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Children's Literature.
WHAT "ST. NICHOLAS" HAS DONE FOR BOYS AND GIRLS.

Victor Hugo calls this "the woman's century," and he might have added that it is the children's century as well, for never before in the world's history has so much thought been paid to children—their schools, their books, their pictures, and their toys. Childhood, as we understand it, is a recent discovery.

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AMERICAN SENTINEL.

VOL. 59, NO. 14. WESTMINSTER, MD., SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 11, 1891. ESTABLISHED 1833.

Select Poetry.

LATTER-DAY WARNINGS.

[Oliver Wendell Holmes, in "The Autocrat at the Breakfast Table." Houghton, Mifflin & Co.]

When legislators keep the law,
When banks dispense with bolts and locks,
When berries—whortle, rasp and straw—
Grow bigger *downwards* through the box,—

When he that selleth house or land
Shows leak in roof or flaw in right,—
When haberdashers choose the stand
Whose window hath the broadest light,

When preachers tell us all they think,
And party leaders all they mean,—
When what we pay for, that we drink,
From real grape and coffee-bean,—

When lawyers take what they would give,
And doctors give what they would take,—
When city fathers eat to live,
Save when they fast for conscience sake,—

When one that hath a horse on sale
Shall bring his merit to the proof,
Without a lie for every nail
That holds the iron on the hoof,—

When in the usual place for rips
Our gloves are stitched with special care,
And guarded well the whalebone tips
Where first umbrellas need repair,—

When Cuba's weeds have quite forgot
The power of suction to resist,
And claret bottles harbor not
Such dimples as would hold your fist,—

When publishers no longer steal,
And pay for what they stole before,—
When the first locomotive's wheel
Rolls though the Hoosac Tunnel's bore;—

Till then let Cumming blaze away,
And Miller's saints blow up the globe;
But when you see that blessed day,
Then order your ascension robe!

Select Story.

HER MEDITATIONS.

How Mrs. Paulding was Reconciled to Tom's Sweetheart.

Maria Saintsbury, in N. O. Times-Democrat.

I wonder why sons will never marry the girls their mothers pick out for them. The perversity of human nature, I suppose. But it seems to me that if any one pointed out the proper line of conduct to me I would follow it.

I had never much of a fancy for Gerarda Abbey. Her lips and cheeks always seemed to be too bright colored, and her dark hair curled and flew about so. And then her eyes danced and shone in a totally undignified manner.

"Tom," I used to say at least once a week, "I wonder you don't admire Margie Hoffheimer. She has such dignity, such repose of manner."

"So has an iceberg—and an oyster," Tom would retort.

"Well! the young men of the present day have strange tastes. She is just my ideal of a woman. *She* never covers her forehead with foolish bangs and frizzes."

"Pity she doesn't!" said Tom. "It has such a lumpy look."

Tom is my only child. I love him dearly, but he has always been a great weight on my mind. For instance, in spite of all my entreaties he would go to Fairview to settle, though every one said there was a fine opening at home, in Paschal, when old Dr. Johns died. What a dear, good old man he was—but somehow he never came to see me professionally that he did not make me sicker than ever.

I told him so once, and he did not take it in good part at all.

Strange how few people can bear to hear the truth.

Well, as I was saying, Tom would admire Gerarda and wouldn't admire Margie. Now, I am not mercenary, but I do think it is better for a young professional man to marry a girl with a nice little fortune of her own than one with a widowed mother and five younger sisters and brothers and just enough to get along on.

"You'll never succeed, Tom," I cried, in a pet, "if you marry a girl with a pack of mothers and sisters clinging to her skirts."

"Strictly speaking," said Tom, in his provoking way, "Mrs. Abbey can't be called a pack of mothers."

"Oh, you know perfectly well what I mean; but have your own way, as usual."

Of course I had to call on the girl, since she and Tom were engaged. The little house where they lived was always as neat as a pin, I must say, and Gerarda was the main stay of the family.

I was polite, but not at all cordial. I am too truthful to assume anything I don't feel. I told her I thought she would look better with her hair brushed back from her forehead. She colored, but answered very pleasantly that "Tom liked it best so."

This happened during one of Tom's visits home. He never staid long, and I used to tell him it looked as if I did not make him comfortable. Well, I did not see much of Gerarda that fall, though we used to pay each other duty calls now and then; and when winter set in I heard of a queer freak of hers.

She had opened a dancing school.

Now there seems to be something very bold and unfeminine about teaching a dancing school. One always thinks a woman ought to support herself by teaching music or embroidery or painting plaques. To be sure Gerarda did not know how to play or paint, never having had much time for accomplishments, I fancy.

I couldn't understand it at all, for the Abbeys had always got along so far, and it was particularly odd when Morton, the eldest boy, had been given a place in a commission house in Cincinnati by an uncle or cousin or something of the sort. I began to think she must have done it out of sheer light headedness and frivolity.

I wrote to Tom, hoping he might remonstrate with her. I am always moderate in the expression of my opinion, so I simply said:

"Gerarda is looking very badly. All this dancing and racketing around is not good for her. But the young people of the present day have no discretion. Modesty seems to have gone out of date along with veneration for their elders."

That was all I said.

But it seemed to have no effect, for Gerarda still went on teaching. She began to look worse and worse. All the color left her face; even her lips were pale, and her mouth got a pinched look. Then she got a hacking cough, and I used to hear her going coughing along the street from her dancing school. She had not been to see me for the longest time—treating me with marked disrespect. But at last I could not bear to hear her, so I just ran out to the gate and gave her a box of lozenges.

She thanked me; then she gave me a wistful sort of look and hesitated, as if she wanted to say something, but she passed on.

One day I was walking along the beach. Winter was beginning to break up, and there were bright patches of green to be seen here and there. The sky was blue and white, with flying clouds, and the water around the piers was shining in the sun. Every thing looked so peaceful and happy that I couldn't help wondering why people can't be peaceful and happy too and follow the golden rule.

I had had a very trying morning.

In the first place I had been to see Mrs. Jones. When I went into the sitting-room there was a fire cracking on the hearth, and I could see through the door that there was one burning in her room also. Now, as Mrs. Jones is poor, and as I had supplied her with food for the greater part of the winter, I thought I had a right to say:

"Dear me, Mrs. Jones, I shouldn't think you could afford to have two fires burning at once—and such a mild day too."

She turned as red as a beet and pressed her lips together, but she didn't say anything. I fear Mrs. Jones is far from being sweet-tempered.

Then I went to Sister Harriet's. Her daughter Ella had just met with quite a severe accident, having been thrown from a buggy, while out driving, and her arm broken. To be sure it was painful, and the shock had made her ill, but then she should not have been so foolish as to have gone out behind Ned Pennywick's young horse. I reminded her of this.

"You ought to be very thankful," I began.

"Thankful for having been nearly killed?" she cried. "Really, Aunt Maria, my gratitude is not so easily aroused."

I sat down on the bed beside her. Perhaps I may have drawn the cover rather tightly over her feet, but she need not have given such a flounce.

"My dear child, it might have been your back or your neck," I said.

"Well, it wasn't."

"But it might have been."

"Maria," said my sister at this point, "too much conversation is no good for Ella. The doctor says it makes her feverish."

So I left there and went to Mrs. Crittenden's. She was in great trouble. She and her husband had not been married long, but they had had heavy money losses, and he had been obliged to leave her with her mother while he went out West to seek employment.

I had brought her some wine jelly, and after I had given it to her I said: "Cheer up, my dear. It might be so much worse. Suppose he was dead?"

"Oh, don't!" she cried.

"Well, but it might have happened. In the midst of life we are in death, and think how dreadful it would have been to see him lying in his coffin instead of his being just out West, where you can hear from him twice a week. Does he write twice a week?"

"Only once," she said.

"Only once—dear, dear!" said I. "I should think he'd write oftener."

"He is too busy," she replied.

Then, to divert her mind from her own grievances, I began to tell her about my new housemaid, Clarissa, and how many things she had broken in the last week.

"Three saucers and a teacup—no! three teacups and a saucer," I was saying, when I happened to glance at her, and saw that she was not listening to a word I was saying.

She seems to be a poor, spiritless creature, and I made up my mind that I would not go to see her again in a hurry.

Indeed, I came to the conclusion that there is very little gratitude in the world. You can go around wearing yourself out trying to do good to others, and never get a word of thanks.

I thought I would go on to Mrs. Stones', as she had asked the ladies of the church to meet at her house and talk over the new altar-cloth. When I stepped upon the gallery the front door was ajar, and a sound of voices came from the parlor; but no one seemed to hear my knock. I paused a moment, when my attention was attracted by the following remark:

"Mrs. Paulding is one of those people who are moral fly-blisters to all their friends and acquaintances."

"Yes," said another voice—it was that deceitful Margie Hoffheimer—"I always think it was fortunate for Job's reputation for patience that he did not know her."

"And the worst of it is that she has a good heart, and one can't quite hate her."

"You are right," replied Gerarda Abbey's voice, "Mrs. Paulding has one of the best hearts in the world. I know of ever so many sacrifices she has made in order to help others."

"Well, I should think you would be the last—"

But I did not wait to hear more. I was so angry that I did not know exactly where I was going when I walked away. To think that Gerarda's voice was the only one raised in my defense, after the way I had always snubbed her. I felt heartily ashamed of myself. As I was hurrying along who should overtake me but Gerarda. She bowed and was going to pass on, but I said: "Your cold doesn't seem to get any better, my dear."

She looked surprised and her lip trembled; then she answered bravely: "Oh, now spring is coming it will soon be well."

"Not unless you take care of yourself. You ought to get Tom to prescribe for you."

She hung her head and murmured something that sounded like: "Tom doesn't care."

I asked what she meant and she answered: "Tom and I are not engaged any longer. I did not write to him that I had undertaken the dancing school for fear he would say the work was too hard for me. But some one else must have told him, for he wrote me such a strange letter—that I could not care for him much if I was able to dance and enjoy myself in his absence. I could not help fancying that he was ashamed of my doing such a thing, and I have already misunderstood. I told her the whole story, and said I would write to him immediately.

"But suppose he's fallen in love with some other girl in the meantime," said Gerarda, with a sob.

"Bless you!" said I, "he hasn't done that—of course not! He is too much the son of his mother to change his mind in a hurry. You'll see him in Paschal before the end of the week." So I walked to the gate with her and left her comforted.

When I reached home I dispatched a hasty note to Tom saying that a patient in Paschal needed his immediate attention; and this brought him on the wings of the wind.

When I had made the necessary explanation he gave me a bear-like hug and then rushed off to see Gerarda.

Of course they kissed and made friends.

In fact, they have been married since last evening, and I am as fond of Gerarda as if she were my own daughter—the only drawback being that they are so far away.

I wanted Tom to come back to Paschal, and then we could all have lived together in the same house and been so happy. I can't think why he wouldn't do it.

THE BLACK RIBBON.

The gentlemen of Cove house sat upon the piazza, smoking and looking at the sea as it tumbled in, when the evening coach, laden with piled up baggage and passengers, came rattling down the turnpike and made the sweep which led up to the hotel. This in itself was matter enough for attention, but when, in the wake of the yellow old coach, just beyond its clouds of dust, a glittering little pony carriage rolled swiftly on, a dozen pair of lazy eyes grew interested and expectant.

The coach drew up with a scientific flourish, and the sweating horses stood panting with the tug through the heavy sand, while the driver leaped down, and with much tumbling and crashing of trunks the old stage was unladened. Meanwhile the pony carriage, holding two girls, rolled smoothly up to a side door, and three waiters were instantly in attendance upon them.

The ladies alighted, and the two disappeared at the private door of the Cove house.

"Who are they?" asked Paul Hanover, withdrawing his cigar from his mouth and turning his handsome blue eyes on the friend at his elbow.

Fane King, who was looking thoughtfully out at sea, replied quietly that he did not know.

"It's Miss Payson, of New York," said Will McKenzie, who knew everybody. "At any rate, that's her turnout."

"Which one?"

"The blonde, I suppose. I never met her, but she was at Newport with my sister last season. Nice, ain't she?"

"Who is the other one?"

"I don't know. Poor cousin, I presume."

Hanover and King relapse to their cigars; but everybody was thinking more or less of Miss Payson.

The ladies appeared at supper. There were only five of their party—the old gentleman, the two young ladies and an invalid child of 13 with her nurse. It was soon remarked

[redacted]

smooth, fresh cheek.

"What can be the matter?" questioned the ladies one of the other.

So, without the least possible information on the subject, Alice Payson was decided to be an object of misfortune and compassion, while unconcealed admiration and adulation were offered the other one.

I cannot say that either appeared much affected by the regard of those around them. Certainly they spoke to no one for at least three weeks. People became discouraged about making their acquaintance, and few more attempts were tried.

But things inevitably changed. One evening when all Cove house was in the surf a scream arose. The scream was followed by a frantic cry.

"Alice! Oh, Alice! She is drowning! Save her! Save her! Save her!"

"Who can swim?" was the cry.

Long before it was answered Fane King was seen striking out boldly for the spot.

But he had some forty rods to swim, and it was probable that Alice Payson had sunk for the second time while the strong tide swelled against the rocks.

"Swim, man, swim!" shouted the old uncle upon the beach.

"Save her, oh, for God's sake!" cried Maud, wringing her hands.

But within a few strokes of Fane King's outstretched arms Alice disappeared.

There was already death upon her closed eyes and pallid forehead. He thought it was a corpse he clasped as he dropped beneath the surface and caught her sinking figure.

It was with difficulty he arose to the surface. Thrice the great billows rolled over his head before he appeared. He could only hold himself and his burden off the cruel rocks. Already his arm was lacerated with their sharp teeth.

They had put out a boat, and it at last came to his relief. As they lifted the senseless girl into the wherry they saw that the black ribbon had been torn from her face, and a large, dull red, discolored mark appeared. It showed more plainly in the otherwise deadly pallor of her sweet face, for sweet it was, and pure as a child's. They covered face and figure reverently, thinking her quite dead, and rowed back, while Fane found his way up the rocks to have his hand wrung speechlessly by the agonized old man.

"I don't think she is dead, Mr. Payson," said Fane, remembering with a thrill the silken hair which had washed against his lips. "She cannot be dead!"

She was not dead. In three days she appeared among them again, fairer, gentler, sweeter than ever, and frankly grateful for the interest everybody betrayed in her. And then it came out that there had been a mistake. It was Alice who was the heiress and Maud the poor cousin, though as beautiful, as radiant and perfect as a Hebe.

Miss Alice Payson, with the black ribbon replaced, tried to thank Fane King on the first day of her reappearance, but her brown eyes filled and she only said:

"You are young; life is sweet to you; it was noble in you to risk yours for me, Mr. King."

Fane's heart swelled so that he hardly knew what was the matter with him. But, somehow, the friendly clasp of Alice Payson's light hand and the gaze of her sweet eyes affected him as no hand or eyes had ever affected him before.

The ice once broken, a bevy of gentlemen strove for the attention of the cousins. Paul Hanover was foremost.

He was very handsome, fair, brilliant, graceful. He was not poor either. Fane remembered that bitterly as he saw him strolling with Alice on the beach or driving for her the little pony carriage. His own peace and comfort seemed suddenly gone. Miss Payson's gentle friendliness only made him worse.

He was startled one day as if shot by Hanover remarking:

"If you're not altogether gone with the blues, Fane, I'd like you to congratulate a fellow."

"Have you won your bet on the trotting match?"

"Pshaw! hang trotting matches! Don't be stupid, Fane. Haven't I been riding with Miss Payson?"

"Well?"

"Well it is," pirouetting around the room and snapping his fingers like castanets. "I'm the fond betrothed of a lovely girl, after the latest novel. Now, what have you to say, my respectable moping friend?"

Fane tried hard to maintain himself and not betray his secret.

"Alice Payson is too good for you, Paul," he answered, with an attempt at being sage and composed, in which he succeeded but tolerably.

"I dare say, but it isn't her, Fane."

"Taint her?"—looking electrified.

"Certainly not. The money's very well, but that defect of hers—it's a delicate subject, but I really couldn't marry a girl with a disfigurement like that."

"You mean that you are engaged to Maud?" asked Fane, hardly believing his ears.

"Exactly."

"Why, I congratulate you, with all my heart!" jumping up excitedly.

"They are going away to-morrow. Don't you want to see them again?"

Fane went down upon the piazza where the ladies sat, unreasonably happy.

The ladies were standing upon the piazza, in the early sunlight, when he approached Alice Payson to say good-by. Paul was talking to Maud, saucy and beautiful in her jockey hat as Fane found his way to Alice's side.

"Good-by, Mr. King. You will come and see us, with your friend?" she said.

There was no one very near. He answered:

"No; I love you, and so I must say good-by forever, Alice."

He saw the delicate features pale. At that instant old Mr. Peyson came hurrying out, followed by a porter with a large valise in each hand.

"Ready, girls?" he called. "Come, hurry, or we'll miss the train."

Alice, with downcast face, gathered up her gray trailing skirt. He thought she was going without a word, but suddenly she looked up into his eyes.

"No. Come," she said. And then in a moment she was gone, the dainty carriage glittering down the beach.

A week later he waited for her in the costly splendor of her drawing room. She came down, giving him her soft hands, nor resisting his embrace.

"I love you so!" He murmured.

"Do you, really—with this disfigured face?"

"I never think of it Alice."

She laughed then and slipped off the black ribbon, and there was one smooth cheek as fair and perfect as the other.

"I had blistered my face for the toothache. It was nothing lasting, you see."

When Fane told Hanover his happiness, or as much of it as can be expressed in words, he looked as if there was something unsaid upon his mind, but when he beheld Alice under her bridal veil he seemed suddenly enlightened.

"If I hadn't been afraid of a black ribbon," he murmured, "I might have been fifty thousand dollars richer."

Making Rice Paper.

The so called rice paper is not made from rice, as its name implies, but from the snow white pith of a small tree belonging to the genus Aralia, a genus represented in the United States by the common sarsaparilla and the spinkenard. The tree grows in Formosa, and, so far as is known, nowhere else. The stems are transported to China, and there the rice paper is made, which is used by the native artists for water color drawings, or dyed of various colors and made into artificial flowers. Mr. Hosie, in his "Three Years in Western China," thus describes the process of making the paper:

I was invited to visit a worker in pith after nightfall. Although somewhat surprised at the hour named, I accepted the invitation.

On arriving at the house I was ushered into a badly lighted room, where a man was sitting at a table with his tools in front of him. These consisted of a smooth stone, about a foot square, and a large knife or hatchet with a short wooden handle. The blade was about a foot long, two inches broad, and nearly half an inch thick at the back. It was sharp as a razor.

Placing a piece of cylindrical pith on the stone, and his left hand on the top, he rolled the pith backward and forward for a moment until he got it into the required position. Then, seizing the knife with his right hand, he held the edge of the blade, after a feint or two, close to the pith, which he kept rolling to the left with his left hand until nothing remained to unroll; for the pith had, by the application of the knife, been pared into a square white sheet of uniform thickness. All that remained to be done was to square the edges.

If the reader will roll up a sheet of paper, lay it on a table, place the left hand on top, and gently unroll it to the left, he will have a good idea of how the feat was accomplished.

It seemed so easy that I determined to have a trial. Posing as a professional worker, I succeeded in hacking the pith, and in nearly maiming myself.

A steady hand and a keen eye are required for the work, and hence it is that the so called rice paper is manufactured only at night, when the city is asleep and the makers are not liable to be disturbed.

A Poor Place for Stamps.

An amusing incident occurred in the post-office recently, says the Savannah (Ga.) *News*. Stamp Clerk Lemcke had just sold a natty old gentleman a dollar's worth of "2's." The old gentleman was wondering where to put them, when he accidentally put his damp fingers on the sticky side of the stamps, and they began to stick together.

"Say, how do you keep these things from sticking?" he asked.

"Rub them on your head," the clerk replied.

"Ah! that is a new scheme," said the purchaser of the stamps, and he removed his hat and began to rub them over the bald head.

"The longer we live the more we learn," he said, smiling, and he allowed the stamps to remain on his head while he paid for them and put some papers back into his coat pocket. The stamps stuck.

"There, now, that's——" he said, as he reached up and tried to remove the stamps. They were sticking closer than a brother to the shiny white scalp. He tore one of them off, and he said it brought the skin. The clerks could not contain themselves, and the bald-headed old gentleman slapped his hat over his head and hurried off to get a shampoo.

An eminent English critic says that "the foolish word 'poetess' is a standing witness in our language to the national obtuseness. How little must the artistic constitution—the third sex—be understood among a people with such a word in their dictionary. How inorganic such distinctions are, of course, needs no illustration."

A LOCUST PLAGUE

From Pall Mall Gazette.

In order to check, if possible, the annual plagne of locusts that devour the herbage and blast the hopes of graziers, farmers and fruit growers to a greater or less extent in December, the Victorian Government proclaimed November 7 and 8 last as holidays for the scholars and schoolmasters in the rural districts, in order that they might co-operate with the settlers in destroying the young locusts in the early stage of their development, before they have been equipped with wings enabling them to take flight over the country to begin their work of devastation. With this end in view, preparations were made in numerous parts of the interior to destroy the pest in various ways, such as by beating with branches the beds in the fields where as yet wingless creatures were known to exist, or harrowing the ground or turning flocks of sheep upon the land and moving them rapidly about so as to tread upon and kill or injure the young brood, and also by spreading straw on the plague spots and setting fire to it. In such ways vast destruction was done to the armies of the young locuts in the early stage of their existence. It was seen, however, that the raid upon the vermin should have been made somewhat earlier, as numbers were already so far advanced so to be on the wing on their mission of mischief; and besides, the attack upon them was not so generally made as was desirable in some districts of Victoria, while north of the Murray comparatively little effort was put forth to cope with the evil, owing to the fact that on the New South Australian side of the Murray the bulk of the land is taken up with large squatting runs, and population is sparse there, thus giving the ravaging locusts almost complete scope to propagate.

People at home can hardly conceive how serious the locust plague is in these colonies. Recently the reports came that the creatures had massed themselves so thickly along some of the lines of railways that, although the breaks were shut down, the trains could not be brought to a stand until they had gone half a mile beyond the stations, owing to the multitudes crushed between the wheels causing the trains to pass along as if the rails were covered with oil The wheels actually slid along the rails. In many of the northern towns the inhabitants had to close their doors to keep out the invading hosts. The plague has now fairly begun work, writes a correspondent of the Glasgow Herald. In the southern parts of New South Wales and some of the northern portions of Victoria the outlook is ominous. In and around Barnawartha (Victoria) the insects are spreading in swarms and causing great destruction. A resident of that district reports that in traversing that part of the country in his buggy the wheels of his vehicle were completely imbedded in masses of young caterpillars and grasshoppers, which on many extensive areas "covered the whole surface to a depth of about four inches like a gigantic and undulating coat of geeen paint."

Where the country presented any depressions it was found impossible to pass with a buggy, and in several favorable localities, such as low-lying lanes, etc., the insects were surging about in masses some two or three feet deep. The ground in their wake is quite destitute of grass. Such are some of the breeding grounds from which the fully developed creatures take flight to waste and destroy other parts of the country. In the Butherglen district (Victoria) the locusts are doing great damage, eating up the grass and invading the extensive vineyards. One vineyard owner there having ten acres of vines reports his entire crop as spoiled. The grapes are not yet fully formed, but the locusts are busy strippiug the bunches, the result being that these wither and die. So dense are the insects that work has to be suspended, as the horses will not face them. Reports come from the Albury district that the locusts are attacking the flags on the wheat stalks, and in some instances the wheat heads have been eaten off. One report states that in the locality of Walbundrie, about thirty miles from Albury, the pest is traveling southwards, in the direction of the Murray, in columns several miles wide, partially obscuring the sky, and advancing at the rate of ten miles in twenty-four hours, resting to devour green spots, and then winging their way to fresh pastures.

Babies and young children dressed in white are thought by medical men to be more susceptible to colds and infectious diseases than those clad in dark, warm colors.

Birds Which Have Disappeared.

A very interesting bird, once an inhabitant of Britain, but now everywhere utterly extinct, is known as the great auk. It was about the size of a goose, but, having very small wings, was quite unable to fly. Being a powerful bird, with a strong bill, and a most accomplished diver, it would have continued to live on in full security but for man's reckless destruction. Unable to rise in the air like other water fowl, and deposit its eggs in security on high ledges of rock, it could only shuffle along some gentle slope to lay its eggs at a safe distance above high-water mark. It was formerly very abundant, and hundreds at a time were taken off the coast of Newfoundland in the first quarter of the seventeenth century. In 1813 it was still abundant on the rocky islands off the coast of Iceland; and in 1844 a couple were caught on an island called Eldey. Since then it has disappeared altogether. The last specimen taken in our islands was caught in a landing net in Waterford Harbor in 1834, and is now preserved in Trinity College. About seventy-six skins and nine skeletons, with sixty-eight eggs and a few bones preserved in collections, are all the relics we have of the now extinct species.

The Labrador duck is another bird which has disappeared, though it lived on till 1852. A very curious handsome starling has become extinct in Mauritius, though, fortunately, a well-preserved skin of it was acquired by Mr. R. Bowlder Sharpe, and carried by him to the British Museum, where it is most carefully preserved.

The name of this island naturally brings to our recollection the dodo, so generally known by name as a bird which has become extinct in modern times, that is, by the end of the seventeenth century. Another bird, which inhabited the island of Rodriguez, and was larger than a turkey, has also become extinct. It was known as the solitaire, and lived to a somewhat later day than did the dodo. The æpiormis, noticed with reference to its enormous egg, may have existed in Madagascar till less than 200 years ago.

To Summer in Death Valley.

The Kansas City *Evening-Times* says: J. H. Clery, a mild-mannered, blonde-moustached young man, who has been on United States Signal Officer Connor's staff in the Rialto Building, has left the city to become a desert-dwelling hermit. Mr. Clery goes to California—to Death Valley—and in Death Valley he will dwell six months in solitude absolute.

Death Valley is in the southwestern portion of the California desert. A more utterly desolate spot there is not on earth. It is the bed of a dried sand lake, forty miles long and twenty wide, and surrounded by steep hills. There is absolutely nothing there, except sand and alkali and blistering heat; for Death Valley is said to be the hottest place in the land. Shade there is none, the sky never clouds, and the mercury seldom or never goes below 100°. Even the breezes come like furnace-blasts, laden with scorching bits of sand. If there is any water to be found in the valley where once was a great lake far below the ocean level, it is strongly impregnated with alkali, and there is not a living creature in the district save rattlesnakes and scorpions.

Sixty miles from the railway terminus at Keeler the Signal Service hermit will journey into this blistering desolation and set up his tent. Here, for six months or more, he will observe the phenomena of the desert now unknown to man. He will study the sand blast, keep record of the temperature, ascertain the exact level of the valley below the sea, watch for rainfall—not a drop has fallen, they say, in twelve years—and tabulate all these things for the benefit of scientists.

In the same desert, but practically as far removed from one another as if in the Sahara, will be three other solitary investigators. The Signal Service has long desired to collect facts concerning this region unknown and unpeopled, but has not wished to order any one to undergo the dismal task of exploring it. The present investigators are volunteers.

Mr. Clery goes about his task as cheerfully as if he were going on a summer outing. He knows nothing of the details of the arrangement except that food will be brought him from Keeler.

"And what will you do for water?" asked a reporter as Mr. Clery prepared to set out for the depot.

"Indeed, I haven't the slightest idea," was the reply. "I suppose they will see to that for me."

A meteoric stone resembling granite recently fell near the mouth of the Pistol river in Curry county, Oregon. It weighs something over four hundred pounds and imbedded itself several feet in the earth. Parties who saw it went to dig it out, but found it so hot nothing could be done with it. After it had cooled it was removed and will soon be placed on exhibition.

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