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The Columbian.

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LAURA, MY DARLING.

BY EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.

LAURA, my darling, the roses have blushed
At the kiss of the dew, and our chamber is hushed;
Our murmuring babe to your bosom has clung,
And hears in his slumber the song that you sung;
I watch you asleep, with your arms round him thrown,
Your links of dark tresses wound in with his own,
And the wife is as dear as the gentle young bride
Of the hour when you first, darling, came to my side.

Laura, my darling, our sail down the stream
Of Youth's Summers and Winters has been like a dream;
Years have but rounded your womanly grace,
And added their spell to the light of your face;
Your soul is the same as though part were not given
To the two, like yourself, sent to bless me from Heaven—
Dear life, springing forth from the life of my life,
To draw you more near, darling, mother, and wife.

Laura, my darling, there's hazel-eyed Fred,
Asleep in his own tiny cot by the bed,
And little King Arthur, whose curls have the art
Of winding their tendrils so close round my heart—
Yet fairer than either, and dearer than both,
Is the true one who gave me in girlhood her troth;
For we, when we mated for evil and good—
What were we, darling, but babes in the wood?

Laura, my darling, the years which have flown
Brought few of the prizes I pledged to my own.
I said that no sorrow should roughen her way—
Her life should be cloudless, a long Summer's day.
Shadow and sunshine, thistles and flowers,
Which of the two, darling, most have been ours?
Yet to-night, by the smile on your lips, I can see
You are dreaming of me, darling, dreaming of me.

Laura, my darling, the stars that we knew
In our youth are still shining as tender and true:
The midnight is sounding its slumberous bell,
And I come to the one who has loved me so well.
Wake, darling, wake, for my vigil is done:
What shall dissever our lives which are one?
Say, while the rose listens under her breath,
"Naught until death, darling, naught until death!"

—*Galaxy.*

A CONDENSED NOVEL.

BY W-LK-E C-LL-NS.

PROLOGUE.

THE following advertisement appeared in the *Times* of the seventeenth of June, 1845:

WANTED.—A few young men for light genteel employment.
Address J. W., P. O.

In the same paper of same date, in another column:

TO LET.—That commodious and elegant family mansion No. 27 Limehouse Road, Pultneyville, will be rented low to a respectable tenant if applied for immediately, the family being about to remove to the Continent.

Under the local intelligence in another column:

MISSING.—An unknown elderly gentleman a week ago left his lodgings in the Kent Road, since which nothing has been heard of him. He left no trace of his identity except a portmanteau containing a couple of shirts marked "29, ward."

To find the connection between the mysterious disappearance of the elderly gentleman and the anonymous communication; the relevancy of both these incidents to the letting of a commodious family mansion; and the dead secret involved in the three occurrences, is the task of the writer of this history.

A slim young man with spectacles, a large hat, drab gaiters, and note-book, sat late that night with a copy of the *Times* before him, and a pencil which he rattled nervously between his teeth in the coffee-room of the "Blue Dragon."

CHAPTER I.

MARY JONES'S NARRATIVE.

I AM upper housemaid to the family that live at No. 27 Limehouse Road, Pultneyville. I have been requested by Mr. Wilky Collings, which I takes the liberty of here stating is a gentleman born and bred, and has some consideration for the feelings of servants and is not above rewarding them for their trouble which is more than you can say for some who asks questions and get short answers enough, gracious knows, to tell what I know about them. I have been requested to tell my story in my own langwidge, though why, being no schollard, mind cannot conceive. I think master is a brute. Do not know that he has ever attempted to poison my missus—which is too good for him, and how she ever came to marry him, heart only can tell—but believe him to be capable of any such hatrosity. Have heard him swear dreadful because of not having his shaving water at nine o'clock precisely. Do not know whether he ever forged a will or tried to get my missus's property although not having confidence in the man, should not be surprised if he had done so. Believe that there was always something mysterious in his conduct. Remember distinctly how the family left home to go abroad. Was putting up my back hair, last Saturday morning, when I heard a ring. Says cook, "That's missus's bell, and mind you hurry or the master 'ill know why." Says I, "Humbly thanking you, mem, but taking advice of them as is competent to give it, I'll take my time." Found missus dressing herself and master growling as usual. Says missus, quite calm and easy like, "Mary, we begin to pack to-day." "What for, mem," says I taken aback. "What's that hussy asking?" says master from the bed clothes quite savage like. "For the Continent—Italy," says missus—"can you go, Mary?" Her voice was quite gentle and saintlike, but I knew the struggle it cost and says I, "With *you*, mem, to India's torrid clime, if required, but with African Gorillas," says I, looking towards the bed, "never." "Leave the room," says master, starting up and catching of his bootjack. "Why, Charles," says missus, "how you talk," affecting surprise. "Do go, Mary," says she, slipping a half-crown into my hand. I left the room scorning to take notice of the odious wretch's conduct.

Cannot say whether my master and missus were ever legally married. What with the dreadful state of morals now-a-days and them stories in the circulating libraries, innocent girls don't know into what society they might be obliged to take situations. Never saw missus's marriage certificate, though I have quite accidental-like looked in her desk when open, and would have seen it. Do not know of any lovers missus might have had. Believe she had a liking for John Thomas, footman, for she was always spiteful-like—poor lady—when we were together—though there was nothing between us, as Cook well knows, and dare not deny, and missus needn't have been jealous. Have never seen arsenic or Prussian acid in any of the private drawers—but have seen paregoric and camphor. One of my master's friends was Count Moscow, a Russian papist—which I detested.

CHAPTER II.

THE SLIM YOUNG MAN'S STORY.

I AM by profession a reporter, and writer for the press. I live at Pultneyville. I have always had a passion for the marvellous, and have been distinguished for my facility in tracing out mysteries and solving enigmatical occurrences. On the night of the seventeenth June, 1845, I left my office and walked homeward. The night was bright and starlight. I was revolving in my mind the words of a singular item I had just read in the *Times*. I had reached the darkest portion of the road, and found myself mechanically repeating: "An elderly gentleman a week ago left his lodgings on the Kent Road," when suddenly, I heard a step behind me.

I turned quickly, with an expression of horror in my face, and by the light of the newly risen moon beheld an elderly gentleman, with green cotton umbrella, approaching me. His hair, which was snow-white, was parted over a broad, open forehead. The expression of his face, which was slightly flushed, was that of amiability verging almost upon imbecility. There was a strange, inquiring look about the widely-opened, mild blue eye—a look that might have been intensified to insanity, or modified to idiocy. As he passed me, he paused and partly turned his face, with a gesture of inquiry. I see him still, his white locks blowing in the evening breeze, his hat a little on the back of his head, and his figure painted in relief against the dark blue sky.

Suddenly he turned his mild eye full upon me. A weak, irresolute smile played about his thin lips. In a voice which had something of the tremulousness of age and the self-satisfied chuckle of imbecility in it, he asked, pointing to the rising moon, "Why?—Hush!"

He had dodged behind me, appeared to be looking anxiously down the road. I could feel his aged frame shaking with terror as he laid his thin hands on my shoulders and faced me in the direction of the supposed danger.

"Hush! did you not hear them coming?"

I listened; there was no sound but the soughing of the roadside trees in the evening wind. I endeavored to reassure him, with such success that in a few moments the old weak smile appeared on his benevolent face.

"Why?—" But the look of interrogation was succeeded by a hopeless blankness.

"Why!" I repeated with assuring accents.

"Why," he said, a gleam of intelligence suddenly flickering over his face, "is yonder moon, as she sails in the blue empyrean, casting a flood of light over hill and dale, like—Why," he repeated, with a feeble smile, "is yonder moon, as she sails in the blue empyrean—" He hesitated—stammered and gazed at me hopelessly, with tears dripping from his moist and widely opened eyes.

I took his hand kindly in my own. "Casting a shadow o'er hill and dale," I repeated quietly, leading him up the subject, "like—Come, now."

"Ah!" he said, pressing my hand tremulously, "you know it?"

"I do. Why is it like—the—eh—the commodious mansion on the Limehouse Road?"

A blank stare only followed. He shook his head sadly.

"Like the young men wanted for a light, genteel employment?"

He wagged his feeble old head cunningly.

"Or, Mr. Ward," I said with bold confidence, "like the mysterious disappearance from the Kent Road."

The moment was full of suspense. He did not seem to hear me. Suddenly he turned.

"Ha!"

I darted forward. But he had vanished in the darkness.

CHAPTER III.

NO. 27 LIMEHOUSE ROAD.

It was a hot midsummer evening. Limehouse Road was deserted save by dust and a few rattling butchers' carts, and the bell of the muffin and crumpet man. A commodious mansion which stood on the right of the road as you enter Pultneyville surrounded by stately poplars and a high fence surmounted by a *chevaux de frise* of broken glass, looked to the passing and footsore pedestrian like the genius of seclusion and solitude. A bill announcing in the usual terms that the house was to let hung from the bell at the servants' entrance.

As the shades of evening closed, and the long shadows of the poplars stretched across the road, a man carrying a small kettle stopped and gazed, first at the bill and then at the house. When he had reached the corner of the fence, he again stopped and looked cautiously up and down the road. Apparently satisfied with the result of his scrutiny, he deliberately sat himself down in the dark shadow of the fence, and at once busied himself in some employment, so well concealed as to be invisible to the gaze of passers-by. At the end of an hour he retired cautiously.

But not altogether unseen. A slim young man, with the spectacles and note-book, stepped from behind a tree as the retreating figure of the intruder was lost in the twilight, and transferred from the fence to his note-book the freshly stencilled inscription: "S—T—1860—X."

CHAPTER IV.

COUNT MOSCOW'S NARRATIVE.

I am a foreigner. Observe! To be a foreigner in England is to be mysterious, suspicious, intriguing. M. Collins has requested the history of my complicity with certain occurrences. It is nothing—bah—absolutely nothing.

I write with ease and fluency. Why should I not write? Tra la la! I am what you English call corpulent. Ha, ha! I am a pupil of Macchiavelli. I find it much better to disbelieve everything, and to approach my subject and wishes circuitously than in a direct manner. You have observed that playful animal, the cat. Call it, and it does not come to you directly, but rubs itself against all the furniture in the room, and reaches you finally—and scratches. Ah, ha! scratches! I am of the feline species. People call me a villain—bah!

I know the family living No. 27 Limehouse Road. I respect the gentleman—a fine, burly specimen of your Englishman—and madame, charming, ravishing, delightful. When it became known to me that they designed to let their delightful residence, and visit foreign shores, I at once called upon them. I kissed the hand of madame. I embraced the great Englishman. Madame blushed slightly. The great Englishman shook my hand like a mastiff.

I began in that dexterous, insinuating manner of which I am truly proud. I thought madame was ill. Ah—no. A change, then, was all that was required. I sat down at the piano and sang. In a few minutes madame retired. I was alone with my friend.

Seizing his hand, I began with every demonstration of courteous sympathy. I do not repeat my words, for my intention was conveyed more in accent, emphasis, and manner than speech. I hinted to him that he had another wife living. I suggested that this was balanced—ha!—by his wife's lover. That, possibly, he wished to fly—hence the letting of his delightful mansion. That he regularly and systematically beat his wife in the English manner, and that she repeatedly deceived him. I talked of hope, of consolation, of remedy. I carelessly produced a bottle of strychnine and a small vial of stramonium from my pocket, and enlarged on the efficiency of drugs. His face, which had gradually become convulsed, suddenly became fixed with a frightful expression. He started to his feet, and roared: "You d—d Frenchman!"

I instantly changed my tactics, and endeavored to embrace him. He kicked me twice, violently. I begged permission to kiss madame's hand. He replied by throwing me down stairs.

I am in bed with my head bound up, and beefsteaks upon my eyes, but still confident and buoyant. I have not lost faith in Macchiavelli. Tra, la, la! as they sing in the opera. I kiss everybody's hands.

CHAPTER V.

DR. DIGGS'S STATEMENT.

My name is David Diggs. I am a surgeon living at No. 9 Tottenham Court. On the fifteenth of June, 1854, I was called to see an elderly gentleman lodging on the Kent Road. Found him highly excited, with strong febrile symptoms, pulse one hundred and twenty, increasing. Repeated incoherently what I judged to be the popular form of a conundrum. On closer examination found acute hydrocephalus and both lobes of the brain rapidly filling with water. In consultation with an eminent phrenologist, it was further discovered that all the organs were more or less obliterated except that of Comparison. Hence the patient was enabled to only distinguish the most common points of resemblance between objects, without drawing upon other faculties such as Ideality or Language for assistance. Later in the day found him sinking—being evidently unable to carry the most ordinary conundrum to a successful issue. Exhibited Tinct. Val., Ext. Opii., and Camphor, and prescribed quiet and emollients. On the seventeenth the patient was missing.

CHAPTER LAST.

STATEMENT OF THE PUBLISHER.

On the eighteenth of June, Mr. Wilkie Collins left a roll of manuscript with us for publication, without title or direction, since which time he has not been heard from. In spite of the care of the proof-readers, and valuable literary assistance, it is feared that the continuity of the story has been destroyed by some accidental misplacing of chapters during its process. How and what chapters are so misplaced, the publisher leaves to an indulgent public to discover.

A TRAVELLER wishes to know what sense there is just now in the term "Railroad Securities," seeing there is no security on any of the railroads.

HATS AND BONNETS.

IT has sometimes happened that genius, by a phrase only meant for poetry, makes a propheey, and in this way gunpowder, the steam-engine, and the mariner's compass are said to have been anticipated. Time works the miracle, and causes the event to correspond with the guess. Even now there is a certain hyperbole becoming a fact. Did the lady who first called her bonnet "a duck" ever imagine that a season would approach when milliners would go as near a duck as possible when composing a head-gear? Far be it from us to question any de[illegible]e the taste of the sex offers for our [illegible]ration. We can only stand by and wonder. In these bonnets are revealed to us the strange mystery of the female notion of attire. Here they have full swing. In dress the fall has necessitated a few restraints which, however irksome, must be borne, but touching bonnets nothing is imposed. And so their variety is infinite, and their name legion. We turn back to the portraits of our great-grandmothers, or to their fashion-books, and find that a "coal-scuttle" was the rage. Historians and essayists who will describe for you the private views of Cornelius a Lapide, or Julius Cæsar, might find it difficult to account for the matrimonial success of those great-grandmothers; for, reading by our light, can we comprehend a man falling in love with a woman whose appearance was ridiculously suggestive of Wallsend? Of course our age has improved in this respect, and when *Le Follet* for June, 1866, is disinterred by a curious twentieth-century writer, he will find therein a legacy of designs worthy of us.

We would not be taken in with "coal-scuttles." We like flowers growing naturally from the human hair, or a small platter of straw laid on the summit of the head. An inverted soup-plate is considered a graceful coiffure, and a lace-rimmed oyster-shell is worn as a sweet thing. We have, to quote *Le Follet*, the "Trouville," the "Biarritz," the "Clarisse," and the "Mandarin." You wear a "green butterfly with silver wings" on your Mandarin. It is necessary this butterfly should be green. The "Clarrisse" has a scarf of gauze round the crown, fastened under a large rosette of gauze trimmed with feathers from the throat of the peacock. See how particular we are as to details, almost as much so as the German dramatist who noted in his play, "Here is to heard the sound of a *red* coat brushing." Anglers are not more precise in their hackles than ladies in the ornaments of the bonnet. A few weeks since Mr. Tupper warned us of a robin-famine, in consequence of the red-breast being sacrificed at the shrine of fashion.

Last year sea-gulls were in danger of extermination, to judge by the run upon their wings. No lady's hat was perfect without a wing, and we believe it was this poor fowl that furnished the decoration. Can it be that the custom is just a relic of the savage state, and owes its origin to an idea connected with that which induces the dandies of the Feejee Islands to wear trinkets of sharks' teeth and the tibias of departed relatives, while the ladies of the same district cover their heads with feathers, after first steeping them in grease? We dress our feathers; they have them *au naturel*. But have they anything resembling the "Tarte" or the "Fanchon?" The "Tarte" is a real love, not bigger than a saucer, and constructed identically of the same shape as that useful article. "La Tarte" is much sought after. It serves no vulgar purpose, though, such as protecting the head. Wreaths of tiny blossoms garnish "La Tarte," and long, floating strings depend from it. The hair must be carefully got up to set off "La Tarte." A recent traveller mentions a tribe in which the chiefs twisted their hair into helmets, and, if we advance as we are, there is nothing to prevent the ladies from twisting the hair into bonnets. The chignon is a step in that direction, the first Darwinian development. This fashion would have the merit of economy, hair being more lasting than straw or tulle.

At present the bonnet is not a bonnet. Four years ago it commenced to diminish—the sides disappeared first, then the front; last year the back went, and now the top is about to depart. We suspect the "Mandarin" is the last we shall see of it; and what a change from the straw tunnel in which a lady's face once resided to the paltry thatch from under which it now smiles at us! One was a substantial house, the other a mere cottage *ornée*. There is a singular circumstance to be remarked here. How general the quantity of hair is, how perfect the plaiting, and how universally the ladies are able to meet the exigencies of a custom which would appear to be more or less dependent on natural advantages. They seem never short of hair, to use a common phrase. They can even have it what color they wish, and Mr. Tupper's robins were unfortunate in possessing waistcoats which matched the prevailing hue. The bonnets play but a secondary part after all. The "Mandarin" only presides over a chignon. A kind of poultice or bandelette of lace, as we should write, just protects this sacred bump. Unfeeling persons suspect the bump to be stuffed with cotton. At the bottom of it we have seen fruit sprouting. It is the substitute for the poll of the bonnet, and is Grecian. The ladies are assured that the chignon is of classic origin, and taking this notion into their heads, they cannot have enough of it. How can we charge them with frivolity or caprice in dress, when they go for a fashion to the immortal statues of old Athens? Certainly the statues had their heads neatly dressed, and considering that the sculptor seldom embarrassed the rest of the figure with any superfluous draping, it is to be assumed he did his best with the hair. If this classic principle is carried out, we may find it open to a few objections. Say that the bonnets vanish, that the Mandarin and his family are discarded, what next, and next? The coal-scuttle, we understand, was in vogue when blushing was known, but that art or infirmity being now obsolete, or being rendered a permanent attraction, we dispense with the coal-scuttle.

To do things altogether as they did in Greece would scarcely suit. We confess we do not witness the complete extinction of the bonnet without a misgiving and a regret. "La Tarte" does not console us, and the "Mandarin" is an inefficient substitute. It will take some time before we are reconciled to "Le Caprice." Not that we are heretical enough to question the propriety of even a "Mandarin." In those matters, as we said before, the ladies should have absolute authority and control. Only we should warn them not to be surprised at the remarks which the innovations give occasion to. In the commencement of this season the sex took to what, for want of a better name, we shall term zebra dresses. We beheld our wives and daughters covered with stripes, and streaked down even as the wild asses of the desert. Now we have grown accustomed to their streakiness. So we may yet be charmed with the "Lamballe" or with the "Trouville," "having the borders raised at the side edged with velvet, worked with beads or straw, and trimmed with feathers." The black box which is worn on the head wherever the English language is spoken, shows how stupid gentlemen are at inventing a hat. The conservative protection which keeps up the hideous gear indicates how we should encourage a spirit of ingenuity among ladies, who might otherwise relapse in the dismal sameness from which we suffer. But we respectfully, with deference, and merely as outsiders, would proffer a word for the bonnet proper. Is our climate as dry and warm as that of Paris? Are we as successful in dressing up to the "Lamballe," in harmonizing cloak, mantle, shawl, or whatever it may be, to the pitch of the hair, as the French? These be grave considerations. Shall it be the bonnet or "Clarisse?" It strikes our uninstructed minds as a misnomer to call a basin of crape a bonnet, and yet it is a bonnet according to *Le Follet*, and belongs to the genus "Fanchon."

The hats are to the bonnets as a crocodile to an alligator, or as the proverbial negro named after the Roman Emperor to the other negro. We have mentioned them indiscriminately. Both are gauzy and floral. Fashion, however, should not imitate Heliogabulus, and require peacocks, red-breasts, and kingfishers to grace her dainty dishes. Who suffers for the flowers we need not detail; the manufacture of artificial flowers is not a pleasant subject, but a lady will have them all the same. One consequence of the mode is, that bonnets have to be renewed almost as often as gloves. That fact, however, suggests a reflection so obviously mean and unworthy that we shall not dwell upon it; we should not complain of what gives us an opportunity of repeating the chiefest privilege of a British father. Paying for a bonnet should be a pleasure, and we have no doubt it is; we trust, though, that the "Mandarin" the "Lamballe," and "La Tarte" are only temporary, and that a bonnet will not become so diminutive as to puzzle a very Owen of millinery, who might be asked to construct one from a future "Fanchon."

A SAGACIOUS DOG.

A PARIS correspondent of the London *Standard* gives the following anecdote of Brusca, a dog which has acquired a notoriety in the Court of the Tuileries: You have doubtless read the amusing and witty letter written by Marshal Vaillant in defence of the canine law. The Marshal is very fond of dogs, and he is the happy possessor of one whose intelligence many men would be happy to share. I allude to Brusco, the intimate friend of Nero, the Emperor's own dog. *Le Nord* gives some interesting details of the little animal whose portrait by Jardin attracted so much attention at the last year's exhibition. Brusca was found on the field of battle at Solferino. His master, an Austrian officer, had been killed that day, and the poor dog was found howling by the side of his dead body. Some French soldiers, touched by the sight of his evident grief, carried him away in their arms, and brought him to the major-general of the army, Marshal Vaillant. The Marshal accepted the gift, and brought him with him to Paris. At first Brusca, having been educated in Germany, had great difficulty in understanding French; indeed, unless he was spoken to in German, he walked off and turned his tail to the speaker with an air of utter disgust. However, he has now acquired the language, and were ten Austrian regiments between him and his present master, all their Teutonic sounds would not prevent his reaching the Marshal. Whenever he goes to Court, Brusca goes likewise; whether the Emperor himself be in his way or not is nothing to him; Brusca would quietly walk over the imperial boots to secure a snug seat near the Marshal. He attends Cabinet Councils with the utmost regularity. This Winter Brusca was immensely bored by the length of the discussion, and sneezed and coughed as usual when he considers that the Council has sat long enough; but on this special occasion his impatience rose to a loud whine, which, producing no effect upon the Ministers, he walked straight up to the Emperor and scratched his trowsers. His Majesty, annoyed at being interrupted, pushed the dog away, and said: "*Est-il bete, ce chien!*" "*Bete?*" said the Marshal, indignantly; "no, Sire, he is not stupid—you shall see." The Minister rose, took a newspaper off the table, and going to the far end of the Council Chamber, said: "Brusca, take that to the Emperor." Each of the Ministers, as he passed them with the paper in his mouth, tried to get it from him. Brusca would not let it go, and carried it safely to his Majesty. From that time to this Brusca has his *entree* at all Cabinet Councils. He keeps himself beautifully clean, and when his paws are muddy he carries a brush, left for his special use in one spot, to one of the Marshal's servants, and barks at him until he brushes off every particle of dust.

MARSHAL BENEDEK.

A WRITER in *Le Nord* gives a long sketch of Marshal Benedek's career, but we confine our extract to the portion relating to his present command: It may be said that he was nominated to the head of the army by acclamation; his appointment was, in fact, imposed on the Government by public opinion. The Marshal bears the most popular name in Austria; and he has gained that popularity less by his strategical talents than his adventurous bravery. Hitherto he has only been a brilliant general of the advance guard; it remains to be seen whether, in a new post, he will display the qualities required by the chief command of a great army in the face of the enemy. He is about sixty-two years old, but looks younger. At a sitting of the Reichsrath I examined him at leisure with a good glass. His countenance is one of those which are never forgotten. Two things in it strike you particularly—the eye and the moustache. The look is that of command; under thick lashes sparkle two black eyes full of vivacity. He would be no soldier were he not to attend carefully to his moustache; he wears it waxed in the Hungarian fashion and hooked at the ends. His face, embrowned by the Italian sun, has become longer than it was; thin whiskers, turning to gray, form a sort of frame, and an aequiline nose imparts to his features a character of great vigor. The Marshal is rather short than tall, and rather thin than stout. For a man of his age there is a wonderful suppleness in his movements, which are rapid and full of vigor. The *ensemble* of his person is not exactly seducing for those who are not partial to the military carriage; but he commands, if not sympathy, at least attention. Besides, to be correctly estimated, he should be seen in a picture with another background—not the benches of a Parliamentary assembly—but on horseback, and in the midst of the smoke of battles.

THE HEALTH OF AMERICAN WOMEN.

THE Cincinnati *Times* has recently compiled some curious statistics concerning the health of American women between twenty and forty years of age. A table is given, founded upon the returns of burials of males and females between these ages in forty-five cemeteries situated in Ohio, Illinois, and Michigan, the places of burial having been selected with due regard to their representative character. The figures from this table are: Males, eight hundred and six; of females, twelve hundred and eighty nine—showing that, at least in the West, fifty per cent. more women than men die between the ages of twenty and forty. The *Times* makes still further deductions, as follows:

First. That in the oldest yards of the country, in which the first settlers buried their dead, the number of the sexes who died between twenty and forty years of age was the most nearly equal, in many cases the males outnumbering the females, while in the new yards at the same places the females greatly outnumber the males.

Second. That in private or select yards, where the upper classes bury exclusively, the female dead during this period of life is greatly in excess of the males.

Third. That in yards where the foreigners chiefly bury their dead the males usually exceed the females between those ages.

DISCOVERY OF COAL IN PENNSYLVANIA.

A WRITER in the New York *Observer* asserts that Col. George Shoemaker, a gentleman of Teutonic origin, was the discoverer of Pennsylvania coal. He lived on the Schuylkill and owned extensive tracts. The writer goes on to say:

"It chanced one day that in constructing a limekiln he used some of the *black stones* that were lying about the place. '*Mine Got! mine Got! dere stones pe all on fire!*' exclaimed the astonished Dutchman, when the rich glow of the ignited anthracite met his gaze. The neighbors, who, of course, were few and far between, were after much ado assembled to witness the marvel. This happened in 1812. Shortly after, mine host loaded a Pennsylvania team with the *black stones*, and journeyed slowly to Philadelphia, a distance of ninety-three miles. There unforeseen difficulties were presented. The grates and stoves then in use were not constructed to facilitate the combustion of an thracite, and burn it would not! After many ineffectual efforts to ignite the product, it was thrown aside as worthless, and our discomfited German, who had beguiled his toilsome way to the metropolis with dreams of ingots, returned to digest his disappointment in his mountain solitude."

BEACH-MARKS IN FRANCE.

AN important work is now in progress in France, viz., the levelling and establishing of beach-marks throughout the country. The object of this undertaking is to furnish a series of levels that will enable the course of canals, railways, etc., systems of drainage and irrigation, and other public and private works, to be laid down on the map and marked out on the ground without error. The operations were begun in 1857, under the control of the Minister of Public Works, and will be terminated in five or six years hence. The work has been since the beginning under the superintendence of M. Bourdalone, civil engineer, to whom is due the series of levels taken from the Isthmus of Suez from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea. The datum line of the levels in France is the usual sea level; the beach-marks established on the ground consist of cones of cast iron, set in masonry on the spot where the levels are required to be noted, and a great number of these have been placed in lines of level which touch seaport towns, groups of rivers and canals, lines of railway, roads, etc. More than eighteen thousand linear miles have been thus laid down as base-lines; but, in order to complete the work, the operations must be extended to one hundred and twenty thousand miles, a length equal to five times the circumference of the earth, and more than half of our distance from the moon. This gigantic undertaking is very costly, but, when once completed, it will enable every engineer or contractor, who may wish to attach a series of levels in any part of France with those of the remotest districts, to do this by the aid of a beach-mark on the spot, or near at hand, for the maximum space between the levels is to be only three quarters of a mile. The accuracy of these levels is such that they are true to three centimetres, or half inch for the whole length throughout France.

THE ART OF DUNNING.

THE art of dunning is not reckoned among the fine or polite arts. Indeed, there are no rules on this subject, as each case must be tried by itself, the success of various expedients being very much "as you light upon chaps." At times, a lucky accident brings the money out of a slow debtor, after the manner following:

One of our merchants, nervous and irritable, received a letter from a customer in the country, begging for more time. Turning to one of his counting-clerks, he says:

"Write to this man immediately."

"Yes, sir. What shall I say?"

The merchant was pacing the office, and repeated the order.

"Write to him at once."

"Certainly, sir; and what do you wish me to say?"

The merchant was impatient, and broke out:

"Something or nothing, and that very quick."

The clerk waited for no further orders, but consulting his own judgment, wrote and dispatched the letter. By the return of mail came a letter from the delinquent customer, inclosing the money in full of the account. The merchant's eyes glistened when he opened it; and hastening to his desk, he said to the clerk:

"What sort of a letter did you write to this man? Here is the money in full."

"I wrote just what you told me to, sir. The letter is copied into the book."

The letter-book was consulted, and there it stood, short and sweet, and right to the point:

"DEAR SIR,—Something or nothing; and that very quick. Yours, &c.,
———."

And this letter brought the money, when a more elaborate dun would have failed of the happy effect.

HOW TO BECOME UNHAPPY.

IN the first place, if you want to be miserable, be selfish. Think all the time of yourself and of your own things. Don't care about anybody else. Have no feeling for any one but yourself. Never think of enjoying the satisfaction of seeing others happy, but rather if you see a smiling face be jealous, lest another should enjoy what you have not. Envy all who are better off in any respect than yourself; think unkindly toward them. Be constantly afraid lest some should encroach upon your rights; be watchful against it, and if any one comes near you, snap at him like a mad dog. Contend earnestly for everything that is your own, though it be not worth a pin; for your "rights" are just as much concerned as if it were a pound of gold. Never yield a point. Be very sensitive, and take everything that is said to you in playfulness in the most serious manner. Be jealous of your friends, lest they should not think enough of you; and if at any time they should seem to neglect you, put the worst construction upon their conduct you can.