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The Barber's Lament.

"Fair maiden, wilt thou shear my fate?"
A love-sick barber cried:
"Oh, no," said she, "I cannot be
A little shaver's bride."

"Thy lip, pomade, doth wound me deep
And cutteth sharp and keen;
Soap precious art thou to my heart,
Which hones no other queen.

"And since to be my bonny bride
Thou wilt not condescend,
I fear my days have run their race
And reached their lather end.

"This form must crumble in the dust,
These lips in death grow dumb;
This barber's mug, so fair and snug,
Mustachen pale become."

—*Cincinnati Evening Star.*

Epigrams.

I.

A pompous attorney, while trying a cause,
Was quizzing a witness and looking for flaws.
The witness, who owed him a personal grudge
Provoked him until he appealed to the judge
"I demand, sir," he cried, with a fiery-red face,
"A little attention while trying this case."
"Your honor," responded the meek little man,
"I'm paying as little as any one can."
The judge, with a frown,
Looked solemnly down
On the squabble, and said, from the bench where he sat,
"We want nothing but silence, and little of that."

II.

Said young Romeo Butts to Miss Claribel Cutts,
(As they stood in a parlor resplendent with light),
With a weariesome sigh, "Oh, I cannot tell why,
But somehow, I feel like a fool here to-night."
Said Miss Claribel Cutts to Romeo Butts,
With a pitiless smile that she could not conceal:
"Yes, your face would betray, I am sure, what you say,
For you certainly look all you say that you feel."

III.

"Oh, husband!" said Mrs. Ophelia McMunn,
As she gazed at her willful and passionate son
"Where that boy got his temper, I never could see;
I'm certain he never could take it from me."
"No doubt, my dear wife, your assertion is true—
I never have missed any temper from you."

—*Chicago Tribune.*

THE STORY OF TWO SINGERS.

An Italian vessel had reached the shores of America. The passengers had landed. The wealthy had been taken to their hotels or their friends' homes in carriages. The poor folk, who still had some certain destination and some one to greet and meet, had been led away under friendly guidance, after many embraces and much gesticulation, or had taken cars and omnibusses for the purpose of reaching their homes and the welcome that awaited them. Some, poor and forlorn, were wandering vaguely about the Battery—the prey of emigrant boarding-housekeepers—and one, poorest and most forlorn of all, sat upon a bench under a great tree and wept silently. She was a woman. She was young and of the peasant class. Her husband had died upon the voyage. She had not a friend in America, and some thief had stolen her purse from under her pillow, as she slept between her little children in her berth in the steerage.

She had only a great bag, with a few shabby garments, and these two children, and a pair of earrings, which she might, perhaps, sell for a little bread—in all the world. As she stared out upon the water, which had swept away the body of her dead husband, and which still covered it, she was very miserable.

"If it had been the Lord's will that I also should be buried in the sea," she sobbed. "I and my children." And she bent her head upon her hands; her eyes were blinded with tears; she saw nothing of what was going on just then.

"Mother!" cried the eldest child. "Mother, look. The bad boy has carried off our bag."

The poor creature started to her feet. She stared wildly about her. A boy was running away at full speed with the bag of clothes on his back. Uttering a scream, she began to run at full speed. People stared at her, but did not know why she ran, or understand that the interpretation of her cry was "stop thief." The boy outran her very soon; her breath failed her. She saw him turning a corner of the street, and regardless of the wagons, cars and carriages in her path, dashed across the road. There was a cry—a crash; a policeman strode out upon the crossing and stopped the vehicles, and the body of the Italian woman was lifted from the ground; her black hair fell over her shoulders, her eyes were fixed, her face pallid, and the yellow kerchief about her head soaked in blood. No one knew anything about her. They carried her to the hospital; thence to the morgue. Afterward she was buried where they bury paupers.

When their mother ran after the thief, the little girls sat where she had left them, for awhile; each was playing with something. To amuse them their mother had given them her earrings—two hoops of gold.

They had their own little ears pierced, but as yet there were only threads in them. Their father had promised that, when he made his fortune, they should have gold earrings like their mother's. But their father was buried in the sea, and their mother was poor. It did not seem likely they should ever have any of those nice things that they had been promised when they came to America. However, children are light hearted, and they were on land again and not stuffed into the steerage of the crowded ship; and they had no doubt that their mother would catch the boy with the bag. They played with the earrings and stared at the pedestrians and at the carriages, with no anxieties about their mother, until they grew hungry. Then the youngest began to cry.

"Mother stays a long while," said the eldest. "Let us go and look for her, and tell her we want supper." And away they went, hand in hand, each clutching her earring.

The eldest was a handsome girl of eight; the youngest a little six-year-old beauty, wonderful to contemplate. They spoke only Italian, of course. As they wandered on looking for their mother, and growing more and more frightened at every step, there came marching up Broadway a military procession. The bugles blared, the drums beat, the banners waved, a crowd of hangers-on tramped over the sidewalk. Rough men and boys took no heed of the little girls, and they were at last separated. The eldest was helplessly pushed forward by the crowd; the little one, who had clung to the railings of a restaurant, was left behind.

"When the procession and the crowd had passed, she still sat there, weeping bitterly. "What a beautiful child," said many, and one or two spoke to her, but she did not understand, and could not answer them. At last there came along the street an old Italian with an organ on his back, and a monkey perched upon it. He paused in front of the restaurant and held out his hand to the child.

"What has happened to the pretty little girl? Has she lost herself?" he asked; and the child, glad to hear words that she could comprehend, told him her story.

The old man listened kindly.

"Dry your tears, pretty one," he said. "We will find your mother, and meanwhile, you shall have supper with me and my monkey. See what a fine monkey. He will shake hands with you. Pepa, shake hands with the pretty little girl, and bow."

The monkey put out one brown paw and took off his velvet cap by the crown with the other.

His pranks amused the child. She trotted along by the side of the organ-grinder, and had macaroni with him in a dismal little room in a terrible old tenement house. She had no doubt that he could find her mother for her—her mother and her little sister Francesca; for Bianca was only six years old, and at that age we are always hopeful. But the old man who, after the frugal supper, went about to do what he could to find the child's mother, soon learned the truth. He knew Bianca was the child of the poor woman who had been killed; and though he kept the knowledge to himself with a dread of mysterious evil, personal consequences peculiar to foreigners who do not quite understand the laws of the land—and scarcely to be wondered at—he generously resolved to take care of the little girl, to whom he did not tell the truth. Bianca believed that her mother would soon come back, until she forgot her grief; but the old man bought a little bit of black ribbon and suspended to it the solitary earring.

"Never part with it," he said. "It is a memento of your mother, pretty one."

He had a little poetry in his breast, as most Italians have, though he was only a poor organ-grinder.

Every day when he went out with his monkey and his organ, he took the child with him. She held the plate, into which the patrons of this cheap concert dropped their coin.

After awhile, he taught her to sing some little songs. Italian children can always sing; and it was no loss to him to have adopted this little creature, for he never made half as much before. The child brought him luck. One day a musician heard her sing, and offered to teach her to sing better. Her voice was full and rich. She studied carefully. She was beautiful and attractive. As she grew up the old man began to see that he must no longer take her into the street. "Stay at home, pretty one," he said. "Study at the school. A better fate awaits you than to sing before windows and catch pennies in a platter."

The girl was glad to obey. She worked harder than ever to improve. She kept the poor place neat; she cooked her adopted father's meals and made her own cheap garments neatly. Hope rose high within her, but, alas! misfortune was at hand. The old man made very little, now that his young singer was not with him. One day the monkey was killed by a larger one, who threw it from the ropes where the two dangled together—ropes swung from pulley-lines fastened to the windows of the houses. Poor Pepa was thrown to the pavement below, and his neck broken. Bread grew scarce, and the old man, lamed with rheumatism, could scarcely carry his organ about; and, at last, the hope that had inspired both perished in an hour. The kind musician died; the free music lessons were over forever, and they could never pay for instruction.

One day Bianca found her father, as she called him, actually ill, and their humble means of subsistence at an end for the present.

"Forever," said Bianca to herself, "if I cannot earn his bread in his age, as he has earned mine in my youth. Surely, even my little knowledge of music is of some avail."

Sitting with her head upon her hands, she remembered the beautiful young prima donna who sang at the opera, and whose voice she had heard through the open window of a certain great hotel.

"She is said to be charitable," she said; "at least, she would tell a poor girl if it might be possible for her to earn her living by her voice; where to apply; what to do." And, full of that ardent trust in human nature which is part of youth, she tied on her poor little hat, and made her way through the wretched streets in which she lived to the great thoroughfare in which stood the hotel which was the prima donna's home.

"Can I see signora?" she asked timidly of a servant who answered her timid ring.

"Well, it isn't likely, young woman," said the man; "she's just going out to ride. Does she know you?"

"No," said the poor girl; "but"—

"Oh—begging, or something, I suppose," said the man. "No, you can't."

"Let me be the judge," said a soft voice; and a beautiful lady clad in velvet swept toward her. "What have you to say to me?" she asked, kindly.

And Bianca was about to reply when she suddenly caught sight of something pendent from a chain which the lady wore that struck her dumb. It was an earring—a hoop of gold—the mate to that about poor Bianca's neck. She remembered how her mother had given one to each of them to quiet them on that day when she sat desolate upon a foreign shore. Strange fancies filled her mind. Could this be Francesca? If it were, would she not despise the poor organ-grinder's adopted child?—an ignorant girl, so shabby that the servants took her for a beggar.

"Come along with me, my child," said the beautiful young lady. "At least you are of my country. I know it by your accent. We have that tie. Come."

She led her to her sumptuous apartment, and closed the door.

"Now, let me know what you came for," she said, smiling.

Bianca bent her head, trembling.

"I came for something else," she said, but I can only think of one thing now—that hoop upon your chain. What is it? Where did you get it? And you look—oh! you look—you are like"—She faltered and paused.

"This bit of gold," said the lady, "is all I have to remind me of my lost mother. I wear it for that. And besides—I have been told that it may be a means of—of"— She broke off and covered her face with her hands. "Why did you notice the ring?" she said. "Of whom do I remind you?"

"Of my mother," said Bianca. "My mother, who on the day of our arrival in this country, left me with my sister upon the Battery. She was killed in the street, though I did not know of it for years afterward. An old man—good and kind, but very poor—cared for me. I never saw my sister again. I came to see you, signora, to ask you what one could do with a good voice and love for music, but with little musical education. I heard you were charitable, but—Oh, signora, what does it mean? As we sat on that bench on the Battery, my sister and I, our mother gave us each one of her golden earrings to play with. See! I have mine yet."

She drew it from her bosom.

"Your name?" cried the prima donna.

"Bianca," said the girl.

"I am Francesca!" cried the other.

She held out her arms, and the next moment the two girls sobbed upon each other's bosom.

Francesca had been adopted by a rich man, who had developed her great talent by all the means in his power. And now she herself was winning fame and fortune. A great joy had come to her in the restoration of her sister, and she took her at once and forever to her heart and home.

And the old Italian, in the comfort of a luxurious home and the society of his adopted daughter, who soon followed in her sister's footsteps, and became a great singer, found himself well repaid for his kindness to the orphan child, and ended his days in peace and happiness.

Gold is still found in quartz in California. All you need is to have somebody to pint it out.

Scott's Poetry in Western Prose.

The train had withdrawn from the castle, but Marmion lingered behind to bid adieu to Douglass. "Though something might be explained," he said, "of cold respect to a gentleman sent hither by your king's behest, while in Tantallion's towers I stayed, part me in friendship and noble earl, receive my hand."

But Douglass was out of sorts, and taking another reef in the band of his ulster, said:

"My dear sir, my manors, halls, towers, et ceters and so forth, are open at my sovereign's will to whoever he desires to send hither, no matter how unworthy such a one may be to stand in the presence of the gentleman who now has the floor," and he looked Marmion straight in the eye.

"My castles are my king's alone, he continued, "from cupola to the basement kitchen, but the hand of Douglass is his own and never shall in friendship clasp the hand of such as Marmion carries so jauntily in the breast of his cutaway." So saying he thrust his hands in his pantaloons pockets and turned on his heel.

Marmion was the maddest man in town. His swarthy cheek burned until it was red as a lobster and shook his very frame for ire. "And this to me!" he yelled; "an' 'twere not for thy gray hairs such hand as Marmion had not spared to cleave the Douglass head as if struck by lightning, and I'm not so sure but I'll do it anyhow! And I tell thee haughty peer, he who does England's message bring, although the meanest politician in the country, may well, proud Angus, be thy mate! And furthermore, my gentle gazelle, even in thy pitch of pride, here in thy hold, thy vassals and lick-spittles near—take your hand out of your hip pocket or I'll smash you—I tell thee thou are defied! And if thou saidst I am not peer to any lord in Scotland, Lowland or Highland, rich or poor, Lord Angus, you're a liar!" and he shook his fist under the Douglass nose.

It was now Douglass' turn to get mad, and he improved the excellent opportunity offered. At first he turned white and purple about the gills, and his ears wagged in awful silence. Then he broke forth:

"Darest thou to beard a family of royal Bengal tigers in their den, the Douglass in his hall? And hopest thou thence unscathed to go? No; by Saint Patrick of Bothwell, no! Up drawbridge, grooms! What, warder! let the portcullis fall, and be lively about it, while I take it out of the fellow's hide!"

The warder and grooms were on deck in an instant, but a moment was lost in running to the kitchen to get the key of the portcullis from the hired girl. Lord Marmion turned—well was his need—and dashed the rowels in his mule, that shot like an arrow through the archway, and kicked the top of the portcullis as it descended behind him. The mule along the drawbridge clattered just as it trembles on the rise. In the words of an unknown poet:

Not swifter does the swallow skim
Along the smooth lake's level brim.

When Lord Marmion reached his band, where he knew he was comparatively safe, he turned around in the saddle and yelled at the top of his voice: "I'll see you later—when I do," and shook his gauntlet at the towers.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Life Among the Comanches.

An American who has been studying the life, habits and traits of the Comanches, thinks that there are at present from 10,000 to 12,000, of whom about 2,500 are warriors. Wholly nomadic, they have no villages or fixed inhabitations, but roam and plunder 800 to 900 miles from north to south and 700 from east to west. They own large herds of horses and mules, obtaining horned cattle only for their immediate wants, because they cannot drive these as fast as they want to move. All their animals are procured by robbing the Mexicans and Americans, and all their wars are undertaken more for plunder of this sort than for any other purpose. They never take men prisoners, though they kill and scalp them; but they carry off women and children; make wives of the former, and rear the latter as their own. They have never had any permanent places of abode, as the absence of all mounds or tumuli in the territory they range over clearly proves. They seem to have been born on horseback, where they do all their fighting; and in attacking trains they always endeavor to stampede the animals by cries and war-whoops—a stampede rendering destruction of a train almost certain. If they attack a village, they kill everybody they encounter, and they drive off the stock. The chiefs of these Indians do not inherit their authority, but acquire it by superior knowledge, personal bravery, or success in war. Any social disagreement is adjusted by a council of chiefs and seniors of the lodges; but those disagreements are few, and family feuds are rare. Indeed, they live together more harmoniously than many civilized people do. Of law they have no notion, nor have they any conception of national policy. They never observe treaties any longer than self-interest prompts, in which they resemble most enlightened peoples. Their religious ideas are very crude and indefinite. In an evil spirit they do not believe, but ascribe both good and evil to the good spirit. Their conception of a future life is indistinct; but they hold that men who have stolen the most horses and taken the most scalps will have the best chance of happy hunting-grounds in another world. Fire is sacred with them, and used in all their religious observances. Ties of kindred are very strong, and extend not only to relatives by blood, but by marriage. Offenses against any member of a family are avenged by all or any one connected with it. They are polygamists, some chiefs have ten or twelve wives. The husband exercises absolute dominion over the wife, who does all the work while he fights and steals. Going into a fight they divest themselves of everything except breech-cloth and leggings. They call themselves Naiini, meaning live, or first-alive people.

"Lost—Two Golden Hours."

The following interesting letter we take from the correspondence column of the New York *Evening Post:*

"During the summer of 1875, after passing through the parks and grounds of the late Sir William Stirling-Maxwell, near Bridge of Allen, I was highly favored by an interior view and inspection of the castle and castles of his construction, and of his noble ancestors, a favor that one could scarcely expect outside of his circle of acquaintances. In the day nursery was this motto, that I have since desired to learn the origin of. If any of your many readers can aid me, it will be an esteemed favor to know whether it may have been original with him or not:

"'LOST.

"'Somewhere between sunrise and sunset,
Two Golden Hours,
Each set with sixty diamond minutes.
No reward is offered,
As they are gone forever.'

"The beauty and propriety of these few words have lingered in my mind and given zest to my daily efforts. I hope that they may be of use to others, through your valuable columns."

A FRUIT GROWER'S MURDER.

Sacramento's Public Administrator Convicted of the Crime—How and Why it was Committed.

In the trial of Troy Dye, ex-public administrator of Sacramento county, Cal., for the murder of A. M. Tullis, a wealthy fruit grower of Grand island, near Sacramento, the jury, after twenty minutes' deliberation, brought in the verdict, "Guilty of murder in the first degree."

The crime was committed on the night of August 1st, of last year. Its object was to enable Dye, in his capacity as public administrator, to get hold of Tullis' estate, the latter's heirs living at a distance. At the time of his death Tullis was the largest fruit grower on the Sacramento river, having one large orchard and large interests in two others. His gains in the fruit season were at the rate of a thousand dollars a day, and he had accumulated from $80,000 to $100,000 before his body was found cold and stiff in his orchard on the morning of August 2d. When Dye, as public administrator, applied for letters of administration, he rated the estate at $50,000, his object being to secure all over that amount. The killing of Tullis on any other ground being objectless, the theory was formed, soon after the murder, that either his relatives had committed the crime to secure the estate as his heirs, or that Dye had done the deed to take possession as public administrator. As Tullis' relatives—a brother and a nephew—were from 300 to 3,000 miles from the scene, suspicion fastened upon Dye, who was discovered to be in the neighborhood of Tullis' ranch the night of the murder. He was arrested on August 12th. As he had up to that time borne an irreproachable reputation his arrest was a shock to the community. Two days later he made a confession of the crime in the presence of the district attorney and others. The murder was not committed by him, but by Clark, his partner in a saloon venture, and by Anderson, a former employee in Dye's butcher shop, Dye having other occupations besides that of public administrator. Anderson, being arrested, also made a confession. Dye said that he first thought of killing Tullis in the spring, having heard of the wealth the fruit grower was acquiring. At that time Anderson offered to kill any one Dye would name for $100, and he confessed to the committal of two murders already.

After Dye made up his mind to murder Tullis, he enlisted Clark as well as Anderson, and the first endeavor was to poison Tullis. Clark visited the fruit grower on pretense of business, and left behind as a parting present a bottle, ostensibly containing a choice cordial, but which really contained poison. For some reason this scheme miscarried, and then it was determined to waylay Tullis and shoot him. A boat was built at Dye's house in Sacramento, in which Anderson and Clark rowed to Tullis' fruit ranch, which was on an island, while Dye waited for them on the main bank. This was toward evening on August first. After they had landed Clark concealed himself while Anderson went to look for Tullis, who presently came near where Clark was lying. Anderson asked Tullis for work, but was told that Chinamen were preferred. He managed to get behind Tullis, so that he could strike him with a sandbag. Although shaken by the blow, Tullis closed with Anderson, while the dog tore the assassin's trousers and barked. Clark, coming to the rescue, fired at Tullis with a pistol, but apparently missed. Saying to Anderson, "Stand back," Clark fired again, hitting Tullis in the back. Putting the pistol to the back of Tullis' head, he fired again. Tullis fell on his face. Anderson had already run to the boat, and Clark then followed. The two rowed back in the boat, which they then broke up and threw into the river. Anderson also tore up and destroyed his trousers, thinking there was blood on them. They then met Dye, who carried them back to Sacramento.

Hat Poisoning.

An "Old Hatter" writes to the Newark (N. J.) *Advertiser:* In your paper of the 29th ult., there was an article headed "How Hatters are Poisoned." The men are afflicted with a nervous shaking of the hands and arms, and sometimes of the head; and I have known instances where the teeth could be picked out with the fingers. In many cases they are unable to get a cup to their lips without help. The affliction is called "The Shakes," and, as stated, is charged to the "carrot" used on the fur. It is made by saturating nitric acid with quicksilver, to one part of which an eighth of water is used to wet the fur on the skins, and when dry a hot iron is passed over them, which gives the fur a yellow tinge called yellow carrot. This has been used ever since hat bodies have been made of fur, and until of late without any bad effects, and in some of the large factories the men are not troubled. I believe the workmen on fancy colors are exempt from them, although the same carrot is used—only the ironing is omitted and is called white carrot. But I suspect the black color has much to do with the trouble. The salts of copper are all poison, and they abound in the dust from the hats; especially in badly-ventilated rooms, which are where the "shakes" are found to prevail in the winter and disappear as the weather will permit of free ventilation in the spring.

The writer has worked at the business many years in the largest factories, has made the carrot and used it without being in the least affected by it, and feels satisfied that some other cause must be at the bottom of the trouble. The furs are now nearly all prepared in Europe, and some other chemicals may be used, but I think not. I find in Ure's Dictionary of the Arts the same formula. The use of carrot on the fur is to make its felt close and firm, which raw stock will not do. I would suggest to the doctor to see if arsenic may not be the cause. Examine the verdigris used for it.

Nearly all the hats worn in the United States are made in Newark, Orange, Danbury, Norwalk and Brookline, amounting to many millions of dollars yearly, and employing thousands of men and women, New York being the great center of distribution for all the country.

A Locomotive in a Quicksand.

The Leavenworth (Kan.) *Times* says: Mention was made in the *Times* during the summer of a singular accident which occurred on the Kansas Pacific road at the bridge crossing Kiowa creek, forty-two miles east of Denver, in which an engine attached to a freight train went through the bridge into the bed of the creek, instantly disappearing in the quicksand and baffling all attempts to recover it. For the past six months the search for the missing locomotive has been kept up, resulting in success two or three days ago, when it was found buried forty feet deep in the quicksand. The sand had been removed for a great number of yards around the scene of the disappearance of the engine, a hydraulic ram being used, the locomotive being found at last after a search of six months. The instance is one of the most remarkable on record.

DISASTERS DURING 1878.

An Appalling Record of Loss of Life on Land and Sea.

The record of the disasters of 1878 is an appalling one. On September 3, the iron screw collier Bywell Castle crashed into the slightly-built excursion steamer Princess Alice, as both were rounding the bend of the Thames at Tripcock's point, and sank her almost instantly. Exactly how many lives were lost will never be known. Seven hundred is a low estimate, and as the majority were women and children out for a day's pleasuring, the collision is certainly the most distressing in marine history. The report of the official inquiry declared that the collision was caused by the bad and careless steering of the Princess Alice.

On March 25, the Eurydice capsized in a squall off Dunnose, isle of Wight, as she was within half an hour of her anchorage, and carried down, in sight of their homes, 300 lads who were being trained for the British navy. There were but two survivors; but happily their testimony established that the disaster was due solely to the danger of the sea.

The German navy also suffered a severe loss. On the last day of May, a squadron was engaged in naval maneuvering in the English channel, when the Grosser Kurfurst struck and sunk the Koenig Wilhelm as they were wearing ship to avoid a merchantman. Two hundred and ninety lives were lost, including thirteen officers. The verdict attributed the collision to a "mistake" of the Koenig Wilhelm's helmsman.

On the night of November 25, the iron bark Moel Eilian ran down and sank the Pommerania, one of the finest steamers of the Hamburg-American line. About fifty-five lives were lost by this collision.

Seventeen lives were lost by the collision on October 31, off Tuscar light, between the National line steamship Helvetia and the British cutter Fanny; and about 150 by the Byzantin-Rinaldo collision in the Dardanelles on the night of December 18.

An explosion of fire-damp in the Abercorn colliery, South Wales, on September 11, caused 251 deaths.

On October 11, the audience of the Colosseum theater, in Liverpool, in their mad rush for escape from the building at a careless or malicious but entirely groundless alarm of fire, trampled thirty-seven of their number to death.

In this country there were but few marine disasters. On the 31st of January, in the same southeast gale which caused the loss of seven lives at Manhattan beach by sweeping several houses into Sheepshead bay, the Metropolis, bound to Para, went ashore on Carrituck beach, on the North Carolina coast, and about twenty miles north of the scene of the wreck of the ill-fated Huron. Ninety-one lives were lost.

Murder or manslaughter, however, are the only words properly descriptive of the loss of fifteen lives by the explosion of the Adelphi's boilers on the 28th of September, near Gregory's point, in Long Island sound. On the inquest it was shown that the boiler needed patching within a month after its inspection, and that it exploded within a month after the repairs. The iron of the boiler was only one-half the reported thickness, and near the rupture it was actually only one-thirty-second of an inch thick.

Twenty lives were lost by the collision on December 1, between the Mississippi river steamers Cotton Valley and Charles Morgan, and thirty six by the foundering on December 10, of the Emily B. Sonder, on her trip from New York city to Kingston, Jamaica.

A shocking disaster, which cannot be called an accident, was the collision on October 8, of an excursion train on the Old Colony railroad with a freight train which was being switched. Twenty-two persons were killed and 120 were wounded. The inquest found conductors of both trains and the engineer of one, guilty of negligence; and as one conductor testified that he was switching his train because he "supposed" the excursion train had passed, and when he saw it approaching, sent out no signals because he "supposed" the engineer had done so, he was held and indicted, but has not yet been punished for manslaughter. The accident is estimated to cost the railroad company $325,000. Another engineer employed by the Pittsburgh, Cincinnati and St. Louis company, whose watch was slow, but who "supposed" he had time to go on, killed fifteen persons by dashing his train into another on August 7.

The list of railroad accidents may be closed by the breaking under an excursion train of the bridge over the Farmington river, on the line of the Connecticut Western railroad. This occurred on January 16, and it is not yet certain whether the bridge broke because it was not originally strong enough or because it had been suffered to decay, or whether the accident was not caused by train-wreckers.

Flax Culture.

The common flax is a native of Egypt or possibly the elevated plains of central Asia, but though no doubt a native of warm climates, the fiber attains its greatest fineness and perfection in temperate regions; the seed being richer in the tropics. Flax is more extensively and more successfully cultivated in Belgium than in any other European country, particularly in East and West Flanders, in which the most beautiful flax in Europe is produced, being employed for the manufacture of the famous Brussels lace, and sold for this purpose at $500 to $900 per ton. Immense quantities of an inferior product are also raised and exported from Russia, especially from the countries bordering on the Baltic. The cultivation of flax was introduced into Ireland from the low countries before the close of the seventeenth century. Flax has been cultivated from time immemorial as a winter crop in India, but only for its seed, and not at all for its fiber.

The estimated production of flax in Russia in 1868, was 193,000 tons; in 1869, 300,000 tons. In Holland there were in 1869, 66,272 statute acres under flax, producing 13,921 tons; in 1870, 60,520 acres, producing 8,918 tons. In Belgium, there were at the latest official census, 142,612 acres under flax, producing 29,582 tons. In Prussia, in 1870, throughout the eight old provinces 346,300 acres under flax, while in Austria there were in 1871, 253,730 acres under flax, producing 44,523 tons. In Hungary, the yield was 18,150 tons. The average acreage appropriated to the growth of flax in France, is 160,550 statute acres, and about 15,000 acres are sown with flax in Egypt every year. The entire produce in Ireland has never exceeded 64,506 tons (1864), and it has sunk as low as 12,929 tons (in 1871). The acreage under flax in Ireland in 1864, was 301,698; in 1868, 206,446, and in 1871, 156,883.

The acreage under flax, however, is not always an accurate guide to the produce, since in 1871, 156,883 acres produced only 13,612 tons of flax, while in 1872, 122,003 acres produced 18,920 tons. In 1872 there were 14,011 acres under flax in England, eighty-four in Wales, and 1,262 in Scotland. In 1870 the United States produced 13,567 tons of flax, of which quantity the State of Ohio alone raised 8,940 tons. Thirty-two States produce flax in large or small quantities.

TIMELY TOPICS.

Herman Scheel, with one assistant, has taken $18,000 from his mine, near Silver City, Nevada, in five months.

Iceboats are used on the Hudson at Newburg, to transport passengers across the river, and they send along at the rate of sixty miles an hour.

Gueting, a murderer in prison at Indianapolis, being visited in his solitary cell by a mouse, caught his visitor and amused himself by torturing it to death.

A sailor on Senator Burnside o Rhode Island, recently found him writing a speech on the army bill, using as stimulants a pot of hot tea and a music box, which he now and then wound up.

The proportion of soldiers who can read and write in the several armies of Europe is as follows: Germany, 965 in 1,000; Sweden, 930; England, 860; Holland, 750; Belgium, 700; France, 635; Portugal, 495; Spain, 490; Austria, 460; Italy, 450; Russia, 115; Turkey, 75.

Quite a flutter has been caused among the lawyers of St. Louis, by the opinion of the Missouri supreme court that the whole 700 of them are as clearly liable to taxation as merchants, hucksters or auctioneers, and must pay their annual license fee of twenty-five dollars like men.

The case of Benjamin Scull and others against the United States, in which a colossal claim was set up under a Spanish grant to 11,000 square miles of land embracing twenty-four counties in the States of Missouri and Arkansas, has been decided by the United States supreme court adversely to the claimants.

An Iowa paper reports that William H. Jones, of Lincoln township, Ill., performed the feat of husking 128 bushels and sixty-five pounds of corn in eleven hours and a quarter. The corn was husked, weighed and cribbed in the above-stated time. A Rock Island man claims to have husked 125 bushels in eleven hours and a half, but it was guessed at.

There are now in the United States ten Roman Catholic archbishops and fifty-five bishops, against six of the former and twenty-seven of the latter in 1850. The number of priests was then 1,800, and of churches, 1,073; while there are now 5,634 priests and 5,548 churches. The colleges have increased from seventeen to seventy-four, and the Roman Catholic population has doubled.

The perfume manufacturers in the department of the Maritime Alps consume annually 6,000 hundredweight of roses, and the neighborhood of Grasse and Cannes is thickly studded with rose farms. On one hectare of two and a half acres 30,000 bushes are planted; a single bush yielding for twelve years. A single hectare in good cultivation will net an average profit of twenty-four per cent. per year.

It will sound a bit funny when the forty-nine Dakotas take their seats in the chapel of Hampton institute, near Norfolk, Va., to hear the "Faculty-man" call out behind his specs: "Man-That-Looks-Around, Frank Yellow-Bird, Laughing Face, Man-That-Hoots, One-Who-Comes-Flying, Lizzie Spider and Walking Cloud." The government will pay the institute $167 apiece for one year's instruction.

An attack by wolves in the streets of an American village is an unusual occurrence, but it was the experience of Mr. Miner, of Joselyn, Minn. Five of these animals, sprang at his horse and tried to get into his wagon, but his dog coming up diverted the attention of the animals who immediately seized and devoured him. His wife and three children, who were with him, at length brought assistance by their incessant shouting.

During the year 1878 forty-eight American railroads, with a mileage of 3,902 miles and an invested capital of $311,631,000, were sold or passed into the hands of receivers, the totals for three years being 132 roads, 11,623 miles and $728,463,000 of capital. In that period one-seventh of the total mileage and considerably more than one-seventh of the total capital investment have passed through the final stage of bankruptcy.

An eagle measuring eighty-four inches from tip to tip of wings swooped down upon a flock of geese on the farm of Samuel McCune, near Zanesville, Ohio, when a terrible combat ensued for twenty minutes. Feathers flew in all directions, the geese standing up heroically to the work. The eagle succeeded in killing one and wounding several others, but was himself captured by a farmer, in a condition of sore distress. Its naked talons measured two and one-half inches.

The London *Daily News* finds it not easy to determine on account of what event the year 1878 is most likely to become historical. Will it be as the year of the Berlin congress? Will it be as the year of the war in Afghanistan? With many persons no doubt its chief title to fame will seem to be the fact that it is the year of the great exposition in Paris. Others will probably long think of it as the year in which Pope Pius IX. died, others, again, as the year that saw the death of the first king of Italy.

At Princeton, Ill., three brothers of the poet Bryant live, all of them farmers; good, solid men, conspicuous for a sturdy purpose, and a certain inflexible honesty, but not more than ordinarily gifted; that is, two of them are not. Mr. John Howard Bryant is more than an amateur poet. Some of his works have been widely copied, and a few of them have found their way into the enduring form of book. The residence of Mr. J. H. Bryant is the finest house that side of Chicago, and it was a gift from the poet to his brother.

Indiscriminate kissing does not generally have the very best results, as some of America's sensational court records go to show. The physicians of the late Princess Alice have serious charges against kissing. They have investigated the cause of the peculiar virulence of the diphtheria which attacked her family with such fatal results, and have agreed that the rapid spread of the infection was entirely due to imprudent kissing. A child with a sore throat ought not to be permitted to kiss any of its companions.

"Your daughter has treated me very curt"—and the young man was lifted by the parental hoof from the door of his girl's house to the middle of the horse-car track. He arose as quick as he could, and mildly explained that he hadn't finished the word, which was "courteous," and Alphonso was taken under the unhospitable roof once more, had his pants mended, was done up in a salve, and then sent home to his ma in a hack. Thus is true greatness rewarded, and impetuosity rebuked.—*Boston Traveler.*

GAMES.

Amusements for the Winter Evening.

THE MANDARINS.

The leader of the game says to the right-hand neighbor: "My ship has come from China." The other asks: "What has it brought?" The first one replies: "A fan;" and with her right-hand makes gestures as though fanning herself. All the other players do the same. The second player then says to the third: "My ship has come from China;" and in answer to the question "What has it brought?" replies: "Two fans;" fanning herself with both hands, her gestures being imitated by all her companions. The third player, on announcing the possession of "three fans," to keep moving the right foot, without ceasing the motion of her two hands. The others, of course, doing the same. At "four fans," both feet and both hands must be kept moving; at "five fans," both feet, both hands and the right eyelid; at "six fans," both hands, both feet and both eyes; at "seven fans," both hands, both feet, both eyes and the mouth, and at "eight fans," both feet, both hands, both eyes, the mouth and the head. This movement, executed at once by the whole of the players, will give them a most ludicrous resemblance to a party of Chinese mandarins.

THE METAMORPHOSES.

Each player is in turn metamorphosed, that is to say, chooses what animal or thing he or she would wish to become. For instance, a lady says: "I would like to be a mirror." The leader of the game then goes around the company, saying: "If this lady was a mirror what would you do with it, what would you think of it, and where would you place it?" When all of the answers are collected and written down, the leader reads them aloud to the metamorphosed lady, who has to guess by whom they were written.

A forfeit is paid by every person guessed, and by the lady herself, if she does not succeed in rightly divining the author of at least one or more of the speeches.

The great art of this game consists in paying delicate and pleasing compliments to the person metamorphosed through the medium of the object she herself has chosen. Thus in reply to the three questions: "If the lady were a mirror what would you do with it, what would you think of it and where would place it?" a person might reply: "I would allow it to reflect no image but my own; I should think it as pure and polished as the lady herself; and should place it where it would always be in my sight."

THE BAKER.

One player takes the part of the buyer and stands on one side, whilst the others form themselves into a file, standing one behind the other, the one at the head of the column calling herself the "baker," those coming after her "the oven," and the last one in the row "the little loaf." The baker, as we shall see, does not long retain her domination. When the file is formed the buyer approaches and asks for a "little loaf." The baker replies: "It is behind the oven." The buyer turns to the right and goes to fetch it, but the "little loaf," namely, the player at the end of file, leaves her place, runs to the left, crying: "Who runs! who runs!" and endeavors to place herself in front of the baker, whose name and office she then assumes. If the buyer is able to catch her before she attains her object she pays a forfeit and becomes buyer, the former one taking the place of the baker and the game going on as before. It should be played quickly, the questions and answers following each other without a moment's hesitation.

Why they Explode.

The *Scientific American* explains the philosophy of kerosene lamp explosions. Read and learn how to avoid danger: All explosions of petroleum lamps are caused by the vapor or gas that collects in the space above the oil. Of course, a full lamp contains no gas, but immediately on lighting the lamp consumption of oil begins, soon leaving a space for gas, which commences to form as the lamp warms up; and after burning a short time sufficient gas will accumulate to form an explosion. The gas in a lamp will explode only when ignited. In this respect it is like gunpowder. Cheap or inferior oil is always the most dangerous. The flame is communicated to the gas in the following manner: The wick tube in the lamp-burners is made larger than the wick which is to pass through it. It would not do to have the wick work tightly in the burner; on the contrary, it is essential that it move up and down with perfect ease. In this way it is unavoidable that space in the tube is left along the side of the wick sufficient for the flame from the burner to pass down into the lamp and explode the gas.

Many things occur to cause the flame to pass down the wick and explode the lamp. 1. A lamp may be standing on the table or mantel, and a slight puff of air from the open window or door may cause an explosion. 2. A lamp may be taken up quickly from a table or mantel and instantly exploded. 3. A lamp is taken into an entry where there is a draught, or out of doors, and an explosion ensues. 4. A lighted lamp is taken up a flight of stairs, or is raised quickly to place it on a mantel, resulting in an explosion. In these instances the mischief is done by the air movement, either by suddenly checking the draught or forcing air down the chimney against the flame. 5. Blowing down the chimney to extinguish the light is a frequent cause of explosion. 6. Lamp explosions have been caused by using a chimney broken off at the top, or one that has a piece broken, whereby the draught is variable and the flame unsteady. 7. Sometimes a thoughtless person puts a small-sized wick in a large burner, thus leaving considerable space along the edges of the wick. 8. An old burner, with its air draughts closed up, which rightfully should be thrown away, is sometimes continued in use, and the final result is an explosion.

Those Husking Parties.

And the husking parties—hold me for a minute! I went to one once; had I been twenty years older then how I would have sketched it for you; but I was only a boy, and I've only a boy's remembrance. I only remember the lanterns strung on cords from one great beam to the other, each comer bringing his own lantern. I remember the lights and the darkness overhead; the bright flashes and the great shadows that swallowed them up; and the hens that nodded and blinked on the scaffolding and the one fool of a rooster that kept crowing, thinking that he morning had come; and the huge pile of yellow ears that grew and grew in size; and the greater pile of straw-colored husks that were thrown backward and pushed out until they blocked the great barn doorway; and the sleepy c