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Mr. Gladstone is the freshest, liveliest, most thoroughly up-to-date "back number" existing in the world to-day.

The number of unmarried women in England and Wales exceeds the number of unmarried men by nearly 300,000.

Germany and Spain are now connected by a submarine cable 1250 miles long the ends of which are at Emden and Vigo. It is the first link in a series of lines to be extended to Brazil and the United States by way of the Azores.

The death is recorded in England at the age of at least sixteen of an ant (not ant) of Sir John Lubbock. This large black insect, whose name was Methuselah, was brought home to England years ago by that celebrated naturalist, and by him studied to great advantage. Its home was in a cosy glass house on the scientist's desk.

The widow of a stage driver who was killed by a tree falling upon him while driving in South Vancouver, British Columbia, sued the town for \$15,000 damages, and a sympathizing jury, after a three days' trial, has awarded her \$10,000, the claim being that the tree was known to be dangerous, and should have been cut down.

Cologne has been celebrating the carnival by a historical and artistic procession around the Cathedral, including young women who represented St. Ursula and her 11,000 virgins, the town tower and the mercenaries employed by the archbishops when they were secular princes. It is asserted that the carnival has been held at Cologne since pre-Christian times and that it is the direct representative of the Roman Saturnalia.

It is said that "horror parties" are now the rage in Missouri. We do not know just what sort of entertainments these are, comments the New York Observer, but we have an impression that this "horror" business is being overdone, both in daily journalism and in general literature. Tragedies are not proper alimant for the mind, which was never meant to live on that sort of food. It is high time that a healthier state of public opinion on this subject was assiduously cultivated.

Ten million dollars more is to be given by Baroness de Hirsch for the benefit of the poor Hebrews in this country, and especially in the City of New York. The fund will be especially devoted to improving the conditions of those in the quarter where they are so closely crowded as to make it almost a ghetto and providing model suburban homes. These, and the various schools and other plans of benevolence, still, like all Hebrew charities, be under the best management, and need to be.

The youngest president of a republic is undoubtedly Jacob G. Smith, who is not yet in his seventeenth year. It must be said, however, that the dominion over which President Smith rules is the George Junior Republic, of Freeville, N. Y., which has done much in the way of teaching young waifs and criminals the meaning of government and law. Jacob Smith was an expert thief and the terror of his neighborhood when he came to the Republic, but he immediately began to reform, showing an exceptional desire to "acquire knowledge. He has been a model boy in every respect since then and now is a member of the Methodist Church, in which he conducts a Sunday-school class. By industry and economy he managed to save enough money to take his younger brothers out of the slums and has already made one of them self-supporting. "Jake," as he is familiarly known, has held every office in the gift of the Republic.

The editor of the Christian Observer of Louisville, Ky., has had a canvass made of the churches of that city, with a view of ascertaining how many attendants they have, the number of members and the number added in 1896. Eighty-four churches report a membership of 25,423. The attendants at the morning service of eighty-seven churches is 14,588; of eighty-five churches at evening service, 10,483; of eighty-four churches at Sunday school, 13,829; of fifty-three churches at prayer meeting, 2207. The number of men who joined fifty-four churches, last year was 489; the number of persons of both sexes who joined seventy churches the same year was 2387. From the returns of seating capacity it would appear that the evangelical churches for whites have room for about one-fourth of the population of the city. It is stated that seventy per cent of the white population of Louisville over twelve years of age, are not church members.

BITTER AND SWEET.

The apple that grows the highest is the best upon the tree; The rose that is most fragrant always has the sharpest thorn; The pearl that is the purest lies within the deepest shell, and the dearest that lives the longest are of hardest efforts born! (The love that's won too lightly is not treasured as a gem; The words that flow too freely never have the greatest weight; Man appreciates his blessings if he has to strive for them; But he never knows their value if they're passed up on a plate. —Cleveland Leader.

A NARROW ESCAPE.

THE last time I had seen Charlie Rudge was years ago, when I bade him goodbye on the platform of the station of the little town where we both lived, and he had shouted as the train moved away that he would write in the course of a day or two. I remembered him well—a steady-looking figure in a well-worn brown overcoat, a rather dirty collar round his throat, and an old copper hat that had done duty for many a rainy day, and was past ironing. A merry-hearted, good-natured fellow was Rudge; ever empty of pocket and open of heart; rather weak-minded, and easily imposed upon.

He never kept his promise of writing, and for eight years I had heard nothing of him, when, not long ago, a rap came at my door, and in came Charlie Rudge, exclaiming: "Hallo, old chap, how are you?" "Hello, who on earth would have thought of seeing you?" "Didn't know you were in town, old boy, or I'd have come before. Saw your name in some paper the other day and your address. So here I am."

As we talked over old times I observed him curiously. Just the same old Rudge, with the addition of a heavy moustache. His hat was exactly like the same old topper, very napless; his collar might have been the identical one he had on when I last saw him, while his shirt front and frock coat were rivaling each other in decrepitude. I asked him to lunch. At first he could not stay, having a most important engagement in the city, where he was about, it appeared, to preside over a board of directors. The same old liar! Afterward he re-entended and did stay, saying the meeting could wait.

We talked of many things. He had apparently tried most occupations and mastered none. Now he was on certain company promoting schemes, which, he said, was risky work, as he had to change a large sum of money. I glanced at his shabby coat! Where was he living? At Brixton, and I must go over and dine with him on Thursday evening. I really must. "Got bachelor diggings, don't you know, old chap, and we'll have a rare old time of it."

So I accepted. Then he told me he was engaged to a "fine girl, old chap. Awfully lucky fellow to get her. When am I going to be married? Not quite sure, but between you and me, I fancy I shall make a stroke of luck soon, and then—oh, I say, you shall be best man's you must. Any'll be delighted. She's a splendid girl. Money? Oh, she's a bit down on her luck now, Clever girl, though. Does typewriting—well, I must say good by now. Don't forget Thursday, old chap."

On Thursday I went over to Brixton, and after considerable wandering reached a small back street and knocked at a dingy door, which was opened by a slatternly looking woman, who showed me into a room where some one had smelted me. A luncheon hung across this room, barely concealing a bed and washstand.

"How are you, old chap? Hope you don't mind small diggings, but they're awfully comfortable. Just one room, you see; I find it handier than having a separate bedroom—no fog going from one room to the other. We'll have supper in a trice. Hope you don't mind a cold collation?" The "cold collation" shortly revealed itself upon a grubby table cloth, and consisted of small meager slices of cold beef, a bottle of mixed pickles, some bread and about three ounces of cheese. "Mrs. Wilkins," cried Rudge, as that inestimable personage was leaving the room after having laid the above banquet and scattering some knives and forks promiscuously upon the table, "we shall want some coffee, please. Would you kindly get us some. You'll have some, won't you, old chap?" I nodded. Mrs. Wilkins wooted with her kimbo and scowled. "Where's the money, Mister Rudge?" "Oh, certainly, certainly, Mrs. Wilkins. Why, dear me, 'pon my soul I haven't got anything less than a sovereign"—Mrs. Wilkins sniffed. "Eh? Well, if you don't mind lending me a shilling, old boy. Thanks awfully."

thing, and if you want a good investment, I think I can say it will pay you nearly cent for cent; at any rate, Marworth says it ought to. I wouldn't tell you one else, but for the sake of old times I've given you the tip."

"Well," he said, "I'm sorry, for you might have made a good thing out of it. But let me tell you something else. Marworth's put me on as secretary, and this morning he came to me in rather a way; he'd made some technical mistake—just a little legal slip, or something—and there was only one way out of it—the signatures of the directors to some document or other; I never bother about these things, you know. He'd got one man to sign, and he wanted my name. Then, he could raise capital at once, and he's promised us both a hundred pounds on Saturday. Did I sign? Rather, my boy."

"But is it all right?" "Oh, Mr. Marworth's safe as nails, and as honest as the day. He's been awfully nice to me all along."

"Well, I shouldn't touch that money—"

"Not touch it? Won't I, though! And I've had 200 shares allotted to me free, besides the post of secretary, and soon, old fellow, you'll have to be the best man, for I'm going to have the bonus put up on Sunday week."

A few days after this I met Rudge in the city. He was smartly dressed and told me that Marworth had given him the money, and also that he had sold some of his shares for £60 that morning, "as a favor to a pal of mine, old chap." Then about a week afterward I had a letter from him saying he had taken a house and fixed the day of the wedding.

Some few days had elapsed. It was past midnight, and I was just thinking of retiring, being the only one up in the house, when a knock came to the door. I carefully withdrew the bolt and latch. A man with his coat collar turned up, a muffler over his face, and a hat slouched down over his eyes dashed in, almost knocking me down. For a moment I was staggered, and then made a rush for the intruder.

"Hush! For heaven's sake shut the door!" It was Rudge! I shut and bolted the door. "Let me come into your study, please." I took him there, and he threw himself into a chair, exclaiming: "I'm a hunted man. For the sake of our friendship, don't betray me. I swear I'm innocent."

"Thank you for nothing," said the detective, as he turned and rushed to the telephone office. "Where will they catch him?" I asked the porter. "At Harwick, sir. The train doesn't stop till then."

I went to see Miss Saunders next morning, introducing myself as Rudge's friend, and found her quite broken-hearted, and yet just a little bit hopeful at the idea that he had escaped. With deep pity for her I was obliged to tell her what had happened. It was the last stroke of grief for her, and she burst into tears.

"I tried to cheer her with the hope that he might have escaped, after all. "No, no. I'm sure they've got him, and he'll go to prison. Oh, you don't think he is a criminal, do you?" "No, Miss Saunders; he's only very weak. But he will have to suffer if he is taken, and you must cheer him by promising to be faithful to him."

"Oh, I will. I am content to wait if it comes to the worst."

I left her promising to see her again in a few days. As I went home I bought an evening paper, and the first thing which my eye lighted was the following: THE MARWORTH FRAUD. Strange Disappearance of the Mar Rudge. Last evening just as the 8.30 train from Liverpool street to Harwick was moving out of the station, Detective Inspector Brett was recalled to his headquarters, and the Marworth fraud, seated alone in a first-class compartment, the inspector was too late to enter the train, but at once started to Harwick, and on the train arriving there a force of police in plain clothes were ready waiting to arrest him. Strange to say, however, although the train was carefully searched no trace of him was discovered. As there had been no stop between Liverpool street and Harwick, it is supposed that the unfortunate man must have jumped from his carriage in desperation. Nothing has since been heard of him, however, and the affair remains a mystery.

"Poor Rudge!" I sighed, as it dawned upon me that perhaps he was lying crushed and mangled somewhere along the line. I was terribly upset and only hoped that Miss Saunders would not get hold of the paper.

The next evening the postman brought me a letter with a French stamp and a Paris postmark, and the direction written in the sprawling fist of Rudge! I hastily tore it open, and read as follows: Dear Old Chap; Just a line to tell you that I'm neither dead nor in prison. How you must have been wondering what had become of me! I saw you noticed the detective had been recalled to his headquarters, and I wondered how on earth I should escape, for I guessed they would be waiting for me at Harwick. At first I thought of risking it and jumping out of the train, but a bright idea struck me. I know that, although the carriage was in it did not stop before we reached Harwick, and I supposed that if I could get on my journey to the rear of the train, and make up my mind to try it. I opened the door and got out on the footboard and ran up to town. I was very lucky, for I passed the windows, and people should see me, and I was particularly careful at the guard's van. At last I found myself on a good road; then I went to my head and ran up to town. I was very lucky, for I passed the windows, and people should see me, and I was particularly careful at the guard's van. At last I found myself on a good road; then I went to my head and ran up to town.

This is the true history of Rudge's marvelous escape. He reached America and gladdened the heart of his fiancée by getting an appointment there—of course, under another name. Miss Saunders was talking of going out to him, but I have just heard that Marworth is taken, and has made certain confessions that clear Rudge and the other man from all share in the fraud, except that of being Marworth's dupes. So I am in hopes that all will be right yet.—Pearson's Weekly.

THE MERRY SIDE OF LIFE.

STORIES THAT ARE TOLD BY THE FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

Always With Us—Shelter From the Storm—She Got the Engagement—Complications—The Reason, Etc. "Tell me what are the signs of spring?" She asked in accents quaint. And he replied, by answering: "To let," "For sale," and "Patent." —New York Journal.

SHELTER FROM THE STORM. Mitchell—"Did you get wet coming from the opera the other night?" Twitwell—"Not a drop; my wife was wearing her opera hat." —Twinkles.

COMPLIMENTS. "I have been referred to in the newspapers as a professional beauty," she said boastfully. "I am glad I am only an amateur," said her young rival.

THE REASON. "Why do you always have your letters with receipted bills in them marked 'Personal'?" "So everyone that gets a glimpse of them will read them."

SHE GOT THE ENGAGEMENT. Miss Sere—"Well, if you must have the plain truth, you're too young and pretty to be my maid." Applicant—"But, Ma'm'selle, you can say that I nursed you during your childhood."

A POSSIBLE EXPLANATION. Mr. Olbroy (soothing baby)—"There, there! wonder what on earth makes the child cry so?" Johnny Olbroy—"Well, pa, what else can you expect? He ain't old enough to swear, is he?"—Judge.

SUCCESS. Soxy—"I suppose the reason Primps is so successful is on account of the interest he takes in his business." Knoxy—"I should say so. Oa everything you leave with him he takes ten per cent."—Pittsburg News.

BECKLESS EXTRAVAGANCE. Peppery—"I've been talking to my wife and been giving her a bit of my mind." Cynical Candid Friend—"Follow my advice, old chap, and don't do that too often, or you'll have none left for yourself!"—Punch.

A SURE THING. Clara—"Mr. Smart says he entertained quite a gathering last evening, and kept them laughing all the time." Kate—"That was the safest thing they could do. They were thus sure of laughing in the right place once in a while."—Boston Transcript.

WHY HE THOUGHT SO. Hortense—"Who do you think was the first woman to use powder and paint?" Van Jay—"Eve." Hortense—"Why do you think it was Eve?" Van Jay—"She was the first woman."

REFLEX ACTION. Magistrate—"You are charged with having deliberately climbed over the railing at the flower show and smashed one of the richest exhibits. What have you to say for yourself?" Fierce Looking Prisoner—"Habit, Your Honor. It was marked 'handle with care.' I used to be baggage man on a railroad."

AN ORDINAL AHEAD. Benson—"Hello, Yardley, what are you doing there? Going on the road as a juggler?" Yardley—"Oh, no (balancing plate on one knee, cup and saucer on the other, trying to look pleasant); Mrs. de Crush gives a reception this afternoon and I'm practicing for it, you know."—Twinkles.

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

Hamburg leads the cities of Germany in the extent of its electric street-car service. It has 340 motors, while Berlin, which comes next, has only 114. A new species of rabbit has been found in Mexico at an altitude of 9000 feet on the volcano Popocatepetl. It is very small, has short ears and no tail. Steel wire is strung on a frame for use as a bicycle saddle, one end of each strand of wire being formed into a coiled spring to make the saddle flexible.

An electric underground railway under the present underground is the latest project suggested in London. It would be used for express trains only. For the purpose of converting ordinary matches into fuses rings made of the ordinary fuse composition without the fulminate are slipped over the end of the head.

The accuracy in some parts of the locomotive is ten times finer than in the watch; but for absolute measurement the accuracy in the watch is at least three times as fine as in the locomotive. The greyhound seems to have been developed in level, treeless and shrubless countries, where a moving object is visible at a long distance, and great speed is, therefore, necessary to enable a predaceous animal to overtake its prey.

A party of scientists from Dublin, Ireland, have visited the scene of the bog-slip near Rathmore, and made numerous measurements and observations. The quantity of boggy matter dislodged is estimated at 10,000,000 cubic yards. Scarlet seems the color most conspicuous in bright sunshine, and scarlet flowers are commonest in dry and sunny climates. As the color gives them an advantage in their struggle with other flowers for the attentions of butterflies and other pollen bearers.

A novel device for generating electricity consists of a hollow cone in which a long, slim battery is placed, the induction coil being placed close to the handle and surrounded by two removable hands attached by wires to the coil for use as poles in giving electric treatment. The spider's threads or fibers are estimated to be one-millionth of a hair in thickness. Three kinds of thread are spun. One of great strength for the radiating of spoke lines of the web; the cross lines or spiral threads, which are finer and are tenacious; that is, they have upon them little specks or globules of a very sticky gum. The third kind of silk is that which the spider throws out in a mass of flood, by which it suddenly envelops any prey of which it is somewhat afraid as for example, a wasp.

A Notable Sapphire. There is at present, in the keeping of Mr. Hayward of Argyle Street, Regent Street, a Ceylon sapphire belonging to Major-General Robley, which is not less remarkable for its size than for its translucency and the brilliance of the optical effects it can show. The weight of the gem is 638 carats, and it is of a dark milky-blue color, perfectly transparent and flawless. Larger sapphires have been known, but they have usually, if not always, been dull and muddy, instead of having the clear, translucent color of this specimen, but, in addition, it possesses a property occasionally found in slightly cloudy or milky Ceylon sapphires—and sometimes in other gems too—which greatly enhances its value in the eyes of believers in the occult powers of precious stones to confer health and good fortune on their wearers. It is a star sapphire or asteria. That is, being cut en cabochon, it displays a beautiful opalescent star, dividing its six rays at the apex, which changes its position according to the movement of the source of light by which it is viewed. By employing two or three sources of light two or three of those stars can be simultaneously seen in the gem. By further cutting it is said that the beauty of this stone could be still more increased, but, of course, at the expense of its size.—London Times.

Duel Under Singular Conditions. The men, who had fallen out over a lady, left the arrangement of details to their seconds, and until they faced each other they did not know by what method they were to settle their differences. One second was a doctor, and he had made up four black pellets, identical in size and shape. "In one of these," he said, "I have placed a sufficient quantity of prussic acid to cause the almost instantaneous death of any one who swallows it. We will toss by the toss of a coin which of you is to have first choice, and you will alternately draw and swallow a pill until the poison shows its effects." Two pellets were then taken as the toss had decided, but without effect in either case. "This time," said the doctor, speaking of the two pellets remaining, "you must both swallow the pill at the same instant." The choice was again made, and in a few seconds one man lay dead on the grass.—Gun-tleman's Magazine.

Official Corruption in China. A striking picture of the official corruption that prevails in China is afforded by some diplomatic reports submitted by the English Foreign Office to the House of Parliament at Westminster. Among other things it is shown that so great is the stealing that, were the imperial Government to abolish the rice tribute from the provinces of Kinsu and Chekiang alone, it would affect an economy of more than \$2,000,000, which is the sum that its collection now costs over and above the revenue that it yields.

A Brahmin's Culivart. Sir Purbal Singh, Rajah of Jolpur, in Rajputana, is the hero of an extraordinary act of chivalry. Though a Brahmin of the highest caste and bluest blood of India, he broke his caste to prepare for burial a young English officer, a complete stranger, who died in his city. He helped put the body in the coffin and carry it down stairs to the carriage, and later to the grave.

WINGS OF A DOVE.

At sunset, when the rosy light was dying Far down the pathway of the west, I saw a lonely dove in silence flying To be at rest. Pigeon of air, I cried, could I but borrow Thy wandering wings, thy freedom, bliss, I'd fly away from every careful sorrow And find my rest. But when the dusk a filmy veil was weaving, I thought the dove to seek her nest. Deep in the forest where her mate was crying— There was true rest. Peace, heart of mine no longer sigh to wander; Loos not thy life in fruitless quest. There are no happy islands over yonder; Come home and rest. —From Rev. Dr. Henry Van Dyke's "The Builders and Other Poems."

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Cholly—"I'll go crazy if you don't marry me." She—"That's no proof you love me." Little Clarence—"Pa, what is a paradox?" Mr. Callipers—"A possible impossibility, my son."—Judge. "Yarley has taken a violent distaste for opera." "What a clever stroke of economy."—Chicago Reporter. She—"I wonder if you really can live cheaper than one?" He—"I guess they feel cheaper."—Indianapolis Journal.

"Do you think he really loves her?" "I'm sure of it. He exchanged his wheel for the kind she rides."—Brooklyn Life. Freddy—"What is statesmanship, papa?" Papa—"Statesmanship, my son, is successful politics."—New York Commercial Advertiser.

He—"Don't you think you could learn to love me?" She—"I would not have to learn, if I felt inclined to love you."—Indianapolis Journal. Dunsap (skeptically)—"Can you keep a secret?" Penelope (convincingly)—"Just let me tell you some of the secrets I am keeping!"—Brooklyn Eagle. Hobson—"Is Robson a man you can trust?" Dobson—"Yes; that is, if you lend him anything; it's all you can do."—New York Commercial Advertiser.

Leola—"Don't you think they are two souls with but a single thought?" Hazel—"Well, I shouldn't wonder. They are both making fools of themselves."—Trab. Francois—"Yes, he is pursuing literature." Gertrude—"Indeed! And is he very successful?" Francois—"No. It is still a long way ahead of him."—Cleveland Leader.

He (fervently)—"Your eyes are like the stars above." She (slightly)—"There are no stars above just now, Charles—the sun is about to rise."—Brooklyn Daily Eagle. "What is a hardy rosebush?" "It is one that doesn't mind your mother pulling it up by the roots every few days to see if it has begun to grow yet."—Chicago Record.

Hostess—"Ah, M. Le Ministre, sit down on this Ottoman." Russian Diplomat—"Parbleu! I would crammer stand. Ze vase thought ez exposer itself."—New York Press. As has been remarked, the horse battle is over. We turn in disgust from slaughter, Our task to resume, even-passed as before, Of cheerfully boiling our water. —Chicago Record.

"Ah," exclaimed the merchant, coming into the office and discovering one of his clerks smoking; "you are disobeying one of my rules, sir. I suppose you are familiar with the old adage, 'Where there's smoke, there's fire?'" And the clerk was promptly fired.—Philadelphia North American.

The Useful Baboon. So far as speed is concerned the dog, of course, has the advantage, for the keenness of scent, for the instinct of finding edible plants and hidden water, and as a sentinel against every kind of danger, the baboon is unequalled. Le Vaillant, an African traveller, gives an account of a tame baboon which accompanied him on some of his journeys. "By his cries," he says, "he always warned us of the approach of an enemy before my dogs discovered it. The dogs were so accustomed to his voice that they used to go to sleep, and I was at first vexed with them for deserting their duties. When he once had given the alarm, they would stop to watch for his signal, and on the least motion of his eyes, or the shaking of his head, I have seen them all rush forward to the quarter where his looks were directed."

The Costliest of Metals. The most expensive product in the world has lately been the subject of some inquiry with the result that the metal gallium has been put at the head of the list with the approximate value of about \$100,000 per pound. Following this have been placed the metals beryllium and lanthanum, a pound of which is held at \$10,000, Radium and thorium, which is said to be worth \$200,000 per pound; Zirconium and rubidium, worth \$4000; indium and tantalum, \$500, erbium, niobium and yttrium, \$300, and ruthenium and vanadium worth \$2000, or about. Ambergite, a secretion of the whale, has, similarly, been said to be the most expensive organic substance known, with a price of \$600 per pound weight.