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The Letters at School.

One day the letters went to school,
And tried to learn each other;
They got so mixed 'twas really hard
To pick out one from t'other.

A went in first, and Z went last;
The rest all went between them—
K, L and M, and N, O, P—
I wish you could have seen them!

B, C, D, E and J, K, L,
Soon jostled well their betters;
Q, R, S, T—I grieve to say—
Were very naughty letters.

Of course, ere long, they came to words—
What else could be expected?
Till E made D, J, C and T
Decidedly dejected.

Now, through it all the Consonants
Were rudest and uncouthest,
While all the pretty Vowel girls
Were certainly the smoothest.

And simple U kept far from Q,
With face demure and moral,
"Because," she said, "we are, we two,
So apt to start a quarrel!"

But spiteful P said, "Pooh for U!"
(Which made her feel quite bitter),
And, calling O, L, E, to help,
He really tried to hit her.

Cried A: "Now, E and C, come here!
If both will aid a minute,
Good P will join in making peace,
Or else the mischief's in it."

And smiling E, the ready sprite,
Said: "Yes, and count me double."
This done, sweet peace shone o'er the scene,
And gone was all the trouble!

Meanwhile when U and P made up,
The Cons'nants looked about them,
And kissed the Vowels, for, you see,
They couldn't do without them!

—*St. Nicholas.*

THE RIVER WAIF.

A STORY OF THE THAMES.

It was a calm, still evening. The broad bosom of the Thames was scarcely ruffled by the little breeze that stirred the drooping sails of some of the river craft. Over the city and over the forest of masts, the round full moon was rising. Touching the dome of St. Paul's, it glanced down over roofs and under bridges till it lay a broad path of light on the sleeping river. The gas lamps flickered and looked pale before it, and many a weary pedestrian, hurrying across the crowded bridges which span the river, paused a moment to gaze at the beautiful globe which even to weary eyes was a wondrous revelation of beauty.

It was dark under the bridges, and the water lapping the piers made something of a soothing in its sound. One of the slow river barges was just passing into the shadow. John Briggs, her owner, [illegible] at the tiller, guarding his [illegible] [illegible] his nephew Ben [illegible] pulling one long oar.

"Steady, Ben!" called out the master, warningly.

"Steady it is," said Ben, and Ben drew in his [illegible]

Out into the light again the boat [illegible] slowly creeping, eagerly watched by a little figure standing on one of the water stairs. As they came closer, he sent out to them a feeble piping hail.

John Briggs shaded his eyes with his hand. "Why, bless my soul, it's Poppets! Bring her near, Ben, so we can come aboard."

Then a strong hearty shout was sent back in answer, while the boat's head slowly turned toward the stair. [illegible] John Briggs put out his [illegible] to welcome the [illegible] "Why, Poppets, we was gettin' oneasy about you, me an' Ben. We thought you'd [illegible] lost, mebbe."

"Me lost! Why, dad!" and they both laughed heartily in huge enjoyment of the joke, the thin treble of the one ringing pleasantly through the gruff bass of the other.

"Well, Poppets," and John Briggs resumed his pipe, "what have you brought fur us, fur 't won't be long afore we shall have our supper."

The little boy knelt down beside his basket which he had set with great care in a corner, and touching each parcel as he took it out with a caressing little pat, he went rapidly over his list.

"There's the tobacco, dad, and the tea and sugar, and bacon and herrin's—and oh, dad! I got some cresses. They was so green, an' they looked like the fields; I got 'cresses of that."

"Ho! ho!" laughed Ben, who was listening; but his uncle frowned him into gravity, then his eyes looked kindly at the flushed, eager face.

"It's all right, my lad. Cresses is werry good fur the health, as my old mother used to say."

"They're too pretty to eat 'most," said the boy, touching them tenderly.

"Well, Poppets, what'll we have for supper, eh?"

"Oh, dad, herrin's! [illegible] and I'm awful hungry."

"Werry good, my lad. Here, steward," to Ben, who grinned in appreciation of the never failing joke, "you hear the cap'n. He says herrin's for supper, and consequently herrin's it is."

"Now, cap'n," said John Briggs, "if so be as it's fair, I'll take the oar, an' by the time Ben's got supper we'll be ready to anchor."

Higher and higher rose the moon, silvering the masts and spars of the many vessels crowded in the docks. The barge was anchored now; and Ben, with his hands in his pockets, was stretched sound asleep on the deck. Further aft, John Briggs and Poppets were seated on a coil of rope, talking in low tones—the child nestling close to the man, his hand in his.

"Now, dad, tell me 'bout that night, dad," said the child, drawing him a little closer; and he commenced the often told, never tired of story.

"Well, Poppets, it was a night just like this, a clear full moon an' a little breeze, not much more'n to-night, for I remember as the sails o' the vessels round [illegible] stirred. Ben was at the tiller, an' I was pullin' werry slow, for I was feelin' uncommon low, Poppets, cos of havin' buried my little girl and her mother that werry same week."

Here the child nestled his head down on the speaker's arm. He always did when this part of the story was reached.

"Well, Poppets," stroking his hair softly, "as I was sayin', we was driftin' down slow an' steady like. When we come under London bridge the moon was shinin' werry bright indeed, an' as I looked back kind o' natural like to see if we was goin' to clear the bridge, I sees somethin' floatin' on the water, right under the bridge, Poppets—floatin' up an' down with the tide."

"Yes, yes, dad, go on!" cried Poppets, clapping his hands.

"Well, says I, 'Hullo Ben, here's somethin' wants lookin' to,'—an' Ben he comes runnin' for'ard; an' by-an-bye we gets the somethin' out, an' then we finds a shawl, an' then we finds some more clo'es and arter a long time we finds a baby, an' that baby was—"

"And that baby was me!" cried the child, delightedly. "Go on, dad!"

"An' that baby was my Poppets"—stooping to pat the boy's cheek. "Well, then [illegible] was lyin' on" (he did not tell him—poor baby—that it was his dead mother's heart), "an' we rubbed you and wrapped you up warm, an' bye-and-bye you begun to cry; an' my! how you did go on, Poppets! Says Ben to me, shoutin' out cos I couldn't hear cos of you—'Uncle,' says he, 'did you ever hear such a screecher?' An' says I: 'No, Ben, an' I hopes I never shall again.' You may laugh, Poppets, but Ben an' me didn't know what to do."

"Dad," said the child, suddenly, "did you ever know my mother?"

John Briggs turned away with a little embarrassed cough. "I've seen her, Poppets; but we wasn't werry intimate, so to speak."

"'Cause you said this"—touching a little ring hanging from his neck by a faded ribbon—"was hers, and she left it for me."

"Well, Poppets, an' so she did; she was a werry respectable woman, your mother, an' she didn't have nothin' to leave you, I s'pose."

"What was she like?" questioned Poppets.

"Well, she was all dressed in black w'en I see her, with a widow's cap on. She was a werry nice woman, I makes no doubt, Poppets, but she got poor an' werry discouraged afore she died."

Then seeing another question moving in the child's face, he went on hastily:

"Look here, lad; this here isn't goin' on with our story. Well, you just screeched and screeched, till Ben an' me was 'most worn out, but I wouldn't give you up—no, I wouldn't; an' you was that hungry, there was no satisfyin' you; so I says to Ben, says I, 'You go an' get a goat;' an' the next day overboard it goes, an' Ben arter it, an' both on 'em was drownded on account o' bein' so contrary. Well, at last I takes you to a woman I know, an' I asks her wot's the matter.

"She looks at you awhile, an' then she says: 'He do screech like a good one, don't he?' An' says I: 'Nobody knows that better nor me.'

"Then she looks at you again, an' says she: 'His mind wants amusin', that's it.' 'As how, nana?' I says.

"'Lord, how should I know,' says she, 'how should I know? You'll have to find out. Children is werry different about that,' she says.

"So I takes off with you in my arms, not havin' learned so werry much arter all. Howsomever, I makes you a soft ball, an' I hangs it by a string, an' you'd lie there by the hours, an' [illegible] like a kitten for all the world. Arter a while, you gives up screechin', an' I brought you up to be [illegible] little boy, an' when you growed, I sent you to school evenin's, and my! how proud you was w'en you could read to yer dad, an' yer dad, Poppets, was proud too, every bit. Then arter a while, you says you wants to do something to help yer old dad, so I takes you to the shops and shows you what to buy, an' then you goes alone it is. Well, arter you got started, I says to Ben: 'Ben,' says I, 'I'm awful oneasy 'bout Poppets.' 'Wot's up?' says he: 'I'm goin' arter him.' So off I starts. Well, I kept you in sight for a good bit, sneakin' round corners an' skulkin' behind barrels, for I didn't want you to know [illegible] you see. If I'd kept at that business long, Poppets, I'm sure I'd ha' took to pickin' pockets. Somehow I felt just like a thief. Well, you was goin' along, lookin' as [illegible], an' I felt just laughin' at myself for bein' so oneasy 'bout you, when all at once I see a lot o' boys stop you, an' one on 'em tried to take yer basket. [illegible] bye a big fellow steps up an' says he: 'I say, youngster, just give up yer basket, or I'll punch yer 'ead,' an' then you just looks at him, an' you says: 'Oh, I wish dad was here!'

"I was only waitin' for that, so I sings out: 'Stand by, my hearties!' an' I [illegible] with a cuff on his ear, an' then [illegible] makes a rush an' knocks over the big 'un, an' the others [illegible] just like a lot of little fishin' boats if a man-o'-war bears down on 'em.

"Well, you walked on quiet for a bit, an' then you says: 'Dad, how did you come here?'

"'Well,' says I, 'Poppets, I thought I'd like to take a walk.' 'Now, dad,' you says, lookin' straight at me, 'you know you come to look arter me.' Well, I had to say I did. You thought awhile, an' then you says: 'Dad, s'pose you do that fur a little, fur I ain't goin' to give it up.' [illegible] just as safe thinkin' [illegible] you clutching yer little basket—an' then some day you leave off when I don't know it, an' then arter a while I won't mind.' Oh! Poppets, you was a terrible strange child, Poppets!

"So we does that, an' sometimes I'd see you looking back fur me, an' I'd make b'lieve I didn't see you, an' walk on as if I didn't take no notice, an' so you got to be all right, an' I do be better now there ain't nobody can come on an' do for you."

"An' that's all about [illegible], dad?"

"An' that's all about you yet awhile, Poppets."

The shadows were denser under the bridges, and the water lapped the piers a little more quickly, for the tide was coming in. Red and green lights were twinkling in the rigging of the vessels, and the crowd in the streets was thinning, and still John Briggs and the child sat talking together.

Once and again the child's thoughts would turn to his dead mother, and he would ask earnest, puzzling questions, and always gently, always skillfully, would the other lead him away from the subject.

"There ain't no use tellin' the child his mother was drownded," he had said to Ben long before. "If she fell in a-purpose—which ain't no ways onlikely, them London bridges bein' a dreadful temptation to folks as is worrited in their minds—he mustn't never know it; an' if she fell in by accident, which may be, too, why he'd always be thinkin' if there'd been somebody there they might ha' got her out, so we jist won't tell him at all."

They had sat silent for some time, when suddenly the child spoke.

"Now, dad, I'll tell you a story, such a nice, nice one," said Poppets, who had been gazing for a long time at the moon shining so quietly down on them.

"Ay, lad, that'll be prime! Why, come to think, Poppets, you've never told yer old dad a story yet."

"Well, I'm going to now," answered the child, nodding his head gravely. "Once upon a time—that's the way all the stories begin in the fairy book you bought me, dad."

"All right, deary; now then, go on. 'Once upon a time'"—

"Once upon a time, there was a good, good man, who was very very lonely, 'cause of havin' buried his little girl and her mother."

"That's me," said the listener, under his breath, "only I don't know about the 'good.'"

"Hush, dad; you mustn't stop me," warned Poppets, shaking his head at him. "Well, this good man was sailin' on the river one night, and he was feelin' very low and very unhappy, and he was sayin' to himself: 'There ain't nobody left, and I wish I wasn't left either.'"

"Why, Poppets!" said John Briggs, with a gasp, "how'd you know?"

"Never mind; I know. Well, he was thinkin' this, and the moon looked down at him, and she knew all about it, and she'd sparkle up the water, and she'd smile at him, and still he didn't notice nothin'. So she kept thinkin', thinkin' what she could do for this good, good man. And by-and-bye a beautiful angel came along, holding a little girl; and the little girl had long yellow curls and blue eyes, and she called the pretty angel 'mother.'"

The child paused a little, for the listener had shaded his face with his hand, and Poppets' little tender fingers went up to stroke it gently.

"Well, then, the moon and the angel talked about the man; and by-and-bye the moon made a little boat out of the moonlight, and she put a baby in it, and then she set it sailin', sailin' down a streak of light till it came to the water; and there it was rockin' up and down, and the moon watchin' it. And then another angel comes along, and she says to the moon: 'Where have you sent my baby?' And the moon says: 'I've sent it to that good, good man, to be a comfort to him.'"

"An' so you are, my blessed Poppets!" murmured the other, fondly.

"Hush, dad; I'm not done. So the moon and the two angels and the little girl all stood watching the man. And when he came to the bridge, the moon shone out very bright and showed him the little baby; and then he saw him take it up and hold it in his arms, and then the two angels and the little girl went away together. Well, the baby was a very bad baby for a while, and almost wore out the good, good man; but he took care of it all the time. And by-and-bye it grew to be a little boy, and then the man used to send it to school in the winter, so it could learn to read for him nights. And after a while he let this little boy go errands for him—and oh, how glad the little boy was to do it! for he used to lie awake nights, wonderin' what he could do for this good man. Well, the little boy grew and grew till he got to be a big, strong man, and he worked hard and saved up his money; and one day he and the good man, who had got to be an old man then, left the boat with Ben, who was a very good man, too. And they went off together, and they got a little home by some trees, and a pretty field near, with buttercups in it, and a brook with cresses. Dad, think o' that! And the little house had a garden, and the young, strong man used to work in it; and then he used to bring all kinds of nice things to the old man, who sat in a big chair by the door. And they had a goat—no, a cow! Dad, wasn't that good? Wait, dad, the story's most done. And they lived there together a long, long time, and the little boy that had grown to be a big, strong man was so very, very happy, 'cause now he could take care of him. And the old man he was happy too, and there was nobody in all the world he loved so well as the little baby the moon had sent him. And often and often, dad, the two angels and the little girl used to come there too, though the young man and the old man couldn't see them; and they were all so happy, 'cause the good, good man was happy too. And that's all. Dad, do you like it? Why, dad, you are cryin'!"

"Bless my little Poppets!"—and "dad" stopped to kiss the flushed cheeks again and again.

And still the moon shone softly, steadily down. Ben had long ago tumbled into his bunk, and the two were left alone together. Poppets had laid his head on his protector's breast, and was watching, half asleep, the sparkle of the light upon the water.

Soon the bells rang out over the city, chiming the hour of twelve. Poppets was asleep. The other only drew him a little closer; he had often slept the night through so before. In his dreams, the child was seeing the little cottage of his hopes, and far into the night John Briggs sat holding him and puffing silently at his pipe.—*St. Nicholas.*

Chip straw, so much used for bonnets, is the braided bark of a willow grown in France and Belgium. Its whiteness is so perishable that it will change over night, becoming the cream color generally seen.

Etiquette in the German Army.

The cavalry is the favorite arm of the German army, the Uhlans, rich in the prestige of the late war, being especially popular, while the two crack regiments are the Garde de Corps and the first Garde Cuirassier. These are composed of men selected for their size, their officers bear the oldest names and their appointments are the very best. We believe they are the heaviest cavalry in Europe, the average weight carried by each horse being 350 pounds, and their appearance in pure white uniform, with cuirass and helmet of polished brass, is very striking, even superior to that of the English Guards. There is great rivalry between them; one has the hereditary Grand Duke of Mecklenburg, the other a prince of Hohenzollern, and there is almost an equal distribution of lesser notables. Each is given an opera box, one under, the other opposite, the emperor's, and they only agree in affecting to ignore each other. Other regiments are jealous, and say they are too fine for use, and it is a fact that the emperor would not allow them to engage during the French war. So in the triumphant entry to Berlin at the end these troops alone were received in dead silence, and the mortification rankles yet. Their officers have in the extreme both the pride and *esprit de corps* characteristic of their profession and order. Two of them were left cards upon a certain Graf, but through mistake they were delivered to the greatest banker in Berlin, who occupied the floor below. Delighted with the attention he immediately asked them to dine, but they coolly returned the invitation with a curt message, saying the cards had not been left for him. This banker, by the way, was taken by Bismarck to Versailles to arrange about the indemnity in 1871, and the story goes that when the latter named the sum of four milliards, Jules Favre exclaimed the thing was absurd, that "it would take from the birth of Christ till now merely to count it." "That's no consequence," said Bismarck, "we have a man here who counts back to the birth of Adam." An instance similar to the above I heard of a cuirassier. The mess were discussing whether or no they might go to a certain concert-room in uniform. Finally one said: "I guess we can go, the Kaiser has been there." "Ah, yes," said another, "but not in our uniform."

This wearing of uniforms in questionable places is a matter about which all officers are exceedingly particular, and the sensitiveness about their honor and good name from which it springs has developed what is called the "Court of Honor," the most curious I know in German society. Each regiment has its court of honor, composed of all its officers, by which all matters affecting the honor of the regiment or its officers, as individuals, are settled. Every new officer entering the regiment is proposed before this court, and even though his examination be passed, must receive its unanimous vote before obtaining his commission. All offenses are complained of to this court, and I presume if an officer were seen in the parquet of a theater, for instance, he would be promptly summoned and disciplined, for no man in uniform ever sits out of the boxes or balconies. The principal function of the court, however, seems to be the supervision of all matters connected with dueling. If an officer becomes involved, he lays the matter before the court of honor, and they proceed to investigate it. If they find their comrade to have been in the wrong, he is directed to tender an apology. If, however, he has been insulted they proceed to investigate the character of the offender. If his position is found to be such that they can fight as equals, the court directs the duel to take place, and the officer must fight. If he refuse, the court has the power [illegible] cashier him, and if he fights, [illegible] power furnishes him with from two months to five years' imprisonment, which pleasing predicament naturally produces the most wilting effect. There is no [illegible] article of law to authorize such an [illegible] and it exists only by the [illegible] authority of the princes.

Worth and the Irate Duchess.

Worth is in trouble again—with a spirited Parisian duchess this time. He had, after a full fortnight's consultation, and an infinite deal of assistance on the lady's part, designed a toilet of toilets, magnificent, unique. Not long afterward the duchess, while at her milliner's, was surprised rather than pleased to discover displayed on the milliner's sofa the exact duplicate of her costume, the same shades, the same trimmings, everything. The milliner also patronized Worth. The patrician, furious, sent word to M. Worth that she did not want the dress; he returned reply that it had been ordered and executed according to order, and must be accepted and paid for. Thereupon the duchess took a fearful revenge. She wrote to M. Worth: "I shall take and pay for the dress, but not wear it. I send you this by my cook; you will be so good as to alter the costume so that it will fit her." And now that cook on her day out appears in one of Worth's most exquisite creations, and the cream of the joke is that the blow has been effectual, and Worth thinks himself disgraced.

One of Old Si's Suspicions.

Old Si, says the Atlanta *Herald*, went to the theater to see the magician performance the other night. Next day we asked him:

"Did you see that man handle that money last night?"

"I did, fer a fact!"

"He made it come and go in all sorts of ways?"

"Young boss, dat man's pow'rful slick wid silber munney!"

"What did you think of him, Si?"

"Dat man fool'd 'round dar wid dat munney 'tell he 'roused up my 'spishions, he did."

"Suspicions of what?"

"Hit teks lots of practiss fer to mak a haf doller 'pear an' dis'pear in dat stile."

"Of course."

"Dat's what meks me hab a 'spishun dat dat white man wuz one time de cashecr ob a freedmen's bank—an' I jess want to hannel him a few minnits, sho's you born."

What Causes Diphtheria.

The origin of diphtheria, said President Chandler of the New York board of health, is a mystery. Most New York physicians, I believe, think that the sewer gases started it. It is a germ disease, like smallpox, and is communicable. It often seizes robust children who, at the funerals of playmates, or in school or church, are exposed to its direct influence.

The diphtheritic poison, impregnating the air passages of the patient, affects the entire system. The air passage impregnation speedily changes into inflammation, accompanied by the formation of membrane. Fever next follows. The poison begins to act as soon as it falls upon the tissues of the air passages, but doesn't sensibly affect the patient until two to five days later. Then he feels great prostration, his throat is dry, and he has pricking pains in swallowing. The throat reddens, white membrane appears in patches, and the glands swell. In fatal cases the fever increases, the throat inflammation spreads, and general exhaustion follows.

The diphtheritic poison clings long to rooms and may occasion death months afterward. Diphtheria prefers, seemingly, children between one and ten; the average age of its victims now is about two years. Neither heat nor cold, rain nor drought, affect it. Cleanliness and pure air everywhere in a dwelling tend to avert and mitigate it.

Where it exists no child should be permitted to kiss strange children, particularly when they have sore throats, or even to play with their tops. When any child in a family has a sore throat, the other children should be kept rigidly apart, in dry, well ventilated rooms. Every throat affection should be promptly treated. The sick child should be watchfully nursed in a well ventilated, sunlit room.

Men who live on Fifth avenue are astonished that their children die. It is not at all marvelous; half of the houses there are not fit to live in. One-half of their owners, I am confident, have never been in their own cellars. They fill their drawing-rooms with satins and gilding, but give no heed to the drain pipes. Often $5 would have saved a loved child's life, if seasonably spent in repairing a defective drain pipe.

A few days ago I went into the cellar of a great brown stone house. The current of sewer gas, rushing directly up to the bedrooms, put out my candle, and left me to grope my way out in darkness.

The Appropriation Bills.

A Washington dispatch says: By January 20 all the appropriation bills will be before the House and most of them will have been passed. Two things are already certain, the sum total of the appropriations will be from $10,000,000 to $12,000,000 below the expenses for this year, and $41,000,000 below the appropriations for the year before, and the deficiency bills will be, so far as information has reached Mr. Holman, below those of any year for ten years past. The estimates for deficiencies are principally confined to the departments of justice, navy and war, and in the last they are largely due to the moving of troops. The deficiencies in the legislative expenses are smaller than for eight years past. That of the House is not likely to be over $28,000. A very considerable saving has resulted from the fact that the contingent fund has been entirely abolished in the House, and cannot be drawn upon by resolution at pleasure. Aside from the decrease in deficiency bills, the best proof of the success of last year's reductions is demonstrated in the fact that they are continued this year, and, should the expenditures of the government be administered upon the same principle, reductions can be repeatedly yearly, so that the appropriations for the current expenses of the government will be reduced in three years from $147,000,000, which they now are, to $95,000,000 or $105,000,000, including in this sum the pension list. This year the appropriation bills are passing at about the figures of last year and without debate. Those in the hands of the committees were placed in the hands of sub-committees during the recess. The most important reduction of the winter is to come in the Pension bill. The House has made it a rule to pass this bill precisely as estimated by the pension bureau, although it has been felt that the expenses incident to the disbursement of the pensions were extravagantly large.

The Senate committee on appropriations has passed an amendment to the bill, however, which will reduce this particular item, and when the bill comes back to the House still further reductions will be made in the same direction, amounting in all to several hundreds of thousands.

The Body Finders of the Seine.

The Paris correspondent of the Philadelphia *Telegraph* tells the following: I must m[illegible]on the strangest, perhaps, of all the strange methods of gaining a living which are in vogue in Paris, and that is the trade of body finder. The authorities of Paris pay ten francs reward for every corpse that is discovered in the Seine and brought to the morgue. As the wages of the poor boatmen who ply on the river are extremely small it will readily be seen that such an addition to their petty earnings is not to be despised. But as b[illegible] at sometimes far down the Seine, beyond the reach of the boatman employed in the upper part of the river, these boatmen have organized a regular traffic with those who ply their vocation far down the stream, and who, if they find a body cannot well leave their regular work to bring it to Paris. The down stream bodies are therefore purchased at five francs each by the up stream boatmen, the profits being thus fairly divided. It may easily be imagined with what care these men watch the river for some indication of the presence of the mortal remains of some poor suicide, who, if he were good for nothing when living, is worth fully ten francs now that he is dead. These body finders form a valuable adjunct to the police force, and instances have been known of one individual bringing in two and three bodies in a single day.

The innocent blush more frequently than the guilty; the face of the latter is not so easily red.

Some Queer People.

There is a young man in the neighborhood who is always melancholy, and always out of work. The other day he was asked by a kindly disposed man whether he could find no work.

"Sir," said he, "the only thing that slurs my happiness is my appetite. Can I help it?"

"No."

"The only thing that appeases my appetite is my food. Can I help it?"

"No; certainly not."

"The only thing that procures me food is money. Can I help it?"

"Of course not. Everybody has to buy food."

"The only way for me to get money is to work. Can I help it?"

"That is the best way to get it."

"But, sir," and here the tears came rolling down his cheek, "there's the rub. Work spoils my appetite, and I haven't anything else to live for."

Right over that way—that is, south—there lives a man who receives a half dozen old bedsteads every day. If this man was in business it would not matter, but as he is not, it makes one inquisitive to know what he does with them. To satisfy my hankering, I accosted him one day.

"You see," said he, "I am a man used to thinking. I am in quest of a discovery that will benefit me and the world. In plain words, I am testing the popular mind on bedbug powders. I have a splendid preparation of that material, and if you want a bottle I will let you have it cheap; but to go to the bedsteads, I buy those to see how many use powder."

"The result?" I eagerly inquired.

"Is shocking, to say nothing of the barbarous habit of not keeping bugs; nine out of every ten use coal oil."

The other of the queer people with whom I have come in contact, is an old lady living in a neighboring village. The other day she was told that eight mules were killed by lightning in an adjoining county, where her husband works.

"Good gracious," she exclaimed, clapping her hands over her head; "I felt it in my bones that something had happened to John."

A Storm of Grasshoppers.

At ten o'clock at night there was an immense number of grasshoppers passed over and through Washington, Mo., a local paper says. The night was very dark but the "hoppers" came butting against the buildings, rattling against the windows, entering the houses at the open windows and doors, and playing havoc with the over superstitious, for many persons had gone to bed and were in their first sweet sleep, as the "hoppers" commenced to rattle against the glass of the windows and jump about rooms, making an infernal small noise like unto a parcel of lady spirits out on their first spree. It was a strange experience for those who were awake and took the pains to go out doors and listen to the odd small noise that filled the air, produced by the concussion of their wings and the batting of their heads against any obstacle in their way. As far as could be judged from the noise they made, they were in great force, and came from the north going in a southern direction; but many thousands came to grief in town, either giving out through fatigue or the many accidents of attempting to make a night trip without good pilots, as the next morning thousands of dead and maimed grasshoppers were lying about loose on the streets, in the yards and houses. They were of the largest type of Rocky mountain species, some of them measuring fully three inches in length from "head to toe." They evidently came across the Missouri river, which at the place is fully three-fourths of a mile wide, and those that did not perish kept on toward the land of the perpetual green.

What is Believed.

It is said to be the belief in the Senate, says a Washington dispatch, that the House will insist upon the observance of the following programme for the opening of the certificates of the electoral vote, especially in the treatment of the doubtful ones likely to come from some of the Southern States: The House will take the position that after the President of the Senate has opened the certificates in the presence of the two houses, without discrimination and without other declaration than the mere fact of what they state as to the result of the elections, his duties end, and it will remain for the two houses to decide what shall be done with the conflicting certificates. The House will resent positively the assumption that the president of the Senate has any authority whatever to decide which of two sets of conflicting certificates shall be selected. There will be, so says a prominent Republican senator, no appeal from the decision of the president of the Senate, but when this condition of affairs is reached a representative will rise and announce: "I object;" whereupon the two houses will separate for consultation, and as soon as a decision is reached as to what shall be done it shall be announced and further action will be accordingly taken. He further says:

"It is an erroneous opinion of Senator Morton that an appeal will be taken from the decision of the president of the Senate, and if not sustained by both houses of Congress will fall. He adds that there is no such motion to be made, and that it would be futile to take any such position in case of a disagreement from the decision of the president of the Senate at the counting of the electoral vote."

That Policy.

In all policies of life insurance these, among a host of other questions, occur: "Age of father, if living?" "Age of mother, if living?" A man in the country who filled up an application made his father's age "if living" one hundred and twelve years, and his mother's one hundred and two. The agent was amazed at this, and fancied he had secured an excellent customer; but, feeling somewhat dubious, he remarked that the applicant came of a very long-lived family. "Oh, you see, sir," replied he, "my parents died many years ago, but 'if living' would be aged as there put down." "Exactly—I understand," said the agent.

Detroit Free Pressings.

A Detroit tailor solemnly and earnestly remarks that no true patriot will try to make a suit of clothes last him over three months.

It would be interesting to know just what thoughts rush through the mind of a man who sits down on a coil of hot steam pipes to rest.

Senator Norwood, of Georgia, is an old newspaper man. He killed four weekly papers in one year, but started a fifth as if nothing had happened.

There may have been cases where some one was to blame for a boiler explosion, and where the engineer had not "just inspected everything and found things all right."

A St. Louis exchange has struck an original idea. It says: "It is generally thought that either Tilden or Hayes will be President after the fourth of March next."

The two Pennsylvania miners who lit their pipes and then proceeded to divide a keg of powder were not badly mangled. The fact was, neither one has yet been found.

Church fairs are good things. They teach a man how to preserve a look of deep humility while paying out two dollars of his hard-earned money for a ten-cent pincushion.

The *Journal of Chemistry* advises all people to eat celery when they can get it, and onions between times. Says it quiets your nerves. But one onion eater can unsettle the nerves of a whole street car load.

A hen may look serene and happy as she sits on a snowdrift, wings spread out and head up, but we all know that she's simply trying to keep up appearances, and that there is a powerful aching down around her heels.

How English Cheese is Made.

Probably the best as well as the most famous English cheese is Cheddar, the excellence and sweetness of which depends as much upon the management of the processes of manufacture as upon the quality of the material used. It is made principally in Somersetshire, and is produced in the following manner: The evening's milk is placed in cooling vats so that it will be brought to a temperature of about sixty deg. by the following morning, when the morning's milk is added, and the temperature raised to about eighty deg. The large vat which contains the milk is gently heated in the water bath; and when the milk reaches the last mentioned temperature, sufficient rennet is added to cause coagulation in about forty minutes. Some whey is added to hasten the development of lactic acid, and finally, when the curd has become sufficiently firm, it is cut with curd knives. It then contracts rapidly, expressing the whey; and in about twenty minutes it becomes quite firm, when it is broken into small pieces by a wire shovel breaker, and the temperature raised to ninety-eight deg. The whey is now drawn off, and the curd left for about twenty minutes longer, when it becomes a coherent, partially solid mass.

When firm enough, it is removed, broken into thin flakes, and spread out to cool. After the lapse of another twenty minutes, it is turned over and left until it attains a peculiar mellow and flaxy condition, well known to the experienced cheese maker. By this time the temperature has been reduced to about seventy deg. The curd is now put into a hoop and pressed gently for about fifteen minutes to drive out the whey, by which a too rapid fermentation is prevented. It is then taken out, cut into small bits by a curd mill, and then salted with one pound of salt to fifty-six pounds of curd.

The curd is now again placed in the hoops and kept under process for from twenty to twenty-four hours. It is then removed and the sharp edges pared off, after which it is turned, bandaged, and put in the press again for a day or two longer. The temperature at which it goes to press is a matter of great importance, because, if too high, fermentation with evolution of gas is liable to take place and make the cheese porous. Cheddar goes to press at about sixty-five deg. While in the curing-room, which is kept at seventy deg., the cheese is rubbed with melted butter and turned over daily.

Old Leather Made Into New.

On old used leather, says a Scotch paper, there have been various schemes of utilization. By dissolving the leather by steam and certain acids, it is possible to produce printing rollers for cotton fabrics; but it seems preferable to cut the leather in pieces, mix them with a cementing liquid, and then squeeze the whole into a mass of different thicknesses, according to the process required, such as material for making up the soles and heels of boots and shoes. With a quantity of paste and the force of a steam engine, shreds are made to assume the appearance of cakes of leather—techically, pancakes or pasted stock—which are largely used in the wholesale shoe manufacture of Massachusetts. There is another method in that country of using up shavings and scraps of leather. These are ground to a powder resembling coarse snuff, and this powder is then mixed with certain gums and other substances so thoroughly that the whole mass becomes a kind of melted leather. In a short time this dries a little, and is rolled out to the desired thickness, perhaps one-twelfth of an inch; it is now quite solid, and is said to be entirely waterproof. There are various processes patented for melting down leather waste and producing large sheets of artificial leather, possessing waterproof qualities, but we have not space to go into any account of them.

In Texas all doctors are required under the new law governing the practice of medicine to appear before the county board of examiners appointed by the district court and stand an examination in chemistry, anatomy, physiology and *materia medica* before they can collect their bills. Any one violating this law is liable to be indicted, fined and imprisoned.

The total production of beet root sugar in Europe is now estimated to considerably exceed 1,000,000 tons.