Near-Sightedness.

The following interesting and instructive article on "Myopia; or Near-Sightedness," is from the pen of an authority, a Chicago optician: This defect is comparatively easy to detect, especially in the higher grades; yet there are some phases of it that require extreme caution and delicate manipulation to arrive at a complete understanding of their condition.

Myopia, or near-sightedness is, more popularly speaking, a disease rather than a structural defect in the eye. This disease, however, has the effect of causing a change in the construction, thus producing the same result; it is generally conceded to be hereditary, accumulating in posterity, and when once developed, even in a very slight degree, its tendency is to increase and assume a more decided form and higher degree. It consists in a diminution of the far point of vision, and thke consequent inability to perceive and recognize objects lying beyond this distance, which varies more or less with the grade or degree of the imperfection.

In the low or medium grades, which are the most numerous, objects lying within this visual distance are seen just as distinctly and with less straining or exercise of the muscle of accommodation than is experienced by a person having normal or perfect vision.

But the myopic eye is largely deficient in penetration, and requires much stronger illumination, especially at night, to render objects distinctly visible within the same proportionate distance, as compared with the results obtained from experiments with normal or perfect vision under the same circumstances.

To illustrate: Assume normal vision in daylight to be represented by 100, that of a myope in the same light and upon the same basis to be seventy-five, then try the experiment with weaker illuminations, say at night, and again let the acuteness or penetration of perfect vision be represented by 100, the experiment will show the acuteness of the myope to be diminished to a range of from forty-five to fifty-five. This want of acuteness will only prove true, for distance, while for near vision the opposite is the rule, the myopic eye being able to see under weak illumination with less proportionate weariness than is experienced in perfect vision.

In the myopic eye, when ocular estimation of distance is to be made, the tendency is to *over* rather than under-estimate it. This has appeared very prominently in estimating the distance of lights at night. As applied to railway or vessel management this, when combined with the want of penetration, will prove to be the most serious defect noticed under this phase of imperfect vision. The different forms and degrees of the defects classed under this head the most numerous of all structural or optical imperfections of the eye, and they have an existence in a low or medium grade in a very large proportion of the population without there ever being a suspicion of their presence.

The comparative frequency of near-sightedness has been the subject of discussion a great many times, and it is found to prevail to a much larger extent in the cities than in the country. This difference has been ascribed to a variety of causes, among which is the fact that persons living in cities have but little occasion to relax the muscle of accommodation for infinite distance, they being habituated to using their eyes for comparatively short distances; hence the muscles become accustomed to these shorter distances, thus losing much of their natural power of relaxation beyond certain points through want of exercise. This is also increased and fostered by the studious habits of the American people generally, and the defect is undoubtedly acquired in a great number of instances through the prolonged tension of muscular accommodation in studying, by children at school. It will be an interesting as well as important fact to notice in this connection some of the results of the examination of a large number of school children. Drs. Ayres and Williams examined the eyes of 1,264 pupils in different departments of the Cincinnati public schools, which showed the proportion of near-sightedness in the district schools to be 13.3 per cent.; intermediate schools 13.8 per cent.; and in the high schools, 22.8 per cent. These results correspond with those obtained from examinations made in Brooklyn and in the College of the City of New York.

It may nôt be uninteresting to notice the fact that of the large number of cases of color-blindness which I have had the privilege of examining during the past seven years, a large proportion were found to have a low grade of near-sightedness combined with some one of the forms of color-blindness. The dangerous character of the error depending upon a defect for development lies mainly in the general progressive nature of the disease, which at first may be of a low grade, but soon increases and forms a higher grade; every step in the progression becoming more and more marked as an element susceptible of causing false perceptions and thereby incorrect judgment. Growing out of this is the diminished penetration and over-estimation of distance which attend the defect in both the high and low grades.

It might not be out of place in this connection to say that this defect can be almost entirely neutralized by spectacles properly selected and adjusted; but the diseased condition nearly always attending it generally demands some medical treatment, especially in the higher grades, before glasses can be properly adapted to the eye. Insuperable objections, however, attend the use of spectacles in railway service in many of its branches.

Curious Discoveries.

The old question, where do all the pins go to? is not near so interesting as this conundrum: How do things get where they are found? The poems of Propertius, a Latin poet who lived half a century before the Christian Era, were found in a wine-cellar. The discovery was made in the nick of time, for the mildew and the rats had begun their destructive work on the parchment manuscripts. But how came these poems in that wine cellar? Did some bottler, a lover of the muse, carry them down to read during intervals of rest, and then, overcome by the fumes of his own wine, forget to carry them away?

It is said that one of the cantos of Dante's "Inferno" was found, after being long mislaid, hidden away beneath a window-sill. Who hid the precious manuscript? Did he hope a reward would be offered for its recovery?

We can understand how "Luther's Table Talk" came to be hidden in the foundations of an old house. Pope Gregory XIII ordered its suppression, and so it became dangerous for any one to be found in possession of the book. When discovered, it was "lying in a deep obscure hole, wrapped in strong linen cloth, which was waxed all over with beeswax within and without." The man who hid it was determined that the book should be read by somebody when better days had come.

An old cabinet held for time a forgotten manuscript which the world is glad the author found. It was the first volume of "Waverly." "I had written," says Scott, "the greatest part of the first volume, and sketched other passages, when I mislaid the manuscript, and only found it by the merest accident, as I was rummaging the drawer of an old cabinet, and I took the fancy of finishing it."

The Baobab Tree.

A curious peculiarity of this tree, found in Africa and Madagascar, is that scarcely any injury will destroy it. Fire scorching the exterior does not impair its vitality. Nor can it be injured from within, as it is quite common to find it hollow. Even cutting down does not exterminate it, for it continues to grow in length while lying on the ground, and its roots, which reach forty or fifty yards from the trunk, retain their vitality. Although the tree attains an enormous age, Livingstone having examined one which he judged to be 1,400 years old, it is attacked by a disease which affects its woody structure, so in course of time its own weight causes it to fall in a mass of ruins.

"Old Residenter."

You couldn't call him a sportsman by any strain on your imagination, and yet he was by no means a loafer, though he did talk with a drawl which indicated that he didn't regard time as a very valuable commodity. He sat on the fence as the train came up to Siegfried's Bridge, with the three Easton fancy gunners aboard, whom he was to pilot across the country after quail. His gun having the lock tied on with a string, reposed across his knees, and his dog, looking like the ghost of starvation, reposed at his feet. The Easton men came up to him.

"Do you know Abe Hertzog?"

"Y-a-a-s, I know him."

"Where can we find him?"

"R-i-g-h-t hyar, I guess."

"Are you Mr. Hertzog?"

"Y-a-a-s! that's what I'm taxed for anyway."

"Jimminy!" said one of the party, *sotto voce*, "can this be the man that Cap told us was personally acquainted with every quail family in Allen Township?"

"You fellers want to go arter some quails, eh?"

"That's what we come for. Do you know anything about them?"

"W-a-a-l, yaas; I can tell one when I see it."

"What kind of a gun have you got there?"

"W-a-a-l, ye see, mister, that gun's an old residenter; bin into our family ever since the first old Hertzog moved up hyar. That gun's a rifle, mister, and she shoots mighty quick. Handle her a little careful, mister," he continued, as he handled the old thing over for inspection; "she has a way of tumbling apart if she's used rough-like."

The old rifle had a barrel about as large as a fence rail, with iron enough in it for a young Gatling-gun, and a bore not larger than a healthy rye straw, while all the stock it had was absorbed in a brass trap-door leading into a cellar smelling of verdigris and filled with grease and little pieces of rags.

"How do you kill anything with this; knock it down?"

"W-a-a-l, yes! sometimes. That's the way I busted the stock thar whar the rawhide bandage air, a-knockin' a fellow down what made fun of it."

At this point the investigator suddenly lost interest in the gun, and the party moved off into the country. As they climbed the fifteenth fence, the old man paused on the top rail and waved his hand indefinitely over the fields before them.

"Gents, there's quails all about hyar and over yander—yaas, and thar's one on 'em now," he added, as he drew up Old Residenter and knocked it over where it sat.

"What! do you shoot a bird on the ground? Why, old man, that's infernal potting."

"S'that so?" inquired the old man, humbly, as he picked up a piece of his gun-stock that had been jarred off by the shot.

Just then a small covey of the birds took wing, and the man who scorned pot-hunting blazed away with both barrells of a costly breach-loader and missed.

"Whar! whar do you shoot 'em, mister?" inquired the old man, quietly, as he put his patch and bullet on the muzzle of his rifle, which he held between his legs while he rammed the charge home, and then as a stray bird flew overhead, he raised and dropped it.

"Is that ar' the way you want it done, mister?"

The objector said nothing, and the gunning proceeded; but it soon became evident that the sportsmen were doing the gunning and the old man was doing the shooting. The lock tumbled off his gun occasionally, and the barrel had a loose habit of parting company with the stock; but the old man had a pocket full of strings, and as fast as it gave out he tied it up, and made ready to shoot whenever a bird showed, and he occasionally varied the monotony of the proceedings by coolly blazing into the bushes, whereupon his mean-looking dog would rush in and drag out a dead rabbit.

The Easton party hunted faithfully, according to their lights, and shot upon the most scientific principles; but, somehow, the old man got the game, as the count showed five quail and a pheasant among the three for the day's work, while Mr. Hertzog peddled along under twenty-two quail and four rabbits; and, as they sat on the board-pile at the depot bargaining for one old man's lot, he remarked:

"Ye see, gents, Old Residenter be'ant much of a gun to look at. She ain't purty nor handsome at all, but I tell you she's mighty on the shoot. All you's got to do is jest to grease the patch right well, and ram the ball down close, and then, if you pint her at a bird and pull, that bird's got to stop. Leastwise, I allers find it so. Ye see, gents, where a man has such a awfully purty gun his 'tention's kinder taken up admirin' of it, like, and the bird goes away after he shoots. Leastwise I allers find it so."

Just then the lock dropped off "Old Residenter" for the eleventh time, and, as the old man wasn't going to shoot any more that day, he put it in his pocket along with his game money, saying:

"Thank ye, gents, thankee. Come up soon again, and I'll take Old Residenter out any time; we'll be purty sure to get something." And he meanders off into the Indian summer haze.—*Easton (Pa.) Free Press.*

Homesickness as a Disease.

Tho last published volume of the "Dict. de Medecine" has an interesting article on nostalgia, by Dr. H. Rey. He regards it as a form of insanity. It is not often observed in childhood nor in advanced age, and is much less frequent in women than in men. It is most common in the young conscript drawn from the country, who enters the infantry; the town lad is too much accustomed to change and the bustle of life; while the cavalry soldier is too much occupied to have time to think over his separation from the place where his affections are centered. M. Rey states that the men of Bretagne are most liable to homesickness, as many cases occurring in those from this district as from the whole of the rest of France put together. The symptoms of nostalgia are, that the patient becomes sad and taciturn, forbears to eat, retires to weep alone, and gives himself up to long reveries of home. After a time, if he goes beyond this first stage, he begins to bear the aspect of ill health, and suffers from headache and sleeplessness; and if the disease still advances, delirium, prostration, diarrhea, and marasmus come on, terminating in death. Sometimes, he says, even old soldiers do not escape the malady. It is in hard times that this occurs, when fighting has to be done in retreat, and when other troubles are added to the bitterness of defeat; when he feels himself forsaken; when he is exposed to cold, is hungry, has to sleep on damp soil, and is suffering frightful thirst from his wounds; perhaps is taken prisoner, or droops under the diseases that spring from misery—scurvy, typhus, or dysentery; under these circumstances, the remembrance of the country he has left behind him, of the mother, the wife, or the home, awakens and brings a tear into the eyes of the bravest.

Saved for Greatness.

Madame de Maintenon, who became the wife of Lonis XIV. of France, and for the last thirty years of his life exercised a controlling influence over his opinions and policy, had a narrow escape from premature burial in childhood. Her parents migrated from France to the Isle of Martinique when she was ten years old. On the voyage she was taken ill, and the sickness ended in apparent death. The funeral rites were over; the last look taken of the body about to be dropped into the sea; a cannon was loaded to be fired over the corpse; when the mother, ordinarily unloving, insisted on seeing her child once more. To her surprise, she found the heart still beating, and in a delirum of joy, declared that the child was not dead, but would recover. The hope, born of rapture, proved a true prophecy; and the little girl, so nearly given to burial in the ocean, was spared to become one of the most distinguished women in French history.

FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

Nerves.

You tell me your nerves are so fragile,
And probably, Lucy, you're right;
But that seems a fine way of saying
You're easily thrown in a fright.

Did nerves make you shriek with such loudness
When Carlo's tooth bruised you in play,
Declare you would have hydrophobia,
And cry nearly all the next day?

Do nerves make you rush for the pillows,
Whenever a thunderstorm's near,
And stop both your ears with your fingers
And act almost frantic with fear?

Do nerves make you fly from a beetle,
And yell if a snake's within sight,
And not for a million of money,
Dare sleep all alone in the night?

Well, Lucy, your nerves may be fragile;
I don't contradict you, my dear;
But I know a good definition
For people who won't conquer fear.

It's better to give a thing, always,
Exactly the name it deserves;
And if one's an out-and-out coward,
I laugh when I hear about "nerves."

Edgar Fawcett.

"Ishpo."

The old red barn had stood at the end of the lane for years, even before the academy had been built at Greenville. It was in ruins now; its days of usefulness had gone; it was the home of rats, and sometimes a shelter for stray tramps who might venture down the lane. It had once been the Saturday play-house of the academy boys, as the sides and corners could well testify; and all the loose boards were well whittled with the jack-knife—that most wonderful of all knives in the eyes of an American boy. But the old barn had stood the storms and sunshine of many years, and was likely to stand in ruins for many years to come. Here and there were patches of different boards from the original red, and the one window was boarded up with an old door that had once been painted green.

But the most curious patch on the barn was directly over the door, where a board had vanished, and an old blackboard with white letters taken its place. The letters were old and faded, and occupied all of the opening. The letters looked like this:

ISHPO.

Now the curiosity of the boys had been excited for a long time to discover the meaning of "ishpo," or what other letters put at the beginning and ending of "ishpo," could make that ontlandish word into anything possible to understand.

Many times the boys at the academy had pondered over the enigma; even men, in passing through the lane, would look with some curiosity on the black patch on the old red barn, and as they hurried along into the city would say to themselves:

"Ishpo;" and what is that, I wonder?

Every boy in the Greenville Academy had thumbed Webster's Dictionary nearest at hand in search of "Ishpo;" and left the book no wiser for the search.

But the mystery of the old red barn was to be unraveled at last. As year after year went by and the boys had become used to the strange word, and some of them entirely forgotten it, a new idea accurred to Dick.

He was enjoying a half holiday and was lying on the grass under the trees on a very hot day, when his eyes happened to rest on the mysterious word.

It seemed to have a new meaning to the boy, now. He had gazed on it for years, but he now wondered why he had never thought before to tear off the old patch, and see if there were other letters with ishpo. But how to accomplish that task without being seen by the owner of the barn, who was a sour-tempered old man, he had yet to discover. Going back to the school buildings he found his comrades, and confided to them his plan and asked their aid. All readily joined in the undertaking, and they formed themselves into a society for the express purpose of discovering the original meaning of the word "ishpo."

They were to wait for a dark night, and then meet at the old barn, where by the united strength of the party, they could tear the old patch from the red boards and examine the side nailed to the barn.

That very night was favorable for the enterprise, for it was dark, and so very close and uncomfortable within the buildings that permission was given the boys by the professor to take a stroll down the lane, before retiring for the night.

Eagerly they all set out for the old ruin, but had scarcely gained the shelter when the storm that had been gathering for hours, burst in all its fury of wind and lightning, and the loose boards and trash around the barn were thrown about in great confusion, and the boys escaped to the open lane.

The old red barn was blown down in the gale!

The next morning in the beautiful sunshine the boys hastened to the spot, and there, still nailed to the barn, was the old patch with its mysterious letters. A few minutes and the old board was torn from the door and eagerly examined by the boys.

The letter F was found, very bright from its long imprisonment, to head the word "ishpo," and the two letters nd ended the mysterious word.

"Nothing but a fishpond," said the boys, as they went back to school for he day.—*New York Tribune.*

Story of an Apron.

And of all little aprons that hung upon the line that windy March day, Nainsook was the very proudest. She flaunted her ruffles, flung out her long ties, dipped, dived and soared higher in the breeze than any other.

And when blue Gingham snapped against her she screamed:

"Keep away, Ginghy; you'll leave a blue mark on me if you don't take care!"

"Don't be so proud, Nainsook; I'd rather be myself any day than a poor armless thing like you. It's Nellie and I that love fun. It's Nellie and I that play in the sand, and it's Nellie and I that make real make-believe cookies out of flour, too. When she has you on, you are so stuck up and afraid your starch will get out, or ruffles unfluted, that she has to sit in chairs, and hardly dares to wiggle her toes."

"H'm! Arms are very unstylish for aprons, and I have ruffles instead. As to dirt, my taste don't run to playing in it, and when I come out of the drawer, Nellie is going to have company or go a-visiting."

"For my part," said the cambric with the pink buds, "I think Nellie and I have the best of times. We are together afternoons after she has been washed up. We play with our dolls then, or build block-houses."

Then the plain white linen made some sensible remarks, the calicoes spoke, and the braided pique, but Nainsook said no more, for she was very busy.

Only think, she had got one clothespin off her shoulder! if she could only wrench free from the other, what a grand time! Away from these common aprons, whose company she hated to be seen in! Off with the breeze to find some little princess who would be glad to see her!

A jerk and she was free! Floating high for one glad moment, the next cast down into the muddy lane, trampled upon by horses, nosed over by pigs, dirty and miserable.

At last came a boy along who fished her out on the end of a stick, and carried her home in that way.

"What yer got, Jim?" asked his mother.

"Er flag of liberty."

"Give her to me; she's an apurn an' will do fur one of the gurls; pity she ain't got no sleeves."

So it came that very day, as Nellie and Blue Gingham were chasing down the lane after a stray kitten, they saw a ragged little girl playing in the mud, and on her, all dirty and forlorn, poor Nainsook.

"That's my apron," cried Nellie.

"Tain't either," said the girl. "What'll you give for her?"

"What do you want?"

"Would rather have that purty blue one; this aint got no arms."

Nellie thought a moment:

"Oh, no! if I give up my blue gingham I can't play out of doors, or in the kitchen, or have any more fun. I guess you may keep Nannie. Mamma had company yesterday, and I didn't have to be fixed up and sit still 'cause she was gone."

Nellie and Blue Gingham ran on, and poor Nainsook wished she had not been quite so nice or quite so proud.

Gunpowder.

With this all are somewhat acquainted. It is a condensed compound which, on the application of heat, springs into a large volume of gas (or kind of air) with great power. Half a gill of powder will suddenly produce gas enough to fill a barrel, or 2,000 half gills. Powder in very fine grains burns so fast and expands so quickly as to burst a cast iron gun; hence very coarse powder is used for cannon and large guns. Gunpowder is a mixture of about six ounces of niter (saltpeter) with one ounce of sulphur, and one ounce of charcoal. The charcoal used, is made of small willows carefully burned or heated in close vessels. The niter, sulphur and charcoal, are ground separately, then together moist, and afterward pressed into solid cakes and dried. These cakes are broken into small fragments, which are put into cylinders and kept revolving until the sharp corners are worn off and the surface of the grains is polished, when they are passed through sieves to assort the coarse and fine grains—the fine being used for small guns, and the large for cannons, for blasting rocks, etc. The fine dust, if packed in a solid mass so that the flame can not spread easily through it, burns slowly upon one side, and is used for fuses in bomb-shells and in blasting, for fire-works, etc.

Disagreeable Habits.

It is easy to form a disagreeable habit, but not so easy to drop it again. Persisted in, they become a second nature. Stop and think before you allow yourself to form them. There are disagreeable habits of the body, like scowling, winking, twisting the mouth, biting the nails, continually picking at something, twirling a key, or fumbling at a chain, drumming with the fingers, screwing and twisting a chair, or whatever you can lay your hands on. Don't do any of these things. Cultivate a calm, quiet manner. Better be a statue than a jumping-jack. There are much worse habits than these, to be sure, but we are speaking only of very little things that are only annoying when persisted in. There are habits of speech, also, such as beginning every speech with "you see," or "you know," "now-a," "I don't care," "tell you now." Indistinct utterance, sharp nasal tones, a slow drawl, avoid them all. Stop and think what you wish to say, and then let every word drop from your lips just as smooth and perfect as a new silver coin. Have a care about your ways of sitting, and standing, and walking. Before you know it, you will find your habits have hardened into a coat of mail that you cannot get rid of without a terrible effort—habits which render you obnoxious to all around you.

Hanging Basket.

Take an old pint dipper, and with a pair of pinchers wrench off the handle. Cut a slip of silver perforated cardboard long enough to go round the dipper and join, and about two holes wider. Join, and crochet a bottom to just fit the bottom of the dipper. With shaded orange single zephyr work the cardboard in rows, slipping a silver glass bead on each stitch. Crochet a border round the top with worsted; also crochet four cords to hang the basket with. Fill the dipper with rich earth, and plant Tradescantia, or anything which will live without drainage.

Words of Wisdom.

Truth is simple, requiring neither study nor art.

A good man is kinder to his enemy than bad men are to their friends.

Sinful pollution is much easier communicated and spreak than holiness.

Wrong none by doing injuries, or omitting the benefits that are your duty.

When a man is happy, every effort to express his happiness mars its completeness.

Dignity is expressive, and without other good qualities, is not particularly profitable.

Men do not have their choice whether they will accept life or not, but they can choose how they will live.

There is hidden thunder in the stores of heaven, ready to burst with burning wrath, and blast the man who owes his greatness to the ruin of his neighbor.

Be not proud of riches but afraid of them, lest they be a silver bar to cross the way to heaven. You must answer for riches, but riches cannot answer for you.

Lost, yesterday, somewhere between sunrise and sunset, two golden hours, each set with sixty diamond minutes. No reward is offered, for they are gone forever.

There is a beautiful precept which he who has received an injury, or who thinks that he has, would for his own sake do well to follow: Excuse half, and forgive the rest.

Love is a secondary passion in those who love most, a primary in those who love least. He who is inspired by it in a high degree is inspired by honor in a higher; it never reaches its plentitude of growth and perfection but in the most exalted minds.

Frugality is good, if liberality be joined with it. The first is leaving off superfluous expenses; the last is bestowing them to the benefit of others that need. The first without the last be gets covetousness, the last without the first begets prodigality.

San Stefano.

San Stefano, where the peace negotiations between Russia and the porte were conducted, is under the shadow of the old walls, which have not been besieged for four hundred years. Close by are the Seven Towers, within whose massive keep a Russian ambassador has often been imprisoned, and the walled-up gate through which the Moslems expect that the Christians will re-enter Constantinople when they recapture it. Here, too, according to a London *Standard* correspondent; is the chapel in whose dovoutly worshipped wells live the miraculous fish which jumped out of the frying-pan on the day of the taking of Constantinople, and have lived on until now with one side cooked, and the other waiting until, in the fullness of things, it can in its turn be submitted to the fire. During the massacre of Chio, a number of Greek children who had been carried off by the Turks were ransomed and afterward educated by a philanthropic society. One of the boys who was ransomed and educated by Americans, has become a wealthy householder at San Stefano. It was under the roof of this Chiote exile, who had been trained by American missionaries, that the conqueror of Turkey, the Grand Duke Nicholas, received shelter while the diplomatists were chattering over the conditions of peace.

Capturing an Eagle's Nest.

Recently United States Deputy Marshal Dewing and a party went up the river to investigate the cutting of logs from the public lands. On Black Lake they discovered an immense eagle's nest in the topmost branches of a large tree, and began cutting the tree down. There was a young eagle in the nest, and when the cutting commenced the parent birds made hostile demonstrations, swooping down upon the party. The female was shot and killed. The wing of the male was broken by a shot, and he was captured after falling in the water. He was with considerable difficulty taken into the boat, knocking one of the men in the boat overboard by a stroke of his wing. The young bird was killed by the falling of the tree. The nest was twelve feet in diameter, and was constructed of at least three-quarters of a cord of wood, some of the pieces being four feet long and as large around as a man's leg. The old male bird measures seven feet and two inches from tip to tip.—*Shreveport (La.) Times.*

May-Day Customs.

Though May-pole and Morris dancing was the most common, there were other curious customs in different parts of Great Britain. In one place, the Mayers went out very early to the woods, and gathering green boughs, decorated every door with one. A house containing a sweetheart had a branch of birch, the door of a scold was disgraced with alder, and a slatternly person had the mortification to find a branch of a nut-tree at hers, while the young people who overslept found their doors closed by a nail over the latch.

In the Scottish Highlands, in the eighteenth century, the boys had a curious custom. They would go to the moors outside of the town, make a round table in the sod, by cutting a trench around it, deep enough for them to sit down to their grassy table. On this table they would kindle a fire and cook a custard of eggs and milk, a knead and cake of oatmeal, which was toasted by the fire. After eating the custard, the cake was cut into as many parts as there were boys; one piece was made black with coal, and then all put into a cap. Each boy was in turn blindfolded, and made to take a piece, and the one who selected the black one was to be sacrificed to Baal, whose favor they wished to ask for their harvest. The victim in that day had only to lean through the fire; but there is little doubt that the whole thing was a survival from the days when human beings were really sacrificed.

In the island of Lewis, in the west of Scotland, there prevails a custom of sending a man very early on May-day to cross a certain river, believing that if a woman crossed it first the salmon would not come into the stream for a year.

The Dutch May-pole was still different, being surrounded by trees stuck into flower-pots, and ornamented with gay-colored flags, and hoops with garlands and gilt balls hanging. Another sort had wooden dolls made to represent the figures of peasants, nailed against the pole by their hands and knees, as though climbing it. There were also figures of birds and people. In some parts of Germany it was the firm belief of the common people that certain ill-disposed beings met on a high mountain on May-day to dance and feast, with no good intentions to their human neighbors. Accordingly on the day before, every family was careful to have a thorn of a certain kind, which was stuck into the door as a protection.

The Scandinavians, whose first of May is not very balmy, had of old a curious fight between summer and winter. Winter—or the man representing him—was dressed in skins, armed with fire-forks, and threw snow-balls and pieces of ice. Summer was dressed in green leaves and summer dress. They had a mock fight which was called "Driving away Winter and welcoming Summer," and in the Isle of Man, where Norwegians had rule for many years, this custom lingered until very lately.

But as the years went on these merry games died out, and a few years ago May-day was in London simply the festival of chimney-sweeps and milkmaids, certainly a falling off from the times of King Henry VIII. The only traces of going-a-Maying were the garlands of the milkmaids and the Jack-in-the-green of the sweeps. The garland (so called) was made of silverplate, borrowed for the day, and fastened upon a sort of pyramid. Accompanying this droll garland were the maids themselves in gay dress, with ribbons and flowers, and attended by musicians who played for them to dance in the street. Sometimes a cow was dressed in festive array, with bouquets and ribbons on her horns, neck and tail, and over her back a net stuck full of flowers. Thus highly ornamented the meek creature was led through the streets.

The sweeps brought out the Jack-in-the-green, which was a tall cone made of green boughs, decorated with flowers, gay streamers and a flag, and carried by a man inside. Each of these structures was followed by a band of sweeps who assumed certain characters, the fashion of which had been handed down from the palmy times of May-day.

There were always a lord and lady who wore ridiculous imitations of fashionable dress, and made ludicrous attempts to imitate elegant manners. Mad Moll and her husband were another pair who flourished in tawdry, gay-colored rags and tatters, he brandishing a sweep's broom and she a ladle. Jim Crow and a fancifully bedizened ballet-dancer in white muslin often swelled the ranks, and the rest of the party rigged out in a profusion of gilt paper, flowers, tinsel and gewgaws, their faces and legs covered with brick-dust, made up a comical crowd. But even these mild remains of the great festival are almost entirely banished to the rural districts, and are almost extinct there.—*St. Nicholas.*

The "Lie Dolla."

An American photographer at Shanghai employed for some time as assistant a Cantonese named Sing Kwa, who concluded that he was master of the tricks of the trade, and accordingly started business on his own account. He had been instructed to use Mexican dollars in preparing a nitrate of silver, but, to his great astonishment, his attempts were unsatisfactory in every instance. Returning to his employer, he related his experience:

"Hi yah! Befo'e time mi helpee you that pidgin, any time hab got numba one plopua that dolla chemical pidgin. Jus' now no can! Plenty time mi do allah same you show mi. Jus' now that medicine b'long largee diffelent! Mi no can sabee how fashion. Mi losun plenty chancee. Mi that dolla hab spilum. Jus' now mi larree chin-chin you pay mi sabee how fashion. No can do."

(Formerly, when I helped you in preparing the chemicals, all was right. Now all is wrong. Repeatedly I have done just as you have shown me, and the mixture is very different. I do not know why. I have been at great expense. My dollars are all consumed. Now I entreat you to explain to me what is wrong.)

His late employer, feeling sure that he must have made some blunder, directed Sing Kwa to try the experiment in his presence, in order that he might detect the mistake; but what was his surprise to find the result something very strongly resembling nitrate of copper, instead of nitrate of silver. Sing Kwa was told that he must have been cheated by some one who had given him bad dollars, which he had used in preparing his chemicals. The prompt reply was:

"What thing! You thinkee mi b'long foolo! Thinkee mi no sabee that b'long lie dolla? S'pose mi takee number one dolla, hab got too muchee largee spensee, —no got plenty plofit. How mi can do so fashion pidgin?"

(What! do you think I am a fool? Do you think I do not know that it is a bad dollar? Suppose I use good dollars, the expense is much too large; the profit is much too small. How can I do business after that fashion?)—*Scribner.*

A Celestial Fairy Tale.

That snakes contain in their heads certain precious stones is an old belief common to most branches of the human family. A story in a Chinese book of anecdotes relates how a foreigner passing a pork-butcher's shop asks the master what he will take for the bench on which the pork is exposed. The answer, given in fun, is "fifty taels." The foreigner offers to pay the money. This convinces the butcher that there must be something valuable in the bench, so he declines to sell it, and carefully puts it by. The foreigner leaves the place and returns after a year's absence. Seeing the butcher, he asks after the bench, and in answer to a very natural inquiry why he deems it so valuable, informs him that lodged in a cavity within it is a snake, holding in its mouth a precious gem. He further adds that the snake lives on the blood that soaks through the wood from the raw meat exposed on it, and that when this supply is cut off the snake will die and the gem become worthless. Cursing his own stupidity, the butcher seizes a hatchet and splits the bench open, finding the snake dead, while the jewel it undoubtedly holds in its mouth is of the same color as the eye of a dried fish.

Opposed to Swearing.

Among the many anecdotes told of George W. Blunt, the New York pilot commissioner, is one in connection with his reproval of the vice of swearing in the office of the pilot commissioners. At one time it was common to hear oath upon oath in the outer office, where were gathered a number of rough pilots and seafaring men. Mr. Blunt, although not free from the habit, believed that its over-indulgence was anything but respectable, and thought that he could stop the abuse and at the same time make it beneficial. He therefore placed in the outer office, against one of the windows, a tin box, and as he did so he said: "Now this is for swearers. Every one who swears in this office must put ten cents in the box, and if I am caught swearing, I will pay twenty." This rule was enforced on all occasions, and one day a gentleman of respectability came into the office, and almost without knowing it he began to utter oaths. Commissioner Blunt stepp d from his private room, and said that he would have to put ten cents into the box. "What for?" said the gentleman. "For swearing," answered Blunt. "What is done with the money thus collected?" asked the gentleman. "It is divided between the 'Pilots' Charitable Fund' and the 'New York and Sandy Hook Pilots' Benevolent Association' for the benefit of the widows and orphans." The gentleman reflected a moment, and taking a $5 bill out of his pocketbook, put it in the box with a smile, and said: "I will take that out in swearing some other time."

On another occasion a preminent yacht owner entered Mr. Blunt's office, and while conversing with him let drop an oath, which was immediately caught by Mr. Blunt with a demand for ten cents. An explanation followed, similar to the one given above, when the yacht owner retired, apparently very indignant at the rigid rules thus enforced; but without paying the fine. Mr. Blunt was not at all pleased with what he thought to be the meanness as well as the viciousness of the yacht owner; but next morning he was surprised at receiving a check for $1,000 as a "swearer's contribution" to the two funds mentioned, to be equally divided between them.

During the war of 1812, the water of the East river came up Burling slip some distance, and George W. Blunt, who was then a boy, would with others go down to see the vessels in the slip. These were two armed vessels, called the United We Stand, and the Divided We Fall. Blunt often told the tale that when these vessels went out and returned without prizes, he with other boys would go out to the slip and shout:

United we stand; divided we fall—
Been out thirty days, and got nothing at all.

It is needless to say Blunt and the other boys kept out of the reach of the captains of both craft, and the appearance of the latter was enough for a general skedaddle.

A Queer Somnambulist.

At midnight, recently, a young man with pale face and open eyes walked into the Fifth street police station in New York and stepping up to Sergeant Hagerty, announced: "I've come to surrender myself. I've killed my girl, and I want to give myself up."

"Who is your girl?" asked the sergeant.

"Eliza Gleason of 516 East Fourteenth, and I cut her throat," answered the young man.

"How did you cut her throat?"

"I got her head through a pane of glass and then cut it from ear to ear," replied the youth. The sergeant despatched detective Vissart to the young woman's house, and there Vissart confronted her. She was the picture of life, and she laughed at him heartily, thinking he had been fooled. Just as the officer went from the police station, however, the young man turned to go also, but Sergeant Hagerty told him he was a prisoner. No notice was paid to this suggestion. The young man started on. Sergeant Hagerty jumped over the railing and put his hand on the youth's shoulder. On being touched he jumped, startled, and glaring about him asked him where he was. It was plain then to the sergeant that the young man was a somnambulist, and had just been awakened. He was conducted to the waiting room. The detective returned in a towering rage at what he considered his fooling. He was soon followed by Mr. Gleason, who explained that the young man was given to walking in his sleep. He emphatically combated Sergeant Hagerty's suggestion that the young man may have been drinking by asserting he did not drink. His name was Peter Coby, and his age was eighteen. He is employed by and lives with Mr. Gleason. He was taken the next day before Justice Flammer at Essex Market police court. The Justice took considerable interest in him, having been a somnambulist himself. Numbers of young Coby's friends testified that he was in the habit of going about in this semi-conscious state and accusing himself of all manner of crimes. He was taken away by his friends.

Singular Phenomenon.

There was once found, says the Inyo (Cal.) *Independent*, a pair of field glasses in the desert near what is known as Death Valley. The glasses are supposed to have belonged to Hahn, a lost guide of Wheeler's expedition. They were brought into one of the interior towns by an Indian, and purchased from him. The most singular fact connected with them is that every object within range of where the glasses had been lying for a year or more is distinctly photographed upon them. We have heard of such phenomena before, but this is one of the most remarkable instances we remember. Both object glasses are covered with perfect and beautiful photographs or etchings of desert shrubs, stems, branches, leaf-stalks. Leaves and leaflets are distinctly marked, as if laid on by a master hand. There is no mixture or confusion of one plant with another, each having a clear border of unmarked glass, rendering it probable that the sun or lightning photograph, or whatever it may be, was received through the eye-glass. These pictures seem to occupy a position about in the center of each of the object-glasses, but a little nearer the plane than the convex side.

Immigration from Germany.

A report just presented to the German Reichstag gives some particulars of the number and destination of the persons who immigrated last year. The total number of persons who left the German ports of Bremen and Hamburg in 1877 amounted to 41,759, being considerably less than in 1876, when 50,577 persons immigrated from the same ports. Of those who left Hamburg 12,643 were destined for New York, 274 for the West Indies, 2,920 for Brazil and the River Plate, 1,295 for the Cape of Good Hope, thirty-eight for Chili, and 1,405 for Australia. Of the total number sailing from Bremen 13,357 went to New York, 3,180 to Baltimore, 858 to New Orleans and Havana, 1,613 to Brazil, and 781 to the river Plate. Of the whole number, however, who thus sailed from the German ports, 21,618, or about one-half, were foreigners, 5,005 coming from Russia, 4,633 from Austria, 1,219 from Denmark, and 8,378 from Sweden, Norway and other countries.

Rich Without Money.

Many a man is rich without money. Thousands of men with nothing in their pockets, and thousands without even a pocket are rich. A man born with a good sound constitution, a good stomach, a good heart, and good limbs, and a pretty good headpiece, is rich. Good bones are better than gold; tough muscles than silver; and nerves that flash fire and carry energy to every function are better than houses and land. It is better than a landed estate to have the right kind of a father and mother. Good breeds and bad breeds exist among men as really as among herbs and horses. Education may do much to check evil tendencies or to develop good ones; but it is a great thing to inherit the right proportions of faculties to start with. The man is rich who has a good disposition—who is naturally kind, patient, cheerful, hopeful, and who has a flavor of wit and fun in his composition.

SUMMARY OF NEWS.

Eastern and Middle States.

William Orton, president of the Western Union Telegraph Company, died unexpectedly of apoplexy in New York on the 22d. He attended church on the 21st, and appeared to be in unusually good health up to the time of the attack at 11 p. m., which ended in death the next morning. Mr. Orton was born in Cuba, N. Y., June 14, 1826, graduated at the State Normal School in Albany, and was at various times a printer, school teacher and bookseller. In 1862 he was appointed internal revenue inspector for the sixth New York district, and in 1865 he was made internal revenue commissioner at Washington. Soon after he retired from the government service to become president of the United States Telegraph Company, which was merged in the Western Union line in 1866. In the following year Mr. Orton was elected president of the Western Union Company and held that position at the time of his death. He was considered an unusually efficient officer. He leaves a wife and eight children.

The Erie railroad was sold at public auction in New York and was bought for $6,000,000 by E. D. Morgan and two others, acting as trustees for the reconstruction committee of bondholders.

Another savings bank crash in New York. The Teutonia Savings Bank has been enjoined from doing further business, a deficit of $148,404.63 having been discovered. The loss is due to poor investments.

The recent suspensions of the Sixpenny and Teutonia Savings banks in New York has led to a heavy run on two other institutions on the east side of the city.

President Hayes, accompanied by prominent Washington officials, visited some of the leading industrial establishments of Philadelphia, and his committee on pensions, and the Congressional committee on the coinage of 20-cent pieces was passed....The House bill appropriating $200,000 to supply a deficiency in the appropriation for the public printing and binding was passed Adjourned.

A bill providing for ocean mail service to Brazil was introduced....The bill authorizing the employment of temporary clerks in the treasury department came back from the conference committee and was agreed to....The appropriation for the deficiency for public print