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France has decided to spend \$22,700,000 a year for new war ships up to and including 1903. The French idea is that the only way for a nation to get a navy worthy of the name is to go to work and build it.

Of the one hundred and eighteen wearers of the Victoria Cross in the British Army, twelve are surgeons, a large number when the whole number of officers in the army, of different corps connections, is taken into account.

The screech of the locomotive whistle is now heard in dreamy old Damascus. The romantic East is being invaded on all sides by the harbingers of civilization. It takes nearly all day to go by rail from Beirut to Damascus. The journey is an exceedingly romantic one.

"We use the eagle as a National emblem," says the Christian Advocate, "because the first battle of the Revolution began in the early morning, and the sleeping eagles were awakened in the early morning, flew from their nests and circled over the combatants, shrieking for freedom, the American patriots declared."

The Indianapolis News observes: "The old order changeth, giving place to new," and in naval construction, at least, there is room for considerable doubt as to whether the new is any better than the old. The disasters involving the loss of millions of dollars and hundreds of lives at one fell swoop have been known only since the advent of the much-praised ironclad.

Much has been said in praise of the enforcement of sanitary laws in the German Army, and the fruits may be appreciated when we recall that in the last thirty years the cases of illness fell forty-two per cent., i. e., now about twenty-three full regiments less than formerly fell ill, and the mortality decreased sixty-five per cent., that is, during the period of military service 2,000 fewer men died.

The statement in a Spanish paper that the last two descendants of Christopher Columbus are inmates of the poorhouse at Cadix invites inquiry as to the whereabouts of the Duke of Veragua and his impecunious brother. The last heard of those descendants of the great discoverer they were in a huff because their hosts at the World's Fair would not pass the hat for them. If they have now gone to the poorhouse or sent their sons there, it is a rather dismal commentary on the Spanish pension system, as well as their own ability to make a living by some kind of work.

It is rumored that the latest fashions for women show a continuing subsidence of the puffed sleeve. The sleeve sometime ago ceased to be a cause for alarm, maintains Harper's Weekly, and in its present proportions might easily have been tolerated for a long time to come. But that, of course, would not suit the fell purposes of the fashion-mongers, whose scheme is to let the sleeve dwindle until it reaches its lowest possible limit, and then gradually swell it again to the full balloon size. The prime purpose of the artificers of fashion is to induce the greatest amount of change which womankind will endure. In order to be adopted changes in costume must be gradual. Woman will not adopt a new fashion of garb which makes all her old clothes impossible; and yet it would not please her to have the gowns of two successive seasons made alike. A change always, but not too violent a change—that seems to be the requirement the designers have to meet.

A fine sample of a castle in Spain is that constructed by the newspaper El Pais, in the form of a dream of a republic of South America with Spain 18,000,000; in all, say, 62,000,000. Leaving the British Empire, with its hundreds of millions, out of the calculation, Russia and the United States both considerably outnumber the proposed alliance. Moreover, some millions of the South Americans are wild Indians. If they be omitted and only civilized people counted, the new Power would be inferior in population to Germany, and perhaps to Austria-Hungary, so that, instead of being the second in the world, it would have to fight for sixth or seventh place. That is, however, of little consequence, for the arrangement is about as improbable as an alliance between the earth and Mars.

THE AFTER TIME.

O, let us be glad that only the earth Beneath us lies frozen and cold; That still the days find beautiful birth, Through orient gates of gold; That still above us the fathomless blue, O'erarches the dazzling light; That still the stars shine tender and true, Through the infinite depths of night.

O, let us be glad that only the snow Lies white as a winding sheet; That the heart of the earth has warmth and glow, And strength her life-pulses beat; That soon shall her fires awaken and set Each nerve of nature a-thrill, And brimming with beauty the earth shall forge, That long the lay silent and chill, —Dart Fairthorne, in Vick's Magazine.

THE LOST LOUIS.

By WILLIAM SAGE.

THE colonel, the professor and young Jack Hawley were seated around the table in a bay window of the club dining-room, over their after-dinner coffee.

The dinner had been excellent, and the old colonel, as the guest of the evening, was feeling particularly genial, as he drew a handful of change from out his trousers' pocket in order to reward the attentions of the waiter.

As he did so the quick eye of the professor took note of a silver piece considerably larger than a dollar. "That's a curious coin, colonel," he remarked, leaning forward over the table.

"That's a Louis," said the colonel, picking it out from the other coins in his hand and passing it over to the professor.

"I always imagined that a 'Louis' was a gold piece," remarked young Jack Hawley.

"They are generally gold," replied the colonel; "but evidently some silver Louis were coined, for here is one."

"I have never seen nor heard of one before," said the professor, looking with interest at the large, clumsy coin, with the heavy countenance of Louis XVI, and under it the date 1776. "I suppose this must be both rare and valuable."

"I prize it more highly because of the wonderful coincidence connected with it," replied the colonel.

"Let's hear it," said young Hawley.

"Well," when I was a lad, began the colonel, leaning back in his chair and lighting a cigar. "Such a long time ago that your grandfather, Jack, was at school at the time and the professor's father was probably wearing kilts."

"Oh, hardly as long as that," interrupted the professor, laughing. "I'm over forty-six myself; you'll make yourself eighty at that rate."

"Well, that would not be so far out of the way; I was seventy-four last month." And the old colonel stroked his white goatee complacently, for he did not look a day over sixty-five. "It was when I was a youth of eighteen, working in a jeweler's shop in Boston, that this coin first came into my possession. At that time, as you know, a great many Spanish, Mexican and French coins were in circulation in this country, and I took this one in my wages. The face of the unfortunate French monarch rather took my fancy, and I kept it for a pocket piece.

"But before I go any further I want to ask whether either of you gentlemen see any marked peculiarity about this coin?" And the colonel tossed it upon the table.

The professor examined it closely. "I notice that it bears the date of American independence," he said.

"Well, that's hardly a peculiarity. There were doubtless others minted in the same year."

"I don't see anything else."

The colonel smiled. "Well, there is, and I'll let you endeavor to find it out while I tell you the history."

"In the year 1845 I went to Mexico. Silver mining was what I went there for, but I did about everything before I left the country, and ended by going into Taylor's army when the war broke out."

"One day I was seated in a gaming-house at Saltillo. Oh, I was wild enough on those days, Jack Hawley, and hardly a week passed that Dave Cranston and Pedro Blanco (they were my two partners), and I did not come into town for a little game of 'brisca.'"

"Well, on this day—ever to be remembered by me as the last time I sat down to a game of chance where the stakes were money—here the colonel took a long pull at his cigar and expelled the smoke slowly—"I was having a particularly hard run of luck and lost so rapidly that in less than an hour after first sitting down I was cleaned out. I had not had nearly enough excitement for my money, and wanted badly to keep on playing. Searching all my pockets in the hope of finding a stray coin I drew out this Louis, which I carried for over four years. The thought at once flashed through my mind that perhaps on this piece my luck would change, and I might retrieve my shattered fortunes. So I tossed it on the table and took another hand at the game."

"And not only won back your losses, but such a large sum in addition that you wisely resolved never to tempt your luck again," interrupted young Hawley.

"Inside of five minutes," said the colonel impressively, "I arose from that table, having lost this piece and everything of value that I possessed, down to the silver mounting on my horse's bridle, and I would have staked the horse himself had not Dave Cranston and Pedro dragged me away from the table, and putting me on the animal's back, rode off with me between them to our camp. I'm not going to read you a lecture on the immorality of gambling, young Hawley, nor lengthen out this story with an account of my life in Mexico. Suffice it to say that I kept my resolution in regard to gaming, and whatever fortune I have made was not amassed in Mexican mines."

"I suppose you got this piece back by purchasing it from the winner," remarked the professor, dropping it on the table and putting down his ear to listen to the ring.

"To my great chagrin he left Saltillo that same afternoon, and I never set eyes on him again."

"Indeed! Then how in the world did you regain possession of it?"

"Forty years later," said the colonel slowly.

"Phew," whistled young Hawley, under his breath.

"I was sojourning for a few days in a small town in Southern Spain. Passing through a narrow street one afternoon on my way back to the hotel, I chanced to stop, as any one might, to look into the window of a dealer in curios, and the first object that caught my eye was this identical coin. Now, I know that this sounds incredible. I, myself, at first thought it was merely a coin of the same denomination and date, but imagine my surprise when, upon going in and examining it closely I discovered that it was the very same Louis that I had lost at play in Saltillo so many years ago. I gladly paid the shopkeeper six pesos for it, and I have carried it in my pocket ever since."

Here the colonel stopped.

"Is that all?" inquired young Hawley.

"That is all, except that I will now proceed to show you—"

"Will you permit me to take a look at the coin?" The speaker who interrupted them had risen from a table in the adjoining alcove and now stood at the professor's elbow. He looked some years older than the colonel, his hair was white and he leaned upon a heavy cane, one leg being decidedly lame.

"I'm Major Tracer; I overheard part of your conversation as I sat at my table there, and I was so interested that I could not refrain from coming over and, at the risk of intruding, taking a part in it."

"No intrusion at all, sir. One old soldier is always glad to make the acquaintance of another, and your name, major, is known to every veteran of the Mexican War. Permit me to introduce my friends, Professor Langton and Mr. Hawley."

"The colonel has just been entertaining us with a remarkable account of the loss and subsequent recovery of this piece of money," said the professor, handing the coin to the major.

"Seventeen seventy-six—the same date," said the major half to himself. Then putting the coin on the table he took up a fruit knife and, placing the dull point exactly over the letter "O" in the word Louis, a hair's breadth from the edge, he gave a sharp, quick pressure and the face of the coin flew open as though on a spring. With an exclamation of surprise the professor took it and inspected it closely. Some skilled workman had cut it open all around the milled edge and fitted a spring inside, just under the letter "O." So nicely had the work been done that when closed it was not apparent to the naked eye. When opened, it was seen that a groove had been hollowed through the inside about an inch and a half long and one-eighth of an inch wide.

"By all the powers, how comes it that you knew that secret?" cried the colonel, dumbfounded, as the major threw the fruit knife back on the table.

Without answering the question directly, the major took the other old soldier by the hand and, looking into his eyes with a peculiar expression on his face, asked: "Were you the man who did that delicate piece of mechanical work?"

"I was."

"For the life of me I can't say. What induces people to make baskets out of cherry pits, lockets out of hair and the thousand and one little gimcracks that are always being made? I was a skillful workman, and in an idle hour I took up this coin, cut it open and fitted it with a spring. There is just one way to open it. You must have had the piece in your possession at one time and stumbled upon the secret. I put something in that cavity in the centre—did you take it out?"

"I did."

The major drew up a chair and stretched his stiff leg out under the table comfortably. "In 1847," he began, looking fixedly at the colonel, "I was also in Mexico. The colonel nodded and handed the major a cigar. "Thanks. I was with Scott at Vera Cruz."

"And I," said the colonel, giving him a light, "was with Taylor in the northern part of the country."

"Having lived in Mexico for a number of years previous to the war," continued the major, lighting his cigar, "and speaking the language of

the country, I was more valuable in the secret service than is the field, so I was," here he puffed on the cigar for a few seconds to get it well lighted "a scout."

"I understand," and the colonel nodded again.

"The American army took up quarters at Jalapa, where I left them and made a detour towards the south, to discover a suitable route by which our forces could approach the City of Mexico, and avoid the fortifications and ambuscades which General Santa Anna had provided for their reception. I had been most successful, and had reached Molino del Rey, a small town almost in the shadow of the walls of Mexico City, when I was captured by the Mexicans and thrown into the jail to await trial as a spy. Imagine my despair. I had every inch of the ground from Jalapa carefully photographed in my brain. Could furnish Scott with information of the greatest importance, and here I was juggled in that little, miserable Mexican jail with every prospect of being condemned to death, and no possible way of getting any part of my valuable information to the ears of the general."

"You will, of course, surmise that the first thing I had done on being left alone in my cell was to examine every avenue of possible escape. My room was ten by twelve. There was in it a table, one chair and a pallet of straw. One small iron barred window, looking out on the prison yard beneath, furnished what light there was. The bars were half an inch in diameter, and firmly set in the masonry. Using all my strength I could not budge them. I was not, however, kept long in suspense. On the afternoon of the second day I was taken out, tried, found guilty, and condemned to be shot at sunrise on the day following—that is, within fifteen hours."

"On my return to the hot, badly aired cell with the stuning effect of my sentence denumbing my brain, I sat listlessly down by the table and allowed my head to rest in the hollow of my hands. My attitude of dejection appealed to the sergeant who brought me in, for placing his hand on my shoulder he asked if there was nothing he could do for me. I shook my head. 'There are some very nice grapes in the market place outside,' he said persuasively. The sound of the word 'grapes' recalled to my mind how parched the roof of my mouth was, so I thanked him, and said I should enjoy a few. I handed him a half eagle, which my captors had overlooked when they took everything else of value from me. In less than five minutes he was back with a basket of delicious-looking fruit, which he placed on the table at my elbow, and offered me the change. I motioned him to keep it, saying that he could spend it to better advantage than I. He pocketed it with an expression on his countenance intending to denote commiseration, but he was such a happy, smiling fellow that the effect was rather comical. As he was putting the change in his pocket one of the larger coins slipped through his fingers and striking the floor on its edge it circled about the room and ended by nestling on the straw at my feet. Actuated by a feeling of delicacy the sergeant withdrew without stooping to pick it up, and hardly noticing the occurrence I remained seated at the table. After a short time I pulled myself together enough to eat some grapes, and then commenced to write a few lines to my friends at home in the hopes that through the kindness of my jailer, who had also furnished me with paper and pencil, they would some day reach the hands for whom they were intended. As I finished writing my eye caught the glitter of the coin at my feet. I picked it up and tossed it onto the table before me. On looking at it closer I noticed that it was a French coin, with the head of Louis XVI. stamped upon it. This sent me off into another train of thought, and as I mused I tapped mechanically on the coin with the point of my pencil, thus, and the major illustrated the action with the fruit knife. 'I must have struck a sharp, quick blow right over the letter O, for all of a sudden the face of the coin flew open and out popped a little object that fell on the table with a tinkling sound. I took it between my thumb and finger, and going to the light could hardly believe my eyes when I saw that I held a tiny file about an inch and a half in length, with delicate sawteeth, which were almost invisible to the naked eye. The next moment I was standing on my stool at the window, experimenting on the iron bar. The little instrument was made of the hardest steel, and its tiny teeth made some impression on the iron. For half an hour I worked away persistently, and by that time I had cut into the bar a little. Not much, to be sure, but still enough to raise my hopes. It was only a question of time and not being interrupted, and I should be through that window. I worked away like a beaver. Twelve hours to saw through two half-inch bars. I had read of men who, with files made with watch-springs, had cut their way to liberty through iron bolts and bars, or with no other tool than the blade of a penknife had dug through a dozen feet of stone and mortar to the daylight beyond; but these men had taken weeks and months to complete their task, while I had just one short summer night. Nearly two hours passed thus when the faint twittering of a bird warned me of approaching day. I had not finished the first bar. I seemed to be making no progress at all now. Once the little file had slipped from my fingers and fallen to the floor, where I had been obliged to grope for it, and the constant fear lest it should slip again and fall outside made me doubly cautious and slow. As the first streaks of red tinged the eastern sky the roll of the drum in the guard room beneath

THE MERRY SIDE OF LIFE.

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

Joy in Absence—Touchy—A Silent Partner—Borrowing Trouble—Gregarious—The Snake Editor Answered—Her Gentle Repeach—The Gentle Reminder, Etc.

I love the good old-fashioned songs, And for good cause, as you'll allow; A present joy to them belongs— Because nobody sings them now. —Judge.

Touchy. "Isn't Groucher a very irritable man?" "He is rather touchy. Touched me yesterday for ten."—Detroit Free Press.

Borrowing Trouble. He—"I suppose you would scream and wake up everybody in the house if I were to kiss you." She—"Why is it that some folks can't help borrowing trouble?"—Chicago News.

Gregarious. "O'Terrence—"Marty, how wud yez loike t' be a hermit? Wud yez injy solititude?" "O'Toole—"Oh, Oi don't know. It wudn't be so if yez had some one t' share it wid yez."—Up-to-Date.

A Silent Partner. Henpeck—"I have troubles of my own." Mrs. Peck—"But you are the partner of my woes." Henpeck—"Yes, silent, as in every thing else."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

In the Klondike. First Citizen—"That lady journalist who just came in from the States seems to be an authority on economy." Second Citizen—"How is that?" First Citizen—"She has an article in the Chilkoot Courier on 'How to Live on Twelve Hundred a Week.'"—Pack.

The Snake Editor Answered. "What's afoot now?" asked the snake editor as the horse reporter proceeded to don his hat and coat after answering a telephone call. "Twelve inches, same as always," replied the horse reporter, as he dashed down the stairs three steps at a time.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Her Gentle Repeach. "I suppose," said a pessimistic young man, reported by the Cleveland Leader, that you would never speak to me again if I were to kiss you." "Oh, George!" replied the adored one, who had no use for pessimism just then; "why don't you get over the habit of always looking at the dark side of things?"

Awful Error. "I'll never forget the time I took my good old aunt from the country to see a Shakespearean revival at one of the theatres." "Didn't she like it?" "Like it? I found out that she would never have gone at all but for the impression she had that 'revival' meant something religious."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

A Long Dog. "Don't be afraid," said the owner of the very attenuated dachshund; "he won't hurt you." "I can't help being suspicious of him," was the reply. "If he is good natured why doesn't he wag his tail when I go to pat his head?" "He will pretty soon. You know it takes even though some little time to travel."—Washington Star.

The Objectio. "Give me the man who sings at his work!" exclaimed the cheery citizen. "He is the person whose temperament has my sympathy and approval every time." "Yes," replied Mr. Blitters, "I don't object to the man who sings at his work so long as he confines himself to that. What annoys me is to have him come in and insist on singing at my work."—Washington Star.

The Gentle Reminder. "Did you ever," asked the young husband, "have your wife look you in the eyes when you came home and ask you if you had not forgotten something?" "Many a time, me boy," answered the old married man. "She does ever. In the early days it used to mean a kiss; now it is usually a reference to wiping my shoes."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

By Way of Illustration. "Mr. Trimmer," said the artless girl, "what is a labial salutation?" "Wh-why," stammered Mr. Trimmer, "I—that is, I might perhaps illustrate it, but I don't think—"

"Why not, Mr. Trimmer? Here is a pencil and paper—please show me." Mr. Trimmer trembled with agitation. He was a decidedly bashful young man.

"I am such a poor hand at illustrating," he murmured. "Please, Mr. Trimmer." "Well," he gasped, "if you will promise to shut your eyes while I'm doing the d-drawing, I'll try." The pretty girl closed her eyes, the wicked Trimmer leaned triumphantly forward, there was a long drawn chee-cheep-cheep, and all was over.

"Why, Mr. Trimmer," said the pretty girl, as her eyes flew open, "is that what it is?" "Yes, yes," cried the frightened youth. "It is, indeed. I'll get the Webster and show you." "Never mind about the Webster," said the lovely girl, "Trimmer is good enough for me." And then their mutual understanding was complete.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

UNCLE HENRY'S PRESCRIPTION.

Aln't no use o' frettin'! 'Bout the weather, friends; Got to take whatever The kind Creator sends. What if dicky do gether, And the cold winds blow? Can't have just fair weather All the time, you know. But there's a thing certain, If your stomach's right, You can make the darkest Day seem nice 'n' bright, —Cleveland Leader.

Humor of the Day. "Your friend?" "No; merely an acquaintance from whom I borrow money."—Judge. "Who is that military-looking chap?" "That, sir, is the hero of a ramored war."—Pack. "Did you get your bike on the installment plan?" "Yes, I pay the doctor ten dollars a month."—Pack. Jones—"Why, Bridget, this is a very small egg!" Bridget—"Sure, sir, it was just laid this morning."—Detroit Free Press.

Women don't need to be told that the prick of conscience is about as productive of pin-money as anything you can mention.—Pack. The chief aim of some women's lives seems to be to get things slicked up one day before it is time to slick 'em up for the next.—Pack. Van Bram—"Jaysmith says he is an expert in toxicology." Shingles—"He must mean intoxicology."—Pittsburg Commercial Telegraph.

"You think you are a pretty smooth article," said the salt. "I have been told," replied the lard, "that I am quite refined."—Cincinnati Enquirer. Miss Trill—"I love to hear the birds sing." Jack Downright (warmly)—"So do I. They never attempt a piece beyond their ability."—London Tit-Bits.

"There are things in this world more valuable than money, my son." "I know it. That's the reason I want money to buy them with."—Detroit Free Press. Druggist—"See here! Why didn't you tell that customer that we had something just as good?" New Clerk—"Because he was after some postage stamps."—Pack.

Stranger (in Texas)—"How long do you fellows work at a stretch?" Cowboy—"Well, it depends a good deal on how easy a feller dies. Dey're variable."—Judge. He—"Well, I must be going; I always seem such a fool among a lot of females." She—"You seem always the same to me." (Now, what did she mean?)—Standard.

Watts—"I've got an uncle eighty years old and he is as frisky as a schoolboy." Potts—"As a schoolboy going to school or coming out?"—Indianapolis Journal. "More men," remarked the server of men and things, "would sell themselves to the devil, if the devil could be taken in with green goods."—Detroit Journal.

"So that burglar carried off all your silver?" "Yes; but what upset us the most was that he drank up all our cream and we had none for our coffee at breakfast."—Detroit Free Press. Blobs—"That fellow to whom I nodded will probably cut me the next time he sees me." Slobs—"Why?" Blobs—"He's my barber; and he's very careless."—Philadelphia Record.

Mrs. Hoyle—"What was all that noise at your house this morning?" Mrs. Doyle—"The servant broke some of the china and then my husband broke one of the commandments."—Standard. "I have a doctor's certificate here that I cannot sing to-night," said the prima donna. "What?" roared the manager; "I'll give you a certificate that you never could sing."—Detroit Free Press.

Her Mamma—"She says when she undertook to reprove you your remarks were, to say the least, out of place." Her Husband—"Why, I couldn't get a word in edgewise."—Detroit Journal. Prisoner—"It's hard to charge me with forgery, for you see I can't even sign my own name." Judge—"That point is immaterial; it's another man's name you've accused of signing."—London Tit-Bits.

Mrs. Stueckup—"Is this Mr. Slim-purse you have engaged yourself to a man of means?" Sensible Daughter—"Yes, mother. He means all he says, and that's the sort of a husband I want."—Standard. "No, no," said the Circassian beauty; "I can never marry the tattooed man." "My!" replied the fat lady; "I should call him a good catch." "Not so," continued the beauty. "He has an elephant on his hands."—Philadelphia Bulletin.

"Now, Thomas," said a certain bishop, after taking his servant to task one morning, "who is it that sees all we do and hears all we say and knows all we think, and who regards even me in my bishop's robes as but a vile worm of the dust?" And Thomas replied, "The missus, sir."—London Tit-Bits. Projectiles used by the United States army for its great modern guns cost as follows: Solid shot, 8-inch, \$63.80 each; 10-inch, \$114.59 each; 12-inch, \$212 each; 12-inch mortar shells, weighing 800 pounds, \$114 each, and 12-inch mortar shells, weighing 1900 pounds, \$195 each.