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FRIDAY DECEMBER 13, 1889.

TO OUR PATRONS.

This issue of the DEMOCRAT has been considerably delayed on account of placing a new press and engine in our office. This delay was caused by the railroad company, over which we had no control, in not bringing our machine as promptly as we expected from the manufacturers.

Our presses and machinery were so badly wrecked in the great flood that our paper has been very badly printed since that time, but now with new presses and improved machinery we expect to print a paper second to none in this part of the State.

WHAT has become of the Pan-American delegates? No body hears anything about them.

SENATOR SHERMAN has formulated a lengthy bill providing for Federal control of Congressional elections.

Mr. Gladstone will be eighty on December 29th. The Grand Old Man is as vigorous, intellectually and physically, as he was ten years ago.

ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY.

Another opportunity for some of the wise moralizing people to get in their work is at hand. Johnstown—poor ill-fated place—is again the subject of a wrathful providence, according to the wisecrackers who know all about what they call the operations of special providences.

But in the eyes of sensible people nothing could be more natural than the destruction of such frail structures as spanned the Conemaugh at Woodvale, at the mouth of Walnut street, and down at Cambria City.

A NOTED LAWYER GONE.

The sad suicide of so brilliant a lawyer as Mr. Franklin B. Gowen, in Washington, the other day, is not only the occasion of unfeigned sorrow, but one that is involved in a mystery so profound as to baffled all attempts to account for the rash act.

But this, though a generally received fact, admits of a doubt. Men perfectly sane to avert exposure, as well as threatened bodily calamities have been known to suicide.

Others who have attempted the act, but have been thwarted in their efforts, have given testimony that they were perfectly sane when they tried to commit the act. Again: Insanity and suicide are by no means as closely linked together, as the theory that insanity leads to suicide supposes.

THE ABSOLUTE MONARCH.

A mighty king, long, long ago, With voice of grief and face of woe To his court wizard did complain: "Sir Wizard, I am said to reign, But what with counselors and hordes Of bishops, judges, generals, lords, Primo ministers and those they call The people, I have no right at all To call my life my own. They talk Of duty, laws and charters, balm My wishes, dog my steps, torment My every hour with precedent, State treaties and prerogative, Till I would rather die than live I bid thee, then—if aught I hold Of royal power to bid—be bold; Take thou my crown, I grieve it not, And give me in exchange a lot, I care not how confined I be, Wherein is absolute sovereignty."

Then growled the wizard sad, but still Received the crown against his will, And swift, with wand and astrolabe, he Transformed the king into a baby! —Amos R. Wells in Wide Awake

Improved in Jail.

Every time a batch of jail prisoners are arraigned in the criminal court I am struck by the vast improvement in their personal appearance that a few months' confinement gives them. In 99 cases out of 100 they are a coarse, brutal, heavy drinking class, and show their low habits in their faces.

His Tribute.

Old Peter Rice, for many years a resident of a certain New England village, was one of those unwise and unjust men who never praise their wives, and who do not seem to realize how blessed they are in the way of companions until death comes suddenly to leave them desolate and uncaared for.

Old Peter's kindly, uncompromising and unappreciated wife died suddenly one day, and Peter came at once to a realizing sense of her many virtues, and was evidently filled with a longing to prove to his friends that he was not blind to his wife's perfections.

Wrongly Translated.

The story is an old one of the party of tired travelers who entered a house decorated by a peculiar sign and demanded oysters. "This is not a restaurant," said the courteous gentleman who met them. "I am an aurist."

"Isn't that an oyster hung outside the door?" asked one.

"No, gentlemen, it is an ear."

A body of sailors from an American vessel, stopping at Samoa, went to the German consulate and demanded dinner.

"This is not a hotel," said the offended domestic official who met them.

"Well, if it isn't a restaurant, what's that black fowl hung out for? Ain't it a sign?" inquired the spokesman.

"The sign" was the German eagle, the consular coat of arms.—Youth's Companion.

That Satisfied Him.

"Last Monday morning," he began, in a solemn voice, "last Monday morning I stopped here and ordered a large list of groceries. Today is Thursday, and they have not come up yet!" "They haven't! Oh, yes, I remember now," replied the grocer.

Cleanliness a Modern Virtue.

The English upper classes are clean, but cleanliness of any high degree is a very modern virtue among them. It is an invention of the Nineteenth century. Men and women born at the close of the Eighteenth century did as the French people do today; they took a warm bath occasionally for cleanliness, and they took shower baths when they were prescribed by the physician for health, and they bathed in summer seas for pleasure, but they did not wash themselves all over every morning.

Two Games.

Little Johnnie—Le's play stage robber. You come alone and I'll spring out with a pistol and take away everything you've got.

Little Jimmie—But we haven't got no pistol nor nuth'n like a stage! Tell you what; when you come along I'll get you to sign a paper and then I can rob you just the same without a pistol.

"All right, we'll play 'Loan Agent,' if you like it better." —Texas Siftings.

A THUNDER STORM AT NIGHT.

The lightning is the shorthand of the storm That tells of chaos; and I read the same As one may read the writing of a name— As one in hell may see the sudden form Of God's forefinger pointed as in blame. How weird the scene! The dark is sultry warm With hints of death; and in their vault enormous The red stars congregate in flames. And now the torrens from their mountain beds Roar down uncheck'd; and serpents shaped of mist Write up to heaven with unforbidden heads; And thunder clouds, whose lightnings inter-twist, Rack all the sky, and tear it into shreds. And shake the air like Titans that have kiss'd. —Eric Mackay

SWEPT BY THE SEA.

[Last Island is off the mouth of the Mississippi, in the Gulf of Mexico. It was once the fashionable watering place of the aristocratic south. Today it is a desolate waste, visited only by fishermen.]

Thirty years ago, Last Island lay steeped in the light of magical days. July was dying; for weeks no flock of cloud had broken the heaven's blue dream of eternity; winds held their breath; slow wavellets caressed the bland brown beach with a sound as of kisses and whispers.

The wind began to blow with the passing of July. It blew from the northeast, clear and cool. It blew in enormous sighs, dying away at regular intervals, as if pausing to draw breath. All night it blew, and in each pause could be heard the answering moan of the rising surf—as if the rhythm of the sea molded itself after the rhythm of the air, as if the waving of the water responded precisely to the waving of the wind, a billow for every puff, a surge for every sigh.

The August morning broke in a bright sky; the breeze still came cool and clear from the northeast. The waves were running now at a sharp angle to the shore; they began to carry fleeces, an innumerable flock of vague green shapes, wind driven to be despoiled of their ghostly wool. Far as the eye could follow the line of the beach all the slope was white with the great shearing of them. Clouds came, flew as in a panic against the face of the sun, and passed. All that day and through the night and into the morning again the breeze continued from the northeast, blowing like an equinoctial gale.

Then day by day the vast breath freshened steadily, and the waters heightened. A week later sea bathing had become perilous; colossal breakers were herding in, like moving leviathan backs, twice the height of a man. Still the gale grew, and the billowing waxed mightier, and faster and faster overhead flew the tatters of torn cloud. The gray morning of the 9th wilyly lighted a surf that appalled the best swimmers; the sea was one wild agony of foam, the gale was rending off the heads of the waves and veiling the horizon with a fog of salt spray. Shadowless and gray the day remained; there were mad bursts of lashing rain. Evening brought with it a sinister apparition, looming through a cloud rent in the west—a scarlet sun in green sky. His sanguine disc, enormously magnified, seemed barred like the body of a belted planet. A moment, and the crimson specter vanished; and the moonless night came.

Then the wind grew weird. It ceased being a breath; it became a voice moaning across the world; hooping, uttering nightmare sounds—Who!—who!—who!—and with each stupendous owery moaning of the waters seemed to deepen, more and more abyssmally, through all the hours of darkness. From the northwest the breakers of the bay began to roll high over the sandy slope, into the salines; the bay broadened to a bellowing flood. So the tumult swelled and the turmoil heightened until morning—a morning of gray gloom and whistling rain. Rain of bursting clouds and rain of wind blown brine from the great spuming agony of the sea.

The steamer Star was due from St. Mary's that fearful morning. Could she come? No one believed it—no one. Nevertheless, men struggled to the roaring beach to look for her, because hope is stronger than reason.

Even today, in these Creole islands, the advent of the steamer is the great event of the week. There are no telegraph lines, no telephones; the mail packet is the only trustworthy medium of communication with the outer world, bringing friends, news, letters. Even during the deepest sleep of waves and winds there will come betimes to sojourners in this unfamiliar archipelago a feeling of loneliness that is a fear, a feeling of isolation from the world of men, totally unlike that sense of solitude which haunts one in the silence of mountain heights, or amid the eternal tumult of lofty granitic coasts—a sense of helpless insecurity.

The land seems but an undulation of the sea bed; its highest ridges do not rise more than the height of a man above the salines on either side; the salines themselves lie almost level with the level of the flood tides; the tides are variable, treacherous, mysterious. But when all around and above these ever-changing shores the twin vastness of heaven and sea begin to utter the tremendous revelation of themselves as infinite forces in contention, then, indeed, this sense of separation from humanity appalls. * * * Perhaps it was such a feeling which forced men, on the 10th day of August, 1856, to hope against hope for the coming of the Star, and to strain their eyes anxiously toward far-off Terrebonne. "It was a wind you, could lie down on," said my friend; the pilot.

"Great God!" shrieked a voice above the shouting of the storm, "she is coming!" It was true. Down the Atechafaya, and thence through strange mazes of bayou, lakenet and pass, by a rear route familiar only to the best of pilots, the frail river craft had toiled into Caillou bay, running close to the main shore; and now she was heading right for the island, with the wind aft, owing the monstrous sea. On she came, awaying, rocking, plunging, with a great whiteness wrapping her about like a cloud, and moving with her moving, a

tempest whirl of spray; ghost white and like a ghost she came, for her smoke stacks exhaled no visible smoke—the wind devoured it! The excitement on shore became wild; men shouted themselves hoarse, women laughed and cried. Every telescope and opera glass was directed upon the apparition; all wondered how the pilot kept his feet; all marveled at the madness of the captain.

But Capt. Abraham Smith was not mad. A veteran American sailor, he had learned to know the great Gulf as scholars know deep books by heart; he knew the birthplace of its tempests, the mystery of its tides, the omens of its hurricanes. While lying at Brashear City he felt the storm had not yet reached its highest, vaguely foresaw a mighty peril, and resolved to wait no longer for a lull. "Boys," he said, "we've got to take her out in spite of hell." And they "took her out." Through all the peril, his men stayed by him and obeyed him. By mid-morning the wind had deepened to a roar, lowering sometimes to a rumble, sometimes bursting upon the ears like a measureless and deafening crash. Then the captain knew the Star was running a race with death. "She'll win it," he muttered; "she'll stand it. * * * Perhaps they'll have need of me to-night."

She won! With a sonorous steam chant of triumph the brave little vessel rode at last into the bayou, and anchored hard by, in full view of the hotel, though not near enough to shore to lower her gang plank.

But she had sung her swan song. Gathering in from the northeast, the waters of the bay were already marbling over the salines and half across the islands; and still the wind increased its paroxysmal power.

Cottages began to rock. Some slid away from the solid props upon which they rested. A chimney tumbled. Shutters were wrenched off; verandas demolished. Light roofs lifted, dropped again and flapped into ruin. Trees bent their heads to the earth. And still the storm grew louder and blacker with every hour.

The Star rose with the rising of the waters, dragging her anchor. Two more anchors were put out, and still she dragged—dragged in with the flood, twisting, shuddering, careening in her agony. Evening fell, the sand began to move with the wind, stinging faces like a continuous fire of fine shot; and frenzied blasts came to buffet the steamer forward, sideward. Then one of her hogchairs parted with a clang like the boom of a big bell. Then another! Then the captain bade his men cut away all her upper works clean to the deck. Overboard into the setting went her stacks, her pilot house, her cabins and whirled away. And the naked hull of the Star still dragging her three anchors labored on through the darkness, nearer and nearer to the immense silhouette of the hotel, whose hundred windows were now all aflame. The vast timber building seemed to defy the storm. The wind, roaring round its broad verandas, hissing through every crevice with the sound and force of steam, appeared to waste its rage. And in the half lull between two terrible gusts there came to the captain's ears a sound that seemed strange in that night of multitudinous horrors—a sound of music!

Almost every evening throughout the season there had been dancing in the great hall; there was dancing that night also. The population of the hotel had been augmented by the advent of families from other parts of the island, who found their summer cottages insecure places of shelter; there were nearly four hundred guests assembled. Perhaps it was for this reason that the entertainment had assumed the form of a fashionable ball. And all those pleasure seekers, representing the wealth and beauty of the Creole parishes, whether from Ascension or Assumption, St. Mary's or St. Landry's, Iberville or Terrebonne; whether inhabitants of the multi-colored and many-balconied Creole quarter of the quaint metropolis, or dwellers in the dreamy paradises of the Teche, mingled joyously, knowing each other, feeling in some sort akin, whether affiliated by blood, conaturalized by caste, or simply inter-associated by traditional sympathies of class sentiment and class interest.

Perhaps in the more than ordinary merriment of that evening something of nervous exaltation might have been discerned—something like feverish resolve to oppose apprehension with gaiety, to combat uneasiness by diversion. But the hours passed in mirthfulness. The first general feeling of depression began to weigh less and less upon the guests. They had found reason to confide in the solidity of the massive building. There were no positive terrors, no outspoken fears, and the new conviction of all had found expression in the words of the host himself: "Il n'y a rien de mieux a faire que de s'amuser." Of what avail to lament the devastation of cane fields, to discuss the ruin of crops? Better to seek solace in the rhythm of gracious motion and of perfect melody than hearken to the wild orchestra of storms; to tolerate the eddy of trailing robes with its fairy foam of lace, the ivory loveliness of glossy shoulders and jeweled throats, the glimmering of satin slipped feet, than to watch the raging of the flood without, or the flying of the wrack.

So the music and the mirth went on; they made joy for themselves, those elegant guests; they jested and sipped rich wines; they pledged, and hoped, and loved, and promised, with never a thought of the morrow, on the night of the 10th of August, 1856. Observant parents were there planning for the future bliss of their nearest and dearest; mothers and fathers of handsome lads, lithe and elegant as young pines, and fresh from the polish of foreign university training; mothers and fathers of splendid girls whose simplest attitudes were wickerisms. Young cheeks flushed, young hearts fluttered with an emotion more puissant than the excitement of the dance; young eyes betrayed the happy secret disreeter lips would have preserved. Sheservants circled through the artless presences, bearing dainties and wine, with a permission to pass,

NEW ENGLAND CONIFERS.

The Many Varieties of Beautiful and Exceedingly Useful Trees.

The conifers, or cone-bearing trees, are divided into three families: The pines, the cypresses and the yews. Of the pines, the most common are the white pine, the yellow or pitch pine and the red pine. These can be readily distinguished from each other by noticing that the white pine has its leaves in clusters of five, the yellow in clusters of three and the red in clusters of two. The white pines form symmetrical and graceful trees, to which the yellow, in this latitude, with its scraggy branches and yellowish green foliage, is an unpleasant and striking contrast. The cones of these trees do not ripen till the year after blossoming, and this is a distinguishing feature between these true pines and the other members of the pine family—the spruces, firs and larches. The spruces have their leaves four sided, and arranged around the stem, instead of being in clusters, as in the pines. The cones are very graceful, being suspended near the end of the branches, and forming a pleasing contrast to the green of the foliage.

The Norway spruce, though a native of Europe, is so common here as to deserve a place among our New England trees, and from the time of its bright red blossoms in the spring, during the growth of its cones, which are purple at first, but change to a rich brown, till blossoms come again, forms a most attractive sight. The hemlock, or hemlock spruce, has small cones; the leaves, instead of being arranged around the stems, spread in two directions, and are a bright green above, with a silvery white beneath. This grows to be a large tree, but is often cut back and used as an ornamental shrub, and, cared for in this way, is one of the most graceful of spruces. The firs are distinguished from the spruces in that they have their cones erect on the upper side of the branches, instead of pendulous. The only representative in New England is the balsam fir, which is quite common among the mountains.

The last member of the pine family is the larch. The larch is distinguished from all other conifers by its shedding its leaves in the fall, and is also marked by the bright red flowers which it bears in the early spring. The only native larch is the American larch or tamarack, but the European larch is found here quite extensively, and is a handsomer and more graceful tree than the native variety.

The cypress family includes the arbor vitae, the cypress and the juniper. The arbor vitae is readily distinguished by the appressed, scale like leaves, arranged in four rows on the two-edged branchlets. The American variety is often called white cedar, but the name more properly belongs to a variety of cypress closely resembling arbor vitae, but having a more slender spray, finer leaves, and growing thirty to seventy feet high, while the arbor vitae ranges from twenty to fifty feet.

We have two varieties of the juniper: one known as the juniper, and the other as red cedar. Both have a berry like fruit, in color black, covered with a white bloom; the juniper has awl shaped leaves, arranged in threes, large fruit, and is found quite commonly as a low shrub. The red cedar has small, scale like leaves, small fruit, and in the east is found as a shrub, but in the west reaches from 60 to 90 feet in height, and furnishes very durable wood of a reddish color.

The yew has its nut like seed surrounded by a disk, cup shaped around its base, which becomes bright red and berry like. In the United States it is only found as a straggling bush, but in other countries grows to be a large tree.

The conifers are the most useful trees to man. They are found in a great variety of latitudes, are about ten times as numerous as other trees, and reach a great height. They furnish long, straight, durable timber, which, owing to the resinous matter, is impenetrable by water. The juices give us turpentine, resin, pitch, tar and kumblack, and the amber of commerce also was formed from pine resin. Some conifers have medicinal properties; the bark of certain varieties is used for tanning, for making paper, and for stuffing in upholstery. The inner bark of one variety and the seeds of another are articles of food. The coal beds were formed from the conifers of the carboniferous age. They form a most attractive feature in the landscape, whether found singly or in large numbers, and through the dreary winter months are reminders of the summer which is past and a prophecy of the summer which is to come.—Annie M. Mitchell in Springfield Homestead.

To Satisfy Insurance Companies. Have you heard the story of the rubber hose bought for the infirmary? It was a coil of hose to hang in the hall, to be used in case of fire. One day they took it down in order to sprinkle the lawn, but as soon as the water was turned on it burst in half a dozen places. The infirmary directors were raging. They took the hose back to the rubber store and demanded an explanation. The proprietor of the store said that he had sold it in good faith, supposing it to be a good article. In order to satisfy himself he wrote on to the manufacturer, who replied that the hose was simply an ornamental article, made to hang up in factories "to satisfy insurance requirements." And so there is hose made that is to be looked at, not used. Here is a big factory, and its owner, supposing that in case of fire he can turn on twenty lines of hose at once, is putting his trust in a rotten, good for nothing pipe. Better inspect all these emergency hose lines at once.—Cincinnati Times-Star.

At the Henderson Hop.

Miss Waite (who has been a wall flower all the evening)—A waltz? Mr. Henderson, you are too kind!

Mr. Henderson (host of the occasion)—Not at all, Miss Waite. You know the performance of one's duty is sometimes sweeter than actual pleasure.—Harper's Bazar.

Toys That Last.

The doll is thousands of years old; it has been found inside the graves of little Roman children, and will be found again by the archaeologists of a future date among the remains of our own culture. The children of Pompeii and Herculaneum trundled hoops just as you and I did; and who knows whether the rocking horse on which we rode in our young days is not a lineal descendant of that proud charger into whose wooden flanks the children of Francis I's time dug their spurs.

The drum is also indestructible, and setting time at naught across the centuries, it beats the Christmastide and New Year summons that bids the tin soldier prepare himself for war, and shall continue to beat as long as there exist boy arms to wield the drumsticks, and grown up people's ears to be deafened by the sound thereof. The tin soldier views the future with calm; he will not lay down his arms until the day of general disarmament, and there is, as yet, no prospect of a universal peace.

The toy sword also stands its ground; it is the nursery symbol of the ineradicable vice of our race—the lust for battle. Harlequins, fool's-cap-crowned and bell-ringing, are also likely to endure; they are sure to be found among the members of the toy world as long as there are fools to be found among the inhabitants of our own. Gold laced knights, their swords at their sides, curly locked and satin shod princesses, stalwart musketeers, mustached and top booted, are all types which still hold their own. The Chinese doll is young as yet, but she has a brilliant future before her.—Blackwood's Magazine.

A Queer Coincidence.

In Berks county, Pa., at the little village of Shillington, lives Samuel Shilling, a living fulfillment of a remarkable coincidence. He first saw the light of day on Feb. 22, 1819. Beginning with the date of his birth, it seems that the father of his country has kept a watchful eye on Samuel Shilling every day for the past seventy years.

Shilling was married on Feb. 22 to a woman, who, like himself, was born on that date. Their first child—a boy—was born on Washington's birthday, exactly one year to a day after their marriage, and two years afterwards, on the same date, twins—a boy and girl—were added to the Washington-blessed household.

Five years rolled around, when, on the fifth anniversary of their wedding, another infant, a little girl, was added to their blessings. The fifth and sixth child, another pair of twins, came around on schedule time two years later, exactly, and upon the seventh anniversary of the wedded life begun on the natal day of our first president.

Mr. Shilling is very proud of the lucky coincidence that has connected his name and that of his family so inseparably with that of the immortal George Washington.

Many remarkable stories, all true, as far as the writer has been able to ascertain, have been related, but it is doubtful if there is another case on record where a father, his wife and six children all claim one birthday, and that, too, one of the most historical in the whole calendar.—St. Louis Republic.

Lord John Russell.

If he had not much pretension to exact knowledge, his reading was wider than that of most of his contemporaries, and he had not merely a large acquaintance with authors of many nations, he had thought on what he read. His mind, too, had been enlarged by intercourse with superior men and by the opportunities of foreign travel. Few men of his age, standing on the threshold of a career, had seen so much that was worth seeing. He had knowledge of every division of the United Kingdom.

In London he had breakfast with Mr. Fox, he was a frequent guest at Lord Holland's dinner table, he was acquainted with all the prominent leaders of the Whig party, he had become a member of Grillon's club. In Dublin (where his father had been lord lieutenant) he had seen all the best society; in Edinburgh (where he was pupil of Professor Playfair) he had mixed with all that is best in letters. * * * Abroad his opportunities had been even greater. He had read his Camoens in Portugal, his Tasso in Italy; he had journeyed through the length of Spain; he had ridden with the duke of Wellington along the lines of Torres Vedras; he had watched a French advance in force in the neighborhood of Burgos. * * * He had conversed with Napoleon in Elba.—Walpole's Life of Lord John Russell.

Looking for the Twitter.

"The mortality among the domestic animals up in our block increased greatly last week," said a South side young man yesterday. "One of our neighbors owns a pretty canary bird, and his little son has always been anxious to ascertain the source of the bird's twitter. So the other evening, while his father was away at the office and his mother was down town on a shopping expedition, the youngster reached the cage, captured the bird and picked off all of its pretty yellow feathers. But he did not discover the source of the twitter, and the bird caught a severe cold through its loss of drapery and died with pneumonia the next morning. The little boy was locked in an upper room when his experiment was discovered by his parents, and now he firmly believes that two in the bush are of much more value than a bird in the hand."—Chicago Herald.

The Buffalo in Australia.

After the lamentable experience of this country, it is interesting to know that there is a part of the world where the buffalo is not only not dying out, but increasing in numbers. Vast herds of these animals are now running wild over certain districts of northern Australia. The animals are said to be massive and well grown, with splendid horns. The first buffaloes were landed at Sydney, New South Wales, in 1829.—New York Com.