AMERICAN SENTINEL.

VOL. 61 NO. 2. WESTMINSTER, MD., SATURDAY MORNING, JANUARY 14, 1893. ESTABLISHED 1833.

Select Poetry.

HER NAME.

—:o:—

"I'm losted! Could you find me, please?"
Poor little frightened baby!
The wind had tossed her golden fleece;
The stones had scratched her dimpled knees.
I stooped and lifted her with ease
And softly whispered, "Maybe."

"Tell me your name, my little maid;
I can't find you without it."
"My name is Shiny Eyes," she said.
"Yes, but your last?" She shook her head.
"Up to my house 'ey never said
A single fing about it."

"But, dear," I said, "what is your name?"
"Why, didn't you hear me tell you?
Dust Shiny Eyes." A bright thought came:
"Yes, when you're good, but when they blame
You, little one—is't just the same—
When mamma has to scold you?"

"My mamma neber scolds," she moans,
A little blushing ensuing,
"'Cept when I've been a-t'rowing stones,
And then she says," the culprit owns,
'Mehetable Sapphira Jones,
What has you been a-doing?"

—Anna F Burnham.

Select Story.

HOW GRIZZLY JIM STRUCK IT RICH.

BY FLORA HAINES LOUGHEAD.

From the Kansas City Times.

Grizzly Jim sat outside of his cabin smoking his after dinner pipe. The fogs had tarried late that day and were only just lifting from the mountains, uncovering slopes and levels of velvety green, torn by ragged fissures and seamed with jutting ledges. The smoke from his pipe curled upward through the boughs of the live oak beneath which he sat; there was a subtle brightness and lightness in the atmosphere that gave promise of a sunshiny afternoon.

Grizzly Jim was large and gaunt. Under his beetling eyebrows his eyes seemed to smolder with a forbidding fire. Whether he had won the grim sobriquet by virtue of his prowess in some long forgotten encounter with the four footed king of the Sierras, or whether it had been bestowed upon him because of his uncouth appearance and churlish manner, no one in the settlement below could say. The little cabin on the mountain side and its lonely dweller antedated the earliest memory.

There was a blithe snatch of song in the distance, echoed by the steep crags around; a clatter of hoofs along the rocky trail; a smart little mustang dashed across the clearing and his rider sprang to the ground, while Grizzly Jim dropped his pipe in sullen amazement.

"Good morning, sir," said his visitor, with a friendly smile.

The old miner stared at a slip of a girl, with a short riding skirt drawn over a cambric dress, the blouse waist of which was revealed in a bewildering profusion of fresh tucks and frills, while a piquant little face looked up at him unabashed, under a tangle of soft brown hair and a bewitching sailor hat. He unfolded his long legs and rose awkwardly, lifting his torn felt hat with savage courtesy.

"You'll excuse me ef I ain't up to my best society manners. I'm not used to receiving calls from nobody, let alone young ladies."

"My call is not from choice, but from necessity," returned the young lady with dignity. "I'm here on business. I'm the Census Marshal for this district."

"The dickens you are!" retorted the miner, but he mentioned a gentleman of less repute in polite society and whose name is better known to Scripture than to literature. "And what do you reckon you'll get out of me?"

There was something in his speech, corrupted as it was by the vernacular of the mountains, that suggested the South. The girl's quick ear recognized the familiar note. She was to some extent fortified against his gruffness, for she had heard of him as the terror of census enumerators, the despair of tax assessors; the one man in all the mountain district who desired no local improvements, no advance of civilization, no contact with the world or his fellow men, and who had for more than forty years remained a mystery to all the community.

"You have already told me where you are from," she rejoined pleasantly. "You are a Southern man, but I expect you also to tell me your name and occupation, where you were born, and whether you are married or single, and all the other troublesome little details that the national government insists upon learning from each loyal citizen."

She took a book from a pocket in her saddle flap and advanced upon him, pencil in hand, while she was speaking, but her heart quaked at her own boldness.

Something in her blithe young face arrested the man's surly refusal. He tried different tactics.

"Take a seat. You must be very tired. It's a rough ride up the trail."

He offered her his only chair, seating himself on a stump. The girl accepted the courtesy, but started as her hand came in contact with a breech loading rifle that leaned against the chair.

With a queer glint in his eye that was not unlike a fantastic gleam of humor, Grizzly Jim took the Winchester and ostentatiously withdrew the charges, then pulled an ugly looking knife from his belt and laid rifle and knife on the rude table that stood between them, as the savage ceremoniously lays down his arms before entering upon a parley with his foe. But there was a limit to his hospitality, and he was not slow to announce it.

"I'll be hanged ef I'll give away my private affairs to every man, woman or child that asks. What's it to you, anyway?"

"It's exactly twenty-five cents," returned the girl frankly. "That is what they allow in the thinly settled mountain district. You wouldn't be worth so much if you were down in the valley. Besides, you see, I teach the school in the village, and the State allowance—pretty much my whole salary—depends upon the number of children we can muster in the district."

"There's no children here, as you can see," returned her host with grim cheer and the air of one who has found an easy solution for a vexed problem. "And as for the two bits"—he thrust his hands into his trousers pocket and jingled some coins there while he eyed her tentatively.

"No, I think you'd better not," said the girl simply. "I earn my wages by faithful service to the government. I don't take bribes for neglecting my duty. I've come up here to get this blank filled out and I won't leave till I have your answers. No, not even if you reloaded the Winchester." And she wound up with a little hysterical laugh.

A sturdy sense of honor, long slumbering in disuse, awoke in the miner's breast as he saw the angry flash in the eyes of his young visitor. But he would make no concession.

"I won't do it," he said stubbornly.

Their eyes met; hers young, bright, shining with righteous purpose; his deep set, lines of age about them, dogged resistance in them. They met and clashed, held each other long and steadily. The man was the first to shrink. He threw up his hand with a gesture of surrender.

"Don't! You look—look like one I lost forty years gone by."

There was silence between them. He swung himself about and pulled his hat over his eyes, so that only a fringe of iron gray beard was visible above his shoulders. The girl looked at him curiously, and not without some feeling. All her fear of him was gone, and a vague compassion stirred in her heart. She was almost sorry that she had undertaken her daring errand, half disposed to slip quietly away, mount her horse and be off down the mountain trail before he had aroused from the reverie. Yet a singular spell—was it sympathy or curiosity, or that strange impulse that causes one to linger and dwell upon the sight of suffering which they may not relieve—kept her motionless, her books still open, her pencil still in her hand.

"I'll tell you the whole story," he said at length, his voice heavy and tired. "I've gone over and over it myself, and it seems like the more I study on it the worse snarl I make of it. You seem a mighty peart young woman. Maybe you can see clearer than an old man."

He looked at her with some apprehension. Perhaps his confidence was misplaced. How could he tell but what the sorry problem that weighed him down might be a mere jest to her—a comical jest to be recounted for the entertainment of frivolous young companions? Her grave expression reassured him.

"It begins like most of the stories of men of my age in California," he said, and it was noticeable that as he reverted to the past he dropped the corruptions of the time and place and expressed himself in purer English, although his speech was still characterized by the soft Southern drawl, and now and then he made use of a phrase or word that is only learned south of Mason and Dixon's line. "I caught the gold fever of '49. I had a wife and child and a comfortable property. Against the advice of all my friends, in spite of my wife's gentle entreaties, I sold off everything I had in the world, and, leaving a small sum with her, started overland for California. It was a dangerous journey in those days. I don't think I realized how serious an undertaking it was until the day I started. I can see my wife yet as she looked that day, and the face of my little Miriam has been with me all these years."

"You don't mean to say that you deserted your family; that you never went back to them?" exclaimed the girl.

"Some people might call it so. But it always seemed to me as if the world went back on me. Good luck, fortune, success, all abandoned me from that moment. I reckon you've read in books or heard old people tell what it meant to go overland to the Pacific coast in those days. Months of hardship and danger. People and cattle dying all along the trail. Indian massacres on the plains. Cowardly gangs of whites on the scent of every train that was known to carry money, watching for a chance of pillage. Before we reached Salt Lake our train was robbed by a couple of rascals who had asked our protection fifty miles back, and I lost everything I had; my money, my supplies, my blankets, everything but the horse I rode and the clothes I wore. A friend who had come with me was murdered. The kindness of strangers saved me from perishing with cold and hunger in crossing the Sierras. About three months after I reached Sacramento very sick with fever. When I got well enough I crawled off to the diggings at the first bar up the river. It had been arranged when I left home that as soon as I reached California I was to fix some kind of a home and send for my wife and little daughter. They were to start by steamer as soon as they had word from me. I couldn't write home and let them know the plight I was in. But I had a heap of courage. The country was full of gold and men were all the while returning from the diggings with heaps of dust. I would strike it rich like the rest and then send back for my wife and child.

"The bar was overcrowded, but they took pity on me—I was a pitiable object, weak and wasted by fever—and they left me stake out a claim in the richest spot. All the men around me were panning out two or three ounces a day. Every now and then some man took out a fortune. I scarcely got a 'color.' I moved on further up the river to new diggings. It was no better there. On again. The same luck followed me everywhere. When I took hold of the most promising sort of claim I could barely find pay dirt. When I gave up and moved on I was sure to hear that some other fellow had jumped my claim and made a pile out of it. I left the placers and went prospecting for quartz. The first ledge I struck made a big show on the surface, but it was pockety and I didn't dare to sink further for fear the ore would play out. I sold it for a song. The man who bought it stocked it, floated a few shares, put up a big stamp mill and kept on taking out rich ore. He has $1,000,000 on the dump to-day. Everywhere it was the same story with me; never managing to keep more than even with the world or getting enough together to more than carry me to the next camp when my claim was worked out. Before I knew it the months and years had piled up, and writing home was forever out of the question, unless some splendid stroke of luck favored me."

He arose and began to walk up and down in a straight line under the oaks. The census marshal observed that there was a hard beaten path there. She wondered how often his feet had paced it.

"In '55 I came here," he said, stopping to reach his hand to a great burr on one of the oak boles, on a level with his shoulder, and to rest it there. "You've heard the yarns they tell yet about the gold that was taken out of this creek in those days. I staked out my claim along with the first on the spot. It was the same old story. On all sides of me other men took out quantities of dust. There was no more gold inside my lines than you could find on a church floor. I'd had enough of chasing luck up the rivers and over the mountains, and having it slip up behind me unawares whenever I moved on. I 'lowed I'd camp down here and wait for it to come to me. I've toiled steady from morning to night, every day I could lift my hand, sometimes at the old placers, more often prospecting the ledges in the mountains above. I've made some promising 'finds,' and I pan out a little dust all the while, but oftentimes I haven't enough to pay for having my drills pointed, and I have to quit work and take my gun and go over the range for venison or bear meat. But it can't last forever. Last week I found some rich 'float' in the creek bed. I'm on the track of that ledge now."

"And have you never written home?"

"What could I write? I don't dare think about them. Some day I'll strike it rich and then I'll go back."

The census marshal could make no comment. In her heart she was impressed by the singleness of mind with which the old miner had persevered in his hunt after precious metal, and his faith that he was bound to "strike it rich" some day struck her as almost pathetic. He seemed wholly oblivious of the fact that there were other ways of obtaining gold that did not call for pick or sluice. During all his lonely years of toil it did not appear to have occurred to him that the same energy, expended in any legitimate wage earning industry, might easily have carried him to his goal and enabled him to have made a home and send for the wife and child to whom he had been so loyal in purpose, but had so miserably failed in deed.

"Now you know why I don't want my name to go down in your book. You know why I've never exchanged a needless word with man or woman till you came up the trail to-day. I've lived so long alone with the rocks and trees and the bare facts of nature that I've almost forgotten the ways of civilized speech, but I think I've made you understand. Do you want my name?"

The girl hesitated in indecision and doubt.

"You don't know? No more do I. Do you see that face in the rocks across the gulch?"

He led her to an opening on the hillside and pointed across the chasm down whose bed the mountain stream leaped.

In the jagged outlines of a great cliff that overhung the gulch the girl easily discerned a massive, sphinx like profile.

"When you live alone in the mountains," said Grizzly Jim, "you get to depending on signs and omens. You can't help it. When the sun touches that cliff, a little past noon, some days the face smiles, sometimes it frowns. We'll watch it to-day. If the face smiles I'll write in your book."

The mist had long since flown back to the sea, and the sun rode high in the heavens. Only this portion of the gulch remained in the shadow, shut off by the crags that rose above it. slowly the sunlight crept past the rocky barriers. A flood of sunlight bathed the dark niche. The ripple of the water below sounded like a chime of bells; a burst of bird song thrilled the air. A wave of light passed over the sculptured face, and a benign smile lingered there for a moment; then the features relapsed into their customary calm.

Grizzly Jim reached out a trembling hand for the book and pencil.

The census marshal slipped over to her horse and examined her saddle girths, for her business there was finished and the steep trail was slippery of descent. The miner wrote slowly and awkwardly, closely scrutinizing the fine print at the head of each column before he made the entry beneath. When he had finished he returned the book and pencil to the marshal with grave courtesy. She could not resist a feeling of absurd solemnity as she received it. She had meant to show a proper delicacy by closing it without looking into it, but her woman's curiosity overmastered her and she took one quick glance at the name, which was boldly and plainly written.

Her face crimsoned.

"It is not true," she said, indignantly. "James Godfrey Peyton died while crossing the plains in '49. Miriam Peyton is my mother."

The effect of this intelligence was like a stupendious blow. The old man pressed his hands to his temples, while he made an effort to span the cruel gap of years.

"Miriam—my little Miriam's child!"

His smoldering eyes devoured her with the hunger of a starving soul.

Her cold unbelief was beyond his power to combat. That which had been his strength became his weakness. The secret so closely guarded for nearly half a century unmanned him when it was laid bare. He sat down at the foot of the oak, burying his face in his hands.

Impelled to an instant faith in his truth the girl knelt humbly beside him. A gentle hand stroked his gray hair; a fresh young face was pressed against his wrinkled cheek.

"They are both here only a few miles away. Come with me. Come home to-day.

He didn't answer for many minutes. Then he said slowly:

"An old, weather-beaten wreck, ragged, penniless. I can't do it. I'd better live on here. You'll keep it from them. I can trust you."

But even as he protested the longing in his face, the anxiety with which he awaited her reply, were painful to see.

"We are all poor, but we will join hands and work and make our way," said the girl bravely. "And listen! She—my grandmother—is no longer young and pretty. She is a feeble, faded, lonely little old woman. She has mourned you all these years. It would be like opening the gates of Paradise for her."

* * * * * * *

In the edge of the valley that broadened out below the mouth of the gulch, where a prosperous mountain village had been built upon the ruins of the old mining camp, there stood a shabby cottage, bowered in honeysuckle and roses. The tiny almond orchard at the rear was in bloom, and the pink petals fluttered down and drifted over the ground. Two women walked slowly back and forth along the narrow path, bordered with sweet scented carnations, that led from the house to the gate. One was plump and matronly, the other old and slight and frail, leaning heavily upon the younger woman.

"It's past time for her to come. It isn't right, Miriam, to let that child race about the country alone. There's no telling what may happen to her."

"Don't worry, mother. I'd trust her anywhere. Every one respects her," returned the younger woman, with a mother's proud confidence.

"I know I'm old fashioned in my ideas, Miriam, but I can't feel easy. A young girl like that oughtn't to go around the country doing a man's work. If her father only hadn't gone to the bad or her grandfather had only lived——"

"Let us go in. It's growing chilly."

"Hush! There's some one coming up the road. She has come. Some one is with her," said the old lady!

The twilight was kind to Grizzly Jim. It smoothed out the wrinkles on his face, dyed hair and beard, mended his tattered clothing and brought out the massive strength of his great frame, presenting him as he really was—a handsome, stalwart man, still in the vigor of his prime. The slight woman on Miriam's arm peered wistfully at him, then she trembled and swayed. He spoke one word and a wild cry quavered on the night silence.

The old miner forgot his poverty and rags. Thanksgiving was in his heart as he folded her in his arms. His voice broke as he tried to speak.

"I've struck it rich at last," said Grizzly Jim.

How Tim Got His Turkey.

It was the night before Thanksgiving, but Tim Daly could see very little to be thankful for. His father was a drunkard. His mother took in washing. Tim sold a few newspapers, and mother and son supported the family of six, and to crown it all Tim had just lost the fifty cents he had been saving for weeks to buy a very small chicken for the family's Thanksgiving dinner.

The chicken was to have been a great surprise to his mother, and fifty cents was what Tim called a "reg'lar boodle." The boy could not keep back the tears when he discovered the hole in his pocket through which the fifty cent piece had fallen.

Tim had spent nearly six of his twelve years on the streets, and there was nothing girlish about him, but he was a pretty good boy. He was always kind to his mother. He helped her with her work in their two rooms in the Bayard street tenement house, and he gave her nearly all the money he made. The secret of it all was that she was a very good mother and Tim knew it.

Chicken was rarely seen upon the Daly table. Like Maggie, the simple minded girl in "Little Dorritt," Tim had never had any "chicking" but once that he could remember, but the flavor of that one tender drumstick seemed to hover about his palate still. When the idea of his proposed surprise came to him he had at first planned to get a turkey, but while the spirit was willing the pocket book was weak, and a cheap chicken replaced the big fat turkey as his heart's (and stomach's) desire. But now his whole hobby scheme had been balked, and as he searched in vain for the missing coin along the snow covered asphalt in front of the City Hall his coveted chicken seemed to have suddenly blown so far away that it was but a mere pin feather in the distance.

A few moments later the world looked even darker to Tim, for a tall, thin, ragged, red nosed man, who looked like a tramp, suddenly seized him from behind, and crying, "Please don't father!" Tim shielded his face with one arm from the blow bitter experience made him expect. The elder Daly was, as usual, very drunk and very ugly. He demanded Tim's money and struck the boy in the face when he truthfully declared that he did not have a cent. More blows followed, and in his frantic struggles to get away Tim dove between his sire's unsteady legs, upset him in the snow and ran like a deer toward Broadway.

At a safe distance Tim turned and looked back. The drunkard had tottered to his feet and was shaking his fist in a threatening manner.

"It was a reg'lar 'Trow him down McClosky,'" panted Tim. "I didn't mean to really trip him up. Sorry I dumped him so hard. No sleepin' at home now for a few nights."

Tim sighed, for the night was cold. Hours afterward he crawled into a big packing box that stood on the walk near a crockery store. The box was half filled with dry straw, into which Tim burrowed and fell asleep. How long he slept he did not know, but he was awakened by the sound of two voices near him. He listened sleepily until he heard one of the men say: "Golden's place is just de mark fer us. De safe where he keeps his diamonds is dead easy."

At these words Tim became very much awake and listened with all his ears. Golden's, he knew, was the name of a large jewelry store on the Bowery, and the words "diamonds" and "safe" indicated that this was the place referred to by the speaker, who very evidently meditated burglary.

"When'll we do de job—about three?" the second voice inquired.

"Yes," was the reply. "From de roof we kin git through de skylight, and next down stairs and at his old safe. Say, it's easier'n a pantry cupboard."

Both men laughed softly. They were talking in low tones, but were so near the box that Tim heard every word they spoke. He almost held his breath for fear they might discover him. Suddenly, in spite of his attempts to remain quiet, the hay rustled.

"Ssh! What's that?" one of the men whispered. "Somebody in de box?"

Tim lay very still and pretended to be asleep, but an instant later one of the men thrust an arm into the box, seized him by the leg and roughly jerked him out upon the snow covered walk.

"It's only a kid," said one of the men.

"G'way. Le' me be," Tim murmured, rubbing his eyes and pretending that he had just been aroused from a sound sleep.

"Have you been asleep, young feller?" Tim's captor demanded, catching him by the collar. "Come, now, were ye sleepin' or only shammin? If ye lie, I'll half kill ye."

"Le' me be, don't hurt me!" cried Tim. "I ain't done anything."

"Did you hear us talkin?"

"Le' me be," Tim sobbed in real alarm.

"I guess you're all right, but if you heard us and ever tell any one, I'll break every bone in your body," said his captor. Then the two men hurried away toward the Bowery.

Tim watched them until they disappeared down the street before he moved from the box. He was very much frightened, but for all that he intended to notify the police at once. Golden's store was not far from the Elizabeth street police station and, selecting a roundabout way so that there would be little danger of his meeting the two burglars, Tim ran as fast as he could toward the station.

He arrived there pale and out of breath, and between his gasps told his story to the sergeant on duty. The officer was at first inclined to disbelieve Tim's statements, but the boy stood the test of rigid questioning, and as it was already 2 o'clock in the morning of Thanksgiving day four officers were detailed to catch the burglars. Tim wanted to accompany them, but the sergeant ordered him to remain at the station house until the men returned.

Fifteen minutes later two of the policemen, disguised in citizen's clothes, were watching the front door of Golden's store from hiding places across the street, while the other two crept over the roofs of neighboring buildings to the roof of the jewelry store, and concealed themselves behind chimneys near the skylight. It was not long before two men came sneaking along the roofs, cut a pane out of Golden's skylight, unlatched and opened it, and let themselves down into the jeweler's building by means of a rope. The two officers did not molest them, for the plan was to allow them to enter the store proper, give them time to begin work on the safe, and then have the officers in the street alarm and drive them to the roof, where they were to be captured.

This plan was carried out to the letter. When one of the fleeing burglars gained the roof he waited to help his companion through the skylight, and the moment both were upon the roof the officers rushed out and covered them with their revolvers. One burglar surrendered, but the other showed fight, and was shot through the shoulder and felled with a night stick. The officers marched their prisoners to the Elizabeth street station, where Tim, who had been fast asleep in a chair, identified them as the men he had heard plotting the robbery.

Tim was quite a hero, and when Jeweler Golden, who had been telegraphed for, reached the station house at 7 o'clock he drew Tim aside and asked him if there was any particular thing he wanted very badly.

"Yes, sir, I want a chicken, or—or, better yet, a big fat turkey for to s'prise ma with," Tim said promptly. Then, in response to questions, Tim told Mr. Golden about his drunkard father and his good mother and the lost fifty cent piece. When he had finished the jeweler said heartily:

"Come on, Tim, and we'll buy the biggest turkey for sale on the Bowery."

He kept his word, and half an hour later Tim staggered into the Bayard street tenement with a turkey so large and plump that he could hardly carry it. What joy there was in the Daly family! Even Daly senior forgave Tim when he saw the turkey and heard Tim's story. The boy said nothing about one incident of the morning, however, until his father had gone out to get liquor. Then Tim gave his mother the ten dollar bill Mr. Golden had thrust into his hand at parting, and that day, for once in their lives, the Dalys not only had turkey for Thanksgiving but cranberry sauce as well.

Superstition of Scotch Fishermen.

From Frazersburg Free Press.

Some still existing superstitions among fishermen are communicated by a resident. At the beginning of the herring season the crew all try to seize the herring first on board to see if it be a male or female. If it is a male their fishing may be expected to be a poor one; if a female a good one. Sometimes, however, the skipper secures it and hides it away, salting it and laying it aside for the season. The boat must not be turned against the sun.

Certain animals considered of ill omen must not be spoken of in the boat, and ministers in this respect occupy the same place as rabbits, hares, and pigs. Fishermen do not like to lend anything to a neighboring boat lest their luck should go with it. If they lend a match they will contrive—secretly if possible—to break it and keep part, hoping thereby to retain their luck. Their dislike to have anything stolen is increased by the fear that the thief may have stolen their luck with it. To ask the question, "Where are you going?" of any one who is going on board is equivalent to destroying all his chances for the time. Persons with certain names are held to be of bad omen, the dreaded names being different in different villages.

Natural Icehouse.

In Washington a coulee is a ravine that a river has worn for itself and then abandoned for another course, says the New Orleans Picayune. The coulees of the Columbia river are immense ravines worn out of the basaltic rock, with perpendicular walls on either side, from one thousand to fifteen hundred feet high. Through this region the Great Northern railroad runs. Not long ago an Indian approached a gang of railroad laborers working in Salmon coulee with a great piece of ice wrapped in a blanket, which he offered for sale. The workmen instituted a search in the direction in which he had come and soon found a cold stream trickling through the shell rock, and further up the ice beds were found. They were formed among the masses of shell rock by the melting of snow in winter, the water running down among the rocks and freezing at night. Ice remains there perpetually and in large quantities. The most singular feature is that the spot is only five hundred feet above the sea, and the sun beats with intense heat upon the rocks above the ice, which is also exposed to warm draughts of air through the crevices, yet the ice never melts.

The slot machine which has recently had such a run in all catch-penny schemes, and which has often been pointed out as the one thing "new under the sun," has been proven to have been in use in Egypt long before the birth of Christ. Hero describes a combination jug and slot machine used for the dispensation of holy water. A coin of the value of five drachmæ dropped into a slot in the jug opened a valve which permitted a few drops of the purifying liquid to escape. One of the ancient slot jugs is now in the British museum.

The City of London covers 687 square miles.

Only one-half of all who are born reach the age of 17 years.

A Fierce Battle With Geese.

An interesting and rather peculiar battle, says the Philadelphia Times, was witnessed the other morning by a number of persons who were driving along the old summer road, in the Twenty-eighth ward. In a field lying on the north side of the old thoroughfare and east of Harris' Bellevue truck farm an aged German was gathering mushrooms, and while peering about the pasture for the toothsome fungi, in a stooping attitude, a flock of "Gander hill" geese strutted under a post and rail fence from a neighboring pond and marched with their necks extended at full length toward the stranger, who at first paid no attention to their hissing, but continued every now and again to reach down and pick a mushroom.

He soon learned to his sorrow that the geese were considerably above the average flock for bold persistency and determined fight. One old gander acted as leader, and, after marshaling his forces into position, led on to the fight by boldly attacking the intruder and striking him a stunning blow on the nose. Before he could recover from the effect two of the geese, one from each side, flew at his face, each taking hold of an ear and holding on with bull-dog tenacity, while they battered his head and face with their clipped wings.

The sharp points of the cut feather stems brought the blood from his cheeks and forehead at every flap. He jumped and pranced around like mad, wildly gesticulating and muttering cries and curses in German.

Two others of his feathered assailants flew upon his back and began pecking him on the head and neck, while the others took hold upon the legs of his trousers and his coat tails and tugged till they fairly dragged him to a swampy part of the field, where one of the poor fellow's feet sank in the slippery mud and he fell backward in the slime. A man in one of the passing wagons hurried to his assistance, armed with a bean pole snatched from the truck gardens. He arrived just in time to prevent the enraged geese from killing their victim.

Even the blows from the tough cedar bean pole for a time had no effect on the geese, and it was not until five of them, with their necks broken, lay quivering on the grass that the poor old German, his face covered with blood and his clothing with mud, could be delivered.

He was led out to the old Summer road, placed in the wagon, and kindly driven to his home in Tioga. The only reason that can be given for the unusual behavior of the geese is that a rag-picker who resembled the German in appearance about a week ago carried away several goslings that belonged to one of the geese.

Rough Experiences.

David Christie Murray, the novelist, writes: "Eight or ten years ago I was sitting in the Savage club in the company of four distinguished men of letters. One was the editor of a London daily, and he was talking rather too humbly, as I thought, about his own career. 'I do not suppose,' he said, 'that any man in my present position has experienced in London the privations I knew when I first came here. I went hungry for three days, twenty years back, and for three nights I slept in the park.' One of the party turned to me. 'You cap that, Christie?' I answered, 'Four nights on the embankment, four days hungry.' My left hand neighbor was a poet, and he chimed in laconically, 'Five.' In effect it proved that there was not one of us who had not slept in that Hotel of the Beautiful Stars which is always open to everybody. We had all been frequent guests there, and now were all prosperous and had found other and more comfortable lodgings."

Ninety-eight Years in a Nunnery.

An Armenian nun has just died in a convent at Jerusalem who was certified by the registers of the community in which she belonged to have attained the age of 115 years. She entered the convent when she was seventeen, and during the subsequent ninety-eight years did not once cross its threshold. Mediæval piety, which set forth complete ignorance of the world we live in as one of the chief qualifications of sanctity, could surely ask no more than this. Very few who have visited Jerusalem would contemplate a residence of ninety-eight years in that city with joy, even with the privilege of remaining all that time immured in the cloister of a convent.

Muffs were first used by doctors to keep their fingers soft and were adopted by ladies about 1550.

Defending the Queen.

Her Point of View in New York Times.

"When I was in Lausanne last summer," said a woman whose want of admiration for the English queen is well known among her intimates, "I came out in a role that would have surprised my friends as it did myself. I actually found myself defending Victoria, and to one of her own subjects, too, an English captain, whom I met several times while there.

"In speaking of my stay in London I mentioned having seen the queen, and wishing to be very civil I refrained from further comment, when to my astonishment he replied, 'And isn't she an old frump?' I answered guardedly that while she certainly did not present an ideally royal appearance I hardly thought her a 'frump.' 'Oh, yes you do,' he replied, 'and so do I, and she is besides a selfish, useless creature.'

"'At least,' I cried, 'you will admit that she is a good wife and mother?'

"The man turned and looked at me in undisguised wonder. 'Now what a funny thing that is for you to say,' he began. 'So is my wife a good wife and mother, but I am sure she never thought of taking credit for it. There are thousands of washer-women in England who are good wives and mothers. Why, I think that is such an odd notion to speak of. And I don't think the prince consort would have agreed with you either. Such a life as she led him. The poor fellow never dared to say his soul was his own.

"'And a narrow minded, selfish woman cannot be a good mother in the best sense of the words. There are many better mothers than she in England. I want you to understand,' he finished almost fiercely, 'that she is not in any sense a typical English woman,' which outburst from such a source amazed and really silenced me."

Peary Planned Well.

Sight-seeing visitors to the white house are usually met at the entrance by a straight, stalwart, handsome man, who courteously directs them to the east room, says the Washington Post. He is Officer John Kenny, and the history of his experience would make the most interesting reading imaginable. Mr Kenny was a sergeant in the Seventh cavalry some years ago, and was the first man to volunteer his services as a member of the Greely relief expedition, which was to start on a perilous voyage in the North seas in search of Lieut. Greely and his men. The terrible experience of that expedition is well known. Some one asked him the other day what he thought of the Peary expedition. His eyes lighted up with enthusiasm.

"Lieut. Pearry is the only explorer who has gone into the northern ice who knew exactly what he was going to do. I confess I didn't think he would be successful, because I never thought he could reach the top of the ice-cap, but he had his plans laid all right and knew what he was about and completed his work nobly. People who have never seen that ice cap cannot imagine what an awful obstacle it is to surmount. It looks as if an enormous piece of the earth's surface had just been turned up and stood on end and kept there. Words cannot describe it, and a man can climb all day and then in the evening lean over and drop a biscuit into the very camp he left hours before. Peary went at it in a business way, and after he reached the ice pack beyond he had a comparatively easy time. Yes, sir, in my opinion he is the only Arctic explorer who ever showed he knew anything about his work."

Movable Drops in Diamonds.

From St. Louis Republic.

It has long been known that diamonds (especially the class known as "rose diamonds") are likely to explode if subjected only to what would seem a very ordinary degree of heat, such as strong rays from the sun, etc. It is now believed that the explosions are the result of the rapid expansion of certain volatile liquids inclosed in cavities near the center of these precious stones. A great many diamonds, even though cut, mounted and worn as gems of perfection, are still in an unfinished condition—that is, the liquid drop from which the stone is being formed has not as yet deposited all of its "pure crystals of carbon." These movable drops may occasionally be seen with the naked eye. When this is the case a strong microscope will give the drop the appearance of a bubble in the fluid of a carpenter's level. It is also highly probable that besides the liquid mentioned these cavities may contain gases under great tension. If being the case, one may readily comprehend how a very small amount of heat would cause the liquid and gas to expand to such a degree that the diamond would give way with all the characteristics of a miniature explosion.

The first and worst of all faults is to cheat one's self.

Married men live longer than bachelors.

©Maryland State Archives, msa_sc2900_scm2298-0016