

TOPICS OF TO-DAY.

"No living germ of disease can resist the antiseptic power of essence of cinnamon for more than a few hours," is the conclusion announced by M. Chamberland as the result of prolonged research and experiment in M. Pasteur's laboratory. It is said to destroy microbes as effectively, if not as rapidly, as corrosive sublimate.

New York is the only State that allows an uncle to marry his niece. In Florida and Georgia marriage is prohibited within the "Levitical degrees," these are set forth in Leviticus xviii. and forbids marriages of nieces and nephews, but seemingly not of uncles with nieces. No European country considers such a marriage lawful.

Dr. Alfred Springer, of Cincinnati, has shown a new application of the metal aluminum. He has made a violin of it, and the instrument, which was given a public test at a concert before a number of musical experts, has been pronounced eminently satisfactory in the purity and sweetness of its tone. The maker said that 32 cents worth of aluminum sufficed for the construction of the instrument.

A dealer in men's furnishing goods explains that glaring colors are popular in socks, and that he sells a dozen loud ties to one of quiet color and design. He adds that the cheaper ties abound in loud colors, not because poor folks have worse taste than rich folks, but because there are more people of bad taste than of good taste, and a great many more of each class among the poor than among the rich.

Swans are not hard to raise; they sell at \$40 to \$75 per pair. A Yankee farmer at Biddeford, Me., is making quite a success at swan breeding, and his profits must be quite large each season. The average hatch yields from three to six young swans. They hatch usually about June and mature in fourteen months from birth. They are very cross when with a brood and need watching constantly unless penned up closely.

Edwin D. Mead, in the March New England Magazine, makes a plea for the preservation of public monuments of beautiful and historic places. Walter Blackburn Harte touches upon the universality of the aesthetic sense in a crude form, passes on to a consideration of the necessity of an approximation to positive criticism applied to aesthetic art, and winds up with a little good-natured portrait of some excessively dignified literary potentates.

The London Society of Telegraph Engineers and Electricians have been making soundings along the coast of Africa with a view of laying a cable from England to Cape Town. At the mouth of the Congo they found a remarkable state of affairs, their maps and soundings showing that that river's mouth is an extraordinary marine gully of no less depth than 1,452 feet. The mouth of the Mississippi at an equal distance from shore would only show 33 feet and the Thames 40 feet. The Congo's incredible depths were traced for more than 100 miles out at sea.

M. Cavaignac, who is looked on, in the light of recent events, as possibly the coming President of France, is said to be of indisputable, freely acknowledged Irish descent. He is descended from the Mac Murrough Kavanagh, who were King of Leinster, and according to this authority, the late Mr. Kavanagh of Borris, long a member of the House of Commons, was a relative of M. Cavaignac. The similarity of pronunciation in the two names is interesting viewed in this light. Should M. Cavaignac attain the Presidency of the Republic he would be the second man of Irish descent to hold that high honor. Marshal MacMahon was always proud of his Irish ancestry.

The introduction of another cement is mentioned, of specially valuable properties for steam pipes, in filling up small leaks, such as a blow hole in a casting, without the necessity of removing the injured piece. The cement in question is composed of five pounds of Paris white, five pounds yellow ochre, ten pounds litharge, five pounds red lead, and four pounds black oxide manganese, these various materials being mixed with great thoroughness, a small quantity of asbestos and boiled oil being afterward added. The composition as thus prepared will set hard in from two to five hours, and possesses the advantage of not being subject to expansion and contraction to such an extent as to cause leakage; and its efficiency in places difficult of access is of special importance.

The March Arena is particularly inviting to persons interested in vital social problems, and to liberal thinkers. Among the important social and economic problems ably discussed are papers by Alfred Russel Wallace, D. C. S., Helen Campbell, and the editor of the Arena. Dr. Wallace presents a powerful contribution on "The Social Quagmire and the Way Out of It," in which he holds that the land question lies at the root of present evil conditions. It is addressed presumably to the farmer, but should be carefully read by all thoughtful people. Helen Campbell continues her series of wonderful papers on "Women Wage-Earners of Europe and America," presenting data and facts never before given to the public, and furnishing the ablest discussion of this problem ever made. Mr. Flower, under the title "A Pilgrimage and a Vision," deals most vividly with social contrasts in Boston, and shows what might be done if capital were a little less grasping, selfish and shortsighted. He also discusses in a thoughtful, and on the whole an optimistic manner, the present outlook under the caption "What of the Morrow?" Dr. Leslie Keeley defends his gold cure in a well-written paper on that subject. Louis R. Elich deals with the present liberal drift of religious thought in an ably prepared paper entitled "A Religion for all Time." Among the other contributors are Prof. S. P. Watt, Helen Gungar, A. M.; John Franklin Clark, Dr. F. J. Furnival, Will Allen Dromgoole, Cora Maynard and Judge John Keatley. All thoughtful and progressive people should read this Arena.

One hundred and six finely drawn illustrations embellish the pages of the March number of the Idler, the unique magazine that has just completed its first year with a circulation of 120,000. And yet after purchasing its bright pages one can readily perceive why everybody wants the Idler. It is one of the very few magazines that you can read without fatigue—in fact, cannot help reading and enjoying every article. The March number opens with a delightfully-written story by I. Zangwill, "Cheating the Gallows," describing how one man evaded Jekyll and Hyde, winning the love of the same girl in both his characters. The

story closes with a "lady or the tiger" situation for the consideration of the reader. Miss M. E. Bradton relates her experiences in the realm of literature and tells of the production of "The Trail of the Serpent," the first of her 53 novels. Jerome K. Jerome's "Novel Notes" are ingenious and refreshing as usual, while in "My Servant Andreas," Archibald Forbes, the renowned war correspondent, relates some of his thrilling experiences in the Serbian-Turkish and Russo-Turkish wars. In "A Matrimonial Romance," as told by the colonel, W. L. Alden relates how a man was married for fifteen years and never had any wife whatever. Under the heading, "Lions in Their Den," Raymond Blithway tells of the well-known actor and society clown, "George Grossmith and the Humor of Him." The experience of "A Blind Beggarman" is well told by Frank Mathew, and Rev. Dr. Joseph Parker considers "The Relation of the Church and Henry Irving," in which he ranks Mr. Irving, the comedian, above Mr. Irving, the tragedian, and concludes "that a properly-conducted stage might be a most powerful ally of the pulpit." Kirby Ward humorously describes the misadventure that befell "That Beast Beauty." The Idler's Club discusses the question, "To Love a Practical Reality or a Pleasing Fiction?" Mrs. Lynn Linton (Rita), John Strange Winter, Miss May Crommelin, Miss Quilla Couch, Morley Roberts and others treating the problem in its different aspects, while I. Zangwill, in his inimitable manner, revisits his evidence. Thus auspiciously opens the third volume of the Idler, with a cluster of twelve gems of the finest quality. The Idler is published at \$3 per year, 25 cents a number, by S. S. McClure, 743 and 745 Broadway, New York, who offers a premium to new subscribers the first two volumes, so that all who subscribe now will receive the Idler for two years from the first number for \$3.

A Story Without a Moral.

The cards were out for the wedding. The bride and groom were waiting for the ring. The company had assembled, and the final touches were being put to the bride's veil.

The maid of honor and the four bridesmaids were superintending this ceremony. All these girls had graduated together from the same school, and had agreed then to fill these relative positions at the first wedding among them.

"There!" said Nettie Valentine, one of the pink maids; "I think that is quite perfect, don't you, girls?"

"Yes, lovely," murmured Theresa Evans, one of the blues. "You must go down now, of course," as an impatient knock came at the door. "Let us say good-bye to Pauline—Pauline Desmond for the last time."

"I do wish, dear," said Fannie Graham, the maid of honor, "that you could have made up your mind to insist that he should take your name instead of you his. But you will write it with a hyphen, won't you?"

"Of course, girls; we all promise, and I certainly will."

"And you won't forget what else you promised?" said several voices.

"No, girls. You may depend upon me. Yes, mamma, I am ready now."

Five minutes later the bride and groom stood at the head of the long parlor in front of the bay window where the clergyman had been awaiting them.

Frank Lacy was a fine young fellow, and they made a handsome couple. To be sure, one of the bridesmaids (the blue one, who had kept on her eye-glasses) had her own opinion of Pauline, in that she had not preferred the Greek professor; but then, really, you know, the professor was pretty old, and, as he never talked in society, it was not generally supposed that he understood English as well as Greek.

Then there was Mr. Midas, thought one of the pink bridesmaids. Pauline was a simpleton there. But, after all, it was just as well, and when she took notice again—

At this point the pink maid's wandering attention came back to the sentence the minister was just finishing.

"So long as you both shall live?"

It was the bride's turn to say "I will," as the groom had just said it.

Pauline stood erect. She raised her dark eyes and fixed them upon the face of the questioner. She was pale, but it was with an earnest purpose, not with nervousness.

"I will do all these things," she replied, "except that I will not obey him."

Everyone was taken by surprise, except the five girls who stood about the bride. There was a profound hush, while the clock on the mantel ticked ten times.

"Frank," she said, turning to her half-made husband, "you do not wish me to make this monstrous promise—to drag this relic of the middle ages—of the times when women were slaves and playthings of men—into our lives? You do not expect this of me, Frank?"

"Because if he does," murmured the tall usher to the pink bridesmaid, "he is very sanguine, and he will apparently be disappointed, like England, you know."

"Is it not so, Frank?"

"Certainly, Pauline, you need not say it, but why couldn't you have arranged this quietly beforehand?"

"Because I wish to do it now. My friends," she said, turning to the assembled guests, "am I not right? It is for you, my sisters, that I do this. A recent writer has said, 'Would that some woman would have courage to make a scene, if necessary, on such an occasion! It would be a glorious scene, if she possessed the courage to stand up to the man who would dare to pronounce the monstrous promise. It would be woman's splendid declaration of independence. The brave bride would be the heroine of the hour. She would do more than a thousand men do to wipe out this blot upon the nineteenth century!'"

"Quoted correctly," whispered the blue maid. "What a memory Pauline has!"

"I am this brave bride, my friends. Now we will go on," she said, turning to the minister.

The service proceeded. The bride did not spoil her point by refusing to be given away. The vows were made (leaving out the obnoxious word). Then came the nervous moment while the best man fumbled for the ring. He had not lost it, he gave it to the man, who gave it to the woman, who gave it to the minister, who gave it to the man, while the nineteenth century stood by and consented. The groom placed it upon the finger of the bride, and hesitated over the words he was to say:

"With this ring I thee wed—"

"And with all my worldly goods I thee endow," prompted the minister.

"No," said Frank abruptly. "Not all of them."

Uncle Canfield, of Canfield, Drew & Co., but nobody knew him.

"Why should a self-respecting man be expected to bring home all his money, like a model little boy in a Sunday school book? Let us throw off the yoke, and our wives will respect us the more. There are 978 employments open to women where there were formerly but six. They are able to get worldly goods for themselves. Pauline, I know it is I that you wish for, not my money."

"It is," murmured the blue maid, mechanically.

"Mean old thing!" said the pink maid to the tall usher. "Mr. Midas wouldn't have done so."

"You can go on now," said Frank to the minister.

"Wait. Perhaps you had better not go on," said the bride's mother, nervously.

"I should think not," said Aunt Sophia severely to the bride's sister.

"You know I never approved of your forms, and you see what comes of them. They had better wait a couple of weeks and join some church where they don't have them."

"I wish they would," whispered one guest to her sister. "They'd have to give back the presents, and that penknife I gave would just do for Fannie Warner. Her wedding's to-morrow."

"And perhaps the caterer will take back the wedding cake," mused an impatient youth, "and that will do for that same Fannie. But we'll have to have the salads. I'm awfully hungry."

"Fun, isn't it?" said the tall usher to the pink maid. "I don't enjoy weddings. But if they go on it would be a pity to waste the minister. Some of the rest of us might use him."

"Go on," said the groom impatiently.

"Go on," said the bride firmly.

"Go on," said Uncle Canfield from the back of the room.

"Oh, don't," said the other pink maid, looking for her handkerchief.

Though it is long in the telling how those behind cried forward and those before cried back, it was only 50 seconds by the clock. Then the Rev. Mr. Blake cut the Gordian by saying hurriedly: "I pronounce you man and wife." Then he went back and finished the service in the usual fashion. (—M. Helen Fraser Lovett.

Wonder in Welland!

A Representative Farmer Speaks.

MR. C. C. HAUN.

The following remarkable facts are fully certified to as being undeniably correct in every particular. Mr. Haun is well known in the vicinity, having resided here over fifty years, and is highly respected as a man of the strictest honor, whose word is as good as his bond.

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"Dear Sirs,—I think I have been one of the worst sufferers you have yet heard of, having been six years in the hands of four of our best doctors without obtaining permanent relief, but continually growing worse, until almost beyond hope of recovery, I tried your Bitters and got relief in a few days. Every organ of my body was deranged, the liver enlarged, hardened and torpid, the heart and digestive organs seriously deranged, a large abscess in my back, followed by paralysis of the right leg, in fact the lower half of my body was entirely useless. After using Burdock Blood Bitters for a few days the abscess burst, discharging fully five quarts of pus in two hours. I felt as if I had received a shock from a powerful battery. My recovery after this was steady and the cure permanent, seeing that for the four years since I have had as good health as ever. I still take an occasional bottle, not that I need it but because I wish to keep my system in perfect working order. I can think of no more remarkable case than what I have myself passed through, and no words can express my thankfulness for such perfect recovery."

C. C. HAUN, Welland P.O.

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CONDITIONS:—Each contestant must mark faces in puzzle in ink or pencil, cut advertisement out and forward to us with Thirty Cents for 3 months' subscription to the Ladies' Companion. Address, "D" LADIES' COMPANION PUBL. CO., 166 King St., West, Toronto, Can.

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