

SMILES AND FROWNS.

If I knew the box where the smiles are kept,
No matter how large the key
Or strong the bolt, I would try so hard—
"Twould open, I know, for me,
Then over the land and the sea broadcast
I'd scatter the smiles to play,
That the children's faces might hold them fast
For many and many a day.

If I knew a box that was large enough
To hold all the frowns I meet,
I would like to gather them, every one,
From nursery, school and street,
Then folding, and holding, I'd pack them in,
And turning the monster key,
I'd hire a giant to drop the box
To the depths of the deep, deep sea.

MISS MINT'S FRIENDS.

"Frank, do you know anything about the queer little person who sits opposite to us at the dinner table? Miss Mint, they call her. Is she a teacher, or what?"

Frank Hastings—a young man who for six months had enjoyed "all the comforts and conveniences of a private home" at Mrs. Starkweather's "select" boarding house, No. 16—street—lighted a fresh cigar before he answered, rather languidly:

"No; she's something ten times worse—a sort of reporter. She goes round to churches and lecture-rooms, trying to pick up the few stray crumbs the other reporters leave behind 'em. There's only one paper employs her regularly, and that at a starvation price. She wears one dress all the year round, sports a bonnet handed down to her by her great-grandmother, and rooms in the attic, for which previous privilege and her dinner she pays Mrs. Starkweather three dollars a week. Bah!" concluded Frank, in a tone of disgust, as he threw one leg over another, and sat gazing into the fire.

"Poor soul! She's to be pitied, I'm sure," said Caleb Darley, who, being a hard-working reporter himself, and a tender-hearted man besides, felt some sympathy for the little creature they were discussing.

"Nonsense," said Frank, sharply. "Why don't she try her hand at something else—dressmaking or teaching, or some other work fit for a woman?"

"Perhaps she hasn't the chance or the talent to do either," Darley replied.

"Then let her stay at home and help about the house. Come to think of it, though, I believe she has no home. She's an orphan." "S'pose 'tilt her rough for the poor thing," said Frank, with a slight tinge of compunction in his voice. "But, come, Darley, let's drop Miss Mint as a steady subject. Have another cigar?"

"Thank you, no; I must be off. I've got to report—'s sermon to-night."

"Poor fellow! Glad I'm not in your line of business," said Frank, who was clerk in a large wholesale store. "Wonder if little Mint's going? You might escort her home, Darley. It would be quite a new sensation for her, and just think how all the fellows on the street would envy you!"

"Oh, leave poor little Miss Mint alone!" said Darley, as he walked towards the door. "Remember she's swimming against a stiff stream. Like the most of us, and finds it hard work to keep her head above water. Don't throw stones at her."

"Pon my word, you're developing a poetical vein. 'This is really getting dangerous. Well, good-bye for the present, old chap; look in again after church, will you?"

"No; I must go to the office," said Caleb, as he went out.

In her little room, two stories higher up, Miss Mint was putting on her bonnet, quite unconscious of how she was being discussed below.

She was very small and slight, this poor little heroine of ours, with a face that might have been pretty before privation and anxiety stole its bloom and plumpness away. Her glossy brown hair was brushed in smooth waves over her forehead; she had large tender gray eyes, and a mouth that, for all its resolution and character, had a pathetic droop at the corners that seemed to have become habitual. She was nearly twenty-three, but looked at least two years older.

Her little room was as bare and comfortless a place as could be imagined. No furnace heat could penetrate up here, and Miss Mint's hands were so numb with cold she could scarcely pin her shawl. The floor of the room unpainted, and bare save for a strip of rag carpet by the bed; the ugly little wash-stand in the corner, with its clumsy bowl and pitcher; the stiff-looking wooden chair that made your back ache to look at it; and the bed itself, with its tawdry, faded counterpane—

It was a dreary picture for poor little Ellen Mint's beauty-loving eyes to rest on. She had done her best to brighten it; two or three pictures she had brought with her hung on the walls, the little table by the window was covered with books, and a delicate glass vase she was too poor to fill with the flowers she loved stood on the bureau. There were a couple of hanging shelves on the wall, of which only the upper one with her work-basket on it was visible; a green and white calico curtain hid the rest. This was her cupboard.

But we return to Miss Mint herself, who is down stairs and out of the door by this time. She is a quick walker, and in a few minutes finds herself at the entrance to the church, already besieged by an anxious crowd, who are

kept in check by the ushers and a couple of policemen. Miss Mint does not attempt to press in here; she slips around by a side door, and an usher who knows her by this time plants a chair for her at no great distance from the pulpit. She sinks mechanically into it, and sits in a sort of stupor for a while—the change from her dark, chilly room to this warmth and dazzle of light makes her head swim and her heart tremble. But her nerves are naturally strong and steady, and she soon rouses herself, determined not to give way to a weakness she has never felt before, and which for a moment filled her with dismay.

The grand voice of the organ echoes through the church, and Ellen, who loves music, is soon absorbed in listening, and feels for a time uplifted above the cares and sorrows of this world. The music and the prayers are the richest part of the service to her; in reporting the sermon she has to follow every word so closely that it takes a way from the enjoyment of listening.

Caleb Darley, seated among the other reporters, catches a glimpse of her, and after that his keen gray eyes wander in that direction pretty often. There is a mingling of pity and interest in his glance—he is a large-hearted, chivalrous sort of a fellow, all the more ready to befriend a woman because she is lonely and unprotected.

The services were over, and little Miss Mint, slipping her note-book and pencil into her pocket, threaded her way through the crowd to the side door. "Good evening, Miss Mint," said a voice at her elbow as she stepped out into the fresh air.

Ellen started and looked up. "Oh, good evening, Mr. Darley," she said, a little confusedly, as she recognized him.

"Will you take my arm?" said Caleb, offering it in such a matter-of-fact way that Ellen complied at once, though feeling more embarrassed than pleased by the attention.

"I see you are in my line of business, Miss Mint," said Caleb, pleasantly, as they left the crowded street for one that led to their boarding house. Ellen laughed a little, and he went on, with a kindness of manner that made you pardon its bluntness. "And how do you like the life? Excuse me if I'm rude, but I can't help taking an interest in a fellow laborer, you know."

"You are very kind," said Ellen, simply. "As for the life, I try to like it, because there's nothing else I can do. I've tried to find a teacher's place; I've tried to find sewing to do; but it was no use. I'm sure I'm thankful there is a way I can earn my bread. Wasn't the music beautiful to-night, Mr. Darley?"—anxious to change the subject.

"Yes," said Caleb, rather absently, for his heart was full of pity for the little creature beside him, and he was already debating in his mind various plans for her relief.

"What a child there is in the air to-night!" he said, rousing himself. His overcoat was hardly a protection, and he thought with dismay how his companion must be shivering under her thin shawl.

"Well, here we are, Miss Mint. I must be off to the office. Sit by the fire till you are thoroughly warm, and tell our landlady to make you something hot and comforting; I see you have a cold coming on."

"Thank you, Mr. Darley; you are quite a doctor," laughed Ellen. "I hope it hasn't taken you out of your way coming home with me."

"Oh, it won't take me ten minutes to walk to the office," said Caleb. "Good night, Miss Mint," and he walked briskly away.

Caleb Darley was between thirty-seven and thirty-eight—a big, broad-shouldered giant, with strongly marked features, a profusion of sandy hair, and an expression of mingled good-nature and determination. He has had to fight his own way in life since he was twelve years old, but the battle, though a tough one, has never made him forgetful of the sufferings of others.

"I wonder, Norah, how long Miss Mint means to keep this up?" "Kape what up, ma'am?" "Why, lying in bed, this way, and to be waited on like a lady. I don't doubt but she's as well as I am."

"Well, I guess you wouldn't say so, ma'am, if you was to see her. She can't speak above a whisper, and is as white as the wall. As for 'waiting on,' it's not much she gets of it, poor thing, for Bridget and I has our hands full already."

"What's the matter with her?" spoke out Caleb, from a corner, where he sat reading the newspaper. He had been away for three days, and only returned the night before.

"Sakes alive! Mr. Darley, are you there?" said Mrs. Starkweather, a little startled. "I never saw you. What's the matter with Miss Mint, did you say? Oh, she's got a bad cold, and so have I, but I can't go to bed, for all that."

"Is she very ill, Norah?" asked Caleb, as his landlady flounced out of the room in quest of something.

"Indeed, sir, you'd think so if you saw her," said Norah, lowering her voice that her mistress might not hear. "It's my belief the poor thing won't get over it. Her lungs and throat is that sore she can scarcely breathe; and her room is as cold as all out-doors, and the water a lump of ice in her pitcher this morning. I do my best for her, but it's a sin and a shame the way Mrs. Starkweather treats her—she's no more feelin' than my shoe."

"I'm sorry to keep you waiting so for your breakfast, Mr. Darley," said Mrs. Starkweather, re-entering. She was generally very gracious to Caleb—he always paid her promptly, never complained of his meals, and gave her very little trouble in any way.

"Do you know if poor little Miss Mint

has any friends or relatives anywhere, Mrs. Starkweather?" asked Caleb, ignoring her remark.

"No, I don't," said the widow, a little snappishly. Then, in a bantering tone which ill concealed spiteful feeling: "You and she seem to have grown to be great friends these last three months, Mr. Darley."

"The poor young lady seems to need friends," said Caleb, coldly. Then, altering his voice a little: "You are the most suitable person to befriend her, Mrs. Starkweather, and I am sure you will."

"Well, sir, I do my best, but you must remember—"

"See that she has a comfortable room, and a fire, and a doctor, and all the care she needs," said Darley, cutting her short, and putting a roll of bills into her hands. "Say nothing about this to her, remember," with emphasis. "I don't wish my name mentioned."

"Well, sir, you're a generous man, I must say," said Mrs. Starkweather, as she turned away. But her inward comment was: "The great fool! To throw his money away on this miserable little Miss Mint, when the overcoat he's wearing don't look fit to go out in the street with! But it's all one to me!" smiling to herself, as she reflected that the result would certainly be some money in her own pocket.

"Well, how is Miss Mint?" she said, entering the poor girl's room an hour after. Ellen turned her head feebly, too weak to show the surprise she felt. "How are you?" repeated Mrs. Starkweather, trying to twist her acid face into a gracious smile as she took the white hand in hers.

"Pretty weak," whispered Ellen, faintly.

"Well, this won't do, I see. We must have you down stairs, where you'll be more comfortable. Is the bed all ready, Norah, and have you made the fire?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, do you think you can walk, with my help and Norah's?" said Mrs. Starkweather. "But you must let me help you on with this wrapper first."

Ellen looked at her with a strange mingling of anxiety, gratitude and distrust in her eyes. She scarcely knew what to make of this unfeigned kindness, but she was faint, sick almost "unto death," and could not help welcoming it. Yet she managed to gasp out: "You know how it is with me; I gave you all the money I had last night. You had better send me to the hospital—"

"Nonsense of hospitals," said Mrs. Starkweather, as she put back a stray lock from Ellen's face. "We're not going to serve you that way. Don't say another word about it. All you must think about now is how to get well."

A tear trickled down Ellen's cheek. "If I get well, your kindness shall not—I will sew for you, anything." Her voice died away.

The quick thought darted through Mrs. Starkweather's mind that here was a splendid chance to get her brown merino made over free of charge. But she said aloud: "Don't say another word. You don't s'pose I'm so hard-hearted as not to feel for you when you're sick, do you? Here, Norah, raise her up, and we'll put this wrapper on her. We mean to take good care of you and get you well again, my dear."

"The old crocodile!" said Norah, indignantly to Bridget, when she found herself in the kitchen again. "To see her palaverin' over the poor thing that she was the best friend she'd got. Hospital, indeed! Only last night she talked of sendin' her there herself, and she'd be there before the day is out only for Mr. Caleb. He's a good young man, and a kind-hearted; there's not a many like him, I can tell you now."

"Will you please put that stand by me, Norah, and give me the pen and ink?"

"Now, Miss Ellen, it's not Mr. Caleb would want you to be doing that copying for him, I'm sure, and you so weak you can scarcely raise a finger."

"Oh, I'm much stronger than I was, Norah, and I must really get to work again. Please do as I ask you, Norah."

"Well, miss, but I tell you you're not fit to do it." As Norah spoke she brought the little stand to Ellen's side. During the three months that preceded Ellen's illness Caleb had given her considerable "copying" to do for himself, and had interested a few others in her. What he did with the numerous manuscripts she copied for him remains a mystery. My opinion is that they were stowed away in the bottom of an old trunk in his room.

Ellen worked away for some time, when she was disturbed again by the entrance of Norah.

"Miss Ellen, Mr. Darley sends his regards to you, and would you like to take a little ride? He's got a couple of hours to spare, and you know the doctor said it would do you good to go out to-day."

"Yes, I would like to very much," said Ellen, her eye lighting up with pleasure. "Tell Mr. Darley I'm much obliged to him. How soon must I be ready?"

Norah returned with the message that she must be ready in twenty minutes, and made haste to bring Ellen's wrappings and help her on with them.

"There!" said Ellen, suddenly. "I promised to rip Mrs. Starkweather's dress to-day."

"Both Mrs. Starkweather's dress," said Norah, indignantly.

"Oh, Norah, think how very kind she's been to me! Will you please bring it down, and after I get back—"

But Norah could bear this no longer. "No, Miss Ellen, I won't. It passes my patience—to have that scaly old creature get the credit of everything! It's Mr. Caleb, bless him! that's done everything for you, just as if he was your brother."

Ellen turned red and pale alternately. "Norah, what do you mean?"—in a trembling voice.

Then Norah told her everything, though begging her not to speak of it to "Mr. Caleb." "For he'd be fit to kill me, ma'am."

But Ellen would make no promises. "I am glad you told me, Norah"—in the same tremulous voice. "I think I might move back up stairs again," she added. "I am so much better."

"Indeed you won't, and get a collapse, perhaps," said Norah, sharply. "There's Mr. Caleb," as there came a rap at the door.

Caleb took Ellen to the park, where he drove about for some time. It was a beautiful spring day; the sun was shining, the grass and infant foliage of the trees so fresh and green.

"Well, Miss Ellen, you are getting a little color into those pale cheeks," said Caleb, breaking the long silence. "You don't know how I've missed you"—with a tender glance into the downcast face beside him. Ellen's lip trembled, and in a minute more a tear rolled down. She tried to speak, but could not.

"Ellen, what is the matter?" said Caleb, taking her hand.

Then Ellen sobbed out: "Oh, I can't bear it! I've just found out all you've been doing for me, and how kind you've been, and I can't bear it. How can I ever repay"—her voice was choked.

"Dear Ellen, shall I tell you how? Say 'yes' to a question I've been longing to ask you these three weeks, and you will make me the happiest man in the world."

Ellen looked up bewildered, and met Caleb's tender, questioning gaze. She crimsoned to the temples.

"Will you be my little wife, Ellen, and shall we set up our 'ain dresidde' together?"

"Do you really care so much for me as that?" said Ellen, with a laugh that was half a sob. "And what will your relations say to your marrying a poor little reporter?"

"Relatives! I have no near ones, and should please myself if I had. Come, Ellen, will you have me? I can't promise you a very brilliant future; I'm a poor, hard-working dog, and expect to be to the end of my days. A strong arm to serve you, and a warm heart to love you—that's all I can offer you, Ellen, dear."

"All!" said Ellen, and laid her little hand in his.

"Thank God!" said Caleb, fervently. "We'll join hands and swim the stream of life together."

He Was an Expert at the Game.

The favorite game played on strangers is the "mook fight." Two of the local stockyard boys pretend to start a quarrel before the farmer. One word leads to another, and in the heat of the excitement both the contestants draw revolvers. This is about all the average man who is not "on" cares to see of the fracas, for by this time he is about four blocks away. Yesterday the chief clerk in one of the freight offices was down in the yards, when two fellows started a sham fight. This gentleman had heard this joke before, but the fight was so sudden and so realistic that he lost no time in leaving the scene of action. He even took pains to get over the fence and crawl on his hands and knees behind a manger. When the guns were shown to him and found to have been concochs wrapped with tin foil for cylinders, he said he was ready to buy out a barroom. But, like many others, this game was worked once too often. Two fellows, both well known around the yards, started a sham fight before a stranger who happened to be from Texas. Of course, they didn't know this. When the part came where they drew guns the Texan pulled an enormous forty-five that looked like a Gatling gun on the would-be jokers and said calmly:

"If that is any shootin' goin' on I want a hand in it myself, and if either of youse turn your weepin' this way I'll let mine loose. I'm from Tarantula Creek myself, and I don't get away from no place where there's shootin'."

It is needless to say it was the jokers who did the "hot foot" this time, and this joke hasn't been played since—Kansas City Times.

Arc Lights Keep Trees Awake.

The trees are dying from the top at Chicago, and the cause is traced to the electric lights. Those close to the arc lights suffer most, but even those 100 feet away are visibly affected. The presence of the light, rather than direct contact with the wires, seems to give the baneful result. Correspondence with botanists in various cities reveals considerable unanimity of opinion on this point, their theory being: The injury is due to the fact that light has the same effect that it would have upon a human being who was compelled to live constantly within its glare. The trees are unable to sleep at night. When they, like the rest of nature, need sleep, the great glaring electric lights prevent. Trees are unable to live in almost eternal day. They are like the rest of nature, whether animals or plants, and demand rest.

Don't Eat When Tired.

After bicycling, or any such exertion, always rest about half an hour before taking a meal. One should never eat when very tired. It is better to refrain, to go hungry in fact, than to eat much food when your stomach is too tired to assimilate what you take. Another equally good precaution is to rest for ten or fifteen minutes, anyhow, or longer, if possible, after eating.

The last time that the City of Mexico saw snow on Christmas was forty years ago.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The Kansas City Star says that Kansas City will soon be the greatest mule market in the world. It already ships thousands annually to all portions of the United States, Central America and Mexico.

A colony of immigrants from Illinois has bought a large tract of land six miles south of Washington, La. The colonists are pleased with their new home, and, as they pay cash for everything, their neighbors are very much pleased with them.

According to the latest estimates of population in several States, nine of them, namely, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, Texas, Indiana, Michigan and Iowa, have an aggregate population of 38,225,000, or more than half the population of the entire Union, which is about 72,000,000.

The Chicago Board of Education has forbidden that any of the city schools shall hereafter be named for a living person. The matter has been discussed for some time past, and was brought to a climax by the fact that one of the city schools now bears the name of the president of a bank which recently failed.

Major J. G. Lee, Louisiana's Commissioner of Agriculture, says that from the 2,500,000 acres in that State under cultivation, there is raised annually about \$75,000,000 worth of different products, and he claims that no other State in the Union can show equal results. The State contains 28,000,000 acres of land.

A scheme for a "greater" Boston is now worrying the heads of the Associated Board of Trade of the Hub. It is proposed that a union of the city with the twenty-eight surrounding municipalities be made. This would place the Hub among the "1,000,000-class" cities, with an area of 273.06 square miles. The population of the district included in the scheme was 983,794, according to the last census. A special committee is to be appointed by the board to push the project before the Legislature.

According to an eminent professor at Geneva, France drinks more alcohol annually than any other nation in Europe. The calculation is made on the basis of the strength of the liquids consumed, and all drinks being brought to a common standard, it appears that each person in France drinks thirteen quarts a year. Next to France comes Switzerland, Belgium and Italy, the annual consumption in the case of each of these countries being ten quarts. The English and Germans consume nine quarts, the Swedes four, the Norwegians three, and the Canadians only two.

European papers say that frozen milk is becoming very popular. It is frozen in different sized bricks, and in this way its purity and freshness are insured. The Belgian Government intends to increase the trade at an annual outlay of 10,000 pounds, and in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark, a company has been formed and arrangements have been completed for the regular export of frozen milk. The necessary plant has been erected, and contracts have been made already for the delivery of 110,000 pounds a week, which will be sent to all parts of the world in bricks or blocks of ice.

United States Consul Muth, at Magdeburg, describes in an official report to the State Department a farm where electricity is the primary motive power. This ideal farm is located at Mecklenburg, Germany, and receives its power from a small brook, which, by means of a dam, drives an eighteen-horse-power turbine. This in turn drives the electric dynamo, whence power comes to operate the necessary farm machinery, pump the water and light the farm house and barns. It has the merit of great economy over steam or horse power, besides the virtue of being always ready when wanted.

New York City has decided upon an important school reform. There will be daily medical inspection of all school children in the primary grades of public, parochial and private schools. The inspection will be conducted by the Board of Health. It is expected that eventually the inspection will include all grades, says a New York correspondent. The purpose is to discover and prevent the spread of contagion. Incidentally the inspection will give valuable aid in the matter of ventilation, positions at study and physical exercise. Public schools are quick spreaders of disease, and public health officers must be vigilant at these strategic points.

Mormon missionary work is being pushed in Pennsylvania and Tennessee. A recent report from "elders" at work in the mission field showed 121 conversions in one month in Fulton County, Pa. The missionaries journey on foot through the country, holding meetings when a church can be obtained gratuitously, as they have no money, and depend upon the hospitality of the farmers for food and lodging. They carry, however, a large supply of tracts and copies of the Book of Mormon. The latter are sold when possible, but to probable converts unable to afford them are given free, as are the tracts to everybody. Twelve "elders" are covering Pennsylvania, and expect to move to adjoining States as soon as their work in that State is completed.

So far as known to the Bureau of Education, there are in the United States 162 institutions for the secondary and higher education of the colored race, of which number six are not within the boundaries of the former slave States. Of the 162 institutions, thirty-two are of the grade of colleges, seventy-three are classed as "normal schools," and the remaining fifty-seven are of secondary or high-school grade. The aid is extended to thirty-five of the 162 institutions, and eighteen of these are wholly supported by the States in which they are established. The remaining schools are supported wholly or in part by benevolent societies and from tuition fees. In the 162 institutions are employed 1,549 teachers, 711 males and 838 females. The total number of students was 47,102, of which 1,658 were pursuing collegiate studies.

Dr. E. J. Senn, of Chicago, is thus quoted in the Chicago Times-Herald: "I do not believe that physicians should wear bushy beards. In fact, I think we will all have to come to the sacrifice and go cleanly shaven hereafter. I believe that the conventional doctor of the future will have a smooth face instead of a beard. My father is bitterly opposed to beards for physicians, and does not allow his internes to wear them. I think it is possible to be too radical in the matter, and perhaps he is. I wear a closely cropped beard, and I do not see how it can aid at all in spreading contagion. With a long beard, and especially in surgical cases, it is different. Careful physicians who have beards protect them with gauze guards, of course, and do not allow them to come in contact with or distribute disease germs in a wound. It is better, perhaps, for all physicians to be clean shaven, and I certainly believe we will all have to come to it."

Philadelphia is worried, like other cities, over the question of the height of business buildings. Even its mammoth new City Hall is dwarfed and the effect marred by the erection of tall buildings around it. Grounds for proposed restrictive legislation are not only those of public safety but of public beauty and the health and comfort of the citizens. The remedial plan proposed by Chief Haddock, of the Bureau of Building Inspectors, would limit the height of a building to one and one-half times the width of the street. This would permit the erection of buildings on Broad street one hundred and seventy feet high, for about fifteen stories; on Market street one hundred and fifty feet, and on Chestnut street ninety feet. It is proposed also by some Philadelphia legislators, not only as regards the height of buildings, but as to their general character, having in view the safety of the occupants and the beauty of the street outlines.

A dead whale drifted ashore recently near Bournemouth, on the south coast of England, and though not very large, as whales go, it being only sixty feet long, yet it threatened soon to become a most inconvenient addition to the list of this seaside resort's attractions. At first nobody seemed to know what action to take, but finally some ingenious person suggested that the Government Receiver of Wrecks was the proper official to rid the town of its gigantic nuisance. This view of the matter met with general approval, and the local Coroner was especially glib in meeting the Receiver's objections that, by no manipulation of words, could it be made out that a whale was a wreck. After long argument the Receiver yielded the point, but all he would do was to set the cetacean adrift at auction. Rain fell heavily on the appointed day, but that did not prevent some 500 people from gathering on a pier near which came the poor creature lay. They came, however, more for the purpose of seeing who would make such a purchase than to take chances by bidding. After much entreaty the auctioneer elicited an offer of five pounds from a rash individual, who turned pale as minute after minute passed and no competitor for his prize appeared. Meanwhile the wily auctioneer dwelt eloquently on the obvious fact that his hearers were missing the opportunity of a lifetime to get a whale at a bargain, and finally this appeal, as might have been expected, had its usual effect on the feminine mind. This was proved by a bid of six pounds which came from a handsomely dressed woman who had been watching the sale, and who could not by any possibility have had use for even one of the forty tons of meat and bone of which she risked becoming the owner. She escaped, however, for two scientific gentlemen came up just then, and one of them finally secured the whale for 27 pounds.

An Operator's Device.

Telegraph operators in a crowded room often have trouble in hearing their instruments, especially if a rickety adds to the confusion. To get the instrument nearer his ear, an inventive telegraph operator set an empty cigar box on a standard a little over a foot high, in which he placed his instrument. The connecting wires were joined to the instrument through two small holes in the side of the box. The result of this device was satisfactory, as the instrument was brought near the ear of the operator, and also acted as a sounding board.—New York Mail and Express.

A Million Dollars in Steel.

The Pennsylvania Railroad has awarded contracts for 40,000 tons of steel rails to the following mills for delivery in the first half of 1897 at various dates as required: Canfield Iron Company, 10,000 tons; Edgar Thomson, 10,000 tons; Pennsylvania Steel Company, 10,000 tons; Illinois Steel Company, 6,000 tons, and the Lackawanna Iron and Steel Company, of Scranton, 4,000 tons. It is understood that these contracts were made at about \$25 per ton, the whole purchase aggregating about \$1,000,000. Another large contract for rails will probably be made in June next for delivery in the last six months of 1897.