## TOPICS OF THE DAY.

For years the dieting expenses of E. Walker, miser of Cincinnati, cost him but ten cents a week. He ate one roll and drank some milk each day, and declared that was all his stomach would stand. He was once a man of wealth, but lost it in securing the bonds of a friend. He had two ambitions—to make a violin equal to a Stradivarius and to dry up and blow away. He almost realized the latter desire.

It is stated to be a fact that there are a great many men in New York who are dressed by contract. They contract with a fashionable tailor to furnish them all the clothes they want in a year, for which they pay him $2,000. They can get a new suit every week, but they must give back the old one. A strange arrangement this, which leaves a man with only one suit of clothes. There are, however, a great many who like the plan.

The end of the world, which, according to the time-rhyme of Mother Shipton, was to have occurred in 1881, having been unavoidably postponed, another old prophecy has been dug up from the French. This district declares that when Good Friday falls on St. George's day, and Easter on St. Mark's day, and Corpus Christy on St. John the Baptist's day, the final consummation will arrive. These conjunctions will occur in 1886.

The Rev. George F. Pentecost, the revivalist, says in the *Independent* that the conversion of sinners is becoming a lost art. "The fact is sad and stubborn that in the great cities, of churches where the talent, wealth, culture, leisure, and opportunity to do revival work abound, there the number of conversions is in an inverse ratio to the facilities." He attributes this to what he calls the overfeeding of the churches. Too much food and too little work result in surfeit and torpor, and that is where he thinks the trouble lies.

Irrigation has been tried in Western Kansas with marvelous results. Formerly it was thought that the dry plains stretching toward the Arkansas river were useless for agricultural purposes. The light and fickle rainfall, the dry air, the hot winds and the long summers were supposed to constitute a combination of unfavorable elements that it would be impossible to overcome. But irrigating ditches were dug that distributed the waters of the Arkansas over these tracts, and now they blossom like a garden. The crops yielded the past year were astonishing. Onions were raised at the rate of 500 bushels to the acre, oats 100 bushels, and other products in similar proportion.

A party of Philadelphians recently made a practical test of rat-flesh as an article of diet. The rats had been caught and caged while young, and fed carefully upon grain and green food. At the meal in question they had been carefully prepared, and were served with an appetizing sauce in company with other viands. The flesh, after cooking was found to be quite light in color, much more so than either the rabbit or the squirrel, and possessing a delicacy of flavor entirely unknown to either of the last-mentioned animals. The experiment proved entirely successful, and a dish of rats, prepared under proper conditions, was voted to be both practical and economical.

Californians, having succeeded in securing laws against Chinese emigration, are now looking about to see if there is anything else in the Celestial empire worth importing, as the Celestials themselves were not agreeable companions and neighbors. The latest Celestial novelty which it is thought would be an acquisition is a small species of insect useful as a scavenger. The Chinese are said to possess some species of ants which devour insects injurious to their orange trees. Dr. H. C. Cook has given a brief history of sketch of the ants in the proceeding of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, and this has awakened an interest in them among the orange growers of California.

The profession—or science, whatever it may be called—of architecture has not made a creditable record in recent years, according to a New York paper, which says: A great number of large public buildings have been erected in various parts of the United States since the close of the war, but scarcely a single one has been completed before radical defects of construction were discovered. Misery loves company, and after having been long condoled with by England for the blunders of our architects, it is some small consolation to find that the mother country is really no better off in this respect than ourselves. Elaborate plans were prepared for the new law courts in London, and immense sums have been spent upon their construction, yet they are but just opened when it appears that the chambers are so dark and ill-arranged that judicial business can scarcely be prosecuted at all, and great alterations must be made or the vast pile will prove useless.

It is remarked by *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* that the growth of manufacturing in South Carolina is remarkable. A recent report shows that there are twenty-seven cotton mills now in operation or nearing completion, which have an aggregate capital of $1,547,000, give employment to 4,262 hands, to whom they pay $728,900 in wages annually, and consume 29,946,269 pounds of cotton a year. The number and capacity of the mills almost doubled between 1880 and 1882, and nine more mills were chartered at the recent session of the Legislature, which is not surprising in view of the fact that the net profits of those in operation last year ranged from ten to twenty per cent., averaging about twelve per cent. The Legislature has wisely exempted all manufacturing companies from taxation for a period of ten years, and Northern capital finds few better fields for investment than the one now offered by the State in which, only a few years ago, secession first flamed into open revolt."

It has been popularly believed that a person becomes unconscious when falling from a great height; but an Englishman who has been making some experiments in falling—whether with himself or other people is not stated—has come to the conclusion that unless one dies from fear or the nervous shock, he reaches the ground alive, and is not killed by the passage through the air. This, however, would depend upon the height from which he falls. The greatest distance one is liable to fall, even from the highest buildings, is not much more than 100 feet. He will be less than three seconds reaching the ground, and during the last second will be falling at the rate of say sixty feet in a second, which is equivalent to a velocity of forty miles an hour. As people are falling at this rate every day in the year, it is clear that a fall from that height will not make them unconscious. The next second they would fall at the rate of eighty miles an hour, the next at 100, the next at 120, and the next at 140. Such a velocity as that undoubtedly would affect the physical condition; but in order to obtain such a velocity a person would have to fall a distance of 1,000 feet.

The imperial city of Berlin, since it became the capital of the German empire has undergone a marvelous change in much the same way that the city of Paris was transformed by the late Emperor Napoleon. But, what is of most interest to American cities, is the fact that millions of dollars have been spent by the German government upon sewage improvements, and especially upon the establishment of sewage farms in the outlying environs, provided with ditches laden with machinery for solidifying and utilizing the refuse matter of the sewage. This is a problem that has thus far been entirely evaded in all the large commercial cities of the United States, where the English plan has been adopted of permitting the sewage to be emptied into the rivers, bays, lakes, and other natural watercourses. In the marvelous city of London, where prodigious sums of money have been spent upon drainage improvements, the sewage is still carried out to sea carefully, and there deposited off the mouth of the river Thames. New York and Boston have followed in the wake of London, while in Philadelphia they are still engaged in discussing the plans for solving this great problem. The opinion is that Philadelphia ought to adopt the German plan, and establish sewage farms and outlet basins.

### Rushes.

Rushes are found in almost every place in the British Islands; and, in both cold and temperate quarters, at home and abroad, they are plentiful. Before the introduction of tallow candles in this country, rushes were used by those both in high and low stations. Rushlights are still sold by our chandler, and are used by the very poor, or for night-lights in sick-rooms. Among the peasantry in the country districts, we have often met with rushlights in numbers. The poor dip the rushes in any kind of grease or melted fat they can procure. Formerly, in farmers' or gentleman-farmers' houses, they twisted great numbers of rushes together in Ireland: sometimes to the bulk of a man's arm, for light-houses or torches. The common hard rush is used still in country places for tying up bundles of flowers, being previously bleached a little. The bulrush and the lesser bulrush are used for mats, footstools, seats for chairs, for baskets and for horse-collars, in Ireland; and in some of the midland districts of England, they make rope of the pith. The pith of bulrushes is used for candles. We have seen ropes and plaited whips, boys' whips and horse-whips made from bulrushes, some being ingenious plaiting and matting for ornamental purposes. We have known it to be used (the soft rush) for thatching cottages or cornstacks, and some of the very poor have used it for stuffing beds. Rushes of all species are a very useful order of plants, and may be utilized in a variety of ways, many still unthought of. It is quite possible that a very useful paper might be made from rushes as well as from Esparto grass or wood. We hope the humble and despised rush or bulrush, which has a history as old as Moses, will soon receive more attention than it has hitherto obtained. This very useful plant has passed into a proverb, and is used in derision to express contempt, as, "I don't care a rush about you."

## AMERICAN BANK BURGLARS.

### Men Who Break Into Banks—How They Operate—Tools Costing $7,000.

The methods of the American thief, the Chicago *Times* says, are very comprehensive and skillful, more so than are those of the profession, for such has thieving become of other countries? It is commonly acknowledged among the first police officers in the world, that, for a fine job, the American thief is far ahead of his of other nations. Why should he be? That is some what of a mystery, unless to the training he has received under the tutelage of the best of English thieves he adds the peculiar daring, coolness, cunning and skill that seem to be inherent in the fully developed American. But no matter for what reason, the fact remains unchallenged that he stands at the head of the craft. A consideration of his ways, gentle and otherwise, will be interesting to read. He is divided in many families, but first and foremost among thieves is the bank burglar or "high-toby man." He is the king bee in the criminal hive, and effects to be a gentleman when not engaged on a "lay." The history of nearly every large and wealthy city abounds in instances of the bankrobber's daring roguery. He comes and leaves mysteriously, and his presence would not have been felt had he not left a "lay" of beautiful tools beside a wrecked safe or bank vault, and taken in exchange greenbacks and bonds that may be thousands, but more often is millions. This is his peculiar sportive moments he might form a fairy changeling, and does, but no amount of sportive wit can persuade the bank officers into thus regarding the act. Bank burglars are not in the habit of working alone.

They travel in gangs and have at their back and call in a crowd of controlling capitalists, "supercargoes," and "go-between." The first named estate" the cracksman when he is broke, triumph the funds for his expeditions, and when he is in trouble look generally after his interests. The "supercargo" is the brains of the gang, plans its expeditions, often furnishes the funds, and takes an active share in the spoils. The "go-between" is he who acts as agent for the disposal of negotiable bonds of securities of any kind, for although these paper have no value to the burglars, the bank people are pleased to do otherwise, and between the two interests both are willing to a raise something in the interest of Calloway and the rest. Bank burglars' tools are generally of a very superior order, gathered with care and pains at until the kit is made up. A full kit of the best cracksman costs $7,000. Too many all go in the event of a failure of a job by dynamite alone, and generally they go when a successful piece of work is accomplished, as the booty is heavy enough to carry away in itself, so the tools are left behind. Mechanics of a superior class exist in large cities who make a specialty of fashioning burglars' tools. In the absence of such a mechanic the tools are collected in parts, but as this is a risky way of obtaining them it is avoided if possible. Kits of the bobyman's tools are kept on hand for hire, and a good collection can be obtained in the center of the business for from $500 to $700. The tool-makers are generally tool-makers also, but often the tenor has thrown on hand, and it is part of the business of the old cracksman to keep them. Fifty per cent. of the noted burglars are practical mechanics and thoroughly understand the temper and capacity of their own tools. Sometimes a gang, each owning implements of different kinds, pool their possessions, and thus make up a full kit." The tool-makers have their specialties. Some are famous for chisels, others for punches and jimmies, and one maker has made a national reputation for a sledge of steel and copper that entirely superseded that formerly used of steel, because of the dull, almost noiseless blow it strikes.

The latest great improvement is in drills that cut into the hardest steel like a knife into wood, especially the double racket drill of Howard, the burglar, who was murdered by his comrades some years ago for treachery. This drill is said to be able to bore a hole through a solid block of steel as easily as does a gimlet in one of wood. Another tool called a safe-opener will cut the front out of a safe when once it gets a hold. But the most powerful and destructive instrument used by burglars is the safe-drag, originally made in England. It weighed at first about 500 pounds, but American ingenuity has got it down to a little over 100 in weight, and improved its qualities. An expert can tear a strong safe literally to pieces with this terrible machine. Of the best cracksmen of the near past and present, Bristol Bill, Max Shinburn, Jack Wade, Red Leary, Scott, Dunlap, and Edson, the last four famous for their connection with the great Northampton, Mass., bank robbery several years ago, and for which Dunlap and Scott are now "doing time," are the kings. Wonderful stories of the daring, skill, and coolness of these men are chronicled in criminal annals, but they have generally come to grief at last. Their immense plunder was recklessly wasted in a Liserts of spendthrift schemes, until they were forced to return to the old business to replenish their purses. This procedure illustrates their lives until an unfortunate move threw them in the clutches of the law, and they were settled.

### Lizards and Music.

Some lizards, certainly betray a sense of musical vibrations. Little geckos and other house lizards, if they do not exactly "come out to listen," as they are reputed to do, will stop instantly in their flight over walls and floors when a note is struck, and remain motionless for some seconds, as though actually listening for its repetition, and I have seen taraguiras in a garden "mesmerissd" by a guitar in the same way. But it is to be observed that in neither instance is the mesmerism complete enough to prevent their eluding capture, and that if the music be continued they soon become habituated to it and resume their wonted movements. I am inclined to attribute the effect to the reception of the air waves by the general sensibility of the cutaneous surface, the feeling of what is most likely a disagreeable thrill, rather than to any impression on the special sense of hearing. Setting at an open grand piano one day, looking at some manuscript, but not touching the keys, a "legatitia," making his way down the wall against which the instrument stood, by a series of running crooked jerks, caught my eye, his little sprawling hands and indescent body sharply defined against the white background. On the further end of the piano lay a paper of emphasis; this had attracted a swarm of flies, and the flies in their turn attracted the legatitia. Down he came, with abrupt suspension-starts and turns to the side and that, until he stood on the level ground of the piano top, paused, dotted half across it, and paused again. Just as he began to run other as to having cautiously brought my hands and feet into position, I struck a tremendous double chord with the hard pedal down. Poor little chap! I thought I had killed him. He was absolutely knocked off his legs, and turned over on his back, whence he lay feebly kicking. Before I could reach him, however, he had recovered, regained his feet, flashed up the wall, and disappeared into a crevice. I expect that last blast, at any rate, had a very low opinion of music afterward.—*All the Year Round.*

### Making Shot.

A shot tower is an immense brick structure, 150 feet high, resembling a lighthouse more than anything else. Visitors are conducted up a spiral staircase, inside to the top, where a fine view is obtained for miles about, but the view down the shaft is not so pleasant. The opening where the shot descends becomes narrower and narrower, until a thing is seen at the bottom but a speck. At the top of the tower are the furnaces for smelting. From these lead is poured into pans set in the tower, with perforated sheet iron bottoms. The melted lead comes through these holes and enlarges on the other side, formed into globules before it falls down to the well beneath holding several feet of water. The large lead drops the whole flight of the tower to the bottom, but the smaller sizes only about half as far. One peculiar thing is, that small shot generally expand in falling, and the largest sizes contract. Very great care is necessary in mixing the metal, as it would run through the holes and drop in strings if not of the proper proportions, and no shot could be made at all.

### Americans Like the Romans.

In an interesting lecture Professor J. P. Mahaffy stated that so far back as the early days of imperial Rome traveling was carried on to an extent almost equal to the traveling fashion of the present day, and that the traveling facilities of the time of Augustus far exceeded those which obtained at the commencement of the present century. The Roman roads and thoroughfares were better, brigandage and piracy were stamped out; there was a unity of coinage; there was universal peace and the Greek language was carried everywhere. The Romans felt, like the modern Americans, very powerful, very rich, to some extent newly civilized, full of national pride, quite content with their own greatness, but as regarded culture aware that they had not all they wanted, and they therefore traveled everywhere to obtain cultivation, without which they considered their education incomplete. The lecturer referred to and detailed the outlines of some prominent land and sea routes leading from Rome, and said that in these days conveniences in the shape of inns were common enough, their tariffs very cheap, and their accommodation notoriously bad.

Every day the papers tell of some man who set out deer-hunting being mistaken for a deer and shot. The resemblance between a man and deer is not great, but it seems as though any hunter could tell the difference unless he has the "buck fever;" but as they cannot distinguish a man from a deer it will be wise for hunters to carry a banner or a transparency on which shall be printed the words: "Do not shoot me. I am not a deer."

At the show rooms of Rogers & Sons, cutlers, of Sheffield, Eng., is exhibited an African elephant's tusk five feet long, twenty-one inches in girth and weighing 160 pounds.

Dr. Ichabod Stoddard, of Perry, Me., has adopted in all thirteen children. He is a children's aid society in himself.

She didn't like him a bit, but still he would call. "What shall I write about?" he asked of her one evening, as he picked up her autograph album. "Shall I write about the early spring? Tell me, what shall I write about?" "Right about face! Forward, March!" she answered, and he did it.

[New Haven (Conn.) Union.]

### How a Lawyer Treated the Case.

I, David Stronse, of New Haven, Connecticut, was attacked with a severe rheumatism in my right arm, hand and foot, so that I walked with difficulty and could hardly use my hand to eat with. I used one bottle of St. Jacobs Oil, rubbing well three times a day, and obtained instant relief and a perfect cure.

DAVID STRONSE, *Attorney-at-Law.*

The feature in new polka-dotted cotton dress goods is the large size and close proximity of the dots.

### POVERTY AND DISTRESS.

That poverty which produces the greatest distress is not of the purse but of the blood. Deprived of its richness it becomes scant and watery, a condition termed anæmia in medical writings. Given this condition, and scrofulous swellings and sores, general and nervous debility, loss of flesh and appetite, weak lungs, throat diseases, spitting of blood and consumption are among the common results. If you are a sufferer from thin, poor blood employ Dr. Pierce's "Golden Medical Discovery," which enriches the blood and cures these grave affections. Is more nutritive than cod liver oil, and is harmless in any condition of the system, yet powerful to cure. By druggists.

A Minnesota farmer advertised that if the man who had run off with his wife, two children, and $300 would return the young ones, he might keep the money and the wife.

As a tonic and nervine for debilitated woman without stimulant, Dr. Pierce's "Favorite Prescription." By druggists.

Josh Billings says: "None of the humorists of the present day will last." We don't see why. Some of their jokes have lasted for five hundred years already.

Dr. Pierce's "Pleasant Purgative Pellets" are sugar-coated and inclosed in glass bottles, their virtues being entirely preserved unimpaired for any length of time, in any climate, so that they are always fresh and reliable. No cheap wooden or pasteboard boxes. By druggists.

Girls are more courageous than men. They are ready to make a match with a fellow twice their size.

### The Frazer Axle Grease.

Is the best in the market. It is the most economical and cheapest, one box lasting as long as two of any other. One greasing will last two weeks. It received first premium at the Centennial and Paris Expositions, also medals at various State Fairs. Buy no other.

### Kidney Disease.

Pain, Irritation, Retention, Incontinence, Dropsies, Gravel, etc., cured by "Barbo-calina." $1. Send for pamphlet to E. S. WELLS, Jersey City, N. J.

Murder will out, so will the fact that Carboline, a deodorized extract of petroleum, the natural hair restorer and restorer, is the best separator of dandruff, and all other hair dressings, as thousands of genuine certificates prove.

One pound of beef saved every year by using Lyon's Patent Metallic Heel Stiffeners.

Dose Cup, Advertisement in another column.

### Pure Blood.

Many families depend for their health on their noble medicine, but here, in this farming country, we do not care so much about our progress as our health. When the blood is out of order, disease manifests itself in the skin and limbs. To be restored to health take Swift's Specific or Blood and Liver Syrup. This medicine is not in the regular form. Dr. Fergus, Grand Prairie, Stephens county, New York, writes: "I have cured a number of Scrofula and Erysipelas in adults with Swift's Specific or Blood and Liver Syrup effectually, and have no hesitation in saying it is one of the best medicines of the day. It has met with perfect success in every case where I have used it."

### LAND-HUNGRY ENGLAND

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