

TOPICS OF THE DAY.

The Shenpa, a Chinese newspaper gives an account of a man thirty-four years old with thirty-two children—sixteen pairs of twins. The father is a poor farmer, and the children are supported by their neighbors.

Four Chicago men have contracted to build a capitol for Texas, to cost \$3,000,000, and take 3,000,000 acres of public land as payment. Their scheme contemplates an immense business in grazing, and they have secured \$6,000,000 for investment for cattle and improvements.

The Medical society, of Scott county, Iowa, has elected Dr. Jennie McGowen, a well-known woman physician of Davenport, as its president for the ensuing year. This is the first instance in the history of the medical fraternity in which a woman has been chosen for the executive position of a medical society.

The present exports of oleomargarine from New York, are estimated at from twenty-five to thirty million pounds. Chambers' Journal says a large part of this goes to Holland. American cheddar cheese is made of oil, lard or this oleomargarine and skim milk. The imitation is so perfect that competent judges can scarcely determine which is real and which the imitation cheese.

It is claimed that over two-thirds of the German migration consists of farmers or farm laborers. Three-fourths of the German population of the Union live on farms. In Wisconsin over one-half of the cultivated soil is owned by the Germans, while they also have large holdings in the rural districts of Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, Nebraska, Kansas, Dakota, Missouri.

Still another important canal is talked of in Europe. By it is contemplated nothing less than the separation of England and Scotland by a waterway from the Solway Firth to the river Tyne. An engineer is at present working on the surveys, and estimates are promised for early publication. This canal would have a length of only eighty miles, or twenty miles less than the Suez. It would, of course, afford a very convenient short cut across the country for ocean steamers. Some forty years ago a scheme of the same kind was talked of.

The growth of the anthracite coal trade has been something marvelous. In 1842 only 1,000,000 tons were mined. Ten years ago an effort was made to reach what was considered the highest point that could possibly be attained—namely, the shipment of 20,000,000 tons. That was considered as much as the market could take at any time. The product fell short of that quantity, however, as the output for 1872 was 19,669,778 tons. But that was considered a great year's work. Now it is nearly 30,000,000, and who shall say what it may be ten years hence?

The "isolated city of the great northwest" is up the Missouri river, 1200 miles beyond Bismarck, away from any railroad, hemmed in by mountains, and at this season shut out from all the world. It bears the name of Benton, in honor of "Old Bullion," and it is the magazine of the British Northwest. It is a substantial town, because lumber is so costly there that it is economy to build with brick. During navigation twenty-two steamboats carry freight to this remote city, and the volume of business there justifies a chamber of commerce and mammoth brick blocks.

A town has been laid out on the proposed line of the Nevada and Oregon railroad in Nevada, of which great things are expected. It has been christened Belfast. An adjacent lake has been tapped to supply the town with water, two thousand shade trees have been planted, a hotel is being built, together with a blacksmith shop and store, and several families have already taken up their residence in the new town. There is a tract of 150,000 acres of valley land around Belfast which awaits occupation, but it must be irrigated, and this is being arranged for by the projectors of the town.

One of the most interesting features of the national exposition of railway appliances, to be held in Chicago from May 24th to June 23d of the present year, will be a collection of antiquated objects, which, having had their day, now serve no purpose except to illustrate the marvelous development of railway mechanics. The Troy Times says that: "the traveling public would be glad to see in that collection several appliances which are still in

use, including a specimen or two of the stoves which are red-hot from November to May, except when they have been burnt out in the ashes of a railroad wreck."

"Harmless as doves" is now thought in London not to be an accurate comparison. The post-office authorities complain that these ubiquitous birds make themselves a serious nuisance by perching on telegraph wires; householders have many a bill to pay for mortar which they have pecked away; at the British museum persistent but only partly successful efforts have been made to get rid of them; at the Royal exchange the authorities have gone so far as to fix wire points into every nook and corner of the architecture likely to afford a lodgement for their unwelcome guests; and nowhere, it appears, are they in lawful possession excepting, perhaps, at the Guildhall, where for several years past it has been the custom to feed them every day with peas in order to establish the right of the corporation to prosecute those who treat the birds with cruelty.

Phoenix park, Dublin, the scene of the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, for which so many prisoners have been on trial, contains 2000 acres, and is entered, like Hyde park, in London, by a state-ly gateway. It is surrounded by a solid coped wall, and is the playground of the Irish metropolis, civil and military, in which solitude, pure and simple, may be realized. It contains statues of Lord Carlisle, Lord Gough, and a hideous granite obelisk, frequently referred to in the evidence, 200 feet in height, recording the exploits of Wellington. The spot where the assassination took place is about half a mile from the entrance, and is overlooked by the viceregal lodge, the semi-official home of the lord-lieutenant, which looks exactly like a twin of our White House. It has, however, the advantage of many mountain views of great beauty.

Is not here a chance for women doctors? Mr. Kittridge, of Bombay, has made a proposal to raise, with the co-operation of natives of India, a fund guaranteeing women doctors against loss, who are willing to go out from England to that country. The queen has expressed her interest and approval of the efforts to send out these women, although she did not subscribe to the fund. The difficulty in India is that both religious and several laws forbid the Hindu woman of the upper castes the aid of a male physician, and she is in consequence left to the mercy of ignorant native midwives and wise women. Hindoos of influence and wealth are exceedingly anxious to provide their wives with the attendance of educated female practitioners. Hence Mr. Kittridge's movement. American women doctors with equal knowledge and experience will be as welcome as the English in this far-off field.

"If Dom Pedro were to die, there might be anarchy in Brazil," writes an American civil engineer and statistician, who has lived there. "The emperor's heir, a daughter, is a complete devotee, crawling on her hands and knees, and knowing nothing of the state, while the imperial powers are even now significant, and the population of Brazil is grossly overestimated, probably not being 5,000,000 of all kinds, and of information about the country there is next to none. Rio has not over 150,000 people, though put down at twice as much. There is no free trade nor yet manufactures, the land proprietors throwing upon the foreign trade the expenses of the revenue, and lumber is brought from North America, notwithstanding the timber jungles of the Amazon valley, the inhabited parts of Brazil being very shrubbery wooded. The two great peoples of South America are the La Plata confederacies and the Chilians, who will some day probably portion South America between them."

A Washington correspondent says of Senator Sherman's letters: "Senator Sherman has got all the letters he has received during the last twenty or thirty years carefully filed away in scrap books with an index most complete. He told me the other night that he had about 40,000 letters indexed and filed away. I asked what he intended to do with all those letters, but he did not answer me—he changed the subject. The letters from his brother, Gen. Sherman, must be very interesting. They number thousands, and were begun when the general was at West Point, and have continued ever since. The love of the brothers for each other is well-known among their friends. Neither has a thought that is

not in some way connected with the other. The letters of Gen. Sherman to his brother during the war will make mighty interesting reading if they are ever printed. They were written in camp—sometimes before a battle and sometimes after one—but they gave the writer's ideas straight from his heart, and told what he thought the same as he would converse with himself."

A Forgotten Promise.

There is a young conductor on a line of street cars in Cincinnati who is the hero of a romantic episode. At the time of the burning of the Brooklyn theater, in which so many people were burned to death, this young man was a resident of Brooklyn. He attended the theater on the night of the fire, and sat beside a male companion in the front row near the orchestra. As it will be remembered, the fire was discovered during the latter part of the first act of the "Two Orphans." At the time the flames made their appearance behind the scenes one of the company billed as Nellie Dell, but whose real name was Kittie Meyers, a young New York girl, was doing a song and dance act. The fire burst out all over the stage with incredible rapidity, and the young man saw that this girl was in peril. With a spring he leaped across the orchestra railing, clambered on the stage and caught Miss Dell in his arms and broke for the private box nearest the street. After considerable difficulty he succeeded in getting into the open air with the girl clinging to his neck, frightened almost to death. He had saved her life, as most of those who were on the stage when he went to her rescue perished in the flames. Thus began an acquaintance which soon ripened into love, and finally they were married. The father of the girl, who was a business man in New York city, made the acquaintance of his daughter's deliverer, and, pleased with his appearance, said: "You have saved my daughter's life, and you shall have her for your wife." Nellie's heart had been smitten by the good-looking fellow (he was a poor tinner at that time), and a union was soon effected. The father said to him: "You shall never want for anything." He must have soon forgotten his promise, for now his heroic son-in-law is manipulating a bell-punch for \$2 a day. Such is life in a great city.

Oldest City in the World.

A ride of seventy-two miles across Phoenicia, Lebanon, Cedo-Syria and Anti-Lebanon brings us, by French diligence, to Damascus. Abana and Pharpar break through a sublime gorge about 100 yards wide, down the middle of which the French road winds its serpentine course, the rivers on either side being fringed with silver poplar and scented walnut. As we look eastward from the brow of the hill the great plain of Damascus, encircled by a framework of desert, lies before us. The river, escaped from the rocky gorge, spreads out like a fan, and after a run of three miles, enters Damascus, where it flows through 15,000 houses, sparkles in 60,000 marble fountains, and hurries on to scatter wealth and fertility far and wide over the plain. Those who have gazed on this scene are never likely to forget its supreme loveliness. Its beauty is doubtless much enhanced by contrast. The eye has been wandering over a chocolate-colored and heated landscape throughout a weary day; suddenly, on turning a corner, it rests on Eden. The city is spread out before you, embowered in orchards, in the midst of a plain of 300 square miles. Around the pearl-colored city—first in the world in point of time, first in Syria and Western Asia in point of importance—surge like an emerald sea, forests of apricots and olives and apples and citruses, and "every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food," with all their variety of color and tint, according to their season, sometimes all aglow with blossoms, sometimes golden and ruddy with fruit, and sometimes russet with the mellowing tints of autumn.—*Contemporary Review.*

Street-Cars.

There are now doing business in this country and Canada 415 street railways, employing about 35,000 men. They run 18,000 cars, and more than 100,000 horses are in daily use. Calculating that the average life of a horse in street-railway service is four years, it makes the consumption of horses 25,000 per year. To feed this vast number of horses requires annually 150,000 tons of hay and 11,000,000 bushels of grain. These companies own and operate over 3000 miles of track. The whole number of passengers carried annually is over 1,212,400,000. The amount of capital invested exceeds \$150,000,000.

Japan's Most Famous Artist.

One hundred and twenty-three years ago—in the year just before the first observed transit of Venus—there was a looking-glass maker in Yedo, who was made happy by the information, "It's a boy." Neighbors and friends rushed in to congratulate Mrs. Middle-land, the happy mother whose son North-house (Hokusai) was to become the most famous artist in Japan.

As the boy grew up he was fond of drawing, and always had a pencil or brush-pen in his hand. He made pictures of babies on their mothers' backs, of chubby children playing, of the ownerless wolfish dogs and bob-tailed cats of Yedo. Nearly all the Japanese artists before North-house had painted only lords and ladies of the court, nobles' costumes and gorgeous silk dresses, and gold-lacquered vases and palanquins belonging to the mikado. Many of their subjects were Chinese, but silken curtains and red temples and pagodas, with abundance of gold clouds in the picture to cover up the plain, or common parts, were what one saw on the most famous works of art.

But Hokusai was a man of the people. He cared next to nothing about Chinese heroes, or high lords of the court—except to make fun of them—and so he struck out in a new line. He pictured farmers and mechanics, hatched cottages and shops and markets, pack-horses and street dogs, and everything in humble life. He especially entered into the juvenile world—which is only as high as a yard-stick—and while his brother artists soared into the mountains and clouds Hokusai kept on the ground, with the result that even the babies understood his drawings, and dyers bought his books for their patterns. To study some of the dainty pictures dyed into a Japanese lady's skirt, or to read a Japanese fairy tale on a bride's robe, is often to recognize Hokusai's pictures reproduced in color.

Hokusai opened a studio in Yedo in 1810, and labored steadily until 1843—about five years before Commodore Perry entered the Bay of Yedo. His chief books of pictures are his mangwa, or album of sketches. Occasionally he made journeys, and the fruits of his travel were his "Hundred Views of Fuji-Yama," besides many pictures of natural scenery. His drawings are more simply and less finished than ours, but are much clearer than those of most Japanese draughtsmen, so that, of them all, Hokusai is best understood by foreigners.

Hokusai is dead, but thousands of Japanese still chuckle over his caricatures; and in American metal-work, silverware, wall-paper, embroidery, and a hundred forms of decorative art, the strokes of his pencil are visible, with a character all their own.—[St. Nicholas.

Small Bed-Chambers.

There is reason to believe that more cases of dangerous and fatal disease are gradually engendered annually by the habit of sleeping in small, unventilated rooms, than have occurred from a cholera atmosphere during any year since it made its appearance in this country. Very many persons sleep in eight-by-ten rooms; that is, in rooms the length and breadth of which multiplied together, and this multiplied again by ten for the height of the chamber, would make just 800 cubic feet, while the cubic space for each bed, according to the English apportionment for hospitals, is 2100 feet. But more, in order "to give the air of a room the highest degree of freshness," the French hospitals contract for a complete renewal of the air of a room every hour while the English assert that double the amount, or over 14,000 feet an hour, is required. 4000 feet of air every hour! and yet there are multitudes in the city of New York who sleep with closed doors and windows in rooms which do not contain a thousand cubic feet of space, and that thousand feet is to last all night, at least eight hours, except such scanty supplies as may be obtained of any fresh air that may insinuate itself through little crevices by door or window, not an eighth of an inch in thickness. But when it is known that in many cases a man and wife and infant sleep habitually in thousand-foot rooms, it is no marvel that multitudes perish prematurely in cities; no wonder that infant children wilt away like flowers without water, and that 9000 of them are to die in the city of New York alone during the hundred days that shall include the 15th of July, 1883! Another fact is suggestive, that among the 150,000 persons who sleep nightly in the lodging-houses of London, expressly arranged in the improved principles of space and ventilation already referred to, it has been proven that not one single case of fever has been engendered in two years! Let every intelligent reader improve the teachings of his article without an hour's delay.—[The Builder.

Some Quaint Epitaph

Here lies my wife Sallie, let her lie, She's at peace, and so am I. Beneath this stone, a lump of clay, Lies Avabelle Younger, Who on the 25th day of May Begun to hold her tongue.

In Yazoo City, Miss., is this inscription:

Here lies interred Priscilla Bird Who sang on earth till 62; Now up on high above the sky No doubt she sings like 99 too.

This one appears in Sutton church yard:

Here lies the boy of Samuel Proctor, Who lived and died without a doctor. At Oxford, N. H., is the following: To all my friends I bid adieu, A more sudden death you never knew, As I was leading the old mare to drink, She kicked and killed me quicker'n a wink.

An inscription in Peter's church-yard, Herefordshire, England, reads: Sickens was my portion, Physic was my food; Grooms was my devotion; Drags did me no good. The Lord took pity on me, Because he thought it best— He took me to his bosom, And here I lie at rest.

Even Westminster abbey, the burying ground of monarchs, is not without its queer epitaphs. Over the poet Gay appears:

Life is a jest, and all things show it, I thought so once, and now I know it.

In a New Hampshire cemetery is a tombstone with this inscription: Richard Jenkins here doth lay, (Lately removed from over the way.) His body's here—his soul's in Heaven. 1767.

Mrs. Jenkins, who had a numerous family, had on her stone:

Some have children, some have none, Here lieh the mother of twenty-one.

The briefest epitaph is on the tombstone of a child who died in Bayfield, Wis. The child was killed during a thunder-storm. On the stone are the words:

Struck by Thunder!

An old toper in Durham has this inscription on his tombstone:

Beneath these stones repose the bones Of Drunkenness Grim, He took his beer from year to year, And then his beer took him.

This is over the grave of a victim of Waterloo:

Here lies the body of Alex. McPherson, Who was an extraordinary person; He was two yards high in his stocking feet, And kept his counterpane clean and neat. He was six At the battle of Waterloo Plunged through The gullet. It went in at his throat And came out at the back of his coat.

In Limerick cathedral, Ireland, may be seen the following inscription on a handsome tablet:

Memorial Mori. Here lieth Little Samuel Barrington, that great Under Taker of Famous City's clock and Chime Maker; he made his own time go early and late, but now he is returned to God his Creator, the 12th of November. Then he went, And for His Memory this is Flout, By His Son Ben, 1693.

How Gambetta Lost an Eye.

His father, who had no provision of the boy's future celebrity, wanted to secure him against military service by keeping him an Italian. Immunity from soldiering was brought about accidentally. As Gambetta was watching a knife-grinder operate on a wheel, the blade of the knife got detached from the handle and flew into the boy's eye and blinded it. He was very much petted in consequence, and the mother was emboldened by her increased tenderness to insist upon Leon being sent to the Petit Seminaire of Montfaucon to receive a classical education. Her husband was an enemy to higher instruction and thought the communal school sufficient for a boy whose destiny it was to be a provincial grocer.—[Century.

What to Do When Choking.

Dr. J. W. White gives these directions to save one who is choking: Do not lose an instant. Force the mouth open with the handle of a knife or of a strong spoon; push the thumb and fingers down into the throat beyond the root of the tongue, and feel for the foreign body. If the obstruction cannot be grasped, a hairpin bent into a hook and guided by the left hand will often bring it out. If this fails, get someone to press against the front of the chest or support it against a table, and strike several hard quick blows with the open hand on the back, between the shoulder blades. Further treatment must be applied by a physician, who should have been immediately sent for.

Two Wrecked Lives.

An eccentric but good-hearted old miser recently died in the village of North Lima, Ohio. When a young man he had loved a pretty German maiden, but through the efforts of her father they were prevented from marrying. The young man, losing all interest in life, came to America and became a recluse, and the maiden became insane, and has been in that condition for the last fifty-eight years. The will of the old man was discovered after his death; and it was found that he gave the savings of his lifetime to his early love, whose mind is too impaired for her even to understand the significance of the act.

WAR'S HORRORS.

A vivid Description of the Battle of Franklin.

It was the 30th of November, 1864. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the line of battle was formed, Stewart on the right, Cheatham on the left, their right and left flanks, interlocked like Parthian shields, composing the center. General Stephen D. Lee's corps was held in reserve. Cleburne's position was in the center; his division formed in three battle lines, and he at its head. Thus arranged, Hood's line was nearly two miles long, advancing, curved like a Mussulman's cimeter, with the blade to the foe. But let us follow Cleburne. Bugles were blowing, drums beating, and hands playing. A courier dashed up to Cleburne's presence, and soon the word "Attention!" was given, then "Forward, march!" and the column passed over a hill and through the little skirt of woods. Soon they emerged into an open field and steadily they passed on with "proper cadence" toward blood and death. The Federal batteries began to open. First came solid shot bounding over the earth and tearing crashing through the ranks, the shrieking shells flew through the air on the wings of destruction, bursting under and above and around the men, and at every explosion unbinding more evils than ever flew from Pandora's box. Twilight was coming on. "Forward men!" was repeated all along the line. A living sheet of fire was poured into their ranks. But the men pressed forward until the terrific roar ran from center to flans, from wing to wing.

Night came and two armies fought like two blind giants in despair. Cleburne's old war cry rang out above the din of arms: "Follow me, boys!" Once again, and again, and again seven times, Cleburne's division, and, indeed, all of Hood's army, charged the breastworks. And once again, and again, and again, seven times were they repulsed. Every time they formed and reformed under a most galling fire. At one time, just after dusk, Cleburne captured a portion of the works and turned the guns of a Federal battery on their former owners; but it was only for a few moments—a little silver rift in the battle clouds that enveloped him in darkness. It was the hottest fire Cleburne had ever met. It was but one stream of blazing hades. Confederates were on one side of the breastworks and Federals on the other. Men fell flat on their faces and fired from behind the bodies of their dead comrades. Dead soldiers filled the intrenchments. Blood made the earth as slippery as an ice-pond. Thus the firing was kept up until after midnight, and gradually died out. But both armies held their own. The Confederates passed the night where they were, just outside the breastworks. The Federals, only a few feet off, held their cover until near daybreak, when they quietly marched back to Nashville.

But when the morning's sun began to light up the sky the surviving soldiers looked out upon a sad battlefield. The dead were piled one on top of the other in awful heaps, and wounded seemed thicker than the uncounted stars. Horses, like men, had died game upon the defenses. Cleburne's body lay there on the top of the breastworks, ghastly in the sleep of death, pierced with forty-nine bullets, through and through. His mare had her forehead on top of the works, dead in that position.

Not far from where Cleburne lay was seen the dead body of General Adams. His horse had his forehead on one side of the works and his hindfeet on the other, dead. The general seems to have been caught so that he was held to the horse's back, sitting bolt upright in his saddle, as if living, riddled and torn with balls. General Stahl lay by the road-side and his horse by his side, both dead, and all his staff. General Gist from South Carolina was lying with his sword, reaching across the breastworks, still grasped in his hand. He, too, was dead. General Granberry of Texas and his horse was seen, horse and rider, right on top of the breastworks, dead. All dead. Four thousand five hundred soldiers all lying side by side in death. Thirteen Confederate generals were killed and wounded. Six brothers, members of a Mississippi regiment, were all dead. "This was the bloodiest picture in the book of time."

A Spanking Team.

Johnny and Tommy were playing out in a street where there was much fast driving, and where they had been forbidden to go. "Hello," said Johnny, "there comes a spanking team." "Where?" replied Tommy. "Right across the street there; it's your mother and mine, and we'd better cut sticks and get out of this," which they did, with their mothers after them.