

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 isn't always the man that lives the longest who lives most.

"Everything comes to the man who waits," except that for which he waits.

"Opportunity knocks once at every man's door," but often makes sure the man is out before knocking.

In England they are exploiting a red light cure for disease. It should be good for the yellow jaundice.

It is more profitable to bet on a fool who has luck than to put your faith in a sage who can't make connections.

A bad man gets vast credit for doing a good thing which nobody would have noticed if the deed had been decent.

The man who dropped dead just after calling for a telephone number must have got the number he wanted at the first ring.

A Canadian has invented a brick laying machine. The real hit of the mechanical world would be an egg laying machine.

There is one thing about Turkey that is lovable; she never allows her debts to outlast for lack of promises to pay some time.

Europe seems to be the only place where any one can go for rest, and if J. P. Morgan tinkers with it much more it will be as nerve-wrecking as America.

Some men who mingle freely in company without worrying over their lack of brains would be terribly mortified if they were to discover that they had no cuffs on.

The resolution to do that which is wrong makes the first step to the stairway leading downward, and we find it an easy footing afterward until we try once more to climb.

Electricity may be the motive power of the future, but the fact remains that in the census year 1900 the output of steam locomotives was more than \$30,000,000.

The English love of sport is attested by the importance attached to a rumor that King Edward never caught a salmon. The King's private secretary was appealed to, and was able to dispose of the slander. His majesty, when Prince of Wales, caught a twenty-one-pound salmon on the Tweed, about the year 1865.

Every once in a while some one advises workmen to "keep out of politics." When it means that their trade organizations should keep out of politics the advice is helpful, but there is no reason under the sun why workmen as individuals and as members of well-defined political parties should keep out of politics. Nobody is more ritally interested in politics than workmen.

The wolf "Necessity"—sometimes called the mother of invention—is the greatest incentive to achievement. Thousands of men would give up in despair but for the influence of this fierce monster ever in pursuit. "To keep the wolf from the door" is a well-known expression, yet ninety-nine out of a hundred families in New York City daily grapple with this very problem. Rent, food, clothing, fuel, light, everyone must have, and these cost money. To get this money, people must work, and fight here is daily fought out the battle for existence.

There are fashions in historical fiction, just as in clothing and personal ornament. A list of historical novels compiled by a student of the subject shows only eighteen dealing with the whole pre-Christian era, whereas the opening years of the Christian era have inspired seventeen books. The Middle Ages have been reasonably well covered by the novelists. With the sixteenth century they get into full swing, the seventeenth provides settings for a still larger number of stories, and the scenes of nearly two hundred are laid in the eighteenth century. That is to say, the novelists huddle within reachable distance of our own day, and ignore such tempting themes as, for instance, Charlemagne. This may mean that the average reader's imagination has a range of only a century or two, or it may mean that the average modern novelist likes to follow the safe lead of Scott and Dumas.

What does one think about when one thinks of nothing? It would be of drilling interest if we could make our way into what seems the vacant spaces of the minds of our friends and find with what visions they are really peopled. There are certain occasions, for example, on which everybody must be thinking of something, and when it is not conventionally suitable to make no sign. When we are listening to music, what goes on in our minds? The musician would give much to know. When hundreds of folk are gathered in a great concert hall and the strains of Mendelssohn's Wedding March peal out, it might well be startling if an instantaneous picture could be taken of the mind of every wife, husband, maiden, lover, widow and spinster who listens to the music. When bands are bowed of some hollow notes, or when a homely man utters a mystic message to his neighbor, the thoughts that throng

through the minds would make a strange commentary on human life and character. We scarcely know ourselves in these regions of involuntary thought. Not a day passes but some emotion catches up its arms full of another and widely different feeling. In our inmost hearts we often smile at funerals and weep at weddings, and are grimly lonely at the gayest festivities, weary in the full tide of joy, dippant when we should be reverent, wandering when we should be serious. There has been no Roentgen ray discovered that could light up these secret places of the mind, and until there is we shall remain largely a mystery to one another, and even to ourselves.

If there is one thing more than another which marks this as a distinctive age in American literary production it is the phenomenal success of many novels. For the first time in this country comfortable fortunes are made through single stories. For the past five years there has ever been some particular story selling phenomenally. Often there have been three or four so much in vogue that for the moment the publishers could hardly manage to supply the demand. Perhaps never before in the history of American letters have so many young writers succeeded in getting the ultimatum of their hopes and desires; and the fact is altogether too significant to be lightly passed over. Of course, we have not sacrificed old favorites. We continue to read with deep interest the productions of those upon whose works time's mellow touch has been laid, but we seem to be reserving our keenest appreciation and our warmest enthusiasm for those who are comparatively new in the ranks of authorship, while we are paying our best prices for the tender shoots and the precocious buds of spring, rather than for the well-ripened fruits of autumn. Glancing over the names of some of those who have caught the ear of the public in recent years we find that Mary Johnston, Booth Tarkington, Winston Churchill, Hallie Erminie Rives, Robert Nelson Stephens, Richard Harding Davis and many others are each under 40 years of age. There is no good ground for the pessimistic prediction that the present demand for novels is to decline. The newer writers are introducing an intense spirit of Americanism into fiction, and of that the American people will never tire.

Circumstances seem to conspire to increase the personal popularity of Edward VII. of England. In his early manhood his life was threatened by an attack of typhoid fever, and on his recovery the national rejoicing was enthusiastic. This was when he was merely heir to the throne. After many years he came into his great inheritance, and he and the nation planned to make the coronation ceremonies a splendid pageant, celebrating the glory and greatness of the kingdom and the kingship. But disease called a halt to these preparations, and while the king was on his sick bed the nation meditated on the vanity of earthly pride and glory; so it was in an humble and contrite spirit that the King and his people gathered for the postponed coronation ceremonies. The King on his throne in Westminster Abbey was not the symbol of the monarchy which he would have been in June; but he was a brother man who had been near unto death and had come back to the haunts of the living. Because of this experience of his, not only his own people, but the whole world felt a kinship with him, and were moved by that sympathetic interest which arises out of a realization of our common humanity. Edward VII. is now not merely a King, he is also a man with the rest of us. His gift to the nation of Osborne House on the Isle of Wight, doubtless planned before his illness, takes on a new significance from his recent experience. The estate, in the King's own words, is to be used as "a convalescent home for officers of the navy and army whose health has been impaired in rendering service to their country." It thus becomes a fitting thank-offering for his recovery, and is a further justification for the affection with which he is now regarded by his hundreds of millions of subjects.

To Locate the Rat.
This is not a pleasant theme to touch upon, but much may be forgiven to one who has recently passed the trying ordeal of having a rat die under the floor. Search for the inconsiderate rodent was unavailing for several hours, and it seemed as if the whole house would have to be torn down to find the malodorous cause of our woe. "Wait," said an Englishman, who happened in, "until I go to the butcher's and get some blue-bottle flies, then I'll locate the beast for you." We waited. In an hour he was back with three or four flies in a bottle. These he liberated in the rooms, having first taken the precaution to close doors and windows. In a few moments the flies settled down in one spot on the floor. "Take up that board," said the Briton, "and you'll find your rat." The board was lifted, and there, sure enough, was the long-sought rat.—Washington Star.

Artificial Marble.
A new process for the manufacture of artificial marble has been patented in Berlin. Asbestos, dyeing materials, shellac and ashes are pounded into a stiff mass and then subjected to high pressure. The product is surprisingly firm and tough, not brittle, is easily worked by means of tools, can be given a fine polish, and in appearance cannot be distinguished from genuine marble.

After a man tires of assessments he calls them taxes.

RUNS THE WEATHER.

HOW THE OFFICIAL FORECASTER MAKES PREDICTIONS.

Signs by Which Our Forefathers Used Solemnly to Prophecy as to Coming Storms Are Brushed Aside by More Modern Methods.

Evening red and morning gray Sets the traveler on his way. Evening gray and morning red Brings down rain upon his head.

Such was the way in which our grandparents foretold the weather.

If it was noticed that the old tabby washed herself by rubbing her paw over her ear, or that the little tree-loads trilled their mournful little songs, or the fireflies flitted low among the flowers and the vines, the old folks shook their heads and spoke of rain; or if grandmother's feet ached the little folks grew sorry—not because grandmother had a pain, but because it meant bad weather on the morrow.

Strictly speaking, our weather bureau is made up of a great many buildings scattered all over the United States, and the one at Washington is the central station that governs and directs the smaller ones, and to which they send in their daily reports; for it is by getting reports from all the different sections of the country that Uncle Sam's weather makers are able to make their predictions. There are one hundred and eighty towns and cities in the United States where there are observation stations, having the same instruments and apparatus as the Washington bureau. Now, the observers at these one hundred and eighty stations do not spend their time waiting for spiders to crawl out of their holes or looking at the sky to see whether it is red or gray in the evening. They look at their thermometers, barometers, anemometers, and so on, which are far better guides than all the other signs put together.

At eight o'clock in the morning and at eight o'clock in the evening of every day the observer at each one of these weather stations from Maine to California looks at his different instruments and carefully notes what each of them marks. Then he takes a look at the sky, to see whether it is fair or raining or snowing, and to see what sort of clouds may be sailing about. According to the Weather Bureau, there are seven different kinds of clouds, and it is important that the observer should see what particular kind is hovering around, for each kind means some special sort of weather or some particular sort of the atmosphere. When he has finished his observation and noted all the indications he telegraphs his report to Washington.

In that way, then, the Washington station receives an account of the weather at all parts of the country at the same time, and as you may easily believe, it keeps the four telegraph operators busy receiving the messages that come pouring in soon after eight o'clock. As each message is received in the telegraph room it is carried by a messenger across the hall to the forecast room, or room where predictions are made, and handed to the translator. As the translator reads aloud the cipher reports from the different stations, other men in the room mark what he reads upon a map of the United States, so that when the last message has been translated the map shows just what the weather is at each one of the one hundred and eighty stations. The map is then turned over to the official who is to make the predictions. In order to get his bearings, he traces across the map the different places throughout the country where the temperature is the same and the places where the barometer is the same. The one he marks with red lines and the other with black lines, and if you will look at a weather map you will see these red and black lines wriggling and twisting all over the country.

When the reports from the North-west show a great fall in temperature he knows that a cold wave has started on a journey through the United States, and he keeps a lookout to see how fast it reaches the different stations in the West. Then he calculates how rapidly it is moving and what kind of weather it has to encounter, and perhaps when he has worked out the problem he will telegraph the following bulletin: "Hail and cold wave flag; thermometer will fall thirty degrees in next twenty-four hours, and, sure enough, by next day Jack Frost has got hold of our noses and toes, and the cold wave flag is almost tearing itself to pieces with delight. But sometimes the cold wave does not come as was expected—it is switched off on a side track or it melts on the way—and then the cold wave flag drops in shame.—Clifford Howard, in St. Nicholas.

SIEVE GIFTS FINE.

Only Old-Edge Immigrants Get Farther Than Ellis Island.

While there are more immigrants at the port of New York than ever before, the deportations are correspondingly numerous. A rigid enforcement of alien laws at Ellis Island results in more people being sent back on the ship they came on than used to be the case. There are many things that may make an immigrant ineligible for a long stay on American shores, and among the thousands of foreigners that come over in the steerage every year it is natural that a certain percentage should be lacking in proper qualifications for American citizenship, or even residence. Every day at the large office there are pitiful scenes of disappointment as the immigration offi-

cially coldly make arrangements to send a man, a woman, or, mayhap, a whole family, back to the country from which they have just come. This happens very often among the Italians, says a correspondent of the Pittsburg Gazette. A goodly percentage of the total immigration is from Italy, and there are many swindling agents in that country who persuade their fellow countrymen that they may evade the immigration laws of the United States by embarking from some foreign port away from Italy. The Italian Royal Emigration Commission has taken the matter up now. It warns all Italians that if they do not come within the provisions of the United States immigration laws they will not be allowed to land in New York. It is not believed that the Italian government desires to check emigration to this country, but it does not like to have its people sent back in disgrace, as it were. While Italians are named as the most numerous class suffering under the provisions of the immigration laws, there are people of other nationalities who find themselves sailing out of New York harbor about the time they expected to be dropping off a railroad train in the far West. The enforcement of rules at Ellis Island and the barge office are stricter than ever they were, and only gilt-edge immigrants have any chance to pass the barriers down at the battery.

PIERPONT MORGAN OF JAPAN.

Suggestion That All Great Financiers Look Alike.

The excellent Baron Shibusawa, often alluded to as "Pierpont Morgan of Japan," created a highly favorable impression in this country during his recent visit. Possessing a physiognomy which, barring an Asiatic tint and a crown of hair of un-European straightness, blackness and fineness, might have been that of a prosperous elderly banker of American, English or Scottish nationality, and a grave and sagacious financial bearing, he spread everywhere the wonder how the Japanese could so soon have assimilated themselves to Western ways. Are we sure, by the way, that financiers have not looked essentially alike in all countries and ages? asks a writer in Harper's Weekly. Many busts and statues of prominent elderly citizens have been dug up in Greece and Rome, and are to be seen in museums to-day, whose faces strongly suggest close and not too credulous attention to financial propositions of some sort; and they look just like our bankers. There is nothing new under the sun of finance except the scale of the propositions; the financiers and their ways are eternally the same. Baron Shibusawa is an excellent type of the kind. His numerous suite, however, were not the well-assimilated Japanese business men seen daily on our streets, who look as if they were born in European clothes, and who have substituted the New York facial expression for the bland Japanese smile. They were for some reason real Japanese, merely masquerading in Western dress. In the group of photographs which they amiably permitted to be taken for the papers the awkwardly bending knees look as if they were reaching out for the kindly protection of flowing robes.

Local Distinctions.

The spirit of democracy, which lateshams formality, was the motive in the rebuke of a traveling salesman to a party of State Senators whom he met at the boarding house of an interior town. They were on their way to the capital, says the Philadelphia Times, and were compelled to wait over for a change of cars during dinner time.

Their conversation soon revealed to the other guests that they were newly elected "Solons," full of the dignity of their position, and anxious to make an impression on each other and everybody with whom they came in contact.

Their ponderous diction at table disgusted the salesman. It was "Will the gentleman from Bligeville have the butter?" and "Will the gentleman from Painted Post pass the bread?" and "Does the gentleman from Nowhere Junction care for the pickles?" and "Did the gentleman from Sigaboard Township enjoy the trip?"

Even the natives present began to squirm under the excessive formality of it all, so that there was a hearty laugh when the salesman, turning to the negro waiter, asked with fine burlesque of what the French call the "grand manner."

"Will the gentleman from Ethiopia bring another cup of coffee?"

Sympathetic Critic.

The first play ever witnessed by Miss Sparrow of Brooklyn was "Hamlet." She sat breathless and spellbound until the curtain had dropped for the last time, and not until she was well on her way home did she confide her opinions and feelings to her niece.

"I pitied Ophelia," she said at last; "yes, I certainly pitied her; but you see she didn't realize such a great deal, after all, her wits leaving her that way. 'Twas a mercy for her, but I couldn't help thinking 'twould have been better to take her right out of the piece when her head got so weak."

Some women show their age and some cover it with a coat of paint.

THE BOOMING CANNON

RECITALS OF CAMP AND BATTLE INCIDENTS.

Survivors of the Rebellion Relate Many Amusing and Startling Incidents of Marches, Camp Life, Foraging Experiences and Battle Scenes.

"A good many stories," said the Colonel, "have been told of that truce at Kenesaw, but here is another. My point of view was that part of the Union line nearest the rebel works. After the assault on the dead angle, June 27, 1862, many dead and wounded were left on the ground between the line we established and the rebel fortifications. Some of the wounded crept back to us during that afternoon and others managed to roll out of the zone of fire and creep back to us that night. The more severely wounded, however, remained where they fell until death relieved their sufferings. On the 28th of June there were no living left between the lines, and on the 29th a truce was arranged for the burial of the dead.

"Some of the bodies were carried to our lines, but most of the dead were buried where they fell, the rebel details and our own working to the same purpose. During the truce there was in front of our brigade a mingling of officers and men from both sides in the not very wide space between the lines. I saw General James D. Morgan of our division wearing a soldier's blouse, without insignia of rank, talking to General B. F. Cheatam, commanding the Confederates in our front. Cheatam wore a blue drilling roundabout gathered at the waist, and, like Morgan, was posing as a private soldier. Both, however, were recognized and identified, and Cheatam during the truce threw off all pretense of disguise.

"Among the men in company G, Fifty-second Ohio, was a young fellow, born and raised in Jefferson County, Ohio, who was one of our men to scale the rebel works. In some way he learned that a certain Texas regiment was in our immediate front, and that his elder brother was surgeon of the regiment. When the truce was on our Ohio boy mingled with the Confederates, expecting to find his brother, but on inquiry learned the surgeon had been sent back to Marietta with wounded that very morning, and so the brothers missed seeing each other on an historic occasion. The Union soldier sent verbal and written messages to his rebel brother, and after that never referred to the relationship. Did they ever meet after the war? I don't know."

"Of course they did," said the Sergeant. "I meet every day or two men who struggled against one another at Stone River or Kenesaw. And by the way, I met an old comrade at an evening party the other night whose face I had not seen for forty years. We were together in hospital at Nashville in 1862 and convalesced together under what seemed to us at the time intolerable restrictions. When we were transferred to the convalescent wards we were always hungry and although we were high-grade men we could not resist the temptation to hover about the dining-room door half an hour before meal time. We were shamefaced about it, but we were so hungry all the time that shame did not count, and we with a score of others formed every day about the door for a first rush on the tables and were often driven back with reproaches by the surgeon in charge.

"Now I never go to a refreshment or dining room at a reception if I can help it. But on this evening last week my wife wanted to see the table and the decorations and I was inveigled into the crowd waiting outside the door for seats. I felt as uncomfortable as I did in the hospital at Nashville, and was wondering if anybody else was ashamed of this waiting like children for dainties and sweets, when I caught the expression of disapproval and disgust on the face of a man just in front of me in the jam. His hair was gray or I would have said immediately that he was my old hospital chum. Then I remembered that my own hair was gray, and I held out my hand to greet in fact my old friend.

"He began at once, 'Like old times, isn't it? I never remember Nashville and how ravenous I was in that convalescent hospital, without blushing. Do you remember the day I stole an apple on the street? I think of it whenever a petty thief is brought before me in court. Do you remember Blake, who in a frenzy of hunger stole and devoured two pounds of cheese? He is on the bench out in Kansas and he spends all his spare time in buying cheese for hungry boys and hoboes. They have to take cheese or nothing because he remembers how cheese touched the hungry spot in his case.

"And do you remember," he continued, as we drifted to the rear, "the chicken pies that old colored woman sold in the market-house? Lord, how hungry I was then. I ate three pies at one sitting and they never feasted me. I never feel ashamed of that, or of stealing the apple, but I do feel ashamed whenever I think of how we hung about the general demenor of hungry dogs about that dining-room door, and I never feel quite comfortable at a function like this. Hello! Where's my wife? Where's yours, my boy? Deserters, both of us. Well, let's sneak out of the whole business. And we did, to recall memories of the hungry convalescents of 1862."—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Took Up the Stock. Stonewall Jackson had small worry

on soldiers whom he caught straggling, but is said to have laughingly condoned one instance. During a forced march in the summer of 1862 he stopped to consult with one of his general officers. The entire command had been passed, and as Jackson and his officers rode forward to rejoin the column the former discovered a private up a persimmon tree. Asked by the commander why he was so far in the rear, the private replied:

"Eatin' simmons."

"Persimmons?" roared Jackson. "Why, they're not even ripe yet."

"Like 'em green just now," explained the soldier.

"And why?" asked Jackson, softening a little with amusement at the fellow's laconic answer.

"To eat my innards up to fit my rations," was the answer.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Experience of an Illinois Veteran.
Comrade Jacob Miller, of Braidwood, Ill., had a most remarkable experience during his service with Company K, Ninth Indiana, and still carries a piece of Confederate lead in his brain, says the National Tribune. Comrade Miller enlisted at Logansport, Ind., in 1861. His first captain was W. P. La Salle, and his regiment was commanded by Robert Milroy.

At the battle of Chickamauga, Sept. 19, 1863, while in the act of aiming, Comrade Miller was struck by a musket ball which penetrated the forehead and he fell backward and was left for dead. Comrade Miller recalls hearing his captain say: "It's no use to remove poor Miller; for he is dead."

By the shot one of his eyes was knocked out of its socket, and the other was soon so swollen that he could see nothing. But he retained consciousness, and crawled forth from among the dead, after his comrades had fallen back, and made his way to the field hospital. The next morning, having a great dread of being taken prisoner, he started out to make his way to Chattanooga on foot. He could only see a few feet ahead of him by holding open the lids of the swollen eye.

Comrade Miller walked as far as he could and then lay down by the roadside. An ambulance driver, finding him still breathing, picked him up and put him in the ambulance in the space which had been occupied by a comrade who had just died. In this way Miller finally reached Chattanooga on Sept. 21, and there fell in with two members of his own company, and with them crossed the river in the evening and stayed all night with the company teamsters.

At noon the next day he had his wound dressed for the first time. Then he drew rations and with his comrades started across the mountains to Bridgeport, where they arrived Sept. 25. From Bridgeport he rode to Nashville lying on his back in a box car. In Nashville his wound received its second dressing.

Miller's two comrades sent a letter to their captain asking for descriptive list for themselves and for Miller, so that they could draw their pay. The captain answered, inclosing the lists, but added that he would never have included one for Jacob Miller had it not been for the testimony of his two comrades who were with him, for the reason that he was sure that he had left Miller dead on the field on Chickamauga. Indeed, after the battle, Miller was reported dead by his captain, and his name was printed in the newspapers among the killed.

Miller's friends in Indiana did not know he was alive until two months later. The army surgeons feeling sure that Miller would die, told him they would not give him any more pain by probing for the bullet, so it was left in the wound until he went home. Nine months after he was wounded he arrived home. Two surgeons operated on him and succeeded in removing about one-third of the musket ball. Seventeen years after he was cleaning his wound one day when a piece of lead dropped into the water.

Comrade Miller has no memory for names, but very vividly recalls all the little details of how he was shot and how he was left for dead, and finally crawled away from among the dead and dying.

Dodging Bullets in Battle.

The physical effects produced upon different men in the presence of danger forms an interesting study, but in many cases the outward signs, as indicated by the actions of the individual, in no wise measure the degree of courage or of fear, says the Century. The practice, for instance, of dodging shots, "jack-knifing" under fire, proceeds from a nervousness which is often purely physical, and has but little more significance as a test of courage than winking when something is thrown in your face. The act is entirely involuntary. A general officer, who was killed at the second battle of Bull Run, was one of the most gallant soldiers that ever drew a blade. Everybody had predicted his early death from the constant and unnecessary exposure to which he subjected himself. When under fire the agile dodging he performed was a whole gymnastic exercise in itself. His head would bob from side to side, and occasionally bob down to his horse's neck, with all the vigor of a signal flag in waving a message. These actions were entirely beyond his control, and were no indication whatever of fear. Dodging to some extent under a heavy infantry fire is very common. I can recall only two persons who throughout a rattling musketry fire always sat in their saddles without moving a muscle or even winking an eye; one was a bugler in the regular cavalry, and the other was General Grant.