

SOMEWHAT STRANGE.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

Queer Facts and Thrilling Adventures, which Show That Truth is Stranger Than Fiction.

One of the most remarkable and puzzling stories of somnambulism has recently come to light. The subject was a young ecclesiastic at a seminary. The bishop of the diocese was so deeply interested that he went nightly to the young man's chamber. He saw him get out of bed, secure paper, compose and write sermons. On finishing a page he read it aloud. When a word displeased him he wrote a correction with great exactness. The bishop had seen a beginning of some of these somnambulant sermons, and thought them well composed and correctly written. Curious to ascertain whether the young man used his eyes, the bishop put a card under his chin in such a manner as to prevent him seeing the paper on the table before him, but he still continued to write. Not yet satisfied whether or not he could distinguish different objects placed before him, the bishop took away the piece of paper on which he wrote and substituted several other kinds at different times. He always perceived the change, because the pieces of paper were of different sizes. When a piece of paper exactly like his own was substituted he used it, and wrote his corrections on the places corresponding to those of his own paper. It was by this means that portions of his nocturnal compositions were obtained. His most astonishing production was a piece of music written with great exactness. He used a cane for a ruler. The notes, the flats and the sharps were all in their right places. The notes were all made as circles, and those requiring it were afterward blackened with ink. The words were all written below, but once they were in such large characters that they did not come directly below their proper notes, and perceiving this he erased them all and wrote them over again.

BANK notes have curious histories attached to them in the way of human comedy, tragedy and melodrama, says the New York Home Journal. A collector at Paris of such curiosities got hold, some years ago, of a £5 Bank of England note which had somewhat of a tragic interest connected with it. Some sixty odd years ago the cashier of a Liverpool merchant had received in tender for a business payment a Bank of England note which he held up to the scrutiny of the light, so as to make sure of its genuineness. He observed some particularly indistinct red marks or words traced out on the front of the note beside the lettering and on the margin. Curiosity prompted him to try to decipher the words so inscribed. With great difficulty, so faintly written were they and so much obliterated, the words were found to form the following sentence: "If this note should fall into the hands of John Dean, of Longhill, near Carlisle, he will learn hereby that his brother is languishing a prisoner at Algiers." Mr. Dean, on being shown the note, last no time in asking the government of the Day to make intercession for his brother's freedom. It appeared that for eleven long years the latter had been a slave to the Day of Algiers, and that his family and relatives believed him to be dead. With a piece of wood he had traced in his own blood on the bank note the message which was to procure his release. The government aided the efforts of his brother to set him free, this being accomplished on payment of a ransom to the Day. Unfortunately the captive did not long enjoy his liberty, his codily sufferings while working as a slave in Algiers having undermined his constitution.

A WRITER of thrilling stories of adventure for boys would find a plot ready to his hand in the charges brought against two Frenchmen named Rorique, brothers, who are at present awaiting their trial at Brest. According to the case for the prosecution, these men are latter-day pirates of a particularly daring description. On December 15, 1891, the French schooner Nitroahiti, trading with Tahiti, left that place under the command of a native skipper named Tehac a Tara. The first mate was Joseph Rorique, one of the accused, and the crew consisted of an Englishman named William Gibson, who was the supercargo, four natives, and a half-caste, who acted as cook. The vessel carried 40,000 francs' worth of goods, to be exchanged in some South Sea islands for mother-of-pearl and other products. At one of these out-of-the-way ports Joseph Rorique's brother, Alexander, came on board, and the two then planned the mutiny. The Captain and the Englishman were shot, and the crew, all but the cook, were killed by means of poisoned food; whereupon the brothers took command of the vessel, painted out the name, substituting that of "Le Roi," and making a descent on a little island, forced some of the inhabitants to come and man the ship. Possibly they might have remained undiscovered, but for the fact that some time afterward they threatened to kill the half-caste, who thereupon went and gave information to the authorities of one of the Caroline Islands.

A CHILD has been born at Birmingham, England, which bears a strong resemblance to a frog. Its skin is warty and cold and clammy to the touch. When it cries it is said to make an unearthly squeaking noise, sounding much more like the croaking of a frog than the crying of a child. Its form in general, as well as the contour of its limbs and the expression of its eyes, also suggests the genus Batrachia. It has but three fingers on each hand and four toes on each foot, both toes and fingers being "webbed" or joined one to the other by a thin membrane. Besides the points already enumerated it is said to have several other characteristics of the frog, even to the huge, knobby-looking, lidless eyes. The account says that the parents are almost distracted over the affair and hourly pray for their uncanny offspring to die. A prominent medical journal in making a record of the occurrence says: "There are two other 'frog-child' cases on record, one the offspring of a Piute squaw in Nevada, which was born some twelve or fourteen years ago; the

other a monstrosity whose parents formerly lived at Gashen, Ind., U. S. A., and which was born in January, 1880.

A WIDOW living in the Rue Buttet-roux-Cailles, Paris, would have had her house ransacked recently while she was taking her habitual Sunday promenade had it not been for a faithful parrot which she regards now with particular affection as being a gift from her departed husband. About 4.30 in the afternoon the concierge of the house was roused from his siesta by a fearful screech from the parrot. Rushing upstairs he met a man coming down the steps four at a time. He was a house-breaker, and upon meeting the concierge the latter just escaped a blow aimed at his head with a monkey-wrench. Passersby succeeded in stopping the thief and dragged him before the Police Commissary of the district. He said he was disturbed in his work of ransacking the place by the parrot talking in the next room. The bird asked repeatedly: "Who is there? Are you there, Etienne?" and, upon seeing the intruder, roused the whole house.

IN Florida Life, a new monthly magazine published in Jacksonville, is an article from the pen of B. W. Partridge, of Monticello. In it he describes the effect of the drought of 1891 on Lake Miccosukie, one of the largest lakes in middle Florida, when about 6,000 acres of water became dry land for a spell. The rainy season of 1892 filled it with water again. Mr. Partridge conceived the idea that the lake could be drained by boring holes in its bottom, and organized a company to try it. Experts were engaged to examine and report on the plan, and the result was that the company has bored a number of holes in the bottom of Lake Miccosukie, and the water is rushing down through them via a subterranean passage to the gulf. In a few months they expect to permanently drain the lake and thus recover 10,000 acres of valuable land.

A CORRESPONDENT of the North China Herald gives an account of a curious industry carried on in China. It is the manufacture of "cheat money," to be carried with corpses. From time immemorial it has been the pious custom of the Chinese to bury with their departed friends a considerable sum of money, that they might not find themselves paupers in the other world. This custom they have found rather costly, and having no very high opinion of the shrewdness of spiritual shopkeepers they have taken to manufacturing a very cheap counterfeit of the Mexican dollar to pass off in the other world. It is simply a bit of pasteboard with tin foil surfaces stamped with a die. A hundred of these dollars in a box retails for 34 cash.

STEVENSON'S Mr. Hyde has been battered in real life in Texas. In the case of the famous character in fiction there were some who criticized the creation on the ground that such a debased glory in brutality was impossible, even under the imaginary conditions of a double existence in which the man of the world was combined with the human brute. In the trial of Dick Edwards, at Denison, for the murder of Mrs. Mattie G. Haynes, one witness told how, when she charged the prisoner with the crime, he answered, "Yes; I don't care any more about killing a woman than a dog." What in the case of the hero of the novelist's story was the superinduced condition of Hyde was the normal condition of the Western burglar.

A TOUGH old soldier was run over by a cab in the streets of Paris the other day. Jean Louis Leclerc is his name. He was born in April, 1793, and served with Napoleon at Waterloo. When taken to the hospital he seemed to be very weak and to be suffering terribly. In view of his great age, the doctors thought he must succumb, but the old fellow soon rallied, and on the day after the accident was able to go back to his home in the Rue du Rhin. So lightly did he treat the affair that he willingly accepted an offer from the driver, who was to blame, of one dollar, by way of solatium. "You see," he said, "I hate going to law at my age, although I do not despair of living to be 120."

A GANG of ruffians, which has just fallen into the hands of the Paris police, rejoice in the title of "Les Mangeurs des Nez," a name that fitly describes their outrages. Not content with garrotting and robbing all the unfortunate people whom they could waylay at night in deserted streets and dark corners of the great French metropolis, they also bit off the noses of their victims, which they carried off and attached to their caps in imitation of the red Indian scalp. Several persons waylaid in the early hours of the morning in the lonely suburbs are now in the hospitals.

IN the courtyard of the palace of Versailles is a clock with one hand called "L'Horloge de la Mort du Roi." It contains no works, but consists merely of a face in the form of a sun surrounded by rays. On the death of a king the hand is set to the moment of his demise and remains unaltered till his successor has joined him in the grave. This custom originated under Louis XIII, and continued till the revolution. It was revived on the death of Louis XVIII, and the hand still continues fixed on the precise moment of that monarch's death.

ONE of the strangest superstitions of Chinamen is the awe with which they regard the cockroach. John holds the ugly black pest as something sacred, claiming that it is specially favored by the gods and a particular favorite of the great Joss. The most unfortunate mishap that can befall a Chinaman is to step on a cockroach. Instantly visions of terrible disasters and calamities arise before him. In some instances the superstition has been known to prey so on the minds of the Celestials as to drive them insane.

A FEW days ago a tramp at Pacific, Mo., spied a railroad tricycle, belonging to a telegraph lineman, standing near the track. He stepped around under corner of the station house, seized the machine, put it on the track and mounting it sped away down the line at full speed. He had gone but a few miles when suddenly the fast express tore around a sharp curve and bore down upon him. Before he could even slacken speed the train struck him, and there was one less tramp in the country and a tricycle gone.

FULL OF ELECTRICITY.

A Connecticut Man Who is a Human Barometer.

For thirty-two years Oswell Powell has lived the life of a hermit in the woods six miles north of Hadlyme, Conn., in a locality known as Partridge Run. The man's seclusion, says the New York Press, was forced upon him by a circumstance that happened when he was about 28 years old. At that time Powell was a prosperous and happy young farmer. He had been two years married, and his domestic relations were extremely pleasant. While attending the county fair one day he came across a friend who was anxious to test his ability to hold electricity, and the two sought a battery that was doing a heavy business in the fakirs' corner of the fair grounds. The men tried the machine, and a good-natured dispute as to who was the best man arose between them. Powell's friend claimed that he could hold the most electricity, and he started in to prove it. He sent the needle around the dial to the 330 mark. Powell pulled off his coat and clutched the handles. The operator sent a stream of electricity into him that took the crook out of his elbows and caused him to stand on tiptoe. Still Powell called for more and got it. The needle swung around eighty points, and yet Powell howled for more. The charge was sent into him, and, leaping into the air, he came down flat on his back. He had put the needle up to the 410 mark, but nearly killed himself in doing it. He was dazed for several hours, but finally came out of it apparently all right.

In less than six months after this experience there was trouble in the Powell house. Mrs. Powell left her husband and refused to live with him any longer. She said that he was kind to her, but there was something about the man that repelled her, and the strange power, whatever it was, seemed to be growing on him. Powell told his father-in-law that he hadn't felt like himself since the day that he tried his hand at the electric machine. He said that he couldn't blame his wife, and he made no effort to reclaim her. It was evident that Powell's nerves had somehow been seriously affected. Expert medical advice was taken, and a good deal of money was spent by Powell in searching for a cure, but to no purpose. The strange power grew upon him, and finally became so strong that the cattle shrank from his touch. Finally Mrs. Powell was induced to return to her husband's house but the two occupied separate apartments. They lived in this way three years, then Powell left and took up his residence in his house that he built in Partridge Run.

The man suffers a good deal of pain just before a thunderstorm. He is a sort of human barometer, and during the haying season the farmers consult the man regarding the weather probabilities. His prognostications are seldom incorrect, and the visits of his neighbors in the summer season became so annoying to him that he adopted the plan of passing weather bulletins on a tree near the road so that the farmers could get an idea of what the weather was going to be without disturbing him. During the times that Powell suffers pain, medicine has no effect on him. The most powerful sedative administered to him is as so much water. The only relief that he gets is by laying his hands on cats, and he has surrounded himself with these animals that appear to be warmly attached to him. When he feels a spell of suffering coming on he takes to stroking the cats, and by this means his suffering is greatly lessened.

A Remarkable "Artist."

The feelings of the government detectives were much shocked three weeks ago by the turning up of a counterfeit treasury note for \$100. It was the series of 1880, check letter A, with the head of Lincoln on the face. It was the latest contribution from a remarkable artist, who has been puzzling the authorities for more than a decade. Like all of his other productions in this line, it was done entirely in pen and ink. It was actually accepted as genuine at a United States sub-treasury and was sent thence to Washington for redemption. One of the experts in the redemption division of the treasury, Miss Alma C. Smith, discovered it, and the teller who took it in at the sub-treasury will lose \$100 by the transaction. The counterfeit will not bear close scrutiny, the imitated lathe engraving being only a mass of pen scratches, but it has the dangerous quality of a good general appearance.

This pen-and-ink artist is a most extraordinary individual. Up to date he has produced about twenty-five such counterfeits. They all reach the treasury eventually, and several specimens of his handiwork are on exhibition at the office of the secret service here. Four out of five of his notes have been twenties, and there have been two fifties. The new one is the only one for \$100 that he has yet turned out. He makes them at the rate of two a year, apparently, and it must take nearly all of his time to do the work, which is evidently executed under a high power magnifying glass. Of course the labor cannot be profitable, and it is supposed that he does it for amusement. It is his little fad. Inasmuch as they come from all parts of the country, it must be that he is a gentleman of leisure and travels from city to city. Little hope is entertained of ever catching him, and it is likely that he will always remain a mystery.—[Washington Star.]

How a Swordfish Can Fight.

Captain Amery, of the schooner Origin, which has arrived at Plymouth from Labrador with fish, reported that while on the outward voyage from England the vessel was attacked by a swordfish, whose sword penetrated the hull and broke off as the fish attempted to withdraw it. The fish then turned several somersaults and disappeared, as if either stunned or killed by the force of the shock. The sword left in the side of the ship measured eighteen inches. Before Newfoundland was reached the vessel made over a foot of water, and the crew were of opinion that if the fish had succeeded in withdrawing its sword the vessel would have foundered.—[London Daily News.]

A FORT IN THE AIR.

PLAN OF A GERMAN CAPTAIN FOR REVOLUTIONIZING WAR.

Many Ascents by Balloons.—The Science of Aeronautics Part of Military Education in the Realm of the Kaiser.

BARON MAXIMILIAN WOLF Von Stolberg Schroeder is all at a Kearney street hotel. For the convenience of friends the gentleman is content to be addressed as Captain Wolf. He is a retired officer of the German army, a typical son of the Faderland. The Captain does not speak English fluently but employs gestures with the freedom of a Frenchman, and a very similar air. He is solid, black-bearded, spectacled, a student by the very look of him. The only picture he had was taken some four years ago, and since that time he has visibly matured.

The German navy," says the Captain, "has about 400 balloons designed for carrying and dropping bombs. The bomb is released automatically—by clock work. It is easy to drop bombs into a city by studying currents, but to hit a ship would be extremely difficult. A land force attacking a naval force thus would be at



DROPPING BOMBS ON AN ENEMY.

great disadvantage, and probably lose its ammunition. Before sending up a bomb balloon it is necessary to send up some dummies so as to determine the currents. It is impossible to do this with such certainty that a ship could be selected as a target. An entire fleet, closely grouped, would make a fine target though.

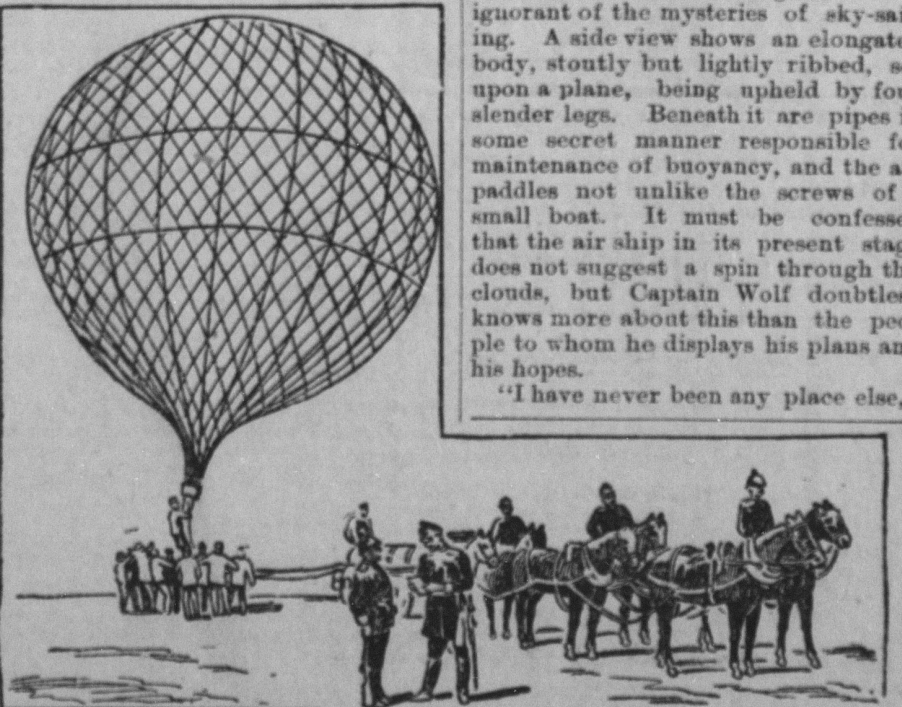
The Captain has paid particular attention to aeronautics as a branch of military science. It is partly for the purpose of spreading knowledge that careful experiments in this direction have given him that he now visits this country. He would like to form a sort of school of soldier balloonists—a reserve.

"You had with Mexico a war. Go up in balloons. No ship can come near and be not seen, nor torpedo boats. There is no studio in this country for such."

"Have you made many ascensions yourself, Captain?" he was asked.

"Oh, 547 trips now. Never very long ones. Once I was upstairs twelve hours and floated from Berlin to Danzig."

There is a Deutscher Balloon Sport Club that has among its members the finest army engineers, the best chem-



SENDING UP A SCOUTING PARTY.

ists, mathematicians reckoned among the scholars of Germany. Of this organization Captain Wolf is a member. While, as the name implies, the object is partly recreation, there is a deeper and more serious side to the gatherings. The design is to keep abreast of aeronautics, and, in case of war, to be ready to offer a balloon corps, ready equipped, to the service of the country. Most of the club members are ex-army officers, who have never become wholly reconciled to a life of peace.

"Really, not such a great advance has been made," continued the Captain, in a vernacular quaintly beyond representation in type, "since bal-

loons sailed out of Paris during the siege and reached the banks of the Rhine. The airships so-called have been failures. None of them have been any better than the old-fashioned silk bag, whipped hither and about at the mercy of the wind, and some have been much worse.

"There are so many things to be considered, power, lightness, strength, susceptibility to control. Now, my airship must have an engine. It cannot be heavy, or it defeats its own purpose. All the material of the ship must be durable and yet it cannot have great weight. I think an engine of a single horse-power will be sufficient, and yet—"

Here the Captain shrugged his shoulders. "The principle of this airship," he continued, "is possibly better shown by the pictures than by anything I can say. The engine occupies the centre. The air paddles are worked by an endless chain and will revolve with great speed. The well body will be filled by the employment of ammonia. Equilibrium is secured by the wind-like fans.

"Since a boy of seventeen I have studied the balloon," went on the Captain, getting guttural in a fervor unobserved before, "I studied him in school, I studied him in the army, and ever since. I did it for love of the Faderland first. Then I did it because the subject became an engrossing one.

makes reckless risks of his neck and limbs, but with no idea of any scientific value being connected with his calling. He usually dubs himself "professor," a case of pretense that a good look at him exposes. Captain Wolf, on the contrary, is a student and scholar, and would be accepted as such on his appearance alone.

While the realm of cloud and sky has engaged most of the attention of Captain Wolf he has not neglected other lines. Among his inventions is a bomb, that sinks when hot, rises when cool, and rising blows any passing enemy from the water, or, as the Captain yesterday expressed, "Poof! There you are."

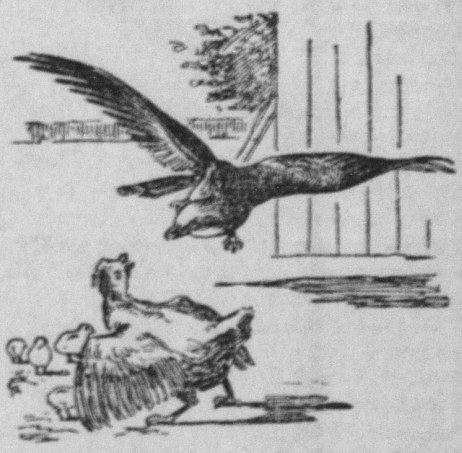
In his collection of pictures are several showing experiments by the German Balloon Club, the different shaped balloons, the methods of securing them in storms. He has drawn up a plan for a balloon shelter, in which the extended bag may be housed. It is flanked by music stands and refreshment booths. Altogether the Captain is a most enthusiastic aeronaut, so much so, indeed, that the bomb that blows hot and blows cold is likely to suffer from neglect.

"They had a great fair in Chicago, Captain?"

"Yes," responded he, with a shade of doubt, "a great far, but not half the chance for ballooning that there is here."—San Francisco Examiner.

Hen Against Hawk.

There was an interesting ornithological exhibition in the dooryard of George Benefield, near Raymondville, a few days ago. An old hen and her brood, parties of the first part, were wandering about the yard in search of grasshoppers, when a big speckled hawk, party of the second part, sailed down from a neighboring oak and pounced upon a chicken. The old hen flew to the rescue, and a terrific battle ensued. The hawk appeared to be in a paroxysm of rage and heeded not the approach of the party of the third part in the person of Miss Effie Cowden, who was standing but a few steps away when "the war began." She seized the hawk by its wings and thought to wring its neck, but it wasn't that kind of a hawk. It turned upon and made desperate efforts to strike her in the face with its beak. There is no telling how long the combat would have continued or how it



A TERRIFIC BATTLE ENSUED.

would have terminated if Mrs. Benefield had not come to the rescue. She broke the hawk's neck with a hoe. The bird measured something over four feet from tip to tip of its wings.

A Deer Among the Cattle.

While a big herd of cattle, being driven from the ranch to market, was passing through the Snohomish Valley, Wash., an immense deer, the largest ever seen in those parts, bounded out of the woods and joined the drove. Partly because of the difficulty of cutting out the animal from the middle of the herd, where it quickly worked its way, and partly through curiosity as to what it would do, the cowboys did not molest it. The deer remained quietly walking with the herd for eight hours, and finally entered into a corral with the cattle at Snohomish, where it was captured.

The Fashionable Pelisse.



This model for winter wear shows one of the newest forms of traveling wrap. It is a revival of the old-time pelisse, and when made of broadcloth and trimmed with bear it is particularly effective.—Chicago Record.

said the aeronaut, "where the conditions for ballooning were so favorable as here. I think there is no other city where there could be found a panorama of nature so magnificent; the ocean, the Golden Gate, the bay, the mountains beyond, and then San Francisco scattered over her hills. Wonderful! I would like to remain here and teach the young men—your private military—the balloon arm of the service. Germany prizes it highly."

Captain Wolf is so different from the usual aeronaut who ventures to the coast that it is difficult to realize that he is one of the craft. The ordinary balloonist is a foolhardy fellow who