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"YOU TELL ME WHERE IS CONRAD?"

AN INCIDENT OF THE BROOKLYN CALAMITY.

"You will tell me where is Conrad?" said an old man, bent and gray,
While the flames were wildly dancing, and the walls were giving way.

"I haf heard some ones was buried—underneath the ruins fell;
He was in the topmost story—ach, mein Gott! I love him well!

"I will tell you how you knew him: he had full and laughing eye,
And his face was smooth and smiling—and he was too young to die.

"Hair he had, like clouds at sunset when anoder day is done;
And I luf him—how I luf him, and he is mine only son.

"Say, Policeman, tell me truly that this young man you did see;
And I all each money gif you, such as I could bring with me.

"Tell me that he anxious acted—that he hunted far and long—
Like as children would be calling for their fader, in a throng.

"Or he wounded was? pray tell me; in the hospital to lie!—
I will just now hasten to him, and I not will let him die!

"Tell me—oh, you must not told me—dead you haf my Conrad see?
Yet, if so is, I can stand dhat—I did long a soldier be.

"Only—Death we do not fear him when we hear the bullets sing,
But to haf my boy killed this way is a rather different thing.

"Only—that his poor old mudder—she waits home all full of fear,
And I cannot there be going till I take good news from here!

"Young he was when we did bring him from the Rhineland here to be;
I did lif for her and Conrad—she did lif for him and me.

"Other ones we bring not with us; Gott, He says, 'These more be mine;'
And we left them all a-sleeping 'mong the vineyards of the Rhine.

"He haf not a cross word gif us—he haf love us every day;
And if he to-night comes home not, 'tis the first night he's away.

"Let me to that fire, Policeman! I care not for walls or brand!
Maybe he in there be living—reaching for his father's hand!

"Let me there, I say, Policeman! I haf work there to be done!
Let me go, or I will strike you! Is it that you haf no son?"

* * * * * * * *

Still the flames were like a furnace, and the walls were crashing loud,
And the old man, held in safety, fainted 'mid the trembling crowd.

And the mother watched and wondered, with her great eyes scarcely wet;
And, half-dazed amid her sorrow, waits for Conrad even yet.

—*Will Carleton, in New York Graphic.*

THE SWITCH-TENDER.

A THRILLING FRENCH STORY.

A little white house seems asleep among the blossoming apple trees. It is early morning, and all is light and freshness. The door opens, a man appears at the threshold, a smile on his face and an expectant look in his eyes. There is a movement behind the trunk of an apple tree. The man's smile grows broader, and from the tree, like a dryad, rushes a charming little flaxen haired girl, who throws herself with a burst of laughter into his arms.

"May I take the little one, Celine?" said the father.

At these words a lovely blonde made her appearance.

"Again!" she said, with a shade of annoyance.

"Oh! we share her very fairly," said the man, with the kindest and most paternal smile. "If you knew," he resumed, "how quickly the hours pass when she is down there with me."

"Don't you think I know, when I find them so long in her absence."

It was embarrassing. Aimee herself began to be troubled by this conversation, and feeling that she could not please both these beings that she loved so much, she was ready to cry. Celine saw it at once and yielded.

"Take her, Laurence; I would rather have her go than feel badly about it."

The father at these words showed some feeling.

"No," said he, in his turn, "keep her, you deserve it; you love her best."

And the discussion began again, but it was this time a struggle of generosity. At last the husband took his darling in his arms, and a smile reappeared on the child's lips.

Celine looked longingly after them, and re-entered the house.

One morning, without saying anything to Celine, Laurence took the little girl's hand to lead her away, when her mother suddenly appeared.

"What!" she said. "You would take her without telling me?"

"Don't think that," said Laurence, in some confusion. "We were in fun—we were going to hide behind the trees and see you look for us."

"Oh!" said Celine, doubtfully.

"Listen, Laurence," she continued. "Aimee grows more restless and troublesome every day. It is dangerous to let her go with you."

"What do you mean?" said the man, turning pale.

"I mean that I am afraid of your railroad, with its trains and locomotives."

"You are very foolish."

"Leave her here. I can hardly breathe while my little girl is down there. It is frightful to think of, but she might get away and be killed."

"Don't talk so, Celine."

"She might run away while you are at the switch, and if you left it to look after her, you would fail in your duty, and might be the cause of a dreadful disaster."

"Oh, Celine, I beg of you, don't!" cried Laurence, who shuddered at the idea.

The young woman did not insist. The switch-tender gradually recovered himself.

"My poor Aimee!" he cried, embracing the child frantically. "It is too bad, Celine; it is a shame to frighten me so."

Celine smiled, and the conversation ended as usual with these words from Laurence:

"You will come for her at noon."

[Li]ttle by little their terrors faded ... Laurence reasoned wit[h] ... child," he said, with the passage of the trains, it is true, but she is old enough to comprehend the danger." And his apprehension gradually vanished.

One evening, however, when he went home he found he had been preceded by the rumor of an accident which had occurred at a neighboring station. A brakeman had been crushed by an express train. Celine questioned her husband while they were at supper. "Is it true that Simon is killed?" she asked.

"No;" replied Laurence, "he was in great danger, but he escaped, thanks to his wonderful coolness."

"Then he is not dead?" said Celine.

"No; and yet the whole train went over him. When Simon saw it was too late to save himself, he laid flat down in the middle of the track, and when the train passed by he got up again safe and sound. I saw him, I asked him how it made him feel. At first, he said, when the engine went over him, he was very warm, after that the time seemed long. That was all. You know Simon is not easily frightened. He is ready to go to work again," added Laurence, tranquilly.

But Celine's anxieties were aroused afresh.

Sometime after that the hours of service were changed and Laurence took the night section. He could no longer think of taking Aimee with him.

One evening, however, a poor woman in the village was taken very ill. The doctor who came wrote a prescription and said to the neighbors he found there: "These medicines can only be had in the town, and you must not wait for them. Let one of you go to the railway station, where there is a portable pharmacy, and ask the station master on my account for a little laudanum. That will quiet the pains till you can have the prescriptions. Which of you will go?"

"Celine! Celine!" said several voices. It was certain that the station master would not hesitate to give her the medicine.

The young woman thought at first of leaving Aimee, but, as she had been particularly restless all day, Celine concluded to take her. They had to pass Laurence's post to go to the station. He saw them coming, and as soon as they were within hearing, began to question them.

"Old Gertrude is very ill, and I am going to the station for medicine."

"That's right. But let me have Aimee; I will keep her till you come back."

Celine lifted the little girl over the fence to her father, who took the precious burden in his arms and returned with her to his box, before which a lamp was burning. All around darkness covered the tracks, which crossed each other in every direction.

It would not take Celine more than twenty minutes to get to the station and back. The child was in one of her most frolicsome moods; she ran suddenly into the garden; Laurence ran laughing after her.

"You can't catch me," said she.

"Yes I can."

But the little witch evaded Laurence's pursuit, leaving laughter behind her. "Here, here!" she said, and rushed to the track and began to cross it.

"Don't go there, darling," said her father. It was very dark—the switch-tender could hardly see his daughter.

"You can't catch me," repeated the child.

"Come, come here," said her father.

"Look for me," answered the child.

"Aimee, Aimee, don't play any more. I shall be angry. Come here."

"Oh! you say that because you can't catch me."

"Come back, I will give you a cake."

"That isn't true, you haven't one. You want to make me come back."

"Yes, I don't want you to stay there. The express train is coming."

"Oh! I shan't let you catch me. The train has gone by."

"There is another."

Instead of replying, the child said:

"Run after me, papa, run."

Laurence saw there was nothing to be done but to run after her and take her out of danger. He rushed toward the place where he heard her voice. It was dark, and Aimee escaped him still. His alarm increased. At any instant the whistle of the on-coming train might be heard, and Laurence redoubled his appeals. His voice was hoarse with fright. the fatal moment approached, and still the child laughed and repeated, "You can't catch me. Now the whistle sounded. The lugubrious call paralyzed the poor man, and he lost his head completely. The train would have two victims if he did not regain his composure. Two victims! It would be a catastrophe with incalculable consequences: for a train was stopping at the station a little way ahead, and if the express was not switched off there must inevitably be a collision. Laurence shook off his torpor.

"Aimee!" he cried, in thundering tones.

"Here, papa." And the child continued to give sharp little calls, which mingled with the roar of the approaching engine. The instinct of duty, rather than will, urged Laurence toward the switch. He seized the instrument which ought to turn the train. "No," he cried, "I must save her. Aimee, Aimee! where are you?" and his eyes sought to pierce the darkness. The switch-tender, with hair on end, thought of throwing himself before the iron monster. But one chance remained, that Aimee was not on the track over which the train must pass. He looked again, and this time he saw her—he saw her. She was there, standing on the very track the train must take if he altered the switch. If the iron tempest did not take its true course the child was saved. The train would go on to crash against the one at the station. What matter? Aimee would be alive! All this went through his mind like lightning. There would be the killed and wounded—twenty families in despair, but Aimee would be safe and sound. There would be an inquest; he would be condemned to prison, dishonored, ruined! But his daughter, his Aimee, would live and be happy. Ah! how quickly one can think in such terrible moments!

The train came thundering on, but it could not be seen on account of a sharp curve in the road. There was still time to save Aimee, but the child would not stir. It seemed to her father that she waited for the train with an air of defiance.

"Aimee," he repeated in a voice strangled by fear—"Aimee, come here; you will kill me!"

Suddenly the advancing lights of the engine appeared. The train was upon him; it was here. The man felt his whole being shake. He was bewildered—could see nothing; thought did not stop, however, but traveled faster than the train. He recalled in a second his honorable soldier's life, when he had sacrificed everything to duty. He saw in the station the frightful accident he would have caused, and heard the cries of the wounded, the last gasps of [the] dying. The problem was before him—his daughter or others? There was no alternative without a miracle. With astonishing promptitude the sentiment of duty became most powerful, and he seized mechanically the handle of the iron bar. The stoical soldier at this moment was uppermost, and effaced the father. He pushed, hardly knowing what he did, and the express train crossed the switch.

On, on it went, and he could see it passing before the station, going by as if it were happy to escape a danger, and disappearing in the darkness. Duty had been strongest. Stupefied, staggered, speechless, Laurence was rooted to the spot, holding still the cursed handle which had helped him to kill his child.

"Now," he said, "it is my turn to die."

The other train was about to pass. He stepped forward, crossed his arms, and awaited it. The whistle sounded, the heaving engine puffed.

Bewildered, thinking of nothing, there he stood.

But that instant a burst of laughter sounded behind him. He turned, wild with hope.

"Oh, naughty papa! he won't play with Aimee," said the most beloved of voices.

The child was clinging to him. Laurence did not seek to know how the child came there alive. He seized her, and fled with his treasure into his little cabin. Then he put her on the ground before the lamp and looked at her. He could not bear so much joy, and fell fainting beside his daughter, who, in her turn, screamed with terror.

At this moment Celine arrived. She heard Aimee's voice, and hastened her steps. Then becoming impatient, she called, "Aimee!" The child ran to meet her, crying, "Mamma, mamma, I am frightened!"

"What is the matter?"

"Papa has fallen down."

Celine rushed toward the sentry-box and found her husband completely insensible stretched on the ground. She sent for help, and the doctor, who had not left the village, came and restored the poor man to consciousness. The next day when Laurence rose his wife looked at him with terror. Instead of his former bright color he exhibited a corpse-like pallor, which never left him to the end of his days. Laurence was forced to tell his wife all. When he had finished the poor father turned to Aimee and said: "But, darling, why weren't you killed?"

"Why," said the child, "I did what Simon did."—*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

Commodore Garrison's Romance.

The second Mrs. Garrison, whom he married in 1878, is a daughter of J. M. Randall, formerly a wholesale drygoods merchant of St. Louis, and the story of the marriage is thus related:

"How did the aged commodore get his young wife?" was asked of an acquaintance.

"She whistled and he came to her, my lad;" was the reply; "but she didn't do it in the spirit of the girl of the ballad."

Garrison had been for forty years a widower. He was a testy old fellow, and had not been suspected of caring a rap for women. The possession somewhere from $10,000,000 to $15,000,000, much of it in complicated use for the promotion of railroad and steamship schemes, had harassed him all winter and spring, and he had gone to Long Branch for rest and quiet. He took a suite of the best rooms in the row of cottages which are an annex of the main establishment, calculating that he would there be a little removed from the bustle of the public house. And it was for a few days as he had fondly anticipated. Then the family of John M. Randall, of St. Louis, took possession of adjoining apartments. They numbered a half-dozen persons, including a whistler. Through the thin partition the commodore heard and was annoyed by the whistling. He disliked it exceedingly. He was driven by it to exasperation. There was a boy in the Randall family, and to him the veteran attributed the noise. He would not at that time hear the soft melody of the whistler nor its clever fidelity to the music which it interpreted, but simply kept his ears open to it as torture. Randall was an acquaintance of his, and one day he said to him, as they sat chatting on the veranda: "That boy of yours will be the death of me, John. Won't you plug his mouth just to please me?"

"Oh, it ain't the boy," replied Randall, "but my daughter. Here, Letitia!"

It was a lovely girl of twenty who responded to the call, and was presented to the commodore. She whistled for him that evening to a piano accompaniment, and it was no longer irritating to him. They were married in the ensuing October. His wedding gift was $1,000,000 in sound securities. In no season since has any belle at Long Branch been dressed or diverted in a more costly manner than the fair whistler.—*Chicago Tribune.*

Companionable Father and Son.

I know a most estimable father who is on first rate terms with his own son. That shouldn't be a remarkable thing, yet I fear it is not just as common as it ought to be. They are, as it were, boys together. He has never whipped that boy. He admitted to me that he would have felt badly if the boy, having the power, had thrashed him, so he saw no reason why he should not respect the boy's feelings in this matter and not take advantage of the advantage a father has over a young son if it comes to a physical encounter. This is certainly a magnanimous view to take, and the son has grown to be a fine young fellow, whose conduct quite refutes the saying of Solomon. They occasionally relax into conundrums for amusement, and here is the latest. They were talking of cocoons. "Why are cocoons like knot holes?" was the question. The younger had to give it up, and, after the fashion of the end man, repeated: "Why are cocoons like knot holes?" "Because they are not holes," was the reply.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Gossip About Tilden.

Friends of Samuel J. Tilden say that the Gramercy park sage has developed a great love for canaries recently. Another thing that is dear to the great man's heart is rhubarb pie. These two important facts I picked up on a railroad train the other day from a man who averred that he had seen Mr. Tilden lately. According to his tale the old gentleman is in much better health than the public generally supposes, and it is hinted that he is s[pe]nding considerable time upon a ma[...] of some mysterious nature, [...]his political memoirs.—"[...] York Times.

[...]heir own

HUMOROUS SKETCHES

Just Getting Ready.

A New Yorker who was prospecting in Michigan last fall came across the manager of a saw mill and bowl factory combined, and naturally asked him how business was.

"Well, pretty fairish," was the reply.

"In debt any?"

"Well, there's a mortgage on the saw-mill."

"Yes."

"And we had to mortgage the bowl factory to pay the interest on the other."

"I see."

"And I believe there's a lien of some sort on the dam"

"Ah!"

"And the man who built the mill-race has a judgment of $600 against us."

"Anything more?"

"Well, the sheriff levied on all our saw-logs yesterday."

"And then you are pretty nearly wound up?"

"Wound up! Why, my dear man, you don't know us Western people! That's the way we always get ready to begin solid business!"—*Wall Street News.*

He Had the Cash.

Miss Susie had been more than usually fortunate in keeping her little brother within bounds when James came to see her. Her courtship met with a set-back last Saturday night, however. While James waited for her to get ready to go to the rink, he noticed little Sammy contemplating his feet with a look of absorbing interest. He began to feel uncomfortable, as will any young man if you gaze at his feet long enough. At length, out from the fullness of Sammy's little heart his mouth spake:

"Mr. Stewpan, kin I look at your shoes?"

"Why, certainly, Sammy."

Sammy examined them faithfully, and then, in a disappointed tone, remarked:

"Why, they ain't any different from pa's."

"Well, Sammy, why should there be?"

"And ain't your stockings or your bare feet any different nuther?"

"Not that I know of, Sammy. But why do you ask?"

"Oh, cos, Sue said to ma last night that you were such an ornery feller she wouldn't look at you if you weren't well heeled."—*St. Paul Herald.*

There Was no Kitchen Line.

She was crazy about palmistry. She had bought half a dozen books and studied the lines and the mounts and the islands and the crosses and the stars, and she had read her Henry's fortune time and again. So he undertook to read her hand one night, with her help.

"This is my heart line, dear," she said, as she traced with her finger across the palm.

"Yes, your heart line."

"You see how well defined and strong it is?"

"Yes, beloved, but it is not quite straight; and this book says those little lines running out of it are evidences of previous affections."

"Oh, but this great big break is you."

"Then, there's my head line."

"Yes, darling. If your heart were as level as your head—I mean in palmistry—I would not be so jealous."

"But you mustn't read it like that. What are you looking for?"

He was anxiously scanning the book and the hand.

"Dearest, I love you. You have a magnificent line and a splendid heart line and a level head line, but——"

"Well?"

"I am poor, and if you could only show me the kitchen line, the future would be one unbroken dream of happiness."—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

A Morning Walk.

"Out in Portland, Oregon, where distances are so deceitful, a very amusing incident occurred last summer among a party of friends with whom I was traveling. It happened that one of our number was troubled somewhat by insomnia, so much so that he arose one bright morning just as the day was beginning to dawn, dressed, went to the office and enquired of the clerk at what time the matutinal repast began. Being told that seven o'clock was the earliest hour, he walked to the piazza, looked around for a few moments, returned, and inquired what mountain that was in the distance. Upon being told that it was Mt. Hood, he said to the clerk; "If any of our party inquires for me, say that I am going to take a run over there to get up an appetizer; will be back again in time for breakfast!" Now, Mt. Hood is some twenty or thirty miles from Portland, but has the appearance of being not over two or three. As the hour for breakfast approached, our party began counting up its numbers, but Mr. A—— was nowhere to be found.

"Inquiry was at once instituted as to what might have become of him, when it was ascertained from the clerk that he had gone to Mt. Hood for a morning walk, and with a merry twinkle in his eye, he added, 'he might not be back in time for the first breakfast;' consequently we took our breakfast minus the absent Mr. A—, and immediately after took carriages for a drive to Mt. Hood, if possible to overtake the prodigal. Finally, after riding an hour or two, we came to a little brook, and there, sure enough, was Mr. A—divesting himself of all his clothing. When asked what he was about to do, he replied that he was 'going to swim across.' 'But why don't you step over?' said some one. 'Well,' replied Mr. A—, 'in this country of magnificent distances, how do I know but that it is two miles across?'"—*Boston Courier.*

Protected Himself.

"I am not much given to practical joking," said the Hon. Thomas Pealring, addressing his wife, "but the man that visits our woodpile to-night will wish that he had shivered in honesty rather than have attempted to warm himself by theft."

"Why, Thomas?"

"It's rather an old trick, but it is very effective. For some time I have noticed that our wood has been stolen. I know the thieves, and I have fixed for them. They are partial to the wood that is already chopped. Naturally so, for the noise of chopping it would arouse suspicions. Well, this evening I bored a hole in a stick, but in a handful of powder, drove in a plug and smeared it with mud to conceal the trick. It you should hear a lot of pots and kettles flying through the air to-night, don't be alarmed."

"Thomas, that's cruel."

"Yes, but it's just. My wood, you understand. They are not compelled to take it, don't you see?"

Mr. Pearling went out to the woodpile. Soon returning with an armful of wood, he put a stick in the stove and said:

"Oh, they've got it. Bit like a trout."

"Thomas, I didn't know you were so mean."

"That's all right. I've got a right to protect my own property. Let's go and get a lunch."

"They went into the dining room and were devoting themselves to cold ham and pleasant conversation when a terrific explosion shook the house. A large fragment of cast iron crushed its whirling way through the room, and then, almost before the awful affair could be realized, the house was on fire.

The firemen did their work well, and an experienced man said the cellar was practically uninjured. The Honorable Thomas and his wife have taken up their quarters in a cheap boarding house. Remorseful und wiser, the honorable gentleman says never again will he descend to the low grades of a practical joker.—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

Training Carrier Pigeons.

"Homing or carrier pigeons require somewhat careful training," said a bird fancier to a New York *Mail and Express* reporter. "It is not often, however, that any are lost. The birds are allowed at first, when about three months old, to fly around and about their home for a week or two. Then they are taken on various occasions to different spots about a mile distant, and the distance is increased until outside the city limits. Then ten, twenty and thirty miles are reached and successfully achieved, and they are taken still further away until the distance is increased to sixty, ninety, 150, 200, 300, 400, 500, and even 800 miles. The stations are generally signal-service stations, as the officers are well qualified to judge as to the weather the bird is likely to encounter. I have known birds to be kept at a station several days before being allowed to fly, owing to adverse weather. Sometimes, after being kept so long, they are loth to leave, and occasionally, after flying about all day, unable to find their way to their real home, they will come at nightfall and settle on the roof of the station. That, of course, is not very often the case, for the birds have a really remarkable instinct.

"I used to know a gentleman in Germantown, Pa., who had a different way of training his birds, or rather of judging which birds he would train. After they had become thoroughly acquainted with their home, he gave them no trial trips, but sent them to New York right away. Those which found their way home he trained for longer flights. It is really astonishing how few he lost.

"Pigeons will fly well till they are four years old, but it is rarely you find a pigeon of that age doing any work. The reason is simple. If a bird owner finds any specially good bird, and it wins half a dozen prizes, he is not going to waste the pigeon nor let it wear itself out. He wants to breed from it. He, therefore, keeps it at home. Carriers run a number of dangers, you know; the hawks get at them and nothing earthly will prevent that."

A Blind Boy Given Sight.

An achievement of surgical science is reported from the State Institution for the Deaf, Dumb and Blind, at Romney, Hampshire county. Henry McRea, blind from his birth in 1870, was a pupil of the institution from Pocahontas county, and had been for the past three years taking the same course, industrial and literary, which is open to all the blind boys of the school. At the recent meeting of the board of regents of the institution, the attention of Dr. J. R. L. Hardesty, of this city, who is a member of the board, was attracted to the boy, and after an examination he announced his belief that the boy's eyes could be operated upon so as to enable him to see. He was affected with double congenital cataract, and while his optic nerve was unimpaired it was shut out from the rays of light. It was resolved that Dr. Hardesty should undertake the operation. A room was darkened and the operation successfully performed with the most gratifying success. The boy's eyes were opened, and the light being gradually admitted to the room, he became accustomed to it by degrees, and in a few days was sent home to his overjoyed family with as keen eyesight as any of them. Young McRea had become so accustomed to obtaining all his impressions of the outside world by other senses that at first his sight was of no use to him. The most familiar objects presented to his eyes were not recognized. He did not know a key from a book by the sense of sight alone until he became familiar with the difference between the two objects. With a nearly mature mind his sense of sight was as uneducated and useless as that of an infant when it first comes into the world. At last accounts, however, Henry was learning very rapidly how to use his eyes, though still relying to a large extent upon his senses of touch, hearing and smelling.—*Wheeling (W. Va.) Intelligencer.*

Arbor Days.

In many of the States of the Union the planting of trees in the early spring is very generally observed, particularly in those localities where wood, shade or water is needed. Incalculable good has been done, although as an institution this holiday is as yet in its infancy: The governor of Kansas in his proclamation for Arbor day, says: "The State which the pioneers found treeless and a desert, now bears upon its fertile bosom more than 20,000,000 of fruit trees, and more than 20,000 acres of forest trees all planted by our own people." And the governor also says, "that there has been an increase in the rainfall in Kansas is fully proved by the statistics of our oldest meteorologists." It has been suggested that this ought to be a national holiday as Thanksgiving has become. But this would not be possible owing to the extent of the country, for the same planting day would not do for Michigan and Mississippi, for Maine and Texas. Excellent as the work has been so far there are twenty forest trees cut down for one that is planted. The destruction goes on with amazing rapidity. There ought to be some action by Congress to enact forestry laws, such as those in force in Europe. Not only should a wanton destruction of forests stop, but it should be agreed that for every one tree cut down five should be planted in its place.—*Demorest.*

Steamers going through the Suez canal must stop whenever the pilot gives the word, and when the sun goes down, no matter where the vessel is, whether at a "station" or not, it must tie up at the bank. There is no risk in this, as no other steamer will attempt to go on after sundown. The pilots are a fine set of men, of different nations, English, French, Greek, Italian, etc. They dress in a simple uniform, something like naval officers in undres[s] ...

TIMELY TOPICS.

Leone Levi, who is a recognized authority on wages in Britain, states that since the middle of 1884 the reduction of wages in the principal industries in that country has been fully fifteen per cent. The total reduction has been £70,000,000, or $350,000,000 for a year.

According to Professor Taylor, of the department of agriculture, the simplest test of pure butter is sulphuric acid. A few drops combined with the butter will turn it first a whitish yellow and in ten minutes a brick red. Oleomargarine treated in the same way, turns at first to a clear amber and in twenty minutes a deep crimson. Use a glass rod in mixing the acid with the butter.

For the seventeen States of Europe the total of the armies on a peace footing is 2,529,532 men. Calculating their wages at sixty-two cents per day, and omitting the holidays, we have a sum of $187.50 per annum for each man. Multiplying this sum by 2,529,522, the total comes to $474,102,875 per annum. Adding to this the total of the seventeen war budgets, which is $508,363,910, the total loss suffered by Europe annually on account of her armies is $982,574,260.

The *Scientific American* approves of the proposal to establish a chain of lightships across the Atlantic. It considers the general idea good, and as to its practicability it states that the experience with lightships proves that a vessel properly constructed may be made to ride out the fiercest storms at anchor, save upon rare occasions, and that the light steel cables of recent construction have been successfully used to anchor ships in the deepest water "of soundings."

There will be a struggle between parties this year in Connecticut, Iowa, Kentucky, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Virginia. Of these Connecticut, Kentucky, New Jersey, New York and Virginia went Democratic in last year's election, and Iowa, Massachusetts, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Rhode Island were Republican. Interest in the next election will be confined mainly to New York, Ohio, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Herat, the bone of contention between England and Russia, is comparatively small for a place of such paramount importance, containing barely 50,000 inhabitants. It is surrounded by a wall which, measured from the base of the earthern mound on which it stands, attains a height of seventy-five feet, which is considerably exceeded by several of the 150 towers that strengthen it. But these defences, though seemingly formidable, are now, like most of those Afghan fortresses, fast crumbling to decay from long neglect. The citadel, like that of Cairo, stands on a steep rock in the centre of the town.

On a recent Saturday night a count was made in two hundred London saloons, and it was found that between the hours of 9 o'clock and 12 o'clock they were visited by 48,803 men, 30,784 women and 7,019 children, or in all by 86,608 persons. It was also found that in one of the best quarters of the city 1,250 well-dressed women entered at twelve saloons between the hours of 10 o'clock and 12 o'clock, 1,122 of whom took malt and the balance spirituous liquors, which they drank in every case over the bar. In none of the saloons were there screens before the doors or window, as in American drinking places.

The artichoke is becoming a favorite crop with pork raisers in Arizona. It is said to be hardy and very productive, requires no cultivation after planting, and possesses remarkable fattening qualities. One variety, the large white sweet, will produce 15,000 pounds to the acre, which will furnish feed for from twenty-five to fifty head of hogs for three months. Hogs may root the ground over where they are planted time and time again, with the only effect that plowing would have—pulverizing the earth. After one year's growth the seed cannot be eradicated from the soil, for wherever so much as a diminutive eye is left the plant will spring up.

The laco weed, which has appeared with frightful rapidity on the Kansas range within the last eighteen months, to the dismay of stockmen, will doubtless disappear within the next eighteen months. Two years ago this singular plant had free swing in the Texas Panhandle and New Mexico, but now it has nearly disappeared in these sections. The plant is a tramp, and makes itself mighty disagreeable to the localities where it effects a temporary lodgment. This plant does not have the appearance of guile, for chemists have failed to detect any poisonous qualities therein, but it is an established fact that horses and cattle are made mad by eating it.

One of the new experiments at Hampton, Va., this year is taking several young married couples from Indian tribes, and teaching them how to make a home. It has been very successful, and the dawning gentleness of the men to their wives and children, the new tenderness and pride of the women, their eagerness to learn how to sew, and their pleasure in cleanliness, are encouraging in every way. It is funny, and yet touching, to see the men with their children, their awkwardness in handling them, and yet their determination to carry the heavy youngsters and share the care of them with their squaws. And these are not the Creeks and Cherokees, but the warlike Sioux and Omahas.

The White House covers about one-third of an acre, and it has cost up to this time about $2,000,000. It is modeled after a castle in Dublin, and the architect, who was a South Carolina man named Hoban, got $500 for drawing the plans. When it was first built, away back in the nineties, it cost $300,000, but the British burned out its insides, and its cost has since added to that sum about $1,700,000. In it all the presidents since Washington have lived, and each has added to its beauties and its expense. John Quincy Adams brought the first billiard table which was used in it. But in John Adams' time it was only half furnished, and Abigail Adams used to dry he clothes in the big east room. Year by year, however, the furnishing has gone on, until now it is a sort of museum of art and beauty.

The first Chinese separate school in America was opened in San Francisco the other day. The attend[ance at the] opening was s[...] Mamie Tape a[...] brother, but in the afternoon four Chinese boys appeared, two of whom could read well and were sufficiently advanced to enter the grammer grade. It is thought that if the Chinese merchants can get over their repugnance to vaccination, they will send their children to the school. As it is, they patronize the mission schools, where the vaccination requirement is not in force. The new departure in education will be watched with much interest by the small number who, in the face of popular prejudice, believe that it is their duty to train up the young Chinese in Christian ways and give them the advantages of a good education.

"The heating power of earthquakes is now made a subject for discussion in scientific journals," remarks the Chicago *Tribune*, "and many good words are said in favor of phenomena heretofore somewhat unpopular. It is claimed that earthquakes increase the temperature perceptibly, and the view appears well supported. Still, it is to be feared earthquakes will never get their hold on public confidence secured by the good, old-fashioned stove or the more pretentious modern furnace. Anybody can imagine a stove and almost any one can do something with a furnace, though soft coal furnaces are sometimes intractable—but to manage an earthquake properly must necessarily require experience. As heaters they are a new thing. It would never do to let a raw servant girl turn on an earthquake alone—it would be worse than kindling a fire with kerosene, and there are other objections to them too numerous to mention. The scientists mean well, but they become too enthusiastic at times."

The rooting out of polygamy under the Edmunds' law, which began in Utah last summer, and which has resulted in the conviction of several prominent Mormons, is carrying consternation among the followers of Brigham Young. The Edmunds' law, passed by both houses of Congress three years ago, provines a penalty of $500 fine and imprisonment for not more than five years for any man entering into a polygamous marriage after the date of its adoption. For the purpose of reaching all those who had been plurally married the law provided a penalty of $500 fine and six months' imprisonment for men living with more than one woman. These two sections are the groundwork of the law, but in order to enforce them, as experience with other laws in the Territory had shown, extraordinary measures were necessary. The greater part of the Edmunds law is devoted to the rearrangement of the jury and political system here. It makes polygamy or belief in it ground for challenging any grand or petit juror and disfranchises all polygamists as well as women who may be married to polygamists.

A Romantic Painter.

Like most romantic characters, Lantara has inspired romance not only in playwrights, but in poets and talemakern. The stories told of him are curious. They might even be true, but there are no facts to show they are. One says that, having received a hundred crowns from that "most heartless of amateurs," the Comte de Caylus, for a moonlight, Lantara was utterly miserable till he and the money parted company. All day he wandered in a passion of suspicion; at, night, in his garret by the Louvre, he could not sleep for thinking of his gold; and when he did sleep he was led through such a dance of dreams as made him wish himself poor again. To be rid of it was easy enough in the Paris of Louis XV.—a very paradise of knaves. He went to the cabaret and told his troubles to his roistering friends. There was plenty of sympathy. It took the form of bumpers and dice; and before long the money troubled Lantara no more.

There is, too, a touching story of a love affair. On the basement of the old house in whose attic Lantara slept lived a young fruiterer—a girl from Picardy named Jacqueline. Her voice it was that first attracted him; it was sweet and strong and clear; and it rose like a skylark's to his open window at dawn; the first and only sound in the humming city that brought back to him the memory of woods and fields. He had passed the fruit-shop daily, heedless of its tenant. Now he lingered on the stairs; hung about the door. Painter and fruit-seller soon became friends, then lovers. Many a time is she said to have lured him from the wine-shop home; and in his sorest straits to have shared with him her poor little earnings. Some of his best pictures seem to have been painted under the influence of her presence; and we can well believe it. But these love-passages were brief. Jacqueline died; and Lantara, oppressed with grief, sought solace in his old haunts. It is told that years afterward he would weep at the mention of her name. To get a picture from him, produced in the days of Jacqueline, was impossible; and when asked why he prized a certain canvas more than others, he asked: "Then you don't hear Jacqueline singing in the landscape?"—*Magazine of Art.*

"Professional Amusers."

The "professional amuser" is an institution in New York society. Blakely Hall says of him:

The life of a professional amuser must be a curious one. There are a great many men in New York now who devote themselves to the task of amusing others. The best of them all is Frank Lincoln. Jimmy Burdette, as he is affectionately called, pushes Mr. Lincoln very close. They are both of them young men, clever and original. Lincoln is the fashion. Night after night all through the season he is at a dinner, concert, club banquet or a children's party, and he is perpetually on the go. The stupid half hour after the coffee is served, which usually falls on a party of diners, and which was formerly filled with tedious or tiresome speeches, is now admirably utilized by the professsional amuser. But I wonder what the amuser himself thinks of it? Probably Mr. Lincoln went to a hundred dinner parties during the winter, and in most instances he goes in as one of the guests, dines, is professionally jolly for an hour after the dinner is finished, pockets a $50 fee—if it happens to be that sort of a dinner party—waves his hand gracefully and withdraws. The diners loll back in their chairs and discuss Mr. Lincoln. I wonder if he discusses them? If he has brains enough to write his memoirs, and they are truthful, they ought to be very interesting. The jester's estimate of the king. [...] often is the jester greater than [...]

[...]ica,

ha[...]

NECESSITY.

Gaunt faced and hungry eyed she waits,
This somber warder of our fates,
Forever sleepless while we sleep,
And silent while we watch and weep.

Sometimes, beguiled by smiling skies
And wooing winds, we shut our eyes,
Forgetting for a little space
That tireless, unforgetting face.

Or, stirred as stirs the sap in spring
By nature's force, we laugh and sing,
Or run to pass that waiting shape
With flying footsteps of escape.

But where we run she leads the way,
She goes before us night and day,
No flying footsteps can escape,
By any path, that somber shape.

Always she waits with whip and spur
To urge us on if we demur;
With bitter breath we call her foe,
As driven thus we rise and go.

The roads we follow wind and twist,
Our eyes grow blind with blinding mist,
Blown down to us as we ascend
The upland heights that near the end.

And at the end—"Where is our foe?
Where hideth she?" we cry—and lo,
Through breaking mist, an angel's face
Looks out upon us from her place!

—*Nora Perry, in the Congregationalist.*

PUNGENT PARAGRAPHS.

The mouse a woman never fears: A moustache.

A Kansas man has been fined $10 for smiling in church. Kansas is a prohibition State this year.—*Graphic.*

Man was born in an Eden, and he has been a needin' creature ever since.—*Cincinnati Merchant-Traveler.*

A man may be loaded to the eyes with philosophy, and yet become as helpless as a child when he tries to get the last word with a woman.—*Chicago Ledger.*

The hen may be negligent of her duties during the winter weather, but she generally manages to come up to the scratch in the time of spring gardening.—*Siftings.*

"Will you pass the butter, Mr. Fogg?" asked Brown. "Every time," replied Fogg. The landlady said it was the way Fogg said it that made her mad.—*Boston Transcript.*

"Don't kick a man when he's down," folks say,
And the reason for this is plain:
He might make it hot for the kicker some day
When up on his feet again.
—*Boston Courier.*

"Papa, what is Wall street?" "Wall street is a place where they raise lambs in the spring, shear them in the fall, and then turn them loose to hustle for themselves in the winter.—*Evansville Argus.*

IT IS HUMAN NATURE.

The poet whose fame is as wide as the world
Believes there will ne'er be another,
And oft in derision his proud lip is curled
As he hears of a rising young brother.
The gifted soprano oft vanity shows
When a cantatric famous we find her,
And the cornet soloist turns up his nose
When he pases the organ grinder.
—*Boston Courier.*

"Never go back," advises a writer. "What you attempt do with all your strength." This may be good advice, but it wouldn't work satisfactorily. When a young man, for instance, attempts to court a girl he may do it with all his strength, but he goes back, all the same. He goes back about six nights a week.—*Norristown Herald.*

A SONG OF BASE-BALL.

You may talk of the places statesmen take
In the temple of fame sublime,
Of men and women who strive to make
A name in prose or rhyme;
But give to me no classic degree,
Be its honor ever so high,
The bat I'll swing, and I'll try to bring
The ball that goes whistling by.

Some men may follow the greed of gold
Till their hair grows thin and gray,
But worry and fret makes young blood old,
And they fritter their lives away,
Though my face is bruised and I am badly used
By a hot ball, what of that?
I'll boldly stand, with blistered hand,
A catcher behind the bat.

The cyclist may ride his glitt'ring wheel
The skater his rollers don,
And pugilistic cranks may feel
Great pride in the doughty John;
But give to me the diamond free,
With its bases, its rush and shout,
Though a tooth I've lost, do I count the cost
When I've caught their best man out.
—*Boston Globe.*

The Invention of Ink.

When ink was first introduced does not seem to have been decided, but gives the paper and the pen, a colored medium which would show on a light surface was so obvious a want, and one so readily found, that there is no extraordinary credit due to the unknown inventor. It appears to be only of comparatively late years that black ink has been almost universal. Roman ink was red, purple and gold, and inks of blue, green, violet and other shades were not uncommon. It is said that simple as is the composition of ink, "we possess none equal in beauty and color to that used by the ancients; the Saxon MSS. written in England exceed in color anything of the kind." Modern ink makers will deny the superiority of the ancients; but who shall say whether words written in the ink manufactured to-day will stand as vividly centuries hence as those Saxon MSS. have stood? It is difficult to see how the writing materials of the present day can be improved upon, for convenience at least, setting aside questions of lasting inks, which the generation that uses them cannot settle. Paper, rough or smooth, fluent inks of any color that the writer may believe suitable to his eyes, pens as fine as a needle or as blunt as a spade, are all to be bought in every street. The great lack of the age seems to be ideas at once more novel and sensible in the record of which these serviceable materials may be employed.—*London Standard.*

Hardness of Precious Stones.

The relative hardness of various stones is determined by the power of one stone to make scratches on another. If a diamond is scratched with one of the points of crystallized topaz, the topaz-point is blunted, and the mark seen on the face of the diamond is only the dust of the topaz, which can be brushed off with the finger. But if the topaz is scratched with the diamond, the latter is unaltered and the surface of the former is marked with a scratch which can be removed only by further polishing down.

It is on the base of this process of comparison that a scale of comparative hardness has been formed, represented by ten substances, of which the diamond is the highest and graphite the lowest in the scale. It is a curious fact that these two extremes of the scale, the brilliant [d]iamond and the soft black [...] chemically the same sub[stance,] carbon.

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