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It is said that the ride from Cannes, France, to Genoa, Italy, is the finest railroad journey in the world.

San Francisco is said to be rapidly declining in prosperity and the California people blame the Southern Pacific Railroad for it.

The cities of New York owe \$171,000,000; the towns, \$14,000,000, and the villages, \$2,000,000, while the counties owe less than \$14,000,000.

The egg product of the United States is much more valuable than is generally supposed. It amounts to \$100,000,000 per annum, about one-third the value of the wheat crop.

Sixty-six out of one hundred American farmers own their farms. More than half of them have no insurance whatever. They are infinitely better off than our urban population and their condition is constantly improving.

One secret of Japanese success is illustrated by the fact, told in Kate Field's Washington, that the new Japanese Minister, Mr. Kurino, pays special attention to journalists.

Who is the most learned man in the world? asks the New Orleans Picayune. If degrees count, a good claim may be made out for Herr von Gossler, the overpresident of West Prussia who has just been made a doctor of philosophy honoris causa by the philosophical faculty of the University of Halle.

The money value of hands and fingers has been made the subject of an interesting estimate by one of the German miners' accident insurance companies. According to this the loss of both hands represents a loss of 100 per cent. efficiency, or, in other words, the whole ability to earn a living.

The investigations of Dr. Parkhurst and the Lexow Committee make it reasonably certain that in the past thirty years New York's police force has levied and collected \$100,000,000 blackmail.

I was in front of the pavilion, when some notes were struck on a piano within and echoed in the orchestra air. I noticed with surprise that, doubtless because of the heat, two of the windows were partly open, though not enough for one to see the exterior of the apartment.

Some days afterward I was in the Casino at Dieppe with some jolly companions, and took part in an animated discussion upon music. I praised popular airs, which spring spontaneously from an innocent sentiment.

THE CROAKER.

When it ain't a-goin' to blow, I'll snow! When the land with cash is hummin', There's a money pants comin'!

THE ABANDONED HOUSE.

BY FRANCIS COPPER.

FOR fifteen years I passed idly every day, and sometimes twice a day, through a little street situated at the extreme limit of the Faubourg St. Germain, and ending in one of those magnificent boulevards which radiate about des Invalides.

Among these was one abode even more isolated than the others. When the porte cochere opened to admit a landau or coupe, the pedestrian (who heard the echo of his steps on the sidewalk) saw only a graveled road, bordered with a hedge which turned abruptly toward a house hidden amid the verdure.

The pavilion was inhabited. The garden, gay with flowers, always carefully attended to, was a proof of that. In winter, the smoke from the chimneys rose to the gray sky, and in the evening a light shone dimly behind the thick curtains, always closely drawn.

One July night, a stifling night, under a dark, heavy sky, I came home about eleven o'clock, and, about to go to my usual habit, I mechanically turned my steps so as to pass before the mysterious pavilion.

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What do you think of this air? I asked Prince Khaloff, a young Russian with whom I was very intimate. "I shall never forget it," I said warmly.

ly, I proceeded to sing it indifferently well. "Well," replied the young prince, "you can congratulate yourself, my dear sir, in having had such a rare treat. That melody is a song of the sailors of Drontheim, away out in Norway, and the beautiful voice must have been that of Stolberg, with whom we were all in love two years ago, when she made her debut in St. Petersburg—that Stolberg was the rival of her countryman Nilsson, and who would have become one of the greatest singers of the century if she had not been suddenly snatched from art, from the stage, from success of all kinds by her love for Count Basil Lobanof, at that time my comrade in the Guards, when we were both corporals in the cavalry.

"So," said I, "the wonderfully gifted artist has renounced everything for a little love affair." "Say rather for a great passion!" cried the prince. "Although very young, Stolberg had had numerous flirtations when she met Lobanof. I was there in the green room on the evening when Basil—who, I should tell you, is as handsome as a god—was presented to her, and I saw the diva pale with emotion, even under her powder and paint. Oh, it was startling, and I thought that she would carry off our young friend that same evening, pell-mell, with the triumphant bouquet, after the fifth act. But immediately he became as jealous as a Mussulman—yes, jealous of the very public when she sang. He was always there in the front seats of the orchestra, and at each burst of applause he turned abruptly, and cast a sombre look over the house. That look seemed to express a desire to slap the whole audience in the face. Everything went wrong. Even when the Czar was present, the prima donna had eyes for one but Basil—sang always to Basil. That caused trouble behind the scenes, and the poor girl decided to leave the stage. She did so at the end of three months, at the close of her engagement. He married her, and since then they have hidden themselves in Paris, in the retreat which you discovered. They must be dead if not yet. But I will wager that Basil will get over it. He is built like the Farnese Hercules, and they say poor Stolberg is consumptive. They pretend even that it is disease which gives her voice its wonderful power and extraordinary sweetness and pathos. Her gift is the result of disease, like the pearl.

All the same, no matter how much in love with Lobanof the poor girl is, she will die of weariness in that cage in which he keeps her. Then she must sing very rarely, since in the many times you have passed before their house you have heard her but once, that night of the storm. Well, it will end badly." The conversation turned to other things, and the next day I left Dieppe to go with some friends to Lower Normandy. I had only been there ten days when I read accidentally in the theatrical paper the following notice: "We announce with sorrow the death of Mlle. Ida Stolberg, the Swedish cantatrice, who alone so briefly and brilliantly on the stage in Germany and Russia, and who renounced her lyrical career in the midst of her success and has been living quietly in Paris for two years past. She died of pulmonary consumption."

I had never seen Stolberg. Once only had I heard that incomparable voice. Still, the reading of this commonplace notice, which announced to me the fulfilment of Prince Khaloff's dismal prophecy, broke my heart. I knew now the whole mystery of the closed house. It was there that the poor woman had languished and been extinguished, deeply in love, no doubt, but stifled also by the captivity to which she was condemned by the jealousy of her husband. No doubt, also, she was full of regrets for the former triumphs of her abandoned art. The fate of Stolberg seemed so sad to me that I fairly hated the man who had sacrificed her whole life. He seemed to me a fop, an egotist, a brute. I was certain that he would soon console himself for the loss of his wife, that he would soon forget the poor dead woman, and that, unworthy of the love which he had inspired, he would also be incapable of grief or fidelity.

On my return to Paris, one of the first persons I met on the Boulevard was Prince Khaloff. I told him how much I had been moved at the news of the singer's death, and I could not hide from him the instinctive antipathy which I felt toward Lobanof. "Behold, you people of imagination!" cried the prince. "You were charmed for an instant by this woman's voice, and you feel a passionate love for her, and for a retrospective jealousy of my poor friend. I own to you that I have always thought Basil a more sensual than sensible man, more passionate than tender; but I have seen him since poor Ida's death, and he is a prey, I assure you, to the most horrible and sincere despair. When I expressed my sympathy to him, he cast himself in my arms, and repeated to me, as he wept on my shoulder, that he could live no longer. And it was not pretence. He goes at once to Senegal, to join the Jackson mission, a party of explorers, who will bury themselves, probably forever, in frightful Africa. That is not common, you will own. It is to be feared that fever or cholera, or a shot from the gun of a savage, will end the poor boy's life and sorrows. Take

back, I beg you, your rash and premature judgment upon him. Besides, he had before his departure an idea which should certainly seem affecting to you. That pavilion, where he has been so happy and so unhappy, belongs to him. Well, he has closed it forever. Basil wishes that no living being should ever again penetrate that abode of love and sorrow. You can pass there now, and see the house fall into ruin, and on the day when they put a notice upon it, on that day you can say, 'Basil Lobanof is dead.' I left the prince, and the next day, reproaching myself for my injustice, I went to see the deserted house. The shutters were closed; the dead leaves of the great plane tree, half-bare (it was the end of autumn), covered the grass of the lawn. Weeds forced their way through the gravelled walk. The work of destruction had begun. Months passed; a year; then another; then the daily papers were full of the great anxiety felt over the fate of Jackson and his companions, from whom no news had come. You know that even to-day the world is ignorant of the fate of those brave explorers. Living always in the same vicinity and passing every day before the abandoned pavilion, I say it decay, little by little. The rain of two winters had lashed constantly the plaster of the facade and covered it with a damp mould. Then the slate roof was damaged by wind and rain storms. Dampness attacked everything. Lizards sunned themselves on the wall; the balcony was loosened; the roof bent. The appearance of the poor house became lamentable. As for the garden, it had returned quickly to its savage state. The flowers were not cultivated; the rose-bushes were untrimmed, and had only leaves and branches; the geraniums were dead. The grass had long since disappeared under the dead hay, and the high stalks of the weeds were discoloured even by the butterflies. Nothing grew there but thistles and the pale poppy. It was a gloomy spot!

Years rolled on. It was now impossible to hope for the return of the Jackson party. Evidently those intrepid pioneers had succumbed to hunger and thirst in some horrible desert or been massacred by the savages, and Count Basil Lobanof was dead with them, faithful to his Stolberg. The deserted house had fallen absolutely into ruins. The great tree which was near the house, and whose foliage was no longer kept in check by trimming, had thrust one of its immense branches through the window. The shutters had fallen off, and the tree had pushed its way into the interior of the dismembered house. There might be mushrooms within and even grass growing on the floor of the salon. Each time I passed before the old ruin which had come to the last stages of decay, I thought, abandoning myself to a romantic reverie, "It is better that it should be so. If they had heard of the count's death, the heirs no doubt would have caused steps to be taken at once for its restoration. They would have broken it open brutally, and let in the garish light of day, to desecrate those halcyon associations of love and sorrow. Basil Lobanof has done well to disappear, and nature lovingly destroys slowly this old love-nest, and keeps it from profanation."

The other day I saw the ruin again; the branches of the great tree came through the roof, and there were lit-tle trees growing in the rocks. Then I met Prince Khaloff, who had not been in France for a dozen years. We walked and talked together, and I told him all about the abandoned house, its slow destruction, and the thoughts it suggested. The prince burst into laughter. "Decidedly, my dear fellow, you will never be anything but a poet. Basil is married again, the father of three children, and holds the office of First Secretary to the Russian Ambassador at Rome."

"The Count Lobanof is not dead?" I cried, stupefied. "On my last visit to Rome he was as well as you or I."

"He did not go with the Jackson party? Oh, the perfidious man!" I cried, furious at my wasted sympathy. "I should have suspected him. It seems that he forgot his dead love at once."

"Oh no," replied the prince. "Basil is not so guilty as that. With grief after her death, he would, for good or bad, go with the party, and he set out for Senegal. But on the sixth day of their march he fell seriously ill and was taken to St. Louis by a caravan, in the greatest agony. There he recovered—but it was not his fault. His friends profited by his weakness and lack of energy to carry him back to Europe, and since then, after waiting a long time, he has consoled himself."

"But then the deserted house? What does that comely signify?" asked I, in a bad humor. "It is a bad humor," replied the prince. "It is not a comedy, but it proves on the contrary, that the count is a man of honor. What did he promise? That as long as he lived no one should go under the roof which had sheltered his love. And he has kept his word, though it has cost him a great deal. Besides, who knows if he does not always mourn his delightful singer, and regret bitterly the evenings passed in that closed house, listening to the divinely sad music of that voice which caused him so much happiness, so much sorrow? All that I can tell you," added the prince with an ironical smile, "is that with a large fortune, a beautiful family, and a home in the Eternal City, a despairing love twelve years old ought to be endurable!"—Translated for Romance.

Claves grow wild in the Moluccas.

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

The whistling buoy can be heard about fifteen miles. Asiatic cholera is the most rapidly fatal thing known to medical science. Carriages propelled by electricity derived from a storage battery are common in Berlin.

A French physician reports a case of hiccough successfully treated by taking snuff until sneezing was provoked. Lightning is most destructive in level, open country. Cities, with their numerous projections and wires, are comparatively exempt.

A total absence of butterfly life in England is noted. Beyond an occasional white butterfly, there are none to be seen this summer. Irish potatoes in a store, with a cellar under them, will stand a temperature of ten degrees, and without a cellar a zero temperature will not hurt them.

Gardening ants collect pieces of vegetable and pile them up to rot in the dark interior of their nests until the rubbish is covered with a growth of fungus on which the ants feed. People wink because the eye must be kept clean and moist, and by the action of the eyelids the fluid secreted by the glands of the eyes is spread equally over the surface of the globe.

The greatest earthquake on record within the limits of the United States occurred in California in 1872. For ten days the ground was continuously agitated, not being perfectly quiet for as long as a single minute.

At the meeting of the German Congress of Natural Science in Vienna, Professor Boltzman delivered an interesting lecture on aerial locomotion. He predicted the greatest success for the application of aeroplanes.

At Predimost, in Bohemia, where many mammoth skeletons have been unearthed, a prehistoric family has lately been found. The skeletons of the man, woman and children are complete, the man's being of enormous size.

A Boston author, who is convinced that the printing of books in white and black is unnatural and trying to the eyes, is about to bring one out with the pages blue, green, yellow, etc., purchaser to make choice of his or her own color.

Professor Roux, of Paris, at a recent hygienic congress at Budapest, asserted that in the Paris hospitals seventy-five per cent. of the children inoculated with Behring's anti-diphtheritic serum taken from horses) were saved, while those not inoculated sixty per cent. died and only forty per cent. survived.

Released Her Imprisoned Foot.

A woman crossing a network of railroad tracks in Long Island City not long ago stepped on a frog, which was unhooked, and pinioned her foot securely. There was possibly no danger from an approaching train, for there were many men about, but her position was not comfortable. Her cries attracted assistance to her side, and the groups of men began suggesting first one thing, then another to release the foot. "Give a sudden jerk," suggested one. "Slide your foot forward," said another. The woman tried, but could not move her foot.

"No, that won't do," cried a third. "Get a crowbar. Get anything. We've got to pry it out." At this the woman became hysterical, and the men all grew nervous. Several ran up the track, and several down to signal any approaching train.

Just then, when the excitement was high, a railroad employe crossed the track, swinging a tin dinner pail. "What's the matter?" he asked of one of the crowd. The situation was explained to him. Everything had been tried, his informant said, and they were waiting for a crowbar.

"Why don't you unlace the shoe," he said, and taking a knife from his pocket he cut the laces. No one had thought of that, but the remedy was effectual, and in fifteen seconds the half fainting woman was able to pull her foot from the shoe, and a slight effort then released the latter.—New York Herald.

Wanton Destruction of Reindeer.

The use of firearms has led to the wanton destruction of the reindeer for the sake of their skins, their antlers, and their tongues, which are a rare delicacy. It is to be feared that the Greenland reindeer will soon go the way of the buffalo of our Western plains; and so of the fur-bearing animals in general. The natural increase is sufficiently checked by the original native methods of catching them in traps. The seal, also, the most important of all the animals upon which they depend for existence—furnishing them food, clothing, fuel, and covering for the kayak—is in danger of being exterminated by the more destructive methods of hunting introduced by modern inventions.—New York Post.

A National Clothing Department.

The men who fought the establishment of the Department of Agriculture a few years ago on the ground that it was unnecessary, will perhaps be surprised to learn that one hundred years ago there was a "Clothing Department," and that Congress issued regulations for a clothing general, a State clothing, a regimental clothing, and so on. A "Department of clothing" would excite derisive laughter now. There was a good deal of inquiry and report on the subject of clothing for the continental army, and at one time General Horatio Gates reported that the cost of clothing each man was \$29.—Washington Star.

THE VALUABLE FUR SEAL.

AN ANIMAL OVER WHICH GOVERNMENTS HAVE ARBITRATED.

Princely Royalty Derived by the United States From Seals Killed—A Remarkable Creature.

THE fur seal (its name should be furry sea lion) is the most celebrated of all our fur-bearing animals, and the United States Government has been as active in protecting it from destruction as it was indifferent to the fate of the buffalo millions. If our great international dispute with England and Canada over the fur seal had arisen seventy years ago, before the days of peaceful arbitration, there would surely have been a war over it. Nor is our interest in our fur seal to be wondered at when we stop to consider that from 1870 to 1890 our National Treasury received \$6,000,000 from the Alaska Commercial Company as royalty on the animals killed (six-sevenths of the purchase price of Alaska). When to this we add the amount received in a twenty per cent. import duty on the dressed skins as they came back to us from the English dyers, the total revenue derived from the fur seal in twenty years amounts to the enormous sum of \$8,500,000. Such an animal was worth saving from destruction. No other quadruped ever became such a bone of contention between two great nations for a long period, the discussion winding up with a high and mighty conference of arbitration.

As usual, the whole trouble arose through the greediness of a few irresponsible and lawless individuals. The sealers of the Pacific coast insisted upon taking fur seals by shooting them in the open sea, by which wasteful process seven were lost for every three secured. But if it were not for the loss of money revenue derived from this animal, it is quite certain the Government would have allowed the wasteful slaughter to go on until the last seal was dead.

The fur seal is not a true seal by any means, but a sea lion, with naked, paddle-shaped flippers and tiny ears. It is about two-thirds the size of the Zalophus, and is therefore the smallest member of the sea-lion family. Mr. Elliott gives the average length of the full-grown male animal as six feet from nose to tail, and weight from 350 to 500 pounds. The average length of the adult female is four feet, and weight from twenty to twenty-five pounds. When dry, the color is a dark, steel gray color, and only the coarse, stiff gray hair is visible. Underneath this lies a dense coat of very fine and soft light-brown fur, in which lies all the value of the skin. In preparing the pelt, the coarse outer hair is entirely removed, and the underlying fur is dyed a shiny, lustrous black, and sheared down very evenly. For some mysterious reason, we, the people of "Yankee ingenuity," are actually unable to dress fur successfully, and this work is done by sheer necessity, sent to England. When it comes back, there is a high rate of duty to pay, which in addition to the original royalty of \$10.22 paid to the Government by the North American Commercial Company for every skin taken, the very long bill of transportation charges, labor, and profits all along the line, from the back of the seal to that of the fortunate wearer, amounts for the price of from \$250 to \$600 on a seal skin cloak.

In its habits the fur seal is a remarkable creature. With 6000 miles of coast to land upon if it chose, his strange and perverse animal now roams to set flipper upon any portion of the whole North American continent, island or mainland, save the two little dots of land in Bering Sea, St. Paul, and St. George Islands, known to the world collectively as the Pribilof Islands. St. Paul is seven miles by fourteen, and St. George is only five and a half by thirteen.

And yet, when Mr. Elliott made his careful and elaborate surveys of all the "rookeries" or breeding grounds of these islands, in July, 1873, and laboriously calculated the number of their fin footed inhabitants, he found there the astonishing number of 3,193,420 fur seals. Like sheep in a pen, they actually crowded one another on the sloping shores of sand, or water worn boulders, or tables of slaty blue basalt. Each burly old male appears a giant beside the females and small calves gathered around him.—St. Nicholas.

"A Heap of Milk."

The Earl of Surrey, in one of his best poems, says: Laid in my quiet bed, In study as I were, I saw within my troubled head A heap of thoughts appear.

He here uses "heap" in precisely the sense given it by people in Southern Indiana, in Georgia, in Texas, and generally over a large part of the United States. This sense of the word is very primitive. I believe the Century Dictionary gives the sense of a crowd or throng as the earliest meaning of the word. It was good when the first colonists came out of England. It seems a little monstrous now—days that hear a man speak of his cow's giving "a heap of milk," or to hear that "there was a heap of people at the basket meeting"—Century.

An Island Inhabited by Turtles.

Cavey, a West India island, is inhabited exclusively by turtles, some of which grow to an enormous size. Attempts to establish human habitations on the island have always failed. The turtles undermine the foundations of the houses, and not infrequently attack the inmates.—New York Mail and Express.

COUNTRY'S MOVING!

Say your say an' sing your song—Country's movin' right along! Spring or summer—ball of snow, Country's always on the go!

Puffin', blowin', Hot or snowin', Always goin', Goin'!

Say your say by night an' day—Country's happy on the way! Spite o' weather, spite o' crops, Always goin'—over steps!

Puffin', blowin', Makes a showin', Always goin', Goin'!

Stormy skies, or weather fair, Country's got the roadway clear! Storms may howl, or bells may chime, Country's goin' all the time!

Puffin', blowin', Hoopin', snowin', Always goin', Goin'!

—Atlanta Constitution.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Man wants but little here below—woman wants the rest.—Truth. A man never knows how to be a son until he has become a father.—Athenian Globe.

With most people, success has a strong tendency to destroy belief in luck.—Pack.

He—"I hear that you are going abroad in a month?" She—"Not much—in a boat."—Truth.

He—"I'm telling you the honest truth." She—"Is there dishonest truth?"—Detroit Free Press.

Popularity is one of the most vague and undefined possessions that man acquires.—Milwaukee Journal.

When a man goes into business, everybody wonders "where on earth he got the money."—Athenian Globe.

This sweet old world is funny, But we learn it by degrees; The best first step is to be happy, Then we steal it from the bees!—Atlanta Constitution.

The trouble about the trials of this life is that a fellow always wants to render his own verdicts.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Visitor (discovering acquaintance)—"Hello, what are you here for?" Prisoner (briefly)—"For six months."—Detroit Free Press.

The Author—"I trust you enjoyed my play?" The Parvenu—"Yes, indeed. The entr'actes are so delightful."—Chicago Record.

No broken ear bleeding was the man Who near the car's front took a seat; No broken bones had he, although He'd fallen over forty feet.—Pack.

"I want a position for my son as an editor?" "What are his qualifications?" "Failed in everything else."—Atlanta Constitution.

"Did you tell your mistress that I called yesterday when she was out?" "No." "It wasn't necessary. She saw you coming."—Inter-Ocean.

"Floissie has accepted that horrid old Goldbeak. What do you suppose she was thinking of?" "Hettie—'Herself, dear.'—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

She laughed at every little jest. Even though it might be stupid; It wasn't worth to show her taste, But a cunning little diplo.—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Agent—"Banker is a social philosopher." Caller—"In what respect?" Agent—"He never kicks when we dun him repeatedly for his rent. He just moves."—Chicago Inter-Ocean.

Dr. Emude—"Years ago the doctors used to bleed their patients for about everything they had." Van Pelt—"The practice doesn't change much, does it?"—Truth.

Kaushem—"Why don't you put a check to that fellow who is evidently dunning you?" Bilker—"What'd be the use? The bank wouldn't pay it."—Buffalo Courier.

Old Lady (proudly)—"My boy is a hustler all the time, but he is humping himself here lately." Visitor—"Is that so? What bicycle does he ride?"—Detroit Free Press.

Now all the college boys bow Upon their hair and muscle Consume more care, because they know In football they must hustle.—Washington Star.

Minks—"There is one great objection to onions." Winks—"What's that?" "They are wholesome." "Do you consider that an objection?" "Certainly. People who are fond of them don't die like so soon as you'd like them to."—New York Weekly.

"Yes," said Mr. Jason, "I allow that women stir the sentimental sex and all that sort of thing, but I've always noticed that when a couple get engaged it is the woman that first thinks of Algeria!"—Indianapolis Journal.

Inductive—"What makes you think Jack Youngley is going to propose to you?" "Why, we were dancing the other night and I complimented him upon the easy way in which he held me. 'Oh, yes,' he said, 'it's always easy for me to hold my own.'"—Brooklyn Life.

Grass Growing a Science. Since grass growing has become a science and an art you may hire a man to create a lawn for you in a fifth of the time once thought necessary for such a creation. Thick and luxuriant lawns are produced between spring and autumn, and a lawn of two years under the modern forcing process may easily rival one of five years under the old-fashioned system. Artificial stimulants and abundant water are responsible for the new order of things.—Chicago Herald.