

Dirt Flying in Panama

It is estimated that the French Panama canal contractors excavated not far from four-tenths of the necessary dirt to be taken out of the proposed waterway, from 1881 to 1903, and that one-tenth of the work to be done by the present contractors is completed, while against one of the rainiest months of the year, 17 out of 31 at Panama, last month excavation on the canal was the largest on record. The New York Tribune says, that in 1901, with the old French methods still largely employed, only 243,472 cubic yards were excavated in eight months, or 30,434 yards a month. Mr. Wallace quickly improved upon that, and in the first three months of 1905 excavated 278,668 yards, or 92,889 yards a month. Mr. Stevens improved upon that record, and now Colonel Goethals has surpassed all former achievements with 1,274,404 yards last month, or nearly fourteen times as much as Mr. Wallace's record and several times the record of Mr. Stevens a year ago. We know of no reason why the rate of last month should not be maintained hereafter, if indeed it may not be materially increased. Now it was estimated that in June, 1904, there were 111,280,000 cubic yards to be excavated. Since that time, down to the first of the

present month, 10,868,684 yards have been actually taken out, leaving 100,416,316 yards yet to be dug. If the work continues at the same rate as last month, therefore, all the excavating will be done in less than seventy-nine months, or a trifle over six and a half years. We may recall, says the Tribune, with some interest, in connection with this computation, the fact that the old canal commission, upon the strength of whose report the unfinished canal was purchased by the United States, estimated that at a high level, such as has been adopted, the canal could be opened for use in eight years and finished in ten years. At the present rate of progress that estimate, which was often laughed at as absurdly optimistic, may be pretty nearly vindicated and realized. It would be rash to attempt to set a date for the completion of the canal, of course, because we know not what unforeseen and unforeseeable difficulties may arise. But barring serious accidents and assuming the work on dams, locks, terminals, etc., to proceed at equal pace with the excavation, it seems not unreasonably to expect completion at a date not far removed from that estimated by the commission.

The Pessimist

Among the really unfortunate individuals we have with us, not only in Danville, but no doubt over a goodly portion of the civilized world, is the confirmed pessimist. And this term or malady is not confined absolutely to the male sex, because we quite frequently learn of the feminine kind which pretends to consider everything and everybody going to destruction but themselves. A confirmed pessimist is truly to be pitied. It is a disease which no medicinal authority has ever been able to successfully baffle. And the worst feature about this trouble is that it is somewhat contagious. After you live a certain length of time in an atmosphere of pessimism the same evil spirit appears to overcome even the most unwilling victim.

Danville has a goodly share of the victims of this trouble. They look at their beautiful surroundings daily with beclouded mental vision. Some of them think we have too many churches, others consider we are lacking in christian influences. Still another class finds fault with municipal affairs in general, claiming this and that is wrong, when in fact it is only their own imaginary mental ills which cause all the trouble. However, it is likely that we, as well as other communities, must be pestered with at least a few individuals who consider everything askance but themselves. It is perhaps one of the necessary evils, because by the wailings of these unfortunate mortals we can more clearly compare all the blessings we enjoy with the very few ills from which we may suffer.

"WILD BILL" WILL RUN SATURDAY

"Wild Bill" Lewis dropped into the AMERICAN office yesterday and announced that he is going to make his long distance run between Danville and Bloomsburg Saturday afternoon, starting at the City hotel, on Mill street, between two and three o'clock. "Wild Bill", whose real name is James C. Lewis, of Lock Haven, was a great runner about twenty years ago and since the publication of the article in the News several days ago about his run from Bloomsburg to Danville on January 18th, 1886, there have been many citizens of town to recall the incident. In describing the race yesterday Mr. Lewis said that Daniel Motern was then Danville's chief of police and it was necessary to employ several assistants to keep back the crowds as "Wild Bill" came up Mill street, a short distance behind Senator Buckalew's racing horse. This race was run through six inches of slush and the time made was 2 hours and 45 minutes. Although this was twenty years ago and Mr. Lewis is now over 60 years of age, the runner thinks he can beat his former record, at least, he says, he is going to make a good try for it. Mr. Lewis' route on Saturday will be over the same course that he took twenty years ago, except that he will start in Danville this time instead of Bloomsburg. At the request of Mr. Lewis The Morning News chose Mr. Irvin Snyder, proprietor of the City hotel, as starter and time keeper. The exact course will be from the City hotel, Danville, to the Central hotel, Bloomsburg, and return. On the run to Bloomsburg Mr. Lewis will be paced by W. Diebert. Several of Danville's younger athletes approached the runner yesterday to inquire if he would object to them going over the course with him. Mr. Lewis said that all would be welcome as long as they could keep up.

SAD CASE OF STEPHEN RAKER

Stephen Raker, the Shamokin man who disappeared so mysteriously from his home last Saturday, was traced to South Danville, but notwithstanding that the authorities here have been doing all they could to find the man, at last accounts he was still among the missing. Mr. Raker, who is well-known in Danville where he has relatives, was employed as hoisting engineer at the Bear Valley colliery. He was always regarded as an industrious hard working man but for sometime past he has been a sufferer from nervous troubles, which, it is believed, caused him to wander away. At 8:30 o'clock Saturday morning Mr. Raker left his home for the office of the Shamokin Lumber company. He never reached the office of that company, however, and since then his movements have been a mystery. The last seen of him he was walking down the Pennsylvania railroad toward Weigh Scales. Raker's wife is terribly distressed over her husband's disappearance. He is a member of the Knights of the Golden Eagle and that lodge is assisting in the search. The mountains have been scoured and the woods and the public roads searched as far as Elysburg. Yesterday morning our police received a dispatch from Shamokin, explaining that information had reached that town to the effect that Raker had been seen in South Danville on Tuesday afternoon. A detailed description of the man was given and our officers were asked to join in the search. The missing man is forty-three years of age, five feet eight inches tall, and weighs about 150 pounds. He has a smooth face, sharp nose and light hair inclined to be curly. When he left home he wore a "pepper and salt" suit, a derby hat, light blue shirt and blue polka dot tie. Acting on the clue Officer Voris went over to the south side yesterday forenoon but he was unable to find any trace of the man. During the afternoon he prosecuted a search in Danville, but he was no more successful than during the forenoon. The girl who traveled 4,000 miles in a prairie schooner, drawn by oxen, to be wedded, will never find the path of domesticity rougher than the road to wedlock.

Sylvia's Fortune.

By GERARD HOPKINS.
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In a well appointed but not luxurious library two men stood staring at each other. The younger, white faced and startled, leaned with one hand on a mahogany table. The other, older and more calm, smiled with conscious pride and triumph.

"Orville Weston!" gasped the younger man. "You here?"

"You seem scarcely pleased to see me, Marsden," replied the visitor coolly, as he took a chair. "I just arrived. Of course you understand."

"No. What do you want?"

"I have just learned of your remarkably good fortune. It is not every fellow who escapes state's prison to be made custodian of a young girl's wealth."

"Hush! She is in the house. You know I was innocent of that crime."

"Innocent?" sneered Weston. "Of course, every fellow is innocent until he is proved guilty. The crime was committed."

Young Marsden almost reeled. He glanced nervously toward the library door. It was nearing midnight.

"I know," said Weston. "She is with your uncle and aunt at the theatre. But before they reach home we'll have a talk. I'm broke, Marsden."

"So am I."

"I know you are. A fellow just admitted to the bar can't be expected to have made a pile. But you've got Sylvia Ford's fortune in your keeping."

Marsden, who was not the hardened man of the world his unwelcome visitor was, turned still whiter and glanced apprehensively toward a small safe.

Weston laughed.

"You give yourself away so plainly. So it is there, is it? What is it? Cash? Bonds? Something negotiable? Sit down. I want to talk to you."

Peeling himself weak and powerless in the hands of this man he hated and feared, Marsden sank into a chair.

"Remember old Whittaker?" asked Weston in a soft, reminiscent voice as he eyed his companion with the gaze of a hypnotist. "What a fad there was that summer at the lake for the signatures of celebrities! And Whittaker had just brought out a book. He was all the rage there then, and you had the fever as well as the women. You had an autograph book, a singularly convenient one. Remember Whittaker put his signature on a page—perilously near the bottom—remember?"

Marsden's breath was coming fast and painfully.

"And remember a month after that a draft for \$4,000 was cashed, signed by Whittaker, and, although he swore he never gave it, his name was attached, and he had to admit the signature?"

"I—the book was stolen," whispered Marsden. "You know who took it."

"Oh, no; I knew nothing about it. But the book, with the missing page torn out, could easily have been identified as your own. You know that."

"It was never found."

"Oh, yes; it was found. It is in existence today. And the detectives are not through with the case yet. I know where the book is, Marsden."

"But I am innocent. I did not use the page."

"But who would believe you? You owned the book. You asked Whittaker to sign his name. You said you wanted him on a page all by himself. He neglected to add a verse. He left the page blank except for his name. You needed money. You had money after the draft to bearer was cashed. Remember?"

"My uncle gave me that."

"Who would believe it? Don't you know, Fred Marsden, that the production of that book now, the fitting of the page where it was torn out, your name on the cover, would be evidence difficult to refute?"

"My God, yes!"

"And you, just starting out on your career, in love with the most beautiful girl in your set, with the world before you, would probably be sent to prison—would surely be sent to prison. Do you think of that?"

"You dare not! You cannot!"

"I dare, can and will if you do not obey me. Listen. I know that you are cotrustee with your uncle of Sylvia Ford's fortune, and I know from your wild look toward the safe that some of it is there. I want money. I will have money one way or another. You have the investing of the money and can give me what you have here. You will never be suspected. You will rise, marry Sylvia and in time can make it good. You will not be harmed—nobody will be harmed. On the other hand, prison for your \$4,000 of Whittaker's good cash, disgrace and the loss of Sylvia."

A wild look came into Marsden's face. He was young. He had had no warning of the arrival of this man he suspected of having stolen his autograph book, a fad of college days. It was almost enough to condemn him to be seen with Weston. He drew vivid pictures of his uncle's suspicion. And he knew that what Weston said was true. He did have \$5,000 of Sylvia Ford's money in the safe. He had intended to try it safely for her the next day. He loved her. The thought of having her suspect him of using Whittaker's name maddened him. She was so pure, so lofty in sentiment, that he feared, even though the guilt could not legally be fastened on him, the doubt would turn her from him. And he was the cool master of the situation, with his cold, pitiless eyes bent on the young trustee, weakening his power of resistance every moment.

"You know it is safe," said Weston in his soothing voice. "You have the power. You are merely borrowing the money. You will earn enough to pay interest on it, and it will be easy to avoid showing any securities. They are elsewhere if your uncle wants them—till you make enough to pay the money back. You see, I would not rob an orphan, Marsden. Oh, no. I am only asking the money of you for old

time's sake, and you can pay it back to Sylvia. You will be happy, Marsden, with Sylvia's love, and I shall always be shut out of the sunlight of congenial companionship. Think of the difference, Marsden, between happiness with Sylvia and the cold iron feeling bars of a cell in Sing Sing prison."

"Man! Devil!"

"Hush! They may come any minute, and I must leave New York tonight. Quick! No one will ever know! Do it now!"

Marsden suddenly awoke to the fact that he was looking into the barrel of a revolver leveled at his head.

"Take your choice," said Weston coolly.

Thoughts that burned like molten lava rushed through Marsden's brain. He was no longer master of himself. Like a man in a dream he rose from his chair, moved by the powerful will of the other, and crossed to the safe. Instinctively Weston turned the lights low. Marsden moved like a man walking in his sleep. Dimly he was conscious of his lifelong innocence, but the words of Weston were ringing in his ears. And he loved Sylvia as few men ever love.

He opened the safe. There lay a pile of bank notes, notes he had drawn from the bank that afternoon. He vaguely wondered how Weston knew. There was a dim recollection of seeing a man like Weston in the bank when he drew the money.

He reached out his hand to take the money. He started as he saw beside it a small revolver. He picked it up with the money.

"That's right," said Weston, with a cold laugh. "Use that after I am gone. You can't use it before. Raise it and I will blow your brains out!"

With his right hand still holding the revolver close to Marsden's head, he reached with his left and took the package of bills.

"This will get me west nicely, and you will never hear from me again," he said. "Shut the safe."

With a groan Marsden did so.

"Sit down in that chair with your back to the door."

Mechanically Marsden obeyed.

"Don't move till I am out of the house. If you do, I'll shoot. I'm too rich now to give up, even if I kill you."

With another groan Marsden sank into the chair. Weston started toward the door—then stopped. He had heard a noise that Marsden in his agony had not heard. The outer door had opened. People were coming in.

"There's a light," said a silvery voice. "Fred must be waiting for us."

Weston was perplexed. He glanced around. In the library was a large screen. Noiselessly he slid behind that. Marsden did not know. The realization of what he had done had come upon Marsden now and deprived him of reason. How could he prove that he had been threatened with a revolver? How could he prove that he had not taken the money himself? Who would believe that Weston had walked in and then out again with \$5,000?

His brain whirled. He was beside himself.

A beautiful girl in an open cloak, with a smile on her lips, tiptoed to the library door to surprise the lover in whom she had so much confidence. She stood horror-stricken on the threshold.

Marsden sat with his head turned away, with his right elbow resting on the table, his hand raised, and her own revolver pointed at his head.

She dared not startle him. She saw that he was meditating. There was but a second to spare.

With the flight of a bird she sprang to his side.

"Fred!" she cried and knocked down the hand that held the weapon.

It exploded. There was a cry from behind the screen. It fell toward them and the body of Weston, still with his own revolver in his hand, but with a bullet from Sylvia's pistol in his heart, plunged across the screen to the floor.

"My God!" said Marsden, and then he lost consciousness.

In Weston's pocket was found the album from which Whittaker's name had been torn. Marsden's explanations were clear and convincing.

A month later he and Sylvia were married, but she shudders when she recalls that night and thinks what another moment of delay in reaching home would have cost her.

Six and Half a Dozen.

"Pennyworth of colliery's wax, please, sir," said the tiny boy as he stretched his hand to the level with the counter.

"Wouldn't shoemaker's wax do as well?" asked the facetious shopman.

"Don't know," replied the small boy, "but I'll ask pa."

Five minutes later he was back again with the announcement that shoemaker's wax would do all right. The shopman grinned.

"And did your pa tell you what the difference was?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said the little boy. "He said there's the same difference as between you and a donkey."

Though small, the child was intelligent, and he made a record sprint for the door.—London Tit-Bits.

The Value of Diamonds.

The value of the diamond is so much per carat, and up to a certain limit the value per carat increases as the size of the stone increases. When a carat diamond is quoted at \$125, a diamond weighing a half a carat is counted at the rate of \$75 per carat. Three-quarter carat diamonds at \$190 per carat, one and one-quarter carat diamonds at \$140 per carat, one and one-half carat diamonds at \$150 per carat, one and three-quarter carat diamonds at \$180 per carat, and two-carat stones at \$200 per carat. Stones weighing more than two carats sell at about the same rate as that quoted for two carat stones, and do not increase so rapidly owing to the more limited demand for the larger sized stones.—New York Herald.

Plenty of Chances.

A young man proposed for the hand of a millionaire's daughter.

"Well," said the millionaire, frowning thoughtfully, "what are your prospects? Is there any chance of promotion in your business?"

"Any chance?" cried the young man. "Well, I should say so! Why, we employ 200 men, and my job is next to the lowest in the establishment."

IN THE SAME BOAT.

A Story of Samuel Warren and Matthew Davenport Hill.

Sam Warren, the author of "Ten Thousand a Year," has been the subject of many anecdotes, none of them better than one which I first heard related about him by his friend, Matthew Davenport Hill.

Looking in one day at Warren's chambers, Hill noticed that he seemed a little troubled. "It is," said the lawyer-novelist, "most unfortunately I ought to have dined tonight with the lord chancellor, but Mrs. Warren is about to present me with another olive branch. How can I leave her? I hope his lordship won't be annoyed at my putting him off." "Oh," returned Hill, "don't make yourself uneasy. I am one of the guests. I know him so well I can put it all right for you." With these words the visitor prepared to leave the room.

At first profusely grateful, Warren presently seemed a little perplexed and said: "By the bye, after all, I won't trouble you to say anything about me to the chancellor. Between ourselves, I have not been invited."

"Well," rejoined Hill, "make yourself comfortable on that point. For that matter, neither have I."—Pall Mall Gazette.

The Three Fates.

The names of the three fates were Clotho, Lachesis and Atropos. To express the influence which they were believed to exercise on human life from birth to death they were represented as spinning a thread of gold, silver or wool, now tightening, now slackening and at last cutting it off. Clotho, the youngest, put the wool around the spindle, Lachesis spun it, and the aged Atropos cut it off when a man had to die.

NOW WE ARE FORMED.

A Few of the Many Marvels of the Human Body.

On an average man's body there are 240,000 hairs. Plucking one every second it would take him twelve eight-hour working days to pull them all out. In his blood there are 25,000,000,000,000 red corpuscles. Laid out side by side they would cover a surface of 8,120 square yards.

The whole of the blood passes through a man's heart nearly twice in every minute. It weighs one-thirtieth of the entire body weight, and it moves in different parts of the body at speeds varying from ten feet to 1,000 yards (nearly one mile) an hour.

The fat of your body is fluid. It becomes solid only when the body cools after death. It is one of your most useful constituents, forming a non-conducting sheath to protect you from cold, acting as pads to preserve you from shock, on the tips of the fingers, the toes and the heels and lying always ready as a reserve food supply when you can get nothing to eat.

A little artery passes from your brain through the skull into the scalp, which acts as a safety valve when the brain is congested with blood.

The skin cannot grow again once it is destroyed; hence the unsightly scars left by burns and severe wounds. Only the surface layer can renew itself. When the whole thickness is destroyed, it never reforms. This is the more curious as muscles, nerves, blood vessels and bones, all less liable to injury than the skin, can grow again.

You are really a wader rather than a land animal. Although as a whole you live on dry land, your body consists of countless millions of separate living particles, and these are all immersed in the water which constitutes four-fifths of your substance.

Within the inner part of your ear, deep in the bone, is a quantity of fluid which acts as a spirit level and enables you to keep your balance.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Now to Remember History.

Teacher—With whom did Achilles fight at the battle of Troy?
Pupil—Philo.
Teacher—Wrong. Try again.
"Sera."
Teacher—How do you do?
Pupil—Them it must have been Hector. I know it was one of our three dogs.—

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