

TIMELY TOPICS

The University of Chicago continues to be a strong favorite of the boss Santa Claus.

When a man guesses he can knock another man down he usually makes a rough estimate.

If a quarrelsome man has two ideas in his head they would probably fall out with each other.

Necessity is said to be the mother of invention—but as to the father thereof history is painfully silent.

The biggest hold-ups are the fellows who make a daylight job of it, first having stolen your confidence.

Ever complained that she had nothing to wear and her daughters have been working the same old plaint ever since.

A dispatch says that Helen Gould is annoyed by a crank who keeps sending her great bunches of American Beauty roses. Isn't it awful?

It has been said that King Edward looks perfectly at home in whatever he wears. This is a glad assurance that his crown will be quite becoming.

At a sale of relics of Edwin Booth in New York two letters to the actor from a woman who asked for "but one glance of your eye" brought good prices. Perhaps her husband was there when the bidding started.

Reporting a shortage of over \$3,000,000, the great Buffalo exposition cannot be said to "pan out well" financially. But the loss is distributed among so many stockholders, and the benefits of the fair have been so far-reaching, that "failure" is the last word to couple with it.

"So long as there is wood to saw in the world, I need no gymnasium," remarked a cynic, listening to a discussion as to where exercise was necessary for grown men. In the same spirit one might conclude that so long as there are intellectual problems to tackle, one needs no game of skill. Doubtless the realities should have precedence.

A Boston physician, who recently treated a street car conductor for an infectious disease contracted by holding paper money in his mouth while making change, warns people against this habit and the practice of wetting the fingers in the mouth while counting money. He remarks upon the swiftness and certainty with which paper handled by infected persons may transmit disease. "It is a matter of common experience," he says, "that the bank bill passes more rapidly out of one's possession than any other known article." Even those who scoff at sanitary precautions must admit that this is sadly, painfully true.

Hitherto it has been possible for the world-weary person to escape from the sight and sound of busy mankind by boarding a ship for anywhere. He could for six days or six months, according to his destination and his ship, be entirely free from all knowledge of the facts and rumors which trouble the ear ashore. Mr. Marconi has changed all that. Under the wireless system it is impossible to get beyond the reach of the daily interests of mankind. Eventually, perhaps, no ship will leave port without an apparatus for receiving Wall street quotations and bulletins of the events in every part of the world. Nothing will be left for the victim of nervous exhaustion but to enter a cave until some pestilent scientist shall discover an X-ray which will carry sound through opaque substances.

The dean of the women's department of one of our great universities declares that she no longer anticipates difficulties, but the unexpected evils which will remove difficulties. Timid by nature, she used to say that she could never survive the shock of finding a burglar in her room. One night recently she awoke, conscious that some one was fumbling at her desk. The room was quite dark; the clock struck one. She lay there considering what to do, not at all frightened, but very indignant at being robbed. Many minutes passed; the burglar still moved stealthily about. Meanwhile the dean had formulated a plan. Calling her youthful ventriloquist skill into service, she said in a deep voice, seemingly at the burglar's elbow, "Bodie, light the gas." Her maid in the next room, thus called by her last name, shot out of bed and the burglar shot out of the window. Investigation proved that the man's search had not yet reached the drawer containing the valuables. "He robbed me only of what I could well spare," the dean laughed—"my fears."

Those who are wont to shake their heads over the extravagances of this age give an extra shake when they contemplate the amount of ingenuity that goes to the making of and the amount of money that goes to the purchase of modern toys. There is hardly any article that grown up people use, either in the way of work or play, that is not reproduced in the toy world. The luxuries of the ballroom, the utilities of the kitchen, and wardrobes of the wealthy are all to be had in miniature, and to visit a playroom is to see ourselves as the toy maker sees us. The child of three decades ago was content with a hairless rocking horse and a

Noah's ark in which the goats were scarcely to be distinguished from the lambs; but now the modern boy demands that the horse shall have hair and a gait of its own, and that the maker of toy arks shall vie with nature in the creation of animals. As for dolls, when one remembers the creature of rags and tags which first issued out of that doll chaos, the family rag bag, and compares her with the finished wax maiden of to-day, who lacks nothing but a soul, and does not differ in this respect from human prototypes, one is convinced that this is indeed a world of progress. Of course dissolution arrives to the inhabitants of toyland more quickly than it does to those who live in the real world, and it is a question whether it is worth while spending much money on what is destined to be so speedily destroyed. But, judging from the growing variety of toys and the increasing number of buyers, this question seems to be answered in the affirmative.

Much is being said these days of "manifest destiny." One authority on destiny is seldom heard now-adays. Josh Billings is in his grave but in his time he had something to say about this matter, as note the following: "Manifest destiny is the science of going to the right place, before you get there, but that is the way it strikes me. The tru way that manifest destiny had better be set down is, the exact distance that a frog can jump down hill with a striped snake after him. I don't know but I may be wrong some more; but if the frog don't git ketched, the destiny is just what he is looking for. When a man falls into the bottom of a well, and makes up his mind to stay there, that ain't manifest destiny any more than having yure hair cut short is; but, if he almost gits out, and then falls down agin sixteen foot deeper, and brakes off his neck twice in the same place, and dies and is buried there at low water, that iz manifest destiny on the square. Mi dear reader, don't believe in manifest destiny until you see it. There is such a thing as manifest destiny; but when it occurs it iz like the number of rings on the rakoon's tale—or no great consequence onla for ornament. Man w'an't made for a machine; if he waz, it waz a locomotiff machine, and manifest destiny must git oph from the trak when the bell rings, or git knocked higher than the price of gold. Manifest destiny iz a disease, and it iz easy tew heal; I have seen it in its wuzt ages cured bi sawing a cord ov dri hickory wood."

POOR HEN WORKED OVERTIME.

But All Her Efforts to Hatch the Eggs Were in Vain.

A group of suburbanites congregated in the reading terminal, awaiting the opening of the train gate, a few days ago, were indulging in small talk, when a remark made by one of them caused a fellow-suburbanite to say: "That just reminds me. Speaking of jokes, I think I am as good-natured as any one when I get caught, but a little more than a month ago some of the men at the office played one on me that gives me just cause for exasperation, especially as I discovered only last week that the jokers had me for their victim. "One of my hens had gone 'broody' and a chicken fancier whom I knew well presented me with thirteen eggs from one of his prize hens, all done up neatly in a box. At lunch time while I was out the deed was perpetrated. Innocently I gave those eggs to my boy, with special instructions for setting the hen. That fowl worked faithfully with those eggs, even putting in overtime on some days. Finally when the three weeks were up she began to grow impatient and would cluck about that nest in a most disturbed fashion, eying the eggs suspiciously. She would, however, get on the nest again and patiently await results. "Several days ago I went to the hen house to investigate," continued the suburbanite, according to the Philadelphia Record, "and a more bewildered fowl than that hen was I never did see. She had as a last resort, and probably in anger, pecked every one of those thirteen eggs. The whole lot had been hard-boiled by my fresh office associates, which fact immediately made clear to me why they were all so much interested in that particular hatching."

Diplomacy of the President.
The velvety-voiced politicians who go to the White House get some jolts from President Roosevelt. When the executive meets the callers in the morning he has them rounded up in the reception room, and sometimes there are a score in the room at once. Mr. Roosevelt bustles in and ropes at the first shorthorn he sees, finishes with him in short order and goes down the line in the same brisk manner. No confidences are exchanged. The sly politician grasps the President by the lapel, puts his lips close to the executive ear and whispers his little tale. The President replies in a voice audible throughout the room, gives the whole snap away, not only revealing the object of the visitor's call but disclosing his action. In the case of a "turn-down" this is very painful.—Washington Star.

First Street Railway.
The first street railroad was laid in New York in 1822, between the City Hall and 14th street.
Warning to professional visitors: When a woman discovers a bedbug she traces it to the last guest who slept at her house.
Some people can absorb just so much information, and, after they have reached their limit, never learn any thing.

MUTE WITNESSES.

The soft lamp glids my desk to-night;
My books stand all a-row,
I turn them o'er, and to my sight
They seem to sorrow so!

The ancient rhymes of love and death,
That were such comforters,
Seem to know some living breath
That all about them stirs.

Story and fable, quaint and good,
They speak so bitterly!
Not as the hand that penned them would
That they should speak to me.

A little comment scribbled fine,
A finger print, a bit
At folded paper at some line,
Tells how we talked of it.

Alike the poet and the sage,
Gold-edge and russet-brown—
A penciled word upon a page,
A corner folded down!

The glamor of the verse is flown;
The cut leaves seem to bleed,
In the dim light I read alone
The books she loved to read.

Reality, Not Acting.

WON'T you give us some of your acting this evening, dear Mrs. Sterling?

Through the window we could see the rain sweeping over the lawn, as it had never ceased to do for the last forty-eight hours, and my guests lounged about the big, uncomfortable hall in various stages of ennui.

They had been discussing the vital question of how the evening was to be got through. Music, suggested by our Wagner enthusiast; dancing, by the waltzing girl, had been gloomily rejected. And then suddenly, as though smitten by an inspiration, the little blonde widow had turned on me, and burst out:

"Won't you give us some of your acting to-night, Mrs. Sterling?"
The truth was, in the days of her



"YOU WILL BE TOO LATE!" I SCREAMED.

maidenhood, the wife of Hen. Felix Sterling had toured three years as leading lady of a provincial comedy company. And now, she still occasionally amused her friends with such smatterings of the histrionic art as she possessed.

"O, yes. Please act for us!" came in a chorus from all parts of the hall. And young Charlie Fleetwood excitedly sprang up and offered to improvise a temporary stage if I would consent to perform on it.

I would not make any rash promises and the subject was still under discussion when tea was brought in, and with its fragrant presence carried our thoughts away from things theatrical to the more important matter of satisfying the cravings of physical nature.

Over the sodden lawn, battling with the wind and rain, half a dozen eager-looking men advanced and steered straight for the entrance porch.

We watched their progress in mild surprise, and then suddenly my curiosity was whetted by recognizing the foremost of the six as one of the keepers at the big lunatic asylum which stands, grim and silent, about a league from Winston lodge.

This man—a burly, hard-faced Yorkshireman—asked to see Mr. Sterling. My husband lazily rose and went with him to the door.

The keeper immediately commenced to talk to him in a loud, excited voice—so loud, in fact, that we could not avoid overhearing part of what he said. And that had the effect of throwing my guests into something like a panic, for the keeper spoke of a lunatic who had escaped from the asylum that morning after nearly murdering an attendant.

The lunatic was still at large, and had been seen, not half an hour ago, lurking in a plantation near our house.

"Hadn't we—hadn't we better have all the doors locked and bolted?" the waltzing girl suggested, with a shudder.

"What sort of a chap is he?" we heard Felix asking the keeper.

"Tall chap, sir. Thin, snow-white hair, face deathly pale, eyes like fire."

"Umph! No, we have not seen or heard anything of him. If we do, we will let you know at once."

"Well, have you prepared your program for to-night, Mrs. Sterling?" Charlie Fleetwood asked when we met in the dining-room.

"Don't ask questions!" I answered. "Let it be a pleasant surprise for you."

Afterward both question and answer proved to have a strange significance. We were sitting in the drawing-room after dinner. Felix was talking to the blonde widow about a curious book of heraldry he had been reading. He said he would show her the volume in question, and rose to go to the library to fetch it.

"Now, Winston lodge, which we have been accustomed to take each year for the sleeping season, consists of an imposing central pile, with two long wings extending east and west. The house was too big for our requirements; consequently we occupied only the center and the west wing. But it was into the east wing that my husband had now gone, the library being there.

He had scarcely left the room when I recollected that the book he wanted was not in the library at all; and, to save him the futile task of looking for it, I ran after him.

I crossed the hall and plunged down the narrow corridor leading to the east wing. My course was unilluminated, save for the dim moonlight that penetrated the mullioned windows; but I knew my way well enough, and marched along without hesitation.

I passed through the lofty picture gallery. Out into a musty passage I dark, and smelling of mousy tapestry. Suddenly, as I was groping my way along, I saw a slight movement in front of me; and there, but a few feet away, stood a gray, silent human figure.

"Felix, is that you?" I said. And I won't be positive that there was not the suspicion of a quiver in my voice.

There came no answer to the question, and the figure commenced to glide down the passage.

Without waiting to get thoroughly frightened, I followed it, quickening my pace a little. The mysterious form did the same.

Along and along we went, twisting and turning among the labyrinth of passages, and then at last, coming round a sharp corner, there was a shaft of light through a half-open door—the door of the library, where my husband was.

I darted forward, feeling quite brave, now that I was in the vicinity of Felix. But I was too late. The form glided into the room, silently closing the door, and I heard the key turning in the lock. I tried the door. It was securely locked. A few yards down the passage, high up in the wall, was a small window looking into the library. Directly underneath it was a heavy oak table. On to that table I scrambled, and glued my eyes to the dust-dimmed pane.

"Felix! Felix, turn around! Look!" Those were the words I shrieked as I dashed my bare hand through the window, and withdrew it, bleeding.

And my warning was not a moment too soon. As my husband knelt in a corner over a pile of books, the tall, white-haired figure was already close on him, an upraised, weighted stick in his hand, the raging fire of insanity gleaming in his eyes.

But I was just in time. On hearing my voice my husband sprang around, caught the descending stick on his arm, and closed with his adversary in a fearful life and death struggle.

With a cry of encouragement to my husband, I sprang down, bunched up my skirts, and raced back along the passage. I ran as I never had run before. I knocked against furniture in the darkness; I stumbled and fell, but still, impelled by a supernatural force, I rushed on.

I must have looked a remarkable figure as I rushed in amongst my guests. My hand was bleeding, and the blood had stained my white evening gown. My hair was half down, my dress was torn. But what did appearances matter to me?

"The madman!" I gasped, panting for breath. "The escaped madman! He has got into the east wing, and Felix—my husband— We must burst the door open. Come! Come!"

All eyes were turned upon me, but not a soul offered to move.

"Don't you understand me?" I cried, wringing my hands in my impatience. "There is not a moment to lose. My husband is fighting for his life! Why don't you come? Mr. Fleetwood, you hear me? Have pity—have pity!"

I sprang to Charlie Fleetwood and strove to drag him from the room by main force. What diabolical spell possessed them all that they were indifferent to my appeal? It all seemed like a horrible dream—unreal, grotesque.

"You will be too late!" I screamed, in a perfect frenzy. "Felix will be dead—strangled by that madman's fingers—strangled, strangled!"

I began to reel, clutching desperately at the air. And then, of a sudden, a strange, half-remembered sound rippled through the room—a sound terrible to listen to at first, yet giving me in the end an inkling of the truth.

It was the sound of hands clapping in applause. They thought I was acting!

I stormed and raved and shrieked as surely no actress could or would. I entertained and implored and struggled the while with the feeling of faintness and numbness that was stealing over me.

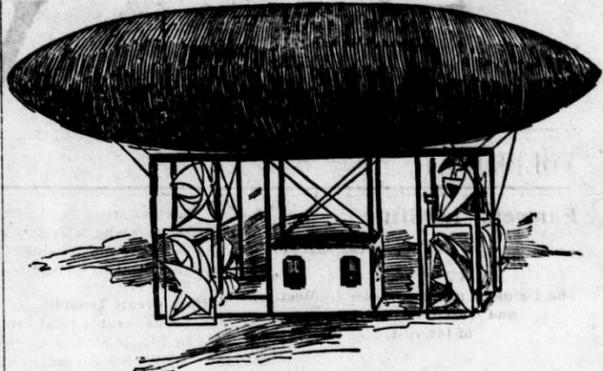
And then at length seeing that my efforts to make them understand were utterly useless, I suddenly stopped and summoned up a smile as I listened to their applause and congratulations.

Somehow or other I induced them to follow me from the room, telling them that I had something to show them in the east wing—a further entertainment, which my husband and I had prepared. Their curiosity was whetted and they consented to dawdle along behind me, laughing and chattering the while.

Only when they heard that last despairing cry of Felix did Fleetwood and one or two of the other men begin to gain a glimmer of the truth. It was with ever-increasing alarm that they hurried forward and tried to force the library door, and, finally, using the oak table as a ram, burst it open.

I have a vague memory of looking into the room and seeing several persons there and a struggle going on. I can recall the sight of Felix running out, pale and limping, but smiling, and of his holding out his arms to me. I went to meet him, and then—I swooned.—Utica Globe.

NEW AIRSHIP FOR WHICH GREAT PROMISES ARE MADE.



A model of a new dirigible airship was recently on exhibition in Chicago. It represents the results of five years' work on the part of William Reiferscheid of Streator, Ill. The model shows a contrivance consisting of two major parts, a cigar-shaped balloon, to which is attached a frame, on which are six propellers. Four propellers are used for ascending and two for steering. The power is supplied by a gasoline engine.

The owner of the machine claims it will do many evolutions unknown to the flying machine of Santos-Dumont. The Streator inventor declares his Eagle, for that is what he calls it, could be driven from Chicago to New York at the rate of 100 miles an hour, and that it could be sailed around a tower with its side touching the structure at all times. He also contends that the Eagle could be turned around all day in the same spot in the air. It is planned to construct a machine at an expense of \$10,000.

AWFUL BOER MORTALITY.

British Reconcentro Camps in South Africa to Be Abolished.

The horrors of the British reconcentro camps in South Africa are to be abated. The appalling mortality that has marked these camps from the beginning has at length aroused the Government to action and the system under which thousands of Boer women and children have perished unnecessarily is to be changed.

The reconcentro policy of England in South Africa will be one of the darkest chapters connected with the Boer war. Even Secretary Broderick, under whom they were instituted and maintained, does not defend them. The death rate in them has been awful. In six months 13,941 persons perished in them. During one month 3,156 deaths of whites are recorded, and of the victims 2,633 were children. The death rate for six months approximates 253



MISS HOBHOUSE.

per 1,000; and if children alone be regarded the death rate will exceed 400 per 1,000.

To an English lady, Miss Hobhouse, the modification of the system under which so many unfortunate Boer women and children perished is due. This lady, who comes of a good English family and whose interests in the Boer reconcentros is merely a feeling of pure humanity, visited South Africa last spring and sought to ameliorate their condition. She appealed to the Government to act and it did. It expelled her from South Africa. On her return home Miss Hobhouse again appealed to the Government to interpose and end the system under which Boer prisoners, or pensioners, were being judicially murdered. Nothing came of her appeals. She then published the facts she had collected in South Africa and the result has been an awakening of the British conscience. The Government felt constrained to take notice of the opinions and feelings created by the publication of her pamphlet and the order was given for a change in the concentration system.

ALPHABET ON A PINHEAD.

Wonderful Achievement of a Baltimore Engraver Excites Surprise.

H. A. Houseal, an engraver employed by George Walter, Jeweler, has accomplished a task in the engraver's art which eclipses the engraving of the Lord's prayer upon a silver dollar, which was supposed for a long time to be the triumph of fine work in engraving. He has managed to engrave the alphabet complete on the head of a common pin. Mr. Houseal, who rarely uses a glass in his work, can read the letters with the naked eye, and although there are few persons whose eyesight is so strong, a common magnifying glass serves to make them easily distinguishable. The letters range from left to right and are all capitals.

In the first circle around the edge of the head of the pin are the letters from A to M, inclusive. Within this is a second circle beginning at N and ending at Z, and directly in the center is the & mark. The diameter of the pin-head is barely a sixteenth of an inch, and it can be understood how small the letters must be. They are about one-fourth the size of the letters in the Lord's prayer engraved on a dollar. The work occupied about an hour and a half, Mr. Houseal occasionally leaving

it to attend to customers in the store. It was done with an ordinary engraver's tool.

"I had heard of some man who had done this," said Mr. Houseal in explaining his design, "but I did not believe it could be done, and determined to try myself. I first rubbed the head of the pin on an oil stone to obtain a flat surface. Then I heated the cement on the disk which we use for holding such small articles. When the cement cooled I screwed the disk tightly to the stand. The most difficult part of the matter to me was in keeping track of the pin. I used a four-inch lens on the job, but I am not accustomed to using a glass of any sort, and frequently I'd lose the pin and go digging around like a man in the dark. But I managed to keep pretty well on its track."

The regularity of the letters as they are seen under the glass testifies to this. Mr. Houseal says he will keep the pin as a curiosity. Mr. Houseal is 25 years of age.—Baltimore American.

To Preserve Old Chapel.

The lovers of the antique and picturesque architecture of former centuries in the City of Mexico are pleased at the announcement that an ancient landmark, the little chapel of La Concepcion, is not to be destroyed. It has been variously claimed for this chapel that it marked the spot where Cuauhtemoc surrendered to Cortes, also that it was the first Catholic temple in which mass was said in the City of Mexico. A recent investigation of these points among the best authorities on ancient history of the capital did not establish them positively, but the little chapel is without doubt one of the earliest places of Christian worship built in the city by the Spaniards and probably in the whole of North America.

The chapel of La Concepcion now stands in the rather neglected little plaza of the same name, which is the public stand for the heavy carts and wagons licensed for hire. It is to be rescued from this unromantic surrounding, however, and a park laid out about it. The chapel will be given a few needed repairs and protected by a suitable railing. It has been proposed that the new garden to be called Jardin Berriozabal, after Mexico's late minister of war.

The Groom Was Forehanded.

Ministers have many interesting and amusing experiences.

A local clergyman was engaged in conversation with a number of friends the other day, when each started telling stories of weddings he had performed. One of the party had this to offer:

Some time ago a great big fellow, roughly dressed, and a wee mite of a young woman came to him. They had no witnesses, and, in fact, did not care to have any. Nevertheless, a bridesmaid and groomsmen were selected from the household, and the ceremony began. They had promised to love and obey and all the rest of the service, when the preacher announced: "Kiss the bride."

The groom, on bended knee, hesitated a little, tried to say something and couldn't.

"Kiss the bride," said the pastor.

"Why, parson, I did, afore I came here at all," replied the groom, whose face had taken the color of a June rose. The witnesses burst forth in laughter, while the minister had all he could do to retain the serious expression which he always wore when wedding people.

Something Sharp Needed.

A young married woman who began housekeeping a short time ago went into a hardware store in a Maine town and asked for a biscuit cutter.

The proprietor, one of her friends, selected a small ax, and with a sober face presented the same to her.

Without smiling the young lady took the ax, put it over her shoulder and marched out of the store and to her home with it.

And now the young hardware merchant is in some doubt as to its being much of a joke on the young lady.—Boston Journal.

All the mean acts of his life are quickly brought before a drowning man or a candidate for office.