

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

Chicago doesn't tolerate any red flag foolishness. Chicago has had all the red flag irrazedles it wants.

Lieutenant Peary did not discover the pole, but he got close enough to discover that dog meat is better than starvation.

The success of Labor Day celebrations, it is fair to assume, was due in large measure to the improved conditions of labor.

The bicycle may be driving the horse out of employment, but it is not making any appreciable diminution of horse play on the stage.

It often happens that a man says he is going to vote a straight ticket when he really means that he is going to vote a crooked straight ticket.

It is said that Boston cleared \$425,000 on the recent Knights Templar encampment. Who would have supposed there was such a profit in beans?

Mrs. Ballington Booth's criticism of the new woman is all right as far as it goes, but the probability is that it will not go very far with the new woman.

A grateful country remembers that Hon. John L. Sullivan did all his fighting with his hands. The maxillary pugilists should open an auction shop or found a school of elocution.

"Henceforth," says the Taunton Gazette, "it will be unlawful in this State to hunt foxes on horseback." That's right; we don't think a fox on horseback should be hunted anyway.

A current paragraph runs thus: "It is said that the superiority of English coal makes the westward trips of Atlantic steamers faster than the eastward. The fact, however, may be also partly accounted for by the prevalence of westerly winds." It is now in order to account for the July heat in New York by the prevalence of northerly winds.

A recent traveler through Alaska says the Territory will become to the United States what Norway is to Europe, the favorite resort of tourists, hunters and fishermen, and that quick-growing hardy vegetables can be raised there successfully. No two visitors see Alaska in the same light, and unless Congress gives it more attention its resources and possibilities will not be understood for many years.

Modern science occasionally reaches conclusions in a very striking manner. The geological specimens recently brought home from the Antarctic region by a Norwegian explorer have been analyzed and found to contain micro-organisms, with garnets and tourmaline and mica schists. As these have never been seen in an ocean island, the conclusion is that a continent exists around the South Pole.

A Boston woman who carries on the business of railroad contractor with excellent results says that what the woman in active affairs needs is common sense, a well-balanced mind, earnestness and directness of manner. Once when a man attempted to rob her of a bag of coin, to quote her own words, "I used a revolver and took the job off his right ear." The existence of several varieties of the new woman may as well be conceded.

The romance of the New York pilot's life is hereafter to be somewhat curtailed by the arrangement made through the Board of Pilot Commissioners for diminishing the cruising area, and lessening the number of boats by half. What traveler does not remember among the joys of his first homeward voyage across the Atlantic, the eager race between pilot boats (the fastest and trimmest craft ever built in America), sometimes four or five hundred miles from land; and the lusty cheer that went up from hundreds of throats when the victor in the race came clambering up the ladder to the steamship's deck—like some gruff sea dog issuing from the brine? Gone are those spectacles, and now the pilots will cruise prosaically between Fire Island and Barnegat. On that track they may now and then meet with wild adventure, but the times when they lay, facing death in the storm, far out at sea in the track of incoming vessels, are gone forever.

The speculation in African mining shares, commonly known as Kaffirs, has been so wild that it has been evident to the clear heads from the first that collapse was inevitable. The wonder is that it should be delayed so long. The fact that many of the African mines are in reality rich properties and some of the shares of sound value has doubtless helped to perpetuate faith in those numerous stocks that are composed chiefly of wind. But this has served simply to put off the evil day. Collapse must follow wild and reckless speculation as surely as effect follows cause. Cable dispatches are giving indications of trouble in Paris. Many banking houses are closed, the reports say, and many private fortunes ruined. The mining craze extended to all classes of society. The oldest actress of the Theater Francaise is ruined by the speculation. A former king has been obliged to pay \$4,000,000 through a banker who is a friend of his. A Smyrna speculator, who ruled the bourse for five years, loses \$25,000,000. The head of an establishment that is known everywhere loses \$15,000,000, and his eldest brother is said to be so angry that he refuses to

assist him. To the French Finance Minister, M. Vermeil, the broker, and Baron Alphonse de Rothschild said the crisis was due to the fact that the people sold Turkish and French securities to buy mining shares, and when they wished to sell mining shares there was no sale for them. When the mining craze has spent itself there will be a better demand abroad for American securities.

The cable brings a peculiarly distressing tale to us from Rome. It appears that the Baroness Gina Sobrero has just secured a divorce there from her husband, P. W. Wilcox, of Hawaii. Wilcox is now serving a thirty-year sentence in the Honolulu penitentiary. A few years ago he made a tour through Italy, where he met the baroness, and, posing as the heir apparent of the Hawaiian throne, won her hand in marriage. Gina went sailing through Italy, cutting a very wide swath because "her husband one day would be the king of the Sandwich Islands." Last year she accompanied her husband to Hawaii, and on arriving there learned that instead of being immensely wealthy and a king in embryo he was the son of a poor carpenter and a Kanaka woman. He had not a cent, and no more claim upon a royal title in Hawaii than in England. So Gina went home, sued for divorce and secured one. She insists that her heart has been broken, but close observers of such things are inclined to think that the fracture can be patched up with court plaster if the right man does the courting.

Although the great European war that has been on the verge of breaking out for the last ten years is still cozily ensconced in the imaginations of the prophets, it is a time of wars and rumors of wars in other parts of the world. Most of them are being waged by civilized against uncivilized nations for the simple purpose of conquest or subjugation. In the course of these campaigns the invading armies of two civilized nations sometimes meet on disputed border lines—for the world has now been parcelled like a garden patch—and then the home governments are compelled to interfere and settle the dispute by international law. For civilized nations are arriving at a point where they do not fight one another—it is too dangerous and too expensive. It is much more convenient to let the foreign ministers come to terms through the devious channels of "diplomacy." It is worth noting that the battles being waged at the present time are almost entirely directed against either the poorly armed or the ignorant and semi-barbarous nations. There is Spain marching her armies through Cuba and threatening death to every patriot who opposes her rule. There is France waging fierce war on the Hovas in Madagascar, expecting soon to take Antananarivo, where the disheartened Queen is encamped. England and Russia are both trying to occupy Chirral and the English already have a heavily armed garrison within its borders. The French, the English and the Siamese are marching over a little state in Kiang Kheng on the Upper Mekong and they are also clashing in Central Africa over the question as to which power owns a dot of fever-infested, savage-ridden jungle. There is reason to believe that if it were not for the United States little Venezuela would long ago have been swallowed by Great Britain. In addition to all these petty combats there are the Armenian massacre question and the Chinese outrages, either of which may yet become a cause of hostile "demonstrations." It is a fairly reasonable hypothesis for the discussion of the peace societies that these numerous squabbles between large powers and petty dependencies or ill-equipped nations may be affording the safety valve through which the civilized half of the world loses the surplus energy which might otherwise be directed into war of vast proportions. It is to be noticed that while the smaller encounters are going on unchecked the "great European war" is quite as remote a probability as ever.

Personal Nomenclature.
It is the custom just now to give to the children old-time names, such as Mary, Adelaide, Martha, Sarah, Hannah, Charlotte, Henrietta, Madeline, Rebekah, Ellen and Isabel. Others, more fanciful, are Gladys, Wilhelmina, Virginia, Geraldine, Gwendolyn and Jacqueline. As for the ultra-fashionables, they have unearthed all the antiquities imaginable and are introducing such names as Hephsibah, Betsey, Phoebe, Priscilla, Salome, Mehetabel, Emmeline, Abigail, Patience and Prudence. When naming boys it should be remembered that the child will one day be a man, when he will prefer a name that will sound dignified. A favorite, and in the writer's opinion an excellent, custom, is the giving of the mother's family name to the eldest son. This identifies the mother's family with the father's and gives to the son a name of distinction. Names which are seldom used are those which are too short and lack dignity, such as Guy, Ray, Roy, Claude and Ralph. The most popular names are John, Joseph, Frederick, Lewis, Daniel, Andrew, Stephen and Thomas, while Jacob is rapidly becoming "fashionable." Others equally as desirable are Aubrey, Geoffrey, Gerald, Godfrey, Kenneth and Lionel.

No Males of Any Kind.
At the seashore.
"Strange thing about mosquitoes. They say only the females bite."
There is a long pause.
"Susie?"
"Yes, Clara?"
"I wonder if all these female mosquitoes are as lonesome as we are?"—Exchange.

Stove blacking improves the appearance of a stove, but it keeps people out of the house half the winter when it is burning off.

THE FAMILY STORY

UNMAKING LOVE.

My dear fellow, suddenly I saw that she loved me. I saw it in her eyes, as the saying is. I imagine my consternation. I am by no means insensible of the great good luck of a man who is loved by a good sort of woman, though quite capable of pretending not to envy him. But this wouldn't do at all. She was the prettiest girl there, and I had gravitated toward her beauty as a matter of course. I always pick out the prettiest face, and go straight for it mechanically. Of course, I don't often arrive; there may be obstacles, and I am quite content to make my bow to the next Venus. It would be a real shock to discover that there was a degree, a possibility between what I had achieved and what I had abandoned, that I was paying my homage to a star of lesser brilliancy than necessary. The fact is, I have quite enough of reason and ideas and intellect generally when I am at work, and we are all of us eternally applying some principle, and that's philosophy. When I join the ladies, all I care about is to have my eye and ear agreeably stimulated, not because they are not capable of making me think, though I don't say they are, but because at those times I want amusement, not instruction. That's why I am so severely logical about feminine charms of person, and feel a personal loss when I worship at a shrine of ninety beauty power instead of 100. However, I am not often in this dilemma, as nature doesn't cut things so fine.

Well, what was I to do? As I said, it wouldn't do; she had no ideas; there was nothing for me to cling to. We might have gone like that the rest of our lives. I admiring her beauty and she existing beautifully. I don't think I was to blame; I faced the question fully, and honorably acquitted myself. I never sought her society, but when we met I certainly did enjoy her musical small talk; she had a charming voice. I don't know what we talked about. I can't remember her saying anything worth remembering, and I certainly didn't attempt to converse. There was a string of questions and answers, just like a royal commission, and about as romantic. But the whole thing, her face, her voice, her easy chat, the frou frou, was a perfect holiday for me, and I felt some of the acquiescence of sleep without any of its unconsciousness. I am a utilitarian person, but I never reckoned the time wasted. The sunshine warmed my fallow mind and made it stronger to bear more drastic impressions. It strikes me now that the disengagement which I displayed may have looked like patience to her ingenuously, and that there may have been a trace of gratitude for the implied compliment, though all she thanks were certainly on my side. However it came about, it did come about. Of course, I might be wrong; in that case it wouldn't matter what I did, but I knew I was not wrong. At any rate I elected to assume I was right, and I had to do something.

Clearly, I couldn't run away. In the first place, this was practically inconvenient. Like other people, I am tethered in the shallows of circumstance. And, secondly, it smacked of the heroic, of which, of course, I have a horror. I was afraid, too, that she would take a feminine pleasure in feeding a sentiment for the absent, and my obvious policy was to discourage, not inflame, her imagination. Externally I had to maintain the old attitude, but it would have been a false pretense to do so with the old nonchalance. I took the first opportunity of denying myself.

"Have you been to see the pictures?" she said.
"Not I," I replied.
"What do you mean? Don't you like beautiful things?"
"Only when I am looking at them, and even then I am haunted by the fear that I am wasting time and might be more profitably employed."
"More profitably?"
"Yes; storing up sources that will last—facts, thoughts, goods, money, anything but fancy."
"You are coming out in a new light," she said.
"A new darkness, you mean," I replied.
"I suppose you are what is called a dark horse," she rejoined.
We both laughed and she went away puzzled.
Next time I managed to startle her. We were talking of the latest novel.
"Romance," I said, "is all very well, but it mustn't be contemporary. Put it into bygone days in as large quantities as you like, but the tale of to-day, which deals with us and our friends, ought only to encourage sober business principles."
She ought to have retorted "Such as answering a fool according to his folly," or by referring to the fact that most fiction was designed to stave off bankruptcy, quite in accordance with my theory. But she only said:
"Don't you think we want a change from our every-day life?"
"I don't," I said, "because my chief amusement consists in watching other people's."
"I didn't know you were such a critic. I hope you haven't reckoned me up."
"The critic," I said, "shuts one eye in order to get a better view; the cynic purposely puts on glasses that don't fit him; the philosopher sees one thing with one, and the opposite with the other."

"Have you got a better view?" she asked.
"I have no view or views," I said. "I am the plain man who is supposed not to exist. Now, the plain woman—"
"I know lots," she said, "and very nice they are."
"What a pity it is," I said, "that only women can understand women. That's why it is that men never really make them their good companions. We think too highly of them; for instance, we think that they are all beautiful."
"But you know better all the time?"
"Of course we do in practice, but the theory is a good one all the same. It is an attempt to take their own view, to put ourselves in their place for a moment. The fact is that very few men take any interest in individual women; it is the sex that they think about—the whole lot at once; it's so like a school book; I hate anything dry."
"Tea?" I said.
"With pleasure," she said, smiling for the first time; and we went off together. Well, we were getting on, but still I didn't see the end. Chance came to my rescue, as it does to everyone if they only wait long enough. There was a new play, the great situation in it was the heroine, who was universally supposed to be a light and unsubstantial woman, demonstrating quite without design her love for her husband; everybody was talking about it. On this occasion conversation was general, and some genius remarked that his only objection to the new woman was that she was so hopelessly old she was always relapsing into weakness of this sort; there was no strength in such a character. A strong woman would have acted quite differently in the second scene, where she could have deserted with honor.

A well-groomed youth sitting next to her remarked pointedly that, if she did love her husband, you know, that made all the difference. She said if wives didn't love their husbands it was their (the husbands') own fault.
"Quite so," I said, "if they will persist in being satellites instead of having an orbit of their own, playing Damon and Pythias instead of Darby and Joan, they can't expect that the wear and tear of their society can be made good, unless they allow the proper intervals for the worn and torn to discover that other people continuously please, either."
"That's a nice view of married life," she said. "I know you don't mean it."
"Unfortunately," I said, "the experiment can't be made, or you'd see."
"What should I see?"
"Well, something, I fancy, would astonish you. The fact is, I don't think any one has understood matrimony before me, and I've had no experience of it. It has long been recognized as fatal to love, if it exists, and more or less apt to produce it, if it does not, just as there are places which give you neuralgia if you don't take it there, and cure you if you do. But I don't think love has anything to do with the matter; that's a detail important enough in the early days of meeting, but not comparable to the bargain which is the essence of the business."
"The bargain?" she almost gasped.
"Yes," I said, "the bargain. Then he says: I must have feminine society. I must have the female point of view all ways there whenever I want it; my own womanhood won't do. In the first place, I can't rely on her punctuality; and then at any moment they may lapse into seriousness, think hard for me—the very thing I want to avoid, and the mischief is done. Besides, they know you; they never give you a chance. Now, matrimony at its best must be between people who don't know one another, and who never will. That's the great secret. It's the only chance of a revelation. It is the only hope of getting anything read into it, and then learning the lesson yourself, especially anything high, noble or not commonplace. There is no room for love here. That discolors such a union—such a contract, if you like—with all the pagantry of the rainbow; it is very natural, a pleasant sight, but it effects nothing. On the other hand, she says: I am tired of this kind of life—I want something new. Whatever I like in my present existence I can practically keep; he will make a new woman of me. Really, what she wants, too, is a trusty companion; if she has any qualities they must come out, because she is in a new world. So what each demands is to be developed and made the most of; really, I'm not at all sure, when I come to think of it, that an enlightened system of polygamy may not, after all, be the greatest encouragement to man to advance to his highest ends. At any rate, it would secure the requisite amount of absenteeism."

I could hardly refrain from smiling at my own paradox, but she was quite serious, gradually maturing to grave.
"Don't you agree with my theory of a bargain now?"
"Well," she said, "there must be give and take, of course, but I—I think I prefer the old fashion."
"It is the old fashion I am pleading for," I said. "At least, it is what I believe and hope; of course, we never know, because those in the secret never tell us. But common sense tells us it must be so. Marriage is an agreement for occasional companionship on terms, and very strict terms."
"Oh, dear," she said, with a genuine sigh, "I dare say you are right, but bow horrid!"

"Anyway," I went on, "that's the type, and so it ought to be. Idealize it as much as you like, but remember that there is nothing in this life which may not be idealized—crime, dress, furniture, a fashionable 'at home,' school-boys, impeccability, even bourgeoisie countess, so why not marriage?"
I was just going on, "If ever I have a wife—" when I reflected that such a parting shot would be too crude. Besides, she had clearly lost her interest.
So I trailed off automatically. "Talking of 'at homes,' are you going to the Idyls?" I asked.
She said she was.
"Don't you think that kind of hospitality a mistake?"
"Well, of course, it isn't a dance, but what do you prefer?"
"Where each sticks to his or her kind; he foregoes with his bachelors, and she, like Jephthah's daughter, with the maids of her youth till they desert; the two tributaries ought never to mix at the matrimonial confluence like Mr. Dombey's party."

"Then, how about seeing your friends?"
"You oughtn't to want to see them all at once; the frequent, though not unlimited, meetings of husband and wife ought to be enough for the purposes of companionship; all other friends are superfluous. Indeed, society is to be recommended as a means of avoiding them. Good cutting acquaintances are enough."
"What a queer idea! What a prospect for the woman! What do you think is to be her fate in this scheme?"
"Singleness," I said, "tempered by a husband."
"Who may turn out—" she went on.
"Who may turn her out," I said.
She laughed artificially and went off. In three weeks I heard she was engaged to the well-groomed youth.—Pall Mall Gazette.

An Underground City.
The Russians have made a singular discovery in Central Asia. In Turkistan, on the right bank of the Amou Daria, is a chain of rocky hills near the Bokharan town of Karak, and a number of large caves, which upon examination were found to lead to an underground city, built apparently long before the Christian era. In Popular Science News we find the following description of this singular city:
According to effigies, inscriptions and designs upon the gold and silver money unearthed from among the ruins, the existence of the town dates back to some two centuries before the birth of Christ.

The underground Bokharan city is a little over a mile long, and is composed of an enormous labyrinth of corridors, streets and squares, surrounded by houses and other buildings two or three stories high. The edifices contain all kinds of domestic utensils, pots, urns, vases and the like. In some of the streets falls of earth and rock have obstructed the passages, but generally the visitor can walk about freely without so much as lowering his head.

The high degree of civilization attained by the inhabitants of the city is shown by the fact that they built in several stories, by the symmetry of the streets and squares, and by the beauty of the baked clay and metal utensils, and of the ornaments and coins which have been found.

It is supposed that long centuries ago this city, so carefully concealed in the bowels of the earth, provided an entire population with a refuge from the incursions of nomadic savages and robbers.

Razors Made by Machinery.
The manufacture of razors by machinery has now become a fixed fact in Germany, and the quality of the article is said to compare favorably with the best Sheffield product, the process being also applicable to scissors-making. A die bearing the impress of a razor blade and tongue, or of a scissors blade and bow, as the case may be, is screwed into the bottom of a drop hammer, which is worked by hand over a pulley, a corresponding die being placed on the anvil upon which the hammer falls. The end of the steel bar or ramrod having been heated to a red heat is laid across the anvil die, and the hammer, falling with a weight of about thirty hundred-weight or less, according to the size of the article to be produced, forces the metal into the mold, this when withdrawn, appearing in the shape of a perfect razor or scissors blank, but surrounded with a fray or fringe, which is afterward pared with the stripping tools as waste. This operation is repeated indefinitely, according to the extent of the order in hand, the tools being then changed on to another size of blade or scissors. Repeated blows of the hammer are required to forge some of the blanks, regulated by their size and shape.

Animal Longevity.
A carp taken in Germany six or seven years ago had a ring through its lower jaw, on which it was recorded that the bearer was placed in a particular water in 1810. This appears hardly credible, but there is little doubt that many carps have lived for upwards of a hundred years.

Until some eight years ago the eldest inhabitant of any English collection of birds was a black Vassa parrot from Madagascar, which died after a residence of forty-four years in the Regent's Park Gardens.
Geese are naturally a long-lived family, and there are several records of birds of this species attaining to sixty or seventy years.
In 1888 the Philadelphia Zoo had a cockatoo known to be more than eighty-five years old.
A parrot died six years ago in Paris at the reputed age of one hundred and three years.
In France ravens have been known to live over one hundred years.

Women could do their marketing more intelligently if butchers would string sausage by the yard.

OUR MINERAL WEALTH.

Our Country in the World So Rich as This.

When the mind is startled by statistics showing the indebtedness of our country, our municipalities and our people, especially to foreign creditors—it amounts to several billions of dollars—we may turn with satisfaction to the yearly showings of the country's productions.

Our national debt, including the currency and all other obligations, and without deducting the cash in the treasury, amounts to somewhat more than a billion and a half dollars. But in a single good year the crop of corn, wheat and oats alone may surpass that great figure. This was the case in 1891.

Again, the yearly product of the mines of the country is so great that if the production never exceeded that of 1894, which was a bad year, it would be more than sufficient, if applied to the purpose, to wipe out the net national debt in two years.

In the last calendar year, according to an official report, the value of five hundred and twenty-five millions of dollars was dug out of the ground in the United States.

This sum, which seems so prodigious, was really a great disappointment, for it fell far below the output of 1893, and still farther below the output of 1892, which was worth almost six hundred and seventy-five million dollars.

The decrease in production does not mean that the mines of the country are becoming exhausted. It is a part of the general depression which prevailed in 1894. The pig iron production, for instance, was affected by the decreased demand for iron in the manufactures, and fell off in amount nearly half a million tons, while the value of the pig iron which was produced fell off nearly twenty million dollars.

The largest item by far in our mining account is coal. It is much greater than the combined value of all the gold and silver that is mined.

Of gold, our miners dug in 1894 a little less than forty million dollars' worth. This is in itself a very respectable amount. Of course it is much less than the world's waste and its need for manufacturing and coinage purposes; but Australia and South Africa contribute large supplies in addition.

The production of gold in this country has lately decreased. More was mined in this country last year than in any year since 1878. It still, however, ranks behind silver in value. Sixty-four million dollars' worth of that metal was mined in 1894.

For a time the value of the copper product was greater than that of gold; but the account now stands the other way. In 1894 the value of the gold product surpassed that of copper by six million dollars.

The silver product has been falling off. This is probably not because there is less silver in the earth to be mined, but because the low price for it has led many mines to diminish or suspend their production. Not so much by ten million ounces was mined in 1894 as in 1893.

There is no country in the world so rich in the products of the earth's surface and of the ground below its surface as the United States. Agriculture is still, and happily, our greatest source of wealth; but we have in coal, in gold, in silver, in lead and copper, in petroleum resources of future wealth far beyond those of any other nation.

Though we do, indeed, owe enormous sums—much more, no doubt, than we ought to owe—we may console ourselves with the reflection that these vast sums have largely been used in developing just such resources of wealth as our mines supply. And the wealth is present which will eventually more than pay the debt.—Youth's Companion.

Repairing Mail Bags.

Mail bags are made of canvas or jute, and are subjected to considerable hard usage. Even an expert baggage assembler does not handle the luggage of the traveling public with more recklessness than the mail bags are treated in their long journeys.

Time is a prime requisite in the dispatch of mails, and the bags are loaded into wagons, and from thence into cars, or the process is reversed, and the main consideration is the saving of time. When the bags become worn or torn or damaged in any way, they are gathered together and forwarded to the great repair shop in Washington. There is a small repair shop in Chicago, where, however, only minor injuries are made good. At the shop in this city some two hundred thousand mail bags are received, overhauled, and sent to different parts of the country every thirty days. Some of the mail pouches are made of leather, and experts are needed to make the necessary repairs. There is, in addition, a mail lock shop, where fifteen skilled mechanics are employed, and about thirty other men and boys.

The pay of those who repair the mail bags is not large, but the labor is unskilled, and it consists mainly in sewing and patching the canvas sacks. It is a singular thing, but occasionally mail matter is found in the sacks which are sent to the repair shops. For this reason, the bags are carefully inspected before they are placed in the hands of the work people.

Honestly Won.

"How did you get the title of 'general'?" asked a hero-worshipping girl.
"I cut my way to it," was the proud reply.

On the Field?

"No, in Bill Wiggins' hotel. There was only two men in our town in Kentucky that had ever been in the army at all, so we cut the cards to see which should be 'general' and which 'colonel'."—Washington Star.

A girl's idea of modesty is to let loose quick when she shakes hands with a strange man.