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Abdominal Supporters and Shoulder Braces.

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Mc CARTY & SOSS have on hand the largest and best assortment of

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to be found outside of either city (New York or Philadelphia), and will make this branch of their business a specialty.

COFFINS and CASKETS of any shape or style, can be furnished at one hour's notice for shipment, at a charge of one-third less than any shop in Stroudsburg. In no case will they charge more than ten per cent. above actual cost. EMBALMING attended to in any part of the County at the shortest possible notice. [June 18, 74-1f]

State Financial Affairs.

The following is a general press dispatch, in reference to the State finances, published in this morning's paper:

HARRISBURG, Pa., Aug. 2.

The Commissioners of the Sinking Fund met here to-day, in conformity with law. The State Treasurer submitted a statement showing the balance in the Sinking Fund to be \$435,533 98. Whereupon the following was offered by Secretary Quay, and unanimously adopted:

"Resolved, That the State Treasurer be directed to notify the Farmers' and Mechanics' National Bank of Philadelphia that the Commissioners of the Sinking Fund are prepared to redeem upon presentation the balance of the five-ten loan of the Commonwealth, amounting to \$434,850; and further, that the State Treasurer be directed to notify the holders of the Chambersburg certificates issued under the act of May 27, 1871, to present the same for payment forthwith at the Treasury, and that interest be stopped upon all the indebtedness above mentioned on the first day of November next."

The amount of loan thus called for is as follows: Five-ten loan, act of February 2, 1867, \$434,850; Chambersburg certificates, act May 27, 1871, \$73,168 26. Total, \$508,018 26. Exceeding by \$72,485 18 the present available balance in the Sinking Fund. The redemption of loans for the present fiscal year will exceed fourteen hundred thousand dollars, and exhaust all the loan of the Commonwealth now due, or which can be reached at the option of the State by the present Board of Commissioners.

Before the adjournment of the board Mr. Mackey voluntarily submitted a detailed statement of the condition of the Treasury, with a list of depositaries of the State funds, including the sinking fund, supported by proper vouchers, with a request that the board should examine and verify it, which was done.

The Clog in the Sinking Fund.

The State Treasurer, Auditor General and Secretary of the Commonwealth, composing the Board of Commissioners of the Sinking Fund, met yesterday at the capitol, and having in conformity with law applied the entire balance in the Sinking Fund to the payment of the public debt, transcending the requirements of the law by calling in and stopping interest, after the first day of November next, upon the sum of \$75,000 of State indebtedness, for the redemption of which the Sinking Fund was not in immediate condition, relying probably upon the receipts of the next two months to provide for its payment.

The debt thus called for redemption, amounting to \$508,018 26, includes all the indebtedness of the Commonwealth which has matured, or will mature, before 1877. The Sinking Fund Commission is thus brought to a dead halt in its operations. The Commissioners cannot go into open market to purchase the State Loan at a premium—nor can they stop interest upon any portion of it until it becomes due in 1877. Until legislation is had to provide for the difficulty the Commission is powerless; and in the meantime what is to become of the Democratic clamor over the mismanagement of the Sinking Fund? How can it be mismanaged when it cannot be managed at all?

With three months yet intervening previous to the gubernatorial election, this action of the Commissioners, virtually taking the Sinking Fund question out of the canvass, is unjustifiable and intolerable, and upon the part of Auditor General Temple simply inexplicable. He will be called to answer at the bar of his party for this ill-advised destruction of half its stock in trade for the present campaign.

Formerly the Commission was empowered to purchase the loan of the State at its current price in open market, but the practice was believed to ensure rather to the profit of the Treasurer than of the Commonwealth; and the enabling statute was accordingly repealed. Its re-enactment would seem necessary to prevent a glut in the Sinking Fund, unless the Legislature shall see proper, relieving the State Treasurer and his sureties, to loan out the public funds to the highest bidders.

The State loan is held at a premium of from 4 to 9 per cent, and is never presented for payment until the holders are forced to come in by the stoppage of the interest upon their bonds.

Appended is a schedule of the loan of the State, for which no provision has yet been made, showing the amount and date of maturity of each:

Act May 4, 1852, due August 1, 1877 83,267,500

Act April 10, 1849, due April 10, 1879 400,000

Act April 19, 1853, due August 1, 1878 273,000

Act April 2, 1852, due July 1, 1882 482,000

*Act February 2, 1867, due February 1, 1877 7,980,950

†Act February 2, 1867, due February 1, 1882 9,995,800

Act April 3, 1872, due April 3, 1922 500,000

\$22,890,250

*Due in 1882, payable at the option of the State after February 1, 1877.

†Due in 1892, payable at the option of the State after February 1, 1882.

Raising Bananas.

The most perfect banana plantation in the United States is that of Colonel Whitney, near Silver Lake, over 200 miles south from Jacksonville, and practically beyond the region of killing frosts. A daily line of steamers renders it easy of access from Jacksonville, and at all points upon the river. This plantation covers an area of several acres, and contains over 10,000 plants most of them in bearing. The plants are of different varieties. Some of them are large trees, twenty feet high, with a trunk from six to eight inches in diameter, while others, and probably the largest number, are of the celebrated dwarf species, standing from six to eight feet high, with a trunk from four to five inches in diameter. The banana, as cultivated in this climate, bears no visible seed, but it is propagated from slips or cuttings which bear transplanting well, and grow with great rapidity. These slips are generally planted about eight feet apart; if it is the dwarf species, an acre of ground will contain from 600 to 700 plants. They require a deep, rich soil, and considerable moisture. It has no season, but the fruit matures generally in from eleven to thirteen months from the date of planting, and by properly timing the planting ripe fruit may be obtained at all seasons of the year. The cuttings once planted first develop two leaves tightly yoked together, which grow to a height of three or four feet, when the blades begin to unfold one after another into great broad leaves, the stems forming a smooth trunk, which grows to the size of a large apple tree, composed entirely of these concentric leaf-stems or petals. In about eight or nine months, according to the warmth of the season, a deep purple bud peeps out just at the point of divergence of the upper leaves, and soon pushes itself into full view, its lengthening stem bending under the weight of a purple blossom shaped like a pointed egg.

Soon a leaf of this blossom opens at the pointed end, and rolls back to the base, disclosing a row of five or six tiny bananas, nestled close together, as if hiding under shelter of its protecting leaf. Each miniature fruit has a waxen yellow flower at the end, with a stigma projecting through it. Other leaves of the blossom unfold one after another, in the same way, until twenty or thirty clusters of fruit are developed, all clinging to one stem, when these leaves wither and fall, and the fruit swells and lengthens to maturity, which requires generally about three or four months. The great stem on which the fruit grows under its weight until the long finger-like fruit hangs down in graceful clusters.

Each plant bears but a single bunch of fruit and then withers and dies, but while the fruit is maturing there springs up from the base of the trunk several offshoots, which take the place of the old plant when it has been removed, and go on growing to the full size of the parent tree.

The fruit, when grown full size, begins to show streaks of yellow upon its deep green skin, when it should be gathered for shipment to market, as it is easily and quickly ripened after cutting by wrapping the bunch in straw or in a blanket and keeping it in a warm place. By cutting the bunches at the right time they can be shipped to New York with perfect safety.

Colonel Whitney has upon his plantation to-day thousands of bunches, in all stages of development, from the little miniature buds to well-matured fruit six or seven inches long. Many of these bunches contain 125 bananas, which sell readily to shippers at two cents each, from which may be inferred the great profit of banana culture.

An acre of ground will readily support 600 plants. Suppose the bunches to average seventy-five bananas each, and we have an annual income of \$900 from a single acre. The cost of preparing and enriching the ground and setting the plants the first year, including the cost of the slips, will average \$1 per plant, leaving a profit of \$300; but they perpetuate themselves after the first year, and require but little expenditure. Besides, the shoots that spring up from the bulbous root stock will supply plants enough to double the ground each year, or they may be sold for more than enough to pay for all expenses after the first year, thus leaving the \$900 for the second and succeeding years.

Humboldt states that the amount of land that will produce 1000 pounds of potatoes will yield 44,000 pounds of bananas, and a surface bearing wheat enough to feed one man will yield bananas enough to feed twenty-five men.—Atlantic Herald.

The Stings of Conscience.

I have struggled with my guilty conscience until I can no longer stand up under the heavy burden, and I am going to make a confession.

I am a murderer!

Within a few hours I shall go and deliver myself up to the officers of the law, plead guilty, and hail my sentence with satisfaction. No one can conceive of the weight of my mental burden—no one who has not stained his hands with human gore.

He was a shoemaker—my victim. I entered his place of business one night in search of a pair of boots. He smiled sweetly, remarked about the weather, and said he would make me the best pair of boots that ever laid out doors. It was Monday, and he was to have them done Wednesday. I called at the appointed time, and they were not half finished. He said Friday, and when Friday came he said Tuesday. I was there Tuesday and he said Thursday, and

when Thursday came he smiled and explained:

"We've been rushed to death—come in Tuesday."

They were finished when I called again, and that wretched man worked an hour and a half to get them over my feet. He said they were made to fit, and he was determined that they should do so.

When I got 'em on it seemed as if every toe had been driven back an inch, and as if each foot was bent up in the shape of a rainbow. I had to draw myself along by seizing hold of the counter, but he assured me that the boots would fit perfectly easy by the time that I got home. I fell down on the street, and had to ride home in a hack. I destroyed three boot-jacks and demolished two chairs getting the boots off and it took all night for my toes to get straightened out.

"Nothing in the world ails the boots!" said the dealer, when I limped down the next day, and he insisted that I put them on. He looked the door and called down the cobblers, and the boots were finally pulled on. He said if I'd come back there at the end of two hours and say that the boots weren't a fit he'd give me fifty dollars. I went out on the street, and the boys followed me, believing that I was drunk; men stopped me and wanted to know if I had run a nail in my foot; two women turned around, and one of them remarked that it always made her sad to see a man with a cork leg.

"Those boots want treecing out," remarked the dealer, as I crawled into the store.

He trod them out, he oiled them, he dug away at the pegs. He said they were a perfect fit. Finally, when I was carried into his store on a door, and his cobblers had removed the boots and left the room, I killed him. He didn't suspect anything, and was rubbing chalk down inside the leg, determined to pull the boots on again, when I became a murderer. He never even ground, and he didn't make a struggle. I shouldn't have done it, and if it were to be done over again, I wouldn't raise my hand. His face has haunted me day and night for years, and it will be a relief for me to bear punishment.—M. Quad.

Shooting with a Flint-Lock.

The Richmond (Va.) *Whig* talks in this wise:—"An elderly man named Beckwith, residing in one of the Peninsula counties, came to this city last Thursday on business. He brought with him an old-fashioned flint-lock rifle to have a stock and lock put on. On the cars he fell in conversation with a party of three gentlemen from this city, when one of them, to test the reality of some of the extraordinary feats of the marksmanship he boasted of, offered him \$10 to repeat some of them, to which the other two added \$5 between them. The trial came off in an old field half a mile below Rocketts, and was witnessed by about a dozen persons. The old flint-lock was fired seven times, and only once missed its aim. The old gentleman, after making two shots at small objects to one side, to get his hand steady, as he said, handed his son a potato, and stationed him at fifty yards distance, holding the potato between his thumb and finger. The rifle cracked, and the potato fell cloven in three or four pieces. One of the larger pieces was then thrown into the air, the marksman keeping at the same distance, and again the shot told. An inch and a half auger was then produced, and a hole bored in the fence, behind which was fastened a piece of white paper. At a distance of sixty yards the marksman sent a ball clear through the aperture, piercing the paper. At a fourth shot, from sixty yards' distance, the bowl of a pipe, which the son was smoking, was crushed. At the fifth shot a copper cent was thrown into the air and hit. The sixth and seventh shots were delivered at a blackened five-cent nickel piece thrown up by the son, standing about thirty yards off. At the first attempt the shot missed. The old gentleman showed considerable mortification, and laid the blame upon a bystander who at the critical moment sneezed loudly. The next attempt, however, was an entire success. The old man declined any further trials of his skill, and when offered a sum of money to repeat his first feat of shooting a potato from his son's hand, he refused, saying he didn't care to try such experiments unless his weapon was freshly cleaned. The exhibition was the more remarkable from the fact that the marksman was an old man, at least fifty. His eye, however, is clear, bright gray. His appearance is that of a poor farmer. The young man showed not the least tremor or anxiety during the dangerous experiment upon himself. The old man, referring to his son, said, 'Bob can shoot just as well as I can.'"

A dutchman read somewhere that money doubled itself by compound interest every fourteen years, if it was put carefully away and left untouched. The guileless Hollander at once dug a hole in the cellar and buried four hundred dollars in a teakettle. This was fourteen years ago last Wednesday. On that day he rose at four o'clock in the morning and "resurrected" his cash, with the confident expectation that it had increased to eight hundred dollars. His disappointment was great; and when his friends interview him about mathematics now, he expresses the opinion that "dem arithmetics is all a lie!"