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Destiny

1856.

aris, from threats of iron, silver, brass,
Joy-thundering cannon, blent with chiming bells,
And martial strains, the full-voiced pæan swells.
The air is starred with flags, the chanted mass
Throngs all the churches, yet the broad streets swarm,
With glad-eyed groups who chatter, laugh and pass
In holiday confusion, class with class.
And over all the spring, the sun-floods warm
In the imperial palace that March morn,
The beautiful young mother lay and smiled;
For by her side just breathed the prince, her child,
Heir to an empire, to the purple born,
Crowned with the Titan's name that stirs the heart
Like a blown clarion—one more Bonaparte.

—*Emma Lazarus, in Scribner.*

The Owl's Matins.

Behold the East with gates ajar,
Through which the morning peeps.
Hail, dawning light and fading star!
Awake the world that sleeps!
Sing heigh ho! to whit, to whoo!
Fair Phœbus upward leaps.

The glow-worm pales her amorous light
The fire-fly flickers dim.
The god of day shuts out the night,
And lights the ocean's rim.
Sing heigh ho! to whit, to whoo!
The world awakes to him.

In flaming glow his orbit see,
High o'er the mountain crest,
Drips sparkling light from out the sea
And lights the owlet's nest.
Sing heigh ho! to whit, to whoo!
I take my flight to rest.

—*Christopher C. Merritt.*

Watering the Hills.

"He watereth the hills from His chambers."—Ps. civ., 13.

Oh! the rippling and the foaming,
Falling not from dawn till gloaming,
Where the rapids are descending, as for ages they have done;
On each downward platform taking
Just a moment's rest, then breaking
Into sweet enchanting laughter at the gleeful triumph won;
All the latent echoes waking
With the fun!

Sweeping from their rocky portal,
Robed at once in light immortal,
Bringing infinite revealings from the silences profound;
How the little eddies whiten,
And the longer reaches brighten,
As the showers of brilliant dewdrops on their silvery slopes rebound;
Falling into gems that lighten
All around.

When the sunbeams come unbidden
To behold the marvel hidden,
All the waters take them captive, to adorn their raiment white;
But the rainbow tells the wonder
Of the radiance lying under,
And the sun in regal beauty stoops to claim his own by right,
Till the ripples fall asunder—
Lost in light!

On the brink the mosses glisten,
And the grasses stop to listen
To the never-ending music of the waters flashing by;
Overhead the elm-trees stately,
In their hearts rejoicing greatly
At the springs of welcome coolness that beneath their strongholds lie,
Spread their myriad leaves sedately
To the sky.

When at night the stars assemble
In the far blue heavens, and tremble
At their own reflected splendor, on the torrent borne away,
Then the laughing waves discover
How the moon—earth's timid lover—
Watches for the perfect mirror they have broken in their play;
Watches—with the stars above her—
Till the day.

Through all seasons' varied phrases,
Still the waters speak their praises
Of the Power that sweeps them outward, in their fullness to the deep;
All their rush and tumult guiding,
For each drop a path dividing,
Till in far-off breadths of ocean each its destined place shall keep,
And at last, in calm subsiding,
Fall asleep.

—*Mary Rowles, in Sunday Magazine.*

JACK'S GREAT PERIL.

I never saw such a change in a man in my life! When we last met, Jack—well, I must not give his real name, considering what I am going to relate, so I'll call him Jack Pallant—was, as he had ever been since I knew him, one of the lightest-hearted, cheeriest fellows in the world, full of fun and up to everything, and as gentle and tender as a woman, with the courage of a lion. And now, what did I find him? Even though but three months had elapsed, he had become a grave, debonair, saddened man—in a word, hardly recognizable, either mentally or physically. I was shocked, and of course he saw that I was. He came to see me, indeed, the moment he heard I was in town, that I might learn from his own mouth what had happened, instead of at second-hand.

Jack had always been more or less a spoiled boy—only sons are always more or less spoiled—and being petted by his mother when quite a child, it was not wonderful that his poor old dad made much of him. But he had taken the spoiling kindly, and beyond making him perhaps a little idle and thoughtless, it had done him no harm. There was no harm in the fellow; he spent more money than he should, but many young soldiers do that without much regret or grief in the long run, and his father, a soldier before him, regarded the failing leniently, paid his bills and looked pleasant. Beyond adding that he was a rather short, dapper little fellow, I need not say much more about him; I have only to try and put into coherent shape the strange and tragical business which had so fearfully altered him.

He was coming to town one autumn evening for a few days' leave from Gunnershoit, where he was quartered. I can see him as plainly as if I had been there, springing into the first carriage that offered room, without regard to who was in it; for he was the least fastidious of men, without the slightest particle of "hawhaw" pride and nonsense, or that stand-off-ishness of manner, too usual with men in his position; ready to make himself happy wherever he was, or in whatever company.

But it so happened, it appears, on this occasion that he got into an empty carriage; at least he thought so, for it was twilight, and he did not observe for the first moment the figure of a woman, seated in a further corner, dressed in dark clothes and thickly veiled.

The sudden discovery that he was not alone rather startled him for a moment, and it may be, as he said, that the evening before having been a guest night at mess, his nerves were not quite up to their usual tone. He was not the lad, however, to be long in such a situation without making some remark to his fellow-traveler, though in this case an unusual hesitation to do so came over him, owing to her mysterious appearance and extreme stillness. The between-lights of the carriage lamp and the evening sky prevented him from discerning details; but there she sat, perfectly rigid, and with not a vestige of her face visible, through the thick black vail.

"Ahem! ahem!" he said at last, shifting one seat nearer to her and nearly opposite; "I hope I have not intruded on you; I thought the carriage was empty. I may be disturbing you, I fear." He would say anything, in a random sort of way, to break the ice, as he called it.

No answer. A long pause. "Very singular," he thought; and he moved to a seat exactly opposite to the figure, making another commonplace observation. No response, or any movement.

"Asleep, I suppose," he said to himself; and he sat quietly watching her, while the train rattled on for a mile or two. A station was reached and a stoppage made, with the usual accompaniments of screech and whistling and slamming of doors, but without producing any change in the posture of the occupant of the opposite corner. The train again moved on. "Can't be asleep," he muttered. "What's the matter with her?"

The window was shut close; he let it down with a tremendous clatter and bang, remarking that "he hoped, as the evening was fine, the weather warm and the carriage close" (for he declared to me there was a peculiar odor hanging about which struck him from the first) "she would not object to a little air."

Still no reply. Then he said "he feared she was not well. Would she like him to pull the bell for the guard and have the train stopped again?" But nothing he could say or do elicited any sign of life from her.

Jack now became seriously uncomfortable and alarmed on her account. He thought she could not be asleep, but had fainted. Suddenly it crossed his mind that she was dead. Night had now closed in, but as the last tinge of twilight faded from the sky the carriage lamp gained its full power and revealed every object more plainly than hitherto. Jack leaned toward the motionless form. A long black veil, falling from a close-fitting hat-like bonnet, enveloped nearly the whole upper part of her figure; indeed, on close inspection, it hardly looked like an ordinary veil, but more like a large thin, black silk handkerchief. Her dress was of common black stuff, much worn and frayed, from amid the folds of which appeared the ends of a piece of rope that must have been fastened round her waist; and one hand, encased in an old, ill-fitting black glove, lay placidly on her lap.

Full of uncomfortable sensations, Jack was about to lift the veil, when, for the first time, the figure moved; its hand stole slowly from underneath the folds of the dress, and the veil was gradually lifted and thrown up over the head.

Involuntarily my friend shrank back into the corner of his seat, for a face was revealed to him which no one could have looked upon without a sense of awe. It was that of a woman somewhat past middle age, thin, haggard and pale to a degree which only death could parallel. The features, finely chiseled and proportioned, showed that at one time there must have been supreme beauty, while, though the iron-gray hair looked a little disheveled and unkempt, the glance of the eye was steady, calm and determined.

In this glance lay, chiefly, the awe inspiring expression of the face, for, in addition to the penetrating look, there was a persistency in it, and at the same time a fascination, quite terrible. It fixed itself upon Jack from the first moment that eye met eye, and for several minutes not a word was spoken on either side. Presently, however, he tried to pull himself together, and to assume his usual light-hearted manner, which had thus for a minute been so strangely and unusually disturbed, and he said, briskly:

"I beg your pardon; I was afraid you were ill."

She slightly bent her head, but spoke not a word, nor withdrew her glance.

He felt more and more that it was costing him an effort to be himself. Her slow, stealthy, albeit lady-like demeanor, added greatly to the effect already produced, and a curious sensation was gradually creeping over him, that—impossible as it might seem—that face was not strange to him. Little as he, with his temperament, was given to speculation or introspection, he found himself striving to look back for some event or circumstance in his life which might give him a clew. Had he ever dreamed of such a face, or had he seen it in childhood? He was puzzled, affected, quite put out. And still the deep, penetrating eyes were fixed on his, piercing as it were into his very soul. And the hands! what were they doing? Taking off the gloves as with a set, deliberate purpose; and the long, white, thin, almost claw-like fingers worked strangely and nervously, slowly closing and opening upon the palm, as if preparing to grasp something.

Again he strove to throw off the unpleasant, unusual sensation which had crept over him.

"I can't stand this," he thought; "I was never so uncomfortable in all my life! I must do something, or say something to put a stop to this, to make her take her eyes off me!"

He moved abruptly to the further corner of the carriage, and to the same side on which the woman sat.

"I'll try and dodge her in that way," he said to himself; "she shall not sit and glare at me in this fashion!"

But she too immediately shifted her place, and, rising to her full height, which was very great, went over to the seat exactly opposite to him, never for one single second dropping her eyes from his. He looked out of the window with a vague notion of getting out of the carriage; when suddenly, passing a little station which he recognized, but at which the train did not stop, an idea struck him—an idea after his own heart—a comic idea! He availed himself of it on the instant, and assuming an ease which double-shotted all upon him, and which he was far from feeling, he pointed with his thumb back toward the station they had just passed, as he said mysteriously in a hollow voice:

"Do you know that place?"

She seemed to answer in the affirmative by a slight inclination of the head as before.

"Ah! you do. Good! Longmoor," he went on; "then I don't mind telling you about my secret. He paused. ("I'll frighten her," he thought.) "Criminal lunatics," he said aloud; "I am one of them. I have just escaped from there!"

He leaned forward, as if to impress her with his words; she also bent forward until her lips almost touched his ear, as she hissed into it:

"So have I!"

With what had already gone before, this put the finishing touch on Jack's uneasiness of mind. It was not, as he said, the mere presence of the woman, or the revelation which his joke had elicited, which scared him, though the circumstance in itself might be unpleasant enough.

"I should have faced it right away from the first, as any man would have done, had it not been for the remarkable influence her face and look had upon me; that unaccountable feeling that she was no stranger to me, it was, that unnerved, and even appalled me."

No sooner had she uttered the words, "So have I," than Jack sprang to the cord communicating with the guard's van, for he felt their truth, and saw in them a key to the whole mystery. But ere his hand had reached the cord, she had seized him round the waist with one arm as with the grip of a vise, and at the same instant he felt one of those terrible hands at his throat.

Every effort to release himself was fruitless; her strength seemed superhuman, and was as far beyond his as was her stature. Her face glowered close down upon his now, still with the same fell expression.

"The only thing I could have done," went on Jack, in describing the scene to me—and just here, he shall speak for himself—"the only means by which I might perhaps have made her relax her hold would have been by aiming one or two tremendous blows with my right fist (which was at liberty) at her face. Had it been a man's, there would have been no hesitation; had it been indeed that of an ordinary woman, at such a pass I should not have hesitated to strike her, to stun her, if I could, by any means; but that face, that I seemed to know so well, yet so mysteriously, I could not raise my hand against it, and, as my arm swung up with the first impulse to deal her a blow, it fell helpless by my side. Vain were my efforts to get her hand away from my throat; there was a terrible swaying to and fro for a minute or two. I felt the grip of the long fingers tightening, and myself choking. Suddenly we fell, the whole carriage seemed to be falling—there was a fearful lurch or two, a strange upheaving of the floor, a tremendous rattle and crash—I appeared to be thrown headlong to some great distance, and—all was darkness!"

The termination of that deadly struggle was brought about in a manner as marvelous and unlooked for as could well have been imagined.

Some fifty souls, say, were traveling in that train—all, save one, in apparent security. Jack's life alone was in danger, when, lo! by one of those marvelous coincidences which do happen at times in the supreme moments of existence, the rescue came, but at the cost of many a life, which but just before would have seemed worth treble the price of Jack's.

At the very instant that his might have depended upon another tightening grip or two from the hand of a maniac a frightful catastrophe occurred to the train. The tire of an engine-wheel broke and half a dozen carriages were hurled down a steep embankment. The scene that succeeded is, unhappily, of too common an occurrence to need more than a word of reference here. Seven passengers were killed outright and double that number slightly or badly hurt, the remainder escaping, as by a miracle, with nothing else than a severe shaking.

My friend was among the shaken. He had been thrown clear of the debris on to a soft, grassy spot, half bank, half hedge; emphatically, his life was saved!

But what followed it was that which caused the suffering—that wrought the terrible change in Jack.

In the darkness of that soft autumn night he strove, foremost among those who had been spared, to render such help as was possible to the less fortunate. When the official assistance came, and fires were set blazing to give light, almost his first care was to try and seek out his dangerous fellow-traveler. In the confusion nobody was prepared, of course, to listen to Jack's account of her, even had he been prepared then to give it. She was not, evidently, moving about among the crowd; he assured himself of that; but supposing her, like himself, to have escaped injury (and he concluded that this was likely), might she not, with the stealth and cunning incidental to her malady, be hiding, and be thus further eluding detention, become, with her homicidal mania, as dangerous to the community at large as some fierce wild animal would be? The thought made him shudder; he must lose no time in assuring himself of her fate.

As soon as an approach to order could be evolved out of that awful chaos, he had convinced himself that she was not among the injured. Then he turned to the dead. His eye fell upon several mutilated and motionless forms, which had been laid in an ominous row at the foot of one part o the embankment. Hers was not among them; he could find no trace of her.

At length, as a sickly dawn was beginning to make the search easier, he endeavored to discover the spot where the carriage he had occupied had fallen, and to retrace his steps (quite to the rear of the train, by the way) to the place where he found himself lying after the catastrophe.

By this time he had made known briefly to some officials that a woman was missing who had been in the carriage with him, and one or two of them followed him in his quest. Presently he realized pretty well where he had been thrown; he all but identified the spot. Then he scrambled through the hedge, and there, on the opposite side, on the sloping bank of a ditch, he beheld, lying quite still, her dark, unmistakable form.

He ran forward, and, bending over her and looking down upon the marble, up-turned face, saw at a glance that there was nothing dangerous about her now—those terrible eyes were closed forever. Except for a slight wound on one temple, whence a little blood had trickled, and the distorted but now rigid-closed hand, which had been so lately at his throat, she looked as calm and unnatured as if she were merely sleeping, while death had restored for a brief period much of that beauty, the traces of which had struck him when her vail was first lifted.

One of the surgeons here came hurrying up, in answer to summons.

"Good heavens!" he exclaimed; "there she is, then, at last! Why, she must have been in the train. How on earth did she manage it?"

"Who is she?" inquired Jack, earnestly, with a strange return of the old, inexplicable sensation. "Who is she? You appear to know her. Pray tell me."

"Oh, one of our inmates; she got away yesterday morning; no one knows how," was the answer.

"You are from Longmoor, then. How long has she been there? What is her name?"

"Oh, she has been there upward of twenty years, I believe; long before my time."

"And her name?"

"Upon my word, at this moment, I can hardly," went on the doctor, mechanically passing his fingers over one of the pulseless wrists before him, and with a calm fascination which contrasted strongly with Jack's earnest, impetuous manner, "I can hardly remember. I think she was committed for the murder of her own little girl. It was a sad case, I know. Ah! her name; I have it," went on the doctor suddenly; "her name was Pallant—Rachel Pallant."

Jack sprang from the kneeling posture in which he was as if he had been shot. Why, that was his own proud mother's name! But, pshaw! what of that? Well, it was rather a startling coincidence; that was all. Ay, but was it all? Indeed no!

The request led to a revelation. That inquiry fully explained what had been the nature of the influence which the weird, pale face and strange presence had had upon my friend.

The strong but subtle link, which no time or absence can quite sunder, existing between mother and son, had made itself felt the instant those two sat face to face, for the unhappy woman was indeed none other than Jack's own mother.

He had never been told—in fact, it had been carefully kept from him. Why run the risk of clouding for life that bright and happy temperament? He was only four years old when the dreadful business happened. Hence he had scarcely known a mother's care; she was lost to him and to the world as completely as if she had died. Nay, death would have been a mercy by comparison, and it was generally assumed that she was dead; only a very few intimate friends knew the truth.

The poor lady's mind had given way suddenly after the birth of a child, who did not live. Within a week, the homicidal mania possessed her; by the merest chance she had been prevented from committing some frightful outrage upon her little boy, my poor friend Jack; and restraint not having been put upon her in time—for her malady had hardly been suspected, so unlooked-for was its appearance—she consummated her deadly propensity upon her eldest child, a girl fifteen years of age—killed her, in a word, as she lay asleep.

And here, after a lapse of twenty years, was the climax and end of the tragedy, as dreadful as anything that had gone before. The order for release, when it came, brought with it as much suffering (to all but one) as had the order for captivity. No wonder that Jack was an altered man. I have never seen a smile on his face since—though I trust that time, with its healing influence, may at least soften the blow.

Length of Human Life.

How long a man can live is a question that has been widely discussed. Americans are generally reckoned to be short-lived, compared with European nations, and they have been in the past; but they are steadily gaining in respect of age, as their material conditions improve and the laws of health are better understood and observed. Several instances have been recorded recently of persons in the United States who have died at 107, 108 and even 110. It is maintained, however, by men who have paid special attention to longevity, that there is no well-accredited instance of any man or woman living beyond 106—that that is the maximum possibility of human endurance. It is more reasonable to suppose that there is a mistake in calculation than that the mentioned limit has been exceeded. In Europe it is a subject of dispute as to what nation lives longest. The distinction has been claimed in turn by the English, French, Germans, Spanish, Italians and Russians. Late statistics prove that the number of people in Europe who are upward of ninety years old is 102 831, of whom more than 60,000 are women. Of those beyond 100, there are 241 women and 161 men in Italy, 229 women and 183 men in Austria, and 526 women and 524 men in Hungary. The percentage of old people is found to be much higher among the Germans than the Slavs. Investigation appears to show that human life has been lengthening in the last twenty years throughout the civilized world.

FARM, GARDEN AND HOUSEHOLD.

Planting and Transplanting.

The well-known three requisites for the germination of seeds, says the *Country Gentleman*, are heat, air and moisture, but not light. In a cold soil they remain dormant; if too dry, they will not sprout, and if buried deep and compactly beyond the action of the air, no movement toward growth takes place. The small seeds of weeds often remain in the soil for years when turned under deep by the plow; when brought again to the surface, the new and copious growth which at once takes place has led superficial observers to the erroneous notion that they have sprung up spontaneously. Nurserymen sometimes keep peach stones dormant a year when they happen to have a surplus, by placing them two feet under the soil until needed. The depth for planting must depend large'y on the size of the seed; and the general rule has been given to bury them from three to five times as deep as their diameter. This rule will vary somewhat with the nature and condition of the soil. If heavy and moist, the depth should be less than in a light, dry and porous soil. In a moist, well-pulverized soil, most seeds, whether large or small, will grow if merely covered and kept moist; but this condition cannot be commonly continued, as a few dry and warm days will dry the surface of the soil and prevent the germination of the seed. Hence the common practice to vary this rule with circumstances. Corn, planted early in the season when the ground is moist, will grow freely if buried only an inch deep; but under ordinary circumstances two inches will be better. It will find its way freely to the surface after many days when buried six inches below. Early in autumn, when winter wheat is sown or drilled in, the soil is usually much drier than in corn-planting time, and for this reason, although the seeds are smaller than grains of corn, it should be placed at a depth of two inches. In dry spring corn should be planted deeper than in a wet one, and the old practice of pressing each hill with the hoe, when the work was done by hand, was useful when the soil was dry. When planting is done with a machine, a roller to follow the tube would be useful in dry weather.

In a dry season, as the present has been in many places, much care is required to impart sufficient moisture to seeds when planted. If the particles of soil are dry, the small grains or lumps which compose it will touch the seed only at a few points, and the chances for its germination will be small. Even if moistened by a shower, the water will be conveyed to the seed only at the few points of contact. It is better, therefore, to plant seed after a shower than before it, as the soil is worked more easily and yielding, and pressing the whole surface of the ground causes germination at once. On this principle, experience has shown that under common conditions seeds grow much better if planted after than before the rain. The exceptions are, when the soil has been so finely pulverized that it cases the seed well on all sides while yet dry; and when the rain is so copious that it fills with water for a sufficient time the interstices which surround the seed.

The Rose Bug Pest.

Another bug has strangely increased in numbers, in the past two years, and it promises to be more troublesome than the enemy of the potato. The rose bug has come upon us in swarms, and it destroys not only our grape and peach crops, but our apples and plums, if unchecked. The best method of checking them it is desirable to learn, if there be any method. We have tried hand picking, whale oil soap, and a variety o agents, but our efforts have been only partially successful. The white hellebore dust is the most effective destroyer, but it is expensive and troublesome to apply. It occurred to us this year to take our grapevines from their supports and lay them close upon the ground when in blossom. This course saved our crop so far as the experiment was tried, and we present the plan for the benefit of grape growers everywhere. The insect cannot or does not reach the blossom when the vines are in this position, and no injury results to the vines during inflorescence. As soon as the fruit is formed, the danger is over, and the vines may be raised and secured to the supports. This we regard as important information, and it should be remembered. Our peach crop we saved this year by passing through the orchard and jarring the trees by a blow with the hand once or twice a day. The insects are detached from the fruit and fall upon the ground, and do not return to the fruit until after a considerable period of time. The better way is to place a sheet under the trees, catch the bugs and destroy them in a pan of whale oil soap suds.—*Boston Journal of Chemistry.*

Household Hints.

Glass held level under water may be easily cut with a pair of shears or strong scissors. Cut a little at a time.

Never wash raisins that are to be used in sweet dishes. It will make the pudding heavy. To clean them wipe them on a dry towel.

In boiling eggs hard put them in boiling water ten minutes and then put them in cold water; it will prevent the yolks from coloring black.

To make macaroni tender, put it in cold water and bring it to a boil. It will then be much more tender than if put into hot water or stewed in milk.

All milk vessels should, in their last rinsings, have boiling water or hot superheated steam applied, as nothing short will destroy the putrefaction which is abundant in milk vessels not thoroughly cleansed.

To take out tea stains, put the linen in a kettle of cold water; rub the stains well with common castile soap; put the kettle on the side of the stove, to let the water get gradually warm; wash it thoroughly in warm soap suds; then rub the stain again with soap, and boil; then rinse.

Single cream is cream that has stood on the milk twelve hours. It is best for tea or coffee. Double cream stands on its milk twenty-four hours, and cream for butter frequently stands forty-eight hours. Cream that is to be whipped should not be butter cream, lest in whipping it change to butter.

Small holes in white walls can be easily repaired without sending for the mason. Equal parts of plaster of Paris and white sand—such as is used in most families for scouring purposes—mixed with water to a paste, applied immediately and smoothed with a knife or flat piece of wood, will make the broken place as good as new. As the mixture hardens very quickly, it is best to prepare but a small quantity at a time.

Curious Phenomenon.

At the Cape of Good Hope, near Table mountain, the clouds come down very low now and then without dropping in rain. At such a time, if a traveler should go under a tree for shelter from the threatening storm, he would find himself in a drenching shower; while out in the open space, away from any tree or shrub, everything would be as dry as a bone. Here is the explanation: The cloud or mist is rather warmer than the leaves; and so, when it touches them, it changes into clinging drops which look like dew. Fresh drops keep forming, they run together, and at length the water drips off the leaves like rain. And this process goes on until the clouds lift and the sun comes out again.

The baby oyster is not much bigger than a pin's head at the end of a fortnight, and at three months old only the size of a split pea. In a year it will become as large as a five-cent nickel, and at the end of four years' growth is fit for the market.

Sheridan's Peril.

Senator Gordon, of Georgia, has been giving a correspondent of the Philadelphia *Times* some reminiscences of the closing scenes of the war, in which he played a leading part as one of General Lee's corps commanders. We give this extract:

"I had a message from General Lee telling me a flag of truce was in existence, leaving it to my discretion as to what course to pursue. My men were still pushing their way on. I sent at once to hear from General Longstreet, feeling that if he was marching toward me we might still cut through and carry the army forward. I learned that he was about two miles off with his men faced just opposite from mine, fighting for his life. I thus saw that the case was hopeless. The further each of us drove the enemy the further we drifted apart and the more exposed we left our wagon trains and artillery, which was parked between us. Every time either of us broke only opened the gap the wider. I saw plainly that the Federals would soon rush in between us and then there would have been no army. I therefore determined to send a flag of truce. I called Major Hunter, of my staff, to me and told him that I wanted him to carry a flag of truce forward. He replied:

"'General, I have no flag of truce.'

"I told him to get one. He replied:

"'General, we have no flag of truce in our command.'

"'Then,' said I: 'Then get your handkerchief, put it on a stick and go forward.'

"'I have no handkerchief, General.'

"'Then borrow one and go forward with it.'

"'He tried and reported to me that there was no handkerchief in my staff.'

"'Then, Major, use your shirt.'

"'You see, General, that we all have on flannel shirts.'

"At last, I believe, we found a man who had a white shirt. He gave it to us, and I tore off the back and tail, and rigging this to a stick Major Hunter went out toward the enemy's lines. I instructed him to simply say to General Sheridan that General Lee had written me that a flag of truce had been sent from his and Grant's headquarters, and that he could act as he thought best on this information. In a few moments he came back with Major ——, of Sheridan's staff. This officer said:

"'General Sheridan requested me to present his compliments to you and to demand the unconditional surrender of your army.'

"'Major, you will please return my compliments to General Sheridan and say that I will not surrender.'

"'But, General, he will annihilate you.'

"'I am perfectly well aware of my situation. I simply gave General Sheridan some information on which he may or may not desire to act.'

"He went back to his lines and in a short time General Sheridan came galloping forward on an immense horse and attended by a very large staff. Just here an incident occurred that came near having a serious ending. As General Sheridan was approaching, I noticed one of my sharp-shooters drawing his rifle down upon him. I at once called to him, 'Put down your gun, sir; this is a flag of truce!' But he never raised it. He simply settled it to his shoulder and was drawing a bead on Sheridan when I leaned forward and jerked his gun. He struggled with me, but I finally raised it. I then loosed it and he started to aim again. I caught it again, when he turned his stern white face, with tears in his grief and streaming with tears, up to me and said, 'Well, General, then let him keep on his own side!' The fighting had continued up to this point. Indeed, after the flag of truce, a regiment of my men, who had been fighting their way through toward where we were and who did not know of a flag of truce, fired into some of Sheridan's cavalry. This was speedily stopped, however. I received from General Sheridan General Lee's note and he determined to await events. He dismounted and I did the same. Then, for the first time, the men seemed to understand what it all meant. And then the poor fellows broke down. The men cried like children. Worn, starved and bleeding as they were, they had rather have died than have surrendered. At one word from me they could have buried themselves on the enemy and have cut their way through or have fallen to a man with their guns in their hands. But I could not permit it. The great drama had been played to its end."

A Snake that Killed Cows.

The largest snake ever found in Campbell county, Ky., was killed one day recently on the farm of Mr. Herman Carr, near Cold Springs. Several years ago a traveler along the road bordering upon Mr. Carr's farm reported having seen a snake, at the lowest calculation measuring ten feet, run across the road a short distance in front of him, and disappear in the brush that grew by the fence. The man was advised to join a temperance society, and the whole affair was soon forgotten. Early last spring one of Mr. Carr's cows was found dead in the stall. Although not chained, the animal had the appearance of having been choked to death, its tongue protruding and there being a heavy mark around the neck. The strangest thing was that its eyes were eaten out. All efforts to solve the mystery of its death were unsuccessful. About three days afterward another valuable cow was found dead and similarly mutilated.

One morning Mr. Carr, on going to his stable, was horror stricken by seeing a monster snake coiled about the neck of one of his cows, while the poor animal stood patiently, being hugged to death. At the appearance of Mr. Carr the snake raised its head and darted out its fangs, and then slowly uncoiled itself and glided away beneath a large pile of hay. Mr. Carr at once raised the alarm, and within an hour several dozen persons gathered. The hay was removed with large forks, and when near the center of the stack the snake was found. It was inclined to show fight and not turn tail, but all trouble was ended by a well-directed blow on the head, which laid it still forever. In the den were the remnants of a young pig. When measured the snake was found to be eleven and a half feet in length, and as thick as a man's wrist. The skin will be stuffed and presented to the State Academy of Natural Science.—*Lexington (Ky.) Transcript.*

The Language of Postage Stamps.

The language of postage stamps, instead of flowers, has just been invented. Thus, when a postage stamp has been placed upside down on the left corner of the letter, it means: "I love you;" in the same crosswise, "My heart is another's;" straight up and down, "Good-bye, sweetheart, good-bye;" upside down on the right-hand-corner, "Write no more;" in the center at the top, "Yes," opposite at the bottom, "No;" on the right-hand corner at a right angle, "Do you love me?" in the left-hand-corner, "I hate you;" top corner on the right, "I wish your friendship;" bottom corner on the left, "I seek your acquaintance;" on a line with the surname, "accept my love;" the same upside down, "I am engaged;" at a right angle in the same place, "I long to see you;" in the middle at the right-hand edge, "Write immediately."

While this is all very good as far as it goes, those who put a postage stamp on any but the upper-right-corner of an envelope, must hold themselves responsible for all the swearing of the post-office clerks.—*Albany Press.*

William H. Vanderbilt controls 3,620 miles of railway, and employs 27,706 men, who receive some $1,178,000 salary each month.

TIMELY TOPICS.

An article in the New York *Sun* says that Holyoke, Mass., is the great center of the paper trade of this country. The town contains 20,000 inhabitants, of whom 4,000 are employed in the seventeen large paper mills of the place. The capital invested in the paper trade at Holyoke is estimated at about $5,000,000, and there are annually produced about 36,500 tons of paper. The mills are run by water power.

Henry Face killed the young man who had wronged his daughter, at Clerkenwell, England, and public sentiment favored him so strongly that a fund was raised to support his family during the year and a half of imprisonment to which he was sentenced. His escape from a worse punishment was regarded as lucky, and he went to prison in good spirits. But his daughter taunted him with being a murderer, and in consequence of that he hanged himself in his cell.

An association, under the name of the "Jasper Monumental Association," has been formed at Savannah, Ga., for the the purpose of erecting a monument to Sergeant Jasper, who on the 9th day of October, 1779, fell in the attack of the American forces on Savannah. The sergeant's exploit in leaping over the ramparts of Fort Moultrie, Charleston harbor, during the hottest part of the British attack at that place, and fixing anew the flag which had been shot from its staff, will be remembered as one of the most stirring episodes of the Revolutionary war.

A Missouri farmer has been figuring on the damage done by dogs in that State. In thirty-two counties 10,602 sheep have been killed. He estimates the number of dogs in thirty-two counties to be 462,000; that a hog will thrive on the food necessary to support an able-bodied dog, and at the end of the year weigh 200 pounds; therefore, if the food for these 462,000 dogs was given to the hogs, it would make 92,000,000 pounds of pork, worth at least six cents a pound, or $4,550,000—nearly twice the value of all the school-houses in the State, and more than twice the amount used by the State for school purposes.

The streets of London, England, have been recently placarded with an advertisement stating that "the art of begging is exhaustively taught in six lessons by Prof. Lazarus Rooney, who begs to inform the public that he has founded a college for theoretical and practical instruction in mediancy." Among other practical appliances for the profession the professor announces that he keeps on hand artificial wounds and sores, assorted braces of two trained dogs for blind men, crutches for cripples, and surgical bandages for wounded impostors. Information is afforded respecting the most lucrative streets and neighborhoods.

The London correspondent of a Liverpool newspaper says: "The papers announced the other day that, owing to an accident in the machine-room, the extra double number of the *Illustrated London News*, advertised to appear, would be unavoidably postponed for one day. As a matter of fact, the 'accident' was a literary, not a mechanical one, the proprietor canceling several thousands of printed copies rather than allow the publication of an article by one of its editors, reflecting, as he conceived, with ill-timed severity and offensiveness on the family of the Prince Imperial. Instantly, on perusing the article, Mr. Ingram canceled the press, sacrificing over £2,000 to this delicacy of feeling."

The classification of a company at one of the seaside hotels, by a child who had not troubled herself to remember names, has a great deal of significance. To her they were "the lady who whines as if she were going to cry;" "the lady who talks about her headache;" "the lady who scolds the children for making a noise, and who plays the piano so much herself;" "the kind lady who speaks to all the strangers;" "the happy lady who draws pictures and lets us look over her shoulder;" "the young man who thinks he is handsome;" and "the boy who always offers to take you out in his boat when nobody else will take you." Truly, many things which are thought to be hid by the wise and prudent are revealed unto babes.

The maddest newspapers of the present time are those which are published in the Austrian lunatic asylums. Contributions are received from all the inmates who have either hobbies or grievances. Those who are afflicted with any monomania whatever may explain their delusions and support their convictions by argument and example. The logic employed in an article of a recent issue by one gentleman to disprove the belief of another that his beard was of heather and required constant watering, was so faultless and incisive as to have done credit to a Regius Professor of Moral Philosophy. Alas! he himself firmly believed that his own nose was made of sugar, and to prevent its getting wet, and consequently melting away, always drank through a straw.—*New York Tribune.*

Even princes sometimes starve to death. Recently, the St. Petersburg papers announced the death from sheer starvation of Prince Serge Michaelovich Galitzin, employed as a censor of books, and removed by "supreme orders" to Odessa, where he took lodging in the house of a carpenter, occupying a dark, damp room, of such limited dimensions that his coffin could not be got into it. An inquiry elicited the fact that for months he had subsisted on dry bread, with occasionally a morsel of cheese or an apple. He left no effects save the rags on him when he died. His mother is a wealthy dame, resident in Moscow, where she owns several houses, a fine mansion surrounded by a park and a fashionable nunnery. His wife—for the unfortunate nobleman was married—hastened from Moscow to attend the funeral, but was too late.

Physical Exercise.

Our greatest blessing is good health, and none can question but that our ailments are too often caused by improper food, neglect of bodily exercise, and frequently from injudicious and persistent drugging. When our organs have by over-exertion become weakly, and their functions slow and imperfect, rest and repose would seem to be required by them: but no! instead of this it is the application of the whip and the spur. Let us for a moment glance at the business and professional man. Does he give a thought to his health in his ambitious race for wealth? Take the so-called sporting man: his motto is, too often, "A short life and a merry one." These illustrations, and others which we could quote we regret to say, preclude almost anything like a rational treatment of the cause of physical exercise.

Yet, notwithstanding our rather somber reflections, it is still a gratifying truism, that athletic exercises with us are already assured of a bright future. They are becoming, day by day and hour by hour, more popular with the masses of the American people of all degrees and ages; their meetings, both in-doors and on the greensward, are patronized and indorsed to an extent hitherto unknown in our fair land; and it is assuredly a great satisfaction for this generation to know that the inevitable and never-failing result will be the production of a more perfect race of men, both intellectually and physically, resulting from their being endowed, as they will be, with that *sine qua non*—the glory of perfect manhood—"a sound and vigorous mind in a healthy body."—*Brentano's Aquatic Monthly.*

NEW POSTAL RULES.

Modifications in Rates of Postage and Classification of Matter.

By the provisions of recent acts of Congress, as construed by the Postoffice Department, various important modifications have been made in rates of postage and in the classification of mail matter. As these changes will largely affect the mercantile, insurance and other interests and as they are at present but imperfectly understood, the subjoined detailed information upon the subject has been obtained by a New York paper through inquiry at the postoffice. It may be relied upon as being in accord with the latest official rulings and decisions of the department, and as absolutely correct. The rate on commercial papers, insurance documents, papers in legal proceedings, etc., when partly in print and partly in writing, has heretofore been the same as on letters, viz., three cents per half ounce. All such articles have now, with the exceptions mentioned, been assigned to the third class of mail matter, and as such are chargeable with postage at the rate of one cent for each two ounces, when sent in unsealed envelopes or wrappers. The exceptions are: If such articles contain writing in the nature of personal correspondence, or are in themselves the representatives of a monetary value. In these cases they become first class mail matter, and, as such, are chargeable with letter rates of postage. According to the last rulings of the department (which reverse a number of those recently made under the same law), the specific examples of the exceptions to third class matter are: Insurance policies signed and in force, daily insurance reports, insurance transfers, notices of premiums due, assignments, transfers, applications for insurance, promissory notes, attached to premiums or not, and all notices from local agents to policy holders respecting renewals, cancellations, receipts or other kindred matter; also, all signed notes, checks, drafts, deeds, bonds, bills of lading, receipted bills, and signed receipts of all kinds. Insurance policies, canceled or incomplete; unreceipted bills, invoices and monthly statements may all be sent at third class rates of postage.

The former restrictions as to writing in books have been removed, to the extent of permitting a simple manuscript dedication, or form of presentation, to be written on the covers or blank pages. Manuscript for publication, when accompanied by proof sheets, may be sent at third class rates; but, unless so accompanied, is chargeable at letter rates. Architectural and other drawings made by hand, heretofore charged at letter rates, are now assigned to the fourth class, and may be sent on payment of postage at one cent per ounce, as may also original paintings in oil or water colors, etc. Chromos are rated as third class matter unless mounted on cloth or pasteboard, in which case they belong to the fourth class. Postage and revenue stamps are now in the fourth class.

Articles of glass, formerly excluded from the mails, may now be sent at fourth class rates (one cent per ounce), provided they are secured so as to guard against injury to other mail matter in case of breakage, and are boxed in accordance with certain instructions contained in the United States Postal Guide. Original packages of tobacco and boxes of cigars and other articles sealed by internal revenue stamps, which were formerly charged at letter rates, are now placed in the fourth class by a decision of the department, which states that they "will regard the stamp placed over the cover or opening of such packages as evidence that no matter is contained therein which is subject to letter rates of postage.

All persons who desire to avail themselves of the concessions no