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British landlords are said to own 20,000,000 acres of land in this country.

Germany's proportion of suicides is larger than that of any other European country.

Years ago Prince Bismarck used to spell his name without the "c." The present spelling does away with the monetary significance of the name Bismarck—two marks.

The London Echo gives a list of large land owners in Australia. One of them has 620,000 acres, another 1,200,000, a third 3,000,000, while the Union Bank owns no fewer than 800,000 acres.

According to the annual report of the Interstate Commerce Commission the amount of railway capital in employment June 30, 1896, was \$10,556,853,771. This is about thirteen times the size of the present national debt.

The London police are much worried over the problem of what to do with drunken men when in charge of electric cars. They don't know exactly how to stop the cab and they don't know what to do with the cab when it does stop.

Florida expects to send 200,000 boxes of oranges North this season, about double the quantity shipped last year. That, however, is but ten per cent of the yield before the great freeze and will not count for much in the market.

An Ohio poultryman says that the best way to prepare high-bred chickens for poultry shows is to pluck them in the summer. He says he plucks them clean and then rubs the birds with grease. By fall they have a beautiful coat of feathers. He adds that it doesn't hurt the birds a bit. The birds didn't testify personally.

The social democrats in Germany, which means everybody who objects to Emperor William's absolutism and believes in a greater share in the government for the people, are preparing to get representation in the Prussian diet. They already poll more votes and have a larger number of representatives in the reichstag than any other party in Germany.

A member of the British Parliament can not resign. When he wishes to resign he accepts the stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds, a nominal office in the gift of the crown, and paying a salary of twenty shillings a year. No member of Parliament can remain in his seat after accepting a Government appointment other than a Cabinet position, and this fiction of the stewardship has thus been perpetrated for at least 600 years.

The increase of the British army is evidently very seriously considered by the present administration, and the Solicitor General of England, speaking at a public meeting in Scotland, said that as a large increase in both the army and navy might become necessary, conscription may be introduced. The statement was called forth comment in all the London papers, for there has been no conscription in Great Britain since the battle of Waterloo.

The destruction of an Abyssinian Army in Somaliland is a striking bit of Fate's stern irony. The Italians invaded Abyssinia and were overwhelmed by those who were far below them in the scale of civilization. Then the Abyssinians in turn invaded Somaliland, and were likewise vanquished by those who were far below them as they were below the Italians. Complete fitness now requires the Somalis to get beaten by some still lower tribe, if such can be found. They might, for example, suggests the New York Tribune, invade Amhara and fall prey to the baboons.

It is an unusual compliment that the German Government has paid to David C. Sanford, engineer of the Connecticut Shellfish Commission. At the urgent solicitation of the Germans he goes over there to present to German scientists in a series of lectures the results of his study of the oyster and its enemies. Mr. Sanford will take with him his collection of oysters and their destroyers, said to be the most complete in the world, and tell of the methods followed in cultivating the oyster and destroying its enemies by the planters of Long Island Sound. Germany is trying to restore to its waters the oyster beds that were once a source of considerable income to German fishermen, but that neglect has practically ruined. Mr. Sanford will investigate the trouble and try to find a remedy to suggest to the German Fish Commissioners.

MY FOE.

Not from my foes without, but those within. I pray to be protected hour by hour; For that aggressive self that leads to sin, And that to pleasure with seductive power. Stands ever by the portal of desire, And mocks my spirit when it would aspire. From that most subtle foe, disguised as friend, I need be over on my guard, for when I sense for one brief moment to defend The castle of my soul, he seeks me then In some unlooked-for way, with mien so fair, And voice so sweet, the while he sets his snares. With honeyed words and soporifics, and lies, He argues on the pleasures of the sense; And pictures duty as a hideous gibe. And laughs at labor's pithy recompense; "Let dullards toil," he cries, "thine is the right." "To gather all life's blossoms of delight!" Again, in mask of teacher he appears, And cries: "Why seek to lift another's load? Each soul that journeys down the vale of life Must carry his own burden o'er the road; Accept thine own, but let all others go. Despoil his mask, I know him as my foe. My base foe, self, which, envious of the goal It cannot reach, since formed of dying Would hinder and oppose my striving soul That longs and labors for the better way; And with this foe my spirit must contend, By prayer and vigil, even to the day." —Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

A DEAL IN PETROLEUM.

HEN I must take your refusal as final? Very well. Here is the document signed by Wilfred Merriam—your brother—acknowledging himself a forger and thief, and giving me power to prosecute at any time I think fit or may feel inclined. Here is my offer: Marry me three months from now, this document will pass into your possession and your brother is safe. If not—

"If you are foolish enough to persist in your refusal Wilfred Merriam will stand in the felon's dock before the month is out, and the brother of the beautiful Nora Merriam will in all probability serve seven years' penal servitude."

"Oh, why do you persecute me thus? I was happy and in peace when I was poor—but now that I am rich you force attentions upon me which are not only an insult to me, but to another, also—"

"Ah! you refer to my nephew, Charles Crawford—a clever lad, Nora, but poor. You speak of your wealth. I do not deny that your snug little £100,000 in hard cash makes your attractions doubly alluring; and do you think I am going to resign all that in favor of my nephew Charles? No, no. In fact, do not think I have any more need for him in my office."

"You will not discharge him?" "If you would not advise me to keep a dog that has once tried to bite—who knows but that the next time he may succeed? You are anxious for your brother; think of him. You have the welfare of Charles Crawford at heart; do not ruin him, for as surely as you fail to marry me I will crush them both. If, however, you agree to my proposal, there is nothing that I will not do for them."

"Give me time to think." "Not one moment. Yes or no?" "I cannot—I—"

"Your brother." "You torture me." "Yes or no—"

"Then God forgive me. If that is the only way to save Wilfred, I must do it."

Notwithstanding the questionable manner in which John Markam secured his victory, he walked down to his office after the interview with Nora Merriam in a cheerful, and even jubilant, frame of mind.

John Markam & Co. were well known in the city as a firm of high repute, engaged in the oil trade. John Markam, the sole partner, had crept up from small beginnings; during the last month, however, he had made contracts which, when completed, would place him on the high road to fortune.

Some three years ago, when Wilfred Merriam, Nora's brother, was a clerk in John Markam's office, a series of petty thefts had taken place, culminating in the cashing of a forged check for a considerable amount.

The guilt being directly traceable to Wilfred Merriam, John Markam, finding that nothing was to be gained by prosecution, compelled the young man to sign a paper acknowledging his delinquency, and discharged him.

contract for 20,000, one for 50,000 and one for 30,000, that is to say, 100,000 tons of Russian petroleum in all, at £4 per ton—equals £400,000. We buy at an average of 64s. per ton, or £320,000, leaving a profit of £80,000, a very nice little deal. I think, Crawford, that when I have seen this through I shall sell the business and retire."

"Indeed, sir?" "Yes, I am about tired of commercial life; these transactions will be through in three months, and then I am going to be married."

"You surprise me, sir." "Aye, life is full of surprises. You know Miss Merriam, I think?" "Miss Merriam?" "Yes, Miss Merriam; but why in that tone of voice? Don't you approve of the lady?"

"This is no subject for jest, sir; you know as well as I do that Miss Merriam is my promised wife."

"Indeed! It is my turn to be surprised. I certainly know that you admired the lady, and I have no doubt that you fostered hopes in that direction; but when you have the cool effrontery to inform me that you are engaged to marry her I can only marvel at your audacity."

"With all respect due to you, sir, as my uncle and my employer, I must say that the statement you have just made is not only untrue, but you know it to be untrue. I was engaged to marry Miss Merriam long before she was an heiress, and we were merely waiting until my position improved."

"And do you think you are likely to improve your position by calling your master a liar? After this conduct you cannot remain in my employ. I will dispense with the three months' notice, and draw you a check in lieu of it. Be prepared to leave in five minutes. Go."

A few minutes later the bell rang again, and Crawford, late in hand and coat thrown over his arm, entered the sanctum.

"I am sorry to have to part with you like this, Crawford, but there is no other course open to me. I have just left Miss Merriam, and she has complained to me of your fortune-hunting propensities, and asked me to use my influence to put an end to your persecution of her. Here is a check for £200, and I sincerely hope that you will endeavor to cultivate more gentlemanly manners in your future career."

Quietly closing the door after him, John Markam's nephew left the office.

The fickleness of fortune as demonstrated by the events of the last few minutes caused an indescribable feeling of dismay in the young man's mind.

Charles Crawford as chief clerk to John Markam & Co., with prospects of a partnership, was now Charles Crawford, with £200 in his pocket and a few more hundreds in the bank, and prospects nil.

His first thought upon leaving the office was of Nora. Could it be as his uncle had declared, that she looked upon him merely as a fortune hunter? No, he would not believe it, and full of determination to ascertain the truth from Nora herself, he made his way to her home.

The cry of joy that fell from her lips when he presented himself before her soon banished all thoughts of her inconsistency from his mind.

In a few moments she had told him all the incriminating document, signed by her brother Wilfred, the persecutions of John Markam, and the extraordinary sacrifice demanded from her in order to save Wilfred from ruin.

"What can we do, Charlie? Poor Wilfred is so happy with his wife and child; is an error of the past to rise up and ruin his life? I would give my whole fortune to find a way out of this trouble. I cannot give you up, Charlie, and yet if we do not hit upon some plan—"

"You will marry John Markam?" "No, no. I do not say that, Charlie, but I must save Wilfred."

The services of four lawyers' clerks were hastily secured and they were set to work writing out duplicate contracts in blank in anticipation of the arrival of the answering telegrams.

The senior partner of the new firm, in the person of Miss Nora Merriam, drove up in her brougham at 10 o'clock, and a few minutes later saw her and Crawford in the private office of the bank manager.

The banking arrangements were rapidly completed, and Charles left with full power to draw upon the new firm's account for any sum or sums up to £100,000.

On their return to the office they found that a number of telegrams had already arrived, and by noon the next day the firm of Merriam, Crawford & Co. found themselves responsible for the payment of nearly 600,000 barrels at prices ranging from 3s. to 4s. each.

John Markam was well satisfied with himself—matters were moving very smoothly with him, his business engagements he calculated would bring him in a comfortable fortune, and so far as he could see no cloud appeared upon the horizon of his prosperity.

In his hours of leisure the thought of Nora Merriam and her fortune brought a smile of triumph to his face. Once wedded to her and the turmoil of business would involve him no more, and if a doubt of the success of his matrimonial venture crossed his mind the perusal of Wilfred Merriam's confession instantly banished it.

"She will wed me to save her brother, Crawford is out of my path, so I have nothing to fear."

But the plans of the cleverest men sometimes go astray, and when John Markam attempted to negotiate for barrels in which to store his oil, he suddenly awoke to the fact that some smart firm had cornered the market.

His contracts had to be fulfilled during the next three months. Unless he had barrels to send his oil away in, the contracts would fall through and he would be ruined.

When at 12 o'clock he was ushered into the private office at Bengers' Court he found himself in the presence of Nora Merriam.

As he came forward to take her hand, she rose and motioned him to a seat.

For a moment there was silence. "We meet under somewhat different circumstances, Mr. Markam." He bowed in assent.

"It is not my wish," she continued, "to indulge any idea of revenge which would probably recommend itself to any other person in my position. I understand from Mr. Crawford that it depends upon this firm whether you become a rich man or a bankrupt."

"That is so."

"I have certain terms to offer which, if you accept, will be good—if not—"

"Name them!" "In the first place you must hand me the confession written by my brother, and sign a document promising not to molest him in any way."

"And then?" "In the second place, this firm has contracts on which will bring in a considerable sum; you have engagements which I understand will make you practically independent. Agree to my first proposition and take Mr. Crawford into partnership; that is to say, combine the two firms, work off all the contracts, and then dissolve—each to have half the profits. Do you agree?"

THE MERRY SIDE OF LIFE. STORIES THAT ARE TOLD BY THE FUNNY MEN OF THE PRESS.

A Taking Young Fellow—Easily Defined—The Discourteous Interruption—Fired Back—Parts of Speech.

He took her fancy when he came; He took her hand, he took a kiss; He took no notice of the shame That glowed her happy cheek at this.

He took to coming afterwards; He took an oath he'd never desert; He took his father's silver spoons, And after that he took—his leave!

Easily Defined. "What is courting danger, Uncle Simon?" "Any kind of courting."

The Discourteous Interruption. "What is a rude awakening, pa?" "Well, it is an awakening before 8 o'clock in the morning."

Parts of Speech. "Were you knocked speechless when you ran into that ice wagon?" "No; but my wheel was knocked speechless."—The Wheel.

Fired Back. "You consider this garbage question an important one, do you not?" "My dear sir, it's the burning question of the age."—Chicago Post.

No Limitations. "Dodsworth, your wife seems to be a woman of commanding presence." "Commanding presence! By Jove, sir, my wife can command when she's absent!"

A Genuine Delight. "There is one thing which gratifies a woman more than all things else." "And what is that?" "Being told that other women are jealous of her."—Chicago Record.

His Sphere of Activity. First Citizen—"I never was so busy as I am now." Second Citizen—"What are you doing?" First Citizen—"I'm looking for a job."—Brooklyn Life.

Cleaned Out. Perry Pattie—"Please, mister, would you help the victim of a wash-out?" "Mister—"Of a wash-out?" "Yes, mister. I ain't had nothing but water to drink for two long weeks."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

The Difference. "What do you think will be the effect of that politician's latest utterance?" "It depends on the individual," replied Willie Washington. "People who like him will call it a 'praiseworthy step,' and those who don't will refer to it as 'a shrewd move.'"—Washington Star.

A Change of Heart. He—"I think I shall have to preach a bicycle sermon to-morrow advising all my parishioners to ride a wheel." She—"Why, Joseph, it was only three weeks ago that you denounced the wheel most thoroughly."

He—"Yes; but remember, my dear, that was while I was learning to ride."—Harper's Bazar.

A Wonderful Man. "What a patient man that Hanford is!" "Is he patient? I never noticed it." "Yes; he inflated his tires with a hand pump this morning without swearing that he would throw the thing away and kick his wheel to pieces rather than ever to try to do it again."—Cleveland Leader.

Tied Up. "There's the word pipe," significantly suggested the housewife when Meandering Mike applied for a re-peat. "Madame," he replied, "his here is one o' de nos' melancholy coincidents dat ever happened. I'm de President of de 'Society of Wandering Wheelmen,' and it ain't been no' more'n two minutes since I declared a general strike."

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

An electric brake is announced. That bacteria may live and grow in melting ice has been shown by Foster. Only one person in fifteen has perfect eyes, the larger portion of defectiveness prevailing among fair-haired people.

An even cubic foot of average soil was weighed and analyzed at Cornell University. It was found that the soil in one acre one foot deep weighed 2082½ tons.

In a recent lecture Professor Bergemann, of Berlin, stated that in fifty cases of perforating the skull for epilepsy he knew of only one permanent cure.

The difference between the tallest and shortest races in the world is one foot four and a half inches, and the average height is five feet five and a half inches.

Wheat can be grown in the Alps at an elevation of 3600 feet, in Brazil at 5000, in the Caucasus at 8000, in Abyssinia at 10,000, and in Peru and Bolivia at 11,000.

Two new asteroids have been discovered between Mars and Jupiter by M. Charlois, of Nice, bringing the number discovered by him up to eighty-six. Pallas, the Austrian astronomer, has discovered eighty-three.

The eyes of bees are made to see great distances. When absent from their hive they group in the air till they see their home, and they fly toward it in a straight line and with great speed. The shortest line between two places is sometimes called a "bee-line."

Corrosive water is a common source of trouble in metal mines. Its effect on iron, curiously enough, is greater when it simply drips on the metal than when the iron is immersed in it. A two-pound iron rail has been cut in two in a few weeks by drops of water falling on it.

A German chemist, Joseph Langer, has succeeded, with infinite patience, in analyzing the poison of a bee's sting. The amount secreted by each bee is only a tenth of a milligramme, and he required 20,000 bees to get enough to experiment with. He did not discover any bacteria, and concluded that the action of the poison was purely chemical.

The fish's belly is white and his back green, because in swimming about in the water the white belly is the color of the light shining through the water, hence protects him from his enemies below. His back being green makes him on the other hand appear from above as part of the green water, and is his safeguard from hawks and other enemies.

Perils of the Railway Mail Service. The remarkable number of fatalities among railway mail clerks in recent weeks calls fresh attention to the extreme hazards taken by these public servants. It is claimed by those who have taken some pains to gather statistics that the death rate is greater in proportion to numbers than actual warfare. This seems almost incredible, yet it is apparent to every one who investigates that of all the positions in the railway service that of the railway mail clerk is accompanied by the greatest risk. It is generally supposed that the engineer and fireman have the most hazardous posts, but they always have at least a moment's warning and are often able to save themselves by jumping.

Active preparations are being made among the mail clerks to petition Congress for better protection. Those who have the matter in charge are considering various suggestions that may take the form of recommendations. One reform that will probably be asked is that the mail coaches be placed after instead of before the baggage cars, the through baggage coach, which is usually unoccupied by baggage men, while the train is in motion, to take the place next the engine, now invariably assigned to the mail coach. It is also probable that the Government will be asked to supply its own cars and to make them of steel, and without platforms, which facilitate the telescoping process and its frightful results.—Kansas City Journal.

The Czar's Account of Himself. It is reported from Vienna that a curious point recently arose in connection with the statistics congress in Moscow. In accordance with the police regulations, it was necessary for every official of the congress to fill up a form giving particulars of himself and family. The President was the Czar, and to him two of the forms were sent. They were returned filled up as follows: "Name, Nicholas Romanoff; ordinary occupation, Emperor of all the Russias and sovereign of the Russian territories; secondary occupation, if any, land owner and agriculturist." The second form, also in the handwriting of the Czar, was as follows: "Name, Maria Feodorovitch; ordinary occupation, Empress of all the Russias and sovereign of Russian territories; secondary occupation, if any, President of all societies and associations for female progress in Russia."—London Chronicle.

An Unpleasant Ride. A certain prominent young man of St. Augustine, Fla., had occasion to take a short trip into the country. He procured a saddle horse and, by mistake, was given a pony that is used by the boys on their evening lamp-lighting rounds. On the way out of the city this pony stopped at every lamp post he passed, and would only move forward after his rider had struck a match. When the lamp posts gave out he stopped at every tree, and, though the journey was rather slow, the young man finished it with the expenditure of about two dozen boxes of matches which he was obliged to purchase.—Baltimore Sun.

FIELDS.

Oh, the gray fields, the hay fields, And the aure arching over, When the west wind dips to kiss the lips, Of the laughing, lay-dewer, The rhythmic swing of the averaging sythe, The swaying of brown bodies lithe, A song from the throat of a blue bird blithe, And the trilling plaint of a plover.

Oh, the sweet fields, the wheat fields, And the blue sky bending over, When the south wind swoops, and the wild hawk swoops, And the clouds seek the cover, The wide field glows with noon-day heat, The reapers rest 'neath sheaves of wheat, The chirp of the crickets sounds as sweet As the liquid notes of the plover.

Oh, the loam fields, the corn fields, And the gray sky glowing over, When the north wind blows from the land of snows, A blustering, boreal rover, Flattened by the wind that hurries by, A flap of wings, a crane's clear cry, And the echoing pipe of a plover. —John S. Hilliard, in the Chap Book.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

"They are not very thick, then?" "No; I fancy they see through each other."—Puck.

"When there isn't company," said Edith, "the baby wakes up only with his eyes, but when there's company he wakes up with his mouth, too."—Judge.

New Yorker—"Have you spent much time in investigating microbes, Miss Back Bay?" Boston Girl—"Yes, indeed; I dote on the dear little Michaelrobes."—Judge.

"The Day of Algiers is a very short man, isn't he?" "I believe so." "Then it would be true to say that the people of Algiers are as honest as the Day is long."—Puck.

Ethel—"What kind of a man is this Mr. Rushington you speak of so often?" Jack—"Well, he is what we men call a good feller." Ethel—"Mercy! As bad as that?"—Puck.

Little Bob—"Aw, I could walk the rope just as well as that man in the circus if it wasn't for one thing." Little Willie—"What is that?" Little Bob—"I'd fall off."—Harper's Bazar.

New Servant—"I found this coin upon your desk, sir." Master—"I am glad you are honest. I put it there purposely to test your honesty." New Servant—"That's what I thought."—Standard.

"Johnny, Johnny, what do you mean by hitting your little brother on the head with the hammer?" "I couldn't help it, maw. That cap you've got on him made him look so much like a tack."—Indianapolis Journal.

Mrs. Farmer—"Don't you never do no work?" Tired Tomkins—"Well, if you knew 'ot hard work it was for a college bred man to keep his temper 'tist answerin' ungrammatical females yer wouldn't ask dat."—Judge.

Little Arthur had been to church "How did you like the sermon?" asked his sister. "Fretty well," responded the youthful critic. "The beginning was very good, and so was the end, but it had too much middle."—London Tit-Bits.

"I once knew a man whose hair changed from black to white in a single night because he lost his fortune." "Well, I know a girl who lost her fortune, and her hair changed from nut-brown to red in less time than it takes to tell it."—Detroit Journal.

Mrs. Nubious—"My husband is a perfect brute." Friend—"You amaze me." Mrs. Nubious—"Since the baby began teething nothing would quiet the little angel but pulling his papa's beard—and, yesterday, he went and had his beard shaved off."—Standard.

Host—"Why did you give that man the most expensive rooms in the house? Do you know if he has the means to pay?" Porter—"Of course I do. Would that pretty young woman have married such an ugly old fellow if he wasn't rich as Croesus?"—Fliegende Blaetter.

First Whitecap—"Here's a letter from the wife of the man we lynched last night." Second Whitecap—"You don't say so!" First Whitecap—"Yes, she says she likes our style of doing things very much, and asks if we'd mind dropping up some evening this week to hang a few pictures for her."—Detroit Journal.

Reader—"Good gracious, man! Why do you buy that trashy magazine? There is nothing to read in it." Wheeler (in amazement)—"Trashy! Nothing to read? Why, man, alive, you must be crazy! This magazine contains more bicycle advertisements than any other two magazines put together."—Puck.

The Chicago Times-Herald can give a good answer to almost any question. When the Denver Post wondered why the cartoonists always represent Uncle Sam with trousers much too short for him, it said: "The trousers are long enough, but the old man's legs have been pulled so often that they are now really longer than they ought to be."—West Union Gazette.

Miss De Fashion (breathlessly)—"Oh, mother, it won't do to wait three weeks before leaving my party. We must send out the invitations at once, and I have it this week." Mrs. De Fashion—"Goodness me! what's the hurry?" Miss De Fashion—"The glorious Miss De Pretty, whom Mr. Richfellow so much admires, has a ball on her nose."—New York Weekly.

The physician in charge had decided that an operation should be performed. "Do you think," asked a relative, anxiously, "that the operation will do any good?" "Well, I should say it would," replied the doctor, confidently. "And he'll live?" "Oh, dear, no; not at all. But it will settle a medical point that has been in dispute for the last fifty years."—Chicago Post.