THE CHORISTERS.

There's a little band of singers
Every evening comes and lingers
'Neath the window of my cottage in the trees;
And with dark they raise their voices,
While the gathering night rejoices,
And the leaves join in the chorus with the breeze.
Then the twinkling stars come out
To enjoy the merry rout,
And the squirrels range themselves upon a log;
And the fireflies furnish light,
That they read their notes aright—
The katydid, the cricket and the frog.

All the night I hear them singing;
Through my head their tunes are ringing—
Strains of music straight from Mother Nature's heart;
Now the katydid and cricket,
From the deep of yonder thicket;
Then the croaking frog off yonder drones his part.
By and by the moon appears,
As the midnight hour nears,
And her smiles dispel the low'ring mist and fog;
Then the mirth is at its height,
And they glorify the night—
The katydid, the cricket and the frog.
—Atlanta Constitution.

Cupid and the Law.

I.

"Goodby, goodby; yes, we'll write and tell you all about it, and perhaps send you some of the drawn work."

And with these and the other usual messages, the train carrying the big excursion to Mexico pulled out of the station.

It was a common, everyday sight to the station hands, and they gave it only a passing glance. But to most of the travelers it was a novel experience, and they looked on it as only the beginning of days of sightseeing in the land of the Montezumas.

There were two passengers in one of these sleepers who attracted some attention. One was a woman of 60, tall and straight, with a carriage like a queen, who seemed as young and gay as the youngest. The other called her "mother," and was about 25, a beautiful girl. Their son and brother had come to the station to bid them goodby, a man of 30, well groomed and well made, the typical American man of that age.

He had provided them with everything that his affection could suggest, and told them to be sure and let him know day by day where they were and if they were well.

"And you will look after mother, Alice, won't you?"

As he spoke two young ladies turned and looked at him—his sister and a younger woman, about 22. She turned involuntarily, and the pretty blush that covered her cheek showed that her name was Alice, too.

Robert Duncan glanced at her, and was struck with her beauty. But she saw his look and turned away and busied herself with her baggage. His mother and sister both noticed the coincidence also, and smiled.

"So we will have two Alices along," said his mother. "I hope we shall become acquainted with the young lady. She looks very pleasant and very nice."

Just then the porter shouted "All aboard!" and Robert jumped from the train. As the car passed him he looked in vain for the faces of his mother and sister. But he did see the face of the other Alice looking at him with some curiosity.

Then he returned to his office. He was the junior partner in a prominent law firm in Boston, and had a hard afternoon of work before him. There was a brief in a case that puzzled both himself and his partner. But try as he would to concentrate his mind on his work, he could see nothing but the beautiful face at the car window and hear nothing but the droning of the car wheels.

At last he became so nervous that he threw down his pen, and telling the boy he would not be back until morning, he walked across the common and the public garden to his home.

The evening at the theatre did not help him, and he was rather horror-struck to find himself no better in the morning. This was a new experience for him. No woman had ever before come between him and his work. This was silly. He never saw the girl before and he never would see her again, of course. He must have dyspepsia.

So on his way to his office he made a call on his old college chum, now a promising young physician. He did not tell the doctor what the most prominent symptom was, but was sure he needed medicine for dyspepsia. Accordingly, he felt rather foolish when he was obliged to say no to all the doctor's questions as to whether he had certain symptoms inseparable from gastric trouble.

The doctor laughed and gave him some harmless powder, and he went to the office strong in the resolve to finish the brief. He made fairly good headway, but still the image of the beautiful young girl would come back to him, and as the day wore on more distinctly. Later in the afternoon he got a telegram saying that the party was at Chicago and signed "Alice." And that started it all over again.

Then he became alarmed and feared that his mind was going. For he was not a believer in "love at first sight," or hardly in the grand passion itself.

Then he found himself with an almost resistless longing to take the first train and follow his folks. Of course, he did not admit to himself that he wanted to see the other Alice.

That afternoon one of the firm's best clients came in. He said he contemplated purchasing some thousand acres in Mexico, with the view of establishing a coffee plantation there. He was not satisfied with the title to the land, and felt that some one ought to go down there and look into the matter more closely. He could not spare the time, and came to them, thinking that some of their young men might have enough knowledge of Spanish to make the trip.

Robert Duncan regarded him as an angel, and said that as the office was not very busy just then, he thought he should like to make the trip himself. This was better than the client expected, so the matter was soon fixed up.

"Perhaps you will meet your folks down there," said the senior partner.

"Why, perhaps I will," said Duncan, as if he had just thought of it. But he told his partner that it was hardly probable, as he was going down on the lower table lands near the coast and the excursions usually kept pretty well upon the higher plateaus.

That night before he started he got a letter from his mother, and in she said: "Alice Chambers is lovely, and we enjoy her very much." So that was her name—Chambers.

II.

The next morning he started. His journey was a tiresome one, and after several days spent on the train he found himself one glorious afternoon climbing a little mountain path on the back of a burro. Duncan had told his folks by wire of his intended trip, and found by looking over their itinerary that they had passed quite near where he now was.

He had left the train at a little town through which they passed some days previously, and was making his way into the country to interview an old Indian whom he expected to find the next morning. The title to Mexican lands often depends on information only obtainable from the kindly Indians.

That night he slept on his blanket under the stars, and early the next morning was pushing on, the path growing still wilder and more beautiful. At last, about 9 o'clock, he came over the spur of the mountain and looked down on a lovely valley. His guide and interpreter told him that in the little village which he could see was the old Indian.

About noon they arrived, the matter of the title was soon fixed up and arrangements were made to leave the next morning on the return trip. But that evening something happened that altered the plans.

A small party of the villagers who had been up on the mountain cutting wood had found a burro wandering alone. They did not recognize it as one of the village burros. It had a side saddle on it and tucked under one of the straps was a little glove. They knew that a young American or European woman must have ridden the burro, and they began a hunt to find her.

Some miles back they found her unconscious by the road, and putting her on the burro which they had led back, they brought her into camp. As they brought her up Duncan walked up the little village street to see what the matter was. He was astounded to see Alice Chambers on the back of the little mule.

She was still unconscious. One of the old women of the village took her into the little open shelter and in a very few minutes she revived, and, opening her eyes, smiled a wan smile. When her eyes caught that of Duncan she started, and he stepped up and said: "I am Robert Duncan, Miss Chambers, and my mother and sister have been traveling with you. I am here on business, and will be happy to help you in any way possible. When you are stronger we shall be glad to hear your story."

She regaineth her vigor quickly under the ministrations of the old Indian woman, and soon told them that she had started out with a party from the little town on the railroad to make an excursion to some famous caves. In some way she had become separated from the others, and had tried to find her way back. She became confused, and, meeting several natives, they had tried to understand each other, with the result that she became more and more at sea.

She had eaten only what some kindly Indians had given her. At last she went so long without food that she felt a faintness coming over her, and she knew no more until she woke and found herself in the little village.

In a few days she was strong enough to travel, and Duncan made himself a demi-god in the village by leaving a sum of money that to the Indians was fabulous. They calculated that the excursion party must be at the city of Mexico, and when they reached the railroad they telegraphed the party. An answer came back which they got at a station farther on. It said: "Thank God, she is found."

They were met at the station by an enthusiastic crowd made up of the excursion party, the American minister and a great mob of Mexicans, who cheered the couple to the echo. In some way the story had gotten into the papers.

Duncan decided to stay for some days, and telegraphed his partner to that effect, who wired back congratulations, and Duncan found himself a hero. He drove with them and went to see the sights.

One afternoon he asked Alice if she would drive with him to the grove of Chapultepec. They dismissed the coachman at the entrance and told him they would meet him there in a couple of hours. Then they wandered through that majestic grove, where it is always twilight, even at midday. They had been talking over their strange experience. "Alice," said Duncan, "you, of course, know that everybody thinks you are my sweetheart, and was before we left home?"

She blushed and owned that she had heard something to that effect.

"Well," said he, "why not make it true? Alice, I have loved you from the first day I saw you in the train in Boston."

She looked up at him and said, archly: "Well, Robert, it was quite mutual, I assure you. Oh, there are some people coming. You mustn't."

From which I infer that he understood her to say "yes."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

THE SHORTEST WAR.

A British Campaign Begun and Ended in One Day.

A campaign, involving the employment of many thousands of men and the fighting of two sanguinary pitched battles, was once begun and ended on the same day. The glory of this unique achievement belongs to the British arms. In 1843 things bore a threatening aspect in the Central Indian state of Gwalior, inhabited by the Mahrattas, considered the most formidable warriors we had up to then encountered in our Indian wars.

Intelligence reached the British authorities that the magnificent Mahratta army of 30,000 infantry, 10,000 cavalry and 200 guns contemplated not only a military depotism, but an active alliance with their neighbors of the Punjab, in the event of which British influence might be threatened by a combined Sikh and Mahratta army, composed of 150,000 men with 500 guns. Accordingly, as a precautionary measure, Lord Ellenborough ordered the assembly of an army of exercise on the Gwalior frontier. This force was divided into two portions; on the northern boundary Sir Hugh Gough commanded 12,000 men and forty field pieces; on the eastern was stationed General Grey with 4,000 infantry and a few batteries of horse artillery.

The concentration took place in November, 1843, and it had the effect of bringing the native authorities to their senses, but while they sulkily acquiesced in the orders emanating from British diplomatists, the internal disorders went on increasing. Finally, it was decided that nothing short of a British occupation of the capital, Gwalior, could put a stop to the unsatisfactory state of affairs prevailing, so on December 17 both Gough's and Grey's forces crossed the frontier for this purpose. No one suspected that there would be any fighting, the native government was known to be peacefully inclined and the contingency of the Mahratta army revolting, to oppose the British advance on its own account, was quite overlooked. But no sooner had the two British columns commenced their march than the Mahrattas declared their rulers traitors, and hastened to take up defensive positions. Gough appears to have entirely discredited the warnings that reached him, for he left his seige train behind Agra and allowed his wife, and the wives of many other officers, to accompany the column, riding on elephants at its head.

At daybreak on December 26 his troops commenced the passage of the Kohari River in leisurely fashion. A halt was called for breakfast, and immediately on the resumption of the march everybody was startled by hearing a heavy gun fired from the woods fringing a little village, named Maharajpore, and following the report a spent cannon ball rolled between the legs of Lady Gough's elephant. Within another few minutes the woods became lined with flame from the mouths of 175 pieces, as they discharged with terrible accuracy a storm of shot and shell into the British ranks. The surprise was completed. The ladies were hurried to the rear, and a council of war was summoned. The battle, which ensued raged for three hours, and the fighting was of a most desperate character. By midday, however, the victory was ours, the Mahrattas fleeing from the field and leaving behind them 3,000 killed and wounded and 156 guns.

By a curious coincidence, at the very same hour this sanguinary and unexpected conflict terminated, the second British force, under General Grey, which was operated many miles away from Gough's line of advance, was attacked by the second Mahratta army, 12,000 strong. Maharajpore had been a soldiers' battle, but this, the battle of Punneah, was to be decided by good generalship. The little British army, by a series of masterly maneuvers, drove the enemy from all points of his position, capturing his artillery, and inflicting a loss of 3,000 men. This completed the day's work, and, in fact, ended the war, which may be said to have begun at 9 o'clock that morning with the firing of the cannon ball at Lady Gough's elephant.—London Mail.

A Description of Wampum.

Wampum was the name applied to shells or strings of shells used by the North American Indians as money. Besides their use as money they were united to form a broad belt, which was worn as an ornament. In the language of the Massachusetts Indians the word signified white, the color which generally prevailed in wampum belts.

Six hundred thousand pounds of tea are consumed in England daily.

THE CATTLE HORN TRADE.

Where the Supply Comes From and the Many Uses to Which They Are Put.

In Frankfort street, near the East River and its picturesque shipping, is a small shop that deals in a curious commodity—horns. Not the musical horns which the little German band delights to play, but the horns with which a bull assists a stranger over a fence or tosses a small boy over a treetop. Cattle are raised not only for the steaks which they carry about with them, but also for their hoofs, which finally trot to the factory and become glue; their bones, which are laid down in the mill to become agricultural fertilizers; their hides, which are turned into shoes, and their horns, which are made by the art of the jeweler, and the skill of the craftsman into a hundred objects of beauty and utility.

The farmer boy, driving Spot and Brindle, may imagine them Christmas beef, but he is little likely to think Spot's hoofs as pasting together parchment deeds or restoring the delicate form of a shattered vase, or to picture Brindle's horns or any part thereof in a jeweler's window as an object of art.

Before the consumer finally sits down at the table to eat old Brindle turned into roast beef he may comb his hair with a horn comb. Then he may eat consomme out of a horn spoon and serve the salad with a horn salad knife and fork, and finally button the horn buttons of his coat over the beef soup and roast beef.

The horns which the cattle in the field shake at you, proudly or defiantly, are an object of the world's commerce. Sometimes a ship from the other side of the world comes into New York Harbor with 60,000 or 70,000 pairs of cattle horns in her hold.

In the little shop you see horns pointing toward you from every direction; horns on the wall, thick as thorns on a blackberry bush; horns as large around as an elephant's tusks, which look as if they might have been carried by a mammoth; long, pointed horns, as black as Satan's, that once grew straight up from a steer's head like the horns of an antelope; horns polished like ivory and mottled like marble. Above the proprietor's desk arches an incredible pair of horns, nine feet long from tip to tip. The steer that once wore those roamed the pampas of the Argentine Republic. They are believed to be the largest cattle horns in New York, and, perhaps, in the country.

"Horns are shipped to the United States from South America, Australia, Africa, India and Europe," says the keeper of the shop. "A great many come from Buenos Ayres and Montevideo, the commercial centres of the great cattle industry of the Argentine Republic and Uruguay. London, also, sends argosies of horns to the New World, collected largely from Russia and the Orient. India exports buffalo horns. The domestic supply of horns comes chiefly from Texas, Montana, Idaho, Colorado and Kansas.

"All the large horns which you see in the office came from South America. I don't think it would be possible now to get a pair of horns as long as the longest pair here. The wild cattle have been crossed by superior breeds, and their horns no longer grow as large and long as they did years ago. In a measure they are graded, and as the stock improves in quality the horns diminish in size. This is especially true of the herds of cattle in Texas and the Far West. There are hardly any pure wild cattle left in the country.

"Twenty-five years ago one might see Americans in the West whose beards reached their waists. That was the day of the long-horned cattle.

"The price of horns depends upon their quality. The best cattle horns bring \$300 a ton, the poorest may be had at \$10 a ton, while \$200 or \$250 a ton frequently is paid. Owing to the decrease in the number of cattle, especially the wild ones, horns have risen 25 per cent. in price in the last two years, despite the competition of celluloid.

"The finest horns in the United States for manufacturing purposes were the American buffalo horns. The bisons, unfortunately, are practically extinct, and their horns have disappeared from the market for all time. Sheep and goat horns do not command as high a price as cattle horns. We often receive horns in lots of 50,000 or 60,000 pairs. We sometimes sell 20,000 pairs to one customer."—New York Press.

A Candid Opinion.

"Well?" smiled the visiting lady.

"Were you considered handsome when you were a young woman?"

"Er—well, Jackie," hesitated the visitor, "I don't know that I was. I think probably no one but Mr. Brown considered me beautiful, and you know he married me."

"Well, I just wanted to know. Were you skinny then?"

"Not very."

"I don't think you could have been so very fat. Now you're old and ugly and look like thirty cents. There's mamma—I hate to say it, because I like her first rate, but she's not pretty and looks about what she is—50, or some such. Then Mrs. Smith—she makes good cream pie, but she surely could never have been handsome. Well, this is the way it goes with all the women I know. I asked mamma what she thought about it. She said that little boys were to be seen and not heard, and that she would have to give me a spanking before the day was over. So I thought I'd ask you."—Minneapolis Tribune.

muttered. "We are all too prone to use adjectives and adverbs, anyway."

He picked up the paper and seemed about to begin to read from it, but suddenly stopped.

"That whole sentence might as well come out," he said. "The meaning is perfectly clear without it. Conciseness is really the crying need of the hour." Then turning to the girl, he said: "Be mine."

Thus we see the power of habit. For years his duty had been to edit the "copy" of prolific correspondents.—Chicago Evening Post.

HOW A PLANT FEEDS.

Van Helmont's Interesting Experiment Showing How a Tree Grew.

It is more than 2,000 years since philosophers began to speculate about the food of plants and what we may term their "digestive" processes, but it is only during the latter half of this century that really clear and definite notions concerning the food supplies of the vegetable world have been generally accepted by scientific men. As far as is known, says a writer in Knowledge, the first botanical experiment ever performed was conducted by Van Helmont. He placed in a pot 200 pounds of dried earth, and in it he planted a willow branch which weighed five pounds. He kept the whole covered up and daily watered the earth with rain water. After five years' growth the willow was taken up and again weighed, and was found to have gained 164 pounds. The earth in the pot was dried and weighed, and had lost only two ounces.

Knowledge was not yet sufficiently advanced to enable Van Helmont to interpret these striking results correctly, and he came to the erroneous conclusion that the increased weight had been supplied to the roots. He therefore looked upon this experiment as supporting the theory which he had advanced, viz., that plants required no food but water. Stephen Hales advanced the subject a great step by indicating that much of the increase in weight of plants was derived from carbon dioxide in the air.

Vegetable cells contain a liquid known as "cell sap," which is water holding in solution various materials which have been taken up from without by the roots and leaves. These materials are thus brought in contact with the protoplasm, which causes them to undergo changes in composition which prepare them to be added to the substance of the plant. Thus it is in the protoplasm of the living cells of the plant that these "digestive" processes are carried on which Aristotle believed to occur in the soil. We see, then, that the living cells are microscopic laboratories in which the digestion of the food of the plant is carried o

Like a New Gibraltar.

According to a man who has just returned from a winter's sojourn in the Bermudas, the people of this continent have little idea of the magnitude of the plans being perfected by the British government at these islands. The fortifications, barracks and dockyards bid fair to make the islands the Gibraltar of the Atlantic.

The imperial government has built an iron balance dock, shaped like the letter V, and 400 feet in length. The bottom is round, so that it can be careened over when the bottom becomes foul, thus allowing it to be scraped and painted down to the center line. The dock can be sunk thirty feet. Between the inner and outer skins is a space of twenty feet in depth. This great chamber is divided into thirty-two compartments by fifteen transverse bulkheads and a longitudinal one running along the keel line. These are pumped out by sixteen individual engines on each side of the dock. The imperial authorities, however, are not satisfied with this provision, for a new dock is being built, in sections, in England, which will be 800 feet long and capable of accommodating the largest vessels.

The island barracks are exceptionally fine, and the fortifications are very strong and extensive. It is said there are 365, or one for every day in the year, but many of them are mere pinnacles of rock. The government is gradually acquiring additional lands for fortifications, dockyards, barracks and similar works. There is no doubt that the intention is to make it a place of immense military strength and equipped with the fullest facilities for the repair of naval and merchant ships.

Japanese Food Abominable.

B. A. Lawton, of Boston, who has recently returned from Japan, was describing that country to a party of friends at the Waldorf-Astoria, and in the course of his remarks said: "All that has been written of the physical beauty of Japan is really inadequate. But with Japanese life, Japanese houses and Japanese scenery are replete with interest and beauty, Japanese food is an abomination to the civilized stomach, and as such to be absolutely eschewed. Take the raw fish, for instance, they serve. The first time I tasted it I was forcibly reminded of the man who invented the 'flapjack' which, when cooked on one side, automatically turned over and cooked the other side as well. The scheme worked out to perfection and fortune seemed to loom large in the near future for the inventor, when a drawback to the scheme was discovered—the 'flapjack,' once swallowed, kept on turning. That is what happens when you eat the raw fish of Japan."—New York Tribune.

The number of high schools in the United States is about 6,000.

AN ARMY ON THE MARCH.

A Single Corps Extends Over Thirty-four Miles of Road.

Few persons have any notion of the vast length of an army on the march. A single battalion of infantry, 1,000 strong—which is the strength of an English battalion—takes up a road length of 525 yards, including about eighty yards for stragglers. A battery of field artillery takes up 260 yards, and a regiment of cavalry takes when marching four abreast, 650 yards. An army corps, with its staff, wagons, guns, hospitals, etc., would extend over thirty-four miles of road.

An army marches slowly on the best of roads. It is much more tiring marching in a crowd than walking alone. Soldiers go at the rate of about two and one-half or two and three-quarter miles an hour, and in the English army they do a good day's march when they cover thirteen miles. This accounts for the fact that when news is printed of an army marching to attack surprise is expressed that the attacked layed so long. It takes a day or more for all the men to assemble on the battlefield.

The rates of march for the various arms differ, of course; but the fastest arm has to suit its pace to the slowest. Here are the English official rates: Infantry in small bodies, three miles an hour; infantry in large bodies, two and a half to two and three-quarter miles; cavalry, walking, four miles; cavalry, trotting, nine miles, cavalry, galloping, fifteen miles; artillery, walking, three miles; artillery, trotting, eight miles.

In our army the average march for infantry is from fifteen to twenty miles a day. When troops move in large bodies, and particularly in the vicinity of the enemy, the march is conducted in several columns so as to diminish the depth of the column and to expedite the deployment into line of battle. In large commands the roads, if possible, are left to the artillery and trains. When long distances have to be covered rapidly, it is done by changing gaits. The most favorable ground is selected for the double time, but care is taken not to exhaust the troops immediately before engaging the enemy.

A Royal Architect and Gardener.

Kings are generally supposed to owe their distinction to their exalted position. It is said of King Leopold of Belgium, however, that if he were not King of the Belgians, he would be a king among architects, or among landscape gardeners.

His taste in these directions is probably more marked than his taste for ruling, for it is well known that he detests the ceremonials of royalty, and is never so happy as when inspecting and correcting designs for a new building or planning the laying out of an estate.

Brussels has much cause to be grateful to him in this respect, since it is to the keenness of his eye for the beautiful in landscape that she owes many of her open spaces from which delightful views of the country can be obtained.

The summer palace of the King and Queen of the Belgians is at Laeken, a suburb of Brussels. It is a castle of about 300 acres, and the park and grounds plainly show the influence of the King's love of horticulture and floriculture. They have been so beautifully laid out that they are the pride and delight of his subjects. The King himself superintended the opening of every glade and the arrangements of every group of trees.

Since the Queen shares with her husband a great fondness for flowers, and since Laeken is her favorite residence, it is not surprising that the conservatories there are said to be the finest private conservatories in the world. They were begun in 1874, and have been added to from time to time since.—Youth Companion's.

Every Man Is a King.

Only one people and one little valley south of the equator whose sovereign ty has not been claimed by some European power now remains. It is the valley of Marotse, fifty or sixty miles wide, north of Liauli, in South Africa, and the only reason why the Marotse, who inhabit it, have preserved their independence is that England and Portugal both claim it, and, therefore, the work of "civilization" is at a standstill.

It may not be as easy to conquer the Marotse when the time comes, for they are a tall, well set up race, very black of skin.

In manners they are very courteous, and in bearing dignified. Every full blooded Marotse is by birthright a king, and takes his place in the aristocracy of the empire. In fact, as every one is king, there is no head ruler.

The bare fact that he is a Marotse insures the respect of the subservient tribes, and as he grows to manhood a sense of superiority usually implants in the native the dignity of self-respect. All the labor is done by slaves who have been captured from neighboring tribes.

Condensing a Document.

The young man took a piece of paper and a pencil from his pocket and laid the paper on his knee.

"I will have something important to say to you in a minute, Miss Jones," he said.

Then he read over carefully what was written on the paper and crossed out a word.

"Superfluous," he said, half to himself.

He went over it again and crossed out another word.

"It's just as strong without that," he