

Webster said in 1826: "Cuba is the hinge upon which interesting events may possibly turn." In view of present conditions the soul of the exponent would be justified in exclaiming, "I told you so."

In 1810 there were one archbishop, four bishops, seventy priests and 150,000 Catholics in the country. To day there are ninety dioceses in the land, with over 8000 priests and a Catholic population of at least 10,000,000.

The ship Henry B. Hyde has made the trip from San Francisco to Honolulu in ballast in nine days and four and one-half hours. Only one other sailing ship has ever equaled this time, the clipper Fair Wind having sailed the distance in eight days and seventeen and one-half hours.

Some one recently stated that the Japanese were making clocks and watches themselves, and would be exporting them to America. A British official in Japan reports that the latter part of the story is probably erroneous, because Japan is importing increased quantities of the very kind of goods she is beginning to manufacture.

The past season, it is said, has been a very profitable one with the sugar planters of Louisiana. The outlook at present is for a crop of 325,000 to 360,000 tons. This is slightly in excess of the crop for 1896, and nearly equals the crop of 1894, which was the largest in the history of the state. The molasses yield, it is estimated, will be from 25,000,000 to 27,000,000 barrels, of which 6,000,000 barrels will be open kettle of good quality and the remainder centrifugal molasses. The tonnage of cane was below the average, ranging from 18 to 23 tons an acre, but the yield of sugar has increased, the average running as high as 195 pounds to the ton in one parish. Prices have advanced this year, and the growers have reaped good profits. The acreage next year will be increased. The value of sugar property has increased about twenty-five per cent. Many old plantations are now being brought under cultivation that have been idle since the civil war.

It is a matter of surprise to learn that public-land offices are still maintained in some states where the remainder of the public domain is less than 500,000 acres, observes the Chicago Record. The offices are kept up by the government, each with its register and receiver. Appointments to these positions are in great demand. The emoluments consist of fees dependent upon the amount of business transacted. Although there may be nothing but almost worthless odds and ends of public lands remaining, these offices pay enough to make them highly desirable. Missouri has only 497,000 acres of public land left, yet the state has three land offices—at Booneville, Ironton and Springfield. For the recent appointment of register at one of these offices there were thirteen candidates; for another place there were nine candidates. Wisconsin has only 454,000 acres of public land remaining. Wisconsin has three land offices, and the Republican congressmen have had ample evidence of the popular demand for the appointments. A man who recently completed two terms in Congress has been trying to get a place as register of one of these offices. Mississippi, with her hills and swamps, has only 441,000 acres which belong to the government, but that state has a land office and the complement of officials. In the states mentioned the appointments are said to be good from \$1000 to \$3000 a year. Of course everybody can see at a glance that legitimate homesteading does not amount to much with such a limited amount of land to choose from. The explanation of the fees in the states where the domain has long been practically exhausted is interesting. The homestead claim until fully proved by terms of residence is not taxable. Many persons holding homesteads do not prove up their claims, but transfer them and enter homesteads again when the limit of time expires. Thus the land is held and passed from owner to owner without paying taxes, but yielding a small amount in fees to the land officers. Such methods are said to sustain these land offices and land officers. A bill to meet the practices has been drafted. It abolishes the land offices in all states where the amount of public land is under 500,000 acres and turns the residue over to the states for school purposes. As it destroys some of the limited patronage left outside of the civil service it has not much chance of enactment.

Catflogues sent out by some American manufacturing houses give both retail and wholesale prices. In Holland this practice is criticised, as information in regard to wholesale rates is considered confidential.

A Boston man who refuses to accept the modern process of photography as an improvement is still taking daguerreotypes, as he has been doing for the last fifty years. He says that they remain the most correct likenesses yet produced, and he does business of sufficient volume to warrant his sticking to his hobby.

A short time ago the British government wanted four locomotives in a big hurry, but the British manufacturers to whom they applied declared that they could not furnish them inside of four and one-half months. The government applied to American manufacturers, who completed the four locomotives in exactly thirty-one days.

So small a creature as the beaver, according to H. B. Woodward of the British museum, has changed the character of a considerable portion of the British Isles to a remarkable degree. The borders of the fens were once covered with forests, and the beaver was one of the most plentiful animals of the region. Its dams turned the streams from their natural course.

The national advantage derived from technical training in the public schools is well shown, maintains the New York Mail and Express, by the commercial prosperity of Switzerland, nearly all of whose exports represent the skilled labor of the people, and not any natural resource of the country itself. The Hamburg edgings, so-called, come from that country, and have brought millions of dollars back to it, while this year the new Swiss laces promise to make a greater impression upon the woman's world.

The late Spanish minister, Senor de Lome, unwittingly paid a compliment to American women when his idea was to depreciate them. He said that they were the only women who had not yet succumbed to the fascination of the cigarette. Spanish, Portuguese and Italian women use the Havana article; Greek, Turkish, Russian and Austrian women the famous Turkish tobacco; French women revel in the caporal, and many English women have taken up the practice; but in this country the habit is as rare among the sex as it was a hundred years ago.

The report of the commissioner of internal revenue for the year 1897, shows the total receipts from all sources to have been \$146,619,593—a decrease, as compared with the fiscal year 1896, of \$211,022. The important changes in consumption are an increase of \$1,338,472 in the receipts from distilled spirits as compared with 1896, and a decrease of practically the same amount in the receipts from fermented liquors. The quantity of distilled spirits gauged was 246,036,921 gallons, a decrease of 23,237,841 gallons. There was also a decrease of 3029 in the number of distilleries operated. Also a notable decrease in the number of barrels of beer produced. The total number of barrels produced, as reported, was 34,462,822, which is a decrease of 1,396,428 barrels as compared with the product of 1896.

Our American exports are still mainly agricultural, notes the Atlanta Constitution. This is evident from the fact that 67.63 per cent. of our entire exports to foreign countries last year consisted of agricultural products. In the aggregate our exports for 1897 amounted to \$1,099,000,000. Of this sum not less than \$730,323,514 is credited to agricultural products. Our exports of manufactured products are gradually increasing from year to year, but it will be some time yet before they catch up with our exports of agricultural products. In the following table our exports for 1897 are classified under six heads, with the aggregate amounts and percentages in each case:

Products of agriculture	Value	Per cent. of whole
Manufactures	\$730,323,514	67.63
Mining	279,616,898	25.89
Forest	19,792,796	1.83
Fisheries	40,834,864	3.78
Miscellaneous	5,649,945	.52
	3,654,001	.35

On account of the vast extent of fertile territory comprised within our national limits we may confidently expect to remain the world's great agricultural market, but while we have this assurance, there is at the same time nothing to prevent us from becoming eventually the foremost industrial and commercial power on the globe.

### THE NATION'S VOICE.

Over the plains and the meadows—  
Over the lights and the shadows,  
There's an echo that thrills  
In the rush of the rills,  
And rings from the hearts of the firm-  
founded hills:  
"The star-spangled banner,  
Oh, long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free  
And the home of the brave!"

Over the roar and the rattle—  
The clang and the clash of the battle,  
There's a song that shall rise  
And shall ring to the skies—  
Where the patriot lives and the patriot  
dies:  
"The star-spangled banner,  
Oh, long may it wave  
O'er the land of the free  
And the home of the brave!"  
—Atlanta Constitution.

## Playing at Sweethearts.

"Why, I'd rather marry her myself," said I. Nothing, in truth, was further from my thoughts.

Amanda's mother regarded me enviously. "Of course," said she, "if that were the case, it would make a difference."

"But I don't really mean it," I cried, hastily. Why, the idea was absurd. Just when I was in the middle of the book on the "Cerebral Convulsions," too.

"Then," said her mother, closing her hard, thin mouth with a snap, "Amanda will marry Mr. Plutus. There is no one but you who has any right to a voice in the matter."

"There is Amanda," I suggested. "Amanda! She is far too young to decide. I am the judge for her. Amanda shall do as I bid her and marry Mr. Plutus."

"I shall do my best to stop her," I said, "but she shall not see you." I knew she would try to be as good as her word, and my heart went out in a great pity for poor little Amanda, who was so like her father and had been a pet of mine ever since she was a child. "If I weren't too old—" I said, half to myself.

"Nonsense. Why, you're no older than I." She is 43.

"Too much buried in my books and in a bachelor's recreations—"

"Marriage would soon alter that."

"I could never make that child happy," I sighed.

"Nonsense! She's devoted to you."

"Not in—in that way." I believe I blushed.

"You'd soon make her."

"Do you really mean it?" I couldn't let old Tom's daughter be married to that Plutus. It would delay matters, anyhow, if she became engaged to me. Meanwhile, I might find some one else for her.

"Why not?" she asked, coolly.

"Very well: I will speak to Amanda about it," I said, slowly. "But there must be no drawing back on your part."

I had a sudden inspiration—being a man of quick thought. "I should like to have your consent in writing. To be candid, I do not trust you."

"Very well," she sat down to her escriptorie. "What shall I write?"

"I consent to the marriage of my daughter to Mr. Frank Austen," I dictated. She wrote it accordingly and signed it with a flourish.

My name is the same as my nephew's. I'll have him up to town, and if he doesn't fall in love with Amanda he's a fool. That was my idea.

"Well, now I'll talk to Amanda," I said, feeling rather uncomfortable. And I did.

Amanda is 18 and stands 5 feet 2. Amanda has golden brown hair that will get loose and tumble about her cheeks and forehead. Amanda has big, dark eyes and long eyelashes and cherry-ripe lips and the dearest little dimples in the world. Amanda has soft, white hands—she generally gives me both—and tiny feet whose rush I could recognize blindfold. She came in quietly today, and there were dark marks under her eyes.

"Oh, Cousin Frank!" she cried—cousin is my brevet rank—"you won't let her make me—marry that horrible man!"

"No," said I. "Mandy, my dear, I won't." Then I kissed her. If only I were sure that she wouldn't disarrange my study!

"You kind old Frank!" She took hold of my arm and squeezed it.

"But your mother insists upon your getting engaged to some one, my dear," I said, ruefully; "somebody who is fairly well off. Are you in love with anybody, Mandy? Tell me, there's a good little girl."

She opened her eyes wide and looked at me honestly. "Oh, no, Cousin Frank! Only—only—I think perhaps I should like to be—some day."

"But there isn't any one yet? Truly?"

"Truly. No one at all."

"Well, look here, Mandy," I said, sheepishly; "your mother insists that you shall be engaged to some one, and I can only find one person."

"Not Mr. Plutus! I won't!" she cried, vehemently.

"No, no! Not any one who will annoy you, dear, or whom you dislike."

"Whoever—" She looked up at me quickly and half let go my arm.

"Just till you find some one you like," I apologized, turning as red as a poppy.

She held on to my arm again and looked down on the ground. Then she laughed. "How very funny."

"Would you mind, Mandy?"

"No—o," she laughed again. "I think it would be rather—fun. You would have to take me out a lot, wouldn't you? To pretend properly—"

"Ye—es. Oh, yes, of course." Whatever would become of the "Cerebral Convulsions?"

"But wouldn't it be rather a bother to you?"

"Not more than to you."

"Oh, it wouldn't be any bother to me!" she cried, excitedly. "We'd go to the Tower and the stores and the Crystal Palace and the Zoo and the exhibition—and have tea in the gardens—and the opera and—"

She saw my face fall. "I only

meant to some of them," she explained. "You always do take me to the academy and one or two places, don't you?"

"I shall like to take you to some, my dear," I assured her. "I always enjoy myself when I do. But you know I am finishing my book just now."

"Oh, yes! I won't worry you, Cousin Frank. And—and—I could help you with it, couldn't I?" I almost groaned aloud. Amanda on "Cerebral Convulsions!"

"I'm afraid it's rather too dry for that."

"I might learn the typewriter and copy it," she pleaded, anxiously. A man is only a fool, after all, however much he studies and learns. Do you know I suddenly bent down and kissed her, and she blushed like a carnation.

"I won't let you blunt your finger tips with a typewriter," I said, gallantly. "But you shall copy some pieces for me—till you find some nice young man and your engagement ends." It was best to have a clear understanding, I thought.

"Ye—es," said she, thoughtfully; "but—oh, Cousin Frank—suppose I didn't find any one else?"

"Then I shall have to marry you myself. It would be better than old Plutus, wouldn't it?"

"Oh, yes. But I shouldn't like—I couldn't bear to think that you had sacrificed yourself to me. I should be such a bother, shouldn't I?"

I looked down affectionately on the ruffled hair and inquiring eyes. "I think—I think, Mandy," I said, gently, "I could put up with you very well. But we have been so used to look upon one another in a different light that it's rather late to change. You see, dear, I have grown into a fidgety old bachelor."

"You're not really old, and you're never fidgety with me, and I owe you so much."

I'd merely paid for her schooling and pocket money and so on. I promised old Tom—poor old Tom!—that I'd take care of his girl.

"That's nothing to do with it, Mandy," I said, slowly. "You see, I've a lot of interests which you could never share." She shook her head, doubtfully. "And I like to rush off, when I'm not working, to men's recreations—to play cricket, to watch football or—"

"I like watching football," she observed, eagerly.

"I'm used to having meals when I please and going out when I like and coming in when I like. Of course, I couldn't do that if I had a wife. It wouldn't be fair."

"It would be a little lonely for her," said Amanda, wistfully.

"So," I continued, resolutely, resisting an absurd impulse to kiss her again, "though I think you the nicest little woman in the world, dear—she smiled just like the sun coming out—"

"it would be better for you to find some one younger and less crotchety." She tapped the ground rapidly with one little foot. "Meanwhile, we're engaged, you know, and we must live up to it. Where shall I take you tomorrow?"

"Oh, no! You must do a lot of your book tomorrow and give me some copying to do—about brains and spines and things."

"Nonsense, child! Don't I always take you out when I come to town. Shall we go to the academy?" She laughed her old childish laugh.

"And lunch at a restaurant?" she inquired, delightedly. "And go to the Crystal Palace afterwards and have tea in the gardens and see the variety show and dine on the terrace like we did last year?" She squeezed my arm in her old way. "Won't it be jolly?"

The next day I took her to the Zoo and smiled to see her laugh at the monkeys. The day after I took her to the exhibition and up the big wheel and put my arm round her because she was frightened, or pretended to be. I squeezed twice for good night. Then I began to see that it would be bad for the "Cerebral Convulsions" if this sort of thing went on. So I sent for Nephew Frank to come up to town at once. That light-hearted young gentleman held his sides with laughter when I explained the situation.

"So I'm to court your fiancée—she used to be a pretty little girl—and take her off your hands for an allowance of £500 a year?" he said, wiping his eyes; "£500 and £300 make £800—£400 apiece."

"Exactly!" I said, approvingly. "You always were smart at figures, Frank."

"But, my dear uncle, suppose she won't have me? Besides, I'm not sure, but I think I'm just a little gone on Nellie Marchant? Suppose I don't care for your Amanda?"

"She's awfully nice, Frank; you couldn't help it." I was surprised at my doltish tone.

"Then," said he, "whyever don't you marry her yourself?"

"I lit a cigar and drummed on the fender with my slipper. 'I'm too old—too settled in my bachelor ways, Frank,' I said, regretfully. 'I don't know—I'm not sure—if it would do.'"

"I believe it would be the best thing

in the world for you." Frank leaned over the table earnestly. He's an honest, unselfish lad; that's why I'm so fond of him. And I know he'd be good to her.

"Well," I said, slowly, "I'll be honest with you, Frank. I'm fond of the child—very fond, indeed. If I thought that she could like me—in that way—I'm hanged if I wouldn't chance it. But she only looks upon me as an elder brother. Some day, she—" I paused to blow my handkerchief—"she would find out. It wouldn't do; I'm sure it wouldn't do."

So it was arranged that I should be busy finishing my book and see less of Amanda. And Frank was to see her every day, to find out if she would like him better than me or if he could like her better than Nellie Marchant.

This arrangement lasted for a fortnight, but none of us seemed quite ourselves. Mandy grew staid and silent. I couldn't do anything right with the book, and something seemed wrong with my liver. Even cheerful Frank grew a bit bad-tempered. At the end of the fortnight he burst in upon me in the evening, when I was busy with the "Cerebral Convulsions."

"Look here, uncle," said he, coolly, flinging himself into an armchair and taking one of my cigars, "you're an ass!"

"That," I observed, mildly, "is very strong language, Frank."

"Well," said he, "I like Nellie ever so much better than your Amanda—that's flat."

"Then," said I, bringing my hand down on the table with a thump, "you're a fool!"

"Amanda," said he, firmly, "is as dull as dishwater."

I took off my reading glasses and glared at him. "She's the brightest little creature in the world," I asserted, resolutely.

He took a long draw at the cigar and blew smoke rings—a thing I never could manage. "Amanda," he continued, in a matter-of-fact tone, "is dull—because she's in love."

I let my pipe drop on the floor with a crash. "With whom?" My voice sounded strange to me.

"Why, with you, of course. Man alive! You must be blind! You're pretending you don't care for her and breaking her poor little heart."

I looked at him in silence for a few seconds; then I got up and fetched my hat. "I'm going out," I told him, and I went.

When I arrived at their drawing room Amanda was sitting on the rug, with her back against the sofa. She had dropped her book on the floor and was looking into the fire with her cheek on her hand, and I could see tears in her eyes.

She jumped up to meet me with an eager little laugh. "What! Deserted the 'Convulsions'?"

"Haug the 'Convulsions,'" I said. "The fact is they're awfully uninteresting compared with you, Mandy."

"Are they? Then they must be stupid."

I put my arm round her waist and drew her close to me. "Mandy," I said, passionately, "my dear little girl, we've been playing at sweethearts long enough; shall we begin in earnest?"

Amanda said nothing—only laid her head down on my shoulder with a happy little sob.—J. A. Flynn, in The Madam.

A BRIGAND CAPTAIN'S CAREER.

The News of His Recent Capture Causes a Sigh of Relief.

The news of the capture of the notorious brigand, Captain Athanas, the terror of travelers in the Balkans, has caused a sigh of relief. His career is the most remarkable in modern brigandage. He had withdrawn himself from his profitable and romantic business some time before his capture and lived peacefully as a citizen at Kuslovitz. His past did not, apparently, affect his social position in a town which is somewhat remarkable for its indifference as to the antecedents of its inhabitants, for the one very good reason that he had given up all the inconvenient habits associated with his former adventurous life. He tried even to make himself popular among his neighbors and gave his ill-gotten gains—a veritable Robin Hood—for the benefit of the poor and distressed.

The deed by which his memory will go down to posterity is undoubtedly the "holding up" of the international express in 1891 from Constantinople to Vienna at the station of Tscherskeskoj, close to the Turkish capital. The train was derailed, and the passengers, under the escort of the Berlin tourist firm of Stangen, were plundered and carried off to the mountains to be held as hostages until a ransom was paid. Among them was an Englishman. With the exception of four Germans and a Jew, all were subsequently released. With a sharp eye to business, the Jew, a rich Berlin merchant named Moritz Israel, was dispatched to Constantinople and brought the alarming news that the hostages would be murdered unless a ransom of 200,000 francs was forthcoming. The German government intervened and finally paid the ransom. Later some of the brigands were captured. But Athanas managed to evade all pursuit.—St. James' Gazette.

Nevertheless, He Got Her.

"You say that my daughter loves you?" questioned the old man.

"I'm sure of it," replied the young man.

"Well, well," returned the old man, looking the young man over critically, "there's no accounting for tastes, is there?"

And somehow, although the young man knew that he ought to be happy over the possession of the girl, he couldn't help scowling and speculating on that remark of the old man's.—Hartford Times.

WHY?  
"Tis not because your eyes are blue  
I love you so.  
For they are big, and deep, and brown,  
As well you know.  
"Tis not because you are so fair  
I can't forget  
Your face, no matter where I go—  
You are brunette.  
"Tis not your graceful, sylphlike form  
That with a thump  
My heart sets beating. Not at all,  
For you are plump.  
"Tis not your tall, commanding form  
That I admire.  
Your head just reaches to my heart,  
And comes no higher.  
"Tis not, in short, because of charms  
That others have.  
'Tis just because you are yourself,  
That I'm your slave!

HUMOROUS.

Suitor—Your daughter, sir, is all the world to me. Father—Humph! Young man, you want the earth.

After a woman becomes a widow, she begins to say a great deal about her extreme youthfulness when she married.

"George, father has failed." "That's just like him. I told you all along, darling, that he was going to do all he could to keep us from marrying."

New-made Widow—Ah, no one can take John's place. I loved him from the bottom of my heart. Friend (brightly)—But you know what they say: "There is always room at the top."

Sunday School Teacher (illustrating the "still small voice")—What is it, dear children, that makes you feel so uncomfortable and unhappy after you have done something which you ought not to do? Dear Child—A lickin'.

Hotel Manager (to departing guest)—I trust you have been comfortable, sir; and that everything has been cooked to your liking? Guest—Yes, all but the bill. I should have preferred that boiled down a bit more.

"No, I didn't have a very good time," she said. "I wanted to talk, and there wasn't a man there." "But there were plenty of other girls."

"Oh, of course, but that was no satisfaction—they all wanted to talk, too."

"Yes," said little George Washington; "I did chop the cherry tree down, father, but I can easily replace it."

"How so, my son?" asked his father. "Why," said George with a snicker, "if I chopped it down I can chop it up."

Mrs. Berry (glancing across the table)—I'm afraid my little girl isn't enjoying her dinner. Rachel (who has left her pudding half eaten, with a sigh)—Yes, mamma, as much as I can; but, of course, if I was bigger, I'd enjoy more of it.

Former Resident—What did Prodigle do with the big fortune that was left to him? Ran through it in a year, I suppose? Friend—Oh, no. His wife prevented that. Former Resident—Good for her! Friend—Yes; she ran through it in six months.

Mrs. Newlywed—Before we were married you said that my slightest wish should be your law. Mr. Newlywed—Exactly, my love; but you have so many vigorous and well-developed wishes that I am as yet unable to decide to which is the slightest.

"I want you to make me a Newmarket coat," she said to the dressmaker. "But it isn't the prevailing fashion to have lengthy wraps." "I don't care. I am invited to a whist party, and the gentleman who is my partner told me to be sure not to forget my long suit."

Mother—I wish you would go on an errand for me. Small Son—My leg aches. "I wanted you to go to old Mrs. Stickney's candy shop, and—"

"Oh, that isn't far. I can walk there easy." "Very well. Go there, and just beside it you will see a grocer's shop. Go in and get me a bar of soap."

A Peculiar Disease.

Daniel Query, a resident of Blue Ridge, a small town ten miles from Selbyville, Ind., is a sufferer from an ailment which is baffling the skill of the local physicians. It is stamped by his attendants as being the "sweating of gravel." Query has been in poor health several years, and has been a constant sufferer from pains of the body. Three years ago he lost his eyesight in consequence. Six months ago he had severe pains across his forehead. In his agony he rubbed his hand across his forehead, when he felt three small lumps.

The pain continued and the lumps grew in size. As they increased they felt to the touch as if a hard substance was under the skin. They were finally pricked open, and from each was taken a small, hard substance that resembled gravel. When the lumps were removed the pain ceased then hundreds of other swellings were pricked with the same and now on some days as many as a dozen pieces of the gravelly articles are removed from them. They appear all over the body so hard that it requires a hammer to break them.

The attending physician has examined a microscopic specimen of the particles, and has pronounced them to be a fatty matter by the sebaceous glands, softened by the great pressure of the body, and it being follicles.

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