

TOPICS OF THE TIMES.

Dr. Smith, in charge of the Lazaretto at Tracadie, N. B., reports that on January 1 there were 23 lepers under treatment in that institution, 11 males and 11 females. During the year six new cases were admitted and two patients. He states that for several years no lepers have been admitted from Tracadie districts, the new cases being from outlying districts, to which the relatives of leprous persons in Tracadie had removed years ago. They were ferreted out by the doctor, and removed in the face of determined opposition. Dr. Smith thinks that leprosy has been finally stamped out in the Tracadie district, so long its home, and attributes this result entirely to segregation.

Among the recent deaths is that of Charles H. Spurgeon, the great London preacher. He did not have a college education, but won his high place by strong natural ability. In figure he was short and chubby, and rather awkward than otherwise. His features had a round Saxon cast, such as would lead one to regard him as capable of a rude strength, of a dogged power of endurance. He spoke good idiomatic Saxon in the pulpit, such as the people could understand. Spurgeon had the faculty of making his lessons into pictures, as the pious mother and her sinning child, the distressed believer and his great enemy, etc. He had no doubt as to the truths of the Bible and the constant presence of God in the world. Winning his fame early, he died in his prime at the age of fifty-seven years.

The World's Fair buildings are rapidly taking shape. One million dollars a month is being expended in the buildings alone. It is expected to be ready to dedicate in October, 1892, the anniversary of the landing of Columbus at San Salvador.

The Silver Thaw.

There came a day of showers
Upon the shrinking snow;
The south wind sighed of flowers,
The softening skies hung low.
Mid-winter for a space
Foreshadowing April's face,
The white world caught the fancy
And would not let it go.

In re-awakened courses
The brooks rejoiced the land;
We dreamed the spring's shy forces
Were gathering close at hand.
The dripping buds were stirred,
As if the sap had heard
The long-desired persuasion
Of April's soft command.

But antic time had cheated
With hope's elusive gleam;
The phantom spring defeated
Fled down the ways of dream.
And in the night the reign
Of winter came again,
With frost upon the forest
And stillness on the stream.

When morn in rose and crocus
Came up the bitter sky,
Celestial beams awoke us
To wondering ecstasy.
The wizard winter's spell
Had wrought so passing well
That earth was bathed in glory
As though God's smile were nigh.

The silvered saplings bending
Flashed in a rain of gems;
The statelier trees attending
Blazed in their diadems.
White fire and amethyst
All common things had kissed,
And chrysolites and sapphires
Adorned the bramble stems.

In crystalline confusion
All beauty came to birth;
It was a kind illusion
To comfort waiting earth—
To bid the buds forget
The spring so distant yet,
And hearts no more remember
The iron season's dearth.

—Chas. G. D. Roberts in *March Century*.

An Excellent Spelling Exercise.

While visiting the public schools of Chicago the other day, I witnessed a valuable spelling exercise which, while not altogether new, might be practised to advantage in all schools, whether of the country or city.

The pupils are given half an hour each day for spelling. On Monday morning the teacher places on the board a list of words chosen from the reading lessons of the previous week. This is left on the board all the week, and each day the first ten minutes of the half hour for spelling is devoted to the forming of oral sentences by the pupils, in which the words in the list are used.

On Friday, paper is passed, and all the words but ten are erased from the board; these ten are used each in a written sentence.

On Monday, fifteen minutes of the time for language is used in reading and discussing the sentences which have, in the meantime, been corrected by the teacher.

The child not only learns how to spell the word, but how to use it at the same time, and it enters into his vocabulary as a means of expressing thought, and not, as is too often the case in our teaching of spelling, a mere combination of letters. — "E," in *Public School Journal*.