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Before the end of this year every one of the 168 towns in Connecticut will be connected by telephone.

The Peruvian oil region is said to cover 72,000 square miles. That of Pennsylvania is about 350 square miles.

A correspondent asks the Chicago Times-Herald to "describe the Greek cross." It would be much easier to describe what has made the Greek cross.

According to the London Labor Gazette, there were 1037 strikes last year, as against only 876 in 1895; but the number of laborers involved was 245,758 in the latter year, and only 199,600 in 1896.

A curious illustration of the diverse conditions that may exist in this country is the fact that while so many people in the Mississippi Valley are suffering from floods the New Orleans papers are raising money for sufferers from the drought in Louisiana.

A woman's bicycle club was organized in Detroit the other day, but the Free Press says that it collapsed within a week because no two members could agree as to the uniform to be worn.

While a marriage ceremony was being performed near Danville, Va., a kerosene lamp flamed up and was about to explode when the bride seized it and hurled it through a window.

Promotions are coming rapidly these days in the upper official circles of the regular army. What few veterans of the Civil War are left find the age of retirement close at hand in the youngest cases.

For the first time in twenty-eight years the State of Ohio is without Democratic representation in the United States Senate. The long period of divided representation began in 1869, with the election of Allen G. Thurman as the colleague of John Sherman.

One of the new dictionaries has in it a pretty big and yet perhaps a useable word, "politicalization," of which it seems to be itself somewhat in doubt, although it half-supports it with a quotation from the Brooklyn Eagle.

Illinois women are making a strong effort to lift the compulsory education law of their State into activity. At present the law only remains that every child shall attend school for sixteen weeks each year.

A newspaper artist has been telling some of the woes of the men who make pictures for the daily papers. He says: "It makes me tired sometimes when I hear some smart Aleck who couldn't tell the difference between art and a side of sole leather criticize newspaper illustrations."

THE SAME OLD SONG.

Mother, out of the mother-heart, Fashion a song both soft and low. Always the same, dear mother art, Rocking the baby to and fro.

Mother, too, with the snowy skin, By-lo, by-lo, tenderly sing, And tell the dastard coming in, Into the baby's eyes to fling.

TALE OF TWO RINGS.

"CARSON," I said involuntarily, stooping to knock the ash from my cigar, "perhaps I ought not to ask, although I have known you for nearly three years, but is it usual for a wife to wear two wedding rings?"

"I was struck down—we heard his screech stifled beneath the debris. For about five more seconds the earth seemed to be leaving and threatening universal chaos; then all became still as a tomb."

"Dead silence. He had just lowered his violin, after a very soft solo—for it was considerably past midnight when I ventured that curious question. There had been an evening party, and, as I was to stay at the house till morning, Carson's wife had said 'Good night' and left us to finish our inevitable smoke and talk. His mouth twitched a little, but it was some time before he retorted in a low tone: 'Is it usual for a man well under forty to have hair as white as mine?'"

"Only just in time. Old Jim's face was only just out of the water, and they said that no human being could have lived in that atmosphere for another two hours. And young Jim?—well, there was just enough life left in him to last three days."

"Everything." He listened at the door for a moment, turned down the lights and then came and sat down, spreading his hands over the fire. "Two rings? Exactly, one is the ring I put on her finger when I married her; the second was put there by another man, and will stay there as long as the first."

"What could I do but promise? I had no thought then of marrying his sweetheart—but it was his dying wish, and for years Jim and I had been like brothers."

"You've heard me speak at least, of the mine itself—the Langley Mine, in Derbyshire. I had only been assistant surveyor at the pits there for about nine months when it happened. At 9 o'clock that morning, Arthur, three of us stepped into the cage—old Jim Halliday, the foreman, his son Jim, and myself; the men had gone down an hour before. I shall never forget that young Jim's sweetheart had walked over to the pits with him, as she occasionally did. They were to be married in a week or two, and she—

"When John Andrews, a farmer living on Island No. 8, in the lower Tennessee, woke up one morning during the recent high-water experience he found a good-sized house stranded in one of his fields. Like other structures carried away by the flood, it floated down stream from some point above to find lodgment in the shallows."

"A new vein had been bored the year before, and then abandoned because it ran in the direction of the river. We three had had instructions to widen it for a space of 300 yards—a piece of work that had occupied us nearly a month. Old Jim picked and young Jim wheeled the coal away to the nearest gallery, from where it was carried over rails to the bottom of the main shaft."

"One of the results of the flood in the west end of East St. Louis brought about a novel funeral procession. William Lorman, a plasterer, died. The street was flooded and neither carriages nor hearse could get near the house. The street-car company was appealed to and responded with two trolley-cars. One was used for a hearse and the other was utilized by the mourners. The journey to the gates of the cemetery was made in this manner."

"Well, by 4 o'clock that afternoon we walked rather roughly that we had reached the limit laid down. 'I think it's as near as possible, Mr. Carson,' old Halliday said, 'Jim, give another couple, we don't want the water coming in.'"

"Canada Covets a Moose Head. Harry M. Church, of New Bedford, Mass., who last October shot the largest bull moose ever seen in New Brunswick, has just received word that the Provincial Government at Fredericton has confiscated the moose's head and placed it in one of the public buildings at Fredericton, says the Boston Herald."

"A newspaper artist has been telling some of the woes of the men who make pictures for the daily papers. He says: 'It makes me tired sometimes when I hear some smart Aleck who couldn't tell the difference between art and a side of sole leather criticize newspaper illustrations.'"

"This Dog Carries an Umbrella. A New Orleans correspondent of the Philadelphia Times writes: On a quiet little thoroughfare letting off of St. Charles avenue, there might have been seen during the heavy rain yesterday afternoon a big shaggy Newfoundland dog carrying a spread umbrella in his mouth, his dripping tail sticking out from under and wagging complacently."

"I think I must have fainted. I do not seem to recollect any more until the moment when I became conscious of my mate's hard breathing over me, and of the fact that his hand was feeling—or, so it seemed—foxy my throat. I dashed away, putting under the shock of this new horror. 'Jim,' I gasped, 'for Heaven's sake keep sane! If we're to go, let us die like men!'"

"The eye of the vulture is so constructed that it is a high-power telescope, enabling the bird to see objects at an almost incredible distance. A nugget of platinum, weighing nearly two pounds, is on exhibition in New York. This is believed to be the largest nugget ever discovered, the metal being usually found in very small grains."

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

Munich, Bavaria, reports bottled liquefied air. Some comets have more than six tails. The great comet of 1744 had six tails spread far shape. Two French biologists find evidence that fasting lessens the effect of diphtheria and other microbial poisons.

The largest mammoth found in the Siberian ice fields measured seventeen feet in length and was ten feet high. Electricity has been adopted as the motive power of the machinery connected with the drainage system in New Orleans.

To guard against disease the Legislature of New Hampshire passed a law providing for the inspection of all ice sold within the State. The eye of the vulture is so constructed that it is a high-power telescope, enabling the bird to see objects at an almost incredible distance.

A company has been formed which made an offer to the municipality of St. Petersburg, Russia, to light all the streets of the city with electric lights for the same price that is now paid for the very unsatisfactory lighting with oil lamps.

Charles Burchhalter, the astronomer of the Chabot Observatory, of California, will travel half-way around the world so that for two minutes, in far-off India, he may endeavor to photograph the sun during solar eclipse of next January.

True manna is said to be found on the blades of a blue grass growing in Queensland. Nearly three parts of it consist of mannite, which, though sweet, is not a sugar. Masses as large as marble appear on the nodes of the stems. The manna-bearing grass is not only indigenous to Australia, but is found in tropical Asia and Africa.

Telegraph and telephone poles are the latest development in the line of manufactures from paper. They are made of pulp in which a small amount of borax, talow, and other ingredients are mixed. These are cast in a mold in the form of a hollow rod of the desired length. The poles are claimed to be lighter and stronger than wood, and it is said that the weather does not affect them.

RAISING A BIG BELL. It Weighs Ninety-Eight Tons and is Over Twelve Feet High. For some time past there has been a sort of dead-heat between the two biggest bells in the world, the one at the Cathedral in Moscow, and the other at the unfinished pagoda of Mengoon, India, north of Mandalay across the river.

In 1896 the Burmese community decided to have the bell raised, and employed the Irrawaddy Flotilla Company, Limited, to do the work. The rim of the bell was first supported by huge baulks of timber wedged in all round, and a tripod erected over it to fasten the shackle to and keep it upright.

Derivation of the Names of the Days. Sunday is so called, because it was anciently dedicated to the worship of the sun. Monday means literally the day of the moon. Tuesday was dedicated to Tuisco, the Mars of our Saxon ancestors, the deity that presided over combats, strifes and litigation.

Traveling on the Jungfrau. On the new Jungfrau Railway in Switzerland no passengers will be accepted until examined medically, and if any travelers feel ill they must get out, and they will be afforded medical attendance.

THE MERRY SIDE OF LIFE.

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

He Goes It Alone Now—Determined—Novel Writing—Deafening—Thrown In—A New Tack—His Explanation—The True Test—A Gloomy Climax, Etc. Ere they were well 'twas freely said she led him by the nose; Now his turn's come, she sits at home, And wonders where he goes. —Cleveland Leader.

Determined. "Don't appear to be in such a hurry to meet him, Maud." "I'm only hastening to pass him by." —Judy.

Novel Writing. "Pushpen thinks he has struck a new note in fiction." "It must be a bank note." —Chicago Record.

Deafening. "A man who will wear such a suit of clothes must be deficient in taste." "Taste! Why, he must be hard of hearing." —Detroit Journal.

A New Tack. "My wife is a most original woman," said Brown. "Why, when I proposed to her, instead of saying 'this is so sudden,' she said, 'well, I think it's about time.'" —Harper's Bazar.

Thrown In. Wife—"It does seem hard that when a woman marries she has to take her husband's name." Husband—"Well, she takes everything else he's got, why leave that out?" —Pick-Me-Up.

His Explanation. Johnnie has been accused of crying. "I des I aint," he maintained, gulping. "What are you doing then?" questioned Uncle Henry. "Lettin' my eyes leak." —Chicago Record.

A Gloomy Climax. "Did you finish the story you were at work on?" "Yes," replied the litterateur. "You were in doubt as to its conclusion. Did it have a happy or unhappy ending?" "Unhappy. The editor refused to print it." —Tit-Bits.

The True Test. Bees—"You could hardly call her a social success." Jess—"Why, she seems to have plenty of admirers." Bees—"Oh, yes, if you look at it that way, but I don't believe she's on friendly terms with a single man she ever rejected." —Chicago Journal.

All He Could Carry. "I took the dough," said the gentleman who had been caught "going through the clothes" of a drunken man, "because I don't believe in no man havin' more than he needs." "But how did you know that he did not need his money?" "Of course he didn't need it. He was plumb paralyzed." —Indianapolis Journal.

No Great Danger. In the Criminal Court the presiding Judge on the bench, a German, asked to be excused from jury duty. "Why?" asked the Judge. "Well, Your Honor, I don't understand good English."

Oh, you will do, replied the Judge. "You won't hear much good English here, anyhow." —Philadelphia Record.

Wifely Accomplishment. Mrs. Commonstalk (soberly)—"Are you sure your fiance will make a good home body, Ely? Do you think she knows anything about mending, for instance?" Cholly Commonstalk—"About mending, mother? Why, that is her very strongest point. I saw her mend a busted tire once in just fourteen minutes by the watch." —Harper's Bazar.

LIFE'S JOURNEY.

He went to seek his fortune With light and joyous tread, And all his bag and baggage Was just a crust of bread.

Years afterward a pilgrim Without sack or coat, But with a stick to lean on, Came hobbling down the road. "That youth you see out of, Now humped, bowed and 'bust," And he had journeyed homeward To try and find that crust. —L. L. Parks, in Truth.

HUMOR OF THE DAY. Bobby—"Pa, what is a half-at-law?" Pa—"Usually the lawyer, Bobby." —Judge.

"I can't see why they speak of the wisdom of the serpent." "Well, you never heard of a serpent getting its leg pulled, did you?" —Truth.

Gosling—"Miss Oldstyle seems to be very strong on literature." Miss Giddy—"Yes, poor thing; that's all that is left to her." —Truth.

"My husband is a great lover of the beautiful." "Indeed he is. I should think that you would almost feel jealous sometimes." —Detroit Journal.

Jimmy—"I heard Tommy Jones was ill nearly all the holidays." Johnny—"Yes, and what's worse, he got well-just in time to go to school." —Boston Traveler.

Mrs. Hasheroff—"Is there too much seasoning in the turkey, Mr. Billings?" Billings—"No; I should say there is too little turkey in the seasoning." —Indianapolis Journal.

Freeman—"I would like to get shaved, sir—close, sir." Barber—"Exactly, sir; there is nothing better for the scalp than that, if you don't mind the looks." —Judge.

Frances—"Yes, he is pursuing literature." Gertrude—"Indeed. And is he very successful?" Frances—"No. It is still a long way ahead of him." —Cleveland Leader.

Teacher—"Tommy, if you gave your little brother nine sticks of candy and then took away seven, what would that make?" Tommy—"It would make him yell." —Harper's Bazar.

"How could you have the nerve—after hearing her—to tell her that she sang divinely?" "Why, my dear fellow, a woman who would sing like that could be told anything." —Puck.

The Boarding Mistress—"And she moved away owing you for three weeks' meat?" The Fat Boy—"Yes! It wasn't so much, mum. She kept a boardin'-house, you know." —Puck.

"Willie Washington," said the friend, "is one of those people who tell everything they know." "Yes," replied Miss Cayenne wearily, "and he doesn't talk very much, either." —Washington Star.

First Cabman—"I axed him three dollars, but he said he had only two; anyhow, he said de legal fare was only one." Second Cabman—"Well, I 'posse you took de two dollars an' accepted de apology." —Puck.

Tramp (desperately, to reporter)—"If yer don't give me some money, gyur, nor, I'll commit suicide before yer very eyes." Reporter (agorly)—"I wish you would my good fellow; 'copy' is awfully scarce!" —Standard.

Waggish Friend—"Where did you get that?" Spriggins (gawping). "Eh! Wha—" "That hat?" "Oh! Hat? Of course! Bought it around the corner. I was afraid you were going to ask me where I got this umbrella." —New York Weekly.

Novel Rabbit Traps. Many of the Russian farmers west of town are complaining about jack rabbits falling down their chimneys and frequently lodging therein, stopping the passage of the smoke. Their pent-like houses—which are all provided with large fireplaces and proportionately large chimneys—are mostly low and covered with the "beautif-ful" chimneys, of course, have to be kept clear of snow. After it has been shoveled away several times, a large funnel-shaped cone remains, the walls of which are rendered icy by the alternate influence of the fire below and the cold above. Any wild animal prowling around on a bitter cold night, upon nearing one of these smoke cones and feeling the warmth would naturally seek closer proximity thereto, whereupon its ventures would invariably result in a slide. Mr. Animal landing in the fire box below. —Kulm (N. D.) Wind.

Soap From Sunflower Seeds. Those interested in new industries may be glad to hear that it is possible to manufacture good soaps from sunflower seeds. Sunflowers grow easily, and need little attention. A company has been organized in the United States to manufacture this sort of soap. It is claimed that the average yield of plants to the acre is 2500 pounds gross; percentage of oil is one-third the weight of the seeds, so that 800 pounds of seed will make 200 pounds of oil. The latter, when refined and ready to use in making soap, is worth about \$1 a pound, and is said to make the finest of toilet soaps. The net profit of the sunflowers to the grower is put at \$11 an acre.

Hot Killing Their Foe. The newest fad in Scott County, Indiana, is "hot killing." The vicinity has lately been invaded by hordes of rats, which are doing much damage. When a "killing" is arranged all the men and robust boys in the neighborhood are invited, and armed with clubs and accompanied by dogs, they begin a systematic cleaning out of the rats, haystacks and corn cribs. The rats are very fierce, and several men have been severely bitten by them, but the work goes on nevertheless, and the average manly residents at a killing is about 200. —Detroit Free Press.