"LIPPINCOTT'S." The January number of Lippincott's Magazine has the following puble of contents:-

"The Vicar of Bullhampton," a novel, part vii, by Anthony Trollope; "The Persecuted Woman;" "The Fairy and the Ghost," a Christmas tale, with six amusing illustrations, by F. R. Stockton; "On Christmas Eve," by Edgar Fawcett; "Our Capital," by William R. Hooper; Sue and I," a tale, by Mrs. W. A. Thompson; "The Singer," a poem, by Lucy Hamilton Heoper; "The Philosophy of Self-Importance," by Edward Spencer, "Beyond the Breakers," a novel, part ill, by Hon. Robert Dale Owen; "International Coinage," by Hon. J. Ross Snowden; "Musings on an Old Mansion," by C. Meredith; "Going an Errand," a Christmas story: "The Critic," a poem; "Literary Lunatics," by Wirt Sikes; "Our Monthly Gossip;" "Literature of the Day.'

From Colonel Snowden's paper on "International Coinage" we quote the following para-

"It is a singular fact, noticed in the United States Mint report for 1868, that the weight of the coins in France, although founded upon a decimal system of value, cannot be expressed in decimals. 'Her normal coin, the twenty franc-piece, is precisely 6 14-31 grams; a most impracticable and unscientific figure. Nor would the twenty-five frame piece, the counterpart of the proposed half-eagle and pound sterling, make any better show. It is not fit to be measured either by grams or grains. And yet this is the coin the United States and Great Britain are invited to adopt!

'In view of the awkward figures required to express the twenty-five-franc piece, it has quite recently been proposed to slightly increase the weight of the piece to the standard of eighty-one decigrams, or eight grams and one tenth, which corresponds with one hundred and twenty-five This would, of course, by increasing its value, bring it a little nearer to the half-eagle and pound sterling. But even if this did remove the objection to a standard based upon the franc and its multiples—which in fact it does not—we do not know that France would agree to this change. Her proposition is to take her standards, and to require the other nations inter-ested to conform to them. Moreover, we have no reason to believe that this modification of the original proposition would be satisfactory to Great Britain. It would require an alteration in the weight of the sovereign, and a change in its fineness from eleventwelfths—say, 91614 thousandths—the present standard, to 900 thousandths, the standard of France and the United States. In fact, this new suggestion rather strengthens the position taken by Great Britain, that the nations interested are not prepared to adopt the system proposed, and that a general monetary conference, in which the whole subject may be considered, is desirable, and may lead to some practical and useful results.

"The foregoing considerations lead to the following conclusions:-1. The advantages of an lowing conclusions:—1. The advantages of an international coinage are overstated by its advocates. 2. There are practical difficulties in establishing and maintaining a unification of coins of different nations. 3. The propositions heretofore made are liable to serious and manifold objections. 4. The value of the gold dollar ought not to be reduced, nor any system adopted which would imprise upon it as the American which would impinge upon it as the American anit of coin and money of account. 5. All nations should be invited to adopt the dollar as the most suitable money unit. 6. It is desirable that there should be a uniformity in the fineness of the gold coins of the different nations. 7. Great Britain ought to adopt the standard of the United States, France, Italy, and Belgium in this respect—namely, in the gold coins in 1000 parts by weight 900 shall be of pure gold, and thus make equal weights of equal value. S. A. single standard, namely, gold, ought to be adopted by the nations, 9. A general monetary conference, as suggested by the British commissioners, is desirable, and may lead to useful and practical results."

We make this extract from the essay on "Philosophy of Self-Importance," by Edward Spencer:-

"Vanity is, after all, only an exaggerated form of self-esteem, and he who esteems at least respects himself. The selfish virtues are not the most popular in the eyes of the world; it is likely, however, that they are among the most serviceable to the world. Shaftesbury has sneeringly remarked that the easy good-nature which we admire in so many persons is apt to be no more than pure selfishness. Still, it is some-thing to be good-natured. It is an admirably wholesome thing for society to possess goodnatured people in its ranks, no matter what has made them so. 'Certainly,' says old Burton, 'vain-glory helpeth to perpetuate a man's memory; and virtue was never so beholden to human nature as it received its due at second hand. And if the vanity of men had done nothing more than preserve for us the examples of great men, we should be beholden to it for more service than we can possibly derive injury "But there can be no question of the positive

utility of the sentiment of self-importance to the well-being of human society. 'Thus puffing well-being of human society. 'Thus puffing humors it is that hath produced so many great tomes, built such famous monuments, strong castles, and mausolean tombs, to have their acts eternized—"Digito monstrari, et diceri hic est;" to be pointed at, etc.; to see their names inscribed, as Phyrne on the walls of Greece, Phyrne fecits this causeth so many bloody bat-tles, "Et noctes cogit vigilare serenas." This, however, is a one-sided and narrow view. Emulation is the nurse of genius as well as the spur. It was the fame of Miltiades that taught Themistocles to become famous. The walls of the Piracus, the fortifications of the Acropolis, yet stand to testify to the tremendous promptings of vanity in one man's bosom. Do not let us forget that Napoleon did something else besides march into Russia and gild the dome of the Invalides. Do not let us forget that Richellen produced something besides a bad tragedy. Do not let us forget that Cicero wrote and spoke other words besides his "O fortunatam natam. How sublimely earnest this sense of self-importance makes the worker! We see Haydn solemnly at prayer before beginning the Creation. We see De Thou earnestly beseeching God, each time he commenced a new chapter, to breathe into his labors the spirit of impartiality and justice. Less consequential men would not have had the courage to assume that the Delty had a personal interest in the result of their labors; but less consequential men would never have labored so faithfully and so well. Ah! if we could only all of us be vain enough to dedicate our performances to God, and feel a consciousness of His immediate interest in our work, what laborers we should become, what tasks accomplish!
"Rob men of this exalted self-opinion—take

from them the creative delight which flows in like a river along the broad, proud channel of self-consciousness-and you deprive them at once of all inspiration—you crush the germ of their excellence.' In the aggregate, men will be willing to do nothing unless their own satisfaction be involved in the issue. And this it is which gives to vanity its energizing power, its operative activity in the human mind; for no hope of compensation is so flattering as that hope which springs up of recognition, of appreciation, of substantial honors and rewards from the lap of fame. Thus, as Lacon has it, 'Self-love, in a well-regulated heart, becomes, as it were, the steward of the household.'"

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"THE GALAXY." The contents of the January number of the

Galazy are as follows:-"Susan Fielding," by Mrs. Edwards, chapters xl to end, with an illustration; "My Lighthouses, ' by H. H.; "Science and Orthodoxy in England," by Justin McCarthy; "Ten Years in Rome;" "The Old Admiral," by Edmund Clarence Stedman; "Put Yourself in his Place," by Charles Reade, chapters xxvili and xxix,

with an Illustration; "Brother of All, with Generous Hand," by Walt Whitman; "Story of the Powder-boat;" "In the Valley of the Shadow," by Albert S. Evans; "A Child's First Sight of Snow," by Sarah M. B. Piatt; "A Monument of Trade," by Edward Crapsey; "The Pest of the Period," a chapter of the Morals and Manners of Journalism, by Richard Grant White; "The Mullein that Grows by Sudbury Wood," by T. W. Parsons: "Poisoned Air," by John C. Draper, M. D.; "The Galaxy Miscellany;" "Drift Wood," by Philip Quilibet: "Literature and Art;" "Nebu-

From the anonymous "Story of the Powder e," by the editor. Boat" we quote the following paragraphs with regard to the conception and execution of the famous plan for blowing Fort Fisher sky-high, which was one of the little failures of the war, the responsibility of which the officers of the army and navy have never yet been able to settle between them:-

While preparations were making, in 1864, for the attack on Fort Fisher, it occurred to Gene-ral Butler that if a large quantity of powder could be confined in the form of a huge torpedo, and exploded close to the works, the effect of that explosion would be the destruction of the fort and garrison and even of the neighboring towns. The idea was suggested by the results of two very recent explosions; the one at Erith, in England, the other at City Point, on the James, in the close vicinity of the General's own headquarters. In October, 1864, on the south bank of the Thames, near Woolwich, two powder-magazines and two barges loaded with powder exploded, killing and wounding a number of persons. There were 840 barrels of powder in the two magazines, and 200 barrels in the barges. The latter were moored at the wharves. The total quantity of powder exploded was, therefore, about 104,000 pounds, or about 40 tons. The two magazines were 135 feet from each other, on the edge of the river, immediately behind the dike. The barges were alongside the wharves, one of which extended 120 and the other 122 feet into the river. Within a few yards of the magazines were three cottages, occupied by the work-men. The magazines and cottages were the only buildings within a mile of the disaster. There were three distinct explosions; the first on board the barges, which tore asunder the large magazine, and so caused the smaller one to explode. Of these magazines not one stone remained upon another. The barges were split into fragments and hurled into the air. The embankment was destroyed, and so were the cottages of the workmen. No damage, other than the breakage of glass and windows, was done outside of the tract of twenty acres on which these buildings were situated. The shock was, however, felt more or less throughout London, distant, at the nearest point, about fifteen miles; and some of the statements sworn to before the coroner's jury make the distance at which the shock was felt as great as forty or fifty miles. A magazine a quarter of a mile from those blown up was uninured, although a piece of iron was thrown through the roof, and the workmen inside of the magazine were prostrated by the explosion. Another magazine lay at a distance of a quarter of a mile from this one, and a Government ma-gazine one mile, and neither received injury. The explosion at City Point took place on board an orduance barge, moored alongside the wharf at that place. She contained about eight tons of ammunition, a part of it in boxes. A similar boat was moored to her off-shore side. The wharf was built on piles, and had upon it a

wooden store-house of one story. About three hundred feet of the wharf was destroyed, and the store-house was blown down. Yet, although a small boat with several men in it, which was alongside the outer barge, was capsized, none of the men were injured. A loaded railroad train was on the track on the opposite side of the wharf, and the engineer was on his engine, but nothing there was injured. Across the railroad, about one hundred and sixty-five yards from the exploded barge, were some light wooden buildings, sutler's tents, etc. All of these were blown down, or so much in jured as to require to be torn down. Several persons were killed in and around these build ings; and fragments of the boat sufficiently large and having a velocity sufficient to kill a man were thrown to a distance of five hundred yards. Those persons who were killed were not killed by the explosion, but by the projectiles which were thrown about by its force.

But, though cited by General Delafield as proofs of the insufficiency of the explosive force powder in large masses to destroy heavy structures at a distance from the explosion, the foregoing facts seemed to General Butler to justify his reliance on the effects of the plan pro posed by him. He believed that by it the forts at Federal Point might be destroyed, and the capture of Wilmington, or at least of the two entrances to Cape Fear river, rendered an easy task. In November he communicated this idea to Admiral Porter, then in command of the North Atlantic Squadron. That distinguished officer, with his usual promptitude, threw him-self heart and soul into the affair. He did not anticipate results as terrible as those looked for by General Butler. He more nearly agreed with General Delafield. But it was, said the Admiral "an experiment worth trying." If its result should prove as great as were anticipated, it would revolutionize operations against harbor defenses. The fate of war would thereafter "depend upon which of the combatants pos

sessed the greatest amount of powder."

Casting about him for the best means to prosecute the enterprise, the Admiral selected from his fleet an old war-worn propeller of about 250 tons, which had long been employed in the sounds of North Carolina. She was called the Louislana, and was in many respects admirably suited for her part in the enterprise. She was flat-bottomed, and drew only five or six feet of water. She had done good service in the shallow waters where she had hitherto been employed, but was fast becoming worthless, and could be better spared than a better vessel. It was, too, a fitting end for the old war-worn steamer that she should go from the ranks of the fleet not into the degrading servitude of some speculating contrac-tor, as an old race-horse ends his days in a cart; nor even into the dull but honorable retirement of a navy yard hulk; but into the very forefront of the battle, and there gloriously expire in one orillant flash-slaying, like Samson of old, more at her death than she had done during her whole lifetime.

The Louisiana was accordingly ordered to report at Hampton Roads; and, on the evening of the 30th of November, she arrived in that harbor from Newbern. She was a slow coach, her best speed being about six knots in smooth water. During the trip from Hatteras Inlet to Cape Henry, she was with much ado kept off the beach, the wind drawing partially on it. On her arrival she was immediately ordered to Norfolk, where her officers and crew were transferred to other vessels, and gangs of workmen at once commenced transforming the man-of-war into a torpedo. Her guns and masts were removed and her stores, ammunition, and provisions taken out; a house was built on her upper deek, extending forward from her smoke-stack (which was just forward of the officers' quarters) almost to her bow, being seventy feet in length. A false smoke-stack, made of hoops and canvas, was placed forward of the real one: the deck-house was covered with canvas, painted to prevent leakage; painted canvas screens closed in the sides and side-lights; and she was then white-washed all over. Thus, when turned over by the navy-yard authorities to the ordnance officers, she was as fair an imitation of a blockade-rupner as could be desired, and one not

easily detected at night. And now came the great question while these preparations were making—who should execute preparations were making—who should execute this plan, so easy of conception, but so difficult to carry to success? For obvious reasons, the selection of a commander for the expedition devolved upon Admiral Porter. Having but lately assumed command of the squadron, and being consequently not familiar with all his officers, he first issued a general order calling for volunteers for a hazardous duty, stating that the chances were "death, or slory, honor and promotion." He was deluged with ap-

plications. Although the nature of the service. tor which they were required was entirely un-known, volunteers, from commodores to masters'-mates, registered their names as candidates for the chance of getting tilled. The feeling that the Admiral's brilliant feats in the West had inspired in the hearts of all, and the natural fancy of sailors for anything that was at the same time hazardons and mysterious, made the list a large one. From among so great a number with equal claims, men already famous at Port Royal, New Orleans, Charleston, or Mobile, how was it possible to select?

As has been said, while the crude conception of the plan was General Butler's, and while the

preparation of the explosive power was the work of the Ordnance Department, the execution de-volved upon the Admiral. He had many brave men in his command: how many had he, who with great bravery combined judgment, and with courage coolness; who would not risk and ruin all for the sake of a dashing attempt; who would intelligently and fearlessly carry out not only the letter but the spirit of their instructions? Many who fulfilled these condi-tions, yet from their age and rank in the ser-vice and their positions in the fleet, could not be spared. The Admiral's attention soon fixed itself firmly upon an officer who, for brilliant and judicious conception, and cool and daring execution, had made his name famous among his comrades, and had gained flattering enco-miums from a department never too ready to

praise. This man was Commander Alexander C.
Rhind, of New York, at this time commanding a double-ender, the Agawam.

Notwithstanding the care with which the secret of the powder-boat had been kept, some "leaky vessel" had allowed it to escape. The whole affair was known at Beaufort before the arrival there of the fleet. It had been received from Newbern, between which place and Wilmington illicit communication was kept up in spite of all efforts to prevent it. In view, therefore, of the great probability that the whole affair was known to the Rebels, it was necessary that measures should be adopted by the powder party to defeat any attempt to prevent the con-

summation of the enterprise.

The following improved plan of operations was accordingly adopted, and on the morning of the 20th December was submitted to the Ad-

I. The Louisiana was to be taken in on the first favorable night. A suitable night was con-sidered to be one with a hazy atmosphere and a light wind on shore. II. The Wilderness was to tow, being assisted

by the steam power of the powder-boat.

III. The course should be W. by S. 1/2 S., for Fort Fisher light. IV. On her arrival at the proper point the Wilderness was to signal the Louisiana by flashing a green light three times, and immediately casting off the tow-line. The Louisiana was then to steam ahead to her own position and let go an anchor, stoppered at thirty fathoms. V. The proper position for the separation of the two vessels was to be decided by Lamson, Bradford, and Bowen on the Wilderness. On their concurrent opinions, the light was to be

VI. The proper position of the Louisiana was to be about one hundred yards inshore of the Wilderness, if the depth of water would allow her to get thus far. She was expected to swing with her bow off shore—a very desirable result—and to obtain which the wind must be light

from the northeast. VII. After anchoring the Louisiana, fires were to be at once hauled, and Rhind and Preston were, personally, to start the clocks, and light the chandelier slow-match, and finally the fire. VIII. All having been completed, the cable-

stopper was to be cut, and the party were to leave the vessel in regular naval order, that is, juniors first They were to warp themselves alongside of the Wilderness by a line attached to that versel, one end of which was kept in the boat. The cable-stopper having been cut would allow the vessel to drift slowly in towards the shore to the extreme length of her cable (ninety fathoms), which it was expected would undoubtedly put her aground close to the beach.

The warp line was to be used to avoid the noise which sometimes unavoidably happens in handling oars; and also as being more convenient in the crowded state of the least.

nient in the crowded state of the boat.

IX. In case the chemy attempted to board, the Wilderness was to attack at once with grape and To the arrangement pose, and the management of his vessel while towing, Acting Master Arey was to give all his attention.

X. Should the fort open and the Wilderness be disabled, and should all efforts to drive off the boarders fail, and the capture of the vessel become inevitable-the final measures should be adopted. Mr. Preston being, in view of this contingency, stationed in the lower-room, was, apon signal from Captain Rhind, to blow up the conisiana to insure the success of the enterprise. This was to be done, to use Preston's own words, by "sticking a lighted candle into the nearest XI. The signal for the self-destruction of the

party was to be three distinct and measured raps on the deck, to be given by Captain Rhind. The Admiral cordially approved of the above plan of operations, with the exception of the tenth and eleventh articles. But being told that these had been adopted by the unanimous vote of the party, he reluctantly assented to them all The gale continued to blow with great fury until the afternoon of the 22d. On its first ap pearance, the transports with the troops, and General Butler in his flagship, got under way and went to Beaufort, from which place they did not return until the 24th. however, determined to ride it out, and did so successfully; but the position of the party on the Louisiana was unpleasant in the extreme. She wallowed and rolled, and dragged the Wilderness almost down to the fleet, although Captain Arey let go all the anchors he had. She finally east off from the Wilderness, and was taken in tow by the Nansemond, during the remainder of the gale.

After the gale ceased the sea went down rapidly, and the night of the 23d was clear and

fine. The weather was quite cold, and the wind light from N. N. W. This was a very unfavor-able wind, as the vessel would probably tall off shore when anchored. However, the Admiral did not deem that objection of sufficient importance; and, besides, it was thought that, the wind being so light, she might swing to the flood tide, which would carry her directly towards the beach; so, as he had determined to attack on the 24th, and had already sent word to General Butler, he ordered Commander Rhind to proceed in at once, and blow up the vessel.

Accordingly, the Wilderness once more took the tow-line, and the Kansas again took her position as a stern range. At a quarter before eleven the two vessels passed the Kansas and stood in shore W. by S. S., running slowly. At twenty minutes before twelve, fifty-five minutes after leaving the Kansas, the Wilderness was in two and a half fathoms of water, with the beach and the embrasures of Fort Fisher plainly dis-cernible. The signal was now made, and the Louisiana steamed in unaided to her statisn. Slowly but steadily she approached the beach; and to the spectators on the Wilderness she seemed almost on shore before she anchored. Arey had to veer out nearly two hundred fathoms of line to the boat astern of her before

she brought up. Then all was quiet.
Those were solemn moments. Lamson and his brother officers stood aft on the hurricane deck, watching with cagerness the dim outline visible in shore of them. Arey's faculties were absorbed in attention to his guns, which, cast loose and ready for action, opened their brazen mouths ready to belch forth grape and shrapnel. One officer stood by the warp, watching for the welcome strain upon it. Suddenly a broad glare of light shot upward; and in an instant the powder-boat was plainly visible, as if by moonlight! It was a moment like that which comes to drowning men before they sink for the last time. For to every one on board the Wilderness, the one shought occurred—"The fire has gotten away from them!" The next instant, destruction, anni-

hilation was expected.

"Pooh!" said Lamson, when half a minute had gone by without any explosion; "they are only hauling fires, and the light shines through the canvas of the false smoke-stack!"

What closed the eyes of the sentries on the

beach and the garrison in the fort puzzled every one. The Rebel newspapers which gave an account of the explosion explained this. The Louisiana, was seen, but was thought to be a gunboat which had gotten aground, and had been abandoned and set on fire. It was impossible for them, in the obscurity of the night, to indee of her distance from the beach; and as judge of her distance from the beach; and as several of our small tugs had at times during the history of the blockade been abandoned and blown up from the glare the Louisiana attracted

no particular attention.

Soon the light was extinguished and all was dark again. The night had become thick, and the Louisiana was scarcely discernible from the deck of the Wilderness.

Twenty minutes passed. The sentries still continued their walks on beach and parapet, and their chalfenges were occasionally heard. At length Arey announced, "They are coming," and soon the boat and her crew were under the quarter. "All right," was the word from Rhind, as he came on deck; and Rhind, as he came on deck; and although orders were to cast loose the boat and let her go, he coolly remarked that she "was too good a boat for the Rebels to have," and ordered her hoisted up. This being done, "Four bells!" was the word to the engineer, who had been bottling up his steam, and the Wilderness darted away to the eastward at a speed of fifteen miles an hour. In obedience to the Admiral's instructions, rockets were now thrown with great rapidity to

notify him that the powder-boat had been duly placed, and arrangements made to explode her This done, the party joined in congratulations on the success of the affair thus far, and hopes that the results would equal general expectation.

According to Commander Rhind's estimate, the Louisiana had been anchored within three hundred yards of the beach. It was hoped that, the wind being light, she would swing to the flood tide, with her stern towards the shore. But she swung head to wind; so that she had to be securely anchored with two anchors and short cope of chain, just sufficient to hold her firmly,

The clocks had been set at ten minutes to twelve, to run an hour and a half; and the candles of the chandefier had been cut to burn an hour and three-quarters. The Wilderness hove to at ten minutes to one on the morning of the 24th, and awaited the explosion. The clocks should have exploded the powder at twenty minutes past one, and the chandelier at twentyfive minutes before two. But it was not until twenty minutes to two that the explosion took place; and by that time the after part of the vessel was wrapped in flames.

At that moment (1.40 A. M.) a huge column of fire rushed straight upward, four loud explosions followed at intervals of about half a second, and all was darkness.

Rhind turned to his officers and quietly re-parked, "There's a fizzle!" and went below. In fact, he had feared all along that the arrangements for securing instantaneous explosion would fail, as there were no fuses laid in the great mass of the powder under the deck. As these arrangements, however, had been made by the ordnance officers, he did not attempt, on his own responsibility, to alter them, but gave his whole attention to carrying out the directions he had eccived, with the utmost carefulness.

When day broke, the Wilderness steamed out to the flag-ship, on board of which they were most heartily welcomed as men risen from the dead. Indeed, the Admiral informed Commander Rhind that, when they had parted the previous evening, he had never expected to see any of the party again in life.

It is almost unnecessary to state here, what has been for a long time so well known to the public, that the explosion failed to damage the works. It was felt heavily at Wilmington, and distinctly at Beaufort; the former about thirteen miles from the forts, the latter about seventy. A Rebel officer and a number of his men, who were lying on the ground about two and a half miles from the fort, declared that "the explosion jumped them about like-pop-corn." on the other hand, a number of wooden build-ings on the point, about a mile and a half from the place where the powder-vessel was blown up. were not even injured.

It has been the custom to refer to this affair as "the failure of the attempt to blow up Fort Fisher." But it is hoped that the readers of this article will carefully discriminate between the failure to obtain certain expected results, and the failure of the expedition. The expedition did not fail; the attempt to blow up the forts did. The powder-vessel was placed and exploded according to orders; and the fallure consisted entirely in the effects of the explosion not fulfilling the sanguine expectations of the pro-

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