THE CENTRE REPORTER.

FRED. KURTZ, Editor and Proprietor. TERMS: Two Dollars a Year, in Advance.

VOL. V. CENTRE HALL, CENTRE CO., PA., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1872. NO. 46.

The Approach of Christmas.

The time draws near the birth of Christ;
The moon is hid, the night is still;
A single church below the hill
Is pealing, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest,
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I knew.

Like strangers voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallow'd ground.

Tennyson's "In Memoriam."

Little Gerty.

I've a sweetheart blithe and gay,
Fairer far than fabled fay.
Light and airy.
She is bright and debonair,
Softly falls her golden hair;
I all other loves forswear:
Little fairy.

Little Gerty swears she's true,
Gives me kisses not a few;
Do I doubt her?
Hearts are often bought and sold
Is it glitter, is it gold?
Half my grief could not be told
Were I without her.

Gerty scolds me if I roam,
Wonders what I want from home,
With sly glances—
Looks that seem to me to say,
"I have waited all the day;
You were very wrong to stray,
Naughty Francis.

If I whisper, "We must part,"
Gerty, sighing, breaks her heart:
Awkward, very.
When I say that I'll remain,
All her smiles return again,
Like warm sunshine after rain.
We are merry.

If my sweetheart knows her mind,
Love is mad as well as blind.
Little Gerty
Says she means to marry me;
She is only six, you see;
I—alas, that it should be!—
Am two-and-thirty.

THOMAS BLUMBLE.

HOW HE GOT MARRIED.

Blumble boasted of being a confirmed bachelor, and took pride in being called a woman-hater. I mean Thomas Blumble, of the importing and jobbing house of "Hood, Stiver & Blumble." He was very fond of letting people know that he disregarded the charms of the softer sex, and was frequently heard to say that he would like to see the woman that could get him under her thumb. There was a time, of course, when Blumble was susceptible to the overtures of Cupid; because when he was plain "Tom," of fifteen years of age, and left "Rock Cove," came to the city and entered the employ of "Mensor, Tigby & Hood," he left behind him a young "Polly Ann," with many a sigh and tear, and more vows than both put together, to be true till death. For two years he wrote constantly to his Polly Ann, repeating the manifold vows of boyhood love; then he was promoted from boy to entry cleik, and soon after was introduced to a very bewitching young lady whom we may be allowed to call Hattie Elton. Then he forgot his Polly Ann down in Rock Cove, and became very attentive to Miss Elton; he accompanied her to the theater and made her presents; he got trusted for his new coat, and with the money that should have paid for it they took a sleigh-ride to Brighton, and feasted on hot chickens and champagne; to please her he learned to polka and waltz; the schottisch and varsovienne were not in vogue then. Things had sped along very smoothly for about a year; so Tom, thinking he might as well have the matter settled at once, popped the question. Miss Elton appeared very much surprised; for a moment she remained silent, then litting up both hands she exclaimed:

"Why, Mr. Blumble,"—she had constantly called him "Tom" for six months previous—"I've been engaged these two years—didn't you know it?"

"Know it? No," replied Blumble, in utter astonishment.

"Why, yes, I've been engaged to Charley Dudley for a long while, and I thought you knew all about it, and was only paying attention to me out of politeness. Charley is in New York now, but we are to be married next Christmas."

"Married next—"

We may guess what Blumble was about to say, but we shall always be in doubt, for, instead of finishing his sentence, he took his hat and rushed out of the house, not even waiting to make the parting salution of "good-evening." Perhaps he was afraid to trust his gnashing teeth, for fear they would change his well-meant words into some wicked expression.

Tom, in the privacy of his own chamber, with his door locked, his elbows upon his light-stand, and his face quite buried in his hands, reverted to the year's time and the many dollars he had thrown away on Miss Elton; then he thought of poor Polly Ann, whom he had "cut" so shamefully, down in Rock Cove, and he decided to write to her, to offer pressing business as an excuse for not having written before, to sue for pardon for past negligence, and to assert that his affections were still unaltered and unalterable. So he unburled his face, and penned the tender missive full of falsehoods and stale love, which he dispatched with the fullest confidence that Polly Ann would be very happy to receive it. But alas for poor human expectations! Polly Ann's letter came. It was brief; she told Blumble she had heard of his attentions te the city lady, that she had almost forgotten him, and was going to marry Jerry Smike, the village blacksmith the next week. She returned to Tom his earliest efforts in love-letter writing and a lock of his hair, and requested him to return to her sundry articles in that line that he had received from her.

From that day Blumble announced himself to the world as a woman-hater. He had been false to one woman, and one woman had tricked him. So he cried down the whole sex. The time which Blumble had heretofore divided between love and business was now devoted to business exclusively, and in consequence he received one promotion after another, until he had the pleasure of seeing his own name the third on the sign over the door which he had first entered as an errand boy. I don't believe he remembered that there were any such persons in the world as Hattie Elton and Polly Ann, the first day that the new sign was raised.

It was as the junior member of the firm that Blumble had travelled through the New England States two years ago last Fall with samples, receiving orders. During his tour he remained in the pretty village of P., N. H., one fine night in October. He sat in the bar-room after supper, smoking his cigar, until it became filled with the villagers, discussing politics, smoking their pipes, talking of their crops and ogling him; all of which was quite uninteresting to him, so he concluded to walk out and view the village by moonlight. He had hardly stepped into the entry, and before he could close the door, ere he heard a voice inquire:

"Who is that gentleman?"

"His name is Blumble, he's from Boston," replied the landlord.

"Blumble, from Boston?" chimed in a third voice, and then added, "You don't say so!" followed by a long low whistle of astonishment.

Blumble stepped off the piazza and walked up the village street. He had scarcely walked twenty yards before he was aware of being followed. Giving the matter but little thought, however, he turned from the road into a pleasant lane that wended its way toward some half-dozen farm-houses, until he came to a rustic seat, upon which he threw himself, and was soon oblivious to all the world excepting the business affairs of "Hood, Stiver & Blumble." He sat until his cigar was consumed, when he was aroused to the world around him by the village clock striking out ten. Buttoning his coat closely around him, he hurried down the lane toward the hotel; as he turned from the lane into the great road he was suddenly and not very softly seized by the throat, by the shoulders, and by the coat-tails, by at least a dozen hands. He was rather too much surprised to speak, even if he had a chance to; the hands so tightly clenched around his throat would have prevented his speaking if he had not been so greatly surprised. As he could not speak he listened very patiently to some half-dozen exclamations of "Now we've got you!"

Something desperate must be done, so Blumble struck the fellow that held him by the throat full in the face, knocking him down, and then cried out as though he expected that this would be the last chance he ever would have to speak.

"What the deuce are you about?"

The striking question had a miraculous effect upon the numerous hands distributed about his person, and Blumble was free. He waited a few moments to regain his breath, then looking around him, asked very energetically:

"What does all this mean?"

"It means that if you don't promise to leave town and not go to see Mary Gay again, we'll just hide you, and then ride you out of town on a rail," said the young man, the recipient of the blow, who had regained his feet.

"Leave town? Mary Gay? Why, I do not understand what you mean," remarked Blumble, considerably mystified.

"Well, sir," interrupted another voice, "we mean that you've come here from Boston to court Mary Gay, and you mean to cut out Billy Higdy here; now if you don't give up Mary, and leave town to-night we'll pitch you into the mill-pond."

"Hold on a moment," said Blumble; "I think you must have got hold of the wrong person, as I have not the acquaintance of Miss Gay, nor in fact of any other lady in this place. But I want you to understand one thing distinctly, and that is, I shall not leave town until I get ready."

Something about Blumble's manner seemed to convince the young men that he was in earnest, for they uttered various expressions, such as, "That's a likely story!" "He's gassing!" "I don't believe that," etc. Men invariably express doubts when being convinced of something they had rather not believe;

For a few moments the whole party remained in silence; then one of the young denizens of P. broke the spell by asking:

"Ain't your name Blumble?"

"Yes, sir."

"And you are from Boston?"

"Yes, sir."

"And don't know Mary Gay?"

"No, sir."

"Well, that's strange! She said his name was Blumble, and that's your name; he belongs to Boston, and so do you; now you've been right up by her house, and we believe you've been there to see her. Don't we, Bill?"

"Yes, we do," replied Higdy.

"Well, young men," said Blumble, "if you don't believe me, go ask the young lady herself."

This proposition was met with approval by the whole party, so Blumble started back up the lane, accompanied by a large escort before, behind, and on each side of him. They filed into the yard, and crowded on to the steps of a neat looking farm house, and Higdy knocked at the door. In a few moments one of the chamber windows was opened and a protruding head asked:

"Who's there?"

"Come down to the door a minute, Squire, will you?" asked Bill.

"Why, what do you want?" inquired the voice in the chamber window above.

"We want to see Mary a minute," replied a voice from the crowd below.

"Why, she has been abed these two hours. Is it anything important?"

"Yes, we want to see her just a minute."

"Well, I'll speak to her."

In a few minutes Mary appeared at the door. She was very good looking, notwithstanding being called out of her bed at such an unseasonable hour—and so thought Blumble. For some moments the whole company remained speechless; at last Blumble, tiring of his conspicious situation, and the "nothing-to-say" spirit of the party, broke the silence by asking the young lady if she had ever seen him before.

"Not that I remember of," she replied.

"I only asked you to satisfy these young men," said Blumble.

"Then he ain't your city beau?" asked Bigdy.

"No!" as short as though it had been but one letter.

"Then we were mistaken" said a voice in the yard and two or three of the party slid out at the gate.

"I am very sorry that I have been the indirect cause of this annoyance to you, but it was no fault of mine. This gentleman," pointing to Higdy, "and his party seized me and would not allow me to proceed to my hotel until I had proved to them that I had not been visiting you. I must now leave them with you to make their own explanations, and bid you good evening."

"Good Evening," said the young lady in a very sweet voice.

Somehow Blumble didn't sleep very sound that night; he was in a strange place, and he kept constantly thinking of his strange adventure, and of the good-looking, strange young lady; and the more he thought, the more he wondered who she was; and when at last he determined to inquire about her in the morning, he fell asleep and dreamed of her.

Blumble was an early riser—bachelors generally are—and the next morning, before the villagers were astir, he had walked out and passed the house of Squire Gay; but he did not see Mary, so he returned to the hotel and inquired of the landlord concerning her. The landlord must have praised the girl for the bachelor decided to remain another day and be introduced to her, then to remain a third, and finally he concluded he might as well stop the week out, and so wrote to his partners, informing them that he should remain there a few days to rest himself. The professed woman hater walked up that same lane each evening, and walked into the house, too; He was not disturbed again by Bill Higdy, for the Squire had threatened if he came within gun-shot of the house again to put a dose of cold lead into him. So the wise but jealous Higdy kept out of the way.

There was a great reform in the manner and habits of Thomas Blumble, merchant. He left his bachelor clubs, notwithstanding the jeers and taunts of his former companions, and he became very circumspect in his remarks on female character. For a number of months he spent his spare hours writing to Mary, and choosing appropriate gifts for her, and for a long while the Boston and P. Express considered him one of their best customers. But ere long there was a brilliant wedding-party at the house of Squire Gay, and P. lost its most charming belle, for Miss Gay became Mrs. Blumble. A few weeks ago Mr. and Mrs. Blumble went down to Rock Cove and visited the old Blumble homestead; while there Mr. Blumble introduced his wife to Mr. Jerry Smike, and Mrs. Polly Ann Smike, and the little Smikes. It would be impossible to tell which are the most contented with their lot, Thomas or Polly Ann. One thing more and I am done. In answer to Blumble's advertisement for a chamber-maid, who would assist in plain sewing, who do you think applied for the situation? You would never guess, so I'll tell you. It was Hattie Elton! Her New York beau had heard of her flirtations with Blumble, and for that reason broke his engagement with her; and she, who might have been Mrs. Thomas Blumble, must be content to be Mrs. Blumble's servant.

The Yuka Devil.

On the reservation there once lived an Indian who was so thoroughly bad in every respect that he was generally known by the sobriquet of The Yuka Devil. He committed all the seven deadly sins and a good many more, if not every day of his life, at least as often as he could. One day he wandered off a considerable way from the reserve, accompanied by two of his tribal brethren, and they fell upon and wantonly murdered three squaws, without any known provocation whatever. They were pursued by a detachment of the garrison, overtaken, captured, carried back manacled hand and foot, and consigned to the guard house. In some inexplicable manner, The Devil contrived to break his fetters asunder, and then he tied them on again with twine in such fashion that, when the turnkey came along on a tour of inspection, he perceived nothing amiss. Being taken out for some purpose or other soon afterward, he seized the opportunity to wrench off his manacles and escape. But he was speedily overtaken again and brought down with a bullet, which wounded him slightly, taken back to the guard-house heavily ironed, and cast into a dungeon. Here he feigned death. For four days he never swallowed a crumb of nutriment, tasted no water, breathed no breath that could be discovered, and lay with every muscle relaxed like a corpse. To all human perception he was dead, except that his body did not become rigid or cold. At last a vessel of water was placed on a table hard by; information of that fact was casually imparted to him in his native speech; all the attendants withdrew, the dungeon relapsed into silence, and he was secretly watched. After a long time, when profound stillness prevailed, and when the watchers had begun to believe he was in a trance, at least, he cautiously lifted up his head, gazed stealthily all around him, scrutinized every cranny and crevice of light, then softly crawled on all fours to the table, taking care not to clank his chains the while, took down the pitcher and drank deep and long. They rushed in upon him, but upon the instant—so fatuous was the obstinacy of the savage—he dropped as if he had been shot, and again simulated death. But he was now informed that his play was quite too shallow for any further purposes, and as soon as the gallows could be put in order, the executioners entered and told him plainly that the preparations were fully completed for his taking-off. He made no sign. Then, half dragging, half carrying the miserable wretch, they conducted him forth to the scaffold. All limp and flaccid and nerveless as he is, they lift him upon the platform; but still he makes not the least motion, and exhibits no consciousness of all these stern and grim preparations. He is supported in an upright position between two soldiers, hanging a lifeless burden on their shoulders; his head is lifted up from his breast, where it droops in heavy helplessness; the new-bought rope, cold and hard and prickly, is coiled around his neck, and the huge knot properly adjusted at the side; the merciful cap, which shuts off these heart-sickening preparations from the eyes of the faint and shuddering criminal is dispensed with; and everything is in perfect readiness. The solemn stillness befitting the awful spectacle about to be enacted falls upon the few spectators; the fatal sign is given; the prop swiftly descends; the supporting soldiers sink with it, as if about to vanish into the earth and hide their eyes from the tragedy; with a dead, dull thud the tightening rope wrenches the poor savage from their upbearing shoulders into pitiless mid-air; and The Yuka Devil, hanging there without a twitch or shiver, quickly passes from simulated to unequivocal and unmistakable death.—*Overland Monthly.*

A REMINISCENCE OF THE GOLD FEVER.—A relic of the first gold excitement in California has just been brought to light by the removal of the old Niantic Hotel in San Francisco, and is none other than the hull of the ship Niantic, one of the first vessels that arrived in that port after the discovery of gold. She was fitted out in New York for a whaling voyage, and was commanded by Cap. H. Cleveland, of Martha's Vineyard. After a few weeks at Rhode Island, where all her whaling apparatus was put on board, the Niantic set sail. On her voyage she touched at Palta, above Callao, and there learned of the discovery of gold in California. Captain Cleveland was informed that thousands of adventurers were waiting eagerly at Panama for some means of transportation to the gold fields. This appeared better than whaling. Casks, boats and all surplus freight were put on shore, and the Niantic steered for Panama. Her arrival was hailed with joy by the gold seekers. They poured on board by hundreds. No price was deemed too high for a passage to the new El Dorado. Captain Cleveland stowed away as many as his vessel would hold, and forwarded $45,000 in gold coin to his owners, the amount of the passage money collected. The cost of the Nantic was about $36,000. This was paying for herself with interest, and besides exceeding the entire expense of her whaling outfit. On her arrival at San Francisco, not only were the Panama passengers put ashore, but all her crew, as a matter of course, deserted for the diggins. Nor could money procure a handful of men sufficient to work her home; so, like many other ships, the Niantic became a permanent fixture. Cap. Cleveland, therefore, sold her to a man who used it as a store-house. Houses were erected on the deck, and lodgings let at rates that go far beyond the tariff of our first-class hotels to-day, and many a weary miner, sad and disappointed from the months of unsuccessful labor, has lain down to rest in the shelter of the timbers of this old ship.

FISHES' EYES.—The eye in the lancelet and the hag is of the simplest form, consisting of a nerve termination coated with black pigment, and capable of perceiving the presence of light. In young lampreys while they remain buried in the sand the eyes are very minute and undeveloped; but when they reach the adult period these organs are developed to an average size. In the majority of fishes, the eyes are admirably adapted to the purposes of vision in water; and in the four-eyed fish of South America not only are the eyes very perfect, but they are also divided into an upper and lower portion, giving them the appearance of two pupils, and enabling the fish to pursue its prey when out of as well as when under the water. In the cat fishes the greatest variety is found in the size and arrangement of the visual organs, from the large eyes on the sides to minute ones placed on the upper surface of the head. In some of the members of this family they are so buried under the skin as to be of little or no use.

A terrible accident occurred at a circus show in Sheffield, England. A gallery crowded with people fell with its living freight upon the heads of those below, and it is reported that seventy persons were injured by the accident and the panic which followed.

Used Up Money.

A correspondent who visited the United States Treasury Department at Washington, says: I made a tour of one of the rooms the used up money was being counted a few days since, and one of the ladies showed me a pocket-book which was sent to the Department by one of the officers of the Department, who stated that it had been lost three years and just turned up in the shape sent. He said the man who lost it claimed that it held $45 when lost. It was forwarded with the hope that, notwithstanding the seeming impossibility of deciphering the mass of pulp remaining of the money, something might be made of it. As I looked at it not a line, mark, or figure denoting its value could be traced, and I asked the lady to whom it was assigned for verification if she could do anything in the way of deciphering it.

"O yes," she replied, turning over some of the fragments, "there is a five-dollar legal tender."

I looked into her face, expecting to see a smile at the joke she was playing upon me; but she was instead earnestly putting the fragments together, to see how many legal tenders she could make. To me this seemed a display of genius not to be attained by many members of the human family, and the successful few must belong to the female sex.

This lady has remarkable skill in this particular direction, and has saved many hundreds of dollars to the Government, as well as gladdened the hearts of numbers who would, except for this ability on her part, have lost large sums of money. The loser of the pocket-book will, from the wreck otherwise total, save perhaps his entire $45 through her.

WASHING BUTTER.—We copy the following from the *Fredonia Censor:* This practice is by some butter-makers looked upon as injurious, and it is a point upon which divers opinions are held. One says, "I never allow a particle of water to touch my butter." It is claimed that by this practice the butter has a richer flavor, that washing takes away. If butter could be entirely freed from casein, which even washing will not do perfectly, it would keep almost an indefinite time with good care. But we are told that unwashed butter contains about five or six per cent. of casein, while that which is well washed will retain only about one per cent. of it. We believe that it is better to wash the casein than to work it out, even if working would do as well, for the reason that the less you work the butter the better it is. If there were some process whereby butter could be extracted from the milk immediately after it is taken from the cow, and the animal heat is gone, without injury to the butter, the keeping qualities of the butter would be greatly improved. It is hoping too much that science will some day do it? A large portion of the milk as it comes from the cow is water, and why should pure water injure butter? We can readily see that if the water contains mineral substances, or is impure, it would produce injury. No one claims but that washing is necessary where the butter is intended for long keeping; and if, as is claimed, the aroma is washed away, there is no doubt but that this aroma is from the casein that remains in all unwashed butter, for even washing will not extract all of it. One thing is exploded that has long been a hobby, and that is, you must pound about so long to get good butter. If the temperature is right, and the previous care has been right, five or ten minutes will bring as good or better butter than hours of pounding. This we have demonstrated to our satisfaction; and we are prepared to expect that other changes in butter-making will come in due time. The more quickly butter is made, and the air shut from it, the better, if only the next hour after the milk is drawn from the cow.

EATING ARSENIC.—A young lady asks the *Ledger* the following question:

"What effect does eating arsenic, in small quantities, have on the complexion? Does it effect the health in any way, and if so, how?"

In answering this question we take the occasion to comment on the folly—we might almost say the madness—of resorting to the use of poisons, either internally or externally, for the purpose of improving the complexion. Arsenic, in any form in which it is used—although not in a pure metalic state and before oxidation—is a terrible poison. If taken in sufficient quantities it causes death, after excruciating suffering. In small doses it produces very unpleasant effects, and undoubtedly shortens life. The habit of eating arsenic once confirmed cannot be broken off. A person is to be looked upon as idiotic who will deliberately adopt the practice of taking such an injurious and dangerous drug, merely for the purpose of whitening the skin. But there are other substances much more commonly used than arsenic for their effect on the complexion, which are also highly deleterious. Many of the cosmetics which are sold contain lead, and there are few poisons which produce results more to be dreaded than those occasioned by lead. Even as used in hair dyes, it occasions neuralgia, paralysis, suffering and death. Seek good looks by seeking good health; by early rising, out-door exercise, wholesome food, a clear conscience, and the cultivation of a cheerful temper; and not by the use of arsenic or any other poison.

DRYING PUMPKINS.—We have tried all modes of drying, but no plan is equal, we think, to this: Take the ripe pumpkins, pare, cut into small pieces, stew soft, mash and strain through a cullender, as if for making pies. Spread this pulp on plates in layers not quite an inch thick; dry it down in the stove oven, keep at so low a temperature as not to scorch it. In about a day it will become dry and crisp. The sheets thus made can be stored away in a dry place, and they are always ready for use for pies or sauce. Soak the pieces over night in a little milk, and they will return to a nice pulp, as delicious as the fresh pumpkin—we think much more so. The quick drying after cooking prevents any portion from slightly souring, as it is always the case when the uncooked pieces are dried; the flavor is much better preserved, and after cooking is saved. This plan is quite as little trouble as the old mode, to say nothing of the superiority in the quality of the material obtained. Try it and you will not return to the old method, we are sure, and you will also become a great lover of pumpkin pie all the year round.

AN EXCELLENT VARNISH FOR HARNESS.—Procure half a pound of gum shellac, break the scales fine, and put them in a jug or bottle; add alcohol sufficient to cover the gum; cork tightly and place where it will be kept warm. In about two days, if shaken frequently, the gum will be dissolved and ready for use. If the liquid appears as thick as thin molasses, add more alcohol. To one quart of varnish add one ounce of good lamp black and an ounce of gum camphor. such varnish will not render leather hard but will keep the harness from becoming soaked with water and the surface clean and neat for a long time. A coat of it will effectually prevent the oil in the leather from soiling one's hands. Nothing is better to render a farmer's boots water proof than an occasional coat of this leather varnish.—*Home Journal.*

A Fragment from Spain.

At the close of the year 1809, when the victorious English were advancing in all directions toward Madrid, and the hitherto invincible French legions were falling back towards their own frontier, a Spanish farmer, one Jose de Salvador, was captured by a squadron of French Cuirassiers who were covering the rear of Soult's main body.

At that time, as is now well known, the French were accustomed to shoot on the spot every Spaniard taken prisoner with arms in his hands; and the unfortunate farmer, when surrounded by the French, had unfortunately with him his fowling-piece, with which he had just shot one of his horses, which had an hour before broken his leg while at work in the fields. The Spaniard was at once dragged before Captain Marius de Violles, the commander of the Cuirassiers, and was immediately ordered by him to be hanged to the nearest tree.

The wretched farmer in vain pleaded his innocence. His hands were tied, and he was on the point of being executed, when the sound of a horse galloping was heard in the distance, and in a few moments a beautiful girl was seen coming towards the party at full speed.

She galloped into the midst of the French, and, dismounting and rushing towards the captain, implored him to spare her father. But alas! all in vain—the captain was inexorable; and in a moment the unfortunate farmer was no more.

His daughter, who had watched the proceedings with a firm gaze, after she had found all her entreaties of no avail, then turned to Captain de Violles, and snatching one of the pistols from his belt, shot him through the head; and then, jumping on her horse, was already at some hundred yards' distance before the thunderstruck Cuirassiers could remount to pursue her.

A volley from their carbines only had the effect of increasing her distance, and it was more than an hour before the French reached the farm where she lived, and found it barricaded on all sides.

They called upon the inhabitants to surrender, but a storm of bullets was the only reply they received from the desperate inmates.

At last, after firing without result for some minutes, the Cuirassiers were on the point of retiring, when the doors of the courtyard of the farm were suddenly thrown open, and a large body of the servants of the estate, headed by the young lady, charged the Cuirassiers.

These being attacked unawares, and having expended the whole of their ammunition, where, after a desperate fight, slain to a man, but not before they had killed more than thirty Spaniards, and had severely wounded the gallant girl who had fought bravely at their head. She, however, after a long illness, recovered, married happily, and one of her sons has lately, after being for several years one of the leading men in his country, perished by the hands of assassins, regretted by all his countrymen.

We allude to the late Don Pablo de Gomez, the news of whose fate in Cuba has so recently reached us.—*Once a Week.*

Florida Sponge Fishing.

The returns of the Florida sponge-fisheries amount to from one hundred to one hundred and fifty thousand pounds annually, furnishes employment to many men and boats. The sponge is gathered by means of a long pole, with two and sometimes three hooks upon the end. This is thrust down into the sponge, which can be destinctly seen in the clear water at the depth of thirty feet. As the fisherman must see the sponge, he can successfully work only in clear and smooth water. They obviate the roughness by throwing upon the surface oil made from the sharks that abound in these waters, or by a contrivance made of a pane of glass set into a box or bucket; this they place on the surface and use as a spy-glass. The large schooners come to anchor and send out small boats to fish, but when the wind is not too strong, the smaller crafts sail around, with a man on the fore-part on the look-out for the sponge; they also have their small boats. The sponge, after it is gathered, is allowed to remain in the sun for two or three days to die. The gelatinous matter that is in them decays, and they are very offensive at this stage. They are then placed in pens (made by driving poles into the water) near the shore, to wash; there they remain a week, and are then ready to be bleached in the sun, cut into shape, and baled for the market. There are five kinds gathered in these waters. The most valuable is called the sheep's-wool, for which the fishermen get one dollar a pound when cleaned and dry. Then there are the boat and yellow sponges. Of the former not much is found. For these they get twenty-five cents a pound. Besides these there is the glove sponge, which ranks about the same as the common grass sponge, which only brings them ten cents a pound.—*Hearth and Home.*

DISASTROUS HARVEST IN SCOTLAND.—The harvest of Scotland is, according to the *Scotsman*, the most disastrous that has been known since the year 1816, when what were known as the Meal Riots took place. The heavy and continued fall of rain during the second week of September drenched the sheaves and cut grain through and through, which is in many cases an irreparable mischief. A good many samples of oats and wheat, as well as of barley have been shown in Edinburgh Corn Exchange during the first three weeks; but, when compared with grain of the 1871 crop, they exhibit an astonishing and deplorable deterioration, but even that does not show the full damage done to the crop, because all the grains that had seriously sprouted had been taken out of the samples by means of screens and riddles. The worst fears regarding the potato crop have been realized; and an illustration of the extent of the failure of the crop is given. In ordinary years a stout man with three assistants (two women and a boy), could easily raise and weigh ready for market eight bolls or thirty-two cwt., potatoes every day. For the last fortnight it has taken a very active man and three assistants to one and a half bolls, or six cwt., of sound, and three bolls, or twelve cwt. of diseased potatoes per day, All this is bad news for the winter.

TOO CLOSE STUDY.—The Boston Public School Committee recently declined to accept a legacy for the re-establishment of the exploded prize medal system. The *Congregationalist*, in referring to this fact, says: "We know a young lady, a recent graduate of a Boston high school, who, after going through the examination and the crowning exhibition, slept for three days and nights, and had to be aroused to take her meals. Any physician knows what that fact means, and will say that if the young lady recovers from the effects of the moral and intellectual stimulus after months of rest, she will be fortunate. A year or two since, a bright boy in one of our public schools, was taken down by scarlet fever. The teacher was so interested in the boy's mental progress, and so anxious to have him keep his place in the class, that he called upon the father and actually offered to give the boy two hours of instruction every night save those of Saturday and Sunday. The fact shows the strain put upon our boys and girls.

Punishing Criminals in China.

The penal code of China has been long known to the world by the translation made by Sir George Staunton. It is probably the most barbarous in existence. Prisoners are wholly at the mercy of the Mandarin who presides at their trial, who may torture or sentence them to death as the whim takes him. The written law is bad enough, but the scope given to the judges makes it ten times worse. It is shocking enough to find a law which declares that, in cases of treason, "all the male relatives in the first degree of the person convicted, his father, grandfather, and paternal uncles, as well as his sons, grandsons, and sons of his uncles, shall be indiscriminately beheaded." But the following is productive of far more practical injury: "Whoever shall act in a way that offends propriety, and that is contrary to the spirit of the laws, without special infraction of any of their provisions, shall be punished with forty blows, or eighty if the impropriety be very great." The Mandarins are, of course, the judges of the impropriety. Chinese punishments vary from the well-known *cangue*, or wooden collar, to the "slow and painful death." This is inflicted by an executioner, who holds a covered basket containing a number of knives, marked with the names of the various limbs and parts of the body. He puts his hand in the basket, draws out a knife, and cuts of the part of the body marked on it; then another, and does the same; and so on till he chances to light upon a knife destined for a vital part. But whipping is the commonest form of punishment. In ordinary cases bamboos are used; but great criminals are flogged with thongs fastened to bamboo handles. M. Huc chanced one day to step into a court, where a Mandarin was trying the case of a noted robber and assassin. The judge asked the prisoner a question which he stubbornly refused to answer. The Mandarin took a piece of bamboo from his table, and threw it to the executioner standing by. It bore the figure fifteen. By his wrists and ankles, the prisoner was swung by cords to the ceiling, so that his body was twisted into the shape of an arc; and while thus suspended, the executioner administered thirty stripes—twice fifteen, according to custom. Strips of flesh, and streams of blood, dripped from the poor wretch at every stroke. Even witnesses and prisoners before trial are treated as barbarously. It is quite usual when the Chinese police catch a suspected thief, and have not a cord at hand to hamper him, to nail him by the hand to the cart in which he is conveyed to prison.

New York Without Horses.

New York says a city journal, suffers from the public calamity which, in the shape of epizootic influenzi, befell this city some days since. On Sunday not a single vehicle was visible at the rack in Union square, and other stands in other parts of the city were alike deserted. Upon those who are in the habit of burying their dead on the Sabbath, the calamity fell heaviest of all, as in many cases horses could not be procured for drawing the hearse to the place of burial. Carriages were out of the question, and where as a rule the ferries were besieged by long lines of vehicles waiting to be carried over to the Brooklyn shore, scarcely more than half a dozen funeral corteges were to be seen in the city. The milk-carriers and ice-men begin to feel the loss of horse power to a calamitous extent. In many quarters of the city the milk had to be carried around by hand, which necessitated great delay in the delivery. Even on Saturday the ice-carts were unable to supply their consumers in certain parts of the city, and Sunday additional cases of influenza in the stables prevented them from going their rounds at all. Above Fourteenth street, ash-barrels and dust-bins were left unemptied during the whole of the day, and the street cleaning bureau aver that if the disease continues to spread they will be quite unable to remove the garbage from the streets, as at the present time the large number of afflicted horses interferes seriously with the contractors performing their work thoroughly. The terrible spread of the disease in certain stables was shown in the reduced number of cars running, and the total withdrawal of rolling stock on several of the railroads. The streets of the city were deserted. New York has not experienced so great a trial for years.

What Tobacco Will Do.

The effect of the use of tobacco upon the system is thus told by a correspondent: We once had two acquaintance who were remarkable for their abuse of the weed. To such an extent did they use it, that their constitutions were seriously impaired, and they determined to abandon the habit, to escape from a premature grave. It so happened that they made their pledges of abstinence at night, and the following morning they were some miles in the country on a fishing excursion. After the excitement of arranging their tackle and throwing their hooks into the water had subsided, there came the quiet anticipatory of "a bite." "Presently," said one of the gentlemen, who afterward related the incident, "the log on which I sat commenced whirling round, the just rising sun grew dark in the heavens, and all nature dissolved in a death-like tremor, that seemed to divide my soul from my body, and I fell head-long into the lake. Fortunately the cold bath brought me to consciousness, and, reaching the shore, I found my friend pale and insensible on the grass. Rousing him from his stupor, we jumped into our buggy, leaving our rods, reels, and lunch disregarded on the ground, and galloping like mad down the road, never stopped until we reached a country store, and seized, with the avidity of starving men, upon some tobacco, but it was a long time before our systems were restored to quietness, and we were capable of coherently explaining the causes of our, for the time-being, apparently insane conduct."

THE PAPERS.—It is strange how closely men read the papers. We never say anything that anybody don't like but we soon hear of it, and everybody tells us about it. If, however, we once in a while happen to say a good thing, we never hear of that; nobody seems to notice that. We may pay a man a hundred compliments and give him a dozen puffs, and he takes it as a tribute to his greatness, and never thinks of it, never thinks it does him any good. But if we happen to say something this man don't like, or something he imagines a reflection on him or his character, see how quick he flares up and gets mad about it. All our evils are daily charged to us, but we never, apparently, get any credit for what good we do.

HOT WATER FOR PLANT INSECTS.—Most plants in vigorous health, it is currently stated, will bear an application of water heated to 140 degrees Fah., and most insects infesting them can be killed by water heated to 120. Hot water is easily applied to house plants, and hence a ready means is furnished for destroying large numbers of plant vermin. A thermometer thrust into the water will quickly show the degree of heat, and by immersing the plants into it for a minute or two, the insects will be cooked into harmlessness.

The Kilkenny Cats.

I have often wondered why none of your correspondents, who are natives of or residents in Kilkenny, have given you the real version of the tale of the Kilkenny cats. I have seen the subject frequently noticed in the columns of Notes and Queries, but I have never seen the following accurate version of the occurrence, which led to the generally-received and erroneous story of the Kilkenny cats. That story has been so long current that it has become a proverb: "As quarrelsome as the Kilkenny cats," two of the cats in which city are asserted to have fought so long and so furiously that naught was found of them but two tails.

This is manifestly an Irish exaggeration, and when your readers shall have learned the true anecdote connected with the two cats, they will understand why only two tails were found, the unfortunate owners having fled in terror from the scene of their mutilation. I am happy in being able to state that neither Ireland nor Kilkenny is at all disgraced by the occurrence, which did take take place in Kilkenny, but which might have occurred in any other place in the known world. During the rebellion which took place in Ireland in 1798 (or may be in 1803) Kilkenny was garrisoned by a regiment of Hessian soldiers, whose custom it was to tie together in one of their barrack-rooms, two cats by their respective tails, and then to throw them face to face across a line generally used for drying clothes.

The cats naturally became infuriated, and scratched each other in the abdomen until death ensued to one or both of them, and terminated their sufferings. The officers of the corps were ultimately made acquainted with these barbarous acts of cruelty, and they resolved to put an end to them and to punish the offenders. In order to effect this purpose an officer was ordered to inspect each barrack-room daily, and to report to the commanding officer in what state he found the room.

The cruel soldiers, determined not to lose the daily torture of the wretched cats, generally employed one of their comrades to watch the approach of the officer, in order that the cats might be liberated and take refuge in flight before the visit of the officer to the scene of their torture. On one occasion the "look-out man" neglected his duty, and the officer of the day was heard ascending the barrack-stairs while the cats were undergoing the customary torture. One of the troopers immediately seized a sword from the arm-rack, and with a single blow divided the tails of the two cats.

The cats, of course, escaped through the open windows of the room, which was entered almost immediately afterwards by the officer, who inquired what was the cause of the two bleeding cats' tails being suspended on the clothes line, and was told in reply that "two cats had been fighting in the room; that it was found impossible to separate them; and that they fought so desperately that they had devoured each other up, with the exception of their two tails;" which may have satisfied Captain Schummelkettle, but would not have deluded any person but a beery Prussian.

Funerals in New York.

All the pomp, *unnecessary* expense, and useless show bestowed on the dead, is so much *lost* to the *living* says Prof. Wells. Here in New York it not unfrequently happens, that "one's little all," is consumed on an ostentatious funeral. A poor man, who has a wife and children, sickens and dies. The wife, almost destitute, to be "in fashion," must incur the useless expense of hiring five, ten, or more carriages from a livery stable—kept for the purpose—at an extra cash cost of from $25 to $50, and upward, to help form a grand procession, and go *empty*, as they often do—or be filled with pleasure-seekers who care nothing for the departed. For one in ordinary circumstances, a funeral costs here from $200 to $500, and for one who has more means, from $1,000 to $2,000, and upward, besides the cost of ground, tombstone, etc., on which several thousands more are sometimes expended. There are graves in Greenwood which have cost more than $50,000. Is not this a kind of idolatry? A coffin or casket may be made of solid rose-wood, lined with the finest silk and silk velvet, mounted with solid silver, and this enclosed in a metallic (leaden) case hermetically sealed, and the whole enclosed in a pine box, all to be buried from four to six feet in the ground. In the country, funerals are less showy and less costly. But a change for the better is coming over the spirits of the living in our cities, and we attribute it in large measure to the Father Mathew Temperance Societies of New York. These societies are composed chiefly of those who were once Irish, but are now naturalized American citizens, who, seeing the folly of Old Country customs, such, for example, as "wakes" and expensive funerals, have dropped them, and are adopting more sensible ways. A decent respect for the dead consists in a quiet and modest burial. It is the living who most need assistance, sympathy, and care.

Lime a Preserver of Wood.

Lime is likely to be used largely as a preserver of wood. It has lately been discovered that vessels which carry lime last much longer than others. For a block pavement it is said that an application of lime can be successfully made. In frame-houses, the space between the lath and siding could be filled compactly with lime, and the usual decay prevented at no very large expense. In regard to lime in connection with ship timber, the experience of an old ship-builder, on the coast of Maine, published in the Mechanics' Magazine, is of interest. He had been in the habit of filling up the spaces between the timbers with some hard stone lime, and ramming it in calculating that slight leaks would cause the lime to expand and fill the crevices. Long observation had led him to consider lime a good preservative. A coasting schooner, built of Maine timber, unseasoned, and loaded with lime, had gone ashore and bilged. Being raised and repaired, the schooner remained sound for thirty years, with the exception of the wood that had been used in making the repairs. It had been noticed, also, that the v