

VENICE, Dec. 27.—Close to the very cross-piece, as it were, of the letter S that probably forms the Grand Canal, is the famous bridge of the Rialto. It is made, like almost everything else in Venice of marble, and is 158 feet long. It is really a short stone street in the air, with shops and peddlers upon either side.

It has often been said that the way to find any one in a crowd is to stand still and let him come to you; and it is true that to get a good idea of the common people of Venice one has only to stand quietly for an hour upon this bridge and watch the passers-by.

Dark-eyed, dark-skinned, decently dressed, pleasant in manner, fair with each other, and courteous to strangers let them have their own way, that is about the impression the common people of Venice make upon one. Their own way does not consist of anything very cruel it is simply a question of your submitting to a few of their little long-established cheats, costing you only a few cents per day, and yielding any amount of comfort and information. For instance, you pay your gondolier his and the city's price for taking you on one of the little canal journeys; then he expects two or three cents more. If you hand him these, he thanks you with a smile that is worth the price of the exhibition; if you do not, he wrenches himself away with such an injured look that you are unhappy for an hour after. When you land, or when you embark in a gondola, a poor withered veteran of the placid waves makes a feeble show at assisting you by holding the boat still with a antiquated looking hook. This man is a worn out gondolier, and he expects you to give him for his little service just two cents—not quite half of an American cent. Who would not expend this much to please an old man? A bewitchingly handsome, or interestingly ugly boy opens the church door for you before you can get a hand to the knob; give him a centime and he will be pleased with it and you. A graceful little girl, with eyes like pieces of night with stars in them, glances at you sweetly. Don't forget to give her a small round fragment of metal if you had rather her little mind would not calculate "Mean old thing" in Italian. One can here, with a very little copper, purchase a great deal of silver and gold.

But do not get a Venetian angry at you. Billingsgate is a feeble description of the racket they can make with their tongues. They are also quick tempered and revengeful. When steamers were put upon the Grand Canal the gondoliers "went on a strike" in a truly American fashion, and would carry nobody for days. When some of the principal hotels decided to keep their own gondolas, and employ only their own servants as gondoliers, the women turned out in a passion early one morning and smashed all the boats. From what I have seen and heard, I have no doubt that a Venetian makes an awkward enemy.

But a touch of feeling sets them all aglow with generosity. Traveling through one of the narrow canals, with scores of more or less destitute people upon the shores, a lady of our party took a fancy to the face of a little girl and wished to give her some money. The child was shy, and tried to run away; but the ragged people pursued her down an alley like street and brought her back, half crying to receive the reward of her beauty. Not one of them but needed the money as badly or worse than she; but they were so pleased with the tiny good fortune at their little neighbor that they gave us all quite an ovation.

The shopkeepers of Venice are mainly a bad lot. According to Venetian papers themselves, and according to buyers from all lands, a shop here is more than likely to be the nest of bandits. They pay guides large commissions for inveigling travelers into their dens, and then ask at least twice the retail worth of their wares—often asserting, with tearful eyes, that they are on the brink of ruin, are offering below cost, have sold nothing that day, etc. If a customer once comes to make himself into a financial sledge hammer, and beats away at them resolutely, he can bring them down at least a third; but even then they can cheat him, for numerous complaints are published that their goods are not always as repre-

sented. One word of advice to tourists: Do not make your journey into a shopping trip, and let your purchases consist mainly of souvenirs; else you will probably be cheated out of time and money.

But we are still at the Rialto bridge, and now walk into the Rialto itself—once a sort of Venetian Wall Street—now a fruit, beef and vegetable market. The first settlers of Venice landed at this little island, and lived upon it as a refuge from the Huns; so that Rialto is really a tiny old city within a city. It is lighted up by Shakespeare's genius for here Shylock first heard of his enemies approaching ruin and chuckled over the pound of flesh that he finally did not get.

But we have not much time to spend in this interesting place; we must voyage through other parts of the Palace City. We dive with a gondola into the more narrow canals—so narrow that when we meet a floating load of hay, we have to turn back to a corner and let it pass. The buildings are so high, and approach each other so nearly at the top, that it seems as if we were sailing in a region of wells. Just here no people are in view—not even at the windows; all is as silent as death, except the faint, regular splash of our oarsman. A boy turns a corner and comes sweeping down toward us in his toy gondola, deftly singing an operatic air; he looks independent enough to be a young duke, instead of a young duck; but he detects our interest in him, and away his rank by asking for centesimi.

Corner after corner, and liquid street after street, and now it is a relief to be in a wide lake or lagoon which separates the city from The Lido—the Coney Island of Venice. We find this place oppressively dull, as all watering places are out of season; the Adriatic deals tenderly with it as compared to the Atlantic our American shore resorts, and nice bath houses and splendid wave accommodations adorn the long sandy strip of ground. It is only a short distance from St. Lazere, the little island that contains an Armenian monastery, where Lord Byron studied, more or less for six months. The monks probably did not succeed in making the wild young man particularly pious, but they preserved his memory in every way possible. They exhibit the table at which he sat, the library in which he worked, and a fine painting of a good old monk in the act of teaching him, they show you an astounding lot of old books, a learned looking printing office, some beautiful flowers and any number of photographs for sale.

Back again through the dusky air offending toward the unique city, whose distant window lights have now been kindled, and look at us over the still waters. As we glide slowly along it is easy to imagine our little craft motionless and the faraway town floating toward us over the deep. Stars began to take their places in the blue Italian sky, the moon is nearly at its full and has silver to spare, which it throws lavishly into the waves around us. Now there comes a mellow voice from the bell tower of St. Mark's, and the old song occurs to us—

Along on the water! 'tis eve's mournful ball,
That so sadly keeps a note of farewell!
For to-morrow we must leave this flood
Full of palaces, crumbling away
Under the memories of a thousand years.

WILL CARLETON.

THE GREAT DIAMOND FRAUD.

Among the many schemes to which the great banker Ralston, who loved to be called the "financial king of the Pacific coast," devoted no small share of the California Bank of which he was president, was the exploiting of mines in the Pyramid range of mountains close to the border line which divides Arizona from New Mexico. This was in the early seventies, when speculation was rife and the discovery of bonanzas an everyday event. Among the employees of Ralston in the Pyramid mines was one George Arnold, a man of meager education, but bright and ambitious. In his shanty on the wild mountain side he was ever dreaming of some plan that would bring Dame Fortune to his feet. While yet dreaming his dream of wealth there came to him the bright colored story of the great diamond discoveries at Cape Colony. His

aim was to devise a scheme which, in its way, equaled Low's South Sea bubble.

The soil around the Pyramid district was rich in color and had character enough to inaugurate any mining scheme, however wild and impracticable. So with a comrade, Jim Haggerty, with whom he had long been associated, Arnold made long tours over the surrounding country. After a few weeks of this kind of work he resigned his place in the mines, with the given intention of seeking the fairer fields of Mexico.

He next turned up in San Francisco in the fall of 1871. He immediately found Ralston, and even astonished that bold operator by revealing that he had discovered in Arizona rich diamond fields quite as extensive as those of Cape Colony. From the grip-sack he had brought with him he poured forth a wondrous display of rough diamonds which had been washed from the yielding soil of the new find. They were many and apparently of value.

Ralston, ever ready for venture, especially one which promised such dazzling results, entered at once into a proposed exploration of the new diamond fields. He introduced Arnold to several leading capitalists, who at once became enthusiastic over the Golconda. With the rapid action peculiar to Californians the clique who had been let into the secret immediately determined to visit the mines, and if found to be all right, to purchase Arnold's claim and title for the sum of \$1,000,000. Arnold reluctantly accepted the offer.

On their return to San Francisco the capitalists wished to form a company. In ten days it was accomplished. Arnold was paid his \$1,000,000 and made superintendent of the new mines. He at once made known the location of the diamond fields and they were visited by several stock holders in the company. Diamonds were found by each and all of them, and all went merry as a marriage bell until Arnold skipped for the East.

It was then thought best to call in an expert, and Professor King, the well-known geologist, was selected. He first discovered that the ground around the clump of trees on the bank of the Rio Prieto had been cleverly "salted" with refuse diamonds such as may be cheaply bought in the marts of Amsterdam. It was also seen that the diamonds found by the capitalists had been "tried" at Amsterdam, and, as Professor King said, "while diamonds may exist in Arizona it is hardly to be expected that nature will produce them partly cut or polished."

The members of the new diamond company were both thunderstruck and indignant, and steps were quickly taken to bring Arnold to justice. He was at his home in his native Kentucky, and the machinery of the law was brought to bear upon him there. He was arrested, but never taken out of the blue grass country for punishment. In some manner he secured his release, and entered upon a life of wild enjoyment. His excuses were of short duration and after five years of feasting and rioting with ill-gotten wealth, he died.—*Providence Press.*

A BRIGHT SCHEMER.

A professional real-estate "boomer" while riding on horseback through the pine woods of Arkansas, came upon a peculiar-looking fellow sitting under a tree, deeply interested in a sort of a diagram, which, with a short stick he was drawing on the sand.

How are you? said the boomer, dismounting.

Ain't complainin', the fellow replied, contemplating a fresh mark which he made in the sand.

You seem to be laying off a town there.

No, I ain't doin' that, nuther.

Must be some sort of land scheme you've got on hand.

No, it ain't that, nuther.

I was in hopes so. You see my business—

No, I didn't see yore bizness, nuther.

Wait a minute. I say my business is to go into a neighborhood and immediately bring up the value of land by stimulating a spirit of speculation. Say for instance, that you've got one hundred acres that you'd like to sell but for which you have found no market. I see you secretly enter into an arrangement with you. Shortly afterwards I meet you at the crossroads where you are sitting with a

number of fellows. I meet you as if for the first time, fall into conversation, gradually come down to land matters and after a while ask you who owns a certain tract. You do, I would like to buy it. You regard the matter carelessly, just as I observe you are admirably fitted to do, and, without giving me any satisfaction, get up and go off. Then I take out a sort of a map and after looking over it for some time, mumble something about a new railroad, as if I don't care about any body hearing me, and afterwards showing considerable anxiety concerning you, ask where you have gone, and start out to look for you. I fail to find you and come back to the place, where the fellows are sitting. Finally I explain all about the new railroad, and speak of you as a most fortunate fellow, for the new depot is going to be located on your land. I start out to look for you again, and while I am gone you come back. By this time these fellows have formed a sort of a syndicate to cheat you out of your place. The leader begins to ask about your land, all the time keep a sharp look-out to see if I am coming back, and the first thing you know you've sold your place for ten times as much as it is worth. After that, of course, you give me a certain per cent. of the money. See.

The diagram maker sprang to his feet knocked the boomer down and kicked him; and then, as he was trying to get up, knocked him senseless. When the boomer came to, he raised up and said:

Will you let me go now?

The peculiar-looking fellow glanced up from the diagram, upon which he had resumed work, and replied:

Reckon you'd better.

The boomer got up, and after brushing the sand off his clothes, said: Would you mind telling a stranger who is unacquainted with the social customs of the community, why you thumped me around in that way?

No would't mind. You see, a fellow with the same game comes through here about a month ago, an I was one of the fools that was roped in into buyin' a old sedge field that ain't worth ten cents.

Thank you for your information. I do not want to be inquisitive, but will you tell me what sort of a map that is your are working on so intently.

I am tryin' to ef I ken make a map showin' how a railroad ken git round a cypress swamp, over a bayou, over a sand mountain, through another swamp and then git to the old field that a possul of us fellers bought. Stranger, I reckon you'd better mosey along, now.—*Arkansas Traveler.*

PEPPER AND SALT.

The position of a judge is an extremely trying one.

It would seem natural for a carpenter to walk with a lumbering gait.

Dogs and men have summer pants, but a dog has a fit sometimes.

The farmer makes his living by the grain in the field, and the carpenter by the grain in the wood.

The business of a spirit-medium is better in winter than in summer, because there is more demand for wraps.—*Siftings.*

A face that one never tires of examining—the face a note for a large amount, good any time at the bank.—*Texas Siftings.*

A New Jersey man has invented a stove to carry in the hat. This, with the conventional brick, makes a very good heating arrangement.

No matter of your head was stunted nit knowledge goes on der church house, und der goot things dot vas lazä on your mind vas get inwagorations, dots so.—*Carl Pretzel.*

How it all comes back to me, said the poet sadly, as with practiced fingers he estimates the thickness of the portly MSS. which had just been taken from the postoffice.

Brown—Do you know how long Robid has been keeping house?

Smith—No, but it must be a great many years. I took dinner with him the other day and he carved a duck without spilling it on the floor.—*Harper's Bazar.*

They were to have young Mr. Law de Dah to dinner, and Miss Travis quietly remarked as she changed the glass at his plate: I must get Mr. Law de Loh soft water. It would't do for him to drink anything hard, you know.

Can you tell me darling, he asked

as they sat together in the the weak spot of the sofa, the exact physiological and mathematical duration of a kiss? About a second and a half I believe, she answered demurely. Thanks, he replied. I will make a minute of it.

Young Journalist (to old editor)—Successful writing, I should think is quite a science. Editor—No I don't think so. Quite easy, it strikes me. All you've got to do is to find out what the people want and then write it.—You encourage me, but say, how is a fellow going to find out what the people want? Editor—I be hanged if I know.—*Arkansas Traveler.*

Irate Father—You remember you wanted to marry a book keeper of mine about a year ago. Daughter—Yes, father. A pretty sort of a man you picked out. He has de-amped with my whole fortune. You remember my father, that you told him he could not have me until he got rich, don't you? Of course the young—I have just received a dispatch from him at Montreal saying he is rich now, but is perfectly willing to marry a poor man's daughter.—*Omaha World.*

WHY HE CHANGED HIS MIND.

Farmer Dobbs was busking corn, and he proceeded, with a pause in his labor, to state his case very clearly: Yes said he, I calc'late some on vistin' Lijah this winter. He lives in New York, ye know, an' I never've felt free to go because they're powerful busy people an' I a'ay's mistrusted would be a put-out to them to traipse around with me. Lijah's in his office all day, an' the gals are seen' about their clo'es, an' their mother she's on a good many boards an sich.

What's made you change your mind, uncle? asked a neighbor, who had come into change works a spell. I'll tell ye, said the farmer, looking at a red ear before he laid it down, and possibly remembering the days when he and Abigail were young. The gals have spent the summer down here, ye know, an' alot they made things hum!

Made a good deal o' trouble? knowingly volunteered the neighbor. Wal, no, I shouldn't exactly say trouble, for we was glad to see 'em an' glad to do for 'em; but bless 'em! they didn't make no bones of henderin' my work, I can tell ye. Sometimes they seemed as if 'twas play got up for them to look at.

Now, I shouldn't ha' liked that, said the neighbor with decision.

It did hender, I can't deny. Clary she'd beg to ride a little ways on the mowin'-machine, and I'd have to follow on my hair turain' gray, what o't hadn't turned afore, for fears she'd cut herself all to pieces.

Then, when we was hurryin' for dear life to get in a load, an' save it from wettin', both the gals must ride in the rack an' help load; an' I'll be buttered when we was coming back and puttin' for the barn, with the big drops splashin' us all over, Jennie she bollers!

O Uncle Peter, stop the oxen! Do do!

I thought she'd got hurt someways, to say the least on't an' what do you s'pose was the matter? She'd seen a big rosberry bush, an' nothin' would do but she must stop an' eat. That time' though, I didn't give in. I driv on.

They seemed poorty lively gals.

Lively! They tooted horas every time we went out ridin' and wanted to make jack-o'-lanterns.—I blessed my star punkins hadn't came!—an' asked the hired men all manner o' ridic'ulous questions an went walkin' 'around with long poles in their hands that they called helpin' sticks.

If it's the fashion in New York to make such a pow-wow, it must sound like Bable an' nothin' else; but I'm goin' there to find out.

They're real warm-hearted gals an' seen' they aint back'ard in henderin' other folks' werk, why I don't want to be back'ard in henderin' theirs.

THE LIME-KILN CLUB.

My attenthun, said Brother Gardner, as he carefully pulled down his vest, has bis directed to de fellerin' item in a Chicago paper:

SKIPPED—The Treasurer of the celebrated Lime-Kiln club at Detroit has changed his postal address to Canada. He took over \$7,000 with him, and it is said the club is badly broken up. Let

us have some philosophy from brother Gardner, on the subject of official honesty.

How dat report go abroad I doan know, continuep the old man, but it was made outer hull cloth, as we all know: Dar sots our respected Treasurer in his usual seat, an' de club ar' safe in Bank. Human foresight an' human hindsight hev deir weak pints, an' de day may possibly come when some sich item may be true in part. I may take de liberty of briefly explainin' to de meetin' fur de benefit of any suspicious member, de modus operandi on which de financial system of dis club am conducted.

Firstly—All de moneys received fur dues, payments of fines, etc., ar' counted threentimes ober by de three members of the Finance Committee. By dat time de figure am k'rect, an' all de bogus pieces sorted out de the furrein heathen. De sum ar' entered on the seprate cash books, an' each member must check up the entry made by the odder.

Secondly—De cash ar' den handed to Sir Isaac Walpole, Waydown Beebee, Elder Spooner, an' myseff. We re-count it an' enter it on four four more cash books.

Thirdly—It uen goes to de Treasurer, who counts it again, makes an-odder entry, an' de five of us purceed to de bank an' deposit it. On de way down we keed a clus watch on each odder.

Fourthly—not a cent can be drawed from de bank widout I issue de check an' fo' odder pussons sign it.

Fifthly—When de Treasurer of dis club so fur forgits hissef as to absorb \$7 000 of our money an' cross de ribber it will be a cold day—cold nuff fur two undershirts. It cant be dun, eben if he wanted to git his name up and yun fur some fat offis.

Sixthly—As to any remarks on de subjeck of offibus dishonesty, our feelin's ar' purty generally known. It ar' mighty few who could git offis if dey wanted it. Candydats fur fat offises, in dese days, ar' selected by brewers, saloonists, gamblers, railroads, and odder rings. Each ring wants a man it kin handle. Each ring gits dar. De fitness of a candydate as to honesty has no bearin on de case. If he doan turn out a thif or an embezzler befo, his term ar' up all people are surprised. If he does turn out, de public holds its bref to find out how many others ar' guilty as well, fur it understands that he has not pofted alone. Wheu de honest men of dis kentry riz up an, insist wid dere bollots, dat only respectable men shall hold offis, de great highway to Canada will be grass-grown.—*Detroit Free Press.*

GETTING THE BEST.

Look here, my friend, said a traveling man to the hotel clerk, I want to impress it on you that I want the best room you've got vacant. I want bath—room with hot and cold water, prompt attendance, and all the modern conveniences, and you will oblige me by not allowing it to escape your memory.

What do you mean sir, by addressing yourself to me in that manner? gasped the clerk, as he aimed the dazzling refulgence of his big shirt-stud at the traveler.

Just what I said and more, too, I'm very hard to please I am.

Who the mischief are you, anyhow?

I'm the representative of one of the biggest diamond jobbing houses in the country, and I can tell paste at a glance was the reply, spoken in a confident tone of voice.

Front! Show this gentleman up to 29, first floor, front, sir, and if there's anything you want we'll be only too glad to attend to it.—*Merchant Traveler.*

AN EMERGENCY WORTH ATTENTION.

Domestic—Please, mam, your pug dog got under the street-car and got killed.

Young wife—Indeed! Yes, mam, and the new girl has ruined your best dress lettin' it fall in the grease kettle.

How careless. And thieves has go. in an' run of with your diamonds.

We must keep the front door locked in the future.

An' please, mam, a man says your husband's fine property down town is burning.

Hark. Whi't's that? I didn't hear anything.

My gracious the baby's cryin'; run to him, quick.—*Omaha World.*