# THE CENTRE REPORTER.

FRED. KURTZ, Editor and Proprietor. Terms: $2.00 a Year, in Advance.

VOL. VI. CENTRE HALL, CENTRE CO., PA., THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 20, 1873. NO. 47.


### The Crickets.

Pipe, little minstrels of the waning year,
In gentle concert pipe!
Pipe the warm noons; the mellow harvest near
The apples dropping ripe;

The tempered sunshine, and the softened shade;
The trill of lonely bird;
The sad, sweet hush on Nature's gladness laid
The sounds through silence heard!

Pipe tenderly the passing of the year;
The summer's brief reprieve;
The dry husk rustling round the yellow ear;
The chill of dawn and eve!

Pipe the untroubled trouble of the year;
Pipe low and painless pain;
Pipe your unceasing melancholy cheer;
The year is on the wane!

### The Sweet Betrayal.

My darling tries with all her art
To hide young Love within her heart,
But, prisoned in that tender nest,
He frets and frets, and will not rest;
And soon the little rogue I spy
At play within her laughing eye.

My darling tries with all her skill
To bind young Love unto her will,
But work such witchcraft as she may,
The pretty rebel hath his way.
He decks her cheeks with blushes rare,
And lingers in the dimples there;
In glance or blush and smile I spy
All that my love would fain deny.

### ADVENTURE IN ST. PAUL'S.

Going over for a six months' visit to England, one of the first things I promised myself on landing was to see St. Paul's; and yet it's a singular fact, that up to the very end of my sojourn there, I had never been inside the great cathedral.

I felt it impossible to go back and face my relations and friends, if I couldn't say that I'd seen St. Paul's; and I made half-a-dozen plans, at various times, of paying it a visit. But first one thing intervened, and then another, till my last day in England had come, my pilgrimage unperformed. This last day, however, I had kept clear of engagements, on purpose to see the place. But before I was out of bed in the morning, I had a telegram of importance, which took me off post-haste to the eastern counties; and it was past eight o'clock in the evening before I reached the Shoreditch station, on my return journey.

Now, I was bound to start early next morning, to reach Liverpool in time for the steamer, and it thus seemed as if it were my fate to miss my last chance of entering St. Paul's. Still, I was determined not to throw away a chance. It might be that the cathedral was still open; and I picked out a fast-looking horse from the row of hansoms, and bade the driver put me down in the shortest possible time at the corner of St. Paul's church-yard.

As I descended from the cab, and stood on the edge of the pavement looking up at the giant bulk of the dome, the clock struck nine. The sun had set; but high overhead the golden ball and cross stood out against the sky, still burnished by the evening glow. All the lower part of the building was in deep shadow, rendered still darker by the thick coating of soot that encased it; but the upper portion, towering clear of houses and chimneys, and swept and sweetened by the winds and rains, caught a gleam of brightness from the clouds above, and raised itself white and fair into the evening sky.

The traffic of the day had slackened; there were few pedestrains, and only an occasional cab rattled by. The big warehouses had retired from business; the shops were shut; the city seemed to sleep. St. Paul's, also, was closely fastened up. It misgave me that all I should see of it would be the outside.

Bending back my neck, and gazing upwards at the huge dome, I saw that about the great golden cross and ball was a tracery as of cobwebs, and men like flies were crawling about those slender filaments. Stout scaffoldings and thick cables they were, no doubt; but from the street they looked like the delicate fabric of the gossamer.

I walked quickly round the church, hoping to find some doorway open, some access to the interior. The iron gates were all closed, the doors were fast. Paul's portals look as inaccessible and forbidding as the rocky flank of a mountain. I was determined to find my way in, if possible; but I knew not how to set about it. Could I have come across anything that looked like a deanery or ecclesiastical residence, I should have made bold to knock thereat, and ask the occupiers for the key. But I could find nothing of the sort. Even at a bun-shop, which was still open, where I inquired as to the way of getting into the church, the people knew no more about St. Paul's than if it had been a thousand miles distant.

I began to feel despondent about the matter, but went round the church once more till I came to the end of the south transept—the shorter limb of the cross—and looked vacantly up at the fine semi-circular portico, with its tall columns and flight of steps. All this time, I never thought of there being anybody living inside of St. Paul's; I should as soon have expected to meet with furnished apartments in the Catacombs, or a family residence in the Pyramids. But peering curiously about, I espied, in the angle formed by the nave and transept on the western side, a window, from which came the faint gleam of a candle. I stood and looked between the railings, and saw that somebody was moving about within. There was a bird-cage in the window; on the sill outside, some red flower-pots. Presently, somebody came to a desk near the window and began to write: an old man, with white hair.

If I could only make him see me, perhaps he would take compassion on me, and admit me in. But it wasn't likely that he would see me. Looking from the light within into the twilight outside, it was hardly possible that he should see anything. I thought of flinging a pebble at the window; but it was a good distance off; I might break the glass, and be taken into custody. I gave a few shrill whistles, holding my fingers in my mouth; but it was all of no use. The old man didn't turn his head.

Once again I had almost given the thing up, and gone home; but just then the light disappeared from the window, and all was darkness. Was the old man off to bed, I wondered, or had he gone to grope about among the crypts below! Should I see his light presently twinkling in those high windows? Did he couch in some stone gallery, or find a resting-place in the golden ball? Whilst I was thus speculating, I heard a door softly closed, a footstep on the stone staircase, and the iron gate at the bottom creaked on its hinges: I sprang forward, and met a gray-headed old man with a thin pallid face, who was just opening the iron *grille*.

With all the eloquence of which I am master, I besought him to do me the goodoffice of letting me into the sacred fane. He hesitated, shook his head; at last he relented. "Very well," he said, "its against rules; but I'll let you in, if you don't mind stopping inside alone for an hour. It will be that time before I return; and I must lock the door behind me. Do you still wish to go inside?"

I thanked him warmly, and said: "Certainly, yes." Indeed, I was delighted at the idea of an hour in perfect stillness and seclusion among the mighty columns and arches of St. Paul. I got under the great dome, which hangs like a luminous cloud above, full of hazy, uncertain shadows, a faint circle of light rimming it round, arches and huge piers encompassing it. From the west, a subdued crimson glow; eastwards, the choir, dark and sombre; the windows of the apse showing as gray luminous patches, the altar glooming in the distance like some funeral catafalque. White figures gleaming here and there in shadowy recesses, marble warriors, heroes, statesmen.

Under the dome, in the great open space, was a vast crowd of chairs—wooden rush-bottomed chairs, lashed together in rows, looking towards the east. Choosing one of the most central of these, I sat down, and began to dream, peopling this wide area with a vast invisible congregation.

In soft, long-drawn cadence, the bell of Paul's struck out the hour of ten. I had been in the place nearly an hour. I felt chilled and numb. Enough of dreams. Let me walk briskly up and down, and think of the busy scenes awaiting me: the rapid flight over continents and seas; the wanderer's return; the warm, glad welcome; wife and children holding out eager arms.

I paced rapidly up and down an avenue between the chairs. I had seen enough; I was anxious to be released, to get away from the world of shadows into the living world outside. For a moment, I stood in what seemed to be the very centre of the dome, and looked upward. A faint circle of light marked the apex of the soaring vault, and just above my head I saw—my eyes being now accustomed to this half-light—I saw, I say, a rope hanging down from the vast height above.

Then I remember the spider-webs I had seen outside about the ball and cross. And as I stood, and looked, and listened, I heard faint sounds of hammering and knocking. Men were at work, hundreds of feet above; a light shone here and there, twinkling like a star.

In years gone by, I used to be a famous gymnast, and the sight of the rope hanging just above my head, put me in mind of my ancient prowess. I was heavier now, my muscles elastic; still, there was some salt of youth in me. How many times, I wondered, could I, hanging to that rope, draw my chin up to my knuckles?

The rope was just out of reach, but I leapt up and caught it—once, twice, thrice. I felt a kind of emulation with my old self; I wanted to persuade myself that I had not lost much of my former prowess; and so I went on drawing myself up and letting myself down, not touching the ground, till I grew tired. Then I stretched myself out, expecting just to reach the pavement with my toes. But I couldn't reach it. Casting a glance below me, I saw with horror that the flooring had vanished from under me. I was swinging suspended by my hands high up in the dome.

Perhaps, if I had dropped at that moment, I might have escaped with only a serious shaking; but I hesitated, and was lost. Slowly and steadily, the rope was being wound up. I shut my eyes. Surely this was a hideous delusion, that another moment would dispel. But no; as I looked down, the floor below was almost lost to my sight. There I swung, a tiny human speck, half-way between heaven and earth. I couldn't hope to hang on much longer. My muscles were wearied with the task I had given them. I made a desperate effort to raise myself hand over hand, so that I might grasp the rope with my feet also; but it was impossible: I could not do it. Even the desperate energy of self-preservation could extract no more force from my muscles; I could only hold on.

I was now on a level with the plinth that surmounts the great arches of the dome; the gilded ground-work of a new fresco in the spandrel casta sort of glow upon me, the colossal figures seemed to mock my agony. I must be half-way up now, and for the moment a ray of hope shone in upon me that I could hold on to the end. But, to my despair, I now saw that the seeming dome was a false one, above which rose the veritable conical roof, another hundred feet or more; and that through a vast round orifice in the sham dome, the rope was to ascend to the uppermost peak of the roof. In that moment of torture, I recognized my fate as inevitable. I might prolong my agony for a few seconds; my muscles are involuntarily relaxing; my grasp would fail; in another minute at furthest I must fall, to be dashed to pieces on the adamantine floor below.

A thousand confused thoughts whirled through my brain, like the smoke and sparks of an approaching conflagration; but especially clear in my mind's eye I saw—I did not think, but saw this vision—the picture of my far-off home, the rolling plains of grass, the herds and flocks, a galloping horseman—there was my home. My wife stood in the portico, shading her eyes with her hands; the children were clustering about her; there was news of father coming—perhaps father himself. It was bitter to die thus.

My limbs relaxed; my senses almost deserted me; a merciful oblivion, the intoxication of despair, stole ever me; voices, I thought, were calling—perhaps a delusion of my failing senses—I was slipping, slipping, and I fell.

"How do you feel now?" I heard a voice say, close to my ear. Was it possible—was I still alive? Yes; my brain was yet conscious. But the frame? Shattered, no doubt, a mere human wreck, to which life would be a mockery. I only dared to use my eyes. Any other muscular exertion might bring on torments to which I was then insensible; and yet I had no feeling of pain; perhaps some merciful paralysis had cut me off from torture.

An old man was bending over me the same who had admitted me. H had a wine-glass in his hands, with some liquor in it; a candle burned by his side, forming a little chamber of light about us.

"Am I knocked all to pieces?" I whispered.

"I don't think so, sir; I don't think you're hurt a bit. Bless you! you didn't fall more than three feet."

I stretched out my arms; they were whole; my legs—they were sound and unhurt. What a happiness to be alive, after seeing death inevitable!

"How is this?" I cried, sitting up, and looking about me. "I thought I was carried up into the dome?"

"And so you were. You'd have been a dead man by this, but just in the nick of time I came back. I don't suppose I would have noticed you, for the light was pretty nearly done; but I caught sight of you against the gilding, and then you gave a sort of moan; and says I—There's death here, if I can't think of something all of a minute. And then I recollected that I'd heard the workmen chaps whistle three times, like this, when they wanted the rope lowered; and I piped away, and then the rope stopped, and began to come down. I shouted to you to hold on and keep your heart up; but I don't think you heard me, for when your face came in sight it was white, like death, and your eyes closed—but you still holding on, till, as I say, you came within three feet of the floor, and then you gave a quiver and fell; and I caught you in my arms, for you were in a dead faint. But what were you about, to let them draw you up like that?"

Then I told him of my gymnastic feats.

"Oh, then, I suspect you shook the rope. That's the signal to pull up, and up they pulled, and never knew what sort of a load they were pulling up. The men are working double shifts now, and in a hurry to get finished."

When I left St. Paul's, I felt weak and nerveless, as if I had just gone through a long illness. I couldn't start next morning, I was so upset; and I have written this account of what happened to me, as a sort of outlet to my feelings; for I don't think I shall talk much about St. Paul's when I get home.

### The Muskrat as a Mason.

As soon as the first frosts are felt, the muskrat selects a mud bar, or spot where the bushes grow in the winter, often near lilies—as the root of this plant is a favorite article of food with them—and proceed to lay a foundation for their house. In the first place they gnaw off at the water's edge a quantity of coarse grasses, rushes and small bushes. Gathering this between the chin and forepaw, as if carrying the material in their arms, they push it before them where they intend using it. The place where they have harvested their grass and rushes looks as if some one had mowed it with a scythe. After the muskrats have brought together material enough to make a solid foundation, and have raised the structure to the water's edge, they dive below and tunnel underneath it, coming up through the middle of the mass. The work is then carried on from the inside; mud, decayed vegetation, moss, and other material, is carried through this tunnel and pushed out from the inside until it is raised to the right height and rooled over; or as Whittier poetically describes it:

"The muskrat plied the mason's trade,
And tier by tier his mud walls laid."

Inside this hillock a small chamber about a foot in diameter is left, and here, with solid, compact walls, sometimes two feet thick, the muskrats have their winter quarters.

Their tunnels give them access to the water when the brook is frozen over. In the winter a rap on this nest will bring one or more of its inmates out, and you will see them scatter away on the bottom of the brook, picking their way among the stones and roots, leaving wherever they go, if the brook is frozen over, a line of bubbles under the ice. When an open space is reached the creature gently rises to the water's surface, and just putting the nose and one eye above water, takes an observation and a breath of fresh air at the same time, but instantly dives again.

These nests vary in size, and look quite rough when first built and until the snow and rain smooths them off. If the nest is broken open they immediately begin repairs, working from the inside. When the meadows and brooks are frozen over, the nests appear as if built on the ice, and sometimes, in the late winter or spring freshets, the upper part of the nest is lifted up and moved, which would naturally confirm this impression; but upon examination it will be found that the foundation always rests on the solid ground below.

Last fall the muskrats, moved by some freak built a nest in the boathouse at Punkapog pond, after the boat was housed for the season. The foundation of the nest rested partly on the floor of the house, which, owing to the high water, was submerged; and as the boat was not raised in the house, the space between it and the floor served the same purpose as the tunnel they, under ordinary circumstances, would make. All the fishing tackle, and everything they could manage, was drawn together to help form their structure. When the house was opened in the spring the nest was found. It was estimated that in building it about five bushels of material had been brought in. The tenants were loth to leave their comfortable quarters, returning again and again as the work of removing the material went on.

### The New York City Labor Market.

The New York *World*, in a review of the labor market and the progressive shrinkage of values, says:

The Typographical Union will use its influence to persuade all employers throughout the city not to discharge their operatives, but rather to reduce the wages of all, or put them on short time. This plan, they think, would prevent much suffering which can in no other way be avoided. The same men will advise all their confreres to assist the employers by willingly working a little longer for the old wages or accept a reduction of pay. This is no time, they think, for employers and employed to be at war. The panic is a calamity to all, the rich as well as the poor, and they contend that all ought to help one another to weather it through.

The coopers are the only workingmen on strike at the present time. A large number of that very numerous class have taken exception to the course pursued by the firm of Havemeyer & Elder, aad are trying to make them yield to the demands of the workingmen by uniting on a strike. Thus far the firm have stood their ground, keeping their shop in working order by importing coopers from the country.

About 200 parasol-makers, girls, are at present idle in consequence of a strike. The employers recently reduced the prices from 7 and 11 cents apiece to 5 and 10 cents.

At one book printing company and binding establishment in Williamsburg, the largest in the vicinity of New York, the operatives have been put on nine hours' time. In the various job offices the expenses of running have been cut down to the lowest.

### Hallow-Een.

The going out of October brought round the old festival of Hallow-Een, which was observed in many places in Great Britain, as well as in some few old-fashioned parts of this country and Canada. It is a festival of apples and nuts, both appropaiate emblems of the russet time of year. Apples are placed in tubs of water and "bobbed" for by aquatic boys. The girls melt lead through the wards of door keys to find of what initial it will take the form, and so give them a clue to the "coming man's" name. Or they place nuts on the fire and predict from the starting of them wonderful things connected with the constancy of lovers. Witches, clad in the livery of Beelzebub, are supposed to ride through the air on fiery, untamed broomsticks. These "modern instances," the telegraph wires, must be terrible impediments to the poor hags in their noctural equitation. Hallow-Een is followed by All Saints' Day and All Souls.

### Dreadful Butchery.

The other morning, relates a Louisville paper, a lady sent her daughter to the butcher's for a piece of veal. She got it, and laid it away until near noon, when she discovered that it was tainted. Indignant at the butcher, the old lady donned her bonnet and went to his shop to give him a blessing. She made her complaint, when the butcher, cool as a cucumber, went to his ice-chest and took out part of a leg of mutton, and told her to smell of that. She did so, and pronounced it good meat. With a triumphant air the butcher said, "Now, madam, the veal your daughter got came right off that piece; upon my honor it did; and if it ain't good, it spoilt since it went from my place." The old lady seemed satisfied and left, but was somewhat nonplussed when her daughter asked her if that butchermade her believe that he could cut a piece of veal from a leg of mutton. She don't send to that butcher for veal now, but goes to another shop.

### A Colorado Desperado.

Our readers are familiar with the facts connected with the bold attempt of one Major G. W. Graham to rob the United Sates Paymaster near Hugo, or River Bend, Colorado. This bold man, single handed, stopped the ambulance and shot at the paymaster and the armed escort, but was immediately shot down and captured. He subsequently made his escape to be re-captured. Graham is described by a Western paper as a perfect gentleman in appearance, and has always associated with gentlemen. There is nothing of bravado in his manner or language. He seemed to be rather a man of bad deeds than words. He entered the U. S. army in 1861, at the age of nineteen, and served until 1870, having passed through all the intermediate grades from a private of volunteers to captainey and lieutenant Colonelcy by brevet in the regular army.

He has been wounded several times and is credited with gallantry and bravery on all occasions. He entered the army from New York. He was noted as an Indian fighter.

Graham having attained an enviable reputation as one of the bravest and best officers in the United States army, suddenly falls and loses all his hard won laurels. He stated to a reporter that on account of his political proclivities he was persecuted and made the victim of intrigue. He was dismissed the United States service in 1870, and from that time his downward career has been steady and rapid. He is well known to the *habitues* of the sporting houses of Kansas City, Leavenworth and Denver, but until this mad attack upon the United States paymaster, near River Bend, upon the Kansas Pacific Railroad, he has never been known to commit a criminal action.

Should he recover from his wounds received in his attack upon the soldiers he will be placed upon trial for highway robbery, and will no doubt be convicted, as he cannot and will not pretend to deny his identity. His punishment will be a matter for the courts of Colorado to determine. Graham is certainly one of the bravest and most reckless men living.

### Indians Spearing Salmon.

It is astonishing to see how the salmon crowd the rivers of northern California and Oregon, at the spawning season. The Indians then gather from a considerable distance, to spear and trap these fish, which they dry for winter use; and you will see at this season many picturesque Indian camps along the river. They set a crotch of two sticks in a salmon pool, and lay a log from the shore to this crotch. Upon this log the Indian walks out, with a very long spear, two-pronged at the end, and there armed with two bone spear-heads, which are fastened to the shaft of the spear by very strong cord, usually made of deers' sinews. The Indian stands very erect and in a really fine attitude, and peers into the black pool until his eye catches the silver sheen of a salmon. Then he darts, and instantly you see a commotion in the water as he hauls up toward the surface a struggling twenty-five or thirty pound fish. The bone spear-heads, when they have penetrated the salmon, come off from the spear, and the fish is held by the cord. A squaw stands ready on the shore to haul him in, and he is beaten over the head with a club until he ceases to struggle, then cleaned, and roasted on hot stones. When the meat is done and dry it is picked off the bones, and the squaws rub it to a fine powder between their hands, and in this shape it is kept for future use. From one of these pools a dozen Indian spearmen frequently draw out four hundred salmon in a day, and this fish forms an important part of their food. Of course they kill a great many thousand female salmon during the season; but so far, I believe, this murderous work has not been found to decrease the number of the fish which annually enter the river from the ocean, and go up its head waters to spawn.

### The Northwestern Farmers' Convention.

The Farmers' Convention at Chicago debated the subject of cheapening transportation. Mr. W. C. Flagg, of Illinois, made the principal speech, apparently reflecting the sentiment of a large class, the substance of which was that although he did not believe in the government's embarking in the business of constructing transportation lines, he feared that there was no other way out of our present difficulties.

Finally, resolutions were adopted asking Congress to pass a maximum freight and passenger law regulating trade between the States, and the legislatures to regulate trade in the States; protesting against subsidies to private corporations; demanding "the construction of railroads and the improvement of water communications between the interior and seaboard, the same to be owned and operated by the general government for the purpose of affording cheap and ample transportation, and to protect the people from the exactions of monopolies;" urging the people of the interior to build up manufactories to make home markets, and to free themselves and keep from debt; declaring that no one industry can be protected by legislation, except at the expense of all other industries, and denouncing all special legislation.

### Dress Plainly

Some one has given the following reasons why people should dress plainly on Sunday. These reasons are as valid any other day in the week:—

It would lessen the burden of many who new find it hard to maintain their place in society.

It would lessen the force of temptations which often lead men to barter honesty and honor for display.

If there was less strife in dress at church, people in moderate circumstances would be more inclined to attend.

Universal moderation in dress at church would improve the worship by the remittal of many wandering thoughts.

It would enable all classes of people to attend church in unfavorable weather.

It would lessen, on the part of the rich, the temptation to vanity.

It would lesson, on the part of the poor, the temptation to be envious and malicious.

It would save valuable time on the Sabbath.

### Fashion.

A fashion writer says: "Imported cloth garments for the street consist of fancy coats and jackets, such as women might wear who were masquerading as men. They are in dark cloths in the prettiest shapes imaginable, the edges piped with peacock green or blue silk, mustard colored silk, or some other striking shade, of which only the single line above the rim is permitted. But the tails or lappels, and the dear little vests and waistcoats, fastened with old silver or pearl buttons, are 'too killing'—as young ladies say—for anything, and suggest canes and neckties and manillas, and all the naughtiness which is supposed to be so fascinating."

### A Winter Prospect.

The coming winter, says an exchange, will bring one of the severest tests that the United States, particularly in the larger cities, has ever had to stand. Compared with the effects which the recent financial crash is about to produce, the panic of 1869 was only the premonitory rumbling going before the real earthquake shock which knocks down buildings, opens yawning abysses in the earth, stirs up volcanoes, and sends resistless tidal waves across the sea. The news which is now received daily saying that this manufacturing firm has been compelled to discharge numbers of its hands, or that building corporation has ceased operations, is only the beginning of a fearful end. Out of 7,500 mechanics at Paterson, N. J., 5,000 have been discharged, and the same state of affairs is reported from manufacturing centers, particularly those in the iron trade. In times of distress it is natural for sufferers to gravitate towards the city, where they are sometimes able to gain a precarious living. So that, besides the thousands of mechanics and laborers who, having left the city for work, will return as fast as they are thrown out of employment, there will be an army of men who will seek the city for shelter. Hundreds of these men will find it impossible to get work to do, and being unable to make an honest living will suffer severely. Many of the large Eastern manufactories in which the hum of the busy machinery was heard from morning till night only a few days ago, are already silenced and their doors closed. Railroad building has come to a standstill, and the thousands of mechanics and laborers recently employed at good wages to make the iron and level the track are to-day either dependent upon the stipends allowed them by the "societies," or thrown upon the mercy of the public.

The discharge of mechanics extends through every grade of manufacturing. Among the clerks and shop girls in the stores many have been discharged, for the reason that there is nothing for them to do.

The season has been noted as an unhealthy one. The New York *World* says that in the charity hospitals there are 10,000 patients, with the authority of physicians that the number will increase to 20,000. Mr. Kellock, the Superintendent of Out-door Poor, who has been connected with the Department for twenty-six years, estimates that there are to-day not less than 20,000 persons in the city of New York who are utterly destitute, and that the number will be increased during the winter to from 40,000 to 50,000. It is a sad prospect, but it is one that should be looked into the face at once.

### What a Woman Wears.

A lady correspondent writes as follows:—

"A man in the strength of his years would fall out of the ranks if he were obliged to carry the enormous weight of clothing a woman carries who walks by his side keeping a perfect step. That she finally breaks down is a fact, but that she keeps her place long is another fact, marvelous and significant. 'How many thicknesses of cloth do you think our girls wear about their waists?' asked a teacher of me. 'Half a dozen, perhaps,' I answered; 'Sixteen,' said she, with emphasis—'sixteen, at the least calculation, bands fastened more or less tightly, according to the inclination of the wearer.' Does any one believe these girls breathe easily under so many ligatures? Add to this the difficulty in walking with yards of cloth folding about the ankles, if they do not trail, and the constant anxiety lest the hat should tumble from its perch of hair, and you have an aggregate of something which is a weariness to the flesh, if much study is not. And yet, with all these odds against them, we learn by reports and actual observation that our young ladies in these mixed schools stand as high in their grades as the gentlemen. But a day of reckoning will surely come."

### A Municipal Gem.

The City of Birmingham, England, suffers from an *embarras des richesses*. A gentleman recently deceased, who seems to have possessed more money than brains, bequeathed a valuable diamond to the corporation, and the members of the Town Council have been puzzling their brains to decide what they should do with the legacy. One of the Aldermen suggested that the gem should be placed in the art gallery, but it was objected that it would not be safe there, and would be altogether "too tempting." The Mayor thought it would probably "be better in a public hall," while one of the Council expressed the hope "that it would not go forth to the town that the Free Libraries Committee were afraid to trust the diamond in the art gallery." After much discussion it was decided that the diamond should be placed on exhibition in the art gallery, but that His Honor the Mayor should have the privilege of wearing it on such occasions as he may desire." The importance of the Brummagem civic functionary will doubtless be much enhanced by his appearance under the shelter of the corporation gem.

### The Corn Crop.

The agricultural report of the United States for October shows that the corn crop is 16 per cent. below a normal crop. The crop of last year was estimated at 1,092,000,000 bushels. In view of the decrease of 4 per cent. in area, the indicated reduction is above 23 per cent., or 250,000,000 bushels. The only States returning the average condition are Georgia, Florida, Arkansas, California and Oregon. The other averages are as follows:

Maine, 85; New Hampshire, 90; New York, 89; New Jersey, 99; Pennsylvania, 93; Delaware, 76; Maryland, 91; Virginia, 99; North Carolina, 95; South Carolina, 89; Alabama, 92; Mississippi, 86; Louisiana, 92; Texas, 78; Tennessee, 91; West Virginia, 96; Kentucky, 94; Ohio, 88; Michigan, 88; Indiana, 84; Illinois, 67; Wisconsin, 88; Minnesota, 97; Iowa, 81; Missouri, 76; Kansas, 66 Nebraska, 77.

### Condensed Milk.

A curious incident, says *Galignani*, occurred at the Vienna Exhibition during the deliberation of the jury on Group IV. One of the largest companies for producing condensed milk was about to receive a medal, not only for its products but for the invention, when an American gentleman, Mr. Horsford, of Massachusetts, interposed, and asserted that he was the real discoverer, as he had succeeded in producing the article twenty years ago. M. Ott, of Berne, one of the jurymen, who had been a student under Mr. Horsford, confirmed that statement, and proposed that the medal should be awarded to his former master. The American, however, declined, asserting that he and his countrymen had decided on returning without any recompense. A decision was, however, taken that his name should be mentioned in the report.

They have hemlock trees in Wisconsin twenty-four feet in circumference.

### The Modern Window Curtain.

The most exquisite article of domestic torture, says the Danbury *News*, is the modern window curtain fixture. The curtain is uniformly of cloth, with a flat stick at the bottom, and a round stick at the top, and a complicated lot of brass cogs and ratchets at the ends. It isn't much trouble to fit in the flat sticks, because they can be measured the right length on the floor, but it is getting the proper length of the round sticks, or rollers, that plays the mischief with a man's temper. We are not quite certain but that it could be done without much bluster were a man's wife to go off to the other end of the town and stay there until the operation is over. She doesn't, however. She keeps right close to him, and enlivens the performance with such observations as her judgment and experiences teach her are best calculated to turn his head. The window curtain is generally put up in the evening. This is partly because the man has then more time, and partly attributable to his desire to put off the evil job until the last moment. The first thing to be done is to separate the parcels and borrow a saw. Every family keeps its own screw driver (point broken) and hammer (handle loose). You instinctively saw the flat piece first, because that is the easiest, and afterward fit the rollers, which is more difficult. Then the curtain is tacked to the rollers, which keeps turning over and breaking the tacks, and catching your fingers under the hammer. This done, you are ready to plant your feet on the best cane-bottom chair in the house, and put up the fixtures. Here your wife says: "Well, if I ever saw anything quite so idiotic as——" You then get right down, while she starts for a wooden article, and by way of showing that you have no feeling in the matter, you kick the cane seat into the middle of the room. Once mounted on the wooden chair, the brackets are put up. To do this requires that you extend yours arms the full length, and while in this condition, with a couple of screws and the screw driver in your mouth, the hammer in one hand, the other hanging to the fixtures, and the curtain with the unwieldly roller across your shoulder, you make the sickening discovery that you have got nothing with which to punch the hole for the screw.

Then you get down to the floor again to remedy the defect, and find there is nothing for that purpose but the advice of your wife to drive the screw till it sets. You mount again. She holds the lamp so she can see if the woman has cleaned the corners of the glass, and as you have your mouth too full of hardware to articulate with any freedom, you find yourself obliged to kick her elbow to indicate that you actually demand some of the flame to set the screw. The artifice is lost upon her, however, for likely as not, she will set down the lamp to rub her arm, and ask you what you mean. No one has yet set a bracket to a curtain fixture without either dropping some of the implements, or a remark well calculated to engross the attention of the party holding the lamp. The awful strain on the arms, the wonderful vacillating humors of the screws, the incomprehensible imbecility of the screw driver, the obstinacy of the roller, and the astonishing perverseness of your wife, who will persist in moving the light at the wrong time, make putting up a modern curtain fixture the most subtile of domestic grievances. And when the curtain is finally up, and secured so it won't fall on your head when you touch the string, and you take hold to draw it up, the feeling you experience as it waltzes off to one side, and tries to stand on its drunken head, and failing in that, settles right where it is, and obstinately refuses to budge either way, has never been truly analyzed. Weeks after, when you are leaning back in your chair, engrossed in memories of the dead past, that curtain will suddenly come thundering down upon you, causing you to spring out into the air, and lifting your very hair almost free from the scalp.

### A Caution.

Newspapers in many parts of the country warn persons rambling about the fields and woods against meddling with the plant known as poison vine (rhus toxicodendron). It is a beautiful, bright-colored creeper, often to be seen clinging to old fences, walls, and trees. Contact with it results in very disagreeable consequences to most persons, though there are some who can handle it with impunity. It attacks those who suffer from it with symptoms much resembling those of erysipelas. Cattle do not seem to be injured by the poison vine, as cows are often to be seen eating it with impunity. It is stated, however, that "milk sickness" in children is caused by using the milk of cows that feed upon it. Several years ago an artist told the writer that, when sketching somewhere in Pennsylvania, at this season of the year, he was poisoned by accidental contact with this plant, and laid up for several days with fever and inflammatory symptons.

### What are Bitters.

Some important experiments as to the effects of the beverages popularly known as "bitters," have recently been described by Dr. Decaisne of Paris. He finds that while the composition of these beverages is not uniform, they generally contain either vermouth or absinthe, in combination with the inferior qualities of alcohol. Concerning the effect of the essential oil of absinthe on organism, he finds that, quantity for quantity, a few drops of it dropped into a vessel of water containing fishes destroy life sooner than prussic acid. He adduces the evidence of various and careful experiments, to show that vermouth and absinthe produce epilepsy in animals, and believes that epileptic fits in many cases supervene from excessive drinking of bitters. The basis of bitters in the United States is common high wines, and very common at that. Still people will drink them, and the compounders of them will get rich, and laugh, of course.

### A Western Fight.

In the West it seems serious business to lose the county seat. In Indiana it was proposed to remove the county seat from Centreville to Richmond, and the jail in the former place was being torn down. A mob of disguised men, sixty strong, attacked a party of seven deputy sheriffs guarding the jail. After firing a hundred shots from small arms without serious results, a six-pound cannon loaded with spikes, nails, and scrap iron was fired at the doors, which being demolished, the mob occupied the Sheriff's residence in the front part of the jail building, and the deputies surrendered conditionally.

Another attack by a large party from Cambridge, with cannon, was made. Richmond was also threatened with attack, for purpose of taking the county records back to Centreville.

There are said to be in crib on the line of the Rockford, Rock Island and St. Louis R. R. from 300,000 to 400,000 bushels of corn of the crops of 1871-72, and in the section through which the line passes five bushels in the hands of farmers to one of any previous year.

### Rattlesnakes.

A correspondent of the Germantown (Pa.) *Telegraph* writes as follows about his experiences with these unattractive reptiles: "Some years ago I was engaged in selling and settling a wild tract of land in the interior of Pennsylvania beyond the Alleghany Mountains. The character of the country was varied by hill and slope, but with a very considerable portion adapted for farm lands, intercepted by good-sized creeks and smaller streams, and covered with a heavy growth of timber, affording a good cover for wild animals and snakes.

The first sight I ever had of a rattlesnake was while watching the clearing off a space for putting up a house. From an elevated stand on a fallen tree I noticed a large snake lying at full length, but a few feet from the woodchoppers and near to one. Presuming it had been killed by the men, I jumped down to look, and landed about a foot from his head, at which movement he coiled defiantly, and I, a good deal astonished at this change, at once rebounded and got clear. On turning to him again he appeared in the same condition of coil; but I, as I afterwards learned, was safe at the first jump, for one foot in distance from his head on the ground, added to sixteen inches recession of it to form his coil, made a distance he could not reach in his strike—the throwing forward of his head in that act being one-third of his length, he being about four feet long. It has been often stated that he puts forward two-thirds of his length; but that could not be, owing to its formation, one-fourth being in the tail, one-third in the neck and head tapering from the thick body, and the body forming the rest of his whole length—that is, a four-foot snake would, according to this theory, have to throw forward thirty-two inches of his length, and that resting on a tapering tail as a base. This is impossible. I have desired thus to settle the point of projection, from information received of reliable woodsmen.

I now propose some account of the rattlesnake at his den. On an occasion of passing down the creek adjacent to my residence in search of stray cows, I reached, about noon, a strip of narrows heavily wooded and with much driftwood on the slope down to the water edge. At one point a large boulder or rock had fallen from the hill and lay about half its size in the stream, backed by a growth of wild grass, and on its level top some tufts of grass growing from the cavities. My dog, a fine pointer, suddenly barked. I soon perceived it was at a snake, and moving quietly forward, I called the dog off, not wishing to disturb the snake, and made a detour to get on the surface of the rock, which afforded a space of about twelve feet square. Passing between some tufts, I discovered on my right a snake just emerging from them moving slowly towards me, in an inquiring manner, as if to see what I was doing there. I then advanced a little to get out of the way, and immediately on my left, somewhat in the rear from another tuft came a snake in manner similar to the first. Finding it now time to get off the rock so as to avoid all tufts, I looked back to the hill, and on a pile of driftwood about fifteen feet from me, there appeared about six more of these reptiles, all quietly taking in the sun, and apparently indifferent to the scene on the rock. There may have been more in number, but I did not look farther. As I did not contemplate fight, the only course left was to take to the water, which I accordingly did by jumping off the rock, and made across the creek.

"I was much struck by this encounter at their own home. It might have been expected that they would show some alarm and an appearance of defence, as is the case with most wild animals at their dens, but here the three sentinals came slowly forward, their heads slightly raised, in the manner stated: no noise, no alarm shown. In the wild woods where they roam singly they move sluggishly, and you may pass near without their attention; but if too near they will rattle, and if you persist they will coil in self-defence. Rapidly whipping them with a long switch, they will break the coil and run away.

The rattlesnake has a peculiar way of swimming. About half the thickness of the body shows above the surface, and the head is raised nearly a foot above the water, after the manner of the sea serpent, the tail acting as the propelling power. I once whipped one into the water, and marveled at his mode of getting along, and indeed felt rather superstitious on the subject.

I will now give a description of the fangs and the poison—received from an experienced naturalist. The fang may be likened to a cat's claw in shape—solid until near the root, where a cavity is formed, having a small orifice at the bottom. Connecting with this cavity is a duct leading to the back of the head, and there joining a bag containing the poison. The fang is not set in the jaw at right angles to it, as is generally shown in drawings, but at an angle that allows sufficient length of the point to make the wound. The length from the orifice to the point is about one-quarter of an inch—length of the duct to the poison-bag one inch. It will be seen by this arrangement that a wound may be made without infusing the poison, if the strike penetrates less than a quarter of an inch. It is not known whether the snake controls the emission of the poison by action on the bag; it may be presumed that it does. In procuring its prey, a hard strike may be required, which, by going its full depth, would infuse the poison and spoil its food. In the case of wounds, given in anger, that we hear of—some fatal and others easily cured—in the latter case the strike must have been short, the point of the fang only entering, and the poison wasting on the ground. I know that there are different opinions about the poison passing into the wound; the common belief is that the orifice is at the point of the fang, and consequently, even in slight wounds, the poison must enter. I trust that my statements may be received as correct, and that the unfortunate person who may receive a wound may be consoled by the chance that the poison did not enter.

There is nothing in the story of a rattlesnake biting itself. The hunter seldom kills them. The casual traveler through the woods should use all due caution, and I would recommend all naturalists and explorers to be very particular when they fall in with a fallen rock with grassy tufts, and backed by heavy piles of driftwood.

REPUGNANCE TO WHEELBARROWS.—In prosecuting the Ashantee war one of the difficulties against which England has to contend is the repugnance of the Gold Coast natives to wheeling barrows. Neither horses nor mules can live on the Gold Coast, and the only way of transmitting articles is either by wheelbarrow or on the heads of the natives. These obstinate fellows, when furnished with wheelbarrows, invariably put them on their heads and cannot be persuaded to work them. The same objection to wheeling barrows was observed by Captain Warren among the Nubian laborers in Palestine, who could not be induced to work with wheelbarrows at all.

### Making her own Hat.

Mr. Howard Paul, in his entertainment, says "that when a sudden sharp fever of economy attacks a woman, and she determines to make a hat or a bonnet for herself, for a brief period between the formation of the resolution and the consummation of the deed her mind passes through various amusing stages of agitation. First, she gets herself up in her most attractive guise, and proceeds to purchase a 'shape'—as I believe the fragile outline or framework of the future structure is called—then, taking the 'bus home, she drinks in the details