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The United States government is the greatest printer and publisher in the world. The number of publications issued annually amounts to about 2,500,000, of which about 600,000 are bound volumes.

Mr. Osborn, the only cocoanut planter in the United States, has recently received by ship from Africa 150,000 cocoanuts. These are to be planted this year along a strip of sea coast many miles in length, toward the southernmost point of Florida.

So well is the law enforced, says the Mobile *Register*, that, "while there are some Southern communities where the practice of carrying concealed weapons still obtains, the majority, including our own city, are troubled with only a few offenders of this kind."

Queen Victoria has received a present from the United States of a quarto volume, bound in sealskin, with linings of damask satin and a hand-painted inscription. The work is regarded as a triumph of American book-binding, and copies have been presented to the German emperor and the emperor of Russia. The queen's copy has been placed in the library at Windsor Castle.

There is a marked contrast between the temperature at the surface and in the depths of the mines on the famous Comstock lode, Virginia City, Nev. While severe winter weather is prevailing outside the heat is so intense in the lower levels of the mines that the workmen, who have no clothing on but overalls and heavy brogans to protect the feet, can work only for short intervals.

The introduction of large quantities of bogus butter and "oleo oil" in England has roused the dairymen of Great Britain to ask for legislation that shall insure the sale of the stuff upon its merits and for just what it is. Last year there were exported from this country nearly 40,000,000 pounds of bogus butter and oleo oil, and England received a share of it. There has been laid before the council of the British Dairy Farmers' association and referred to a special committee a bill providing that all imitations of butter "shall be called by names clearly and entirely distinguishable from the word 'butter,' and from any compound modification or derivation of the word;" that all manufactories of bogus butter in Great Britain shall be registered; that bogus butter shall not be colored in imitation of real butter, and that the bogus products shall be sold under their right names.

The possibilities in the way of the utilization of steam, it may be assumed, are pretty well ascertained. It has been of incalculable value in bringing civilization to its present point; but we do not expect any new developments from it. But the possibilities of electricity no one can gauge. New phases of its usefulness are being demonstrated with great rapidity. The power to send messages by induction from fast moving railroad trains is the latest valuable discovery that is entering upon common use. This is done by throwing the words through the air, as it were, to the wires which take them to their destination, and the process is reversible. Mr. Edison says that they can be thrown thus nearly six hundred feet, and through balloons, at an elevation of a little over three thousand feet, twenty-five miles. There is so much of the unknown quantity still about electricity that it would be a rash undertaking to define its limits as a servant to man.

In a recent lecture Professor Sumner expounded his views on the subject of socialism, which he regards as one of the most important questions of the present day. He is opposed on economic grounds to every form of socialism except that where co-operation is voluntary. The co-operative commonwealth, which is the system that modern socialistic reformers are advocating, where every one would be compelled to co-operate, he regards as a tyranny and a system that could never under any circumstances be established so long as human nature remains what it has been in the past history of the world and is to-day. The progress of the race within the last century has been greater than in any 1,000 years previously, owing to the invention of labor-saving machinery and the discoveries of modern science. He says that modern civilization has make probably 50,000,000 of the 1,500,000,000 people on the globe to-day comparatively well off, and adds that the socialists want to wipe out what little progress has been made because the whole work of civilization has not been accomplished and made them all well off. Things must be left to adjust themselves naturally, he thinks.

It is estimated that one-half of al American men above the age of thirty are partially bald; and, as this characteristic is one of those most likely to be transmitted from father to son, it is fair to suppose that a few generations hence adult Americans with hair on their pate will be rare. The excessive mental activity of our people is believed to be the chief cause of this baldness; but a medical authority advises against wearing the hat so continuously, as many men do, and the wearing at any time of an unventilated hat.

A comparative table of the strengths of the merchant navies of the world, which has just been published in France, shows that Great Britain possesses 22,500 trading vessels, with an aggregate tonnage of 11,200,000. Of these vessels 4,649 are steamers, with a tonnage of 5,919,000 tons, or rather more than half the grand total of burden. The United States makes a very bad second, with 6,600 sail and 2,700,000 tons. Norway has 4,200 vessels, with 1,500,000 tons, and Germany, which comes next, has 3,000 sail, with a total of 1,400,000 tons; France, Italy and Russia bring up the rear, each with less than 3,000 vessels.

The powerful and enduring influence exerted upon American "heirs" by stories about enormous estates in England to which they are entitled is again shown by the fact that 300 of the Lawrence-Townley "heirs" held a meeting in Detroit and indignantly rejected as unworthy of belief the statement procured from our minister to Great Britain that there is in England no Lawrence-Townley estate, nor any known family of that description, and that there is a Townley estate which has been held for a long time by its proprietors, who are protected by law, and against whom no one offers any claim. Owing, however, to this statement, the lawyers appear to have changed the name and location of the property, although its value remains at the old sum of $800,000,000. Once it was the Chase estate, then the Chase-Townley, and the Lawrence-Townley. Hereafter it is to be the Peregrine-Edward-Townley estate, and th "heirs" are to be represented by William H. Stewart and S. H. Blake, of Toronto. The vigor of the association which the "heirs" have formed affords a remarkable example of the credulity of persons who probably exercise prudence and common sense in their private affairs, but who really believe that they can get possession of this "estate," which lies on the surface of the moon, and in no other place.

The luxurious New Yorker is apt to know very little of the miseries of his fellow townsmen, says a correspondent of the Cincinnati *Enquirer*. Two men were smoking one afternoon in the Union League club. One was William Waldorf Astor, who had just been elected a vice-president of that wealthy organization, and the other was Tom Saunders, a fellow member. Their cigars suggested to them the cigarmakers' lock-out. Their weed was of domestic brand, and Astor suggested that it would be interesting to find out by whom, how and where those very cigars had been rolled. Dr. Hammond was present, and he declared that, if all the relations of mind to matter were perfect, it would be actually possible to see in the smoke that was curling upward views of the manufacture of cigars. His theory was scarcely demonstratable or refutable; but it was possible to see the scenes in all tangibility, and the next day was devoted to the freak of doing so. By tracing the cigars from wholesaler to retailer, thence to the manufacturer, and finally to the original worker, the investigators finally got into an upper tenement in Marion street, which is a thoroughfare of poverty. Therein lived a family of Polish Jews, whom the stoppage of employment had already plunged into abject want. They got some dollars from their visitors, and that is all the knob there is to the story, unless something of a climax of interest was reached in the knowledge that the cigars for which the millionaire had paid twenty-five cents apiece had not cost in wages and materials more than four.

Of the Earth.

He was mashed on fair Finetta,
From the moment he first met her;
So exceeding
Her high breeding,
And her proud patrician way;
And he soon upon her waited,
His fond love reciprocated;
And this sappy
Was as happy
As the brightest summer day.

But one day the youth benighted,
Out to dinner her invited,
And 'tis bootless,
Idle, fruitless,
To attempt his grief to tell,
When she ordered salt-cod shredded,
Liver, cabbage, pork-chops breaded,
Mashed potatoes,
Stewed tomatoes,
And clams fried in crumbs as well!

LIFE IS TOO BRIEF.

Life is too brief—it seems to me—
To fight, fall out or disagree;
To fret the heart and waste one's time
In warring words or angry rhyme;
To mourn fond hopes before they flee.

To sit with folded hands—to see
The nether side continually:
Reproach a smile—Is mirth a crime?
Life is too brief.

Calm, kind, serene and peaceful be,
And, growing passe gracefully,
Accept time's kindly frost and rime,
The heart be merry as a chime;
Nor banish joy and jollity—
Life is too brief.

—*Robert O. Fowler, in Detroit Free Press.*

MY FRIEND MEURTRIER.

I.

I was at one time employed in a government office. Every day from 10 until 4 o'clock I became a voluntary prisoner in a depressing office, adorned with yellow pasteboard boxes and filled with the musty odor of old papers. There I breakfasted on Italian cheese and apples which I roasted at the grate; I read the morning papers, even to the advertisements; I rhymed verses, and I attended to the affairs of state to the extent of drawing, at the end of each month, a salary which barely kept me from starving.

I recall to-day one of my companions in captivity at that epoch. He was called Achille Meurtrier, and certainly his fierce look and his tall form seemed to warrant that name. He was a great, big fellow, about forty years old, without too much chest or shoulders, but who wore felt hats with wide brims, short, but ample coats, large plaid trousers, and red neckties under rolling collars. He wore a full beard, long hair, and was very proud of his hairy hands. The chief boast of Meurtrier, otherwise the best and most amiable of companions, was to trifle with an athletic constitution, to possess the biceps of a prize-fighter, and, as he said himself, not to know his own strength. He never made a gesture even in the exercise of his peaceable profession that did not have for its object to convince the spectators of his prodigious vigor. Did he have to take from its case an empty pasteboard box, he advanced toward the shelf with the heavy step of a street porter, grasped the box solidly with a tight hand, and carried it with a stiff arm as far as the next table with a shrugging of shoulders and frowning of brow worthy of Milo of Crotona. He carried this manner so far that he never used less apparent effort even to lift the lightest objects, and one day when he held in his right hand a basket of old papers I saw him extend his left arm horizontally as if to make a counterpoise to the tremendous weight.

I ought to say that this robust creature inspired me with a profound respect, for I was then, even more than to-day, physically weak and delicate, and in consequence filled with admiration for that energetic physique which I lacked.

The conversations of Meurtrier were not of a nature to diminish the admiration with which he inspired me. Above all, in the summer, on Monday mornings, when he had returned to the office after our holiday, he had an inexhaustible fund of stories concerning his adventures and feats of strength. After having taken off his felt hat, his coat, and his vest, and having wiped the perspiration from his forehead with the sleeve of the shirt to indicate his sanguine and ardent temperament, he would thrust his hands deep in the pockets of his trousers, and, standing near me in an attitude of perpendicular solidity, begin a monologue something follows:

"What a day, my boy! Positively no fatigue can lay me up. Think of it. Yesterday was the regatta at Joinville-le-Pont. At 6 o'clock in the morning the rendezvous at Bercy for the crew of the Marsouin; the sun is up; we jump into our rowing-suits, and seize the oar and give way—one-two, one-two—as far as Joinville; then overboard for a swim before breakfast; strip to swimming drawers, a jump overboard, and lookout for squalls. After my bath I have the appetite of a tiger. Good. I seize the boat by one hand, and call out, 'Charpentier, pass me a small ham.' Three motions in one time, and I have finished it to the bone. 'Charpentier, pass me the flask.' Three swallows, and it is empty."

So the description would continue—dazzling, Homeric.

"The hour for the regatta—noon, the sun just overhead. The boats draw up in line on the river before a tent gaudy with streamers. On the bank of the mayor, with his scarf of office, gendarmes in yellow shoulder-belts, and a swarm of summer dresses, open parasols and straw hats. Bang! The signal gun is fired, the Marsouin shoots forward of her competitors and gains the first prize, and no fatigue. We dine at Creteil. How cool the evening in the dusky arbor; pipes glow in the darkness, and moths singe their wings in the flame of the omelette au kirsch. At the end of a dessert served on decorated plates we hear from the ball-room the call of the cornet. Take places for the quadrille! But already a rival crew, beaten that same morning, has monopolized the prettiest girls. A fight! teeth broken, eyes blackened, ugly falls and whacks below the belt; in a word, a poem of physical enthusiasm, of noisy hilarity, of animal spirits; without speaking of the return at midnight on crowded platforms, with girls whom we lift into the cars, friends separated, calling from one end of train to the other, and fellows playing a horn upon the roof."

And the evenings of my astonishing companion were not less full of adventure than his holidays. Collar and elbow wrestling in a tent under the red light of torches, between him, simple amateur, and Dubois, the iron-man in person—rat chases near the mouth of sewers with dogs as fierce as tigers—sanguinary encounters at night in the most dangerous quarters with ruffians and nose-eaters—were the most insignificant episodes of his nightly career. Nor do I dare relate other adventures of a more intimate character, from which, as the writers of an earlier day would say in noble style, a pen the least timorous would recoil with horror.

However painful it may be to confess an unworthy sentiment, I am obliged to say that my admiration for Meurtrier was not unmixed with regret and bitterness, perhaps with envy. But the recitation of his most marvelous exploits had never awakened in me the least feeling of incredulity, and Achille Meurtrier easily took his place in my mind among heroes and demigods, between Roland and Pirithous.

II.

At this time I was a great wanderer in the suburbs, and I occupied the leisure of my summer evenings by solitary walks in those distant regions, as unknown to the Parisians of the boulevards as the country of the Caribbees, and of whose somber charm I endeavored later to tell in verse.

An evening in July, hot and dusty, at the hour when the first gas-lights were beginning to twinkle in the misty twilight, I was walking slowly from Vaugirard, through one of those long and depressing suburban streets lined on each side by houses of unequal height, whose porters and portresses in shirt sleeves and calico sat on the steps and imagined that they were taking the fresh air. Hardly anyone passing in the whole street; perhaps a mason, white with plaster, a sergeant de ville, a child carrying home a four-pound loaf larger than himself, or a young girl hurrying on in hat and cloak with a leather bag on her arm, and every quarter hour the half-empty omnibus coming back to its place of departure with the heavy trot of its tired horses.

Stumbling now and then on the pavement, for asphalt is an unknown luxury in these places, I went down the street, tasting all the charms of a stroller. Sometimes I stopped before an enclosure to watch through the broken boards the fading glories of the setting sun, and the black silhouettes of the chimneys thrown against a greenish sky. Sometimes through an open window on the ground floor I caught sight of an interior, picturesque and familiar; here a jolly-looking laundress holding her flat-iron to her cheek; there workmen sitting at tables and smoking in the ground floor of a cabaret, while an old Bohemian, standing before them, sang something about liberty, accompanying himself on an old guitar.

Suddenly I stopped.

One of these personal pictures had caught my eye by its domestic and charming simplicity. She looked so happy and peaceful in her simple little room, the dear old lady in her black dress and widow's cap, leaning back in an easy chair covered with green Utrecht velvet, and sitting quietly with her hands folded on her lap. Everything around her was so old, and seemed to have been preserved, less through a wise economy than on account of hallowed memories, since the honeymoon with monsieur of the high complexion, in a frock coat and flowered waistcoat, whose oval crayon ornamented the wall. By two lamps on the mantel shelf every detail of the old-fashioned furniture could be distinguished, from a clock on a fish of artificial and painted marble to the old and antiquated piano, on which, without doubt, as a young girl, with leg of mutton sleeves and with her hair dressed a la Grecque she played the airs of Romagnesi.

Certainly a loved and only daughter, remained unmarried through her affection for her mother, piously watched over the last years of the widow. It was she, I was sure, who had so tenderly placed her dear mother, she who had put the ottoman under her feet, she who had placed her near the inlaid table and arranged on it the water and two cups. I expected already to see her coming in, carrying the evening coffee, the sweet, calm girl, who should be dressed in mourning like the widow and resemble her very much.

Absorbed by the contemplation of a scene so sympathetic, and by the pleasure of imagining that humble poem, remained standing some steps from the open window, sure of not being noticed in the dusky street, when I saw a door open and there appeared—oh! how far he was from my thoughts at that moment—my friend Meurtrier himself, the formidable hero of tilts on the river and frays in unknown places.

A sudden doubt crossed me. I felt that I was on a point of discovering a mystery.

It was he indeed. His terrible hairy hand held a tiny silver coffee-pot, and he was followed by a poodle which greatly embarrassed his steps—a valiant and classic poodle, the poodle of blind clarionet-players, a poor beggar's poodle, a poodle clipped like a lion, with hairy ruffles on his four paws, and a white mustache like a general of the gymnase.

"Mamma," said the giant in a tone of ineffable tenderness, "here's your coffee. I am sure that you will find it nice to-night. The water was boiling well, and I poured it on drop by drop."

"Thank you," said the old lady, rolling her easy chair to the table with an air; "thank you, my little Achille. Your dear father said many a time that there was not my equal at making coffee—he was so kind and indulgent, the dear good man—but I begin to believe that you are even better than me."

At that moment, and while Meurtrier was pouring out the coffee with all the delicacy of a young girl, the poodle, excited no doubt by the uncovered sugar, placed his forepaws on the lap of his mistress.

"Down, Medor!" she cried, with a benevolent indignation. "Did anyone ever see such a troublesome animal? Look here, sir! you know very well that your master never fails to give you the last of his cup. By the way," said the widow, addressing her son, "you have taken the poor fellow out, have you not?"

"Certainly, mamma," he replied, in a tone that was almost infantile. "I have just been to the creamery for your morning milk, and I put the leash and collar on Medor and took him with me."

Reassured on this point, important to canine hygiene, the good dame drank her coffee, between her son and her dog, who each regarded her with an inexpressible tenderness.

It was assuredly unnecessary to see or hear more. I had already divined what a peaceful family life, upright, pure and devoted, my friend Meurtrier had under his chimerical gasconades. But the spectacle with which chance had favored me was at once so droll and so touching that I could not resist the temptation to watch for some moments longer; that indiscretion sufficed to show me the whole truth.

"Yes, this type of roisterers, this athlete, this despot of bar-rooms and public houses, performed, simply and courageously, in these lowly rooms in the suburbs, the sublime duties of a sister of charity. This intrepid oarsman had never made a longer voyage than to conduct his mother to church every Sunday. This trainer of bull-dogs was the submissive slave of a poodle.

III.

Next morning on arriving at the office I asked Meurtrier how he had employed the previous evening, and he instantly improvised, without the least hesitation, an account of a sharp encounter on the boulevard, where he had knocked down with a single blow of his fist, having passed his thumb through the ring of his keys, a terrible street rough.

I listened, smiling ironically, and thinking to confound him; but, remembering how respectable a virtue is which is hidden even under an absurdity, I struck him on the shoulder, and said with conviction: "Meurtrier, you are a hero."

—*From the French.*

Poppy Culture.

It is probable that very few owners of flower gardens are aware that the poppies cultivated merely for ornament will produce opium. When the flower petals have fallen, leaving the seed capsule bare, if an incision be made in that body, a sticky juice will exude. This juice is opium. It varies in certain chemical qualities, according to the country in which it is cultivated, and the variety of plant from which it is produced.

Although the plant will grow in almost any climate, it is in India that it is most satisfactorily cultivated, the opium revenue of that country being derived from two sources, those of Malwa and those of Bengal.

When the land has been plowed and harrowed, the poppy seed is sown at the end of October, or the beginning of November. Six pounds of seed are sufficient for the third of an acre. As soon as it begins to germinate, as it does in a week after sowing, the land is divided by furrows into rectangular beds, about eight feet in length by four in breadth. These channels are used for irrigation, as the plants need frequent watering, sometimes requiring it until the crop is matured. About seventy-five days after germination, the flower appears, and its four petals are gently removed, on the third day after their expansion, to be pasted together with the leaves destined to form the outer shell of the opium cake. In course of eight or ten days, the capsules are lanced at night, and the juice which has exuded from the incisions is scraped off in the morning, with a small scoop, and transferred to a metal or earthen vessel. This process is three or four times repeated, at intervals of two or three days, and the result is crude opium. The bower petals and the plant leaves and stalks have also a considerable value for packing purposes; the thicker portion of the stalks are used by the peasants for fire-wood. The crude opium, having been gathered, is stored by the cultivator, and watched, that it may remain free from mold or taint.

At the end of March, or the beginning of April, when the weather is furiously hot in Bengal, the cultivators, carrying their opium, obey a summons calling them to meet the deputy agent of their village. There the opium is tested, paid for, and taken into the possession of the government. Finally the opium paste is made into cakes, dried, packed in boxes, and removed to Calcutta, for sale by auction.—*Youth's Companion.*

Sky-High Millionaires.

The young Vanderbilts—I mean Cornelius and William K., the present heads of the family—have "gone at it" as if they meant to double the fortunes their father left them right speedily, writes a New York correspondent of the Cincinnati *Commercial Gazette*. Indeed, I don't see how they can help it. Cornelius Vanderbilt is forty now, and he is worth, I suppose, at least, $80,000,000, perhaps more. This, at compound interest, should double every twelve years, which would make it no less than $640,000,000 when Cornelius is seventy-six. It would increase a good deal faster than that at the interest which he is to-day receiving on his stock and bonds, but there will come panics, reverses, perhaps, and he cannot safely count on making more than $460,000,000 in thirty-six years. Cornelius is first vice-president of the New York Central railroad and head of finance; William K., is second vice-president and master of transportation.

There are 331 of the Passamaquoddy Indians now in Maine, all of whom are farmers.

AN EASTERN APOLOGUE.

Melik, the Sultan, tired and wan,
Nodded at noon on his divan.

Beside the fountain lingered near
Jamil, the bard, and the vizier—

Old Yusuf, sour and hard to please.
Then Jamil sang in words like these:

Slim is Butheina—slim is she
As the boughs of the Araka tree!

"Nay," quoth the other, teeth between,
"Lean, if you will—I call her lean."

Sweet is Butheina—sweet as wine,
With smiles that like red bubbles shine!

"True—by the Prophet!" Yusuf said;
"She makes men wander in the head!"

Dear is Butheina—ah! more dear
Than all the maidens of Kashmeer!

"Dear," came the answer, quick as thought—
"Dear—and yet always to be bought."

So Jamil ceased. But still life's page
Shows diverse unto Youth and Age:

And—be the song of ghouls or gods—
Time—like the Sultan, sits, and nods.

—*Austin Dobson.*

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Business in astronomical circles is looking up.

The latest instance of absence of mind—The dude.

The heaviest mash on record was when truth was crushed to earth.—*New York Journal.*

It seems a little strange that when we are tired we can best rest easy by retiring.—*Merchant-Traveler.*

In Missouri they call a brass-band concert a success when the leader escapes with his life.—*Puck.*

Lemonade may help a man along fairly well, but it is the "stick" in it that causes him to stumble.—*Life.*

"All men are born free and equal," but the difficulty is that some are born equal to half a dozen others.—*Life.*

The "fresh" young man finds considerable difficulty in earning his salt because he needs so much of it.—*New York Journal.*

A student of human nature says anything can be sharpened. Put a lead pencil in a woman's hands and see.—*Binghamton Republican.*

The end of the week comes rolling 'round
And brings the only chance,
For Mary Ann to take the time
To mend her hubby's pants.

—*Kaleidoscope.*

Architecture is called "frozen music," but some buildings look as if the orchestra had been struck with a heavy frost when they were tuning their instruments.—*Boston Bulletin.*

PATIENCE PERSONIFIED.

He never spoke a word;
But with a look of deepest melancholy
He sat, like Patience, on an ottoman,
Watching for his wife to put her bonnet on.

—*Lynn Item.*

"Mr. Smith," asked the professor of natural history, "which animal exhibits the greatest susceptibility for attaching itself to the human race?" Smith reflects; "Ah—er—r—rer—I think the leech, professor."—*New York Mail.*

"Does your wife talk in her sleep?" asked one married man of another one day when they they were comparing notes. "I don't lie awake to see," replied the heartless husband; "but she talks all the rest of the time, so I rather guess she does.—*Somerville Journal.*

"Ah!" remarked a young rat, as the steel trap closed on his leg, "I was afraid we would have a cold snap before morning." "True," said a wise cat, who happened along, "and we may now look for considerable activity in the fur market." And, sure enough, the fur began to fly at once.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

SHE WOULD.

Deep in her eyes of bonnie blue
I saw the love light shine;
"Sweet love," I softly asked, "will you
Be mine?"

She raised her head and breathed a sigh—
Her eyes with tears are wet,
And blushingly she made reply,
"You bet."

Money's Worth.

"Does it ever occur to you," said a cash bookkeeping man to his friend, "how much more you are getting for your money now than when we began on $15 a week, twelve or thirteen years ago? Look at it. You had to dress then pretty nearly as well as you do now. I will venture to say you couldn't get a pair of trousers then that suited you for less than $10 or $15; you get the same thing now for $8 to $10, and you can get for $5 trousers that would have cost at least $10 then. The suit you had to pay $40 to $50 for then costs you $30 to-day. You can buy all the New York papers—if you are a newspaper man and read news wholesale—for twelve or fourteen cents, and the bundle left nothing of a quarter then. As for books—well, there weren't at books that cost less than $1 in 1872, and now a dollar bill covers a fairish library. Just look at the way good ready-made shoes have come down in price, and as for shirts and good underclothing, you ought to find out what they cost 'before the panic.'" "Well," rejoined the non-cash bookkeeping man, who promptly gave up these conundrums in price, "what I want to know is what becomes of the money I am unconsciously saving?" "You had better go home and look around and try and remember how barn houses were before 1876 brought in art decoration, for one thing; and for another, notice that you see top dress-coats where there was one a dozen years ago. You are living better for the same money, my boy. That is all."—*Philadelphia Press.*

Queen Marguerita, of Italy, makes regular visits to the charitable asylums named in her honor.