

of them little short of myself in mental capacity—who are able to believe in this theory of an Intelligent Creator! Pity is an unscientific impulse, but I really do feel pity for them! Just think of it, my hearers. Myriads of men in all ages, so far as we can learn, have embraced this most unreasonable and incredible hypothesis. Contrast it for a moment with the beautiful, simple scientific conception which I have already mentioned—of Human Nature waking up, as it were, and persisting itself into being! And let me ask, where is the necessity—the scientific necessity—of a Creator, when one is able to evolve oneself, as I did, as you did, my hearers, in the person, so to speak, of our respected progenitor, the enterprising and persistent primordial germ in the distant depths of space. Human Nature to-day is what it has become through its own efforts, and therefore it is all right. *Quod erat demonstrandum.* The collection will now be taken up.

TOPICAL TALK.

“WOMEN’S franchise in England is probably merely a question of time,” declares a writer on female suffrage. As a cynical old bachelor I am bound to add, “yes—a question of time out of mind.”

FUN KEE is the name of a Chinaman in this city. It strikes me that his name describes, pretty accurately, the state of his countrymen’s feelings since the French got at them. They appear to be a rather funky lot.

I CORDIALLY agree with the writer who says: It is sheer wantonness to throw away game because it happens to be a little “high.” The best plan is to raffle it off if you can’t get people to pay the price. Throwing away for it is more sensible than throwing it for a way.

I SEE it stated, as something remarkable, that a chemist in Munich makes quinine out of coal. Tut, tut! what of that. Don’t our coal-dealers, right here in Toronto, make gold, silver, and dollar hills out of it? Don’t they make a ton of the dusty mineral out of 1,700 pounds? Who cares for the Munich man?

A RANDOM slice from a current serial story is this:—“For a moment she did not recognize him; then, with a faint smile, she put out her hand in greeting to Lord de la Poer.” I did not read the whole of the chapter, but I have a shrewd suspicion of the run of it. She is a bonanza heiress, and he has a scheme, as Lord de la Poer, to become Lord de la Rich. Eventually they get married and live unhappily ever after. That is to say, she lives unhappily.

I HAVE just made the discovery that Mr. Gilbert caught inspiration for at least one portion of *Pinafore* from a cat’s concert. One night while the feline orchestra

“Breathed fitfully the music of the spheres,”—lower spheres, you understand—Mr. Gilbert contributed, by way of applause, every available toilet article in the room, until only his razor strop was left. As he gracefully, but with erratic aim, shielded this, he murmured softly: “Farewell, my hone!”

The *Telegram* justly observes that there is no custom so idiotic as that of a man taking a woman’s arm when walking with her. I entirely agree with the paper named. A man should put his arm round his fair companion’s neck when promenadeing the street, and any fellow who doesn’t is an idiot. It is obvious that Nature intended woman’s neck for something else besides being a shaft down which to pour ice-cream, oysters, and Mumia’s extra dry. You can’t go against Nature, but she’ll run to the *Telegram* office and get some journalist to set her right before the world.

It is curious to notice how a man who is given to getting frequently inebriated and making a nuisance of himself, will contend

that drunkenness is a constitutional disease, and how he will talk with a self-pitying whine of dipsomania, oinomania and the like: but directly that man braces up; forswears the flowing bowl and becomes a shining light in the temperance ranks, how he will repudiate his former theories, and how he will exclaim: “Bosh, sir: don’t tell me: drunkenness a disease! tut, tut: nothing but an evidence of innate depravity and a total lack of will-power, sir; look at me, sir, look at me.”

Nor many days ago an indignant letter signed “Jeweller” appeared in the *Telegram*, in which the following sentence occurred: “and how can they expect retailers to make a living, if they go behind their back and take the bread out of their mouths in this way?” I can’t answer the question, but I don’t see how any one could very well take the bread out of a retailer’s mouth by going behind the latter’s back to do it: that is, unless the retailer turned his head round. Of course the thing is possible, but it would be much easier for the robber to pry open the other’s jaws from the front.

THE person who acts as correspondent at Ardrea for the *Orillia Packet* must be a man of high moral principle, a staunch supporter of the Right, and an uncompromising denouncer of the Wrong. Hear him:—“Some of the boys on their way home set fire and burned the dwelling house of the late Mrs. Bridgeman. I cannot vouch for the truth of the above, if true, the parties who did the deed ought to be ashamed of their conduct.” That they ought. They should feel real mean about it. To go to work and burn down a dwelling house was just too silly for anything. Incendiarism is positively ridiculous, arson is awfully foolish. “Feel ashamed?” Well, I guess they ought to.

I SEE, by a Boston paper, that the wives of green grocers and inferior tradesmen wear seal-skin sacques to so great an extent that Boston upper-tendom has decided to eschew the seductive garments, and thus show that its members are a long way above the vulgar trading herd. Say what you like, these lower classes are of some use to us patricians after all. This, their latest freak, will save me a vast amount of trouble and mental worry, for bills for seal-skin cloaks will be off my mind. I hope the Toronto green grocers and such creatures will start paying rent and all bills regularly. We, of the upper ten, will then be excused from following suit and doing as the ordinary tradespeople do. Ahem!

This has, so far, been an extraordinarily mild winter, at least that is my experience. In this connection it is most interesting to observe how differently various people appear to be affected by the temperature. For instance, on Monday, the fifth inst., the mercury stood fairly high in the thermometer tube, and citizens generally remarked that it was a warmish day, and yet Mr. Withrow, Aldermen Carlyle, Farley, Millichamp, Lobb and McConnell and a few private citizens assert that it was one of the coldest days they ever experienced. The Arctic breezes that so chilled these gentlemen, set in about 5 p.m. Mr. Manning, Mr. Baxter and others, on the contrary, say that they would not wish for a nicer day.

I NOTICED an article in the *Hamilton Times* a short time ago which described the state of affairs in Manitoba when the cold was down to 50° below zero. If the account referred to is true some very singular things indeed take place when the weather is so unwarm, for we are informed that “the roast beef feels like a solid bone and when struck with a sharp axe fat pork flies all over the house in chips.” There are two things about this paragraph that are really extraordinary. The first is the transformation of cold roast beef into fat pork on being hit with a sharp axe; (this instrument being, apparently, a kind of magician’s wand

under the influence of the extreme cold) and the second is the statement that the pork, *nee* beef, flies all over the house. I used to be told, when I was but a youth, ruddy and of a fair countenance, that pigs *might* fly; but they never did, and I don’t think the statement I have quoted as at all entitled to belief. I have been in Manitoba, myself, and have experienced cold as intense as 50° below zero, but it never made a liar of me: no, sir, and nothing will ever do so as long as Toronto has men in the city council who will disregard the truth just for the fun of it.

I SAW it stated in several newspapers lately that the celebrated goose which attached itself to a certain Prussian Uhlan regiment thirty-five years ago, is dead, and has been stuffed and placed in a conspicuous position in the quarters of the officers of the corps mentioned. This statement is only partially true. It is true that the goose lived with the Uhlans for thirty-five years; it is true that the bird died and was stuffed. There the truth ends. The bird *did* die and was stuffed—with sage and onions, but it was never stuck up in the officers’ quarters, even though its attachment to the regiment for thirty five long years greatly endeared it to those warriors. The fact is I dined with a young bachelor at his boarding house on New Year’s day and we had that goose for dinner. Must have been that one.

EVERYBODY makes some kind of a New Year’s pledge. The trouble is that generally the pledge is too heavy a contract to take in a whole job and ought rather be tendered for in sections. Now, I have the editor of the *Orillia News Letter* in my mind’s eye as I write. This enthusiastic person goes recklessly into the promising business thus:—“Whatever we can do to mature the plans adopted to realize the aspirations of all animated by a desire to promote the greatest prosperity will be done earnestly and faithfully.” This, it is quite clear, is altogether too much to promise in a heap. He should have written more cautiously. How more calm, and cool, and sincere it would have sounded for him to have simply pledged himself to buy the town, and then wound up with some non-committal proposal to improve it somewhat! There is nothing worse than too much zeal, except you count too much dictionary.

I REGRETFULLY make the admission that the hero of the following true incident is an acquaintance of mine. The company were talking of the prevalence of typhoid fever in so many towns, and gradually the talk turned on individual experiences of the fever. This young man gravely said: “I remember when I was getting over the typhoid. I used to feel a great lump in my stomach, just like indigestion. And yet it was not that, either. I suffered for quite a while, but at last got relief by talking, an epidemic ordered by the doctor!” Subsequently the young man asked me privately what had raised such a laugh at the conclusion of his story. Being a sensitive person myself with a predisposition to suicide, I forbore telling the whole truth. I simply said that the company were naturally amused at the neat way in which he had disappointed their expectations by crediting the doctor instead of some patent medicine with his cure.

A YOUNG man on the *Globe* got hold of a burglary item the other day, and proceeded to write up the most minute details of it, as furnished, no doubt, by the detectives, who never miss minute details in burglaries, even if they have to miss the burglars in obtaining them. According to the young man’s powerful paragraph, the burglars made a noise which the inmates at first attributed to rats or mice. Here the reporter made a grand miss. He might have sandwiched in an observation to the effect that they fancied “it was the cat.” But