

SOMEWHAT STRANGE.

SEASONABLE HINTS AND MATTERS OF MOMENT.

Queer Facts and Thrilling Adventures Which Show that Truth is Stranger Than Fiction.

A LAW passed in the time of King Edward III, and still upon the English statute books prohibits the serving of a dinner of more than two courses to any one, except on holidays.

AFTER a great deal of patient perseverance, Ambrose Bumm, of Warrahoo, Wyoming, has tamed and trained a dozen potato bugs. They perform a variety of simple tricks, such as button, button, who's got the button, ring around a rosy, prisoner's base, bunkadee, and so forth.

LONDON, Canada, has a curious human freak. He is Henry Bessware, aged forty. By some peculiar muscular contraction he can cause his left eye to pop out in most unpleasant manner. The organ looks as though it were about to carroll on the end of his nose.

A BOY in an Illinois town stood before a rural Justice charged with cruelty to animals in tying a string to the leg of a turtle. His lawyer contended that the turtle was not an animal, "but a reptile of the snake species." The Court agreed with the lawyer, and the defendant was discharged.

THE latest development in the milk business in London is to drive the cows around the route and have them milked in the presence of the customers. The customer is thus able to judge for himself of the healthy appearance of the animal, and is sure of the freshness of the milk. The practice is a common and ancient one in Egypt.

A SCOTTISH correspondent writes: "A housewife at Langholm has been victimized by a thief who had no fear of the law. She had washed some children's collars and hung them out to bleach on a hedge surrounding her garden. The wash suddenly disappeared and could not be found. A few days ago the collars were discovered; they formed part of the foundations of the nest of a thrush situated in the cleft of an ash tree close to the garden."

THIS snake story comes from Floyd Springs, Ga. A large chicken snake captured a small chicken there a month ago, and had swallowed its right foot and leg when discovered by the chicken's owner. The snake was killed, but not before it had bitten off the chicken's leg. The owner believing it to be an unusually fine chicken, made a small wooden leg and fastened it on with a strap. The chicken walked off very proudly, and paved up the earth recklessly with its hickory limb. Now it is almost frying size and is still in good shape, and will be exhibited at the Atlanta Cotton States and International Exposition next year.

JAMES HARE, aged 21 years, was found dead the other night on the public road two miles west of Morgantown, Pa. The death of young Hare is the culmination of one of the most famous surgical operations ever performed in Pennsylvania. Seven years ago, while hunting with a rifle, the gun dropped from his hands and the hammer struck on a rock, discharging it and sending the bullet through his right eye and out of the top of his head. For the past seven years he has kept his head bandaged, and although at the time of the accident he lost considerable of his brains, he has been intelligent and one of the brightest students in the university. An inquest was not deemed necessary by the Coroner, as his death was evidently the natural result of the wound.

A CORRESPONDENT of the Vossische Zeitung writes from Tunis that the last executions of criminals by hanging were so slowly and clumsily accomplished as to afford terrible spectacles, and the Government of the Bey applied to England for a model of the apparatus there used. A Tunis joiner, a European, was instructed with the making and carrying out of a practical gallows. He succeeded in the attempt, but a new difficulty presented itself, for no Arab would consent to use the European machine, and its maker was requested to find a European who would hang criminals for 60 francs a head. A man was found, but public opinion was absolutely contrary to his undertaking the job. Since the Arabs declined to be hanged by foreigners the new-fangled gallows has never been put to use.

NATURE quotes a curious observation of Professor Havelock Charles, from the Journal of Anatomy and Physiology, dealing with certain characteristic markings upon the leg and feet bones of the Punjabis, which are never found in Europeans. In the Punjabi the markings are defined from childhood, and are racially transmitted. They are due to the habit of squatting, commonly found among orientals, and the interesting point is that the same markings are found upon the remains of neolithic or cave-dwelling man, who probably, therefore, adopted the same posture. The disappearance of the markings in the later descendants of the cave-dwellers in Europe is an instance of the modification of hereditary traits due to prolonged disuse of the particular function or action which induced them.

AUTHENTIC instances of old people who have recovered lost sight, hearing or speech, or who have grown a third set of teeth or a supplementary crop of hair, are not uncommon. But

cases in which perfect memory has been regained after being impaired almost to the verge of extinction by paralytic shocks are rare. This, however, has happened to William Meentee, an old man of eighty-four, residing on North Twenty-eighth street, Philadelphia. During the recent storm he insisted upon taking his daily walk, and in consequence was laid up with a severe cold. While sitting in his armchair after his recovery, a day or two since, he found himself humming an air which he had not heard since he was a boy in the Emerald Isle. Then he began to tell a story which the old song recalled, and, to the amazement of his family, he went on to recite incidents and events not only of long ago, but of more recent dates, of which before his brief illness he had no recollection.

ACCORDING to an official report at the last term of the Wake county (N. C.) Superior Court at Raleigh, a case was heard in which it was shown that a little half-grown bull was on a railway track. He answered the warning whistle of an approaching train with a bellow of defiance and a toss of gravel over his shoulder. A tramp who happened to be close behind him stepped off the track and waited to see the fun. The engine struck the little bull fairly, doubled him up like ball and sent him twenty-five feet through the air as if shot from a catapult. The bull made a line shot and knocked the tramp into a little pond near the road. When the engineer backed the train to take stock of the damage done, the tramp was crawling out of his involuntary bath on hands and knees. Under advice of counsel, learned in the law, an action was brought against the railway corporation for the personal injuries and indignity inflicted. On the trial, to the surprise and disgust of the plaintiff, the verdict went against him. To a sympathizing bystander he remarked that he had been "bowed over into a goose pond by a little dooty piney woods bull, and that a dozen jackasses had kicked him out of the court house."

DURING the panic of last summer almost no money was sent into the Treasury for redemption. People were hiding away and saving whatever they had. Of late a good deal of the old fractional currency has been received. Only the other day a lot of it arrived which has been found by workmen in tearing down a dwelling at Beaver Falls, Penn. Though partly rotted, enough of the pieces were put together to credit the remitter with \$52. A good deal of money is lost in that way. Persons secrete big wads in the walls of houses and then die.

FARMER JAMES M. CONNERS, who has all his life voted and paid taxes in Delaware, now finds himself, according to the new boundary survey, a resident of Pennsylvania, says the Law Journal. His property was assessed last autumn by the Delaware authorities and the taxes are now due, but of course Connors will not pay taxes in Delaware on property situated in Pennsylvania. He will not pay in Pennsylvania because he has not been assessed by the authorities of that State. He will be disfranchised for three years by the change of boundary. He cannot vote in Delaware because he does not live there, and he will not be able to vote in Pennsylvania on local issues, because to do so he must have paid State and county taxes for two years before he can thus vote. The change of boundary has wrought havoc with Connors' insurance in a mutual insurance company, to which he has long contributed, for by its charter it cannot take risks outside the boundaries of Delaware.

A NEW YORK special to the Philadelphia Public Ledger says: In the interests of medical science an unusual use of the unclaimed bodies in the city morgue has been made by a member of the anatomical committee of Bellevue Hospital. The experiments have not been concluded. For the purpose of determining, in the interests of medical science, the effect of wounds in the brain when produced by firearms of different caliber, as well as to demonstrate the result of shots fired into the brain at the different distances, together with the outward appearance of wounds produced under such circumstances, Dr. Charles Phelps has been making these experiments. Dr. Phelps is an authority on gunshot wounds, and also one of the city's police surgeons. He became particularly desirous of ascertaining the appearance of such wounds after the mysterious shooting of Miss Fuller, a typewriter in a lawyer's office in Nassau street, on the evening of March 17. He hoped to be able to obtain valuable information, indicating at how close a range a pistol might be fired at the head if discharged with suicidal intent, and also the distance at which it would probably have been held to indicate that murder or accidental shooting by another person had been committed.

THEY were talking about queer checks, drafts, etc., in one of the San Francisco banks, and a gentleman not long from Kansas City, Mo., finally told the following: "I was once employed," he said, "to collect a balance of \$470 which was due to a well-known building firm of Kansas City, from an eccentric old millionaire. How he made his money I don't know, for it is said that he could neither read nor write, but he had it all the same. Well I found the old boy down in his cellar, and was gratified to hear him say that he would pay the bill at once. 'I haven't that much money with me,' he said, 'but just wait a minute.' He felt around as if looking for a piece of paper, and I was just about to offer

him some when his eyes lit upon a piece of board about eighteen inches square. 'Just the thing,' he said, and with that he picked it up and made a lot of queer-looking marks on it. 'There,' he said, 'take that to your bankers and it will be all right.' I protested, but he insisted, and finally I did as he said. I handed the piece of plank, dubiously enough I can tell you, to the paying teller, but what was my relief when he merely smiled, studied the hieroglyphics a moment, and handed me \$470. Then he laid the board upon the shelf, and that was all there was to it. It transpired that the old man had a system of signs all his own, which his bankers had agreed to respect. All the same, that plank check seemed curious, even to them, and it is hanging up in the office of their establishment now."

An exciting scene was witnessed in a rye field near Cochocton, N. Y., on a recent Monday, when a big snake, already supposed to have been killed, nearly overpowered two men. Isaac Layman was raking rye and as he put his hand under the grain for the purpose of binding it it came in contact with a cold, damp object, which moved at his touch. He quickly pulled the sheaf aside and was horrified to see a monster copper colored snake of the pilot species, the bite of which is death, ready to spring at him. Mr. Layman, pale with fright, struck the reptile over the head with his rake, not only breaking the snake's head, but also the rake. After finishing the snake, and in his judgment rendering it incapable of doing harm, Mr. Layman hung it across the fence and resumed his work. It was here that the most wonderful part of the scene took place. After raking and binding some distance away, Mr. Layman returned to where he had hung the snake across the fence, but it had disappeared. After looking around the snake was found near by ready for battle, and before Mr. Layman could defend himself the snake made a leap for him. Mr. Layman, to escape, made a dive for the fence, which he fell over and ran to the hotel near by, where he secured the assistance of Ben Vail, a young man of nerve and experience in handling such reptiles. After arming themselves with clubs and a shotgun, they returned to the field, where after a hard fight, the snake was killed and brought triumphantly to the hotel, where it was placed on exhibition. The snake measured nearly eight feet in length and eight inches in circumference.

A DIAMOND RING.

Rich Prize Found in a Seine in Lake Erie.

"Captain John Peterson, of Dunkirk and the Lake Erie tugboat Stauffer," said a New York commercial traveler, "has a diamond ring, which, aside from its rare value, is prized almost beyond price by its possessor, owing to the singular manner in which it came into his possession."

"Captain Peterson is one of the oldest lake skippers in the service, and he keeps at it now just because he likes it, for he doesn't have to, as he has laid by a snug something for all the rainy days that may come as long as he lives. One night a year ago the captain's wife awoke, somewhere along about midnight, and heard some one in her room. She screamed a scream that awoke her husband wide open, and he saw a man hurrying toward the window of the room. The captain jumped out of bed and got to the window in time to grab and recover his wife's \$300 seal-skin coat, which the burglar had on his arm. But the thief got away."

"Next morning the captain discovered that his gold watch and chain were gone. The timepiece was worth \$150, and Captain Peterson went out on the lake that morning feeling blue enough."

"The business that called him out on the lake that morning was to haul in a number of seines which had been dragged by a heavy storm three miles from where they had been set. He felt so bad over the loss of his watch that he tried to get some other tugboat master to take the job off his hands, but everybody was busy, and the captain had to go himself."

"When the last seine had been hauled in he saw something sparkle in the sun on the edge of the net. He looked to see what it was, and was astonished to find a ring entangled in the cords. It was black with mud all but in one spot, and that sparkled like an electric light. When the captain came ashore he took his singular find to a jeweler and asked him what it was worth. When the jeweler told him that the sparkle came from a diamond, and the ring was good for the best \$500-bill that was ever turned out, Captain Peterson forgot all about his being blue over the loss of his watch."

"The jeweler said the ring had undoubtedly been many years at the bottom of the lake. It might have belonged to some one who went down with one of the numerous wrecks that occur every few years on Lake Erie. Captain Peterson has had several offers of more than twice the market value of the ring for it, but he has refused them all.—[Cincinnati Commercial-Gazette.]

A Peculiar Tree.

A peculiar tree growth is noticed at De Ruyter, N. Y. Two beeches, joined together, stand about twenty feet apart, each is over a foot in diameter, and it is impossible to tell which tree originally sent out the joining limb.

The appropriate name of Ferret is borne by one of the detectives of the London police.

TO INCREASE TRADE.

THE INTERCONTINENTAL RAILWAY COMMISSION REPORT.

If the Road is Built it Will Be One of the Wonders of the World.

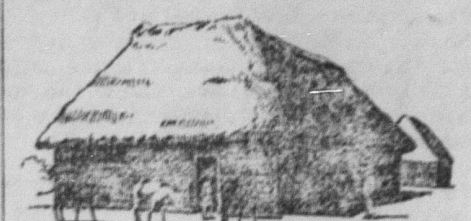
The forthcoming report of the Intercontinental Railway Commission, giving the results of the recent Government surveys through Central and South America, to connect by rail all the republics on the American continent, will be certain to create a profound impression on the country. Advance sheets indicate that it will be a marvelously interesting work from every standpoint. It will give important information concerning railway possibilities never before offered to the world, and will trace a continuous railroad route extending from Mexico clear down to Argentina, a distance of 4,500 linear miles. It will fairly bristle with newly ascertained facts and practical statistics touching all the republics to the south of us; it will be illuminated by a profusion of photographs of life and scenery along the whole route, and will be still further enriched by a vast quantity of charts and maps—topographical, geographical and geological—of the regions traversed, thus combining the attractions of a fresh book of travel and adventure, with the more substantial features of

with no grades as high as 4 per cent. From the head of the Cauca Valley the matter of grade comes to be a ruling consideration, and the construction of a road could be effected at a moderate cost. This Colombian region abounds in natural resources, and the Cauca Valley is destined to become one of the richest mineral and agricultural portions of all South America.

Corps No. 3, under Civil Engineer William D. Kelley, of Philadelphia, Pa., likewise started at Quito, but worked southward through Ecuador and Peru to the confines of Bolivia. In certain stretches the building of the line would be expensive, owing to various deep canyons and heavy grades natural to so mountainous a country; but in other parts construction would be inexpensive. In some localities, indeed, more populous and more level, a railroad would prove decidedly remunerative from the local traffic alone.

Summing up, Corps No. 1 surveyed a stretch of 800 miles, Corps No. 2 carried the line on 1,700 miles further south, and Corps No. 3 extended it on to Cuzco, the ancient capital of Peru, a distance of 1,734 miles—the sections together measuring 4,234 miles not counting the extra branch from Medellin in Columbia to Cartagena, or the remaining little links below Lake Titicaca.

The successive steps which have



THE BIGGEST HOTEL IN AGUTLA, THE STARTING POINT IN GUATEMALA.

From the lower border of Mexico on down through the snow-clad ranges of the Andes to Argentina, the survey extends through a wide diversity of climate, geological formations and products. The eleven Central and South American republics directly interested, exclusive of Mexico, with her 12,000,000 souls, have a combined population of 45,000,000, ready and waiting to be brought into commercial relations with our own 65,000,000.

The products and resources of all these republics are valuable and exceedingly desirable in North American commerce. Guatemala, with an area of 46,800 square miles (about equal to New York or Pennsylvania), produces a great variety of articles useful to the United States, among them being coffee, cocoa, bananas, hides and hard woods. Her coffee crop alone amounts to between 50,000,000 and 100,000,000 pounds annually. Even now the United States imports from Guatemala over \$3,000,000 worth of goods every year, which from lack of facilities are brought principally by sea and enter the port of San Francisco. Salvador, though the smallest of the Central American States, is proportionately the most populous and prosperous of them all. Coffee, indigo, sugar, medicinal plants and rare woods, together with gold, silver, iron, copper and mercury are among her products. The exports of Honduras, one of the largest of the Central American republics, are chiefly cattle, mahogany, cedar, hides, india rubber, bananas, coconuts, bar silver and gold bullion.

The resources of Nicaragua also are very great, especially in fine hard woods, dyewoods, rubber, sugar, coffee, cocoa and indigo, besides cattle, corn and potatoes. Indeed Nicaragua's trade with the United States already is larger than with any other country, amounting to about \$4,000,000 annually. In return for her exports she imports from the United States machinery, iron, steel, flour and manufactured goods.

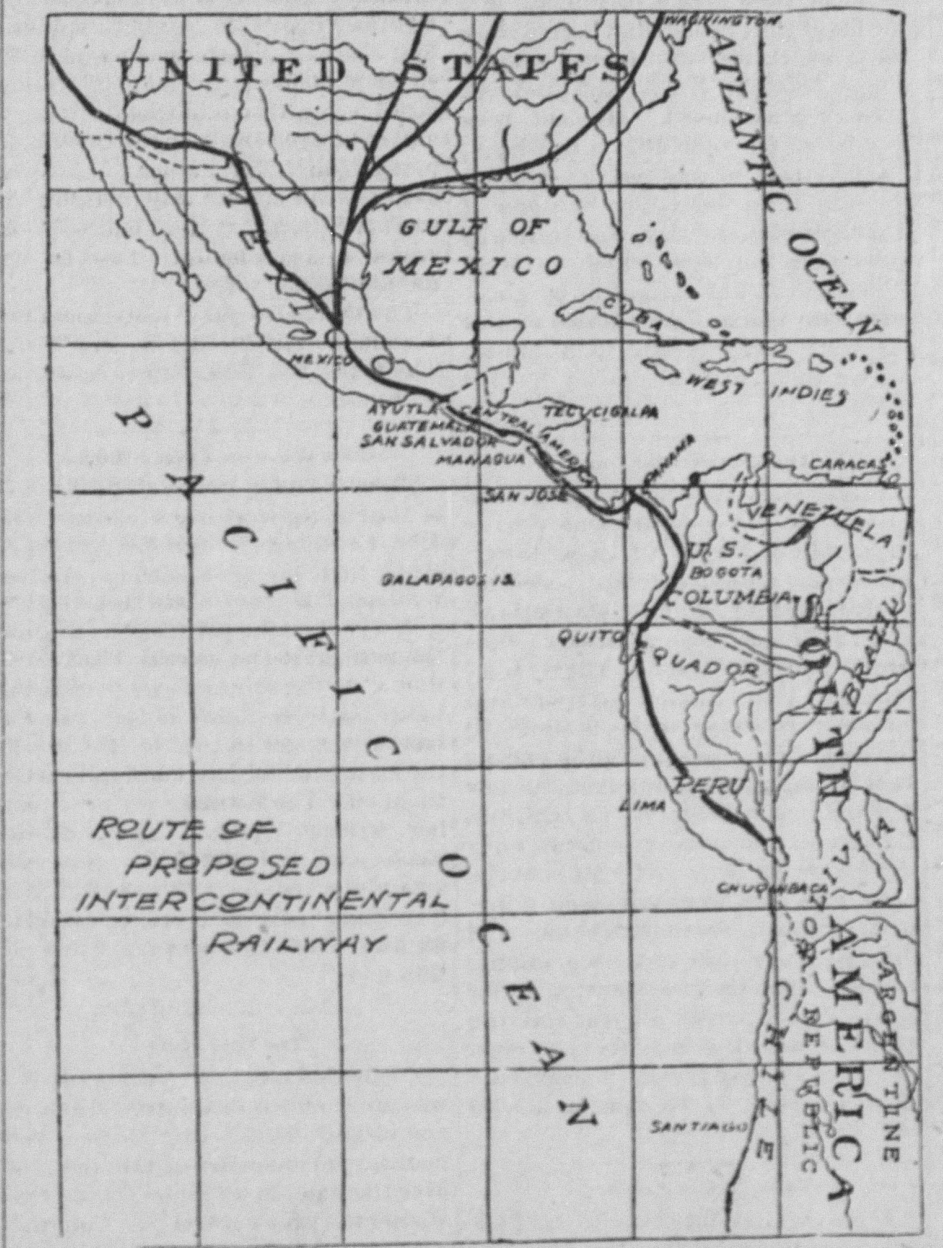
Costa Rica, with her exceedingly fertile soil, already ships to the United States large quantities of coffee, bananas, hides, rubber and mother of pearl, and in turn imports silk, woolen, linen and cotton goods, machinery, agricultural implements, furniture and hardware. Recently the American trade there has almost entirely superseded that of England, and now amounts to nearly \$5,000,000 a year.

Colombia, with her area of 505,000 square miles, possesses enormous natural resources, but heretofore, through lack of intelligent labor, transportation facilities and means of communication, she has been unable to develop them properly. Among her products are gold and silver, emeralds, opals and other precious stones, marbles, mineral salts, coffee, hides, ivory nuts, cocoa and cinchona bark. She imports all kinds of manufactured goods and her trade with the United States amounts to about \$12,000,000 annually.

As to Ecuador, owing to the fertility and diversity of her soil and the variety of her climate, all sorts of plant life flourish within her boundaries—rice, pepper and semi-tropical fruits, cotton, corn, sugar, wheat and barley. Her exports, mainly shipped to England, include cotton, cocoa, rubber, ivory, nuts, cinchona, straw goods and precious metals. In Peru, besides her wonderful treasures of gold and silver and coal and iron, largely undeveloped as yet, a wide range of agricultural crops is produced. Sugar to the amount of 100,000 tons, cotton to the value of \$1,000,000, wine to the value of \$1,000,000, and also enormous yields of rice, cinchona, rubber, fruits and vegetables. Corn is also extensively grown and constitutes the staple food of all classes. The export of wool brings \$5,000,000 a year, and other exports are guano, cubic niter, sugar, cotton and sulphur, at present sent principally to England and Germany. But the construction of a section of railway through Peru, Ecuador and Colombia to Cartagena on the Caribbean Sea would put them in easy communication with the southern ports of the United States and very materially increase our trade, even should there be a delay in the construction of the entire system northward.—[N. Y. Recorder.]

A Needle in His Nose.

Rory Rayne, of Guthrie Cross Roads, Pike County, Penn., experienced a severe pain in the end of his nose one day recently. A threaded needle gradually worked itself out, and he experienced great relief; but, stangely enough, his nose, which had been a decided retrouse, became aquiline and changed his expression completely.



a technical report. But, above all, the report will demonstrate the entire feasibility of constructing an intercontinental railway, and will show conclusively that no insurmountable engineering difficulties stand in the way of such a momentous undertaking. This elaborate report is now in process of completion at the headquarters of the Commission in Washington, and will doubtless be promulgated from the Government Printing Office in the course of a few months. Its publication will mark an epoch in the history of great railway surveys, outrivalling in novelty, magnitude and interest, if not in importance, the great Pacific Railway Survey Reports of 1858.

It will be remembered that three separate surveying corps were organized for the work and sent into the field in April, 1891, and that the last corps returned in July of last year, since when the engineers have been engaged uninterruptedly in the reduction of their field notes and the preparation of drawings and other details of their reports. The whole survey was divided into three sections, the upper section reaching from the Mexican-Guatemalan boundary down into Costa Rica; the second from Costa Rica down to Quito, Ecuador, and the third from Quito down to the lower terminus in Peru. As the Mexican system of railroads is being extended to the northern boundary of Guatemala, and is now in operation as far as Oajaca, 400 miles south of the City of Mexico, the Commission was not under the necessity of making any surveys in the Republic of Mexico.

Accordingly, the work of Corps No. 1, under Lieut. M. M. Macomb, U. S. A., was begun at Ayacata, on the northern frontier of Guatemala, and a continuous line of survey was run from that point southeast to the Rio Savegre. Two years were devoted to the surveys and explorations in this part of the route, and in addition, astronomical, geodetic and meteorological observations were taken and a large amount of data collected bearing on the resources of the countries traversed.

Corps No. 2, under Civil Engineer William F. Shunk, of Harrisburg, Pa., went to Quito, Ecuador, and from there surveyed northward to the Rio Savegre in Costa Rica, thus connecting with the work of Corps No. 1. The section between Quito and Popayán, passing as it does through the very heart of the Andes, is pronounced expensive to construct, but at the same time the surveys prove the entire feasibility of the route,