We on this side of the Atlantic are feeling the rage in Paris for Russian gowns and Russian toques, and the latter, I can promise, will be quite sure to please those whose tastes run to gaudy and altogether startling effects. The Russian toque is very becoming to a dark-haired and dark-eyed woman. It has a cloth crown decorated in gold and green embroidery, the brim being of astrachan. A stylish bonnet in blue velvet, having a crown ornament with graduated rows of applique, is shown in the illustration.

The velvet is puffed high both at the back and in front, and there is a tuft of

A Blue Velvet Bonnet.

pale blue ostrich tips in front, the strings being of pale blue satin ribbon.

The tiny theater bonnets this year are of the most dainty and delicate build, little more than headdresses, but full of style and expression. Possibly I should say they are style producers, rather than stylish in and of themselves, for we should bear in mind that the philosophy of dress and personal adornment is merely to accentuate and bring out these qualities and to disguise and cover up defects. A lace capote set off with bows of yellow and light blue satin makes a very pretty hat for evening wear. So, too, does the black tulle directoire shape, with orange roses encircling the crown, and with orange velvet strings.

FLORETTE.

Evening Gowns in Paris.

Just at present evening dresses are engaging the especial attention of the modistes. A gown recently completed for a bud who will make her debut within a few weeks is a most charming confection, and, in its way, is an ideal evening gown for a very young lady. The material of the body of the dress is white bengaline, cut low but filled in at the neck with accordion plaited crepe de chine. The long sleeves are of the same diaphanous material as is used at the neck, and are gathered in at the waist in bands of silver passementerie. Over the close-fitting bengaline skirt is one of accordion-plaited crepe de chine. Silver passementerie is used on the bodice and at the foot of the skirt.

Speaking of a white gown, a very beautiful dinner dress of white moire, vaguely striped, which is in the hands of the modiste, that belongs to a leading Chicago society woman, is well worth describing. It is said to be an exact reproduction of a dinner dress worn by Mlle. Berthe Cerny, of the Gymnase Theater in Paris. If this is so Mlle. Cerny certainly has a very beautiful dress. The vague stripes are in pale rose and blue in rainbow fashion. The waist is draped fichu style in pink and orange surah crossed back and front under a corselet belt of pale green velvet. Around the waist is an outline of black plumes. The enormous tillent velvet sleeves are encircled at the elbow with plumes. These sleeves have the seam open from the epaulet to the elbow to display the arm. About the foot of the demi-train skirt is a band of fluffy black ostrich plumes.

Hints for Table Decorations.

The clever Parisian has discovered a new method of perpetuating the scent of flowers at a dinner table. A novelty has appeared in the shape of small squares of biscuit china (a tender cream color) and the inventor has found the means of impregnating them permanently with the perfume required. One one side flowers are painted. The other contains the menu of the dinner. One is placed by the side of each guest, and thus violet, rose, or any other flower dinners can be given with less trouble than before.

Perhaps some of my readers who live in town and cannot readily command ferns or other plants, have not tried the following simple and very inexpensive substitute for them. It consists of cutting off in thin slices the heads or crowns of half a dozen carrots and placing them in as many saucers or tiny vases, crown upwards, and nearly covering them with water. After a week or so they will begin to sprout, and delicate fronds will continue to unfold and grow during the winter months. Beetroot crowns also succeed in this way, and form a pretty contrast to the lighter green of the carrot.

Fads for the Fashionable.

SUEDE gloves are still first favorites for evening wear, though kid is now more worn in the street. Lavender with black points give away to pale tan, with either black points or narrow lines of pale red stitching.

BLACK velvet dresses are in style both for old and young. They are to be enriched by borders of brown and black fur and a belt, collars and cuffs embroidered in jet and gold. A bonnet or toque may be trimmed with the same combination.

IN Paris the new skirts are stiffened around the bottom with steel. This seems to be the natural precursor of the crinoline; but though skirts are very much fuller, and occasionally stiffened with horse hair to make them stand out, it is very doubtful whether hoops will ever really be the fashion again.

THE sweeping changes in the shape of winter hats and bonnets have brought about a new style of wearing the hair, termed "the bun"—a very descriptive name for the big round knot of hair which is soon to be the fashion. It is worn low, though not so low as the Langtry knot, and demands a larger amount of hair than the majority of women possess.

A CHRISTMAS TOAST

In Honor of the Grand Master of the Knights Templar

DRAWS OUT A NEAT RESPONSE.

The Aims and Hopes of Templarism Eloquently Presented.

90,000 SENT HUGH M'CURDY GREETING

DETROIT, MICH., Dec. 26.—Hugh McCurdy, Grand Master of the Knights Templar of the United States, has issued the following Christmas greeting in response to a toast in his honor, which was joined in by members of that order at meetings to be held all over the country to-day:

CORUNA, MICH., Dec. 26.

To All Knights Templar of Our Obedience:

GREETING—Acknowledging with profound gratitude the high honor which you tender me by meeting in your asylums this day at noon and joining in this Christmas toast: "To our Grand Master, Hugh McCurdy. From ocean to ocean and from the gulf to the lakes 90,000 Templars send merry Christmas greetings."

In response to this sentiment I can only offer you the promptings of a heart overflowing with gratitude and good will to all—malice toward none, mellowed and sanctified by divine inspiration of this hallowed season of the year, heart goes out to heart and redolent joy of sweetest fragrance fills every memory.

I would not presume fitly to respond to greetings from "90,000 Templars from ocean to ocean from gulf to lakes," were it not for the truth that Templarism's magic word is that little monosyllable one. In this word what restful music we find. Of its charm all are conscious. There is no word in the language more powerful; it is the first element of thought, it holds the first place in human life. It is the beginning and the end of all things. The best words and deeds of men have been spoken and done in its spirit. In this spirit, Sir Knights, your greetings come, in this spirit are they received. No greeting is more in harmony with all that Templarism embodies than a Christmas greeting with its inspiring memories of the angel's song of "Peace on earth, good will to men." Only so far as Templarism works for this end has it claim to the homage of men. The world cares very little for elevation of sentiment in greeting, in sermon, or in song, unless it sees it manifested in some proof. It is not, then, 90,000 Templars sending Christmas greetings to which I am invited to respond; but the Templar unity which in the ever blessed spirit of this glad season, greets all Templars and which all Templars greet.

The spirit of Christmastide is the spirit of Oneness. The spirit of the Son of Man who joined man and his God with a sense of companionship. Words, names, conditions, creeds divide men. These all become meaningless in the presence of the greetings of Christmastide. How the walls of partition fall at the sound of this word "One"—the word of the century—the watchword of our day; a word which men may safely trust and safely follow, wherever it may lead, whomsoever it may include. It is the mission of Templarism as it is the mission of Christmas to conciliate all antagonisms, all dividing and separating influences to make more sacred the claims of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man.

Templarism is in this world and we are Templars to seek and to save that which is common to all men. Human needs, human love, human sorrow—in these all men are one.

Templarism is in the world to-day
"The banner of the cross to bear,
And its strength with human weakness share."

Here, like,
"The star flower of the Virgin Child,
Sown by some wandering Frank, to tell to Men the story of the Savior's birth."

And, as,
"From nature's face that simple flower
The lines in sin and sadness swept,
And Magian pile and Paynim bower
In peace like that of Eden slept."

So Templarism grows in all its truer, better self to ease the burden of the world. Its true life, like the life of its leader, the Star Flower of Bethlehem, is a perpetual song whose music is the gladness of the world, because an echo of that first Christmas song of a true brotherhood "peace on earth, good will to men."

And, Sir Knights, on this the gladdest day of all the year, assembled in your asylums, and standing in magic circle around our shrines, we pledge each to the other and to all Sir Knights throughout the world, a more unswerving faith in the principles and practices of our magnanimous brotherhood. Let us sing with one voice and will:

"Behold the drink of Gods;
They drink and lo! in heart and brain
A new glad life began:
The grey of hair grew young again,
The sick man laughed away his pain,
The cripple leaped and ran.
Drink mortals what the Gods have given.
To bring the skies more near,
And lift men up to Heaven."

And may the one spirit of Christmas tide and true knighthood upon us and all mankind

"Drop its still dews of quietness,
Till all our strivings cease;
Take from our souls the strain and stress,
And let our ordered lives confess
The beauty of its peace."

Sir Knights, you will now participate in the toast which I offer. Christmas: The birthday of Him who is the embodiment of all Templars' hopes. The inspirer of that spirit which makes all Knights Templar one, whosoever disposed around the globe.

HUGH MCCURDY,
Grand Master.

WILSON'S BIG DEAL.

He and Several Pennsylvanians Secure 15,000 Acres of Coal Land.

PARKERSBURG, Dec. 26.—[*Special.*]—Ex-Congressman Ben Wilson, of Clarksburg, has about completed another gigantic coal deal with several Uniontown men. It is said that they have secured the mining right of 15,000 acres of the best land in this State. This is Mr. Wilson's second transaction within the past year.

In Trouble Over False Paper.

BURLINGTON, VT., Dec. 26.—W. A. Brown, son of James Brown, a prominent business man of Chicago, has been arrested in Vergennes, for forging a $400 check on an Oakhill, Ill., bank. He attempted to pass the check at Middlebury. Failing to secure bail in $1,500 Brown was lodged in jail at Middlebury.

Parkersburg in Luck.

PARKERSBURG, Dec. 26.—[*Special.*]—The project, that has been discussed for some time, looking toward the erection of a female reform school in this State appears to be assuming a tangible form. The institution will be called the "Girls' Industrial Home," and will be modeled after the "Boys' School," at Pruntytown.

An Old Woman Murdered.

PARKERSBURG, Dec. 26.—[*Special.*]—A report reached here to-night that an aged woman was murdered at Cairo yesterday afternoon. Cairo is not a telegraph station, and no further particulars could be learned. It is said that the body was left uncared for for several hours.

MANY prominent citizens and officials recommend Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

Gallery Open All Day.

One dozen cabinets and a large crayon for $3 only. Hendricks & Co.'s photograph gallery, No. 68 Federal street, Allegheny. Cabinets $1. No extra charge for family groups.

2,000 Children Made Happy.

H. E. Bower, the popular grocer of the Northside, yesterday distributed to the children at his place of business, 274 Robinson street, 2,000 boxes of candy with the help of a Santa Claus.

Mr. Bower is a hustler and deserves great praise for his kindness to the little folks.

REAL ESTATE SAVINGS BANK, LIM.,

401 Smithfield Street, Cor. Fourth Avenue.

Capital, $100,000. Surplus, $81,000.

Deposits of $1 and upward received and interest allowed at 4 per cent. TTS

A MINNEAPOLIS FAILURE.

Corser & Co., Real Estate Dealers, Fail for a $1,000,000.

MINNEAPOLIS, Dec. 26.—The failure of the old real estate firm of E. S. Corser & Co. is announced to-day. The liabilities will reach a million dollars, but it is thought the assets will more than cover all obligations. The cause of the failure was not real estate and speculation but speculation in wheat. E. S. Corser, the head of the firm, has a large farm in the Red River Valley and raises grain, and in connection with handling his own product has gone extensively into speculation. It is said upon reliable authority that he has lost $250,000 in wheat during the last few days.

The firm consists of E. S. Corser, Lester B. Elwood, Walter E. Badger, and Austin L. Belknap. It is impossible to arrive at the true state of affairs until a statement is made for the creditors. The real estate, Mr. Corser thinks, is worth $1,000,000 and the amount available for unsecured creditors will largely depend upon the management of the estate by the assignee. No assignee has as yet been appointed. Corser & Co., were managers of the New York Life building. The firm always stood high in this city and could readily have secured abundant assistance, if they had been willing to accept it. E. S. Corser was president of the Real Estate Board and has just declined re-election.

TIME scatters our locks and turns them gray. Are you too young to bear these marks of age? Then use Parker's Hair Balsam.

DEWITT'S Little Early Risers. No griping no pain, no nausea: easy pill to take.

SYRUP of FIGS

ONE ENJOYS

Both the method and results when Syrup of Figs is taken; it is pleasant and refreshing to the taste, and acts gently yet promptly on the Kidneys, Liver and Bowels, cleanses the system effectually, dispels colds, headaches and fevers and cures habitual constipation. Syrup of Figs is the only remedy of its kind ever produced, pleasing to the taste and acceptable to the stomach, prompt in its action and truly beneficial in its effects, prepared only from the most healthy and agreeable substances, its many excellent qualities commend it to all and have made it the most popular remedy known.

Syrup of Figs is for sale in 50c and $1 bottles by all leading druggists. Any reliable druggist who may not have it on hand will procure it promptly for any one who wishes to try it. Do not accept any substitute.

CALIFORNIA FIG SYRUP CO.
SAN FRANCISCO, CAL.
LOUISVILLE, KY. NEW YORK, N.Y.

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS.

THE
PARTING SHOT
TO
THE OLD YEAR.

As a fitting climax to our previous efforts we now offer you the choice of any $22, $20 or $18 suit or overcoat in our stock for

$14.50.

OUR

$14.50

PARTING SHOT.

Look to your interests and take advantage of our $14.50 sale of Suits or Overcoats.

Every purchase made in our ESTABLISHMENT if not perfectly satisfactory can be returned and the money will be cheerfully refunded.

4-PLY LINEN, 2100 FINE,
COLLARS 7 CENTS. CUFFS 11 CENTS.

SALLER

Smithfield, Corner Diamond Street.
BRASS FRONT.
MAIL ORDERS RECEIVE PROMPT ATTENTION.
de26-1-TUF

A PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATION.

When Abel Burgess, attorney, of Aberdeen, revived his career, which he frequently did by way of recreation, he increased in self-esteem—an unnecessary gain. From being a farmer's lad, a rough, blasphemous, hard-drinking trainhand, a stupid but ambitious student, he had forced his way, through diligence and pertinacity, to an honored place in the ranks of the bar of the State. One thing only did Abel love more than himself, and that was his profession. He loved it as his parent; he loved it as his child; he loved it with the gladness of one who has assiduously wooed and won.

Incidentally he had married a poor girl from the neighboring metropolis, of whom he knew little except that she was very beautiful and had supported herself and her widowed mother as a copyist. Incidentally there had been births and deaths, joys and sorrows, within his environment, but none of these had turned his feet from the path nor his eyes from the goal of his calling.

Had he ever considered the matter he would have concluded that he was devoted to his young wife; for whatever belonged to him acquired a certain sanctity from the possession. She had a fine home, servants, equipages and pin money. What more could she crave? Had he known that gossips said he disregarded her, he would have replied that she certainly seemed to thrive under the neglect.

Themis is a jealous mistress, but she never had cause of quarrel with Abel. He worked except when he slept; and he slept very little. He had collected a vast law library with more latitude than discrimination; and when he was not busied with his cases he was reading, annotating, and digesting the precious volumes. But such moments of play were scant and irregular, for he had a large practice and attended to it. Whatever his defects as a man, and he was no god, Abel Burgess was an acute, painstaking and thorough lawyer, who, when once retained, was as loyal, tenacious and indomitable as a bulldog in his client's interests. Bulldogs are not handsome, nor gentle, nor lovable, but those who need their services must accept their characteristics.

One afternoon Abel Burgess sat at his desk in his library. Before him were the latest volumes of reports from Patagonia and Greenland, and a commonplace book in which he was gleefully entering citations. There was a sharp rap, and instantaneously a little, old man rushed into the room, slamming the door behind him.

"'Squire Burgess!" he gasped; "'Squire Burgess, take this case for me and here's $1,000 slap down as a retainer. Oh, dear! $1,000."

An exceedingly nervous little, old man he was, with tremulous fingers and features that twitched so that the spectacles astride his nose vibrated like flashlights.

"Sit down," roared the counselor, as if addressing one at the bounds of the country, "sit down, you —— fool, and stop driveling about money. First let me find out whether you have a case. Sit down, I say."

The little, old man glanced toward the door as if desperately anxious to escape, but his limbs were so shaken by fear and excitement that they compelled him to obey.

"You know me," he faltered, "my name is Oscar Q. Battin."

Yes, Abel Burgess knew him as the richest, meanest man in Aberdeen, one who had saved and scrimped and starved all his life, occasionally enriching a public charity, but grinding his gentle wife into the grave, and harrying his only son unto desperation. Oh, yes, he knew him, as one familiar with litigation in Aberdeen county must needs know Oscar Q. Battin. Yet, as a bulldog may disdain to worry a cur, so the lawyer, perceiving the agitation of his visitor, became, after his sort, gracious.

"Certainly," he replied. "Everyone in Aberdeen knows Oscar Q. Battin. I think I had the pleasure of cross-examining you once in Griffin versus The City." Here Abel smiled grimly, while a spasm shook his auditor. "Ah! a famous case. What a rascal that old—oh, I beg pardon, of course. Come, come, sir. Take time and compose yourself; meanwhile I'll go on with my work," and he swung about in his chair, and in an instant was absorbed with colonial proceedings thousands of miles away.

"Ahem!" at last coughed the client.

"Now then?" said the attorney, briskly.

"Where shall I begin?"

"At the beginning."

"It was five years ago that I made my will. It was the last piece of work that Robert Marston—Marston & Wilson, you know, of the metropolis—did for me, and only a few months before he died. He was one of the witnesses, and his partner, who died last summer, was the other. This will was the result of the carefully-considered plans of my later years. My son Oscar has been a constant course of sorrow to me. In every way he has disappointed my hopes; in every way he has disgraced me.

"Sooner than have him inherit my wealth I would make a bonfire of it. Since he arrived at manhood I have given him an ample allowance, ample for any one whose hours were not all idleness. Well, in this will I bequeathed an annuity of like amount to him and nothing more. The scoundrel! I should have left him a shilling to buy a rope! All my estate, both real and personal, I divided between my deceased daughter's child and at least a score of charitable institutions. As well you know, a will of such nature was a very bulky document." Here Mr. Battin paused, wiped his brow, and groaned.

"Well?".

"I wrapped it in heavy parchment, tied it with red tape, and placed it in a box at the Asbestos Safety Deposit Company. I have also a large compartment there in which I keep my securities; but in this one I have kept a few papers of a private nature."

"Where did you keep its key?"

"On this chain ring with the others. See, here it is."

"And left them occasionally on your desk or hanging from a lock, I suppose? Go on."

"The day before yesterday I opened this box to consult a memorandum. In moving the contents I noticed something strange about the package containing my will. It was very light. I examined it narrowly; it seemed the same as I had left it. I untied the string, and then I noticed another strange thing, which belongs to the second part of my business here. I removed the wrapper and what do you think? Oh, dear! Oh, dear! There was the same kind of paper, the same indorsement, the same signatures—I would swear to them all, my own especially—but the instrument consisted only of two pages, and apparently in the hand of old Mr. Marston. Here it is.

"It gives everything to my son Oscar, revoking all other wills and constituting him as sole executor. It's a cheat, a fraud, a forgery! I am not crazy! I never made such a will! I would cut off my hand first. I am a poor old man, and they are plotting my death." Here Mr. Battin groaned and sobbed feebly.

"What did you do?"

"I—I was stunned, and so frightened. I went to the manager and told him everything. I asked him whether anyone had been at my box. He said, 'No one except your son Oscar.' Oh, dear."

"Exactly. Who had taken an impression of your key, of course. Well, what next?"

"I sat in the front office in more of a tremble than I am now, and sent the messenger to bring Oscar."

"That was foolish."

"Yes, but I was so scared, and I wanted to confront him with a witness, so that he couldn't face me down, and —"

"And the messenger returned, having delivered the summons, but Oscar didn't show up, and you haven't seen him since, and are not likely to.

"There is no 'on.' That is all and more than enough. I am terrified to death! There is some plot, and this villain will surely kill me. It's a wonder that I am still alive. My will is gone. Under this false one, or my intestacy, he would inherit, and he knows it, and—"

"I think you have been in imminent danger," said Abel Burgess, gravely. "But calm yourself. Oscar is no fool. He has fled; and he appreciates that you will do at once what you now desire to do, I presume, protect yourself and your property."

"That's it, that's it. Fix it so that in any event, whether I'm alive or dead, that rascal shan't have a picayune!"

"Whom did you name as executor in your will?"

"My agent, James Mason, who manages all my affairs."

"Hum! An honest man. You trust him implicitly?"

"Implicitly. If he could only act as executor now, I would live and die content."

"That is just what I was about to suggest to you. Make a deed of trust conveying everything to him to manage as he now does during your life, and at your death to divide as therein specified. Such a deed is irrevocable, and by removing the temptation removes all peril of violence.

"That's just what I want, just what I want," exclaimed the old man, rubbing his hands together gleefully. "I will send my papers and instructions to you before nightfall. I have got you now, oh, mine enemy!"

"Is there anything further?"

"Indeed, yes, something that I care even more about. My son has fled. He will be sufficiently punished by poverty. He will starve, he will die, he will rot in a ditch. I foresee it, I believe it. But he had an accomplice. He had neither the brains nor skill to originate and carry out such a scheme. That accomplice must be detected. I will spend half my fortune to apprehend him. And then, oh, then; he shall feel the weight of the law, I promise you. He shall suffer as I have suffered. You must take charge of this for me. You have been Prosecuting Attorney. You are wise and cunning, and—"

"Tut-tut. How do you know it's a 'he'? Who have been your son's associates?"

"I know little of his habits except that they are bad. James Mason told me this morning that he had lately been seen in the metropolis in company with a very pretty young woman. The huzzy!"

"Aha! What did I suspect. Cherchez la femme." (The attorney anglicized the vowels and gave "femme" two syllables, but he comprehended the phrase notwithstanding.)

"That reminds me," began Mr. Battin.

"That reminds you of the second strange thing which you noticed when you made your discovery."

"Exactly. How quickly you take me! As I untied the string a long, fine hair twined around my finger—a woman's hair."

"A hair that may hold the sword of Damocles! Tell me in whose handwriting was the body of your will?"

"I don't know; but I would recognize it. I often admired it, it was so firm, elegant and legible. Some clerk's of Marston & Wilson, I presume. Why do you ask?"

"That will do, Mr. Battin. I won't detain you any longer. The sooner you send your papers to me the better. Call at this hour to-morrow and the deed will be ready for execution. As for the other matter, I will think it over. Good-day, sir." And the lawyer swung around in his chair and became absorbed in his books.

The following day the deed of trust was duly executed, and old Mr. Battin breathed easier. Perhaps this freedom from dread gave strength to his desire for vengeance, for it became the impulse of his life. Day after day he haunted the lawyer's office with inquiries and suggestions, and Abel Burgess soon found that it was unnecessary for him to carry the memorandum "the matter of Battin" from one page to another of his diary. Indeed, without this persistence on the part of his client, it would have been unnecessary, for, as the problem grew more difficult, the more determined did he become to solve it.

Such was the nature of the man, such the foundation of his success, until his obligation was fulfilled he was a slave, bound hand and foot by the golden links of the retainer which he had accepted.

One evening Abel Burgess set hard at work at his desk. Before him were the notes of private inquiries which his agents had made, a goodly number, but under the winnowing of his acumen there was an abundance of chaff and but little grain. The facts seemed about as follows: Young Oscar Battin had lived the life of an idle, dissolute man of the world, frequenting clubs, cafes and greenrooms, and in these resorts well-known and liked for good nature and liberality. But all reports concurred that for the past year he had abandoned his ordinary pursuits and avocations.

His acquaintances joked about a mysterious attachment, and said that Oscar had been caught and strung. There had been glimpses of him driving and dining in the metropolis; but these glimpses told nothing of his companion, who had been persistent and succeeded in her incognito. Some, indeed, asserted that she was young and pretty, but these were evidently moved more by reasoning than by knowledge. As for the firm of Marston & Wilson, the information was even more scant. They had been highly respectable, old-fashioned practitioners, devoted to the passive rather than the active side of the law. Both were now dead, and a fire had swept away the building containing their office and with it their books and papers.

Their confidential clerk, who had served them for many years, was incapacitated and away from town, seeking health in a distant sanitarium. One agent, however, had found a young man who had served as office boy for the attorneys about the time of the making of the Battin will, but his memory was more acute of acts of truancy than of duty. He did recall, though, and this was the most significant fact gleaned, that old Mr. Marston gave the engrossing of all important papers to a young woman whose style was acceptable to him. Being closely questioned, he further stated that she always came to the office in the company of an elderly female in black, and that her appearance was "fly."

"Oho!" chuckled Abel Burgess, as he exhausted the memoranda, "my first impressions were correct. Cherchez la femme."

This, then, was the manner of his deductions and conclusions: Of the persons who could have been cognizant of the purport of Oscar Q. Battin's will two were dead, and they the ones most likely to preserve its secrecy. Their old clerk, whose career was an assurance against suspicion, was an invalid occupied by the hopeless pursuit of health. The office boy had been too young and giddy to merit the slightest consideration. Who therefore remained? The copyist, familiar with the handwriting of her employer and skilled in the use of the pen.

As from a mountain, the trained perceptions of the lawyer grasped every detail of the history; the meeting of Oscar and this young woman; their mutual infatuation; their desire for wealth that they might seek pleasure together throughout the wide world; her revelation of the contents of the will and his despair; her suggestion that she cold imitate, could forge, and his acquiescence; and the unfolding of a plot whose last scene might have been murder!

"If I only could get a specimen of her natural handwriting and identify it," mused the lawyer. But would this be sufficient? Yes; should old Mr. Battin recognize it as that of the body of his will, then, the person being known and her active participation proved, how quickly could a thousand little circumstances be woven into the meshes of the law.

"But how can I get it?" grumbled Abel. "Confound those old drones! Had they been in active practice they might be fifty papers in her hand on file in this very office!"

Had he ever had a case with Marston & Wilson? No, he had scarcely known them. And yet there was something contemptuous associated with their name. What was it? Stay: had there not been some years ago—of course. What a dolt he was not to have remembered. They had intervened in the great partition suit of "Jackson vs. Jackson," and had filed a laborious brief, taking such an untenable position that he had kept it out of curiosity. Where were those papers? Well, search would reveal them.

"And then," murmured Abel Burgess, as he hastened to the storeroom, "if I have the brief and you copied it, and old Battin recognizes the handwriting, look out for yourself, my dear young lady, whoever you may be."

Abel Burgess bore the package to his desk and turned over the contents. There, at the bottom, was that which he sought. He opened it and scanned page after page. He placed it in a compartment of his desk. He rebound the bundle and bore it to its receptacle. What afflicted Abel Burgess on his return from the storeroom? Such a strong, vigorous man, why did he walk so feebly?

Such a cool, self-contained man, why did he tear the memoranda into shreds and bestrew the floor? Such a resolute, arrogant man, why did he turn low the lights and sink lumplishly into his chair and moan as if without hope? Surely, for one whose entire delight lay in the law, such surroundings should be felicitous!

Did he blame himself during the dreary vigil of that night? Did he realize that love, even when merely a selfish sense of ownership, can not be contemned with impunity? Ah, the bitterness of ashes! ah, the emptiness of regret! Why is the past the only dead that returns, and always to upbraiding?

It was early the next morning that Oscar Q. Battin made his customary call on his lawyer. He found him calm, reserved and subdued, far different from the blatant, aggressive man who had received his business so cavalierly.

"Oh, I am so anxious," exclaimed the old man at first sight. "I dreamed last night that you had discovered something, and I've been wild with anticipation ever since."

"After all," said Abel Burgess solemnly, "what can you gain by continuing this inquiry? Nothing, save annoyance and scandal. Your son has disappeared. Your affairs are satisfactorily arranged. Come, let the matter drop, and I will return your retainer to you." There was pleading in his tones, as he spoke.

"How dare you make such a suggestion?" cried Mr. Battin passionately. "Not to save my immortal soul would I do so. Ah, you have made a discovery, and it affects your interests in some wise. Oh, you lawyers, you are all alike. Each one has his price. But have a care, I——"

"Gently, sir, gently," said the attorney as he reached the brief from his desk. "Look at that. Did you ever see the handwriting before?"

One glance, and Oscar Q. Battin, in his fierce excitement, sprang to his feet, poised as if about to spring.

"Of course I have," he shouted. "'Tis the same as the body of my will. Tell me at once who wrote it."

"A young woman who was a copyist employed by Robert Marston."

"Her name, her name, that I may drag her through the mire of shame. Oh, the huzzy, the har—"

"Hush, she is now my wife."—*New York Times.*

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AMONG THE DIAMOND DIGGERS.

How the Famous Gems Are Sought in the Fields Bordering on the Vaal.

[Jeweler's Circular.]

I have just had a few days among the river diamond diggers, near Hebron, on the Vaal. The work here is carried on by individual diggers, each man leasing his claim and working it himself with the aid of a few native laborers. They are a motley crowd, these diggers, and representative of every nationality. It's a hard and precarious existence.

Diamonds are few and far between, but when found, nevertheless, they are generally of first-class quality and realize high prices. The diggers are mostly men of very small means. Their tools and washing gear are about all they have, and they consequently live very poorly. Meal of rough quality is often the only food that passes their lips from one month's end to another. This they usually get on credit from some storekeeper, who furnishes them with the bare necessaries of life on the off chance of their finds. Most of the diggers, of course, have a find some time or other, though there are strange instances of illluck following the quest of diamonds year after year.

I had a conversation with one old man who had been at this sort of work for 19 years, and I am afraid to say how long it is since he has had a turn of luck. He had lived nearly all this time on meal, and there he was toiling away at about the hardest work man can undertake, yet seemed willing to go on to the end. This labor, however, though heavy, has a wonderful fascination for those who once take it up. A very fine stone had been found a few days before my arrival. It was valued between £700 and £800. Toward the end of last month two brothers had a marvelous run of luck. They found stones to the value of over £4,000 in a very short space of time.

BRICKMAKING IN ASIA.

Some of the Uncivilized Tribes Are More Skillful Than the Whites.

[Youth's Companion.]

We should hardly expect to learn much about the arts of civilized life from the tribes of Central Asia, and yet, according to M. Edouard Blanc, some of the inhabitants of Western Mongolia know how to make better brick than we can make. They use the same material as we do, and singularly enough the thing that gives superiority to their process of brickmaking is one of the most powerful agents of Western civilization, steam.

When the bricks have been baked for three days the opening of the oven is closed with felt, which is kept wet, so that the bricks, still intensely heated, are enveloped in steam. This process causes a remarkable change in the character of the bricks. From red they turn gray, and at the same time they acquire a remarkable degree of toughness and hardness. Although porous they give out a sound when struck like that of clink-stone, and they resist the effects of the weather much better than do the bricks of Europe and America.

Necessity, as usual, was the mother of invention in this case, for the climate in which these ingenious Mongols live is subject to great extremes of temperature, which have a disastrous effect upon bricks made by the ordinary process.

CULTIVATION OF POTATOES.

A French Scientific Agriculturist's Remarkable Experiments.

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

A remarkable series of experiments made by a French scientific agriculturist in the cultivation of potatoes has given astonishing results. In one instance he obtained a yield of no less than 42 tons of tubers per acre. He selected the best and soundest seed potatoes, ploughed the land very deeply and manured it heavily.

He also steeped the potatoes for 24 hours in a solution made by dissolving six pounds of saltpetre and six pounds of sulphate of ammonia in 25 gallons of water; then he allowed them to drain and stand for 24 hours for their buds to swell before planting them.

SCALING THE FAMOUS MATTERHORN.

How Three Persons Had to Give Up Their Lives in the Attempt.

"I was one of a party of six," said Dr. Welworth, of Oberlin College, O., in the St. Louis *Globe Democrat*, "that left the village of Hartzberg, in Switzerland, one August morning a few years ago, to attempt to scale the rocky heights of the Matterhorn. That feat has been accomplished since by several Alpine climbers, and yet it is still a rare occurrence. Some day I hope to accomplish my desire, and look down from its snow-capped peaks.

"We secured two guides, and having ascended the first easy slopes, we came to where the guides advised the use of the chain system—that is, of taking a long rope and knotting it about the waist of each person, about 20 feet apart. Then if one should slip or fall he could not roll away, for the others could assist him. We tied ourselves together and resumed the ascent. Soon we were high into the regions of cold winds, and steadily nearing the clouds, that cap the mountain's peak. Several times one or another of the men fell, and each time had regained his position with the aid of the rope. All at once a great cry came from below; the last three of my companions had slipped and fallen, and their combined weight threatened to drag us all over the cliff. I staggered under the load, as did the second guide, who was close behind me, the elder guide having taken the lead.

"The situation was precarious. We were all slipping from our positions. The leading guide at last lost his grip, and called down from above to cut the rope. I did not understand until the guide below me drew a knife and severed the rope between himself and our last three companions. They rolled away over the precipice and were no doubt crushed below. This freed us of a great weight, and we all regained our feet. Then we decided to retreat. The guide seemed not to regret his action very much. He said it was simply a choice of three or eight deaths, and he prefered three. It was an awful occurrence, but illustrated to me the lawless, ethicless character of necessity and self-preservation."

AN INTRESTING FIND.

Bones of a Mammoth Animal Discovered While Digging a Well.

[Los Angeles Times.]

E. K. Green, who is putting down a well for a laundry company on Winston street, below Main, made an interesting find yesterday forenoon in the course of his work. At a depth of 45 feet below the surface he encountered, embedded in the gravel, a hard substance in his digging, which, upon examination, proved to be portions of the skeleton of some mammoth animal, buried, perhaps, hundreds of years ago. The substance was badly decayed, and readily crumbled in the hands under pressure.

One of the largest pieces secured intact was the ball of a joint, which measured some 12 inches in diameter and several times that number in circumference. Smaller portions of bones, supposed to be pieces of ribs and tusks, were also unearthed.

Judging from the parts found the animal must have been at least 20 feet in length. The composition of the bones leaves no doubt but what the remains were not those of a whale, but of some of the mammoths of former centuries, so often found trace of under ground.

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