



Of a regular army is small, but it was made still smaller by 1,578 desertions during the past nine months. This is a costly piece of business, for the deserter costs the Government a good deal of money in one way or another from his enlistment until he skips.

NOT A BAIT FOR ROBBERS.

A Railroad Man Tells Why Pay Trains are Never "Hold Up." "Why is it that train robbers never plunder a pay train?" "Because they know their reward would be too insignificant."

PEARLS IN OYSTERS.

Facts Concerning Their Origin and Growth. The keen eye of science has discovered that the birth of a pearl is anything but a poetical affair. It is due to an accident, and to one of those provisions of nature by which every living creature resists foreign attack and seeks to protect itself from injury.

THE HONEST OLD TOAD.

Oh, a queer little chap is the honest old toad. Lying under the stone by the side of the road. He takes a little brown from his toe to his crown. He takes a little brown from his toe to his crown. He takes a little brown from his toe to his crown.

RETRIBUTION.

"You wanted to see Miss Celia Westleigh? Goodness gracious, she was buried yesterday!" The landlady of the shabby, out-of-the-way boarding-house to which the young man had just ushered two elegantly dressed ladies, with an awful enjoyment of the dramatic nature of the scene, exclaimed.

FRANCE BISMARCK continues to supply good interviews for the German papers. He complained to a correspondent recently that "a few months of laziness had added ten years to his life," that he had aged considerably since he left office, &c. This is the reason when a good many persons, unlike the ex-chancellor, would take several months of idleness for weeks of continual growing, and then feel ten years younger.

MANY cases of sickness from the effects of typhoid fever reported from different parts of the country. The poison appears to be developed through some chemical action in milk, and is most frequently found in cheese and ice-cream. It is well known that milk and its manufactured products are peculiarly susceptible to the presence of foreign substances, or to contact with them, and a little care in the respect would be only a reasonable precaution.

FIRE could not have invaded a building in the country where more losses of various kinds would have resulted than from the burning of the upper floors of the Western Union building in New York. As it was a nominally fire-proof structure, papers and books were stored there that money could not replace, and there was besides, a great amount of costly fittings required for the business of the Western Union Company and the Associated Press. Their destruction illustrates anew the practical impossibility of securing inflammable material from dangers of fire by the construction of a case that will not burn. A furnace is an ideal fire-proof structure and that is what a fire-proof building becomes when it is made of iron, brass, copper, lead and paper. Fire-proof or fire-resisting construction is, nevertheless, desirable, because it helps to stay the spread of flames, but it should not give rise to a false sense of security. The same precautions against fire are required in a building of this kind as in the flimsiest structure of wood.

CONSIDERABLE interest attaches to the laying of the cable between Bermuda and Halifax, and its completion will make a new era in the history of the island. An American electrician who has just returned from the Bermuda points out how much more communication there is from the fact that it is an important British naval and coaling station, with one of the largest floating dry docks in the world, and a large military garrison, and that the prosperity of the island is mainly dependent on its export of vegetables, which brings in revenue of over \$200,000. The people have become alive to the necessity of knowing what is going on in the world around them; they are putting up better buildings, dredging the harbor channels so as to admit the largest craft, building docks and wharves, and are now placing themselves in a position to reap the full advantage of daily prices current. This evidently is not the end, for it is rumored that plans for an electric road are already under consideration.

A COMPANY has been organized in Pennsylvania for the construction of steel railroad passenger coaches which will neither burn, nor go into splinters in cases of collision or other accident. The steel car is not an entirely new device, but the companies did not like it—certainly have not taken to it—and would not have it, for that reason, yet there is good cause to believe that the steel car is as likely to be the passenger coach of the future as the steel ship is the assured favorite of the present. In it lies apparently the element of safety in the most attainable degree. It may be bent, indented or crushed, even in a collision, but if so built as to exclude the use of wood in material measures, it cannot be smashed and reduced to mass of tinder or death-dealing timbers and splinters. The question of practical lightness should not be an unmanageable one in the construction of steel passenger coaches, as they could certainly be strongly built without being made much heavier than the present palaces and sleeping cars.

THE COMING MAN.

I imagine that when we look back from our home in the unseen universe ages hence we shall see, without much doubt, a race of men, the members of to-day much as the man of to-day differs from his, perhaps simian, ancestors. The brain will be developed to meet the more complex and serious conditions of a more complex and civilized life; the vital powers will be intensified; the man, reducing the powers of nature still more completely to his service, will be able to control the forces of the past, the intellect and the soul which inhabit it.

DEATH AND BURIAL OF A BANK NOTE.

There is a certain ceremony which attends the death and burial of a Bank of England note. It is only three days after its issue that it is carried to its last home in the Banknote Library. Its first day of nothings is spent in the inspector's office, where severe judges sit in judgment on its character. On its second day, it and its thirty or forty thousand fellows, done up into parcels, are counted and sorted, that is to say, each parcel is put in its place in the cards, according to dates and denominations of value. The third day, they are posted to ledgers, which are kept as index to the paid notes. On the evening of the fourth day, they are carried down with scant ceremony, in huge bags, to the Banknote Library.

NEWS IN BRIEF.

—During the early days of the war General Garfield, while in Kentucky, bought a farm near Pestonsburg for a few hundred dollars. Recently his widow sold it for \$7,000.

—A new telephone has been brought over from England and is said not to infringe on any existing patent. It is of the most simple construction, consisting of an electro-magnet and celluloid diaphragm.

—One of the oddest silver brooches shown resembles a dilapidated glove, turned down at each end with broken leeches. A dozen small diamonds glittering from the side take the places usually occupied by nails.

—Among the many gifts received by Mr. Stanley recently is a well worn copy of Shakespeare's works, from a laboring man. Mr. Stanley was gratified by the receipt of it, and wrote the giver a cordial letter of thanks.

—Three thousand patents have been granted to women since the establishment of the United States patent office. Some of these are of considerable importance. The hollow brick for fire and partition walls is the invention of a woman.

—There are people who still believe in the practicality of cow milkers. One of them has just got a patent for a device by which the contents of the udder without being kicked over for his smartness.

—The United States Government Commissioner of Patents estimates that from six to seven millions of the entire manufacturing capital of the United States, or six thousand millions of dollars, is directly or indirectly based upon patents.

—In Russia, when codfish are covered with the disease called the "pink," pink being used when the disease is a child or a young person, crimson for women and purple for men, but black is in no case employed.

—The increase of capacity of the Suez canal resulting from the use of the electric light for night passages is equivalent to widening the canal from its present bottom width of 200 metres to thirty-two metres—an operation which would cost at least \$2,000,000.

—Cyrus W. Field is said to wear two watches. One an elaborate affair, valued at \$2,500, is worn to please a friend who presented it to him, and the other, an ordinary gold watch, is worn to please his wife. He does not use the fine watch for fear of being thought too "showy."

—The uses of electricity extend. An electric fan, one of the new things under the sun, is in vogue, and the wire passes into the fan, and is arranged that when the electricity is turned on the flat face of the iron is kept at an even degree of heat—just sufficient to keep the fan going.

—It is reported from Rome, Italy, that there are alarming fissures in the dome of St. Peter's. About a century ago a similar state of things was remedied by encircling the dome with a strong band of metal. The band was heated and fir contraction on cooling was found to be sufficient to close up the cracks.

—William Waldorf Astor, since he has been the richest man in America, has the gloomiest expression of face conceivable, his former cheerful demeanor having been entirely lost. His head hangs forward like that of a man who is weighed down by responsibilities, and his eyebrows are drawn together in an almost morose expression.

—The latest invention is a hat with clock work fixed in the crown. When wound up it causes a little door to open on one side of the hat, when the figure of a young man, dressed in a suit, is visible. This saving the wearer the trouble and inconvenience of talking off his hat every time he meets an acquaintance in the street.

—The engraving of medals is probably the oldest of all the arts. If readers will take the family Bible and turn to Exodus xxxix, 7, they will find a list of the names of the engravers in the room of the New York Historical Society there is an engraved gold ring which Egyptianologists say dates back to 600 years before Pharaoh.

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—The higher educated natives in India last year a large number of his plays were published in the vernacular. "As You Like It" and "The Winter's Tale" were translated into Tamil and Telugu for Madras; "The Taming of the Shrew" came out in the Punjab and "Hamlet," "Much Ado About Nothing" and "The Comedy of Errors" were great favorites in the northwest provinces.

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