TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS.

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

France will make no mistake in diagnosing the Dreyfus affair as a case of intermittent fever.

Spain is in a position to take the head of the line in the Czar's universal disarmament condition.

When more or less freeboard is mentioned as a characteristic of men-of-war how do the Cuban insurgents understand it?

Belgium, it is said, has more cycle paths than any other country in the world. In this country we run largely to cycle pants.

Jamaica wants to be annexed to the United States, but, really, we don't need her. Haven't we shown that we are full of ginger?

With regard to general disarmament, when Russia becomes a bear in the market, it's not strange some don't take any stock in it.

Aguinaldo, who is full of what he intends doing in certain contingencies, is always pictured bareheaded. Maybe he wore out his hat talking through it.

New Zealand is solving her rabbit-plague problem by refrigerating rabbits for the English market. For poor bunny this is clearly a "freeze-out" game.

Will the Delaware candy poisoning case affect the trade in confections as a feature of lovers' affection? Not to the extent of giving each other taffy anyway.

A young fellow about to get married doesn't think annexing so much earth as is represented in the Philippines very great. He himself's going to annex what's the whole world to him.

With Russia, Germany and England all quarreling over their "rights" in China—where they have no possible rights under the sun—we will have to hunt hard for an excuse to abandon the Philippines.

A Western poet regrets that he didn't enlist so that he might return home now and have his lips "banged out of shape by batteries of bliss." It does seem a shame that he didn't get to the front in some way or other.

A doctor advances the theory that it is the oxygen in the lungs and not the heart that circulates the blood. If the theory will do away with the "heart-failure" verdict when a men has been run over by a locomotive it will be eagerly accepted.

Telephones are still comparatively rare in the great city of London, the great merchants holding it to be a rather undignified contrivance. Possibly a 'phone may yet be invented which will not suffer a man to be called up by anything short of his social equal.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox protests against the leaving of a fortune to any one when their receipt of it depends upon the death of another person. Some other reforms are necessary in the matter of willing property. Legacies have done much harm. Many a young man would have lived longer and happier had he never owned a dollar beyond what he had himself earned.

It is characteristic of the arrogance of the French press that every paper in Paris, little or big, jumps to the conclusion that the czar's proposal for international disarmament is intended to restrain the mighty French army from wresting back Alsace and Lorraine. The French soldiery, they say with Gallic ingenuousness, compose the most terrible body in Europe, as Russia, in common with all other nations, recognizes.

Admiral Dewey apparently thinks that there are better names for ships of war than Harvard and Yale. He recently remarked that, since the Navy Department was giving the names of educational institutions to ships, he would follow suit. Two microscopic gunboats captured from the Spanish, called the Callao and Leyte, he has decided to rechristen, and he suggests that the first be called The Philadelphia College of Physicians and Surgeons and the second The Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Haytian Government refuses to permit the establishment within its territory of a United States Weather Bureau station to enable early notice to be given of tornadoes originating in the West Indies. This refusal need not excite much surprise. Hayti has not progressed in civilization, education, business, industrial pursuits, or the arts and sciences during the last 100 years. It has gone backwards. It will continue to retrograde towards barbarism until white men—Anglo-Saxons or Teutons—take the island in hand and direct matters. The rulers of Hayti are unfit to govern anybody. They are asked to allow something to be done for the purpose of saving vessels, their cargoes and their sailors. They do not care whether commerce is carried on or not, so they refuse.

The dedication of a monument to Francis Scott Key in his native city was chiefly a tribute to the man who wrote "The Star-Spangled Banner." The memorial likewise honors one who wrote to his friend, John Randolph of Roanoke: "I agree with you that the 'state of society is radically vicious,' and that it is there the remedy is to be applied. Put down party spirit; stop the corruptions of party elections; legislate not for the next election, but for the next century." Few statesmen are poets, and perhaps it is well that prose-writing law-makers are in the large majority. Key, however, showed a spirit worthy of high statesmanship when he wrote the sentences quoted, which are almost sufficient to entitle him to be called an early reformer of the republic.

Give us clean fairs! Let not the agricultural fair, whether local, county, district or state, be turned into a school of vice. That's just what some of the so-called agricultural exhibitions are. They teem with devices to swindle the unwary, that cause many to distrust reputable exhibitors and dealers and thus injure the material interests of the whole exhibition. But robbing people of their money by fake schemes is unimportant compared to the robbery of innocence that is boldly permitted at many fairs. Impure or outright immoral "attractions" are allowed at too many a fair. Many a youth can trace his fall into sinful ways to such influences at an "agricultural fair." Many a girl has been enticed from the paths of virtue after witnessing the glitter of immodest women in some "midway side show." To thus mar the purity of youth is a wrong that all the good done in other directions by a fair can never compensate for. We certainly voice the sentiments of the great people in denouncing all such shameful adjuncts, and in demanding that the fairs be held to a strictly moral standard. There are influences enough at work to drag down young and old, without engaging the fairs in such iniquity.

There was a time, not many years ago, when the sewing machine business was so brisk that even the people who had no use whatever for the machines were constantly reminded of them. Expensively furnished shops were given up to the sale of them, agents were numerous and active, and the names of the various makes were familiar to the whole world. The traffic was evidently very profitable until suddenly the "bottom dropped out" by reason of the expiration of patents, and in a little while the sewing machine trade seemed to have vanished off the face of the earth. There were no more big and showy shops, the bland and ingratiating agent ceased to seek purchasers, and a careless public vaguely assumed that every possible purchaser within the boundaries of civilization had been supplied with a machine. It is of interest, therefore, to note the manufacturing statistics which show that 700,000 sewing machines are made in this country in a year, and that not less than sixty-five factories are in operation, giving employment to 10,000 persons, and having annual receipts of more than $15,000,000. It appears from these rather impressive figures that this useful invention has taken its place among the things indispensable to domestic comfort and no longer needs a brass band to call the attention of "the lady of the house" to its merits.

England is determined to keep her naval strength twice as great as that of any other power. It is only common prudence that she should. Her colonies in every sea and her vast maritime interests demand it. And more than that, there is every probability that when she is called upon to stand up for her rights she will have to fight not one nation, but two or three. The time will come when, in the natural course of events, England and America, with minor help, will be compelled to stand against the rest of the civilized world. This great struggle, though possibly far off in length of time, is certain to come—as certain almost as fate. The commerce of the world is slowly but surely drifting to the United States and England. We are feeding millions and extending our manufacturing interests. English goods go everywhere, and English capital follows fast and close after. Now that the two nations are to work harmoniously their victories of peace will be more striking than the victories of war, but no less galling to the Latin and Slav. In time the tremendous balance of power will tell. It will lead to a mighty conflict, a conflict confined almost exclusively to the sea. Of course, America will not prepare for such a struggle, but she will be strengthening her navy for the next ten or fifteen years. Even now, with the additions which will materialize within a few years, our navy in absolute utility will be second to none save England. And add to this the skill, coolness and daring of the American seamen, and it will then be a fleet respected in every harbor on the globe. The naval prestige already gained in this war, and the commercial advantages sure to follow, are easily an offset for the dollars and cents so far, or yet to be, spent. The gain in territory and strength is net.

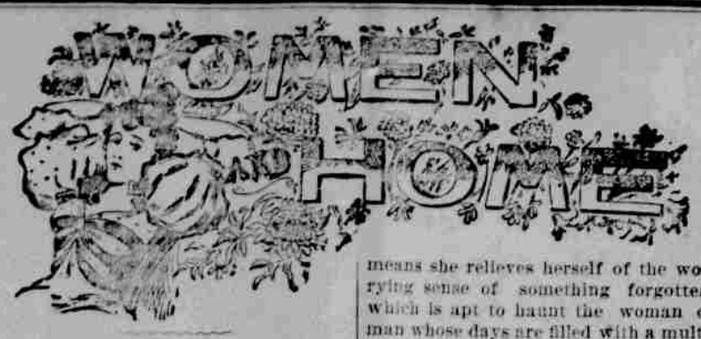
A Boat of Cement.

An Italian named Gabellini has recently made a boat of cement. The framework is of small bars covered with a wire netting, the latter being in turn, covered with cement. The surface is then polished. It is claimed that such a boat costs less than a wooden one, and despite its extra weight goes more easily through the water.

Work for the Philatelists.

The various countries of the world now use 13,400 different kinds of postage stamps.

Popularity often wins new acquaintances and loses old friends.



AS HIS MOTHER USED TO DO.

He criticised her puddings and he found
fault with her cake;
He wished she'd make such biscuit as his
mother used to make;
She didn't wash the dishes and she didn't
make a stew,
Nor even mend his stockings, as his mother used to do.

His mother had six children, but by night
her work was done;
His wife seemed drudging always, yet she
only had the one.
His mother always was well dressed, his
wife would be so, too,
If only she would manage as his mother
used to do.

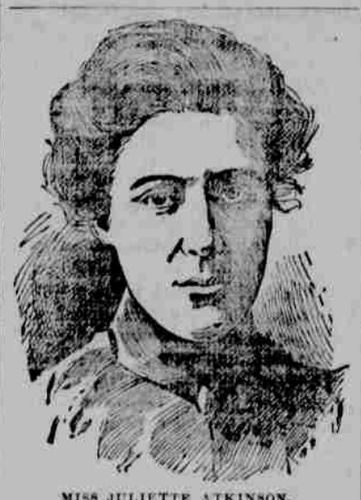
Ah, well! She was not perfect, though
she tried to do her best,
Until at length she thought her time had
come to have a rest;
So when one day he went the same old rigmarole all through,
She turned and boxed his ears, just as his
mother used to do.

Little Attentions.

If husbands only realized what the little attentions mean to the wives there would be many happier unions, says the New York Ledger. It is not the cost of a gift that makes it precious to the recipient. A tiny bunch of violets brought home at night betokens the thought given to her even while business occupies his attention; the most trifling souvenir of a wedding or birthday anniversary becomes a sentiment underlying its proffering. Women may be foolish, they may be all heart and very little reason; but the man who understands their nature and caters to it is the one who stands higher in their estimation than the one who acts as though all he cared about was material comfort given with any sort of brusquerie. Of course, there are many mercenary women—thousands and thousands who can marry for a home and for rich raiment. These pooh-pooh the violets and value only the diamonds; but the average feminine heart, the sort which a man wants to beat beside his own, the foundation of truest sympathy and love, is moved more by the little attentions in which sentiment is involved than by the great offerings representing only a stupendous sum of money.

Woman Tennis Champion.

Miss Juliette Atkinson, the Eastern tennis player, is a wonder among women athletes. She was brought up in tennis courts, one may say, and while in her teens could handle the racquet with a skill that was marvelous. She has, in the past few years, won every championship worth speaking about.



MISS JULIETTE ATKINSON.

She has won the national and international championships and at Niagara-on-the-Lake she defeated all the best women tennis players of Canada. Miss Atkinson lives in Brooklyn, and it was in that city she learned the game that has made her famous.

Women as Business Advisers.

It is said that the only two countries where women are the leaders and men in leading strings are France and the United States. Frenchmen comment on the fact that English and American women often are utterly ignorant as to whether their husbands are making or losing money, while the French woman, even in business, is her husband's adviser, and is made his confidante in regard to all his business transactions. The critics think that the different positions occupied by American and English women are due largely to education, boys and girls being educated in the same schools in America.

A Code of Honor for Women.

The advanced woman needs a code of honor. If she is to compete with men in men's work, she must adopt the one which men have found effective and practical. She must learn to hold her tongue, to respect other people's business, other people's secrets, other people's letters. She must not pry or tell white lies, or do little, mean, underhand actions. In fact, a man's honor must be a woman's.

An Anti-Worry Pad.

Among sure preventives for gray hairs and crow's feet a certain busy woman sets down what she calls an anti-worry pad. She keeps an ordinary note-size writing pad on her dressing table, and on this she jots down a list of engagements, letters to be answered, business to be attended to, articles needed for the house or for personal use, conveniences, charities and all the other interests that enter into a busy life, as they come to her mind. By this means she relieves herself of the worrying sense of something forgotten, which is apt to haunt the woman or man whose days are filled with a multiplicity of demands, and who has no secretary to keep him or her remembering details. For such, the anti-worry pad is recommended as a nerve and temper tonic.—Vogue.

Handy Catch-All.

Many articles may be made by clever fingers not only to beautify home, but also to add to one's convenience while at work. A hanging catch-all near the work table or sewing machine may be made of any solid colored material

A CATCH-ALL.

liked; gray linen canvas would be pretty. If made of soft goods an interlining of stiffening should be added. The catch-all has four sections, which may be ornamented by embroidery or applique, the joining seams concealed by a ruffle of ribbon, a tiny puff of silk or a cord like that which it hangs by. This bag would also be useful hanging by the toilet table as a receptacle for soiled handkerchiefs, collars and cuffs.

Five-Minute Rests.

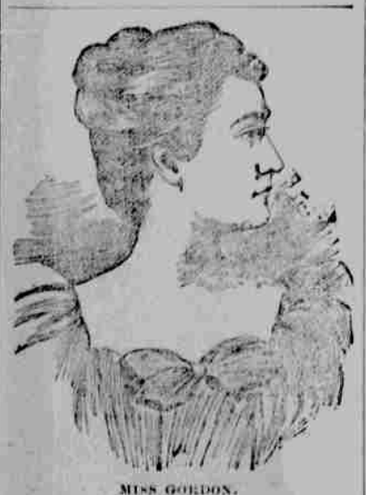
Few understand, except those who have had to resort to five-minute rests in order to keep up during a tedious convalescence, how much elasticity of figure is unconsciously acquired if the body is given periodic rests during the day. The cult of the five-minute resters is gaining disciples among women whose social duties are quite as wearing as those grimier ones of the kitchen slave or the working housewife; and the fad is such a wholesome one that the girl who wishes to keep her freshness and save her strength for congenial work, will do well to adopt it. In order to derive the greatest benefit from a five-minutes' rest, one must relax all the muscles of the body—and of the mind, if possible. Be a limp, inert, lazy bundle for a brief spell. Shut the eyes, let the shoulders and hands droop, relieve all tension which dignity usually demands, and try not to think for 300 seconds.

How to Bleach White Straws.

Leghorn and other white and cream straws may be admirably recleaned by the following means: Remove any trimming and lining, pick out all ends of cotton, and wash the straw under cold water, and scrub it with a clean nail-brush. Then, in the bottom of a tin hatbox set a saucer of burning sulphur, and suspend the hat above this. Put on the top of the box, and leave the hat undisturbed for several hours, so that the fumes of sulphur may have time to bleach it white and clean. When set in the air for a little while all offensive smell will be removed from the straw.

Declined the Honor.

Miss Caroline Lewis Gordon, daughter of General John B. Gordon, commander in chief of the United Confederate Veterans, was mentioned as the



MISS GORDON.

logical successor to Miss Winnie Davis as "Daughter of the Confederacy," but she has declined the honor.

Heavy Shoes for Women.

The use this past season by ladies of men's weight foot gear has met with great favor. The women who have long held the belief that their feet were too tender for any but kid glove shoes have found that the stout soles and uppers, made on generous lasts, were at once the best protection and the most comfortable wear.

Mrs. Takahashi, whose Japanese husband is the publisher of the Shinpo, a Hawaiian newspaper, has learned enough English in a year to become the business head of the publication.

MORE FANCY WAISTS.

DESPITE THE PROPHETS THEY ARE STILL POPULAR.

Three Examples of Up-to-Date Prettiness in This Style of Garments—Tailor Dresses and Suits for Street Wear Are Made Tight.

New York correspondence:

BLIGHT has hit those prophets that promised unfashionableness for fancy waists. These handy and handsome garments have not gone out, and apparently never will, for women apparently cannot make up their minds to that. Uses of fancy waists, however, are a bit different from what they formerly were. Women who set these methods, and they're naturally women of extensive wardrobes, have gowns made with a view to wearing the waist not only with its own skirt but with others. The skirt, too, is planned for like double service, because fancy skirts are as much in vogue as fancy waists are. A dress that was planned for this sort of shifting about is shown above in the small picture. Of mull over silk, and all white, it was a dainty lot of puffing up to the yoke. The latter was brocaded white satin, and an edge of lace was around the brocade. The skirt for this bodice had a finish of the brocade with an edge of lace, and is planned for wear with other light bodices, while the dainty bodice will be as pretty in itself with a dark skirt for dinner occasion, as it is with its own skirt when it makes part of a home or receiving afternoon costume.

The place where puffed or tucked materials are most often seen is in yokes. This is because it is so difficult to make a perfectly plain yoke set well. There is a fancy now, too, for making the top of the sleeves part of the yoke. This is to guarantee that the bodice is made with permanent yoke that is not intended to serve in the afternoon with the yoke in the evening without. Many women classify economies of that sort as "so vulgar," which is foolish of us. There is a better reason, however. The yoke can be basted in, and many of them are. This insures the set, and at the same time the bodice can be relieved of the yoke at short notice. The second bodice the artist shows was made on this plan. Yoke and top to its sleeves could come out easily, and there were a plain silk cap to the sleeve and a line of silk above the ribbon-run edge which will show when this change is made. The waist was pale green taffeta, the yoke puffed white chiffon over green silk, and the trimming was run with emerald satin ribbon and finished with narrow beading of emerald stones. Though the blouse effect here was not pronounced, the bodice was far from being tight. Indeed, very few fancy bodices are made with lines closely following the figure.

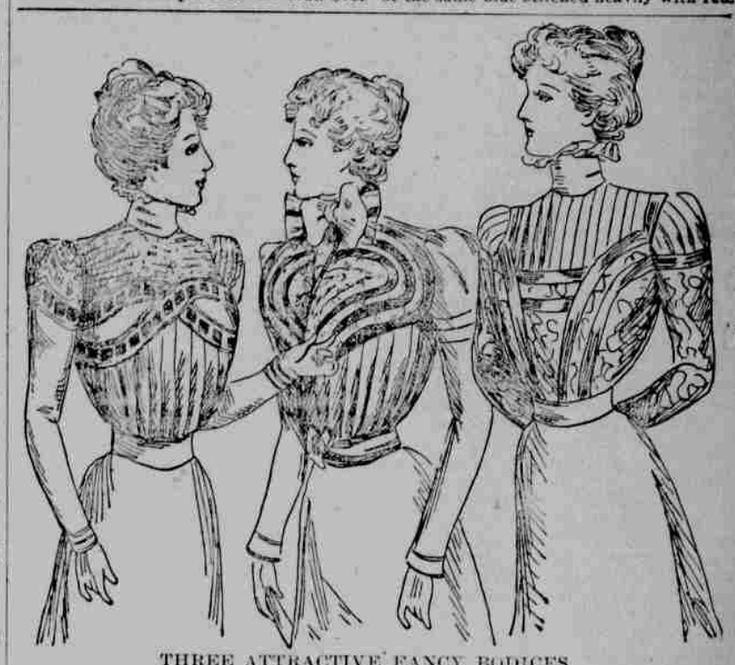
Next to this bodice is an ingenious and pretty one that was a deviation from the prevailing yoke idea. The pictured design carried suggestion of coat about collar and revers to take the place of the usual yoke, while the lower part of the bodice hung in blouse pleats and finished in a round belt. This bodice was in bright purple foulard, a lovely material woven of silk and very fine wool. The revers were covered with puffed white lawn and were run with narrow violet velvet ribbon. The double bow at the neck was especially pretty. The white taffeta inside bow was attached to an inside stock of white taffeta covered with white lawn.

To fit a figured stuff and not get into difficulties in matching the figures requires a good degree of skill on the part of the dressmaker. In the remaining one of these bodices this danger was overcome, for it was close fitting, yet without disfiguring darts. It was of lovely orange silk brocade, the figure in satin just a shade lighter than the background. The milliner's folds of satin were a shade darker than the background. The one shade of ivory white that blends with all these strong yellows appeared in the yoke, which was made of by-the-yard tucked satin and was as pretty as could be. The sleeve caps in this case matched the yoke, which was not adjustable in any sense.

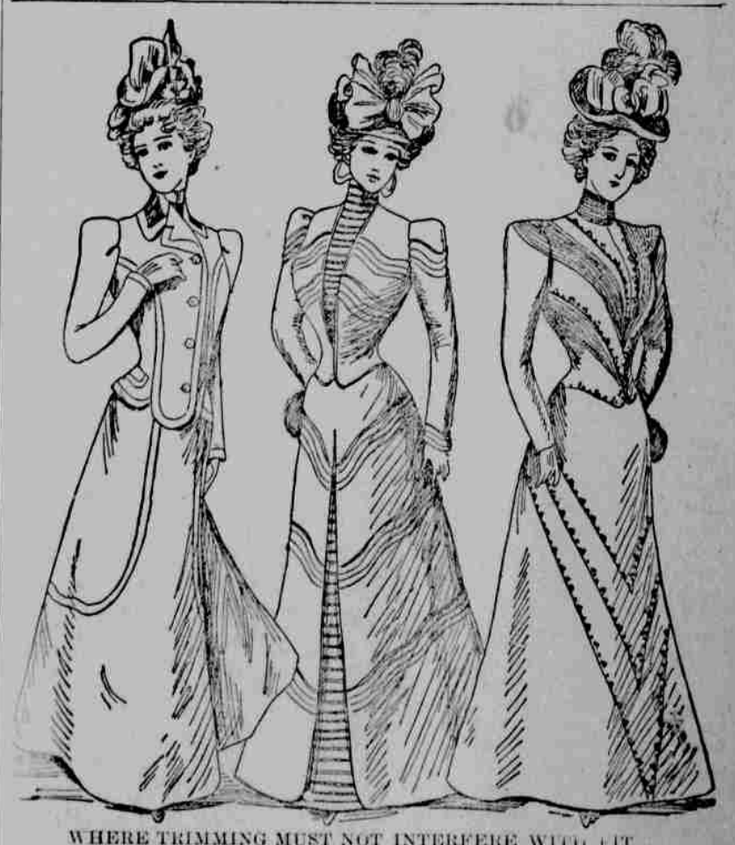
While women have clung closely to looseness in fancy waists and house dresses, they have surrendered pretty generally to tightness for street and tailor dresses. Ready made blouses became very plentiful, some of them atrociously made; in these facts, perhaps, lies the reason. Tight fit doesn't necessitate plainness, however. Many tight bodices are extremely ornate, and even in tailor gowns a surprising amount of trimming is employed without any interference with the fit or with close following the figure's natural lines. A striking example of this was the right hand gown of the three shown herewith. Of dark blue basket cloth, it was trimmed with shaped pieces of broadcloth of the same blue stitched heavily with red. The arrangement and shaping of these broadcloth pieces were very clever, and the management of the stitching was adroit. The fichu-like finish at the shoulders gave width to the figure, and yet conformed absolutely to fitted lines. The under-arm pieces were planned to emphasize slenderness and curve, and the way the stitches run added to this effect. Note, too, the very careful and well planned use of the little braid edge; not enough to look patchy, just enough to emphasize detail. Another admirable feature was the simplicity gained by omission of bands on the skirt, while rows of braiding suggested harmony with the bodice.

Another of these designs also accomplished free trimming without interfering with the fit. It was in dark red cheviot stitched in black. Its long pointed yoke was of fancy vesting run with a little bright red stripe on black, the petticoat panel matching. Don't risk such a costume unless you are absolutely sure of your figure and your dressmaker, for the bodice must fit perfectly over the hips, and the sheath closeness of the skirt must not be interfered with by the slit at the front.

A jacket is a popular part of the early winter tailor rig. The reefer, the riding habit, the blouse, all appear, but the exclusive and characteristic design of the season shows a tight fitting coat with shield front prolonged below the sides of the bodice. That is the model remaining in the pictures. This jacket is quite a wonder of tailor work. Absolute accuracy is necessary for that single breasted shield front widening to the arms at the chest, thus giving width and military flatness to the upper figure. The inlaid velvet collar is a feature of many jackets, and strap finish that does not interfere with fit or with oneness of color scheme is in excellent severe taste. The costume shown was heavy green broadcloth, its coat intended for cold weather.



THREE ATTRACTIVE FANCY BODICES.



WHERE TRIMMING MUST NOT INTERFERE WITH FIT.

Nothing ages like laziness.—Balzac.