

TIMELY TOPICS.

The greatest book of the century, says an exchange, is the check book.

Now that even telephoning without wires is spoken of, there's certainly something in the air.

It must be quite unhealthful to live over 100 years, judging from the way persons above the age are dying off.

The general impression seems to be that the world's nineteenth-century run was a very fair accomplishment.

A vaudiville trust has been organized, but there is little reason to hope that it will throw out any of the old jokes.

Does Ignatius Donnelly know absolutely now whether there really was a Baconian cipher in Mr. Shakspeare's plays or not?

Instead of giving the expression a bicycle flavor by remarking a man has wheels, the up-to-date terms is he's off on his automobile.

The man who invented the photographic film died the other day in New Jersey. To the uninitiated this may seem like a thin excuse for fame.

People are so impressed with the wondrous possibilities of the new century they are asking where will they end. About the only answer at hand is they'll end in precisely a hundred years from date.

It conveys a rather striking idea of the growth of the country in population to consider that the two States of Iowa and Minnesota contain together more inhabitants than did the country over which Washington became President in 1789.

With a man dead from being hanged in a joke and a woman killed by sitting down at a chair that was pulled away, we do not need a didn't-know-it-was-loaded case to remind us that some folk are getting just too funny for anything but the penitentiary.

The first American deep-sea cable was laid last summer across one of the broad Alaskan bays, and the work of continuing the connecting land line up the Yukon valley is now going forward. Iron masts are used in place of timber. A hole is chopped in the eternal ice, and the pole soon firmly set by pouring a little water around it into the hole. This rapidly congeals, and unless disturbed in some other way will remain frozen forever. Evidently, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel," was not spoken of Alaska!

Heredity does not determine courage, or its opposite, but the constitutional tendency may be clearly marked through generations. A recent rescue of shipwrecked persons of Grand Manan is the subject of a report from our consul at St. John, New Brunswick. During a period of more than seventy-five years, grandfather, father and sons of a certain family have repeatedly saved life or piloted vessels out of danger. It is said that the Canadian government is to give the rescuers suitable testimonials. The whole world is a debtor to its heroes of peace. To strengthen the courageous purpose of others by brave doing or enduring is to fulfill one purpose of living.

It cannot possibly "make a man" of a boy to pour a peppery sauce down his throat; to pour hot grease on his feet; to pull him at night out of bed into the dirt and mire of the street; to compel him to persist in a gesture or movement till he faints "om agony; to make him stand on his head in a bathtub; or ride logs and sing senseless verses; to goad him into offensive replies and then challenge him to fight a higher-class man of more experience, with the result of being knocked out by a blow in the stomach and disfigured with cuts about the face; to bedevil him night and day so that his nerves shall be unstrung and study and success in examinations will become impossible, causing him to be expelled finally.

An illustration of the present eagerness of practically all nations for oceanic islands is furnished by France in its attempt at introducing sheep-raising on Kerguelen Island, about half way between Africa and Australia. These new sheep-raisers will be nearer the south pole than any other Pacific islanders and the most southerly people on an oceanic island. The island of Kerguelen for many years was claimed by both British and French geographers, but as it was not supposed to be of any special value no steps were taken by either government for the formal occupation of the lonely isle. In 1893 France formally annexed the island, owing to accounts from the French island of Reunion. Inhabitants of the latter found that Kerguelen had an abundance of fish, that it was a re-

sort for sea lions, valuable on account of their oil; that there were a number of good harbors, that lignite for fuel had been found. Moreover, as the island lies near the sailing route between Australia, the East Indies and Chinese waters, it would be a good place for a supply station. Although the annual temperature is only 10 or 12 degrees above the freezing point there is a strip or zone of grass on the island, and now the attempt will be made to begin the sheep-raising industry. If this can be combined with the other advantages there will at least be a chance for hardy colonists to make a living on this otherwise desolate isle.

A novel case has been decided by a New York court. A passenger brought suit against the New York Central Railroad for being deprived of his seat in the car. The question involved was whether a man, when he puts his valise or any hand baggage into a seat, thereby reserving it for his own occupancy, is legally and morally entitled to it. The court decided that when a passenger buys a ticket he presumes that he is to get a seat, and unless there is some unusual condition he is legally entitled to it. If he enters an ordinary coach where no seats are reserved and there is no trainman to usher him to a seat, it is the custom of railway companies to allow the passenger to choose his own seat. This practically amounts to a regulation of the company. Therefore, the court ruled, if a person occupied a seat and then for any reason left it without in some way marking it as reserved by himself and returned to find it occupied by another passenger, he has no right to ask that passenger to give up the seat. If, however, he leaves his cane, umbrella or hand bag in his seat when he goes to the platform to buy a paper, or for any purpose, and finds his baggage moved and the seat occupied by another, he has a legal right as well as moral right to that seat. The court further held that a passenger was entitled to but one seat, and could not reserve one seat in an ordinary coach while occupying another seat in a smoking car. This decides a point which has been raised thousands of times on railway trains.

In its broadest statement the problem of the world's economy is to develop and give scope of individual originality, the benefits of whose exercise are registered in individual character as well as in objective results. The English economist, Marshall, however, declares that one-half of the power of human initiative is suppressed by the present social order, and it is not difficult to accept the statement. The happy instances where individuals manipulate circumstances so as to bring out striking results are rendered the more conspicuous by the number of other individuals who entirely fail not only of such achievement but of anything comparable thereto. And yet it is known that these others grade only somewhat below the first in capacity. Of all the stupendous waste exhibited in the physical and moral world this is perhaps the most tragic in character and consequences. Yet it is enacted unobtrusively and with little dramatic effect. It is typified by, the circumscribed career of the working class boy who, at 14 years, passes from the influence of the "graded" system of education to "tend a machine" for ten hours a day. The lot of the few who enjoy more elastic and extended educational opportunities and a more adequate field of action thereafter is more in the public eye. There, however, is not the lot of "the great majority." Among the latter there is no inconsiderable proportion whose power of individual initiative is but meagerly developed and whose potential contribution to the world's enterprise is never realized. There can be no doubt that the dominant aim of the century which has just closed has been commercial rather than humanistic. It has been the century of wealth-making. It has launched an entire series of world's fairs. It has established free public schools and abolished slavery, both of which acts mean accelerated material development. It has built great cities with their lack of art. It has gone haltingly forward with its newly demanded factory laws. It has neglected persons as conscious objects. It has trusted for salvation to the instinct of gain. It has—perhaps with some twinges of conscience—secured all men that the current waste of flesh and brain was inevitable and that there could be no better way. The problem of this century is to work out that higher economy in which there shall not only be a still better directed effort to effect material saving but in which the emphasis shall be shifted from the material product to the human agent—in which social advance rather than the instinct of profit-making or even of vast organization shall more effectually dictate action. This does not mean the retarding of material progress. Quite the contrary. The better the man the better his product. And a century whose conscious effort shall be to make all existing progress converge upon the development of its people and upon insuring scope to their capacities will realize a peculiar quality and profusion of productive expression.

HOW WELL IT HAS LINKED THE TWO TOGETHER!



MONUMENT FOR THE SOLDIERS.

A monument for the soldiers!
 And what will ye build it of?
 Can ye build it of marble, or brass, or bronze,
 Outlasting the Soldier's love?
 Can ye glorify it with eagles,
 As grand as their deeds, that writ,
 From the inmost shrine of their soul of this
 To the outermost verge of it?
 And the answer came: We would build it
 Out of our hopes made sure,
 And out of our purest prayers and tears,
 And out of our faith secure;
 We would build it out of the great white
 truths
 Their death hath sanctified,
 And the sculptured forms of the men in
 arms,
 And their faces ere they died.
 And what heroic figures
 Can the sculptor carve in stone?
 Can the marble breast be made to bleed,
 And the marble lips to moan?
 Can the marble brow be fevered?
 And the marble eyes be grieved?
 To look their last, as the flag floats past,
 On the country they have saved?
 And the answer came: The figures
 Shall be all brave and fair,
 And, as befitting, as pure and white
 As the stars above their grave!
 The marble lips, and breast and brow
 Whereon the laurel lies,
 Beseech us right to guard the light
 Of the old flag in the skies!
 A monument for the soldiers!
 Built of a people's love,
 And hallowed and decked and panoplied
 With the hearts she built it of!
 And see that ye build it stately,
 In pillar and niche and gate,
 And high in pose as the souls of those
 It would commemorate!
 —James Whitcomb Riley.

CROOKSIE.

HE had never known any other name than Crooksie Peters, though there was a rumor afloat in the tenements that he had once been called Jerome, or Gerald—they had forgotten just which. What did it matter anyway? Crooksie was far more appropriate, for the only straight thing about him was the pair of little white pine crutches.

His memories of home were vague. There was a misty outline of a big, red-faced man, who stumbled in late, and went to sleep in the broken rocking chair, with his mouth wide open. There was a woman, too. Crooksie was more afraid of her. She had eyes that burned you, somehow, and straight, black hair, with gray in it. Nance, people called her.

Once the man went away, but the woman stayed at home, and kept the door locked and the old rickety bed against it, too. One day, just at evening twilight—that interval of lull before the noises of the night began, two horses came down the narrow street and stopped at Crooksie's door. The windows in the court were raised and grimy faces peered out.

Crooksie didn't know just what happened; but there was loud talking, and then the door gave in, and two men carried Nance, kicking and screaming, down the stairs and drove away. And Jackie Bollinas had sat until dark on the curbing singing over and over, in a drowsy monotone, "Crooksie's Nance has gone in the patrol wagon." Crooksie's Nance has gone in the patrol wagon.

All this was long ago when Crooksie was only a child. He was nearly 12 now. Other tenements had opened their doors

to him, and there had been a great deal to do. There were babies to mind, and errands to go, and ever so many other things besides. As for Nance, he had never seen her again.

"I say, Crooksie, does yer want ter go out ter the graveyard to-morrow?" asked Jackie Bollinas one evening. Jackie sold papers and was authority on the news of the day.

"There's goin' ter be a big time out there—bands playin', an' speeches, an' real cannons, an' everybody in their best clothes! It's Mer-morial day, for the heroes, yer know?"

"What's them?" questioned Crooksie, Jackie scratched his head. The crown of his hat was missing; that was convenient at times.

"Well," Jackie answered reflectively, "them's fellers what—what fights, or somethin', an' then goes an' dies, an' every year the people goes out ter the graveyard an' takes flowers, an' sings, an' prays, an' gits a hollerday. It's nifty. Let's me an' you go."

The first ray of light found Crooksie awake the next day. He knew just where in a neighboring court a milkweed had opened some fuzzy yellow blossoms, and the heroes should have them, every one.

It all seemed beautiful out there in the cemetery. In the tenements death meant a black box for those who went and a black bottle for those who were left behind. But this little world of grass and sunshine where the birds sang and the flowers bloomed was different.

The exercises had already begun, and the eager, surging throng pushed and crowded on its way to the soldiers' plot. Once the boys were pressed almost under the feet of a big black horse.

The lady who was driving drew the reins sharply and stopped. The boys stared hard at her.

"Ain't she a pretty one, though?" whispered Crooksie, and Jackie nodded.

"Sure!" he said.

There was something in the little bent figure, and the pinched, pain-scarred face of Crooksie that touched the pretty lady, for she leaned suddenly toward the boys and smiled.

"Wouldn't you like to ride?" she asked. Crooksie's heart gave a great bound, and then stood still. He had never ridden in all his life; but now something was choking him. He shook his head, and the lady drove up the hill alone.

The morning wore on and noon came. Children grew tired and cried, with their little faces hidden in their mothers' skirts, or went to sleep on the green turf. Women sat singly or in groups on the copings and ate sandwiches and boiled eggs. Thus does life assert itself in the presence of death.

At last the memorial address was over, and the heroes below the Stars and Stripes slept under a quilt of flowers. The volley had been fired, and the cannon's deep-mouthed cry went echoing through the hills.

Then there was a terrified shriek. "Runaway! Runaway!" somebody called. "Look out for the runaway!" and a big black horse came plunging down the narrow drive. The phaeton held the pretty lady. People screamed and scattered like frightened sheep. There was not a man among them who dared to stop the beast.

Near the foot of the hill a tiny figure stood, with one little crutch outstretched. "Crooksie! Yer durned fool!" screamed Jackie Bollinas. "Crooksie—"

"Get the kid out of the way!" yelled a man. "He's no good!" and the women shut their eyes.

There was a crash. The horse had struck something and stood still; a policeman caught him by the bridle.

It was hours before Crooksie showed signs of returning to life. Then there was a rushing sound in his ears, like the wind in the pines; he was drifting somewhere, and patches of red and yellow light danced before his eyes.

"He's coming round at last," said the doctor.

Then Crooksie felt a soft, cool hand on his, and looked up, straight into the face of the pretty lady.

The night lamp shed a tender glow through the dainty room and rested lovingly on the little bed.

Crooksie had never seen such a room before. He tried to sit up, but fell back with a cry of pain and lay quite still.

"My precious little boy," said the pretty lady. "My dear, brave little hero."

Crooksie's eyes had a question in them and the doctor raised him on the pillow.

"Yer didn't mean me?" he said.

"Cause I'm crooked, yer know, and there ain't any crooked ones, is there?"

"Crooked what, dear?" asked the lady.

"Herod," he said with an effort. "Is there any with bad backs, an' legs that are sort of wabby?"

The big doctor laid him suddenly down and walked away, but the pretty lady knelt beside the little bed and took Crooksie's hands in both of hers. Hot tears were blinding her, but to a woman it falls this duty of taking the pilgrims half way to heaven.

"Dear little man," she said, "there are all sorts of heroes; big ones and little ones, white ones and black ones; yes, dear—and crooked ones, too."

"An' do they put crooked ones out where the grass an' the birds is?" was the eager question.

"Yes."

"And will they give 'em flowers—v'lets an' perrywinkles an' pinks?"

The little voice was growing very weak.

"Yes, dear," said the lady, "and the backs are all good in the land where the heroes go, and the legs will all grow strong."

A happy smile glowed for a moment on the little face, and Crooksie gave a long, contented sigh. "If Jackie—could only know," he said.

Next morning an early sunbeam peeped aslant through the curtain. It gilded a pair of tiny idle crutches and kissed a little sleeper. Some one had placed a sprig of mountain laurel in the childish hands, for the world had lost another hero.—Indianapolis Press.

How Flags Wear Out.

It costs money to fly even two small flags every day in the year. The two small ones on the east and west fronts of the Capitol, each about three yards long, which is small for such an immense structure as the Capitol, fray out so fast that it costs one hundred dollars a year to replace them. They are darned every day, and on windy days probably two or three times. Even with all the economies, one hundred dollars worth of fine wool floats off into the air in such fine particles that never a trace of it can be found even at the foot of the two flagstaves.

Man is the wonder of nature.—Plato.

THEIR OWN POLE.

It Furnished More Fun than if It Had Been Stolen.

Five wicked students were in a barber's shop getting their hair cut and parted in the middle. All this took to quite late in the night, and then one of them said:

"Barber, what will you take for your sign pole?"

"Ten dollars," replied the artist, smilingly.

"Here is your money," said the student, who was a member of the winning football team that season, and so had only to write home at any time for a check. "Sign this," and he drew up a bill of sale. "Boys, help me home with my load." And the little cavalcade went down the dimly-lighted street with the singular burden upon their shoulders.

"Hi, there!" yelled a policeman, whom they had tried to pass slyly, "what are you doing with that barber's pole?"

"That is our business," grimly replied the football player.

"It is also mine," rejoined the policeman. "Come with me to the station, and bring that pole with you."

"We cannot afford to carry it away from its proper destination," said one of the students.

"Never mind," growled the policeman. "I'll get it there," and he summoned help, and conducted the whole procession to the police station.

"Boys," said the sergeant, after they had ranged themselves in front of him, "I'm sorry, but this bit of fun will cost you \$5 apiece."

"Perhaps before we are fined, you would like to look at this strip of paper?" inquired the ball kicker.

"Why," exclaimed the sergeant, reading the bill of sale, "here is an awkward mistake. This is your pole."

"We had thought so," meekly replied the student.

"Young men," said the sergeant, "you are discharged. Officer, go back to your beat."

"Will you kindly instruct him to take the pole where he got it?" inquired the student.

"Certainly," replied the sergeant, "that is your right," and the striped stick of timber was tugged back again by the disgruntled myrmidon of the law.

The students again shouldered their tapering load and started down another street. They soon met another policeman. This time they did not attempt any evasion.

"What're ye doin' with that beam of wood?" shouted the officer.

"Our business," sang the boys.

"Your business seems to be the thief business," said the officer. "Come with me to the station."

"We will not carry the pole," said the students; "but if you want to, we'll swear not to run for it."

The officer believed them after they had repeated it in Latin, and being a large, strong man from the Tipperary regions, just about managed it. He was soon before the same sergeant mentioned above.

"It's their pole," shouted the sergeant, as soon as he saw them. "Take it back where you got it."

"Why didn't you tell me?" grumbled the officer, between breaths, on the way back.

"You said we were thieves, and how could you believe thieves on a question of property?" replied the students. And they started once more for home.

Again and again they were escorted to headquarters, until they began to feel quite well acquainted with the sergeant.

The sixth or seventh policeman they met was a smaller man, and they took particular pains with him. They yelled, whistled, sang "Good-night, Ladies," and marched four times around him in solemn procession. He simply thanked them for the entertainment.

"Why don't you arrest us?" one of them cried.

"There's been a general alarm sent all over the city," replied the peace-preserver, "to the effect that if we met five men with a pole, don't molest 'em, as they're harmless lunatics on de way to the asylum to start a barber's shop there."—Weekly Telegraph.

Most Curious Charity.

One of the most curious charities in Surrey has just been distributed in the village of Wotton. In 1718 a resident named William Gianville died, leaving a will which directed that he should be buried in the churchyard "six yards underground," and that 40 shillings apiece should be paid annually to five poor boys of the parish, who, on the anniversary of his death, with their hands laid on his gravestone, should repeat by heart the Lord's prayer, the creed and the commandments, read First Corinthians, 15, and write two verses of the chapter. Lately the number of boys participating in the charity has been increased from five to seven. This year sixteen boys offered to compete, but only eleven attended. The first seven were successful and the unsuccessful boys were each presented with half a crown, while the five non-competitors received 2 shillings each.—Pall Mall Gazette.

Watch out that your paganism is due to the fact that you talk a piece of gasp surprisingly well.