

THE HOUSE OF CLAY.

There was a house—a house of clay,
Wherein the inmates sang all day,
Merry and poor.
For Hope sat like a heart to heart,
Fond and kind—fond and kind,
Vowing he never would desert—
Till all at once he changed his mind—
"Sweetheart good-bye!" He slipped away,
And shut the door.
But Love came past, and looking in,
With smiles that pierced like sunshine thin,
Through wall, roof, floor,
Stood in the midst of that poor room,
Grand and fair—grand and fair,
Making a glory out of gloom,
Till at the window mocked old care—
Love sighed—"all lose and nothing win"
He shut the door.

A MARVELOUS STREAM

Wherein Birds and Beasts are Caught and Hopelessly Held Captive.

[Pampas and Andes.]
At a distance of thirty miles south of the river Diamante our route passed by a natural object of considerable interest—a stream, or rather lid, of yellowish white fluid like petroleum issuing from the mountain side at a considerable height and trickling down the slope till lost in the porous soil of the valley below. The source from which it flowed was at the junction, where a hard metamorphic rock, interspersed with small crystals of agnate, overlay a stratum of volcanic tuff. It was formed like the crater of a volcano, and full of black, bituminous matter, hot and sticky, which could be stirred up to the depth of about eighteen inches. Floundering in it was a polecat or skunk, having been enticed to its fate by the desire of securing a bird caught in the natural bird lime, till a bullet from the revolver of one of the party exterminated the skunk's struggles to extricate itself from the warm and adhesive bath in which it was hopelessly captive. The overflow from this fountain was, as described, like a stream of petroleum two or three feet wide trickling over a bed of pitch or some such substance, which extended to a much greater width along the edge of the running stream at its contact with it. This material was of a very sticky nature, becoming gradually harder as it spread further out, assuming the appearance of asphalt when it became mingled with the loose sand of the adjoining soil.

While engaged in examining this natural curiosity, we came upon two small birds, caught in the sticky substance at the edge of the stream; they were still alive, but upon releasing them both the feathers and the skin came off where they had come in contact with the bituminous matter, so that we had to kill them to put an end to their sufferings. No doubt they had been taken in by the appearance of water which the stream presented, and had alighted to drink, when they discovered their mistake too late. Their fate suggested the idea that in a district so devoid of water others of the feathered tribes must constantly become victims to the same delusion in a similar manner, and upon a close inspection of the margin of the stream the correctness of this inference was established by the discovery of numerous skeletons of birds imbedded in it; nor were those of small quadrupeds unrepresented, among which we recognized the remains of a fox.

Plaster Decorations.

[New York Letter.]
A Broadway dealer says that the house-decoration mania runs chiefly to plaster now. Busts, statuettes, plaques, relief, antiques, urns, and vases are a few of the things sold every day by the dozen. They are all made in the Italian quarter by newly-arrived emigrants, and cost almost nothing in quantity. Ladies by them almost exclusively. They take them home—paint, gold, silver or bronze them. They then look almost as handsome as genuine antiques, and at one-twentieth the price. Of course it's shoddy, but it brightens up a sitting-room amazingly, and for people of limited means it's a good thing. Besides, it gives a decent livelihood to scores of young girls; who would otherwise be starving on needlework. They'll buy a dozen or two casts for \$2, color or fix them up for \$1 or more, and then, if they have good taste, are careful in their work, they can sell them all the way from a half up to \$2 apiece.

A Cheap Home Zoo.

[Philadelphia Call.]
Little Bob—Oh, pap, won't you take me to the Zoological garden?
Pap—I am too busy, my son, too busy.
"Well, ain't there any menagerie near your office?"
"No, my boy; nothing but business houses there."
"Oh, I do want to see all the horrible creatures that Tom Tompkins tells about. He's been to the Zoo and three different menageries."
"Well, Bub, although I have no time to take you anywhere, your love of examining strange creatures shall be gratified."
"Ain't that nice? When?"
"This evening. I will bring home a microscope and let you look at a drop of Schuykill water."

Increase in the Size of Farms.

[Albany Journal.]
The average size of farms in the United States decreased from 203 acres in 1850 to 134 acres in 1890; the percentage of unimproved land decreased 61.5 per cent. to 49.9 per cent., and the assessed valuation almost tripled. As the population pushes westward the number of small farms will increase, the great ranches of the west will be divided and the "evil" will remedy itself.

Our Modern Juggernaut.

[New Orleans Times-Democrat.]
Who has not seen, about 8:30 o'clock in the morning, a procession of white-faced, hollow-cheeked little girls on their way to school? It is early morning and they might be supposed to have a refreshing sleep, yet they look worn and heavy-eyed, and in their walk there is none of the elastic spring of youth. They have not the buoyant air that one is wont to associate with childhood, but more as though they were burdened with the cares of a long and unhappy life. They skip not, neither do they laugh or jump, but drag wearily along, seldom lifting their joyless glances from the ground.

With their fingers they clutched huge packages of school books, and upon their fragile arms hung baskets or buckets containing luncheon which, if they have the appetite to digest. No foot-sore dromedary swaying mournfully through desert sands beneath the indescipherable vertical sun of the Soudan, ever groaned beneath a burden so disproportionate to its strength as these children, in a civilized age and by the connivance of civilized parents, are compelled to bear day after day through years of their unhappy lives.

The curriculum of the average modern school is to the children of this enlightened land what the car of Juggernaut was to the benighted Hindus. Its remorseless wheels, impelled by as cruel and ignorant a superstition as ever reigned within a Brahmin's breast, roll over these helpless little forms, crushing out health and joy, dimming the brightness of these baby eyes, and blighting the blossom on the rounded cheek. It is applied to all comers as the bed of Procrustes was to every luckless captive who fell into the monster's hands. Feeble or strong, robust or delicate, quick or halting, ambitious or reluctant, all are forced into that appalling mould and fitted to it violently, no matter how much of health or happiness, even life, may be the cost.

Practical Metaphysics.

[New York Graphic.]
Don't drum on the desk with your fingers or "joggle" your foot by the hour while sitting down. In so doing you are expending strength for nothing—to get which you have eaten and slept—strength you need to use to best advantage in buying, selling and getting a living. Every movement of muscle, whether it accomplishes anything or not, whether voluntary or involuntary, costs an outlay of body strength. Every thought also involves an expenditure of strength. Therefore all thought involving fret, worry, fear, or borrowed trouble is so much strength unprofitably expended. It will waste you away mind and body. You may always tell a man or woman whose existence has always been a life-long fret by their careworn, hollow, emaciated faces. They are never healthy. Fret kills more people than the cholera. It leaks away strength constantly. At last the weakest organ or function gives away. This we call disease. The doctor comes and gives the disease a Latin name. The disease may attack heart, liver, lung, stomach, kidney. But the real and underlying cause had been at work for years in the patient's mind. You can't help fretting, worrying, borrowing trouble. That makes no difference as to result. Merciless nature takes no account of what you can't help. Possibly you cannot help it. Years of habit may have made worrying "second nature" for you. It may be a habit as hard to break as the "joggle" of your heel while sitting at the desk. Both movements—the physical one of your foot and the mental one of your mind—may have become involuntary. You might call it automatic mind or body action or automatic exhaustion.

Mennonites in the Northwest.

[Pioneer Press "Voices."]
The Mennonites are, in their queer way, the most soundly progressive of the settlers on the Red river. They never caught the spirit of the boom, but they have made ends meet, and expecting not too much have been little disappointed. Outwardly a dull people, they are as sure and quick to seize profitable methods of farming as any of our western landholders. They are leading the way in the use of steam plows, which will, it seems to me, cut a large figure sooner or later in Red river farming. The farmer who can turn under his stubble at the rate of twenty acres a day in August and September, as soon as the harvest is cleared from the field, gains a month's advantage in the spring for every week of work in the fall.

The Mennonites have an old settlement at Waynesboro, in the Pennsylvania end of the Cumberland valley, where a large Mennonite manufactory of agricultural implements has grown up. These people make traction engines and steam plows, and our western Mennonites are buying them as fast as they can. The saving in the long, cold Manitoba winters is a big one. One steam plow saves fourteen horses and seven men. The seven months' feed of this many horses is more than the interest on the cost of the steam plow.

Smoking Like a Gentleman.

[Alfred Ayres in The Mentor.]
The well-bred man, on the contrary, the gentleman, the man that smokes only for the love of it, puts but as much of his cigar in his mouth as is necessary in order to draw it, keeps it in his mouth no longer than is necessary, and never fails to remove it when he talks or passes any one toward whom he would be respectful, especially a lady. Further, our best bred men never smoke in any street at an hour when it is much frequented, nor in any public place where smoking is likely to be offensive to others.

Set a Good Table.

[Times-Star Interview.]
There is one thing to be remembered about setting a table, and that is to watch everything. But the main thing is to set a good table. You can get at a man ten times quicker through his stomach than in any other way. Give me a man's stomach, I say, and you can take his head and heart.

Whitehall Times: Men with red noses are the light-houses to warn mariners when "half seas over."

THE BRITISH RECRUIT.

Joining the Army—Gorgeous Posters and What They Promise.

[New York Herald.]
Lord V. deley, who professes such an awe in the young soldier, has been so considerate of his brother officers that he took with him to Egypt only the veteran, grown-up men of the regiment, leaving behind the stuff that he theoretically desires to encourage—that is to say, the young and incompetent. There is hardly a regiment in the service that has not been weakened by the reason that the best men have been picked out here and there to make up the corps that Sir Garnet is to lead. No better illustration could be given of the present disorganization of the British army than this. No wonder Germans say that Englishmen wander war among the sports. But at any rate, there is a great demand for recruits, and the posters we are approaching are intended to make the mouth of the passing cockney water for the sweets of the barrack-room.

Poster No. 1 promises to pay 27 cents a day to men who enlist between the ages of 19 and 25, and who are five feet seven inches in height. To get these 27 cents a day you must enlist for twelve years—seven years active and five years in the reserve. After your first seven years you get \$105 bounty, and after twelve years you get \$180. While in the reserves you only get 12 cents a day, and are liable to be called out once a year. However, you get a gorgeous scarlet uniform, an enormous bearskin on your head, and the pleasure of quartering at Windsor or Buckingham palace—always within sight of the queen. The second poster invites me to join the Scots guards, another crack regiment that quarters either in London or Dublin. The uniform here again is scarlet, with bearskin shako. I must be 18 years old, must be five feet seven inches high, and measure at least thirty-four inches around the chest, certainly not a hard test. I must enlist three years at 27 cents a day, and then remain nine years as reserve, to be called out once a year. The poster has a colored picture of a dashing Scots guardman surrounded with the names of many famous battles he is supposed to have assisted in winning.

This poster, however, is more generous than the last, and promises a medal after eighteen years' service as well as \$25 in cash. After twenty-one years it promises a pension of 27 cents a day. A Yankee, used to getting his \$12 a month as private, would think this rather small, perhaps. So it is, in cash, but the English soldier can buy a great many more good things with his shilling a day than the American can with his 40 cents. The next poster is illuminated by colored prints of the army hospital corps. There is more work than glory to be got in this service; but if the pay is only \$2.04 per week, the rest of the conditions being practically the same as with the Scots guards.

The next poster is a work of art. A central group in high colors represents several bold grenadiers in highly colored, not to say, elegant poses. Four colored, medallion-like flank this. One represents a billiard-table surrounded by cheerful grenadiers; a second represents a luxurious mess-table surrounded by equally prosperous warriors; a third shows the glories of dress-parade, and the last illustrates some heroic passages during the bayonet drill. The names of battles won by grenadier guards feebly and this artful poster, while below are recited the conditions of service. The recruit must be five feet eight inches high; must be at least 18 years old, single, and thirty-five inches around the chest. He gets 27 cents a day for his first three years of active service, and 12 cents a day for his nine years in the reserves. After eighteen years he gets a "good conduct" medal, and after twenty-one years he may get a pension providing his commanding officer gives his consent. This is rather hard on the soldier, it would seem, and would, with us, discourage a man from joining the forces. The poster adds that many soldiers make money by getting prizes in rifle matches.

In all branches the prospect is held out of a pension after twenty-one years of service. The next poster, flaming with gorgeous uniforms, states that men joining the royal marines may save as much as \$150 in three years, and frequently as much as \$250 in that time. The recruits have it held out to them that their pleasure is to be looked after. "There are," the poster says, "cafes, theatres, recreation rooms, coffee bars, ball courts, covered skittle alleys, quait grounds, cricket fields, racket courts, libraries, and schools at each headquarters."

How the American private must envy these placarded promises—all indicating the desire of the government to make the soldier's life tolerable. And certainly, from an inspection of the Chatham marine barracks, I can say that our soldiers would consider themselves in luxury had they but half the recreative resources of the British soldier. If they had as many resources as those in Canada, they would be better off than they are now. Whoever hears of furnishing United States soldiers with racket courts, base-ball grounds, or billiard tables? And yet does any American doubt that it would be a good thing for the service by discouraging attendance at saloons? I have reached the end of the war department posters, and I think, "what fabulous inducements these are. How vastly superior to those offered the soldier in France, Germany, or even the United States." But still recruits don't come in.

Consumption of Quinine.

The total consumption of quinine in this country during the last year amounted to about 1,500,000 ounces. Of this amount 600,000 ounces were imported from England. The production has nearly doubled within the last ten years.

Plaster Casts.

Plaster of Paris casts soaked in paraffine can be readily cut or turned in a lathe. They can be rendered very hard and tough by soaking them in warm glue-size until thoroughly saturated, and allowing them to dry.

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