often spilled upon the ground while milking unless there is something the matter with it making it unfit for use. In such case all the milk is not likely to be drawn from the teat, and that of itself will dry up the cow. The soothing noise of the milk going into the pail keeps the cow quiet and disposes her to give down all the milk she has. There is a stopping of this soothing noise when milk is drawn out upon the ground. The cow is very susceptible to the strains of music, vocal or instrumental, and the milker who can sing while milking will be able to get all the milk quickest as well as to get the largest quantity.

Green Peas Profitable.

Market gardeners find that the pea crop returns as large a profit as any that can be grown so easily. They sell it while green, and for the very earliest get very high prices. The pea is hardy, and the farmer who has light, warm soil has as good a chance as the market gardener. To give the plant a good sendoff early some concentrated commercial manure should be put in with the seed. This will make the green pea crop several days earlier, and on earliness the price mainly depends. The crop bears shipment well, and farmers too far from the city to market the peas themselves can easily make arrangements to ship them to some one who will deal fairly with him.

Adulterated Paris Green.

In purchasing paris green for poisoning potato bugs or other insects, care should be taken to secure that which is pure. The entire unreliability of much of the paris green in market leads to using it in large doses so as to produce the right effect, and this is frequently injurious to the tender leaves. With paris green of full standard purity the amount required to kill insects is so small that no injury will result from its use. When the paris green is used to destroy fungous growths heavier doses are required, and lime must be used with it to prevent injury. But for both uses the paris green should be pure, so that those using it may understand what results to expect.

Merits of the Java Fowl.

The Java fowl resembles in form that of the Plymouth Rock. It is, however, not so heavily built, says the Independent, nor is its comb like the latter's. There are three colors among the Javas—black, mottled, solid black and solid white. Javas are good layers, very good broilers, and by many considered superior to either the Plymouth Rock or Brahma fowl; but experience will more correctly prove this. We find in nearly all fowls some few points that we do not fancy. The better qualities overbalancing the inferior should be the point to aim at in selecting a stock for fancy and practical purposes.

Time to Cut Wheat.

Wheat is ready to cut as soon as any part of the stalk begins to turn yellow. If the head is well filled it will then be bent over and the berry will fill from the stalk better if the grain is left standing until dead ripe. The bran of wheat cut while the stalk is somewhat green is thinner and its proportion of gluten and starch is larger.

Dampness Kills Chickens.

Cold, dry weather, provided there are no cracks to cause draughts of air, will not cause sickness in fowls, but damp quarters will cause roup, even in moderate weather.