

The United States of America has won and holds the most conspicuous place in international conversations.

American shoes are steadily growing in favor in the markets of Europe. There is naturally a good deal of kicking at this, but it does no good.

Many Spaniards have been appointed to places on the new police force of Havana. They and the Americans will club together for peace.

Great Britain has ordered two new battleships, each to have a displacement of 14,000 tons, and cost \$5,000,000. That is what England thinks of the disarmament scheme.

The hauling down of the Spanish flag in Havana the other day has been supplemented fittingly in Madrid by the abolition of the office of minister for colonies. This was the final act of abdication for which more than four centuries of misrule were the preparation. The shutters were put up as the proprietors had decided to go out of the colonial business.

Among other departments of government activity, the work of the weather bureau during the last fiscal year calls for some comment. The most important incident in the work of the bureau for the year was the extension of its field of operations, so as to include the West Indies and the shores of the Gulf of Mexico. This was in large part dictated by considerations of a military and naval character, but in part also the departure was intended for the benefit of our growing commercial interests throughout the West Indies and Central and South American countries. In the United States new observing stations have been established, mainly in the west and southwest, and a climate and crop centre has been located in Alaska. It may interest statisticians to know that the bureau has undertaken the work of collecting statistics, which it is hoped will in the course of time enable those interested to determine the relative frequency of lightning strokes throughout the United States.

The cycle show at one time, both in this country and in England, seemed to have outlived its usefulness. These seemed not to be enough that was new each year to warrant the trouble and expense of a large show. But either the cycling public yearly includes so large a proportion of new comers as to make what is old to others a novelty to them, or else the people found sufficient beguilement in the many souvenirs, together with the few novelties, to make them willing to support an annual exhibition, observes the New York Commercial Advertiser. At any rate, the recent show proved to be one of the best held in America. That burning question, the chainless wheel, will be the chief feature, and next to it will come the automobile vehicles; for the cycle, from a fad, has come to take a similar place to that of the trolley cars in the public mind as a necessity with a certain pleasurable about it. The chainless wheel is a problem on which everyone is working. Like the storage battery, it appears to be foredoomed, but just in what form and who shall be its prophet are as yet undecided.

A paper has recently appeared in the English journals giving some notable data based on the national census of several successive decades. A most remarkable fact is the decline in the proportion of women employed in agricultural and farm service in the realm, also a marked decline in the proportion of women employed in silk, worsted and woolen manufactures, likewise in the proportion of seamstresses; on the other hand, an enormous increase is noted in the proportion of the sex engaged in the teaching service and as tailoresses, who are mostly sewing machinists. It is admitted, in this paper after an elaborate and careful investigation of all the facts and statistics relating to the point in question—that, while the industrial employment of married women with young children is an obvious sin, it is not the paramount one. In a word, the paper corroborates the conclusion arrived at by previous investigation by eminent specialists in this line, that the factory employment of women is not the main cause of the high rate of infant mortality in Lancashire and other industrial localities. Some interesting tables are given in the paper cited, showing that there is much more constant relation between infant mortality and the social condition of different town populations, measured by the proportion of domestic servants employed, than there is between the proportion of industrial occupations among women and infant mortality.

This country uses five times as many telephones as any other nation. The Americans are the champion long-distance talkers in the world.

Foreign governments are at "outs" about almost everything else, but they all agree that American manufacturers are capturing the markets of the world.

One year ago it was seriously proposed to abolish the marine corps, but in view of the admirable services of that body during the recent war it is now the intention to enlarge and extend it. Events have shown that the marines knew their business.

Two hundred cities and towns in Germany are preparing granite columns surmounted by braziers in honor of Prince Bismarck. On the anniversary of the late chancellor's birth fires will be lit in these. It would be interesting to know what the kaiser thinks of the scheme. If he is wise he will insist on designing the pillars himself. That would show that he had a real sense of humor.

The Salvation Army has established three colonies, one at Fort Amity, Colorado; one at Fort Herrick, near Cleveland, and one at Fort Pomie, California. In all three there are not quite two hundred persons, all included. The cost of the experiment during the first year has been about \$45,000, and Commander Booth Tucker thinks that with \$50,000 more he will be able to pull through another year.

The British postoffice is pluming itself upon marked improvements in mail collection and delivery. In the tight little isle the problem of making efficient the postal service is far simpler than in this country of vast distances, and yet there is no department of our government that has kept itself more closely in touch with the people, or that has more readily adjusted itself to the growth of population and the needs of newly developed agricultural districts, than has that of the postoffice. It seems odd to us that the British postal authorities should regard as a great achievement the placing of letter boxes in private houses at a minimum fee of \$25 a year.

We cannot expect that our crops will always be abundant, or that a great yield will always be coincident with a shortage abroad; but the growth of our exports of manufactures cannot be checked by conditions like those which may reduce the shipments of products of the soil. There is rich promise in this growth, which shows that in important industries we are not only supplying the home demand but also marketing a large surplus in foreign countries. Last year we were shipping manufactures from our ports at the rate of about \$1,000,000 for every working day. There is nothing so significant and encouraging in the returns as those figures which show the rapid increase of the exports of iron and steel, not only because of the great importance of the iron industry the world over, but also for the reason that the inexhaustible supplies of our raw material easily and cheaply obtained, and the progressive improvement of our processes of manufacture cannot fail to establish the supremacy of the United States in the world's iron trade. We are now on the threshold of a great conquest in the field of manufacturing industry.

In an article on the open-air cure for consumption in the Nineteenth Century, James A. Gibson describes the methods in vogue at Nordrach in the Black Forest. There the patients live in rooms the windows of which are never shut, summer or winter. They go out in the rain and come home and sit down without thinking of changing their clothes, and never take cold. Their system is put in such a condition that it throws off the cold microbes, and infection touches them not. The obvious disadvantages of trying any such method in the places where it is most needed—in the places where there are the most people, in the town—is that the wider you open your windows the more microbes you let in and the harder you will have to work to throw them off. Still, it seems that for freedom from colds it is not advisable to do as many city men do, dash from their houses to the cars, and then from the cars to their offices, with just as little life in the open air as the still incomplete inventions of man render necessary. Whether the doctors will eventually trace the cold microbe to his lair and throttle him there or not, it is wise for us not to wait for them, but to put ourselves in a state where we can combat the wicked microbes ourselves. For we do not catch cold, as we have thought all these years; the cold catches us.

THE MISER.

He said to himself, "I would fain be rich,
No squandering spendthrift, I;
With might and main the gold I'll gain,
To spend in the by and by."
I'll grasp and gather and pinch and save,
Nor answer the fools who jeer,
But my hungry till their coin shall fall,
To pay for each mocking sneer.

And so, as the years rolled swiftly by,
A mountain of gold he piled,
Whose shadow fell on his lonely cell,
Where never a loved one smiled.
He meant to barter his wealth for joys
To brighten his journey's end,
But it grew a part of his very heart
That he could not bear to spend.

THE MISER.

He died, and all his schemes and plans
The mould of the churchyard hid,
With ne'er a tear on his friendless bier,
Nor flower on his coffin lid:
He left his gold for a spendthrift fool
To scatter to earth and sky,
And the grasses wave on his lonely grave,
Neglected and rank and high.

There are beautiful lands that he might have sown,
There are joys that he might have known,
There are cries to heed, there are mouths to feed,
There is seed he should have sown,
And grateful blessings from thankful lips,
And love of a child and wife,
All these he sold for a bag of gold—
And this was a wasted life.

—Joe Lincoln.

THE DEXTERS' BARGAIN.

BY F. G. GRANT.

The Dexters were noted as a family for their shrewdness, and Squire Dexter was proud of it. He called it foresight which enables him to get much for little, and he was elated when he saw the same trait creep out now and then in Don and Aleck, his sons.

Not that the Dexters were dishonest as the world defines dishonesty; the squire would not have done anything that he thought dishonorable, but he had a knack of getting the best of a bargain.

For various reasons Squire Dexter did not keep a horse, which was a sore vexation to the boys. Doll was Mr. Dick's horse, a clean-limbed young chestnut which the squire liked to drive. As he frequently hired the animal, he thought himself quite a benefactor to poor Mr. Dick.

Mr. Dick had not made such a success financially as had the squire. He was a simple, straightforward old man, who had seen nearly all his property slip through his fingers in his dealings with those sharper than himself. The squire said this was due to a lack of business qualifications, and he privately opined that the old man should not keep a horse, since he could hardly provide himself and wife with necessities.

But old Mr. Dick clung to his horse, and as no one except the Dexter boys had evinced much desire to own it, he had encountered no great temptation to part with it.

Now the temptation had come in the form of bodily needs. The old man shivered in his thin clothes that morning as he hurried Doll.

"After Doll again?" he asked, with an abortive attempt to cease shivering as the boys rushed into the stable.

"Yes, sir," answered Aleck.

"Your pa's getting pretty fond of Doll," said Mr. Dick, giving a last touch to her mane. "I don't see why he don't have a horse."

"Nor I," said Don, impulsively.

"He might buy Doll," said the old man, slowly.

Don and Aleck exchanged glances. Don slipped on the bridle before he put the question that was crowding for utterance: "Would you sell her?"

"I've seen the time I wouldn't, but it's different now," said Mr. Dick, sadly. "I'm getting old, and—and—I need the money."

The boys knew what this meant. Last week there had been talk that the Dicks would be on the town this winter.

"How much will you take for Doll?" asked Aleck.

"It don't seem as if \$75 ought to be too much. Doll's got good blood in her—but I do need the money," the old man sighed.

"Will you give father the refusal until tomorrow?" It was Don who put this question. He could not await Aleck's more deliberate speech.

"I'd rather your family should have her. You know how to use a horse, and you like Doll," partly mused the old man.

The squire had told the boys to put Doll to the carriage before bringing her up the lane to the house door, but they could hardly wait to this, so eager were they to tell the news.

"It's what I call a bargain," said Don, emphatically, as he jumped into the carriage.

"Yes," assented Aleck, "father supposed old man Dick would want \$100 for her."

"Well, Uncle Eben will think it cheap. He paid \$800 for a span, and I guess neither one was any better than Doll."

Soon they were at the gate where Squire Dexter and his brother were standing.

Don screamed out first. "We've struck such a bargain, father!"

Then the two, as they tumbled out of the vehicle, poured out an excited account of their call on the old man. Squire Dexter turned to his brother with a laugh.

"They're Dexters, Eben, through and through. Know a good thing when they see it."

"And will you take her, father?" said Don, as the squire and Eben got into the buggy.

"We'll see. Uncle Eben will test her."

It was noon before the two men returned.

Eben Dexter was a good judge of horseflesh, and the animal had been closely scrutinized in every particular. As he stepped out of the carriage the eager boys heard him say, "I'd clinch it at once. She'll sell in the market for \$300 at least, with that style and action. Sound as a dollar, too. I'll find a buyer at that price any day. I'll give you \$200, myself."

"Whew, but did you hear that?" Don whistled ecstatically, and gave Aleck a punch in the ribs that sent him headlong into the vacated carriage as they got in to take the mare home.

"I should say I did," grumbled Aleck, rubbing his side. "But it

won't do a fellow any good with his ribs smashed to finders.

"We mustn't look too delighted," cautioned Aleck. "Old man Dick may repent when we tell him father will come to see him about Doll."

"No, he won't. He isn't that kind. He's straight as a string, if he is poor. You know pa's said more than once that he wouldn't have been so poor if he hadn't been so straight. He's a good old man, and it's a pity he and old Mrs. Dick 've got to come down to the poorhouse." Don flicked a bit of hay out of Doll's tail. "And even \$75 won't go far to keep them out very long."

"That's so," replied Aleck; "but I'm glad we've got the chance to get the horse as long as he had to sell her, though I'm sorry for them."

Mr. Dick was looking for the return of the horse and met them at the gate. The boys said nothing, according to Aleck's suggestion. But the old man betrayed his anxiety.

"Did you speak to your pa about Doll?"

"Oh, yes, Mr. Dick. Father 'll be across to see you."

"I wouldn't be in any hurry, only it's all I can depend on for winter," said the old man. "I'd like to get in coal before the price rises, and there's Doctor Smith's bill—he don't like to wait long, and Mrs. Dick's apt to have him any time with her rheumatism—and some flannels for her and then the living."

"Father'll let you know before the time's up," answered Aleck.

"Poor old man has got the price whittled down pretty close," observed Don, as he swung the hitching-strap against the gate-post in turning into the street. It was Don's habit to hit things when he was thinking hard.

"He'd cut it still more, I suppose," Aleck rather curtly replied, "but he needs an overcoat."

Nothing more was said. They hurried in to the dinner table, where the family were already gathered. Eben Dexter was reviewing the horse's fine points, and the squire was in a very jubilant mood. Mrs. Dexter, who had smiled indulgently when Don and Aleck had announced the news to her, now sat silently listening.

After dinner she followed the squire into the hall. "Are you going to buy the horse?" she asked, timidly, as she helped him into his ulster.

"I think so."

"But can you afford it?" she ventured, with still more diffidence, for Mrs. Dexter did not often inquire into any of her husband's business.

"Why, you heard Eben," Squire Dexter replied, with a look of surprise. "I can make a good sum. He'll guarantee me a buyer."

"But I thought perhaps you couldn't afford it," she repeated, with gentle insistence, brushing off a bit of mud from the garment and avoiding his eyes.

"H—m," said the squire. He pulled on his gloves and joined his brother without reply.

The boys, standing in the door, looked puzzled. They followed their father and uncle down the road to Mr. Dick's, while Uncle Eben kept up a one-sided conversation, not seeming to notice that the others were unusually quiet. They found the old man in the stable.

"Stays about Doll all the time now," observed Aleck, as he and Don stopped at the door while their father went in. Eben Dexter walked up and down outside, smoking his cigar.

The squire chatted a few moments on various topics, noting involuntarily as he did so how rapidly the old man was aging. He felt impelled to say, kindly: "We're all getting on in years, Mr. Dick."

"Yes, sir; yes, sir," said the old man, with assumed cheerfulness and an attempt at a smile. "It's all I am getting on in, squire." Then, quickly, as if fearing his visitor was avoiding the important subject, "The boys told you I wanted to sell Doll?"

"Yes, they said so." The squire's tone was perfectly non-committal.

"I do hope you'll take her, squire," Mr. Dick stopped before the manger with a scant forkful of hay. "The boys want her, and I do need the money powerfully just now, squire."

The squire saw the withered hands tremble, and he felt that it was not from the weight they were holding.

"I'd go hard to go to the poorhouse this winter," sighed the old man. "Perhaps my wife and I won't be here to worry about another winter. Don't say you can't afford it!"

"H—m."

The squire wrinkled his brows, turned on his heel and walked to the door. The boys stepped back and watched him. He looked toward the old house beyond. Mrs. Dick, scantily clothed, was emptying a wash-tub of water. She looked up, saw him and bowed.

The squire raised his hat gravely.

The gray-haired woman reminded him of his own mother, dead but a few years. His mother had every comfort, he thought, gladly. It was a shame for old Mrs. Dick to be so poorly provided for as she was. How those two old people would fare and feel in the poorhouse! Then his mind ran to the horse. Could he afford the bargain before him? He understood well what his wife had meant.

"Pshaw!" He uttered the impatient exclamation aloud. "The bargain was Dick's own making," thought the squire. "I'm not bound to tell the old man he is letting his horse go far below its value. Or am I?" The squire grew angry with himself that he should allow such a query to confront him.

"Taint the money," just then Don observed in an audible mutter to Aleck, giving the stable door a kick as he spoke.

The boys had let nothing escape them. Don had been reading his father's thoughts. The kick called Squire Dexter back to the present. He looked up at the boys. His sons were sharp like himself, he reflected. Could he afford it? He determined to shift the responsibility of the bargain upon the boys. They should decide. As he turned to speak the old man quavered behind him. The hesitation had worried him.

"I thought it was a good bargain, squire. I'll have to sell her. I might take—"

The squire had whispered to his boys: "I could get the horse for \$50. She is worth \$300. Shall I beat him down to \$60? I leave it to you."

"But, pa," interposed Don, with a frown, "would that be just right when we took the refusal at \$75?"

"And he's got lots of things to get," said Aleck.

"I say he ought to get what's right," said Don, stoutly, and Aleck nodded a vigorous assent.

"Mr. Dick!" The squire pulled his coat about him and wheeled upon the old man. "Don't say a thing. I can't afford the price." The peremptory tone made old Mr. Dick shrink.

"Eben!" The squire turned back to the door. "Step here!"

Eben Dexter had thought it best not to be seen in the transaction. He was used to bargaining, and he thought the sight of a stranger might raise the price. He did not know what kind of a man Mr. Dick was. Then he had wanted to enjoy his cigar. But he, too, had been observing some of the very things the squire had observed, and the cigar had lost its flavor.

He threw it aside in disgust as he stepped inside at his brother's call and saw the white-haired, bent, shabby old man trying to hide disappointment in unnecessary attentions to the animal in the stall.

"This is my brother, Mr. Dick." The squire's tone was cool and even. The old man raised his faded, misty eyes and bowed silently. "He'll make you an offer for your horse."

Eben Dexter looked in surprise at his brother. "Not going to buy it yourself?" he asked.

"We can't afford it." The squire made a comprehensive gesture that took in the wondering boys, Mr. Dick and himself. "Make him the offer you made me."

Eben Dexter raised his shaggy eyebrows, glanced at the boys, who were staring straight into their father's eyes, looked once more at his brother, took hold of his own coat-collar and shook himself up. "Mr. Dick, I'll buy your horse for \$200."

"What?" The old man gasped.

"I guess I can add \$100 on my own account," said Eben Dexter, coolly, nodding sturdily back at his brother and then laughing encouragingly as he saw old Mr. Dick clinging trembling to the manger. "That'll make three. That is what your horse is worth."

"And I could not afford to give what she is worth," said the squire, recovering his most matter-of-fact manner.

The Dexters were prompt to act when a decision was reached. A check was drawn on the spot, while the squire tried to ward off the broken thanks that Mr. Dick attempted to utter.

"No poorhouse, no poorhouse," he murmured, again and again, causing both men to shuffle about uneasily and sending Don and Aleck outside for a violent wrestling-match by way of concealing their emotion.

"You'll have a horse when I can afford it," the squire simply said to the boys as the two men came out to find them thus joyously engaged and to send them back for Doll. He knew that his sons understood.

"I'm glad Dexter's got him," reiterated old man Dick, his bent form straightened up, his eyes beaming, as he stepped spryly about making preparations for Doll's departure. "It ain't so hard to let her go now. Oh, but it's what a man takes along when he makes a bargain that shows his religion. You should be proud of your father, boys."

"We are," Don promptly answered, elevating his chin proudly. "It's better than even having Doll our own selves."

But Aleck could not refrain from a boast at the tea table. "I tell you," said he, "it takes a Dexter to make a bargain, though, and this is the best one yet."

The squire looked across at his wife, and she smiled with loving approval. —Youth's Companion.

SCIENTIFIC SCRAPS.

A London physician, Stanley Kent, claims to have discovered the specific bacillus of smallpox, after five years of experimenting.

A tantalizing fact pointed out by an English astronomer is that Herr Witt's new planet between Mars and the earth was, in January, 1894, in a more favorable position for observation than it will be again until 1924.

A German physician, Dr. Riegel, has made some important discoveries relating to internal diseases, by making patients swallow a miniature photographic apparatus, and taking pictures of the interior of the stomach.

Dr. Joseph Carne Ross, physician to Ancoats hospital, Manchester, England, writes in praise of a decoction of cinnamon as a cure for influenza. The treatment must be begun within twenty-four hours of the beginning of the attack.

It is well known that the pressure of the atmosphere on the surface of the earth is about fifteen pounds to the square inch, equivalent, that is, to a pressure at the lower end of a column of mercury about thirty inches high, or to the pressure of a column of water thirty-four feet high.

Careful weighing shows that an ordinary bee, not loaded, weighs the five-thousandth part of a pound, so that it takes 5000 bees to make a pound. But the loaded bee, when he comes in fresh from the fields and flowers, freighted with honey or bee bread, often weighs nearly three times more.

ART AND SCIENCE.

The Porter Knew More Than the Professor About Shears.

An article in Cornhill on the simplicity and ignorance of great men, says that Professor Huxley delivered a lecture at Newcastle-on-Tyne, for which numerous diagrams were required. Old Alexander, the porter of the institution, and a favorite among the members of the society, was helping the professor to hang the diagrams, but the screen was not large enough, and the blank corner of one would overlap the illustration of another.

The professor declared that he would cut off the margins, and asked Alexander to bring him a pair of scissors; but alas! they would not work, and the learned man threw them down in disgust.

"Vera guid shears, professor," said Alexander.

"I tell you they won't cut," exclaimed Huxley.

"Try again," said Alexander. "They will cut."

The professor tried again and called, angrily: "Bring me another pair of scissors."

Sir William Armstrong stepped forward at this point and ordered Alexander to go out and buy a new pair.

"Vera guid shears, Sir William," persisted Alexander, and he took them up, and asked Huxley how he wanted the paper cut.

"Cut it there," said the professor, somewhat tartly, indicating the place with his forefinger.

Alexander took the paper, inserted the scissors and cut off the required portion with the utmost neatness. Then he turned to the professor, with a significant leer and twinkle of the eye.

"Seance an' airt dinna ay gang the-gether, professor," said he.

Huxley gave way to laughter, and so did everybody present, and of course the scientist paid the fine of his stupidity in a sovereign.

Some one expressed amazement to Alexander that he should dare make freedom with Huxley.

"Why, mon," said Alexander with great emphasis, "they bits o' professor bodies ken naething at a' except their buiks."

Shams at the Kensington Museum.

The investigation being made into the conduct of the Kensington museum has shown among other things that the authorities are not above manufacturing false antiques. One of the staff is said to have concocted from genuine old panels a Venetian-Martin cabinet, for which the museum paid nearly \$5000. A chair bought at the Hamilton palace sale, and said to have belonged to Cardinal Wolsey, has been proved to be of the last century and to have been made in Ceylon. And there are imitation Della Robbia and modern antique agate cups which have been bought for ten times their value.

Perhaps the chair of St. Augustine, reported to have been discovered at Stanford Bishop, near Bromyard, may turn out to be something of this sort. There is a tradition that the saint visited the place during his ministrations in Britain. He probably did not remain standing all the time he was there. An old chair put together without nails was until recently in the church, which, when thrown out as rubbish, was picked up by the parish clerk, who sold it to a physician from Birmingham, who has written it up in a monograph, and putting together the historical fact of St. Augustine's sojourn in Britain, the local tradition and the actual old chair, claims that it is the "Bishop's chair," in which he is said to have seated himself. —Art Amateur.

The Sultan's Hobbies.

The estimated value of the Sultan's jewels is \$40,000,000. If his majesty has any hobby at all it may be said to be the purchasing of jewels and witnessing private theatricals. No professional of note, be he actor, singer or conjurer, passes through Constantinople without an invitation from the sultan. He always pays for these performances in Bank of England notes.

Kilts in the Mosquito Season.

Out of the 400 men required for the Victorian Scottish regiment only sixty-four have been enrolled, and on the third occasion of receiving applicants only eleven entered their names. So bare legs during the coming mosquito season are too much for the Victorian Scotmen's endurance.—South Australian Critic.