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The railroads of the United States have cost nearly ten billions of dollars.

Some of the largest ocean steamers can be converted into armed cruisers in thirty hours.

There are four natives of Georgia and seven of Kentucky in the United States Senate. New York furnishes eight and Ohio six.

The report that the Panama syndicate has been rehabilitated is not borne out by the facts. Employees and merchants are leaving the Isthmus and everything is at a standstill.

Miss Kate Hilliard, in a paper read before the New York Theosophists, speaking of hypnotism, says that no one while under the influence has ever been induced to surrender a vital secret. Many experiments have been tried with this intent, but without success.

A New York confidence man says that he and his fellows victimize more city men than hayseeds. The rural visitor, when he comes to town, is suspicious and on his guard, while the city man, who thinks he knows it all, is a much easier victim. Besides he does not run to the police when he is "pinched."

A writer in Harper's Weekly, in eulogizing James M. Bailey, of Danbury, Mass., tells us that the Danbury News man would never allow an article reflecting upon the private life of any individual or likely to wound any person's sensibilities, to be published. He preferred that his journal should chronicle the good deeds of his townspeople, rather than record their weaknesses and failures.

Canada promises to offer notable treasures to future historians of this continent. The Archives Department at Ottawa now presents for reference 1299 volumes of original correspondence, and many hundreds of copies of documents bearing upon the history of the New England colonies, Acadia, French Canada and the more western regions. The British War Office handed over to the Department some time ago eight tons of valuable historical material, comprising 400,000 official documents.

All Europe seems to the New York Times to have the exhibition fever, and some sort of world's fair is to be held in every European capital during this year. And the epidemic is spreading farther afield. Alexandria is preparing a national exhibition of ancient and modern Egypt, to be open in that city during the coming summer. It is to be a complete exposition of the modern life, social, industrial, and artistic of the land of the Pharaohs, and also of much of the country's wondrous past.

Chemistry seems likely to furnish substitutes for the expensive perfumes now made from flowers, predicts the New York Sun. It has long been known that the exact odor of the banana is produced in the laboratory. There seems a possibility, however, that even when some fragrant plants cease to be cultivated for the perfumes many may become of importance in surgery. It has been discovered that some such plants are free from the attacks of insects and from fungus growths, and this may be due to the fact that their essential oils have antiseptic qualities. The eucalyptus yields an antiseptic, and so do other familiar plants.

Says the New York Observer: We do not know how many hundred thousand times the old adage that "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing," has been repeated, but we think it is about time that some one should give us as condensed a suggestion of the possible evil effects of great knowledge. It is not at all certain that the wonderful knowledge achieved in the scientific world, which enables men to make such deadly munitions of war as are now produced, is a blessing to mankind. The London Spectator calls attention to the fact that the new explosive of anarchy could not have been created without the diffusion of chemical knowledge. A burglar can use chloroform in his nefarious pursuit quite as successfully as a surgeon can relieve pain with it. Much of the crime of the day is committed by persons of education, whose resources in that respect aid them in their operations. The conclusion to be reached in the matter is, that knowledge, like all other good things, needs to be sanctified, in order to be put to the highest use for the blessing of mankind and to prevent its perversion. Knowledge is power for good or evil, if good then only because of the existence of something better that holds it by the reins.

THE NEW DAWN.

An hour ago we said good-by, My dream and I; The golden voice that promised me Love, light, fruition, ecstasy, Is silenced quite, And it is night. Night, while the rent clouds fret the moon, And waters croon Beneath the fatal, running breeze That wakes a message in the trees: "Patience—and pray— Till comes the day." The day is here, the azure day, A day in May! How can I grieve while Nature sings? The robins' call prophetic rings The one refrain, "You'll dream again!" —Kate Jordan, in Lippincott.

THE OLD STONE BELFRY.

BY FRANCIS C. WILLIAMS.

COME here, "Ralph," said Mr. Kline as he wearily dropped into a chair in the kitchen, "you'll have to ring the bell to-night; I'm clean played out. The rheumatism's got me again. I lighted up the church and turned the lamps low before I came home, but as for going back again to-night, I can't do it." "All right, I'll do it," replied Ralph, a sturdy boy of fifteen. "All I'll have to do will be to turn up the lights and ring the bell twice, I suppose."

Mr. Kline had been the sexton and bell-ringer of the old stone church for twenty years, and Ralph Kline had many a time been with him when he opened the church for service, and even had helped him ring the bell. Therefore, though the church was a quarter of a mile from the nearest house, it was with no hesitation that he started out after supper. A bright moon lit up everything and made the snow sparkle as if strewn with diamonds.

Arrived at the church he pulled the big key from his pocket, unlocked and opened the door and walked in. The body of the church, which was not large, was dimly lit by a dozen lamps, which Ralph speedily turned up so that the building was cheerful in a glow of light. Then he walked to the vestry, and opening a small door at one side, glanced at the nickel clock which was suspended on the wall. "Five minutes of seven!" he exclaimed to himself. "Time I was ringing!"

The bell at the church was always rung twice, with a period between of ten minutes. Most of the congregation lived at a distance—a quarter of a mile to a mile or more away. So a "warning bell," as it was called, was rung at five minutes of seven, in the evening, when services began at half past seven, and a second bell at ten minutes after seven. Thus every one within hearing distance of the church had ample time to make ready if they wished to attend.

Ralph closed the door of the tower-room and took off his coat. By lamp-light, the bell-rope seemed like some great snake stretching down from above where the darkness hid everything. But Ralph was too accustomed to the interior of the place to think of this. He reached up and took a firm grasp on the rope, threw his weight upon it, and slowly sank toward the floor.

The bell, which was a big one, hung in a cradle, and the bell rope, passing up into the belfry, was fastened to the groove of a large wheel which, when turned by a pull on the rope, rocked the bell and threw the iron tongue against its sides. The bell was very heavy, and it took a couple of vigorous pulls, even when Mr. Kline himself had hold of the rope, to bring any sound forth.

Twice Ralph pulled and hung upon the rope before the cradle began to move perceptibly. Even then the bell did not ring, and the boy threw all his strength and weight into a third effort. As he did so, it seemed to him that the rope came toward him much more quickly than it should, and then, before he could let go, it suddenly loosened up above and fell in great spirals to the floor. Fortunately none of the heavy coils struck him; but it gave him a big start, notwithstanding, and he jumped quickly to one side. There he stood staring up into the darkness, and wondering what could have happened. Then, realizing that the only way to learn was to go up into the belfry and investigate, he picked up a lantern which stood in a corner, and lighting it at the lamp, started up the ladder which led to the tower above.

above. Apparently, it was all right. It seemed to run properly enough through the hole in the flooring on which he stood. He was about to go down the ladder again to discover where the break had occurred when a draft of air stirred the rope, and, as it moved, he saw that it did not go through the hole at all. It came to an end just where it reached the floor.

Ralph placed the lantern beside him and bent down to examine the rope. It seemed to have been severed by some jagged edge, for it was torn and frayed, and bits of hemp strayed the floor near by. He concluded that it must have been worn through by rubbing against the sides of the hole through which it had originally passed.

While he was looking at it he was startled by a sharp squeak at his very elbow. He glanced quickly about, and a bright spark in a dark corner of the belfry caught his eye. He picked up the lantern and swung it in front of him, and a small gray animal darted under a beam. It was a rat.

All at once, Ralph recollected that the old belfry was said to be infested with those animals, and, raising himself, he turned to go. As he did so, his foot struck the edge of a floor board and he fell, knocking the lantern over and instantly extinguishing the light.

Somewhat startled now, for the first time, he groped about for the trap door, but could not find it. The moonlight, which came from above, lost itself in the narrow tower, and where he lay it was almost entirely dark. At last, however, his hand came in contact with something which he knew was the trap door; but, even as he touched it, it fell with a bang! He nervously tried to raise it again; but in vain. The door was flush with the floor about it, and there was no ring bolt or projection by which to secure a hold on it.

While Ralph was struggling to get a finger beneath the trap door, the same sharp squeak which had startled him before sounded again, and this time it was almost immediately echoed from half a dozen other places.

As he turned about, in every direction there shone in the darkness tiny sparks of light. Ralph knew that these were the eyes of rats. One, or even a couple of the animals he would not have feared. But a dozen of them, boldly surrounding him in this way in the darkness, sent a shiver down his back. He noted, too, that they did not seem afraid of him, though he banged on the floor and yelled at them. Instead, they grew bolder as their numbers increased, and one of them presently darted across his foot.

Ralph now sprang to his feet and rushed at the enemy. Those in front of him at once retreated, as he could tell by the disappearance of their eyes. But as he moved several jumped at him from behind, and one fastened its teeth in his leg. He kicked wildly at this, and the rat was thrown to one side. Another instantly sprang at him, and then a half-dozen at once, a couple of the vicious little animals fastening themselves in his clothes.

Ralph whirled about, dashing his assailants off for a moment. It was only for a moment, however, for he was attacked again immediately, and this time more fiercely than before. Thoroughly terrified now, he yelled loudly, and kicked and struck out with fists and feet indiscriminately. But no answer came to his cries. The walls of the tower echoed his voice and the squeaks and squeals of the rats; but that was all.

Something struck Ralph in the face. Instinctively he made a pass at it with his hand, thinking it was a rat. But his fingers came in contact with the bell rope, which shook with the blow, then swayed into his face again.

At the second blow an idea came to him. He reached out quickly with both hands and grasped the rope and pulled himself from the floor. Then, with one tremendous kick, he shook off the last of the rats which clung to him, and, hand over hand, raised himself a half-dozen feet into the air. The rope slowly descended with his weight as the wheel slowly revolved. The bell at last struck a solitary, muffled note as the tongue fell against its edge. Then it was silent, remaining tilted in the air, and, as Ralph rested.

work, for the rope was thick and heavy, but when it was done, and he held the rope so that it could not slip, he found he had a fairly comfortable seat.

He now hung some three feet below the cross beams, and, thought the rope rose and fell gently for a few minutes, as the cradle above slightly rocked with his motions, no sound came from the bell. There were no sudden pulls on the rope, and consequently the tongue of the bell remained motionless against the bell's edge.

Ralph was content to rest in this way for several minutes. Then a blast of icy wind sweeping down upon his shoulders warned him that he could not remain long where he was. Swung in midair, without a coat, he would shortly freeze!

But would any help come? It seemed unlikely, since only his own family knew that he was at the church, and they would not think it strange if he did not return for a couple of hours.

Neither was it likely that anyone would think of coming up into the belfry, unless they should happen to go into the room below and see the fallen rope. Of course there was a chance of this, since there would be curiosity doubtless as to why the bell had failed to ring as usual.

Ralph determined that something must be done to attract attention to his place of imprisonment at once. He knew it was useless to call. His voice, cooped up between the narrow walls of the high belfry, would never be heard outside, yell as loudly as he might.

He looked about wildly, and just then a shaft of moonlight gleamed on the curved side of the bell. The bell—why had he not thought of it before! He reached up quickly, and, after a little effort, succeeded in grasping one of the beams overhead. Then he began swaying on the rope. He had an insecure hold, but within a few minutes his heart leaped as a deep boom rang out from the bell. Harder and harder he worked, and the notes of alarm followed close upon each other. Soon the old bell was ringing out a wild peal and the timbers under his hand vibrated with its movement.

Suddenly, through the clangor of the bell he heard the sound of voices. Then a light shot up from up the open trap door, and a voice called out to know what was the matter. There was a note of alarm in the question; for, this bell ringing, apparently without hands, was enough to make anyone a bit fearful.

Ralph quickly told them how matters stood. He added in warning: "Look out for the rats!" The man below held a lantern high above his head, and then crawled upon the floor, immediately followed by a companion.

Ralph recognized the men as neighbors, and soon descended stiff and cold from his awkward perch. No rats were to be seen. Frightened by the light and the presence of so many persons, the vicious little beasts had retreated.

Ralph did not wait to investigate more. Once down the ladder he told his story to the startled congregation, which had nearly all assembled, and then hurried home. To this day, however, he never looks at the old stone belfry without a shudder.—St. Louis Republic.

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

There is an electric doorstep. Paper belting has been invented. Only about 6000 stars are visible to the naked eye.

There are 23,000 species of fishes, one-tenth of which inhabit fresh water. Scientists are of the opinion that some icebergs last for two hundred years.

It is pointed out that one-legged men usually grow fat possibly from lack of exercise. In the parrot's beak both mandibles are movable—a peculiarity unknown in other species of birds.

A section of a California tree sent to the British Museum, London, is 1330 years old, according to its rings. Plenty of water is reported to supply a good level for the proposed canal between Lake Superior and the Mississippi.

An eminent anatomist says that more of the ill health of women is due to their habit of cramping their feet than is realized. There are 187 pounds of salt in a ton of water from the Dead Sea. In the Atlantic the amount is eighty-one pounds to every ton.

At one year old the infant alligator is twelve inches long. He is fifteen before he doubles that length and he does not attain his maximum development until the age of fifty. The little snow bird of the Sierra is no bigger than a wren, but he is as strong as the sturdy petrel, and fits about in infinite glee when the wind is blowing fifty miles an hour.

A medical man has found out that a dismal weather has a bad effect upon the reasoning powers as well as upon the spirits. He says his deductions made on cloudy days often prove to be faulty.

To make animals unconscious before slaughtering is considered humane in Bern, Switzerland. A test was recently made there by legal enactment, and it took six quarts of alcohol to render an ox unfeelingly drunk.

United States Consul General Mason at Frankfurt, Germany, in a report to the State Department, suggests that our fruit preservers try the new fruit syrup made from beet sugar and chemically identical with natural fruit sugar.

There were many expressions of wonder by persons who chanced to be out in a rainstorm at Pocatello, Idaho. The rain had a peculiar whiteness and left white spots on the clothing, like mud. They were examined and found to be the residuum of salt water.

One secret of the willow's marvelous tenacity of life is to be found, perhaps, in the fact that it sends its roots a long way in search of moisture. It was discovered, after an important aqueduct had caved in, that its walls were cracked and filled for many feet with roots. These roots, it was discovered, came from willows at least thirty feet distant.

ARMY AND NAVY UNIFORMS.

Officers' outfits are expensive and change is costly.

The Latest Fad is Whistles for the Army—Changes That Have Been Made—Items of Cost.

THE latest fad of Major-General Schofield is the army officer's whistle. The officer has gone forth that every infantry officer must equip himself with this useful article, and that it must be done in the hit of his sword. This is done "for the good of the service," and the necessary alterations will be made at the Springfield (Mass.) armory, but not at General Schofield's expense or at the expense of the Government. When the general commanding the army gets a notion that the service will be improved by a change in an officer's uniform or equipment, the officers of the army must pay for it. If General Schofield ordered a change in the regulation coat of the army officer to-morrow or in the regulation shoulder strap, the officers would have to throw aside the old coat or the old shoulder strap and equip themselves anew. The same rule holds in the navy.

An officer's outfit is expensive. The army outfit costs at the very lowest \$180. Very few officers would be satisfied with an \$180 outfit. It is made of cheap cloth, poorly finished. It is "regulation" and the commanding officer would have to pass it. But an officer would feel very mean in one of these outfits at an official reception. From \$180 the cost of the outfit ranges up to \$350. Most of the difference is in the cost of the material of the uniform.

A naval officer's outfit costs even more. At the Navy Department they say that in round numbers a "good" outfit will cost \$450. There are 1410 officers in the navy on the active list. If the Navy Department took a notion to alter the character of the uniform and equipment of its officers so radically that the present outfit would be useless, it would cost \$634,500 to make the change. All of this would come out of the pockets of the officers themselves. It is very well to make officers pay for their own outfits, but they cannot see the justice of paying for changes which depend on the whims of a superior officer and which benefit no one but Uncle Sam.

It would not be a novelty for the War Department to order a complete change in the army uniform. In the early history of the Government it was done rather frequently. Washington ordered the first change in the continental uniform in 1777. Up to that time the army button was white. Under Washington's order the regulation uniform was to consist of "a dark blue or black coat reaching to the knee and full trimmed, the lapels fastened back, with ten open worked buttonholes in yellow silk on the breast of each lapel and ten large regimental buttons at equal distances on each side, three large yellow buttons on each cuff and a like number on each pocket flap." At the same time an order was issued for the navy to equip themselves with blue coats, with red facings; red waistcoats and blue breeches; the coats trimmed "yellow" buttons. The marine officers of the day wore green coats with white facings, white breeches edged with green, white vests, silver epaulettes, black gaiters and white buttons.

Two years later Washington ordered another change in the uniform of the army. The regulation coat thereafter was blue, the facings of white, buff or white. This lasted until 1782, when orders were issued to equip the infantry with white buttons, the coats to be of blue with red facing and white lining. By 1796 another change had been made. The infantry officer wore a dark blue coat reaching to the knee, full trimmed with scarlet lapels, cuffs and standing cape, white trimmings, white under dress, black stock and cocked hat with white binding. In 1810 the officers of the general staff were put into top boots with gilt spurs and other minor changes in their uniform were made.

Nowadays changes in uniform and equipment are less frequent. The last radical change in the naval uniform was made eleven years ago. But the officers live in daily dread of another. Here is the outfit with which a naval officer would have to provide himself if a complete change of pattern was ordered:

Special full dress, \$80; full dress, \$50; frock coat, \$45 to \$55; services uniform (extra blouse), \$80; two pair blue trousers, \$30; overcoat, \$45 to \$60; cap, \$7.50; chapian, \$15 to \$25; epaulettes, \$25 to \$50; sword, \$15 to \$20; full dress belt, \$15; undress belt, \$5; sword knot, \$2.50 to \$4; helmet, \$2.50; shoulder straps, \$3; gloves (right pair), \$2 to \$4; rain clothes, \$10 to \$25.

The "special full dress" is a feature of the naval uniform. It is worn on the greatest state occasions—in honor of the President of the United States or some foreign naval officer of high rank. With it is always carried the clumsy chapian. The army has no special full dress. Here is the army officer's outfit:

Undress uniform, \$25 to \$30; forage cap with ornaments, \$5 to \$11; shoulder straps, \$5; dress uniform, \$45 to \$60; shoulder knots, \$5 to \$13; headress, \$15 to \$30; sword or saber, \$10 to \$21; dress belt, \$10 to \$15; field belt, \$2.50; overcoat, \$15 to \$35.—Washington Star.

THE FLIGHT OF TIME.

He had talked on every subject and The girl was dreadful tired; He'd talked and talked and talked until She wished to see him there.

And when he had got back again To whether she was mad, Enough you bet to sail down stairs Her hero and warlike dad.

"It's been a lovely day," he said; "I wonder if 'twill be Like this to-morrow, for I love These balmy days to see."

She answered him: "I do not know, And I don't care to guess, For in such matters, I must say I'm not a prophetess.

"But if you really want to know To-morrow's weather's fate, Possess your soul in patience, for You'll not have long to wait." —Detroit Free Press.

HUMOR OF THE DAY. A summer lit—Slapping a mosquito. —Boston Courier. A still alarm—"The revenue officers are coming."—Truth. The only really true and steadfast love is love of self.—Hallow. Every bird places us with its lay—especially the hen.—Grip. A masked ball—A lemonade with a stick in it.—Philadelphia Record. Don't talk too much. A stiff lower jaw is as useful as a stiff upper lip.—Puck. Some people are never at home until they are away from home.—Atlantic Globe. A beetle can draw twenty times its own weight. So can a mustard plaster.—Texas Sittings. You will notice that the man who is spoken of as "superior to clothes" wears mighty poor clothes.—Puck. Nothing is easier to understand than how we shouldn't have made the mistakes we have seen other people make.—Puck. The man who is willing to wait for something to turn up is usually too blind to see it when it comes along.—Puck. Oddly enough the homeliest of old maids are generally girls who were matchless in their youth.—Buffalo Courier. Uncle George—"Are you good at guessing?" Little Dick—"Yes, indeed. I'm head in the spelling class."—Good News. He—"My love will have no ending, dear." She—"Now, I say, George, aren't you going to marry me, after all?"—Tid-Bits. The long-out overcoat has proved To him the best of coats. Since underneath it he can wear His baggy pantaloons. —New York Herald. Musical composers should have no trouble about proposing to their sweethearts; they are used to making overtures.—Philadelphia Record. An offer to bet is not an argument, but it frequently has the effect of alienating your opponent and increasing his respect for your position.—Puck. "Am" said the burglar after he had found that the safe was empty, "this thing lacks a whole lot of what it was cracked up to be."—Indianapolis Journal. Twickenham—"How is your daughter's French tutor getting on with her?" Bitter—"Very nicely. He has got so he can speak English first-rate." —Brooklyn Life. "I wonder what makes Higley so unpopular?" "I give it up, but it's a fact. Why that man is so disliked that he can't even get a bite when he goes fishing."—Indianapolis Journal. Nature adorns a woman, And art a platitude. And this is mighty hard upon The gentle, harmless jade. —Boston Transcript. My son, if you are flush, associate with the well-to-do, for they are not likely to borrow; but if you are broke keep on good terms with the poor, for they are more willing to lend.—Puck. "You beat us," said the defeated yachtman, "because you caught the breeze before we did." "That's because we watched for it with baited breath," replied the victor.—Chicago Tribune. Logical; Elie—"Mamma, why do they hunt lion an tigers?" Mamma—"Because they kill the poor little sheep, Elie." Elie (after a pause)—"Then why don't they hunt the butchers, mamma?"—Punch. Young Foggy—"Dad, let's go into the other room and see the phonograph. It repeats every word you say." Old Foggy—"Just as though I hadn't friends enough that do that right along."—Boston Transcript. Mrs. Nextdoor—"I have found out one thing about that Mrs. Newcome. Whoever she is, she has never moved in good society." Mr. Nextdoor—"How do you know that?" Mrs. Nextdoor—"She shakes hands as if she meant it."—Tid-Bits. Museum Manager—"I've got too many of you freaks. I'll have to discharge one of you." India-Rubber Man—"Let it be the Human Salamander; he's used to the fire." Manager—"No! I think I'll bounce you." —Philadelphia Record. Heloise (eight years old)—"What does transatlantic mean, mother?" Mother—"Oh, across the Atlantic, of course. But you mustn't bother me." Heloise—"Does trans, then, always mean across?" Mother—"I suppose it does. Now, if you don't stop bothering me with your questions I shall send you right to bed." Heloise is silent a few moments. Heloise—"Then the mountain trans means a great present!"—Brooklyn Life.