

Papa's Letter.

I was sitting in my study,
Writing letters, when I heard,
"Papa, dear mama, Mary told me
Mamma must be 'lurbered."
"But I'm tired of the kitty;
Want some orzer ring to do,
Writing letters, is 'on, mamma?
Tan't I write a letter, too?"
"Not now, darling, mamma's busy;
Run and play with kitty now."
"No, no, mamma, me write letters—
Tan if 'ou will throw me how."
I would paint my darling's portrait,
As his sweet eyes searched my face—
Hair of gold and eyes of azure,
Form of childlike, wistful grace.
But the eager face was clouded,
As I slowly shook my head,
Till I said, "I'll make a letter
Of you, darling boy, instead."
So I parted back the tresses
From his forehead high and white,
And a stamp in sport I pasted
Mid its waves of golden light.
Then I said, "Now, little letter,
Go away and bear good news,"
And I smiled as down the staircase
Clattered loud the little shoe.
Leaving me, the darling hurried
Down to Mary in his glee;
"Mamma's writing lots of letters—
I's a letter, Mary—see!"
No one heard the little prattler
As once more he climbed the stair,
Reached the little cap and tip-top,
Standing on the entry stair;
No one heard the front door open,
No one saw the golden hair
As it floated o'er his shoulders
In the crisp October air.
Down the street the baby hastened,
Till he reached the office door;
"I's a letter, Mr. Postman!
Is there room for any more?"
"Cause dis letter's doin' to papa
Papa lives with God, 'on know,
Mamma sent me for a letter;
Does 'on fink 'at I tan go?"
But the clerk in wonder answered:
"Not to-day, my little man,
"Den I'll find anozzer office;
'Cause I must go if I tan."
Fain the clerk would have detained him,
But the pleading face was gone,
And the little feet were hastening,
By the busy crowd swept on.
Suddenly the crowd was parted,
People fled to left and right,
As a pair of maddened horses
At this moment dashed in sight.
No one saw the baby figure—
No one saw the golden hair,
Till a voice of frightened sweetness
Rang out on the autumn air.
'Twas too late—a moment only
Stood the beauteous vision there;
Then the little face lay lifeless,
Covered o'er with golden hair.
Reverently they raised my darling,
Brushed away the curls of gold,
Saw the stamp upon the forehead,
Growing now so icy cold.
Not a mark the face disfigured,
Showing where the foot had trod;
But the little life was ended—
"Papa's letter" was with God.
—Durlington Hansleye.

THE BUSHRANGERS.

My story has one great merit: it is true. A simple narration, therefore, of the following authentic events in connection with two notorious Australian bushrangers, Pearson and Rutherford, may be read with some interest. The scoundrels had a short and not very brilliant career, but the details which I learned from eye-witnesses, the facts that came out in the police court, where I had the painful duty to sit as one of the committing magistrates in the case of one of them, and the subsequent awful fate of the other, together make up a record of crime not unworthy of reproduction; and should this story reach the eyes of any of those who were concerned in it, they will pardon me for adhering so scrupulously to the bare facts and incidents that I have not even suppressed their names. During the terrible drought in December, 1868, of which Australian "squatters" will have a lively but bitter recollection, so great were my straits, that I had directed two of my overseers, James McNall and Harry Zouch, to brand and prepare some twenty thousand sheep "for the road," to travel in search of grass and water, now getting very scarce in my own country. The drafting-yards were at "Con's Hut," an out-station about seventy miles from Fort Bourke. Half a mile up the Warrego river from this place was a bush public house, kept by one William Shearer, fifteen miles further my Belalie head station. For many miles no other human habitation broke the dreary monotony of what is termed in Australia "The Bush," but what in reality consists of a succession of bare and parched plains, intersected at long intervals by narrow belts of timber or occasional pine ridges. Suddenly the men were disturbed in their work, as they afterward told me, by the sound of several shots fired almost simultaneously in the direction of the public house. To catch their hobbled horses, saddle them, and gallop off to see "what was up at Billy Shearer's" was the work of a very few minutes. Now what did happen "at Shearer's"? I will describe by giving, as near as memory will serve me, the substance of his evidence at the trial. He stated that about noon on this December day he was standing behind his counter in the bar, a small room about ten feet square, when a party of men, consisting of Sergeant McCabe, of the New South Wales mounted police, McNall, a

trooper of the Queensland force, and their black boy, the native "tracker," rode up, and having alighted, inquired if anything had been heard of two bushrangers, Pearson and Rutherford, adding that they were wanted about a late "sticking-up" case in which they had been concerned, and had been tracked to that locality. Shearer knew Rutherford from his having been but a few months previously one of the station hands, and was able to inform the police that this outlaw, at any rate, had not yet put in an appearance; the police must have missed them in the bush and gone ahead of them. The sergeant had just sat down on a small form on the left front of the bar, placing his rifle within reach against the counter—the other constable was standing beside him—when two men rode up, hitched their horses to the veranda posts in front of the inn, and without warning the foremost—Rutherford—entered the room, and covering Shearer with his revolver, uttered the formula so much dreaded at the time in Australia, "Bail up!"—the doorway at the same time being occupied by the other man, Pearson, also revolver in hand. Finding themselves in such close proximity to the police was no doubt a most unexpected surprise, but Sergeant McCabe's challenge "to surrender" had no other effect than to cause Rutherford to wheel half round, alter his aim, and fire, McCabe, as it appeared, receiving the ball as he was in the act of leaning forward, and though without time to bring his rifle to the shoulder, discharging it in that attitude at Pearson in the doorway. The scene of confusion was indescribable—the small room was dense with smoke—six shots, it is believed, having been exchanged in almost as many seconds as such terribly close quarters. The bushrangers rushed for the horses, which had broken away in the melee, caught them, and decamped; but Pearson was seen to drop his revolver and to be staggering, and, as was subsequently discovered, was shot through the wrist and the shoulder. McCabe was down, mortally wounded, and the first care seems to have been for him, a circumstance which explains the almost unnoted escape of the bushrangers. It was at this juncture that the overseers, McNall and Zouch, came upon the scene, and, without further delay, armed themselves with poor McCabe's rifle and revolver, and, accompanied by the unhurt trooper and his native boy, went in pursuit. Following the tracks, they reached the head station, Belalie, where they learned that Pearson and his mate had been before them, had helped themselves to two of my best horses, abandoning their own, and, leaving the bar, had struck out due west across the bush. This occasioned some surprise, as Rutherford, who knew the ground, must have been aware that such a route, if persisted in, would necessitate seventy miles without water, and that, too, with a wounded comrade. Occasionally across the wide plains the fugitives were sighted, riding leisurely along, little suspecting how closely they were followed; and our men had to check their pace, as their tactics were to keep them in ignorance of pursuit, with the hope of being able to take them by a night surprise, when, as was naturally expected, they would "go into camp." McNall has described to me how, on one occasion, where the plains were smaller and the clumps of timber more frequent, they were able to get within rifle-shot, and he was sorely tempted to show them as little consideration as they had shown the poor sergeant, and fire; but Zouch, who, before he came to my employment, had been a sub-inspector of police, and had had much experience in hunting down bushrangers, was bent on taking them alive, and would not risk the chance of a long shot. These cooler counsels prevailed, and they steadily and stealthily followed on. They were doomed to disappointment in the end; for, almost incredible as it may seem, with a wounded man to endure such heat and fatigue, these hardy desperadoes made no halt. As night came on our men, on the other hand, were obliged to camp, as they could no longer follow the hoofmarks of the fugitives' horses without risk of losing them altogether. So soon, however, as the moon was up they were again on their tracks, and followed them till soon after daylight, when, worn out with thirst and fatigue, they reached Mr. Vincent Dowling's Yantabulla station, on the Outback river. Here they were mortified to find that the bushrangers had again been too quick for them, had run the station horses into the yard, helped themselves to fresh ones, and were away with some hours' clear start. It was then decided to abandon the pursuit. There were at that time few stations further west, and sooner or later starvation would compel the runaways to return to inhabited parts. The trooper was left to watch and endeavor to pick up further information, while McNall and Zouch had reluctantly to return and look to their station duties. At the time when bushranging was rife in Australia there were parts of the country where, among a certain class of small farmers and publicans, sympathy was shown for bushrangers, and what the police had to encounter before they ultimately succeeded in extinguishing the evil was the great difficulty in getting reliable information of the movements of these marauders, who on the other hand were themselves kept posted in the movements of their pursuers, and the "office" being given, were harbored or assisted to escape by secret allies, who seemed above suspicion. In the far interior, where we lost sight of Pearson and Rutherford, this was fortunately not the case; here they would find no "cover" either from the nature of the country or the disposition of the inhabitants. They could not hold out long outside the occupied country, and when forced to return, population was so scattered and sympathizers none, that hopes of escape were slight. Added to this, the excellent police force of the colony was on the alert, and border patrols active and vigilant. Notwithstanding, for upward of a month there was no sign; till one day Pearson was sighted on look in a range of hills near Fort Bourke. He was easily captured, and, when brought before the bench, was haggard and worn out with fatigue. This unfortunate man was of comparatively gentle birth, had been a

medical student in England, and being sent out to the colony to seek his fortune, had, as is too often the case where a young fellow is shipped off without funds, interest or capital, lost caste, got among dissolute companions, until, attracted by what weak-minded boys would think a dazzling life, had come by rapid steps to this terrible depth of crime. The case was simple—his only care seemed to be to clear himself of the actual murder of McCabe. The law, however, could take no cognizance of this—whether he fired the shot or not he was equally guilty of the murder. He was committed, tried and sentenced to be hanged. Subsequently his sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life, and when I last heard of him he was still an inmate of Darlinghurst jail. An extraordinary statement of his was that on leaving the public house, he had to be helped on to his horse in an almost fainting condition, and yet held up through that exhausting escape; that a day later, by his directions, his mate extracted the ball from his shoulder with his knife; and yet when taken, though weak and ill, no trace of wounds save the scars remained. He had parted from Rutherford, as his entangled state was a danger to both, and he had not had the hardihood to attempt to make his way through the cordon formed by the vigilant guardians of the peace. But to his companion he was true as steel, and would give no clue to the direction Rutherford had taken. The latter, who was a much more experienced bushman, and in stronger health, was successful in evading his fate for some time longer. As was afterward ascertained, he had contrived to elude the police, and made his way to the McQuarrie river, some three hundred miles nearer Sidney than the scene of his late terrible outrage. He was a smart young fellow, a native Australian, though of English parentage, and of good address. Arriving in a district where he was unknown, he had no difficulty in getting employment, and was for some time engaged breaking-in horses on a cattle station, a duty he was well able to perform. Had he been contented to remain at honest work he might have long escaped detection; but it was not to be. He was soon at his old work, and one day walked into the Pine Ridge hotel, near Canomba, kept by a Frenchman named Beauvais, and unceremoniously announced: "I am Rutherford. Bail up." The process was without excitement, orderly and business-like, and Beauvais knew there was no alternative but to submit. He pleaded that he was not a rich publican, and begged moderate terms, offering any refreshment he demanded. Rutherford money and nothing else—"that or your life." With his revolver at the head of the unhappy Frenchman, he marched him into the private room, where the cash box was kept, and stood by while his victim reluctantly and slowly opened it. However, he stood a little too close, and Beauvais, as he described it to me, thought: "I will not part with my money without a struggle." There was no time for bandying words or remonstrance. Quick as thought he threw up his antagonist's revolver arm, and grappled with him in a deadly struggle. He was a plucky fellow, but the odds were against him. Rutherford was a younger and stronger man, armed, and now desperate. Beauvais' grasp on the revolver arm prevented Rutherford from getting an opportunity to fire; still the issue could not long be doubtful. At this moment in the unequal combat some good chance caused one of the men to stumble, and both fell heavily to the ground. There was a loud report; Rutherford's pistol had gone off in the fall, and Beauvais, jumping to his feet, found that the wretched murderer had perished by his own hand, and without a struggle. I am glad to be able to add that this plucky act was not left unrewarded, the New South Wales government presenting Beauvais with £100 for his gallant conduct in having been instrumental in ridding society of this dangerous and desperate felon.

Largest of Their Kind.

1. The largest ocean in the world is the Pacific. 2. The largest sea, the Mediterranean. 3. River, the Amazon. 4. Gulf, Mexico. 5. Cape, Horn. 6. Lake, Superior. 7. Bay, Bengal. 8. Island, Australia. 9. City, London. 10. Public building, St. Peter's, Rome. 11. Hotel, Palace, San Francisco. 12. Steamer, Great Eastern. 13. Desert, Sahara. 14. Theater, Grand Opera House, Paris. 15. State, Texas. 16. Territory, Dakota. 17. Park, Phoenix Park, Dublin. 18. Highest mountain, Mount Everest, Hindostan, Asia. 19. Sound, Long Island. 20. Largest railroad, Grand and Central Pacific. 21. Canal, Suez Canal, China. 22. Bridge, that over the Tay at Dundee, Scotland. 23. Largest railroad depot, St. Pancras, London. 24. Largest room in the world under a single roof, military one, St. Petersburg. 25. Strongest fort, Gibraltar. 26. Longest ship, the Romsdal, lately in the port of New York. 27. Sailing ship of greatest tonnage, the Three Brothers.

A Feminine Mystery.

Assuming that no man ever saw a woman slip her ears or wear earmuffs, it behooves the sterner sex to respectfully inquire why this is so. Women's ears, taken as they come, look very much as men's ears. To an impartial and fair-minded observer, they are more delicately constructed, and, naturally, not as well fortified against cold as the average masculine auricular appendage. The feminine ear is not protected by whiskers or hair, and fashion declares that the hat or bonnet shall in no way contribute to its warmth or general comfort. It goes into battle against the common enemy without armor, and with no more preparation for conflict than were this the month of June instead of December. That it should escape under such circumstances, or that, unwrapped and thus exposed, it should not require slapping, as either a preventive or protective measure, is a mystery which the average masculine mind is not equal to. —Chicago Inter-Ocean.

SCARLET FEVER.

Some Facts as to its Origin—its Aggravation and Prevention by Ordinary Precautions.

In view of the large number of cases of scarlet fever prevailing in New York, the World sent a reporter to one of the best-known physicians in the city, Dr. Fordyce Barker, from whom the following facts and opinions concerning the disease were gathered:

The reporter asked if scarlet fever could be called a disease of modern times and was unknown to the ancients. It was first described by Bydenham in the seventeenth century," answered Professor Barker, "as a distinct disease."

"Are there great differences in the severity of such epidemics?"

"Very great differences; some epidemics being mild and some attended with severe and dangerous cases. But there are always mild cases during the most severe epidemics."

"What are the causes of scarlet fever?"

"The specific cause is infection by a specific poison which is communicated by direct contact either with the exhalations from the lungs of patients, with their skin, or by means of clothing or various substances with which the patients have come in contact. Scarlet fever is said to have been communicated by milk, or even by a letter. Taylor, an eminent English writer, reports the beginning of an epidemic as being in the family of a milkman who delivered milk to twelve families. Of these families six had scarlet fever as consequence. A certain individual predisposition must exist, as it is frequently found that one child in a family may take the disease, while others of the children who have frequently been exposed in the same degree do not get it."

"Are individuals who have had the disease in a mild form more liable to a second attack?"

"I should say not. On the contrary, those who have a constitutional predilection to the disease are more liable to a second attack. Ordinarily one attack secures immunity from a second, but there are many exceptions to this. It is very rare that patients die from a second attack. In fact not more than three or four cases of this kind have been reported in medical literature."

"How long does the poison retain its activity in clothing, furniture, rooms, etc.?"

"This is very uncertain. There is conclusive evidence that it has been retained in clothing sometimes for months. For example, a lady assisted in nursing the children of a sister in the country in the month of August. In the following February one of her own children was attacked with the disease and subsequently two others. It was then found that this lady had put on a dressing gown she had worn at her sister's the previous August, and had taken in her lap the first of her own children which was attacked at the time she put on another case, a nurse who had been in attendance on scarlet-fever patients four months before seems to have communicated the disease to a lady whom she was attending who had a young infant. Another case was that of a lady who had moved into a house where there had been scarlet fever some months before. Three of her children were attacked with the disease who had not been exposed to infection from any other source, and no other cases were prevailing at the time that could be heard of by the lady's physician."

"How soon is the disease developed after infection?"

"Trousseau reports a case in which the disease was manifested in twenty-four hours after exposure, and similar cases are reported; but usually the period of development is from three to ten or twelve days after exposure. This is probably due to the difference in the susceptibility of the patients."

"At what period of the disease, and how long is it infectious?"

"It is infectious throughout its whole course. It is believed to be most intensely so during the period of desquamation, or when the skin is peeling off; but so long as there is any evidence of disturbance of the system from the localization of the poison in any organ, it is not safe to assume that the disease is not communicable."

"What is the comparative susceptibility to and danger from the disease at different ages?"

"The most susceptible period of life is from one to fifteen years. Murchison, a very high authority, states from the statistics of nearly 150,000 cases that about sixty-four per cent. of deaths from scarlet fever are under five years, and nearly ninety per cent. under ten years; ninety-five and a half per cent. under fifteen years, and only one and three-fourths per cent. over twenty-five years. Scarlet fever is very rare in young infants. Only one-nineteenth of all the deaths are under one year, and one-fifteenth between one and two years."

"How can scarlet fever be prevented and alleviated?"

"To prevent scarlet fever, complete isolation of the patients is absolutely essential, as well as the prevention of all contact with those in attendance on the diseased persons. It is essential also that the house should be thoroughly ventilated, so that the poison which may escape may be as diluted as possible. All clothing should be thoroughly disinfected, and even the soiled linen of the sick should not be mingled with that of the other members of the household. The relief of the patients pertains to the medical treatment. After the disease is recovered from, the sick-room should be thoroughly disinfected, as well as the bedding, the furniture, the carpets, and even the walls. It is found that dry heat to the point of 212 degrees, kept up for some hours, effectually destroys the poison; and this, perhaps, is as good a method as any of disinfecting the bedding of those who cannot afford to have it destroyed."

When the reporter referred to the published statement that the household of the Princess Alice, grand duchess of Darmstadt, were made more susceptible to the contagion of diphtheria by the habit of kissing among its inmates, and asked Professor Barker whether inhaling the breath of a scarlet fever patient by kissing or otherwise was dangerous and should be avoided, the doctor replied, "Most assuredly the disease

might be communicated by a mother kissing her child who has either scarlet fever or diphtheria."

"If diphtheria complicates a case of scarlet fever, does this necessarily make the case fatal?"

"It is a severe complication, but by no means necessarily fatal, as I've often known cases to recover in which both diseases existed. Last winter a young girl of fourteen had diphtheria. After the diphtheria was palpably subsiding the child continued to have a very high temperature, leading to the suspicion that some other poison was disturbing the system. Suddenly a very intense form of scarlet fever was manifested. The child was extremely ill for several days, and then, during desquamation, the diphtheria again appeared. But this young girl perfectly recovered. Diphtheria, therefore, while causing grave apprehension, should not be regarded as necessarily terminating fatally. A child sick with scarlet fever in a house which is exposed to sewage gas, or in which there is defective plumbing, would be likely to have the disease complicated with diphtheria."

"Does the term scarlatina mean a mild form of scarlet fever?"

"No; the two terms are precisely identical."

"Is scarlet fever always a fatal disease in women just after confinement?"

"It is not; but after confinement sometimes women are very susceptible to the poison. I have always heard physicians loosely say that under these circumstances the women always die, but this I know to be far from the truth. A woman with an infant just born was some years ago brought into one of my wards in Bellevue hospital. The next day scarlet fever appeared in her case. I immediately had all the patients in the ward removed and took every precaution to prevent the spread of the disease. This patient, whose system was completely broken down by want and exposure, died within twelve hours after the appearance of the eruption. Three other women who were in the ward when she was brought in, and who had recently been confined, were attacked with the disease on the third and fourth days after exposure. Two of these recovered. It is a singular fact that neither the baby of the first woman nor any of the sixty or more in the hospital had the disease. In private practice I have seen few cases of scarlet fever in women who had recently been confined, but a majority of these have recovered."

Mystery of a Murdered Man.

There is a mystery about the life of the murdered German, Schulte, of Norwalk, Conn., which, if unearthed, would probably make a very interesting story. In one of the most quiet and secluded neighborhoods to be found along the Sound, about half way between the city of South Norwalk and the village of Darien, a stranger appeared nearly two years ago and bought a little farm on a cross-road. He hardly examined the property, but asked the price, promptly counted out \$5,000, and took possession almost at once. No one knew anything of his antecedents, and he avoided making acquaintances. His next-door neighbor said, after the murder, that he did not know him by sight. He made frequent visits to New York, and was attended to and from the railroad station by a hired man who was required to walk always so many paces in front. He lived in the plainest manner, and while it was known that he had money to supply his wants, there was no suspicion that he was rich. Suddenly, while on his way home from the station, he was brutally murdered, and then it was discovered that, aside from what money his murderers secured, he had \$20,000 in cash inside his vest. Inside the house a large sum, said to be \$200,000, was found, and a little chest deposited by him in a Norwalk savings bank a day or two before his death was found to be full of French gold coin. Papers in his possession showed that he owned a very large amount of property in Germany, near Cologne; they also indicate that he was a man of good education, and apparently of considerable prominence. Those who made his acquaintance say he spoke four languages fluently. It has also transpired that he was intending removing to Virginia, where he had instructed a New York agent to buy a farm, as he found the New England climate too severe. A passport among his papers indicated that he had traveled through Germany. Probably time will unravel the mystery, but at present nobody knows his history, why he was in apparent hiding at this spot, or what motive could have led to the crime. There are no clues to the murderers, except such as throw suspicion on the man-servant. His course at the time is thought by some to show his innocence, by others to indicate a well-acted part to hide his guilt and throw suspicion on others. All told, the story is more mysterious, although less tragic, than the horrible killing of poor Mary Stannard in Madison. —Hartford Courant.

The Sewing Women of New York.

From a small paper, called the *Cherry Record*, issued by St. John's guild, one of New York's leading charitable institutions, we take the following: Few people, except the actual sufferers, are aware of the many hardships endured by the sewing women of New York. The prices paid for work by the manufacturers are, at the best, very low. The conditions exacted by them are frequently of such a nature that poor women, though honest and industrious, are unable to comply with them. This has led to a class of middlemen, who being able to comply with the conditions of the manufacturers, obtain the work for them, and then sublet it to poor women at greatly reduced rates. As an instance, the usual rate paid by the manufacturer for a common grade of shirts is fifty-five cents per dozen. Many women who apply to the guild for work last winter had been making the same shirts at twenty-eight cents per dozen. This was indeed a great hardship, if not a positive injustice. The guild desires to protect the sewing women from this great tax upon their poorly-paid labor, and has established a sewing department, in which the full price that is received from the manufacturers is paid. The management of this department has been placed in the hands of a committee of ladies who volunteer their services.

OSTRICH FARMING.

A Peculiar Bird and a Peculiar South African Industry.

The males are splendid birds, often measuring seven feet in height when the head is raised, and above four feet to the shoulder, with black shining feathers on the back, and the beautiful plumes, both black and white, under the wings and on the sides of the tail. A band of bright red or pink runs down the leg, and they prance about with great dignity, shaking the wealth of rich, loose, hanging feathers under their short arms (as one might say) with much pomp and ceremony before their ladies, who are far more quietly dressed in gray. They, too, have, however, some white feathers; but these cannot be depended upon, as they are often streaked with gray, and are never so valuable as those of the male birds. Their large eyes have a curious film, which they can bring over them and retract at pleasure. A pair of fine ostriches is worth about \$400, and five were now parted with; but the remaining nine used nightly to settle themselves to roost at equal distances along the farmyard, with their large projecting breasts flat on the earth. And a stranger driving up to the place at dusk was more than once confronted by the nine sentinels suddenly uprising from the ground to their full height with startling effect. They are extremely strong, and can kill a man by striking at him with the full force of the leg, when the claw, above an inch long, of the front toe, will tear the flesh from head to foot; the wound from the nail is considered to be poisoned. The bird when it is to be plucked is therefore very carefully secured; it is driven into a narrow pen and a bar let down behind it. A stocking is then drawn over its head, and when once blindfolded it remains motionless and makes no resistance. The quill of the feather, when "alive," is full of blood, and plucking must be a painful process. About twenty of the finer feathers, and thirty or forty of the commoner ones, are taken at the same time, when the poor bird's wounds are rubbed with sweet oil and vinegar. It soon seems to recover; but the tender-hearted master sometimes cuts the plumes off near the root instead of plucking them; these, however, do not sell so well. A good feather is worth \$2.50 at Cape Town, and the produce of the five ostriches amounts to about \$300 a year. This, in a bad season, when the wheat is devoured by rust, when the sheep have the scab, when the cattle suffer from dry seasons and short crops, and the odium is threatening the vines, must be a very pleasant resource to the Cape farmer in his need, which the English one will envy him. It is by no means, however, all plain sailing with ostrich produce. The birds only breed after five years, and often come to grief; the male birds fight, they rub themselves against the ground—break and dirty their feathers, are fond of water, and often plunge into the pools, and swim over, much to the detriment of the plumes that are to figure on the bonnet of some Paris or London *elegante*. The garden pool of the farm in question is surrounded by wild red geraniums six feet high or so, which are mown down from time to time only to grow up more luxuriantly, mixed on the lower, moister side with a quantity of tall white arums and a sort of red gladiolus with long, loose, narrow leaves. As the ostriches grew older they were confined in a pen surrounded with a fence of cactus or prickly pear, the fig of which is good eating; and one day a young mulatto crept in, where he had no business, to steal the fruit. An indignant ostrich struck at him, and tore open the whole leg of his trousers, wounding the thigh. It might have killed him; but the boy Jack, who fed them, rushed up at the sound of the shrieks with a basin of barley and rescued the man. The wound, however, was months in healing. The bird is very easily killed by a slight twist of the neck or a blow on the head. The immense cavity for air within the breast, which enables it to run so long, makes a sound like a drum when the bird is struck on the back. At one time in the year they make a loud booming noise like that of a bull, very alarming when the ostrich is unseen and comes suddenly close upon you. They are, however, extremely quiet when well treated; and the little children on the farm are often put to ride on their backs. Horses, until accustomed to the sight of them, smart and rear in great affright, and the ostrich returns the compliment of dislike. In an ostrich camp near by, when the master went about to inspect his sitting hens, they rose at him menacingly, but when he rode round, they remained cowed and silent. —Good Words.

The Consul's Snake-Eater.

The "secretary bird," carrying his pen behind his ear, ranks among the remarkable of the feathered race. These birds are also called serpent-eaters, and in sighting their peculiar prey from afar, their eyes will match those of the eagle. The author of "Thirty Years at Sea," saw one domesticated at the British consul's residence, in the city of Louisa, Africa, and stalking about among the poultry. They are kept, he says, about the basements and courtyards of houses as scavengers, and to destroy mice and snakes, which latter are their principal food when not in captivity.

The owner of the one I speak of was showing its capacities to our captain, and the bird gulped down five or six chickens' heads, which had just been cut off. A large snake, said to be poisonous, was then brought in a basket and turned out in the courtyard.

The secretary at once made for him with his wings extended, and the quills at the back of his head (from which he is familiarly named) all erected.

The snake glistened rapidly around the wall, evidently seeking some hole or hiding-place, but finding none, he collected himself for a spring, but before he could strike, the bird seized him by the neck, lashed him violently on the pavement two or three times, and then, putting one horny foot on his neck, commenced to tear him in pieces, and devour him.

Not more than two minutes elapsed between the turning out of the snake and his being safely stowed away in the secretary's crop, in company with the chickens' heads.