

A Pillow of Roses.

My home is afar from the town and its jar,
Where cool breezes are blowing—
Where birds unafraid warble soft in the shade,
And beauty and bounty are growing;
No flatterers woo me, no lovers pursue;
So peace in my cottage reposes;
My days glide along like the flow of a song,
And I dream on a pillow of roses;
Ah, never a sleep is so balmy and deep,
No eyelid so happily closes,
As hers who lies down without kingdom or crown,
To dream on a pillow of roses!

The fur of the ermine is costly and rare,
And royalty claims it to robe her—
And buoyant as air are the gossamers fair
That spangle the grass in October—
But neither could spread so delightful a bed
To solace the world-weary comer,
As roses, which grow in the sunshine and dew,
And stole all the sweet of the summer.
Ah, never a sleep is so balmy and deep,
No eyelid so happily closes,
As his who lies down without kingdom or crown,
To dream on a pillow of roses!

The down of the eider is dainty and soft
In her nest by the boreal billow,
By covetous mariners plundered so oft,
For a monarch's pillow of roses,
But the rest of a queen is not always serene,
And a king upon thorns oft reposes—
How gladly they'd lay down the scepter
To-day,
To dream on my pillow of roses!

Ah, never a sleep is so balmy and deep,
No eyelid so happily closes,
As his, who lies down without kingdom or crown,
To dream on a pillow of roses!

MIGNON'S HEART.

During one of the long journeys I made in my youth I met with a German singer traveling on foot, carrying his knapsack. The poor artist had sold his theatrical wardrobe, had no longer the means to pay for a night's lodging and was singing in the streets to obtain the price of a meal.

Pitying his forlorn condition, for it was evident from his appearance that he had been better days, I asked what had reduced him to such extremities. Seidler—for that was the name of a once celebrated tenor—wept bitterly as he related to me the history of his misfortunes.

"There was a time," said he, "when I had a beautiful voice; the public delighted in listening to me and I even loved to hear myself, but alas! between one day and the next, my voice became harsh and broken through my own fault perhaps. I am no longer an artist, because I was too much of a man. I have lost the heart of Mignon!"

"The heart of Mignon?" said I.

"Yes, when one has lost it as I have one can sing no longer. Whilst one has it, one sings and delights great audiences. To lose Mignon's heart is a proverb well known among singers of my country—a story and tradition, call it what you like."

"I would like to hear it, Seidler. Let us go and smoke in a quiet place and the Johannsberger which colors the glasses will enlighten your memory with its golden lustre."

The gloomy countenance of Seidler brightened up, his last tear was lost in a smile, and he related to me the following story, short, simple and yet mysterious, full of poetic sentiment and charming morality.

A young singer from the Imperial Theatre of Vienna, walking in the Prater one day, saw a young girl singing to the promenaders. Her voice was refined, sweet and melancholy. The singer approached and asked her name. "My name is Mignon; till this morning I belonged to a troop of acrobats and tumbler, but my little talent displeased my master, the head mountebank; he wished to teach me dancing and I would only learn music; he could see in me only a bad ballet dancer, and I think I am good for nothing but a singer."

"What has become of your master, Mignon?"

"I do not know; he beat me this morning and then went away."

"What are you going to do then?"

"I am going to sing that I may not seem to beg."

"Will you come to me, Mignon?"

"Who are you?" One does not go with strangers."

"I am an artist who does not sing as well as you do, Mignon, but I love sweet voices and pretty singers."

"An artist a singer," cried the girl. "Give me your hand. You shall be my master and your servant is ready to follow you."

A month after the meeting the actor whose name was Stephen and the singer whose name was Mignon were already the best friends in the world. They sang together every day, they lived amidst the fruits and cadences of an interminable duet. In a case like this duet music resembles calumny something always remains behind.

For Stephen and Mignon the result was much love and a great deal of sorrow. One evening Stephen had been singing the exquisite "Il mio tesoro" Mignon sat motionless at the foot of the singer whom she silently admired.

A tear suddenly fell upon the young girl's forehead. Raising her little hand to dry her friends' tears, she said:

"If Stephen is unhappy what will become of Mignon?"

"Look at me," said Stephen. "Is there sorrow in such tears?"

Mignon knelt before the artist whose she called her master, she leaned her pretty head upon Stephen's knees, without noticing the long black hair which fell over her shoulders. Stephen tried to raise the young girl, and felt upon his hand a tear from the eyes of Mignon, and said to her in his turn:

"If you are unhappy what will become of Stephen?"

"Look at me," said Mignon. "Is there sorrow in these tears?"

"Mignon, my darling Mignon," said Stephen, "weep in my arms, let us weep together, so close to one another that our hearts may guess the secret of our weeping eyes."

Stephen gave her a kiss. With a girl who loves you a kiss like a good action, is never thrown away. At this moment his heart, moved by the caress given and returned, the amorous actor could think of nothing more gallant than to repeat "Il mio tesoro," still contemplating adoring Mignon. He sung with unparalleled spirit and inspiration;

never had his voice been so pure, so brilliant, so charming as now, in this supreme moment of joy and love. One might almost have said the singer had discovered taste, sentiment, the true passion and genius of music upon the lips of his mistress, in the heart of Mignon. In the inner life of great artists, those elect who live through the imagination, the heart, the spirit, there is an Egeria, an enchantress, who loves and inspires by her heart and her kisses. From that day forward Stephen, who felt that he was singing wonderfully, promised himself to reach fame and fortune. Mignon promised herself to aid him by her counsels, her memories and her lessons; she would be one to help and secretly direct his new studies; she became his instructor in love and song. When Stephen reappeared at the Court Theatre after a long absence, the audience absolutely failed to recognize the voice of the singer. It had become penetrating, spiritual, caressing, marvelous. Never had been heard any voice so brilliant yet so soft, so expressive, so impassioned as the song of that wonderful actor. The heart of Mignon sang there. She was proud of the talent and fame of Stephen. The poor girl studied from morning till night, the better to teach her lover all the wonderful arts of song, the most difficult resources of music, the very mysteries of perfection. Stephen's success was her masterpiece and it was truly the heart of Mignon through the lips of Stephen that sang in the Court Theatre. So long as her beloved loved her still and was good enough to tell her so, so long as he brought her the bouquets the public bestowed upon the wonderful singer, so long as he returned her valuable lessons, she had no other desire in this world. Nothing for her was not to last, her happiness was to end as quickly as a romance. In the pride and intoxication of this triumph, Stephen began to resemble the hero of a French play; when the gambler is fortunate he forgets and disdains the love of Angelique. When fortune leaves and betrays him, he returns to the woman who loves him and adores her again. Just so was it with Stephen's grand passion; when he was happy in the enthusiasm of the audience, neglect of the beauty, tenderness and devotion of Mignon. If the public was cold and lost some of its enthusiasm, then he became loving to the poor child once more, he found her charming, pretty, clever and adored her.

Soon Stephen imagined that he no longer needed to draw inspiration from the taste, the lessons, the voice or the faithful mistress who loved much, a devoted friend with much resignation. Stephen liked to live in the land of rugged gallantry, in the equivocal kingdom behind the scenes. Mignon had a great fault in his eyes; she was not an actress, she had at her feet neither flatterers, slaves, lovers nor poets; she wore no garlands of faded flowers, and her simple attire was not theatrical finery. Her face was rosy without paint, her hands were white without bleaching, her breath sweet without perfume. Not that she was an actress, she was satisfied with being a woman. Mignon did not think of complaining, or grieving; perhaps she determined to let herself die as quickly as possible without suicide.

The health of the young girl failed daily and alarmed everybody except Stephen. Mignon forced herself in vain to struggle against suffering and weakness, and one evening she fell unconscious and almost dying in the arms of her physician.

When she came to herself late at night, pale, motionless, voiceless and unrecognizable, Mignon saw Stephen seated at the head of her bed, bending sadly toward the young invalid, as though to whisper to her pity and consolation.

She thanked him for his visit, his kind looks, his sadness, with a smile, a tear and a sigh.

"Dear Mignon," said Stephen. "God himself has avenged you and punished me."

"God avenged me?" murmured Mignon.

"Yes, my fame and fortune are ended; the day I began to forget and betray you, I felt the first effect of the Divine anger."

"What has happened, Stephen?"

"I cannot sing any longer, Mignon, the last notes of my voice died away with the last sighs of our happiness. I have lost all I owed to the inspiration of your love, God has breathed upon my lips, and song has ceased."

"You cannot sing any more, Stephen?"

"I shall never sing again, Mignon."

"But you will sing again," cried the young invalid. "You will sing if you love and obey me. Listen to me." Stephen knelt by her.

"I have no strength left, no memory, and I can scarcely see you and I feel that I must die soon; presently at the last moment you must come softly to the bedside, you must bend over her who has so deeply loved you, you will know by the pallor of the countenance, the agitation of the features, when the last breath is about to escape, then you must hold me in a last embrace, your lips pressed to mine, you will feel that I am expiring and your last kiss will receive the heart of Mignon. If you will receive it within your own and once more listen to its counsels, you will recover all you have lost, the voice, the expression, the passion of the inspired artist. My best beloved, you will receive the heart of Mignon; it will live in and inspire you as long as you do not degrade it by your actions or thoughts. My heart shall breathe into your voice those exquisite notes, treasures of melody and poetry. So long as you remember the poor girl who adored you the heart of Mignon will be faithful and bring you happiness!"

A few hours after this scene the poor child was at the point of death. Stephen gave her a long melancholy kiss; she breathed her last sigh and the spirit of Mignon passed into the heart of Stephen. Two or three days after her death Stephen entered her chamber, the dreary look of the room inspired the poor artist with singular ideas, with loving regrets, with fantastic sentiments, which almost resembled madness. He handled the little articles she

had used, he caressed the head of Mignon on that pillow where it no longer lay, and he uttered aloud to a phantom words which had once been whispered to the woman. Mignon above might be happy and proud; she was still loved and regretted.

Suddenly it seemed to Stephen that a mysterious voice, as sweet as that of his mistress, whispered low in his ear, "You can sing God pardons and I inspire thee, Sing."

Stephen dried his tears and sat down before Mignon's piano. With trembling hand he struck the notes, his eyes turned to that heaven where he hoped to see the beloved one when suddenly, as if by a miracle, he sang with a voice that recalled his grandest inspirations the "Il mio tesoro," which he had so often sung at the feet of his mistress. It was the loving heart of Mignon which once more sang in Stephen.

From that time forward Stephen never sang in the theatre without thinking of Mignon; he had loved herself and he adored her memory and this adoration brought good luck to his talent.

The Shoplifter's Muff.

The French muff is the latest device of the female shoplifter, and, by those familiar with its construction and perfect adaptability to its business, it is conceded to be the neatest thing known. The holiday period is the choicest season of the year for the shoplifter, but it has been shorn of a large share of its profits by alert floor walkers, who have become perfectly familiar with the "warehouse" dresses and cloaks of the professionals. Until the advent of the French muff the ladies who lived by picking up valuable laces, silks and fancy articles in the largest stores had no particular comfort in their calling, but with the new device they have been able to reap a harvest despite the lynx-eyed professional counter watchers.

The shoplifter's muff is, outwardly, above suspicion, there being nothing about it to betray its capacity for concealing plunder. It is covered with any kind of fur, just as honest muffs are, with the significant exception that instead of being padded with cotton the fur rests upon a framework of wire. Between the fur covering and the wire-supporting frame the space usually filled with cotton is left vacant, thus providing accommodation for quite a stock of valuable lace, articles of jewelry, gloves, or anything else small and valuable.

In the bottom of the muff there is a small slide on the inside worked by the hand of the wearer, who, after introducing the article stolen in the muff, presses back this slide and drops the plunder into the cavity between the frame and the fur. With one of these muffs shoplifters go so easy as to be successfully practised by novices, as not one store walker in a thousand would suspect that his counters could be worked through a muff worn as these are when in action. The operator rests her hand with the muff on it on the goods which she proposes to sample, and a moment of diverted attention on the part of the salesman or saleswoman is ample for her to transfer to her ingenious warehouse such samples as she can conveniently and quickly pick up with one hand. The movement of concealing the stolen articles is instantaneously executed, and however well the muff may be stuffed, it cannot be bulged out to attract attention, like a cloak or a dress.

Cultivate the Mistletoe.

There was a tradition that the maid who was not kissed under a bough of mistletoe at Christmas would not be married during the following year. There was once a notion that its heathen origin should exclude it from the Christmas decorations; but this found no favor with the young people at any period. On the contrary, they took good care that it should be hung, and that it should have plenty of berries, for the ceremony under it was not plucked off with each kiss, and consequently the supply of berries determined the number of kisses. It did not need the Roman use of the plant to recommend such a preventative of the state of old maidhood. Some trace the use of green bush decoration to the original branches of vervain among the Romans. With Romans and Druids the vervain was a panacea for every ill, and above all, that it "conciliated hearts which were at variance"—another good office of any plant in the Christmas season. The Druids only venerated the mistletoe that grew on the oak, but the common mistletoe (*Viscus Album*), with its pearly berries, is gathered from the hawthorn, the old apple tree, the lime and the fir, and from other trees. Of late years this parasite has been scarcer than formerly, and efforts have been made to propagate it. This is done by cleaning off the bark under any joint of a young tree with the moistened thumb, and then pressing the glutinous berry on the cleaned place till it adheres to the bark; it will begin to show growth in about fifteen months. It is an obvious suggestion that in sections of the country where the statistics show a falling off in marriages this plant ought not to be let die out.

Descendants of the Norsemen.

From Greenland comes the story that little hamlets occupied by the descendants of the Norsemen who emigrated thither hundreds of years ago, are in existence, and that they contain a happy and contented population, uninfluenced by the events passing in the outside world, and untroubled by politics or base ball. Centuries ago the coast of Greenland was the Danish fishing ground, and the country, which then boasted a less rigorous climate than that with which it is credited now, was not deemed unfit for settlement.

It has been found that a good remedy for cabbage worms, to be sprinkled on the heads, is made by dissolving a tablespoonful of saltpeter in twelve quarts of water.

Dry rot in trees is a transmissible disease, and one diseased tree is capable of infecting a whole nursery. Therefore, look well to your trees. Clear away the dead and diseased trees.

CHASED BY A BLUE HERON.

A Curious Adventure in a Florida Swamp—The Hunter Hunted.

Of all the native birds in Florida none are more interesting than the heron tribes. The king of all these tribes is the great blue heron. It grows to an extraordinary size. Capt. Dummitt, who planted the most noted orange grove in the State, killed one on a bayou near Mosquito Lagoon fifteen years ago which measured nine feet seven inches from the point of its bill to the tips of its toes. The coastwise bayous and lagoons are usually dotted with small mangrove islands. In south Florida the mangrove grows to the height of sixty or eighty feet, but north of Cape Canaveral it is a gnarled brush from ten to fifteen feet high. The bushes cover the little islands as hair covers a man's scalp. The islands are veritable thickets and woe betide the man who is lost in them, for they are infested with sand flies, red bugs, mosquitoes, and scorpions. Creeks intense in crookedness and of uneven tide wind among these islands like the paths of a labyrinth.

These solitary creeks are the favorite fishing grounds of the great blue heron. Some of the happiest days of my life have been spent in hunting the bird in these haunts. Seated in the bow of a Canadian canoe, with my gun on my knees and a guide in the stern, I was noiselessly poled over the winding creeks beneath the arching mangroves. At sharp turns there was frequently a scream of affright. Huge wings were unfolded. The great bird waded itself into the air, and was brought to earth by a shot well aimed. It is dangerous sport, however, for a stranger. Even the best of guides are sometimes lost in the green labyrinth and suffer untold tortures. Unpractised hunters are apt to lose their eyes: for the beak of the great blue heron is as sharp as a needle, and his long neck masks immense sweep and great power. The bird strikes with marvellous precision and with the rapidity of lightning. When wounded it is especially dangerous. When once struck on the cheek within half an inch of the eye, the blow was made by a crippled snowy heron on an island in Lake Worth. It was just after twilight. The darkness saved my eye. I was in a thicket looking for birds that I had shot while on the wing. I saw a snowy spot in the undistinguishable foliage, and took it for a dead bird. As I stooped to pick it up my cheek was pierced as though receiving a thrust from a stiletto.

In the spring of 1875 I was encamped in the heart of Turnbull Swamp, about eight miles from the head of Indian River. The weather was very dry and there was much less water in the swamp than usual. I was hunting parakeets, wild turkeys, wood ducks, deer, bears, wild-cats and pumas. The swamp is treated with savannas a hundred yards wide and miles in extent. Deer becoming scarce in my vicinity, I set a savanna on fire one morning while on a turkey hunt. After the burning of the dead grass the new crop would serve to bait the deer within a fortnight. At sunset I was miles away from camp. At dusk I saw several gobblers fly into a grove of tall cypresses and marked them with the intention of returning in the morning at daylight and shooting them from the trees. The reddened sky gave me bearings on my way back to camp. After wading for ten minutes through mud and water, listening to the doleful music of a death owl, I emerged upon the burning savanna. The sky was overcast. But the flames were leaping over the tall, dry grass, and tinged the clouds and the tops of the cypresses an orange hue.

Suddenly I saw in the lurid light above me four great blue herons. They were in line, flapping their wings with the precision of machinery. Instinctively I drew my gun to my shoulder. An inspiration I discharged it, for the "sight" was invisible. The second barrel did good work. The third heron in the line stopped, fell ten feet, and came swooping toward the ground in great circles. I saw that the bird would drop some distance away, and ran forward to mark the spot. But the third heron, despite the fact that the lurid light from the rolling wave of fire in the south, was as black as the belying darkness of the clouds. I heard the bird strike the earth with a thud, but did not see where it fell. The black ashes of the burnt grass were ankle deep. I searched for the prize but did not find it.

I was perplexed. Suddenly a feathery form arose from the ashes ten feet away. It seemed to tower above me. It was the heron. It had elevated the white plume on its head as an angry cockatoo draws forward its topknot. The plume alone could be distinctly seen in the darkness. With a blood-curdling scream the tall bird dashed for me. I knew my danger. On the spur of the moment I turned and ran toward the blazing savanna. The bird gave chase, screaming frightfully at every jump. I divined the situation. Its wing was broken, and it was thoroughly infuriated. If it struck me in the rear with its sharp and powerful beak, I fancied that its head would clean through me. In my haste to secure my prey I had neglected to withdraw the empty shells from the fowling piece. It would not do to stand the chance of a fight by using the gun as a club, for it was so dark that I could not gauge the bird's distance. Besides the bird would be facing the light, and I would be facing the darkness. I continued my retreat. I ran as though the devil was after me. In my flight I threw open the barrels of my gun, and drew out the empty shells. It had haste I reloading and reloaded the barrels, still running at the top of my speed. Then I stopped, wheeled about, and banged away with both barrels. The bird shrieked worse than ever, and was untouched.

Again I sped toward the burning grass. I had regained my composure however. Fear gave way to mirth. I laughed outright at the absurdity of the situation, blessing my stars that no friends were near to chaff me. Again I reloaded my gun, turned, and fired. I was on the verge of the blazing grass and had a fair view of my pursuer. At

the second shot the heron fell, and the impetus from its speed was so great that it, came against me, legs, wings, neck, and beak, in a limp lump. I had shot it through the neck. Its head was attached by the skin of the neck alone. I carried the prize to camp. Its plumage was the perfection of feathery beauty. Old Conner, my guide, was awaiting my return with a supper of roasted venison and yams. The bird was so tall that Conner fastened its beak to the back of my coat collar, drew the neck over my head, and the feet touched the ground. He afterward severed the head from the neck, and hurled it across the fire at the trunk of a palmetto—I have seen performers at a circus handle a knife in a similar way—the sharp beak entered the tree, and stood quivering there like a heavy-handed bodkin; and for all that I know it remains there to this day.

DINING WITH AN EX-KING.

By Mrs. Lynn Linton as She Saw Him.

My fortune has never carried me much among the great, but I have dined with a king, albeit a king deposed. When Ekbal ood Dawiah, the ex-king of Oudh, came over to England to press his claims I was introduced to him by Mr. Hector, who had married a dear and charming friend of mine and who had been twenty-six years a merchant in Bagdad. Hence it was that as Mr. Hector's friend—he being also the old king's—I was included in a famous dinner given by Ekbal ood Dawiah at his house in Brompton. It was a dinner entirely in the Eastern style, where we sat on the floor and ate with our fingers. Mr. Hector was very earnest in impressing on his wife and me the most scrupulous attention to two things—to touch nothing with our left hands—do we not all remember the men in the "Arabian Nights" whose right hands were wrapped in their cloaks, and who thus were obliged to eat with their left?—and not to soil our fingers beyond the first joint. We all sat on cushions on the floor, where also the dinner was laid. Sir Henry Layard, Sir Henry Rawlinson, Captain Felix Jones, late resident at Bushire, and his wife, a pretty Chaldean and a Nestorian Christian; Prof. Vambury, and ourselves formed the party. The first had a couple of rice on our plates, on which were afterward placed all the meats of the table. When the king wished to honor us he scooped up some rice and laid it with his own hand on the plate designated. Wishing to specially honor Mrs. Hector he made up a ball of rice and put it into her mouth. I do not remember the dishes besides kabobs and pheasants dressed to look like pears, but the food was beyond measure delicious. After dinner gorgeous creatures, dressed in white, with bullion fringe to their sashes, brought round a basin, rose water, scented soap, and a fringed and embroidered towel, when we all washed our hands and were clean. Then came the turn of the servants. Though a water drinker for his own part, the king allowed wine—notably champagne—to those who liked it. And what struck me as especially royal and fine was that when the servants began their meal he went in and gravely served them himself with wine—a bottle of champagne in each hand. Mrs. Hector and I were rather out of the run of things, for the conversation was carried on in Persian, Hindustani, or Arabic indifferently, and pretty little Mrs. Jones was the only woman who could talk with the men. That all sorts of "merry jests" were said, perhaps broader than would quite suit English tastes was evident by the faces and the loud laughter of the men. Sometimes they translated for our benefit, and sometimes they would not, and I never regretted more my ignorance of the environment in which I found myself. I remembered, too, how Sir Henry Layard teased us—all in good humor—by saying how incomparably more beautiful, more attractive altogether was Mrs. Jones in her Eastern dress and Eastern childlike simplicity, than were Western women in their starch and stays. This was about the time when wild Dayral won the Derby, and we who loved and believed in Layard looked to the fulfillment of the anagrammatic prophecy and hoped that the Premiership would some day fall to the second conqueror of Nivevel. Another striking incident took place that evening. Before dinner, and while the king was out of the room, Prof. Vambury disappeared. Presently there glided in a wretched being all in rags and seeming dirt—a gaunt, wild-looking creature, who stole in like a shadow and sank down in a noiseless bundle close to the wall by the door. When the king came in and saw the fakir he called out in a voice of thunder: "Who is this dog?" His face was really terrible. He drew back with a look of disgust and rage that made him like some wild animal rather than a man. When Vambury revealed himself and explained that it was simply a joke his royal wrath a little subsided, but he ordered him to leave the room at once, and to have done with such detestable fooling.

Shakespeare's Mortgage.

A photograph has been taken of the original deed of mortgage by William Shakespeare and others to Henry Walker, London, vintner, of a dwelling-house at Black Friars, dated March 11, 1612-13, with autograph signature of the great poet. Accompanying the deed is a letter of Albany Wallis to David Garrick, stating that the document had been found among the title deeds of an estate at Black Friars, belonging to the Rev. Mr. Fetherstonhaugh of Oxford, who presented it to Garrick.

A good winter food for promoting egg production is sheep, hog or beef liver cooked and chopped fine, with milk, and a liberal supply of oats. In addition, plenty of gravel, ground oyster shells, ground bone and fresh water should be furnished.

"Yes, my son, there may be roller skates in Heaven, but the floors will be padded and the music will never go out to wet its whistle."

THE FAMOUS PONY EXPRESS.

Where It Went, How It Went, and What It Accomplished.

Twenty years ago settlers starting for the far West, with their heavily laden wagons, knew that the journey would occupy six months' of hard travel, and might involve many dangers of varied character—chiefly from hostile Indians, prairie fires and rattlesnakes. Once started on that far journey, many a weary month must elapse ere any tidings could reach them from the home they had left.

Great was the excitement when a company of fearless, determined men announced their resolution to carry letters from the shores of the Atlantic to those of the Pacific in fourteen days. The feat was deemed impossible. Nevertheless, the Central Overland California and Pike's Peak Express was duly organized, the vast expanse of country right across the Great Continent was divided into runs of sixty miles, and at each terminus rude log huts were erected as stations and stables for men and beasts.

The latter were strong, swift ponies, selected for their hardiness and great powers of endurance, and the riders were all picked men, experienced scouts and trappers, noted—even in that region of keen, hard riding men—for courage and good horsemanship; and many a time both have been tried to the utmost in the course of those terribly long and awfully lonesome rides across the reckless prairie, continually in danger of attack, by day or by night, by wild Indians or highway robbers.

Once a week an express messenger started from either side of the Great Continent. From the first moment to the last, not a second must be lost. As long as the pony could gallop, gallop he must; and the eager beast seemed as keen as their riders, and scarcely needed the cruel spur to urge them on. For sixty miles at a stretch they must keep up their utmost speed; and when at length the goal was reached, where the next messenger was waiting in the saddle, ready to start within one minute's delay, the precious letter bag was tossed from one postman to the other, and ere the weary incomer had even dismounted, his successor had started on his onward way.

Then pony and man might rest and feed, and rest again, till the return of the messenger with a re-filled letter bag, which was warranted to accomplish its journey of upward of 2,000 miles in 240 hours. (The railway on the New York side being already constructed as far as St. Joseph, that station was the eastern point to which the Pony Express had to run.)

This Pony Express was continued for two years, accomplishing its work with amazing regularity, and involving many venture. It proved, however, a ruinous failure from a commercial point of view, and the company collapsed with a deficit of \$200,000.

Eider Down.

The men who get the down leave home early in the spring mornings and visit the places to which the eider-duck resorts, and each man hunts for the nests. The nests are built in clefts in the rocks, sometimes very high up, where a false step would be certain death to the unfortunate man who falls down on the jagged rocks below. The down is plucked from the breast of the duck by the bird itself, and is used to line the nest for the comfort of the young ones. The hunter robs the bird of all the lining it has provided for the purpose, and then goes on and repeats the performance at some other nest. Everything must be done very quietly, for a loud noise frightens the birds, and if frightened away once they will not build there again.

There is a law enforced that forbids the discharge of firearms within the hearing of the breeding places, and a stranger would probably be mobbed if he disobeyed it.

Two crops of down are gathered. The first crop is the best, for the duck uses an abundance of her choicest down in making her first nest. A short time after the first is gathered, the hunters go over the same ground again and rob the nests of the second lining, which consists of all the down the poor duck could rob herself of for her young. This proceeding seems to call out the last energies of the birds, for they then make a new nest, and the drake lines it with his breast feathers. In this nest the young is hatched. The hunters seldom disturb it, for the probabilities are that that pair would go away and never return.

After the down has been gathered it is taken into a large room in the farmer's house, and each nest—for the lining retains the shape of the nest—is placed on top of a primitive arrangement that looks like a ham laid flat, with strings of leather run across the strings and the lichen, moss, sticks, chips and other parts of the framework of the nest that are mixed with the down fall through to the floor, while the down remains in the operator's hands. The down is then picked and brought to market, and from there shipped to all parts of the world. The color of the down is a surprise to many, for instead of it being white, as some people imagine, it is a blue-slate color, glossy, and very pretty. An immense amount can be crushed into a handful, but it will resume its natural appearance when released. The down taken from dead birds is not so good as that from the nests. It is not so light or so much like fluff silk to the touch. Iceland furnishes about seven thousand pounds of the down a year, that is of a superior quality.

That's a great watch, Hobbs. I paid \$3 for it, and it keeps time to a minute.

"Ah, indeed? Why, it's four o'clock, Nobbs, and your time-piece says it's only 12.30."

"Well, that's the minute it keeps."

From nearly 400 singers—including no Germans or Italians—Dr. Lennox Browne has secured testimony that the use of alcohol and tobacco injures the singing voice.