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## TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

### A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

It is not the great things which we would do if we could that will count in the end, but the little things we could do if we would.

A Boston girl who was scolded for using too much gas at night turned on all the gas jets and committed suicide. But she used too much gas to the last.

A New York man says the world will come to an end this year and an Indiana prophet says it will come to an end in 1897. Those "end men" always are funny fellows.

A New York man wants a divorce on the ground that he was hypnotized into marrying his wife. That fellow evidently doesn't understand that all marriages are made in just that way.

Many physicians in Russia charge only 15 cents for a consultation, and, although their number is small, suicides are frequent among them, the cause being inability to make a living.

Social life can be sweetened and improved by a smile and a kind word for every one. This requires no great talent. It is the outflow of a generous, appreciative, responsive, and kindly nature.

Every pure thought and noble resolve, every act of duty and of love, every sacrifice for principle, strengthens the power of goodness within us, and makes it more certain that, when conflicts and emergencies arise, we shall not be overwhelmed.

If a book be worth reading once it is worth reading twice; and, if it stands a second reading, it may stand a third. This, indeed, is one great test of the excellence of books. Many books require to be read more than once in order to be seen in the proper colors and latent glories, and dim-discovered truths will by-and-by disclose themselves.

The Sheats laws of Florida, that made the teaching of mixed classes of white and colored pupils an offense punishable by imprisonment, have been declared unconstitutional and void. Last spring teachers in the school of the American Missionary Society at Orange Park were arrested for violation of this law. This case was carried before the Supreme Court of Florida, and brought about the recent declaration.

The progress of the work of caring for insane persons is shown in every enlightened community by the abandonment of the old manner of housing the patients. Huddling thousands of these in one building is no longer in favor, and it probably will be but a short time before the cottage system will prevail. Seven two-story cottages will soon be built for the Long Island and State Hospital at King's Park. These will contain about 125 patients each, managed in consonance with the most recent and advanced ideas on the subject.

Last week 1,285 Sicilians arrived on one steamer at New Orleans and a pathetic scene took place. It is said that many of the men and women kissed the floor of the wharf on landing and threw themselves into the arms of friends, who had come before, weeping for joy at reaching America. From Sicily to America is like coming from darkness into dawn. Let us hope that these additions to our population will not soon forget the benefits accorded them by American citizenship; that they will learn the language of the country, educate their children at our schools and themselves engage in honest pursuits.

Doctors are said to be like verbs—regular, irregular and defective; but nobody has yet attempted a scientific classification of the swarm of mystical and supernatural healers to whom the example of Schlatter at the West a few months ago seems to have pointed the way. They rise up in multitudes and pervade all localities near and far, and strangely enough none of them seem to lack followers and believers. It is a curious delusion which reposes faith in their spells, but it is as old as human infancy, and will probably last as long. The fool we have always with us, and it is not, therefore, a matter of legitimate surprise that we must sometimes have the "healer." He never heals anybody, and individually is soon forgotten, but his type abides and abounds in all lands and seasons, being now and here especially prevalent.

The verb "to bowdlerize" has passed into the language from the effect of an English clergyman to produce an edition of Shakespeare's plays which might be read by young ladies without bringing the blush of shame to the cheek modestly immortalized the minister, and his work is now one of the curiosities of the bookshops. It seems el-

most incredible that at this day a similar attempt should be made on another author and that the work should be "Tom Jones," but it is actually a fact that a member of the Fielding family has produced an expurgated edition of that masterpiece, in which Molly Seagrims will be left out. "Hamlet" without the prince will be complete in comparison to this work.

In those days of advanced criticism novelists and playwrights cannot be too careful. Stage ideas of law have long been a subject of merriment even among people not connected with the bar, and stage deaths by poison are often not looked upon by medical men with that seriousness which the dramatist desired. The same is true of the work of novelists, and one of these was recently called down by the London Lancet for making away with two of his characters by curare and prussic acid mixed. The Lancet says that to give that mixture would be like blowing a man's brains out and then cutting his throat, as the two poisons are antagonistic. Scientific knowledge is becoming so popular that the novelist of the future must kill his characters according to materia medica or let them die natural deaths.

A crusade has been inaugurated in Topeka, Kan., for the purpose of stopping the practice of overchecking carriage horses. Judge Foster, of the United States District Court, is the pioneer in the movement and he proposes to start a society whose members shall take an active part in reporting cases to the Judge, who will attend to the prosecution under a law which covers the point. It is to be hoped that the crusade will be so successful that it will be emulated by humane persons in other cities. The practice of checking up a horse's head so high that the animal is in constant torment is caused largely by a desire to give the horse a more graceful bearing, and most often, doubtless, the owner is ignorant of the cruelty he is inflicting. A crusade against the practice, however, preceded by an educational campaign, should be effective in putting an end to his refined torture.

Nothing more entirely joyous has come out of the far West for many days than the report of a fantastic vision afforded a galaxy of "reputable citizens" of Sacramento, Cal. It appears to have been a gigantic airship under perfect control traveling at a height of a half mile, illuminated apparently by electric lights and people at the time of its passage over the city with a company which was singing the popular air of the day. One naive explanation of the apparition is that some one has solved the mystery of aerial navigation and is conducting his experiments at night in order to escape impertinent curiosity. Other explanations more plausible perhaps will occur to most people, but none should be accepted as conclusive. If explanations are dodged these "reputable citizens" may be induced to add some more details of the spectacle and even finally reveal the character of the source of inspiration. Californians must not keep to themselves a vintage that is so delightfully exhilarating.

What a roaring opera bouffe could be based upon the situation in Cuba! Everyone admits that Cuba should be free and that the island has been treated outrageously by Spain, but the ridiculousness of the movements of both armies cannot but force itself upon any who read the dispatches. The most active men in Cuba are those who send out the "war" news. We never hear of skirmishes. Every meeting of opposing troops is a "battle" or an "engagement." The high-sounding titles and the higher-sounding names to which the titles are attached are incongruous considering what these Quixotic personages really accomplish. "Lieutenant Colonel Rodriguez de la Casino yesterday executed a brilliant flank movement upon the Las Pinas plantation and escaped without the loss of a man. He captured seven soap boilers. This will cripple the insurgents." "General Antonio Maceo, the intrepid leader of the patriots, again displayed his brilliant strategy by crossing the trocha at the head of eighteen men and returned laden with spoils wrested from Weyler. Among the supplies secured were a live goat and four cans of tomato soup." "The most sanguinary battle of the war took place to-day, when General Alameda Calixta Garcia, with twenty-one men, boldly attacked a Spanish force of nearly thirty under Colonel Bohadi. Each commander directed his men from a convenient tree. The Spaniards were completely routed, retreating to Havana. One was wounded by the discharge of his own weapon. A Cuban lieutenant sprained his ankle and Garcia was nearly wounded, the bullet lodging in the tree in which he sat. It is reported that Weyler has given up the struggle." Why, one good election scrap in a Chicago ward contains more fatalities than a whole Cuban campaign.

Specimens of fire damp have been recently collected from many sources, all containing nitrogen, with, apparently, about the same proportion of argon as is obtainable from the nitrogen of the air.

## FANCIES OF FASHION.

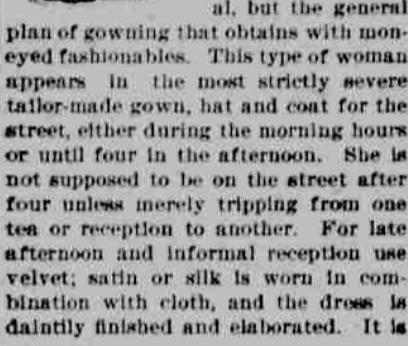
### GREAT VARIETY IN THE STYLES FOR THIS SEASON.

Styles for the Cold Weather Season Are Now Well Settled—Gowns for All Manner of Occasions Through the Winter Months.

Winter Styles Fixed.

New York correspondence:

ASHIONS for the winter are now so settled that what the new year finds accepted is pretty sure to remain so until warm weather, several months hence, forces a general change. These fashions have, as usual, been set by women who can afford large wardrobes, but the other sort of women will do well to study not the freakish fancies of some extravagant individual, but the general plan of gowning that obtains with moneyed fashionables. This type of woman appears in the most strictly severe tailor-made gown, hat and coat for the street, either during the morning hours or until four in the afternoon. She is not supposed to be on the street after four unless merely tripping from one tea or reception to another. For late afternoon and informal reception use velvet, satin or silk in combination with cloth, and the dress is daintily finished and elaborated. It is



DRESSED UP FOR AFTERNOON.

is met at, say, forty rods range, the dainty devices that the fashionable woman affects are of good purpose, but she who tolls as much as she directs is pretty apt to postpone attempts to look dressed up until such time as most of her tricks are done. The rest of them find her nicely attired if she is rigged like the woman of the third illustration. Here is a dress of figured challie, the skirt full and plain, and the bodice having a full front of blue China silk and bolero fronts of the dress goods. A pretty trimming of white lace frills is added to the front, and the blue silk gives the stock collar. The shape of these sleeves, which ended in bell-like cuffs, suggests that the big sleeve is dying hard. One new dress with tight sleeves usually takes a woman out of the notion of being too stylish, and she contents herself with a sleeve tight to the elbow and softly drooping puff from the shoulder.

There remain in the illustrations two afternoon dresses of richer stuff than that just described, and so elaborate that the wearer of either one would not be suspected of not being through with her day's household cares. The first of these was brick red silk. Its front was loose from neck to hem and was laid in two wide boxpleats while the sides and back were fitted and were finished with a satin belt decorated with scarlet



A HANDSOME EVENING DRESS.

high at the neck, the skirt drags and sets out prettily, the hat spreads out, with lots of feathers, and the whole is very becoming. Light gloves may be worn, and a cape that is dainty and elaborate may be donned. For dinner she appears in evening gown, not cut very low, and with half sleeves. It is of satin or brocade, possibly of delicate-colored broadcloth, the skirt plain and the general cut and finish of the gown severe. Over it may be thrown a warm, dark cloak, heavier than the dainty afternoon cape, but carefully differentiated from the usual ball wrap. This gown is also suitable for the theater. For late evening, ball and dance wear her evening gown is cut as low as she likes. It is made of silk, covered with some transparent material, and the effect is very elaborate. It is usually flower-decked, and chiefly beautiful because it seems as perishable as a fresh plucked flower. Over this is worn a very elaborate half-length cloak, warm and beautiful, or a sumptuous full-length affair. The latter is suitable rather for matrons than young girls. Slippers and stockings should always match the gown.

The evening dress is the item of the wardrobe that will come in for the



WITH DRUDGERY BEHIND HER.

greatest modification, and the selection of this model was guided by considerations of beauty and adaptability. Its cut-out may be filled in with lace if desired, though the maker shook her head

deprecatingly while admitting the feasibility of such treatment. Its material was rose pink satin, and gulfure was used to give a bolero effect. Over this were frills of silk muslin, and an embroidery of beads was put on the corset. Cerise ribbon garnished the skirt as indicated, and was repeated on the bodice.

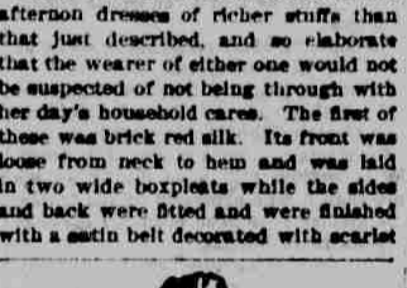
With the woman whose domestic duties are a serious matter of routine not unmixed with drudgery, all daintiness and dressiness in the housework gown must play second fiddle to serviceability. Where a pretence is made of being a housewife—that is, where drudgery



DRESSED UP FOR AFTERNOON.

is met at, say, forty rods range, the dainty devices that the fashionable woman affects are of good purpose, but she who tolls as much as she directs is pretty apt to postpone attempts to look dressed up until such time as most of her tricks are done. The rest of them find her nicely attired if she is rigged like the woman of the third illustration. Here is a dress of figured challie, the skirt full and plain, and the bodice having a full front of blue China silk and bolero fronts of the dress goods. A pretty trimming of white lace frills is added to the front, and the blue silk gives the stock collar. The shape of these sleeves, which ended in bell-like cuffs, suggests that the big sleeve is dying hard. One new dress with tight sleeves usually takes a woman out of the notion of being too stylish, and she contents herself with a sleeve tight to the elbow and softly drooping puff from the shoulder.

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ANOTHER WOMAN OF LEISURE FOR HALF A DAY.

satin loops. At the top was a yoke-like trimming of heavy cream lace which also gave the sleeve trimming, and the collar with its pretty bow was of the same satin ribbon used for the belt. Pendant from the shoulders was a jacket-like drapery of pleated silk. The other dress was more elaborate in its richness. Of gray broche silk, its wide godet skirt had a band of white satin embroidered with gold down the centre. The bodice opened over a wide plastron of white chiffon over white satin, and the left side lapped over with two buttons, the narrow space between belt and plastron being edged with gold embroidered satin, bands of the same giving sleeve finish and collar. The sleeves were moderately full puffs trimmed with gray pleated mousseline de soie, and frills of the same edged the open fronts and came around the collar in back.

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Thomas B. Reed, of Maine, has been installed as arbitrator of two of the leading insurance companies of the United States. His predecessor was the late William E. Russell, of Massachusetts. The salary of the place is \$5,000 a year and the duties only occasional.

The less a woman has to confide the more she insists on doing it.



ROADS MUST BE ROADS.

There appears to be a growing impression to the effect that a road is a place of passage from one point to another, and that if it is anything short of that the ones accountable for its condition may be held responsible for the trouble that may be occasioned by its faultiness.

Passengers injured in a railroad accident, occasioned by a defective road-bed or an imperfect rail, are very sure to sue for damages and to recover liberally.

Any one injured by a defective sidewalk can usually make a town or an individual pay smartly for it.

The spirit of the law seems to be that a railroad must be a railroad and in a condition to properly carry on its work in a business-like manner.

A sidewalk must be kept in a safe condition for people to walk over it.

Now, what about a road over which persons in vehicles must travel? Must it be a real road? Oh, no! Most any old thing will answer. It differs from a sidewalk and a railroad. They have to be what they pretend to be, but a wagon road may be simply a streak of mud or stones or anything else. No one appears to be responsible for the condition of the public road. It is supposed to just run wild and look out for itself. If any one is injured or his vehicle is broken, it is the result of his own folly in presuming to use a road for traveling purposes.

But the times change, and we are changed with them. Folks are beginning to apply the same rules to county governments as they do to city governments and private corporations. Accidents on public roads and bridges caused by defective conditions of the same have to be paid for by the county. It is just.

Good roads are cheapest in the long run. The reign of King Mud should be cut short.—L. A. W. Bulletin.

### How to Work Country Roads.

Much has been said and written about country roads and the proper way to construct them to insure good ones the year round. But much of it applies only where gravel or crushed stone can be obtained with which to make a road bed unaffected by rains and standing water. In many sections of the country gravel can be had by hauling it from creek and river beds, and where it can be so obtained or purchased at a low figure the best possible use of time and money is in securing and spreading this upon a road bed previously graded into the proper form. If the gravel is dumped upon a perfectly flat surface it becomes mixed with the soil during wet weather and soon is lost. The first thing to be done is to grade the road. The grading or macadamizing can then be done at leisure. The upper illustration shows the best form of the road. The dirt from the ditches at the sides is carried to the middle and left in a rounded form, highest in the center. Care must be taken to make the sides slope all the way from the center to the bottom of the ditches, or the water will stand in the sags and percolate into the roadway, making it soft and muddy. Make good outlets for these ditches to carry the water off and keep the road dry, and also that they may serve for outlets for tile and for all other farm drains.

Keep the surface of the road smooth and free from holes, for those traveling will not make martyrs of themselves and bump over the rough places to wear them down if the sides are smooth. Leave the sides at one side. They will decay in a year or two. A large amount of road work can be done in a short time with comfort to man and beast, by using one of the improved road graders. Four men with their teams make a good force; one man and team for the plow, the others for the grader. It will pay any town handsomely to invest in the most improved machinery for road work. When grading the road, be careful not to get the grade too wide. Make it just wide enough for teams to pass. It will flatten out with use and wet weather. Water will less easily stand on a narrow road.

A great aid in keeping the road dry is a row of tiles on either side at the outer edges of the grade. These should not be laid too deep, for the surface will become packed so that the water will not readily soak through. But if the grade is the proper form the water will run off the surface so rapidly that comparatively little will soak in; and as the tile and laying them add largely to the cost of the road they may usually be dispensed with. In the summer when the farmers are busy with their crops, the roads are usually dry and any kind is good enough. The low price for which farm lands sell is due in a large measure to the poor highways. With better roads the value of the lands rapidly increases. Examples of this can be found in every county. Farms located

along good, hard roads are in constant demand at prices far in excess of those situated at a distance from such roads. Wherever other work will permit, farmers can well afford to give a few days' work on the roads instead of feeling it a hardship to have to work the time required by law. Work them thoroughly, each neighborhood for itself. The labor and time spent will return one hundred fold in the increased value of property and in the ease and comfort of traveling.—Farm and Home.

### Love Their Home.

With the exception, possibly, of the anthropoid apes, the homing sense is possessed in a higher or a lower degree by all mammals; this is true also of the birds. The well-known exploits of the carrier pigeon are so similar that they will scarcely need comment. The duck and the goose sometimes have this sense very highly developed. I once knew a goose to travel back home after being carried for the distance of eighteen miles. A drake and a duck, to my certain knowledge, traveled back to their old home, a distance of nine miles, after being transported by railway. Instances of homing returning in dogs, cats, horses, etc., are of such common occurrence that I hardly need call attention to them. The following instance is so unique, however, that I will give it.

In the fall of 1861 a gentleman of Vincennes, Ind., visited his father at Lebanon, Ky. When he started to return home his father gave him a yoke of young steers, which he drove via Louisville to Vincennes. Shortly after his arrival the steers made their escape, swam the Ohio at Owensboro, Ky., 160 miles below Louisville, and in a week or so were found one morning at the gate of their old home at Lebanon. Led by their sixth sense alone, these animals had made a journal of several hundred miles over a route entirely unknown to them.

Fishermen are well aware of the fact that certain fish choose localities for their lurking places which they will share with no other fish. The black bass, brook trout, sturgeon and goggle-eyes are familiar examples of the fish which have this habit. Some time ago I performed the following experiment: I took a bass from its home near a sunken stump, and, after passing a thin, short piece of strong thread through the web of its tail and knotting it, replaced it in the river two miles below its lurking place. The next day I saw it in its old home, clearly recognizable from the bit of thread which waved to and fro in the clear water as the fish moved its tail.—Pittsburg News.

### Stanley's Compliment.

Dean Stanley actually suffered from listening to music, and yet Jenny Lind once told Max Muller he paid her the highest compliment she had ever received. Stanley was very fond of Jenny Lind, but when she stayed at his father's palace at Norwich, he always left the room when she sang. One evening Jenny Lind had been singing Handel's "I know that my Redeemer liveth." Stanley, as usual, had left the room, but he came back after the music was over, and came shyly up to Jenny Lind.

"You know," he said, "I dislike music; I don't know what people mean by admiring it. I am very stupid, tone-deaf, as others are color-blind. But," he said with some warmth, "to-night, when from a distance I heard you singing that song, I had an inkling of what people mean by music. Something came over me which I had never felt before; or, yes, I had felt it once before in my life." Jenny Lind was all attention. "Some years ago," he continued, "I was at Vienna, and one evening there was a tattoo before the palace performed by 400 drummers. I felt shak- en, and to-night, while listening to your singing, the same feeling came over me; I felt deeply moved."

"Dear man," she added, "I know he meant it, and a more honest compliment I never received in all my life."

### How He Knew His Mother.

The Prince of Wales is not averse to having a little fun over his august mother's propensity for giving away India shawls. At the recent Henley regatta he had his attention drawn to an elderly lady who, the Prince's friend said, bore a striking resemblance to the Queen, and might be her Majesty's incognito. As the Prince leveled his field-glass on her, she rose, and taking the shawl on which she had been sitting, threw it around the shoulders of the young girl who was with her.

"It is undoubtedly the Queen," the Prince replied, quietly; "she has betrayed herself. She has just presented one of her India shawls."

A family with a hereditary mania for suicide by hanging has been discovered by Dr. Brouardel, of Paris. The father, a farmer near Stampes, hanged himself without apparent cause, and subsequently his four daughters and six of his seven sons followed the example, but not until they had married and had children, all of whom likewise hanged themselves. One son, now 68 years old, is the only survivor of this ill-fated family.

After a man has saved up a few dollars it is impossible for him to be so good to us with everybody.