

**TIMELY TOPICS**

It is getting to be a long time between scandals.

The mill of to-day grinds with the water that has passed—into steam.

"Conscience," says the Manayunk philosopher, "is that within us which tells us when somebody else is doing wrong."

Spain talks of abolishing her navy. Perhaps she fears that next time she would be compelled to pay for the court of inquiry.

Women are to have a direct voice in the management of the Methodist Church hereafter instead of running it by proxy, as of yore.

The women of Germany are about to be granted the right of free speech. After having been silent so long they will probably have a good deal to say.

According to statistics just published, the Swedes are the tallest people in the world. But it may be noted that the statistics were published at Stockholm.

It will now be interesting to watch the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and see how a great educational institution gets along without a football department.

A member of the congregation at Marshall Springs, Ky., fired a revolver at the preacher, but missed him. Kentuckians are in danger of losing their reputation as marksmen.

One of the greatest reforms in the history of Kentucky has been instituted. The Confederate Veterans' Association of that State has passed a resolution to recognize no military title not won in war.

The New York Press in a treatise on names claims that to-day Reginald Egmont Montague and Howard Cecil de Vries are shoveling hash in a suburban restaurant while Sir Peter Gubbins and William Smith are doing the world's work.

Measurements of salmon leaps may now be included in high-jump records. Standards were erected below waterfalls by Norwegian fishery commissioners. The fish are credited with a maximum of twenty feet in the official returns. Contemporary jumpers on land must own that the salmon is a worthy competitor.

The funny men will have to revise their mother-in-law jokes. A Chicago man was so fond of his legal relative that he employed detectives to help him find her after she had moved out of his house. Of course, the fact that she took a sofa with her in which the man had hidden \$500 may have influenced him, but this should not mar the incident for the professional jester.

The divorce evil is not an evil per se. It is the result of an abuse of a means of relief which has a definite status in the law and in society. The remedy is not to be found in any extreme, but in a sensible, practical, conservative course, which takes account of facts and conditions as they exist. And, above all, no plan should be adopted which imposes punishment or hardship on the innocent for the wrongs of the guilty.

The man who composed "Home, Sweet Home," never had a home. The man who composed "On the Banks of the Wabash" never had a bank. The man who composed "Baby Mine" never had a mine. The man who composed "My Bark is on the Sea" never had a bark. The man who composed "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp" never owned a tomato can. The man who—but probably we have carried this far enough.—Kansas City Journal. But why not carry it further? The man who wrote "After the Ball" never batted his eye. The man who wrote "Just as the Sun Went Down" never had a sun. The man who wrote "Just One Girl," however, probably had half a dozen. The further you carry it the more interesting it becomes.

Dr. Vial, of Paris, hypnotized a Miss Thorne, an Australian lady, sitting opposite him in an omnibus. He did it to give his power to another physician who was with him. The doctor compelled the girl to follow him to his office, where, in the presence of several physicians, other experiments were conducted. For example, when he ordered her to stab a freetender across the street Miss Thorne seized a knife and started immediately. Dr. Vial then roused her from the trance, explained everything, apologized and offered to pay any fee demanded. Miss Thorne went home dazed and afterwards was very ill. She told her brother what had happened, and he, after consulting the doctor soundly, sued for damages. It is difficult to see wherein

a doctor has any more right to drag a person around by her mind than by her ear. Sooner or later the courts will have to decide.

Easy divorces granted by American courts are not valid under the laws of Canada. The decision in a recent case should be a warning to divorced people making excursions across the boundary line between the United States and the dominion. They may be married according to law on the side of the line and not married on the other. A few years ago a woman named Wood living in Toronto was married to Dr. Barnhardt of the same place. Not very long afterward Dr. Barnhardt slipped over to Detroit, remained there long enough to procure a legal residence under the laws of Michigan and then procured a divorce from his Toronto wife. Probably she was in collusion with him in these proceedings. But that question was not raised at any subsequent time. After the divorce she married Pendrill of Toronto. Except the divorce episode at Detroit it was a Toronto affair from first to last. This marriage proved unsatisfactory to the husband, but he could find no cause for divorce. He therefore caused his wife to be prosecuted criminally for bigamy in marrying him while she had not a legal divorce from Dr. Barnhardt, her former husband. In this suit the decision in the case of Earl Russell, tried in the English House of Lords, was followed. It was decided that an American divorce is not valid in any part of the British empire. The case was appealed and may go to the highest British courts. But it has caused much anxiety in all the border cities, where many divorced people under American laws have remarried and are residents. The enforcement of the decision would unmarry in every case American divorced people if they had remarried and should visit England on a tour of foreign travel.

Thomas Nelson Page, whose opinion in a matter of literature commands respect, seems in a recent interview to feel that things literary are at present in a bad way. "People no longer ask," said Mr. Page, "if a book is a work of art, but if it is one of the half dozen best selling books of the year." This tendency, of course, results in the neglect of the valuable and the permanent, and in the cultivation of the ephemeral, which is a courteous equivalent of trashy. Mr. Page no doubt has substantial reasons for the opinion he expressed. But it is only natural, in the opinion of the Chicago Tribune, that a man who is in the midst of the fight should be somewhat disturbed by the unexpected strength of the enemy and should not at first be aware that perhaps the foe he is confronting have always existed and seem new and strange only because they are now in a somewhat different guise. The complaint about the trashy has been the diversion of the critics of all ages. Mr. Kipling assures us in one place that the cave men felt that the days of the true romance had passed away, and in another that the primitive poet who wrote tribal lays was met with the remonstrance that "his work was pretty, but was it Art?" One can read in the publisher's preface to the first edition of Milton's lyrical poems that if the publisher had wished to make money he would have published something else, "for that this age hath no just taste and would prefer other things." In a later generation Pope has immortalized the "maudlin poetesses" and "rhyming poets" who "raged and raved" till he thought that "all Bedlam or Parassus had broke loose." And to come down to modern times, if any one will take the trouble to resurrect the trash of 1850, now happily buried, he will have more tolerance for the trash of to-day. There is still another excuse for the present age, however, besides that to be found in the fact that it is little, if at all, worse than its predecessor. The standard of taste is lowered by the tremendous increase in the number of readers. Thousands of men and women have as yet no test for a book except its popularity. After they have read for some time they will begin to discriminate for themselves, but at present they go with the tide. The noble army of novel readers is recruited largely from this class of persons. But is the fact that a large proportion, say even the larger part, of the reading public is now occupied with worthless novels to be taken as a proof that there is not still a "fit audience, though few," which listens to the words of the best writers both of the past and of the present? And is there any way of showing that that audience is smaller now than before? On the contrary, may it not be larger? The sale of "classic" authors continues steadily. Shakespeare comes out in new editions every year. Even men like Sir Thomas Browne, Gray and Pater, who can hardly expect an overwhelming popularity, are not without their large body of admirers. Might it not be said, then, that although perhaps the whole lump of readers is larger now in proportion to the leaven of the judicious than ever before, the leaven still exists, and that in time it will accomplish the work which is prophesied for it in the scriptures?

**A Photographic Accomplice**

**M**R. MOURDOFF," said the prosecuting attorney, "tell the story of the murder, just as you saw it committed."

The witness, a small, nervous man, took a new position on his chair, hesitated a moment, and then began to talk.

The audience in the court room waited expectantly.

They were of the usual types—the idle spectators, the sensation seekers, the newspaper reporters, and the score of unclassifiable individuals who go to make up such a cosmopolitan throng.

The trial had dragged heavily until now, and had been a mere battle of lawyers; but with the advent of a new witness interest had been awakened, which had reached the feverish point when it was found that he knew the minute details of the crime.

Consequently, when he began to speak, the silence was painful.

"I am a photographer by profession," said Mourdoff in starting, "and am particularly interested in outdoor work. Often I take a landscape camera and wander through the woods, impressing upon the sensitive film the more beautiful and delicate bits of nature, thus bringing into my studio the fragments of the artistic forest."

"One Saturday afternoon—by reference to notes I find it was the 12th of July last—I started on one of my regular expeditions."

"I remember the day was a perfect one, and the whole plant world seemed clothed in holiday attire. After securing a number of excellent views I turned towards home, but stopped with an exclamation of delight as I beheld one of the prettiest, daintiest glades imaginable."

"Quickly setting up my tripod, I focused the camera until the clear image of the scene was visible upon the



UNDENIABLE PROOF OF THAT MAN'S GUILT.

ground glass behind. I was about to take the picture, when I heard the sound of rapidly approaching footsteps and angry voices.

"Now, in order to secure the proper distance effect, I had been obliged to set up my camera behind some bushes, through which, luckily for me, there was a small opening."

"Although this afforded a sufficient sight of my choice woodland scenery, yet none save a close observer would have seen anything, if looking from the other side. Hence, I decided to let whoever might be coming pass by, while I awaited their departure before taking the photograph."

"Sinking back into the couch of luxuriant grass and leaves, I idly watched for the newcomers."

"A tall, muscular man presently stepped into sight, and was soon followed by a second. Both resumed the quarrel of a minute before as they paused in the open space, neither of them conscious that they had an unwilling listener."

"The men were too far away for me to hear just what they were saying, but I gathered that there was some trouble concerning money matters, which they were unable to settle. I did not care to be an eavesdropper, and so was about to proclaim my presence, when I heard one of them sneeringly remark that if he wished to be a thief he would follow the other's example, but that for his part the reputation was not an enviable one."

"His companion said nothing—a silence, the dangerous intensity of which I did not then comprehend; and the two turned to go. As they did so I pushed aside the branches and glanced at their faces, only to see two strangers, one of whom was the prisoner who sits there."

"A cloud was rapidly obscuring the sun, and as I desired the picture to be well lighted, I made ready to open the lens as soon as the men were out of the way."

"Standing with my back to the glade, I carefully adjusted the delicate mechanism of the camera, and soon had all in readiness to snap it."

"Suddenly there was a sharp, ringing report behind me. I whirled quickly around, and in the motion gave the rubber bulb in my hand a faint pres-

sure, without realizing what I was doing; and only discovered, when I heard the metallic click of the shutter, as it closed after its instantaneous movement, that I had taken the photograph!"

"When my startled senses came back to me I saw a bleeding form lying on the ground, while a few yards away a man was running."

"The body which lay on the thick, green grass was that of a man whose death caused this trial; and the cowardly, feeling assassin, the man who would not face the consequences of his deed, was the prisoner, John Evans."

The witness took a glass of water, wiped his heated brow, and looked about him.

The spectators, too interested to think, gaspingly drew back in their chairs. The prisoner, a handsome, honest-appearing man, sat motionless and stunned.

"That night," said Mr. Mourdoff, resuming his narrative, "I developed the plate that was in the camera, and you may be sure I watched with interest and hope as the picture gradually began to form."

"Bit by bit the trees came out; the long shadows deeply indented the grass in their reverse color of pure white; the grass, like a bunch of tangled thread, gathered into a discernible mass; and then, last of all, the two men's images stood out on the dull gray surface."

"By means of a solution of alcohol I dried the negative at once, and by using a developing paper, I soon had a perfect print."

"The photograph is more than a mere curiosity; it is the study of a crime. On it you can see undeniable proof of that man's guilt; see the manner of the killing; see the already dying victim."

"That is the extent of my knowledge of this murder."

In a dazed, uncertain fashion, the man on trial for his life gazed at the photograph which the lawyer held in his hand.

He seemed unable to comprehend the story, and his eyes beseechingly asked for a glance at the picture which he could not understand.

But the prosecuting attorney had fame and a name yet to gain, and heeded not the pleading now expressed in the mute, quivering mouth; what difference could it make, at any rate?

The picture was a remarkably distinct one.

Before a background of tangled trees, merging into the matted grass at their base, stood two men; one with an exploding rifle in his hand, was on the extreme right; and the other, on the left side, was falling, his arms thrown up in a way that left no doubt as to the human target his companion had chosen. The murderer, whose calm face harmonized with his cool firing, was unquestionably the present prisoner, John Evans. The other was the man who had been found dead with a bullet in his forehead.

The first of the twelve jurymen held out his hand and took the photograph. For a moment he gazed critically at the bit of cardboard, then a grim look of determined duty overspread his face—a look which caused the attorney for the State to lean comfortably back and writh his face in a contented smile.

One after another of the jury passed the picture on to his neighbor, some with pitying glances at the pained prisoner, some with the loathing for him clearly shown in their shrinking countenances; but one and all with an unmistakable verdict plainly written on their persons.

A short half hour later the jury filed back into the court room, and the foreman stood up.

"We find the prisoner guilty of murder in the first degree, as charged," was all he said.

Wrapped in an outer covering of heavy paper, the Governor one day received an envelope bearing the inscription, "To be sent to the Governor of the State after my death."

Inside was a signed and duly attested confession, which read—

"In the late Evans murder trial I, Robert Mourdoff, gave false testimony in regard to the killing of Andrew Cordon. In this confession, which shall be read only after my death, I wish to state that I was the murderer of Andrew Cordon. The photograph displayed in court was an elaborate affair which I made—skillfully, I congratulate myself—and it had no real value at all."

"For years Cordon and I have been enemies. I hated him and he hated me, although to the world we were casual friends. I murdered him on that fateful Saturday, July 12th."

"How was it done? I'll tell you."

"During the past year many dealers in photographic goods have offered for sale a little article, under the name of 'multiplying attachment,' which enables the operator of a camera to take two pictures on the same plate."

"It is a small, round instrument to fit over the lens, and as one side only has a hole in it, but one-half of the photograph is taken at once. Then, by revolving the opening at the opposite side, the other portion may be completed, with no dividing line where the sections join."

"For instance, in my studio I have a view of a house, with two young men on the lawn. As a matter of fact, there is but one man photographed twice, yet most people pride themselves on recognizing that the gentlemen are twins."

"Again, I have two deadly enemies bowing politely to each other—seemingly. I first persuaded one to have his picture taken, and then, a few days later, enticed the other to be photographed while bowing."

"Of course I took number one on one portion of the film, and number two on the other; but the effect is a continuous photograph which engages both when they see it."

"First begging your pardon for such a lengthy explanation—which you will grant to a man who will be dead when you read this—I have determined to reveal the whole story."

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"I deliberately planned and executed the murder, and I can tell of the crime in a very few words."

"On that day in July I left the studio, taking with me a multiplying attachment, and went to a place where I knew both Evans and Cordon would come during the afternoon."

"Evans was the first to arrive, and he halted in front of my camera, as I expected (having set up a dead aim at a few yards away). Carefully aiming at it, he fired—fired just as I snapped the shutter into position; and half of my photograph was completed."

"Cordon came soon after for a drink at the little spring, and I went forth to meet him. We quarreled; we always did when we met; but to-day I gave in, and he was elated—poor devil! By some adroit maneuvering I placed him in position, and told him to remain there while I secured a view of the scenery, with human life—a most needed requisite of outdoor work—in it."

"He objected to doing a favor for me at first, but finally consented in a surly way to stand still for a second. Then I went behind the bushes to my camera, turned the multiplier, picked up my rifle and shot him—killed him instantly. I think; and as he fell I exposed the other half of my negative."

"The photograph was taken; on one side Evans stood aiming a gun, on a line with the rifle on the opposite side was Cordon, falling dead. The thing was complete to the smallest details."

"What a triumph for photography! Art conquering truth!"

"I need only to add that Evans proposed to, and was accepted by, the girl already engaged to me. I loved her as I never loved before or since—and it happened five years ago."

"You know how I felt; Evans had ruined me; I must ruin him. But I no longer feel the bitterness towards him that I once did. I think he has suffered enough already for the injury he did me, and I think he should go free."

"I understand he is to be hanged next month; and to-night I die by my own hand; so there will be ample time to save him."

"Once more I wish to say, John Evans is innocent; I murdered Cordon. I am going to have witnesses to my signature, and after that—"

The Governor laid down the confession in horror. Owing to a change in arrangements Evans had met death on the scaffold the day before.—The Argosy.

**Narrow Quarters.**

Mr. Spudkins had discovered the flat while out house hunting, and he took his wife to see it, confident that she would reward his discovery with words of commendation, because he had saved her so much trouble in the search for a home.

He was mistaken, as usual.

Mrs. Spudkins went through the diminutive rooms with critical eyes. Then he expected her to discourse on the lack of closet room.

Here again he was mistaken.

"Rooms are too small," she said. "Easier to heat, my dear," Spudkins ventured, "and they won't take so much carpet."

Mrs. Spudkins went on, ignoring these considerations.

"Why, there isn't room here to swing a cat."

Hereupon Mr. Spudkins drew himself up with dignity and said severely:

"Then, my dear, we shall be compelled to seek some other, and let us hope, a more refined form of exercise than cat swinging."

But even this did not move her, and they proceeded on the weary search for more flats to criticize.—Pittsburg Commercial-Gazette.

**First Double-Decker English Ship.**

The first double-decker ship built in England was the Great Harry, constructed in 1500 by order of Henry VII. It was 1,000 tons burden, and cost £14,000, a sum worth more in those days than £120,000 now. At that time 50 to 100 tons was the usual burden of merchant ships. The Great Harry was burned by accident.

The first invitation a girl receives from a boy, starts the longing to have a private writing desk of her own.

**CANADA'S ONLY WOMAN MARBLE CUTTER.**

The novel sight of a young lady working with mallet and chisel over a tombstone may be witnessed in Windsor, Ont., any time during week days. The engraver is Miss Alice Rigg, daughter of George Rigg, whose marble works are located on Pitt street east. She is the only woman marble cutter in the dominion.

It was six years ago that Miss Rigg first began to work with chisel. She used to look after her father's office after school. One dull evening, being lost for something to do, she picked up the shop tools and chiseled away for



MISS ALICE RIGG.

pastime. The agility and cleverness with which she handled the instruments surprised her father. She liked the novelty in connection with the experiment, and it was not long until she did the most of her father's engraving. Now she is his sole engraver. She dons the heavy canvas apron used by the men, and works out in the open with her father. "I like engraving, and that's why I am chiselling here to-day," said Miss Rigg to a reporter. "I would much rather work with the chisel than do housework."

**SHE WAS THE PRESIDENT'S FRIEND.**

This is a picture of little Laura Ambler, whose photograph was the only one on President McKinley's desk in his home at Canton, Ohio. It was placed there by him a week before he left for Buffalo, and it was still there when he was taken back dead. The little



MISS LAURA AMBLER.

girl is the daughter of B. S. Ambler, a lawyer, of Salem, Ohio, a friend of the martyred President. She is an unusually pretty, sunny dispositioned child, and how much of a pet she was to President McKinley is evident from the fact that he placed her picture where it would frequently meet his gaze.

**EXPECTS TO HARNESS CYCLONES.**

Prof. B. B. Britts, of Richland Center, Wis., has a mysterious machine which he says will take power from the wind and store it in such a manner that it may be used at will. He maintains that he can bridle a slight breeze or a cyclone and convert the power to the use of man.

Omanha capitalists have been asked to invest in a plant for the manufacture of Britts' strange machine. The inventor guards his secret with great care, but says that he will be in a position to make a public demonstration of the cyclone-harnessing machine in a short time.

"In this Western country there is never a time," said inventor Britts, "when there is not sufficient wind to make it possible for my device to acquire power. It is different from a windmill, and is so carefully constructed that it may be operated with the slightest breeze. My invention will do away with all other methods of generating power. It is applicable to locomotives, and will displace electricity and compressed air in propelling street cars. It will also be valuable for navigation purposes, and will make sailing stations and steam power a thing of history."

**From Showers.**

"A Cornell professor says that frog spawns can be carried up in the atmosphere and hatched out in the clouds."

"By gum, you bet I'll carry an umbrella next time I go out."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.