

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

A CHOICE SELECTION OF INTERESTING ITEMS

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

Mr. Roosevelt wrestles every day with matters of state.

Turkey probably believes that no Stone is worth \$72,000.

Recipe for optimism: Take one healthy man and one good meal. Mix well.

Adversity may prepare a man for the life beyond, but it curtails his credit while here on earth.

We are fast getting back to first principles. One vandellian makes a specialty of imitating a monkey.

The statement that Limburger cheese is alive with microbes or anything else is paradoxical. Limburger is dead and gangrened.

Tolstoi says that money is a curse. Most people regret that it is not one of the kind which have a habit of coming home to roost.

It is reported that Limburger cheese will prevent smallpox. A majority of the people will be likely, however, to prefer to run the risk.

During the past year the German emperor has decorated 2,473 people. The undecorated German, like the dodo, will soon be extinct.

Pauline Bigelow, who predicted a war in six months, is said to have been sued for divorce. But perhaps this was not the war he had in mind.

History informs us of but one occasion when a boll on the back of the neck would have been a good thing. That was when Lot and his wife started to leave.

It is said that there are more than 2,000,000 brands of cigars on the market. The campaign cigar, however, always smells the same, no matter what name it goes by.

It is alleged that Russell Sage was recently swindled in a real estate deal. The man who did the swindling can either lecture or exhibit himself in the dime museums if he wants to.

A subscriber wants to know why it is that the persons who furnish tips on the races for a consideration don't play them themselves, and thus help themselves to the good things. We don't know why, unless it is that they can't bear to take the money from the poor bookmakers.

The Sultan of Turkey is giving away some of his wives to favorite pashas. The Sultan has a large supply of old and slightly passe wives that he can spare just as well as not, but hasn't he wit enough to see that his method of getting rid of them may be the cause of a good many of the troubles that are cropping out in Turkey?

There is nothing inherently sacred about dropping a slip of paper into a wooden box. Voting itself is valueless unless there is a definite, intelligent principle behind it. When the citizen falls through ignorance or stupidity or indifference, to perceive a real issue in the contest it can make no difference in the ultimate results whether he goes to the polls or remains at home. He will have contributed nothing but a meaningless slip of paper to the cause of popular sovereignty, and a meaningless slip of paper stuffed into a ballot box is no more potent for progress in a democracy than a meaningless slip of paper stuffed into a garbage box.

Michigan is the home of a warning example of the chewing gum habit. Of course, the person is of the feminine sex and, although not young, she is described by that well-worn adjective, "pretty." But that is not to the point. The point is what the doctors discovered after she had chewed gum for 18 years. They did not make the discovery in a day, nor in a week, for her case was first diagnosed by that comprehensive term "indigestion." But after a while, when all their remedies had failed, they decided to use the knife and she was cut open. Then this is what they found. The organs of the stomach which should have been at work aiding digestion were glued together. "What is this substance?" cried one learned man, and when his associates could not answer he sent some of the matter to a chemist, who reported, "Chewing gum." Now the young woman had not intentionally swallowed sticks of this cohesive material, but she had been masticating it between her molars for 18 years and particles had found their way into the interior of her body. The accumulation of these would have caused her death had not recourse been had to the knife. A word to the wise is sufficient. The foolish are born deaf.

Lots of men would flirt, if there were anything in it; if they did not know that every woman they attempted to flirt with would go off and tell about it.

"Another fire caused by friction." "How's that?" "Aw, rubbin' a three thousand-dollar policy on a \$2,000 barn."

"CHEERS FOR THE LIVING; TEARS FOR THE DEAD."



MEMORIAL DAY.

O'er the breadth of a great republic, From ocean to ocean borne, Wherever the stars of her banner Gleam out to the light of morn; From the depths of her grain-sown valleys, The slopes of her wooded hills, In the song of her wind-swept prairies, The rhyme of her peaceful hills, Comes the noiseless tramp of an army, Shadowy, silent and gray— An army, though vanished its legions, Yet lives in our hearts to-day.

To the men who from field and forum Uprate at the country's cry, Their lives, if their need, for the honor, Their honor for her to die; Who, seizing the gun for the plowshare, And grasping the sword for the pen, Went forth an army of patriots, 'Tis to these a band of a nation Its tribute of love will pay, Wherever the grave of a soldier Shall hallow its toll to-day.

Not with branches of yew nor cypress, But with roses and blossoms sweet; With amarant and laurel above them, And heart's ease fair at their feet, While softer than winds of the summer, And sweeter than roses bloom, Are the memories and love which gather And brighten each silent tomb; And though Time in his march triumphant Hounds all to his flag away, Yet the touch of the Great Eternal Is nearer than he to-day.

O'er these graves where all strife is ended, Where the past and its memories lie, Rise the grateful hearts of the people In prayer to the Lord Most High For the hope of a prosperous future, The gracious gift of His hand; For a great and quiet nation, A free and a fruitful land; For his angel of Peace, whose plinths Stretch over that land to-day; For the love that elapses as brothers The hands of the blue and gray, —Woman's Home Companion.

THE HEART OF MEMORIAL DAY.

"I really wish," said Mrs. Maxwell to her daughter Belle, "that you would be more polite to Mr. Curry." "I can't see why," replied Belle, with the independence of a true American girl, "that I should be polite to a man who is not my father. He is a poor fellow, and I don't care for him." "Indeed! I'm glad, then, that he's got no recommendation. I don't know of another." "The widow sighed and looked rather distressfully at her handsome but plump-spoken daughter. "Belle Maxwell," she said, "more and more every day do you grow like your poor father. He was just so proud-spirited—just so independent." "I'm glad to hear it, ma! I hope I may always deserve to be spoken of in that way. To be the daughter of one of the heroes who fell at Chickamauga, fighting for the Union and the old flag, and to resemble him as I grow up—I think that is glory enough for a poor girl like me. Poor, dear father! how well I remember how fine he looked in his major's uniform when he took me up and kissed me, as he went back from his leave of absence, just before that battle! I was only a little thing; but the recollection will never be blotted out from my memory." "Such a reminiscence as this very naturally set good Mrs. Maxwell crying, and for a moment the subject of their conversation was forgotten. It was brought up again by the ring of the door bell. "That's his ring," said Mrs. Maxwell, hurriedly drying her eyes. "Now do try and treat him well. Just think what a chance it would be for you, Belle! I know he likes you." "This was rather more than the widow had said yet to her daughter on the subject. She was a good-hearted woman, but the prospect of having Mr. Curry for a son-in-law had rather upset her usually level head. She had made a great many plans in secret, based on that desirable event. The death of her husband in the war had left her poor, with nothing to rely on but her daughter's musical abilities, the exercise of which now gave the two a very comfortable support. Belle was a good girl, as well as handsome and clever, and cheerfully labored for her mother and herself. She was probably as happy in her independence and in the love of her work and her home as any girl in the city. Some years having passed since the fall of Major Maxwell among the country's heroes, the widow's grief had become blunted, and she, too, was enjoying a certain happiness. That is, she had been, until the advent of Mr. Curry and his marked attentions to her daughter threw the good woman into a flutter of excitement and anticipation. Nothing is so disturbing to the average person as a remote and uncertain prospect of wealth; and the truth is in this case that Mrs. Maxwell was awake the greater portion of several nights, speculating about what would happen when Belle would become the rich Mrs. Curry.

The young lady herself was not in the least disturbed by any such prospect. The man was positively disagreeable to her. He was gentlemanly in his ways, cold and unemotional; one to whom generous impulses were strangers. He was devoted to the care of the large fortune that had been left him by his late uncle, a great war contractor, and was constantly looking out for chances to swell it by speculation. This was the last man that might naturally be expected to fall in love. But "beauty draws us by a single hair," and the first sight of Belle Maxwell effectually did the business for Leander Curry. He had been prevailed upon, against his custom, to buy a ticket for a charity concert, in which "home talent" was largely to be represented. The gem of the evening proved to be a song by Miss Belle Maxwell, which was heartily applauded and encored. The grace and beauty, as well as the pure, sweet voice of the singer, made a deep impression upon the vast audience, and they actually struck some sparks from Mr. Curry's flinty heart. He came, saw, heard—and was conquered. He became a frequent caller at the humble Maxwell home; and this condition of things had been in progress for some months at the time that our sketch opens.

All this time we have left Mr. Curry standing at the door, while our necessary explanation has been made. He might still be standing there, for all Miss Maxwell would do to admit him; and the widow, seeing Belle's perfect indifference, answered the ring herself, in a great state of vexation. She presently returned with the caller, who saluted the young lady, receiving a distant return. Mr. Curry was practical, at least, and never wasted time. The particular object of his call was made known before he had taken a seat.

"Miss Maxwell, I have lately bought a pair of fine trotters, and have not yet had them out on a long ride. I am going over to Ridgford to-morrow, and I should be pleased to have you accompany me. It is a business trip, but I think it will be a pleasant one. It will, of course, take all day." "The widow's heart leaped. Things were getting on admirably. For her daughter to be seen riding with Mr. Curry behind those trotters was almost as good as an engagement of marriage. She had never heard of his taking a lady out to drive.

The next instant Belle made a reply that gave her mother a chill. "I am greatly obliged to you, sir; but it would be impossible for me to go to-morrow. I have promised to sing at the public Memorial Day exercises in the square." "You should not decline on that account," the mother eagerly put in. "You can get them to excuse you. There are others that can sing. Go with Mr. Curry, by all means."

The girl looked at both her mother and the gentleman with a quiet but severe dignity. She was a dutiful child; but there are occasions when a mild reproof from child to parent is the correct thing, and it was so now. "I shall sing at the exercises, as I promised," she said, decidedly. "Ever since the war closed, from the time I was a little girl, I have taken part in the observance of this day, and I shall do so as long as I live. You surely can't mean to advise me against it, mother?" "No, Belle, you know I would not; but this is an unusual invitation—

"It must be declined," was the firm interruption. Mr. Curry was very much vexed, and was indignant enough to show it. He was also foolish enough to say some things in his vexation, which, while correctly representing his own narrow views, were very impolite things to say in this house.

"I am much disappointed, Miss Maxwell, at your refusal." She did not think it necessary to say that she too was sorry; for she was not sorry, and this was the last man on earth that she would tell a white lie to, for the sake of mere politeness. "And I am rather surprised," he pursued, "that you should prefer such a meaningless show to a pleasant ride in the country at this charming season." "Meaningless show! The blood of her heroic sire flushed up in the girl's cheek at the words; but she kept back her temper, and kept silence. "It has always seemed to me to be a very silly parade of false sentiment," the doomed man went on. "The soldiers enlisted as a mere matter of business; they were paid for their work; those that did took that risk at the start; the account was closed some years ago. For sensible people to get up these observances every year, to sing, and pray, and palaver, and have a great fuss with flowers over a pack of dead soldiers seems to me the very foam of folly. I wish—

"Mr. Curry, such sentiments are disgraceful!" she cried. "I won't sit here and listen to them. Mother, if you get any pleasure from this man's company you may stay here and enjoy it; I must be excused."

She abruptly withdrew to her own room. On the following day Mr. Curry drove his splendid trotters over to Ridgford alone, thinking along the way a great deal about his investments and alternating these reflections with others about the curious nature of girls. Belle Maxwell participated in the tender and touching ceremonies of the day; and many remarked that her voice had never sounded so sweet as when she sang "They Sleep the Sweet Sleep of the Brave."

A tall young veteran walked by her side as they went to the adjoining cemetery to witness the ceremony. There was much talk between the two, in the course of which she observed that he had not called upon her lately. "No," he said; "and I believe no man has but Mr. Curry." "If you mention that odious man's name to me again, I'll never speak to you," she said.

The tall young veteran was very glad to hear this, and he governed himself accordingly. And he conducted himself generally in such a way toward Belle Maxwell that before another Memorial Day the two were married.

Years have elapsed since then. Nothing in our country is more common than a sudden reverse of fortune; yet such examples are always surprising. It will not astonish the reader to learn that the tall young veteran became an inventor and accumulated a great fortune by his patents; but it may occasion a mild surprise when it is stated that Mr. Curry lost every dollar in speculation, and is now earning ten dollars a week in the employ of Belle's husband. And old Mrs. Maxwell, sitting by the happy fireside of her daughter, with her grandchildren about her, has often confessed to herself that Belle's way was the best.

The Hero's Grave.

"I don't reckon as we could find it at this late day, now." "Find what, Uncle Ted?" "Jimmy Dare's grave, Jimmy Dare, the hero o' Shiloh—one o' the heroes." "Who was he? What did he do? Tell me all about him."

"Why, in me! What's such lads as you know about war and so on. 'Twas in your father's time—yes, in your grandfather's, even." "You see, Jimmy an' me were chums from boyhood, an' I reckon 'bout the only thing we ever did differ in was our sweethearts; an' when the war broke out we was among the first volunteers from our section, fined the same company, and marched days an' days together, hungry sometimes, but often fished an' slept. Oh, me, but war is dreadful! Jimmy never got back to the old home nor to his lassie, Nettie Ray; and here I am without my good right arm—a sleeve empty, an' a crippled leg besides; la, la—but we fought in a glorious cause, an' we come out victors."

"But Jimmy, Uncle Ted?" "Jimmy? Why, that's who I'm a talkin' 'bout. Jimmy, you see, was a fair-haired boy, an' as I often fancied sort o' chicken-hearted. Shows what a fool I was, that's all.

"Jimmy, he an' me kept together for a time, went foragin', and I must say he could jist cook a chicken or turkey beautiful; he'd white hands like a woman, yes, an' curls, yellow curls. "The battle where he fell was at Shiloh; somehow we'd got separated, an' in the midst o' that fearful slaughter I saw close to me our colonel, a man we all loved, who had a beautiful wife an' baby, as we all knew. One o' the rebels leaped forward and was jist goin' to lay out our colonel, when up flew his arm an' he fell dead from Jimmy's shot. Then other Confederates sprang at us, and we had a lively time, and we all fought like tigers. Ah, me! ah, me!" "Was Jimmy killed then?" "Jimmy? Oh, fust thing I knew our colonel was down, wounded in the breast, as we found afterward. Jimmy bent over him, lifted him in his arms—in his left arm, for he still fought with his right—an' he sung out to me, gay an' cheerful: "Cover me, Ted, the best you can. I'm takin' the colonel to his wife an' baby."

"I tried to save him. I think they found out then the mettle in my good right arm; they'd ought, for they shot it away in less than ten minutes." "I begun to back out after that. I felt sort o' weak; an' as I went I wondered if Jimmy got away with the colonel. I had left the hottest o' the fray; there was jist then re-enforcements, an' an' I stumbled over dead an' dyin' myself most dead with pain an' loss o' blood."

"As I went on slowly like, I saw a slender, boyish form, a head o' yellow curls, among which was a crimson mass, an'—an' that was Jimmy." "Dead?" "Oh, yes; killed by a ball, but I couldn't see the colonel nowhere. So as I went away, where my arm got a little attention, I found that the colonel had been assisted off the battlefield by his own wife an' servant, who, sure enough, was lookin' fur him.

"That's the story o' my boyhood's chum; that's the reason old maid Miss Ray never married, an' I reckon you don't wonder I wished we knew where his grave was, so we could cover it over with flowers?" "I wish we could, Uncle Ted, but— with a tender smile—"the heroes are not all dead. Seems to me we've got one in our own family, eh?" "Tut, tut! I only did my duty, that's all, that's all; but Jimmy was a hero, true blue."

The Old Sword on the Wall. Through the warm spring sunlight, streaming through the window, sets it gleaming, With a softened silver sparkle in the dim and dusky hall.

With its tassel torn and tattered, And its blade deep-bruised and battered, Like the veteran, scarred and weary, hangs the old sword on the wall. None can tell its stirring story, None can sing its deeds of glory, None can say which cause it struck for, or from what limp hand it fell: On the battlefield they found it, Where the dead lay thick around it, Friends and foes a gory tangle—tossed and torn by shot and shell.

Who, I wonder, was its wearer, Was its stricken soldier bearer? Was he some proud Southern stripling, tall and straight and brave and true? Dusky locks and lashes had he? Or was he some Northern lad, fresh and fair, with cheeks of roses, and with eyes and coat of blue?

From New England's fields of daisies, Or from Dixie's bowered mazes, Rode he proudly forth to conflict? What, I wonder, was his name? Did some sister, wife or mother Mourn a husband, son or brother, Did some sweet-heart look with longing for a love who never came?

Frail quest! Fate forever Keeps its secret, answering never, But the grim old blade shall blossom on this mild Memorial Day: I will wreath its hilt with roses For the soldier who reposes, Somewhere 'neath the Southern grasses in his garb of blue or gray.

May the flowers be fair above him, May the bright buds bend and love him, May his sleep be deep and dreamless till the last great bugle call: And may North and South be nearer To each other's heart and dearer, For the memory of their heroes and the old swords on the wall. —Saturday Evening Post.

EMERALDS ADVANCE IN VALUE. Prices Go Up and Mining the Stones Is Again Profitable.

Columbia's emerald mines, which have not been worked since the eighteenth century, are to be re-opened and operated by a company of American and British capitalists. The mines, in the Chivor district, are practically in the same condition as they were in 1792, when they were closed by order of the King of Spain, because their operation was no longer profitable, owing to the low price of emeralds.

Columbia is a rich country and has many valuable deposits of gold, silver, and precious stones, but on account of the scarcity of labor the aborigines do most of the work in the mines, and they use only the rudest implements of wood and stone. The great difficulty that confronts a prospector in Columbia is the method of transportation. The country is the most mountainous in the world, and the only means of sending freight to the coast is by pack mules and by boat on the great rivers, which is most difficult and expensive.

"The diamond is no longer the most expensive gem," said an old miner. "As regards monetary value, it is far surpassed by the ruby and the emerald, and even the pearl is rated higher. The emerald is at present the most fashionable stone, and brings good prices. An emerald of medium size and purity that may have cost about \$50 a few years ago cannot be had to-day for less than \$250. Recently an emerald of three carats was sold for \$875, while one of six carats brought \$4,000. A diamond of exactly the same size costs about \$1,000. It must not be assumed, however, that diamonds are depreciating in value. Other stones, and especially emeralds, simply have risen in price of late in a surprising manner."

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"Wishing you every success in the sale of your Vogeler's Curative Compound and St. Jacobs Oil, I remain, gentlemen, "Your obedient servant, "GEORGE CLARKE, Gardener, "23 Beechcroft Road, Surrey."

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