

## TIMELY TOPICS.

This proposed raising of the Maine has a double interest. It is also at the bottom of the late American-Spanish war.

There was a duel the other day near Phoenix, Ariz. The Paris fashions do not prevail in that section. A man was killed.

Prince Henry is said to be the home-liest man in Europe, but candidates for postmasterships do not tell Queen Wilhelmina so.

The author of "The Man with the Hoe" might bring himself up to date by writing a few warm verses on "The Woman with the Ax."

If it's true that uneasy lies the head that wears a crown, about the only reminiscence of the old racing days King Edward may have is an occasional nightmare.

According to a New York newspaper, Nikola Tesla is "preparing" to telegraph across the ocean by the wireless method. Yep. Preparing. Preparing is Nik's long suit.

Some of these days a maddened woman with a hatchet will make things interesting for the grocer who covers the sidewalk in front of his store with his goods.

In Wilkesbarre, Pa., a man thrashed his wife expecting she would bring action for divorce, but she merely had him arrested for assault. The man has not been born who can figure out in advance just what a woman will do.

Twenty cadets were found deficient at the recent West Point examinations, and were discharged. Every one of them failed in mathematics. There may be consolation to the young men in the fact that in Greater West Point, otherwise known as the world at large, many reputable and useful citizens are poor mathematicians.

All classes of people nowadays recognize the value of advertising. A public institution in an Eastern city recently had a number of unclaimed babies to dispose of. Publicity soon brought over a hundred applicants for the little strangers. A minister in Ohio has increased the attendance at his church by means of large display ads. He pays the regular rates, too, and takes care to get top of column and next to reading matter. He is his own ad. writer, and gets up his ads. in a bright, attractive manner. Verily, the methods of commercialism are spreading to all walks of life.

The peanut seems to be playing the part of "civilizer" in some of the foreign possessions in tropical Africa. Traders give a negro a bushel of nuts for seed on condition that he returns four bushels from his crop, and since the yield in good years is twentyfold, the black man generally has a surplus which he can sell at the rate of a shilling a bushel. From a single station in Senegambia there were shipped, in 1896, twenty-nine thousand tons. Small boys and scientists have long been in agreement touching the value of the peanut; now statesmen also will have to do it honor, since it seems likely to lead the native African into the paths of agriculture.

One does not need to be a lawyer in order to realize the force of Gen. Manderson's address before the American Bar Association, respecting the necessity of uniform divorce laws. No two States exactly agree in statutory treatment of the subject. What is cause for divorce in one State is not cause in another. The result is that the legitimacy of children is called in question, real estate titles are clouded and many other injustices which could be wholly avoided by uniformity of divorce laws in all the States. Nor is there any serious obstacle in the way of attaining such uniformity. A joint convention of representative lawyers from the various States would agree upon a desirable statute and the various Legislatures would undoubtedly enact the necessary legislation. Any Governor who should take the initiative in the matter might depend upon meeting with a friendly response from his fellow executives. And even if there should be a few dissenters a large majority of the States would reach an agreement which would greatly improve the situation. It is unfortunate that there should be any necessity at all for divorce. The severing of the marriage tie is perhaps the most serious act with which the civil law concerns itself. But if we are to have divorces—and there is small hope that we can abolish them—it is at least advisable that the laws governing them should be the same throughout the nation. It is the part of wisdom to minimize a bad business. The States should get together and reform the divorce

laws. Perhaps if they were to do that they would see the advisability for uniform legislation in many other matters respecting which there is a great and most undesirable divergence of statutes.

Most people who are not in good health know in a general way what ails them; some of them know what kind of food they ought to eat in order to overcome their bodily infirmities and prevent a recurrence of them. But people who have good health usually consider only their taste or their pocket-book when they order a meal. An experiment which one of the Boston hotels is making shows that others besides invalids are beginning to understand that it is important to have the right sort of food as well as to have it properly cooked. The cafe of this hotel provides not only a bill of fare, but a diet list made out by a physician and intended as a guide to the patrons of the house. It prescribes the food best suited to various physical conditions. To the fat man it offers a variety of dishes that tickle his palate, and at the same time check his tendency to grow fatter. The thin and anemic can procure the things which make blood and tissue and build up an enfeebled system. The new way of looking at the food question puts health first and preference afterward. It considers the needs of the individual, and makes practical application of the old saying that "one man's meat is another man's poison." It tries to make the diet like a well-stocked wardrobe, offering plenty of variety, yet designed for and fitted to the person for whom it is intended. Lilac is a charming color, but the red-haired girl does not need it to enhance her peculiar charms. Sirloin steak is a toothsome and desirable thing, but melons and coarse bread may be better for the full-blooded man who has a tendency to rheumatism. How one can fit his diet to his own needs is a matter which the physician can best decide. It is certainly easier to preserve health by the use of proper food than to regain it by taking medicine; and the prescription filled in a restaurant is pleasanter to take than one compounded by the druggist.

The presence of hundreds of youngsters of all ages wearing glasses in our public school should have admonished the school authorities long ago that present school methods or practices are largely responsible for the impairment of the eyesight of children. In many instances it is noted that before a child has passed through the primary grades it is found necessary to embellish its face with a pair of spectacles. While the present tendency to cover with glasses the face of childhood may be partly ascribed to the modern industry and persistence of eye specialists, it is nevertheless a fact that in the large percentage of cases there is positive impairment of vision and the glasses are indispensable to study and to good health. There is no longer any disposition to challenge the statement that visual defects have a positive and direct effect upon the nervous organization, interfering with digestion or heart action or causing headaches and mental depression. An investigation of the eyesight, or visual acuity, of children in the public schools of one city, has resulted recently in some important disclosures, among them being the fact that 32 per cent of the boys thus far examined have less than two-thirds of the normal keenness of sight, while 37 per cent of the girls fall below two-thirds of normal. It is also ascertained that the first three years of school life increase eye defects one-third. The marked increase in the visual defects in the first three years of school life is attributed to the greater concentration of the powers of vision in the effort to learn to read. In older persons, where a cursory glance at a few letters in a line of reading reveals the meaning, the effort to read is not attended with much eye strain, provided the type is of good size. In children however, the eye must take in the form of every letter in every word. Increased eye defects in the lower grades are also due to the fact that the primary rooms are invariably the poorest lighted. When it is known that eye strain has a deleterious effect upon the general health and that eye defects are uniformly accompanied by decline in mental power, amounting in many instances to dullness, it is easy to justify every movement on the part of the board, no matter what the expense, to remedy these defects and to remove as far as possible the causes of visual impairment among school children. The rooms should be better lighted and no text books should be allowed in the schools that are not printed in large type.

**An Inconvenient Bottle.**  
Collier's Weekly tells of an old farmer who had been to the metropolis, and was describing to his friends the splendor of the hotel at which he stayed. "Everything was perfect," he said, "all but one thing. They kept the light burning all night in my bedroom, a thing I ain't used to."  
"Well," said one wag, "why didn't you blow it out?"  
"Blow it out!" said the farmer. "How could I? The pesky thing was inside a bottle!"

## Science and Invention

After nearly thirty years of constant effort and great expenditure, it is ascertained that the earth's diameter through the equator is 7,926 miles; its height from pole to pole, 7,899 miles.

In Germany a furnace has been invented intended for burning low-class fuels, such as lignite and peat, and in which the combustion is intensified by turning into the fire the gaseous mixture obtained by the evaporation of liquid air. The nitrogen is first set free and the residue, containing at least 50 per cent of oxygen, is sent into the furnace.

Recently a new light system has been introduced into the village of Simonsheim in Wurtemberg. From a large central petroleum reservoir the oil from which the light is produced is distributed to the different lamps through copper tubes; the petroleum is then vaporized by special apparatus and burner. A large lighting plant of this system is to be put in the railroad shops at Stuttgart.

In this era of "world empires" interest in the sun's empire is hardly surprising. An English inquirer seeks to learn its size, and points out that three well-known comets of short period have orbits extending beyond that of Neptune, while one comet of long period—Donati—has a period of nearly two thousand years. If this last named comet really moves about the sun, it is calculated that the diameter of the solar system must be nearly 60,000,000,000 miles.

Prof. Boutan has succeeded in making snap-shot photographs of fish in the sea at a depth of about nine feet. His plan is to let down into the water a white sheet, and then attract the fish in front of it by a judicious distribution of toothsome bait. The object of the proceeding is to increase our knowledge of the movements of fish when not constrained by artificial surroundings or confinement. It has been proposed to lower cameras two or three miles in the sea and make photographs there by flash-light, but the enormous pressure at such depths would, it is objected, crush the apparatus.

It has been ascertained that but for the saltpeter furnished by the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky and by some smaller limestone caverns the United States would have been unable successfully to wage the war of 1812. Even during the Civil War these cave supplies of saltpeter were largely utilized for making gunpowder. Recently the question of the origin of cave saltpeter has been discussed anew in the Journal of Geology, and W. H. Hess, dissenting from the view that the saltpeter deposits are due to the formation of guano by bats, holds that they have originated from the evaporation of water which, as it percolated through the roof of the cavern, absorbed nitrates from the soil.

Russia authorities are displaying remarkable energy in connection with the utilization of Popoff's wireless telegraphic system. All the lighthouses in the Black Sea are to be provided with this apparatus, and several stations are to be erected on the shore, so that communication may be maintained between the shore, lighthouses and the warships within the radius of the electric waves. Two hundred complete installations of the apparatus were recently dispatched to Vladivostok and Port Arthur, and the work of fitting out the Russian warships in the Pacific is to be carried on with all possible celerity. The two ports are also to be connected by the establishment of intermediate stations along the Korean coast.

### VACCINATION.

**How the Discovery of the Preventive Virus Was Made and Applied.**

During the eighteenth century it was common talk among the country people of England and Scotland that milkers of cows never had the smallpox. At a time when this disease was one of the scourges of Europe such a fact naturally attracted attention. Physicians in the cities did not regard the country notion as worthy of notice. When an epidemic threatened they inoculated healthy persons with smallpox virus to give them the disease. Then it was treated from the start under favorable conditions. The chief effect of the method was to make the inoculated person certain he was to be seriously ill, while the un inoculated might possibly escape. Jonathan Edwards was one of the famous victims of inoculation.

It was left for an obscure country physician, Dr. Jenner, to recognize the scientific importance of the tradition about the immunity of milkers. By his experiments in 1796 he proved that inoculation with cowpox virus carried protection against smallpox. He wrote a pamphlet on his experiments and sent it to the Royal College of Physicians in London. The manuscript was returned with a contemptuous reply. The discovery was of too great importance not to make an impression, and during the fifth year after his first vac-

ination Jenner and other doctors vaccinated 10,000 persons in England.

In spite of the success of the process there were many in the early part of the century who doubted its efficacy. The experience of the last thirty years has demonstrated the value of vaccination beyond the possibility of doubt. In Chemnitz, Germany, a city of 64,000 inhabitants, there was a smallpox epidemic in 1870-71. About 54,000 of the inhabitants had been vaccinated. Only 1.8 per cent of them contracted the disease. Of the unvaccinated more than 46 per cent were ill. Among the vaccinated less than 1 per cent of the cases resulted fatally. Among the unvaccinated the percentage was above 9. Statistics of the armies in Franco-Prussian war show the same general results. The German soldiers were carefully vaccinated, while the French were not. During a wide-spread epidemic of smallpox the German lost only 450 men from the disease, while the French lost 23,400. In general it has been shown that the danger of infection is six times as great and the mortality sixty-eight times as great in the unvaccinated as in the vaccinated.

Vaccination is compulsory throughout most of Europe. In France the law is loosely enforced and the London Daily Mail is authority for the statement that 14,000 Frenchmen die annually from the disease, while it carries off only 110 Germans a year. The parents of every child born in England must, within six months after the child's birth, have it vaccinated by a registered medical practitioner or by the public vaccinator. In case a parent believes vaccination will be harmful to his child he can secure exemption by taking oath before two justices of the peace before the child is four months old. By such stringent methods as these England and other countries have prevented the recurrence of those epidemics which were so disastrous a century ago. The case is one where the ounce of prevention is worth several pounds of cure.

### Training Boys in Germany.

A writer describing in a Philadelphia daily the methods of schools in Germany, states that the manual training schools in Germany are especially intended for the class of boys who idle away their time before and after school on the street.

The regular session closes at half past two o'clock in the afternoon, and after this time the boys who, either through poverty or the indifference of parents, are not properly and healthfully employed must attend the industrial school for the rest of the day.

In the summer-time the boys, divided into classes, each under the supervision of a teacher, are trained systematically in all the branches of gardening. At other seasons of the year the boys are engaged at various light crafts in workrooms, such as making of baskets, brushes and brooms, and plain carpentry, where the use of tools is taught. Typesetting and bookbinding are taught to the advanced and older classes.

Each boy receives a small remuneration for his work when it is faithfully and obediently performed. The money, however, is not paid to him directly, but is put into a savings-bank for him, and from time to time he receives his certificates of deposit.

The girls are taught knitting and all kinds of sewing in the same systematic manner. Every lesson is made a class drill. The children work by dictation, all in the room doing the same work at the same time.

### A Failure in Coopering.

A certain man who was once a prominent Kentucky politician was more a demagogue than a statesman. He was, according to Short Stories, in the habit of boasting that his father was a cooper in an obscure town in the State—that he was "one of the people," and didn't belong to the "kid-gloved aristocracy."

The "general's" great falling being his fondness for liquor, it will surprise no one to be told that the more he drank the more loudly he declaimed his political sentiments, and the prouder of being the son of a cooper he became. During a political campaign, where his opponent was the Southern orator, Tom Marshall, he had been unusually noisy and offensive in his boasting regarding his obscure origin. In replying, Marshall said, looking hard at the general:

"Fellow citizens, my opponent's father may have been a very good cooper,—I don't deny that,—but I do say, gentleman, that he put a mighty poor head into that whiskey barrel."

### Good Shooting in Cambridge.

Years ago, when Bert Harte, fresh from the Pacific slope, heard the list of famous men living at Cambridge, he said to Mr. Howells:

"Why, you couldn't fire a revolver from your front porch anywhere without bringing down a two-volunteer!"

### Prison for Microbes.

New York's costliest small building will be the \$20,000 laboratory, 26 by 50 feet, which the Board of Health is erecting for bacteriological experiments. It is to be a steel "bomb-proof," with solid asphalt walls.

Learning seems to make as many mistakes as ignorance.

## NEW PROOF OF EVOLUTION.

Darwin's Theory Sustained by Comparing the Blood of Man and Ape.

The latest proof of the correctness of Darwin's assertion that there is near relation between man and ape is furnished by a discovery of the correspondence between the blood of man and the ape.

Blood exposed to the air coagulates—forms a jellylike mass. After a time the coagulum contracts and expels a perfectly clear fluid called serum. Lately experiments with this natural serum showed some queer results. When the serum of a rabbit was mixed with the blood of an animal not closely related to it, for instance a guinea pig, the blood corpuscles of the guinea pig were thereby dissolved. But the serum of the rabbit mixed with the blood of a closely related animal, a hare, for instance, did not affect the blood of the hare at all.

The serum of a horse works no change in the blood of the donkey, but destroys (dissolves) the blood corpuscles of the rabbit, lamb or man. The dog, fox and wolf readily permit exchange of blood, while the blood corpuscles of the dog are dissolved by cat serum. This, then, seemed to furnish a new and sure means for establishing blood relationship between animals. Experiments with human serum showed that it dissolves the blood corpuscles of all vertebrates, also those of the lower ape. But the experiments with the higher apes gave different results. Neither the blood corpuscles of the orang-outang nor those of the gibbon were dissolved by human serum, and human blood was carried into the blood course of a chimpanzee without in the least affecting the latter's condition.

These experiments serve to show that the blood of man and that of the higher apes must be looked upon as identical. It is absolutely sure that none of the tested serum of animal resembles the human blood as closely as does the blood of those three apes—the orang-outang, chimpanzee and gibbon. This highly interesting scientific discovery furnishes new proof for the probability of man's evolution from lower animals. It throws some light on the sorry experience had with transfusion of animal blood in the blood suffering human beings. Some scientists maintain that the sheep and man, the calf and man stand too far apart in the order of descent to permit intermixture of their blood without harmful results.

## HAS 237 DESCENDANTS.



MRS. NANCY A. MITCHELL.

Mrs. Nancy A. Mitchell, 84, who lives in Lyon County, Ky., is believed to have the largest number of living descendants of any woman in Kentucky, if not in the United States. She has 237 living descendants, including 10 children, 100 grandchildren, 120 great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren. Mrs. Mitchell has been married seventy years. Only one of her children died. She belongs to a church, five miles from her home, and rides horseback to attend the services two and three times a week. The church organization is seventy years old, and she is the only living charter member.

**Some Nineteenth Century Wonders.**  
If the telescope of the seventeenth century reveals to us myriads of suns, the spectroscope of the nineteenth tells us what substances compose these suns, and, most wonderful of all, the direction and rate in which each is moving. The mariner's compass easily yields place to Morse's electric telegraph, perfected in 1844, while the useful barometer and thermometer are certainly less wonderful than Bell's telephone and Edison's phonograph. Dr. Roentgen's "X" rays, which pierce the hidden recesses of nature, and, literally speaking, reveal the innerman; Marconi's wireless telegraphy; liquid air; the bacillus or germ theory of diseases, for a notable group of the latest wonders.

### Gold Product of Canada.

It is estimated that the Canadian gold fields yielded last year 1,257,802 ounces of gold, valued at \$28,000,000. Compared with the preceding year, 1899, this is an increase in ounces of about 250,000, and in value of \$5,000,000.

It can be said of almost any boy of 13 that he may be better looking when he has a mustache to cover his teeth.

## COAL MINERS TO STRIKE SOON.

### RAILROADS ARE PREPARING.

Cars Are Loaded—Many Collieries Idle for Lack of Empty Cars—President Mitchell Goes to New York—Pittsburg Fears a Strike.

Scranton, Pa., March 24.—President Mitchell of the United Mine Workers, accompanied by District Presidents T. D. Nichols, T. P. Duffy and John Fahr, have left here ostensibly for New York. Last night Mr. Mitchell held a long conference over the long distance telephone and it is believed that the departure of the mine workers' officials was the result of this interview. There are indications that the railroads are preparing for a strike. All the cars available are being loaded with coal while none is being emptied and returned to the mines. Consequently many collieries throughout the region were idle, owing to a scarcity of cars.

### Streetcar Men Strike.

Pittsburg, March 24.—A serious strike of the employes of the Monongahela Traction company, which has lines from Pittsburg to Braddock, Homestead, Duquesne, East Pittsburg and McKeesport, threatening a complete tieup of the lines, hinges on a meeting of employes now in session at Braddock. The men claim that the company is trying to break up their union, while the company asserts the trouble was brought about by their refusal to reinstate former employes who were discharged because they were obnoxious. Superintendent of Police Leslie has ordered the lines under police guard to anticipate any trouble that may arise.

### New Board of Control.

Olympia, March 25.—It can be positively stated that Charles S. Reed of Seattle will be the republican member of the new board of audit and control which will be appointed by the governor about April 1. For some time past it has been currently reported that Ernest Lister of Tacoma and Henry Drum of Spokane would be the democratic members, but no one seemed to know who the republican was to be. Reed, however, is now slated for this appointment, and unless something should happen in the next few days to change the trend of matters he will be the appointee of the executive.

### Pig Iron Prices Raise.

Birmingham, Ala., March 25.—Another advance of 25 cents per ton has been made on pig iron, making the total advance \$1.25 since November and \$1 within the past month. The sales by the local manufacturers were heavy, the purchases being for immediate consumption. A representative of one of the leading companies said today in speaking of the market: "The pig iron market is considered to be in a firmer condition than it was four weeks ago, when prices ruled \$1 per ton lower."

### Murder at the Dalles.

Portland, Ore., March 26.—A special from The Dalles, Ore., says: A man was found murdered on the railroad track last night. No clue to the murderers was found. It was thought that the man was killed by the cars, but when the blood was washed from his face a bullet hole was found under his eye, and the bullet had pierced his brain and broken his neck.

### McKenzie Must Stay in Jail.

Washington, March 26.—The United States supreme court has denied the application of Alexander McKenzie for leave to file a petition for a writ of habeas corpus, releasing him from imprisonment in California, under the proceedings of the circuit court of appeals for contempt in connection with his conduct as receiver of certain mines in Alaska.

### Bold Robbers.

Wichita, Kan., March 25.—The safe in the combination bank and drugstore of Holt & Co. of Geuda Springs, 50 miles south of here, was blown open this morning and robbed of its cash contents. The amount is not known, but some people place it at the apparently exaggerated sum of \$7000. The robbers got away without leaving any clue.

### Boers Near Queenstown.

Queenstown, Cape Colony, March 26.—The town guard has been called out owing to reports that a force of Boers is near the town. Business has been shut down in order to allow the employes to man the trenches and forts day and night. The Boers, who are said to be 20 miles off, are alleged to have crossed the railroad near Drummond.

### No Better Terms.

London, March 26.—The colonial secretary, Mr. Chamberlain, when asked in the house of commons if it was possible to change the offer of the peace terms to the Boers, said the negotiations were closed and there was no intention of reopening them.

Every slot machine in Salem was taken off the counter last week, in obedience to the Prohibition law.

Most of the reformers move along the lines of most resistance.