

LITTLE MISS BRAG.

Little Miss Brag has much to say
To the rich little lady from over the way;
And the rich little lady puts out a lip
As she looks at her own white, dainty slip
And wishes that she could wear a gown
As pretty as gingham of faded brown!
For little Miss Brag she lays much stress
On the privileges of a gingham dress—
"Aha,
"Oho!"

The rich little lady from over the way
Has beautiful dolls in vast array;
Yet she envies the raggedy home-made
doll

She hears our little Miss Brag extol
For the raggedy doll can fear no hurt
From wet, or heat, or tumble, or dirt!
Her nose is inked, and her mouth is, too,
And one eye's black and the other's blue—
"Aha,
"Oho!"

The rich little lady goes out to ride
With footmen standing up outside,
Yet wishes that sometimes, after dark
Her father would tangle her in the park—
That, sometimes, her mother would sing
the things

Little Miss Brag says her mother sings
When through the attic window streams
The moonlight full of golden dreams—
"Aha,
"Oho!"

Yes, little Miss Brag has much to say
To the rich little lady from over the way;
And yet who knows but from her heart
Often the bitter sighs upstart—
Uprise to lose their burn and sting
In the grace of the tongue that loves to
sing
Praise of the treasures all its own!
So I've come to love that treble tone—
"Aha,
"Oho!"

—[Eugene Field, in Chicago Record.

The Old Lady's Story.

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

"When I was a girl," said the old lady—she was a very, very old lady, eighty-five or more, they said, "things were not as they are now, and the post office, here in America, was not managed as it is to-day. Getting a letter was a serious thing, and sending one more so. I've reason to know that.

"I lived in the country with my aunt and uncle—not my real uncle, for he was my aunt's second husband, and she only an aunt by marriage—but I had no other kin and was glad to have home folk. I had, beside, a cousin by courtesy. His name was Thomas, and that was about all I knew of him for years—he came in and went out without taking any notice of me. His father used to talk about him before me, finding fault with his idleness. Once I heard him say:

"The boy has not the making of a man in him, Cynthia. You wait on him and spoil him, and one day you'll regret it."

"Then aunt asked uncle if he wished her to be hard on the only son of three."

"Not hard," he answered; "only Tom ought to be taught that he will have to see to himself—we have nothing to leave him. If I should die before you, he ought to be able to support you—and he takes to nothing."

"Tom, by this time, was a young fellow of nineteen, and I was fifteen. Three years later he had no more idea of settling to any business than he had had before, and I had come into a fortune. It was not a large one, but it was enough to make me comfortable for life, and I was glad to stop washing dishes and doing the ironing, and ask my aunt to make me a boarder, since I could pay her well."

"She was pleased, and that day I left my little garret-room under the eaves, and had a large room on the second floor given me."

"Besides paying my board, I hired a servant for the housework, and my aunt thought that very generous. Hitherto I had worn her made-over gowns. Now I sent for Miss Crabtree, the dressmaker, and had plenty of dresses made, giving Aunt Cynthia a rich black silk and a broche shawl. She made a great fuss over them, and I was not surprised that my cousin Tom should begin to be very pleasant to me, for the first time in my life."

"I thought it was because he saw I had kind feelings and was grateful for what had been done for me when I was a little orphan. It was a new thing to be made so much of as I was now, and I enjoyed it. Even when Cousin Tom began to make love to me I never guessed that it was because I had money, as I know it was now."

"Will you marry me, Cousin Belle?" he said one day, and my answer was: "Tom, I feel as if I did not love you the right way, we are too much like brother and sister."

"But he teased me and teased me, until I told him that he might ask me again at the end of the year."

"But you must build no hope on that," I said, "for I think I shall feel just as I do now."

"And now Aunt Cynthia began to praise her boy to me, and to say how glad she should be if he had chosen some one she loved."

"It might be that I would have yielded to this pressure, but that something shortly happened to turn the whole current of my life. It can be told in a few words. I met Arthur Lorrimer at the house of a friend. He devoted himself to me that evening, and he saw me home, and I understood from what he said that he was in love with me. Cousin Tom was furious that I had accepted other escort. We had a scene that very night. Tom was very rough and brutal."

"You have no right to accept another man's attentions," he said. "You are engaged to me."

"Of course this was false, and I told my aunt what I had really said to him. She only cried, and told me that I had no feeling for her poor boy, who loved me so well."

"I might have believed that he loved me, and felt myself guilty, but that a little later, coming down stairs to find my gloves, which I had dropped, and stepping softly, for I thought the whole house was asleep, I saw Aunt Cynthia and her son still sitting beside the grate."

"I don't care a rap for the girl herself, Tom was saying. 'I know many a one I admire more, but I like her money, and it would slip into my pockets without any trouble. I hate work. And it seemed such a soft thing to get a rich wife.'

"You shall have the child," said the mother. "I can keep that jackanapes away. Fine clothes and city ways have caught her fancy, that is all. Besides, how do you know the man means anything."

"By his looks," said Tom, "I kept wondering what he saw in her pale little face to roll his eyes for. Why, I think she is very nearly plain."

"I went up stairs without my gloves, but my heart was very light. I could have no pity for a fortune-hunter, and the words I had heard made me happy."

"To cut a long story short, lest I bore you, it was not long before I was engaged to Mr. Lorrimer. My aunt had permitted his visits, and told me that she hoped I would not leave her until I was married. I knew that the money I contributed to the household was valuable, and agreed to stay. Tom I seldom saw nowadays; when I did, he was sulky."

"I had known all along that my betrothed husband was going to Baltimore for a few months before our marriage, but when the time came, it was very hard to part, and when he was gone I was very sad and lonely. As I told you, in those days the mails were very slow—there were no steam cars."

"For a long time I was not alarmed, but at last a terror beyond words fell upon me, and I expected nothing but to receive tidings of illness or death. What came to me, however, was this:

"A paper in which was marked in pencil a notice of the marriage of Arthur Lorrimer to Augusta, daughter of Everleigh Turner, Esq., and a note in an unknown hand."

"MADAM"—it read—"As one of Mr. Lorrimer's closest friends, I am charged with a message to you. You will see that he is married to his love with whom he quarreled two years ago. That love will have its way, is the only excuse he can offer. He prays that you may be happy, and begs you will forgive him."

"A. APLETON."

"I did not faint, I did not weep, when I received this letter, but I felt the shock in every nerve. My cousin had brought the mail from the post office, and as I sat gazing into the fire he touched me on the arm."

"Cousin Belle," he said, "I read the paper on my way home. See now what a false heart you have been trusting in, and setting aside a love that would have lasted you for life."

"Do not utter falsehood, Cousin Tom," I said. "You care nothing for me; you want my money, for I heard you tell your mother so. But I will marry you and show this deceiver that I am not pining for him. Only remember, I do not love you any more than you do me; and I will never give you even a kiss."

"Oh, Belle, I do love you! I said what I did out of pique!" cried Tom, and I am sorry you heard me. We shall be a very happy couple yet."

"Never!" I said.

"I'll write to this fellow," said Tom. "Pretend we have not heard the news, and tell him you've found out you like me the best, and want to be off with me."

"Yes," I said, "you may do that. I hate you both; but tell any lie you like." And he ran away.

"Sitting in the room where I stood was a looking-glass which reflected a portion of the kitchen. As I happened to turn my eyes that way, I saw my aunt standing near the open fire reading a letter. As she read, she seemed to watch and listen."

"In those days we used both black ink and red for correspondence, and Arthur had a fancy for red. This letter was written in that color. The writing, too, looked at that distance like his, and the secrecy of Aunt Cynthia's manner awakened my suspicions. I took a step forward, and she flung it into the fire, and I saw her run out at the garden door. The next instant I was in the kitchen."

"The paper had not blazed up at once, for it had fluttered behind the back log. I caught up the tongs and brought it safely out. It was scorched and yellow, but I knew I could read it; and running to my room, booted myself in and examined the paper."

"It was a letter from Arthur, and from I learned that he had written many times, and having received no reply, had grown so anxious that he had resolved to come back again."

"I am greatly irritated to-day," he said. "Some rascal has thought it a good joke to publish a false marriage with an unknown, probably imaginary lady. It is unlikely that you will ever see a Baltimore paper, but I cannot help troubling about that, too. However, we shall meet in a few days. The stage should arrive at — next Thursday."

"I saw it all—my cousin had played a deep trick. The advertisement was his work, and he had forged the letter, but I was master at last."

"As for my aunt, the cruel creature had destroyed the letters for

which she knew I was longing—she would willingly have broken my heart in order that her son might have my money."

"I believe from what I saw that she had not been able to finish the letter, and was not aware how soon Arthur would arrive, for this day was Thursday, I remember, and night was coming on."

"I went down to tea as though nothing had happened. My cousin took my hand and kissed it, my aunt advanced and kissed my cheek."

"Here are true hearts," said she, "and we will compensate you for what false ones have made you suffer."

"Marry me to-morrow, my darling," said Tom, "and I can write to that man, not that we are engaged, but that you are my wife."

"A good idea," said I; and just then I heard the rumbling of wheels. A vehicle stopped before the house, and some one rapped heavily with the knocker upon the outer door."

"It is he!" I cried, and in a moment more I was clasped in Arthur's arms."

"Ask me no questions," I cried, "but take me away from these terrible people who would stop at no crime in order to win what little wealth is mine."

"That very night old Parson Partidge married us, and I left the town with my husband. At my prayer, he forbore to punish Tom, and we have never seen any of those people since, and have lived happily for years amongst my husband's kinsfolk here in Baltimore."—[Family Story Paper.

THE SEA OTTER.

His Fur the Costliest in the World—
Shot from Derricks.

Just at the present the Sea Otter is the favorite of the millionaires, and his fur is the costliest in the world. I wonder if any of the wearers of this beautiful fur—so costly that the price of one set would feed a hungry family for two whole years—ever stop to find out how the first wearer was born on a bed of kelp, floating out in the open sea, on the icy cold waters of the Pacific, and literally "rocked in the cradle of the deep;" how he was brought up on the heaving billows, and when bedtime came, found a soft resting place on his mother's breast, while she floated upon her back and clasped him with her paws as he slept; how the only land he ever saw was the rugged, rock-bound shores of Alaska or Washington. Now and then, when the ocean was very rough, and before the hunters were so had, he used to crawl out upon a rock and lie there, while the roar of the breakers boomed in his ears and the breakers dashed over him in torrents. But then, it is probable that not one woman out of every five hundred takes the trouble to learn the life history of the creature whose furry coat she wears."

The Sea Otter is the largest of the Marten family, and is very unlike the family after which the family is named. It has a thick, clumsy body, which, with the round, blunt head, is from three and a half to four feet in length. Unlike those of all other otters, the tail is short and stumpy, being about one-fifth the length of the head and body. As if to increase its value, and hasten its destruction, the skin is much larger than the body, like a misfit coat, and lies loosely upon it in many folds. For this reason the stretched pelt is always much wider and longer than the animal that wore it."

The coat of the full-grown Sea Otter is very dense, very fine, and its color is shimmering, lustrous black. Ever since the earliest discovery of the Sea Otter by the Russians, its fur has been eagerly sought by them, and the cash prices of skins have always been so high that there is not, in the whole United States, a museum rich enough to afford a good series of specimens. Mr. Charles H. Townsend, the naturalist of the United States Fish Commission, writes me that in 1891 the price of the best skins had reached \$400 each, and their value has been since increasing. On the northwest coast of the State of Washington, where Sea Otters are still found along a thirty-mile strip of coast (from Gray's Harbor, half-way to Cape Flattery), they are shot by hunters from tall "derricks" from thirty to forty feet high, erected in the surf half-way between the high tide and low tide, and the hunter who kills four Otters in a year considers his work successful."

Owing to the persistent hunting that has been going on ever since Alaska came into our possession, the Sea Otter is rapidly following the buffalo to the State of Extinction."

The favorite food of the Sea Otter is not fish, as one might suppose from the habits of the common Otter, but clams, crabs, mussels, and sea-urchins. Its molar teeth are of necessity very strong, for the grinding up of this rough fare, and the muscles of the jaws are proportionately powerful.—[St. Nicholas.

The Doctor's Revenge.

A man in Dexter, Me., who thought it a fine thing to stop a doctor who was hurrying by, to ask him some trivial question, didn't see half so much fun in it when his door bell rang violently at 2 a. m. the next morning, and when, after hurrying on his clothes and hastening down, he found the physician prepared to answer the query, and any more he might have to propound.—[Lewiston (Me.) Journal.

The British Mint coins twenty-five tons of pennies every year.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

THE wonderful proportions to which newspaper advertising has grown within the last thirty years is an eloquent tribute to the value of printers' ink as a medium for communicating with the public.

A MUCH bigger wheel than the great Ferris Wheel, which revolved in the Midway and is to be set up in New York, is building at Earl's Court, London. It is a 400-foot wheel, and will carry 2,000 people in fifty cars. Three restaurants will be built on platforms at varying heights on the supporting towers, and a big ball-room will crown the towers, at the axle.

THE latest thing out is a pulseometer, by which the life insurance examiners can tell to a fraction the exact condition of an applicant's heart beat. An electric pen traces on prepared paper the ongoings, haltings and precise peregrinations of the blood, showing with the fidelity of science the strength or weakness of the telltale pulse. It's a wonder, and yet as simple as A, B, C.

THE marriage rate in England and Wales during the last quarter of last year was lower than in any previous like period. There were 121,818 marriages, which was in the annual proportion of 16.3 persons per 1,000 of population. The mean rate for the corresponding quarter in the preceding ten years was 17.3. It is also noted that the average of the last ten years is far below that of any preceding decennium.

HENRY McCALMONT, a well-known English yachtsman, is having a steam yacht built by the Fairfield Company in England which, it is said, will not only be the fastest vessel of her class but absolutely one of the fastest vessels in the world, including torpedo catchers. She is to be of about 1,500 tons burden, and will be driven by engines whose minimum speed will be equal to twenty knots per hour. Mr. McCalmont will command her himself, assisted by three navigating lieutenants.

FOR many years strong protest has been made to the Egyptian Government by antiquarians and hosts of other interested people in the world over against the continued housing of the priceless Government collection of Egyptian antiquities in the old wooden museum at Ghizeh. The collection comprises the choicest of all the relics that have been discovered in Egypt. It is, and has been for many years, exposed to the greatest possible danger from fire. The Government has hitherto declined to remedy the matter, but a few days ago the Council of Ministers agreed to the appropriation of \$750,000 for the building of a new fire-proof museum at Cairo to contain the collection.

ATTENTION has been called to the cheapness of life in Italy by the light sentence of a few years' imprisonment recently imposed upon a native who, in a fit of jealousy, murdered a physician innocent of all offense. Jealousy is practically accepted by Italian juries as a part expiation of crime, and their misled verdicts are styled verdicts of the heart. Consequently, Italy heads the list of European countries for homicides, and the vendetta flourishes there unchecked. A story is told of a Neapolitan who, wishing to kill his wife, would not venture upon the act at home, where he might be guillotined, but removed to Florence, where the penalty was imprisonment for life. Since then imprisonment has been made the penalty throughout.

No one of the World's Fair or Industrial Expositions of this year is held in a city of the first rank or in the capital of any country, European or American. The favored places are Antwerp, Lyons, Milan and San Francisco. Antwerp, the second city of Belgium, has a population of 240,000; Lyons, the second city of France, has a population of 420,000; Milan, the second city of Italy, has a population of 300,000, and San Francisco, the eighth of American cities in size, has a population of over 300,000. All of them, with the exception of San Francisco, are inland cities. All of them are exceedingly attractive, and are well worth visiting at any time. Those three of them which are in Europe possess very great historic interest, while that one of them which is in our own country is the pride of the Pacific Coast.

In an editorial on the recent destruction of the Brooklyn Tabernacle, Engineering News strikes from the shoulder, and strikes hard at the cheap manner in which many large buildings are constructed. Attention is especially directed to the rapidity with which the flames spread over the great auditorium through the medium of the papier-mache covering of the walls and ceiling. "It seems well-nigh incomprehensible," says this conservative journal, "that a building designed to hold a great public assembly could have been deliberately made such a tinder box by those entrusted with its design and construction. The pitiful excuse that the papier-mache was cheaper than plaster is the only reason that has thus far been made public for the use of this material." In this, as in most other instances, cheapness was far from being economical, but in spite of the lesson taught at such tremendous cost, similar errors, the Washington Star thinks, will continue to be made so long as mankind is "penny wise and pound foolish."

THE Canadian Government, in conjunction with the Australian Colonies, is now organizing to run a submarine cable from Vancouver, B. C., to Honolulu, thence to Samoa and on

to Auckland, New Zealand. This line, by rather a circuitous route, will virtually surround the globe, and complete the missing link across the Pacific. It may not be generally known that ever since the dethronement of a Hawaiian Queen, Canada has been looking with hungry eyes on the Sandwich Islands, and would be glad of any pretext to annex them to the Dominion, if it could be done under any pretext, without exciting the jealousy of the United States. At the same time the Government of New Zealand is making overtures to England, America and Germany for the privilege of exercising a protectorate over the Navigator Islands, which have come to be known as Samoa. The foundations of empire are being laid in Polynesia, and before another generation goes past, important colonies, or it may be independent governments, will be established in lands like Fiji, which were recently in the control of savage cannibals.

THE chemists all over the world are striving hard to produce precious stones, but up to this moment with only partial success. The false diamonds produced are an actual failure, for they lack entirely the sparkle which reveals in an instant the quality of the true brilliant. Several firms in Paris are engaged in their manufacture and seem to prosper, though all the value of their wares is in the gold with which they are mounted. The same firms manufacture emeralds and rubies, the first with only partial success, the second with a clearness of color that might sometimes almost deceive an expert. The imitation sapphires are not attractive. If they are too translucent their falsity is at once evident, the dull color of the sapphire or its other imperfections being sometimes the proof of its genuineness, as is the case with pearls. The makers of these imitations do not seem to trouble themselves with the thought that if they succeed in making precious stones of the natural beauty and quality they would be no longer precious, for what gentleman would wear a ring set with a beautiful brilliant that had probably not cost more than ten cents, or what lady a necklace, no matter how superb, whose only cost was the gold of the setting, to which, perhaps, some fine work had given additional value, the whole not being worth more than \$40 or \$50?

AN ambitious scheme for a canal in the interior of California has just been set afoot. It is to be run parallel to the coast, and is to cost \$10,000,000, which has yet to be raised, and the projector expects to see steamers running up so far as Brinkerville, 220 miles from the coast, in the not far distant future. "The main canal," he says, "will be 175 miles long, from Suisun Bay to Tulare Lake. It will be extended to Bakersfield, and there will be branch canals running out to various important towns. It will be large enough to carry vessels of heavy draft, and will be just what its name implies—a ship canal. A system of immense locks will be necessary, and thereby we will obtain another great value from the canal. The surplus water in the locks will be distributed through the lower adjoining country for irrigation, and the elevation at each lock will give great facilities for water power. Motors operated by water would furnish electric lights for all the towns on our line. From Suisun Bay the canal will extend down the San Joaquin Valley, the river being utilized most of the way. Tulare, Buena Vista and Kern Lakes and the Kern River will be included in construction. The water will be obtained from these lakes and rivers, and from the natural drainage. The drainage is an important factor, and we will annually save whole lakes of water that is now lost. The water that flows down from one section of the canal will be saved in the lower locks. It will be a large volume of water, for the canal will be at least fifty feet wide in its general portion."

A Gruesome Companion.

A weird story is told in connection with some legal proceedings just set on foot at Cordele, Ga. A Nebraska man has appeared there and asked to have a receiver appointed to take charge of the property of the late Dr. George W. Marvin, whom the stranger alleges to have been his father. The estate amounts to some \$250,000. A few years ago Dr. Marvin came to the place from Nebraska with his second wife, and invested a good deal of money. About a year ago he was elected mayor of the town, but a short time afterward he died. His widow appeared to be inconsolable. She refused to have the body buried, sent for an embalmer and had it embalmed. Then she had it mounted on a chair, with electrical machinery, so that when she entered the room it would arise to meet her, and then sit down again. The work cost her about \$10,000. Afterward she spent the most of her time sitting by the corpse. A short time ago she surprised the community by marrying the cashier of the Cordele bank.—[New Orleans Picayune.

HUMILIATING CIRCUMSTANCES.

Algy—Deah boy, have my twoushahs begun to bag at the knee?
Cholly—No; they're all right.
"Is my eye-glavass on stwaight?"
"Yes."
"I don't look like a blowsted guy, do I?"
"Not at all, old chappie."
"Then I cawn't unde'stand it! A stweted beggar stwuck me foh a dime just now.—[Chicago Tribune.

QUEER TREES.

Remarkable Forest Growths in Various Parts of the World.

Most remarkable are some of the features of different kinds of trees, and eccentric vegetation is confined to no country, but can be met with all the world over, says the Philadelphia Press.

In Madagascar is to be found a tree called the traveler's tree, yielding a copious supply of fresh water from its leaves. As it will thrive in any arid country where planted, its benefits to the traveler are great. A double row of these across the Sahara would not be a bad speculation for some consolidated African caravan company to go into. It would open up a new line for tourists and would doubtless prove popular and profitable.

In Venezuela there is the cow tree, which grows on otherwise barren rocks. Its leaves are leathery and crisp, but by making incisions in the trunk a peculiar greasy milk oozes out, which is tolerably thick and of an agreeable balmy smell. The natives gather round these trees at sunrise and bring bowls with them to receive the milk, for toward midday the heat of the sun turns the milk sour. The sight of these cow trees puzzled the innocent traveler, who cannot account for the trunk being plugged up all over with bungs and short sticks. The natives also use the milk as a gum.

The butter tree was first discovered by European travelers in the center of Africa. From the kernel of the fruit is produced a nice butter, "which," says Livingstone, "will keep a year." Not exactly a recommendation for butter, one might think.

On a par with this is a manna tree, found in Calabria and Sicily. In August, when it is the custom to tap the tree, a sap flows out. It is then left to harden by evaporation, after which the manna, of a sweet but somewhat sickly taste to any but those accustomed to it, may be gathered.

In Malabar there is the tallow tree. From the seeds of this, when boiled, is produced a firm tallow, which makes excellent candles.

The guava tree of the Indies bears a fruit giving the qualities of a rich and delicious jelly.

But the most remarkable tree yet discovered flourishes in the island of Fierro, one of the largest of the Canary group. This island is so dry that not even a rivulet is to be found within its boundaries, but there grows there a species of tree the leaves of which are narrow and long and continue green throughout the year. There is also a constant cloud surrounding the tree, which is condensed and falling in drops keeps the cisterns placed under it constantly full. In this manner the natives of Fierro obtain water, and as the supply is limited the population must of necessity be limited, also.

In Japan and some islands in the Pacific there is a camphor tree. The camphor forms in the trunk of the tree in lumps, and some pieces have been found as thick as a man's arm.

The sorrowful tree is found only in the island of Goa, near Bombay, and is so called because from morning until the time of sunset no flowers are to be seen upon it, but soon after it is covered with them. As the sun rises again in the morning the petals close or fall off. Stranger still, the flowers blossom at night all the year round, and give out a most fragrant odor.

There is another funny tree in Jamaica, known as the life tree, on account of its leaves growing even after severed from the plant. Only by fire can you entirely destroy it.

Freezing a Soap Bubble.

A frozen soap bubble, broken in two and floating like an iridescent transparent eggshell on the surface of liquid air, was one of the most marvelous sights shown by Professor Dewar recently in his lecture at the Royal Institution, London, on the effects of intense cold. The investigation of this new field of science is developing many wonderful bits of knowledge, some of which are sure to be turned to valuable practical account before long. A pretty experiment, which most delighted the audience, was quite simple. The professor poured a few spoonfuls of liquid air into a glass vessel. The intense cold caused by the evaporation produced a miniature snowstorm in the atmosphere above the liquid. The operator lowered a soap bubble on the end of a rod into the freezing atmosphere. The bubble became darker, the movements of the rainbow-colored film grew slower. It contracted somewhat in size and a moment later froze. A slight movement broke it from the rod and in two pieces, which floated for an hour, gradually accumulating a tiny snow-drift within, precipitated from the freezing air above.—[Chicago Herald.

Queer Old Laws.

Thus, the laws of King Ethelbert of England, A. D., 561-616, provided that for slaying a freeman 50s. should be paid to his kindred and 50s. to the King; for cutting off a foot, 50s. was paid to the sufferer by the offender; for causing the loss of a great toe, 10s.; for striking off an ear, 12s.; for putting a man's eye out, the assailant had to pay 50s.; for cutting off a thumb, 20s.; and for each nail of which one man deprived another, the aggressor had to pay 1s. It must, of course, be remembered that the value of a shilling in those days was very considerably more than it is now.