

Complaint is made in Philadelphia that high school pupils have to carry around a weight of fifteen pounds in books.

The Floridans are experimenting in the growth of the rubber tree. The gum is a staple product, and it will be a good thing for the United States if the tree can be made to thrive in this country. The Los Angeles (Cal.) Times says there are large rubber trees in or near that city.

One of the arguments used by the four members of the Royal Commission on Vaccination who opposed the compulsory law in England was that vaccination is riskier than railway travel. There is one fatal termination to every 14,159 cases of vaccination, while of railway travelers only one is killed among every 35,500,000.

Levy Mayer, just back from Europe, predicts in the Chicago Times-Herald that in time Germany will outstrip England in commercial influence. He reveals the fact, probably known to few people this side the water, that the Kaiser is quite as active in promoting the financial welfare of his nation as in advancing its military standing.

Irish leaders in New York City are known to have received startling assurances of late from their friends in the British Parliament regarding Home Rule. They hint that, in some form, it is about to become an accomplished fact. It was because of this that the Irish political prisoners were liberated. In the face of the grave European crisis, England is striving at last to unite the Irish under her flag.

The professional paraphernalia of Arsene Blondin, the celebrated tight-rope walker, who crossed the Niagara rapids on a steel cable, are to be sold at auction. That same rope, his bicycle of antique make, the barrow in which he wheeled the patient, the harmonica, the cooking range—all the accessories used by him on the rope over Niagara—have lain forgotten in a storehouse until lately. More than one eccentric collector will reproach himself for not having been smart enough to seek out these souvenirs of a man almost unique in his time.

It has been discovered that if bonemarrow is not the elixir of youth, at least it is a powerful tonic. Bonemarrow is now served in Parisian restaurants, spread raw upon thin slices of bread in a dainty manner, and it is said to be a very palatable morsel. Every one eats it who can afford to buy it, and butchers are furnished with a new branch of industry. Dr. Renault of Paris, prescribed bonemarrow to an anemic patient as a tonic, with immediate and most gratifying results. The news of its wonderful effects spread rapidly, and at the present time marrow-bone eating has become a fashionable fad. American physicians are reporting cures of nervous prostration and general waste.

All sorts of complications have arisen in connection with Italy's new postcard. The design of the card is intended to commemorate the union of Rome with Italy and the fall of the temporal power of the Pope. Leo XIII considers the issuing of the card an offense to the church, and in deference to his protests Austria, Spain, Portugal and several of the Southern German states have refused to receive it or pass it through their mails. France and Belgium have done the same in a number of instances, and the expropriations have now been addressed by the Italian government to the foreign powers concerned, with claims for compensation made on the ground that the postcard if framed in strict accordance with international postal law.

The opening of the Danube to navigation past the famous Iron Gates, which was formally declared recently by Emperor Francis Joseph to be now accomplished, is an extremely important event. The tremendous formation of rocks which prevented vessels passing the rapids which rushed over them was greatly diminished many years ago, so that vessels drawing nine feet could get by. The later engineering operations have still further deepened and extended the channel, so that now the river is navigable for all ordinary steam traffic beyond this point. The Iron Gates obstructed the river where it forms the boundary line between Hungary and Serbia. Even now, above this point, the narrowness of the river results in a current so swift that sailing vessels cannot navigate it. The extension, however, of the steam navigation of the river is regarded in Austria as of very great benefit to commerce.



BIDDY'S ADVENTURE.

I have it on the authority of Robert that Henry Howard Burke could be more kinds of a fool than any other man in Carson County. Robert, being the only man on that range who answered to no nickname nor subtitle, is an authority I feel bound to respect.

When young Mr. Burke, fresh from an Eastern school, came westward to grow up with the country, the livestock interest was just then paramount, and all the boys expected to become cattle kings. So, some weeks after closing his school-books, Henry found himself taken on trial as horse-wrangler on a cattle-ranch, where his associates promptly dubbed him "Hen." He did not like it, and said so. Whereupon Robert informed him that if Hen didn't please him, he should be called Hen no more. "Your name is Biddy." And Robert's decision was final.

Like a colt in a harness, Biddy thrashed about a good bit before he became somewhat adapted to his environment. He was the butt of all the old jokes, the victim of the usual impositions, until a greener man appeared, when he settled down to the routine of his work like the other men, except that he usually did the unexpected thing, and reached his ends by devious and difficult ways.

It was on the occasion of his taking a short cut over a rough mountain, with the horse herd, to save a couple of miles of smooth road around the point, that Robert first made the remark set down at the beginning. I have an idea that Biddy's versatility in folly was the result of his greater intelligence. Robert himself probably knew just enough to be a fool in two ways; while, with no more effort, Biddy had the choice of half a dozen. But I never mentioned this view to Robert.

The chief work of the horse-wrangler is to graze the saddle-horses at night and bring them into camp at dawn, where each man selects his mount for the day. One early evening a thunder shower caused the bunch to drift away from camp, and as the clouds began to break, and here and there a star showed through, Biddy realized he had lost his bearings. Robert said afterward that any other man would have held the bunch right there until morning and turned them into camp half an hour late. But Biddy had another way. Catching sight of Antares through the clouds, he recognized it for the north star, and knowing he had drifted southward in the rain, he drove his herd for half the night toward the South Pole, and was half the day getting back.

And that was the beginning of his carrying a compass. On his first trip to town, he bought a pocket compass, and he learned from the county surveyor that the local variation of the needle was thirteen degrees east. Thus armed and equipped, he felt himself equal to any emergency, and he got along smoothly enough until Robert broke his leg.

It was a "mighty bad break," the foreman said; "looked like the bone was crushed."

Biddy was sent off post haste for a doctor. He took a hurried lunch, he took the best horse in his string, he took his compass—and that was the last seen of Biddy until the third day. His orders were to ride forty miles to town, get the doctor, and be back in eight hours.

I think Biddy might have made it in that time but for the compass and his saddle. Experimentally, he had used the compass with success, and he now had no doubt that it would lead him into the town by midnight.

But the saddle he rode had a broken horn, which was mended with soft iron. As Biddy rode along, he lit a match from time to time, and consulted the compass. The night was windy, and to protect the light he held it, and the compass close down alongside of the saddle-horn, where the iron deflected the needle six to ten

degrees. An error of that extent amounts to one mile in eight. When he had been riding an hour, he was well off the true course and already in trouble in the sage-brush.

By morning he was in a thicket, in a trackless canon, his horse played out, himself exhausted. He climbed a hill and found water on the other side; then he could not find his way back to his horse. He spent hours looking for the horse, gave it up, and fortunately lost the compass. It then occurred to him to follow down the canon, which soon opened out into a little valley with a settler's cabin.

Here he learned that he was about the same distance from town as when he started upon his ride. Getting a fresh mount and this time following a traveled road, he reached town just twenty-four hours late.

More delay ensued here, the doctor being out. Finally, with Dr. Cutler in tow, he started back for the ranch. During the long hours of waiting the injured man was, by his comrades, made as comfortable as might be; and, as time passed beyond when Biddy should have returned, they sought to shorten it by anecdotes of other accidents.

Smithy said it reminded him of a man down in Arizona got bit by a snake. "They sent me down to the nearest station for whiskey. On the way up I intended only to take one sip, but I took two, and I never remembered exactly what happened after that, until I got back with the empty jug. And the joke of it was, the man was dead."

Another said Robert's hurt was just like a case he had known, where the doctor cut off a man's leg in two places.

"Say, boys," said Robert, "put my gun where I can reach it before that doctor comes."

The next morning Ed Reese came running up. Ed was what the cowboys call a natural doctor. He had pulled teeth and cut hair on that range for years.

"Ed," said Robert, "I'm powerful glad to see you; I didn't know you was this side the mountains. You got to stay and fix my leg."

"Well," said Ed, "I shaved you lots of times; guess I can mend your leg."

Ed at once set about reducing the inflammation by application of fresh meat, preferably newly killed rabbits, split up the back and renewed every five minutes, and by other expedients well known to cowboy doctors. After some hours he announced that the leg would come out all right.

I may say here that it did, and eventually became a better and longer one than its mate.

Robert was comfortably asleep, and the boys were taking an after-dinner smoke outside, when Biddy came in sight with Dr. Cutler. It was agreed that the doctor was not to be allowed to see Robert, but Smith said he ought to have some kind of a job after coming so far and how would it do to break Biddy's leg and let him set that?

When they rode up, Ed Reese stepped forward and informed the doctor that it had all been a little joke on Burke, that Robert was only slightly bruised, had recovered and had gone away.

Was he mad? Well, he didn't say much, and only grunted when Ed handed up a twenty, saying they wished to pay for the joke.

When the doctor had turned his horse's head toward them, Biddy told the story of his delay. It was doubtful what his standing was to be until Robert settled it.

"I am awfully sorry," said Burke to Robert.

"Shucks!" said Robert; "me and you are pardners from this day. You saved my leg."

"That's right," said Reese. "Dr. Cutler never lost so good a chance to cut off a leg as yours was yesterday. —Argonaut.

Their Conclusions.

Two scientists of the twenty-first century were examining with deep interest a petrified body, which had just been discovered.

"It is quite old," said one.

"Yes," replied the other, "but not more than 150 years. I should say. You will notice that it has the bicycle face and the telephone ear. Those peculiarities did develop until near the close of the nineteenth century, according to the best authorities." —New York World.

The Use of Bicycles in War.

The bicycle, at first regarded more as a plaything, or as part of the machinery of a circus, to be used only by experts to amuse a crowd, as the trapeze, or the balloon, gradually worked its way and from a toy has come at length to be as practical for everyday use as the old-fashioned horse and buggy. Possibly there are now in actual use more bicycles than pleasure carriages of every description, and the bicycle has come to be a necessity of the civilization of our day. Its almost universal use in this country is a matter of general remark, and while at first the demand for it was regarded as a " craze " or a "fad," which would shortly die out, when some new "fad" was started, the demand continues to grow, not only here, but throughout the civilized world, and presently, it would seem, the one of either sex who does not ride the wheel will be the exception, like the one in these days who never rides the trolley or travels by railroads. Its use has also extended to the army, as was noticed more than a year ago, when some of our commanders tested its availability for the transmission of dispatches from one army post to another. In France it was adopted for this purpose some years ago, and now we learn that it is being tested for use by combatants. To do away with the objection that the bicycle can only be used where there are roads, and good roads at that, a folding bicycle has been invented, which in a few seconds the rider can fold up and pack upon his back when he comes to a bad piece of road or has a field to cross, and with his rifle in hand may fight as a foot soldier very moderately burdened. Regulations have also been adopted providing for the drill of riders "in detachments as scouts or rapid marching partisans," and thus "the fighting wheelman" is expressly recognized. A folding cycle similar to that of the French one has also been under trial for the Austrian army. It is described as a small rear-driving safety machine weighing little under thirty-one pounds, with pneumatic tires and an ordinary saddle, so constructed that one wheel closes upon the other, and so folded that the rider can sling it upon his back and carry it without inconvenience, leaving both his hands free to handle his rifle. When riding there is a contrivance near the axle of the front wheel for holding the rifle in a verticle position. In the German army there is a regular system of training the men for the use of the bicycle, and the practice with it is kept up throughout the winter. In connection with the wheel practice there is also a system of training in the building and repair of the machines, the disposition of weights, the carrying of the rifle and revolver, the precautions to be taken with regard to heat and cold, and to the care and cleaning of the machine. So, also, during the recent military manoeuvres in England a bicycle carrying a telegraph instrument which can run a type-writer and a reel of five miles of fine, flexible wire, with relays of reels extending the service, so that one wheel carries thirty miles of telegraph wire and the operating machine, the wire unwinding by the rotation of the rear wheel of the bicycle.

From this it will be learned that the wheel has already become a practical thing for army operations as well as for pleasure and business, and that instead of disappearing from use upon the introduction of some new "fad" or " craze," it has in all probability become a permanent adjunct to our civilization. Possibly in a short time we shall see our troops mounted on wheels—or at least corps of wheelmen trained for special duty, as scouts or flankers, performing their evolutions on our streets, and quite as much at home on their wheels as the cavalry on their horses, and capable of rendering service quite as effective. —Trenton, (N. J.) American.

Why They Do Not Own Their Houses.

The New York Sun says: Some persons indulge in sentimental regrets that no New Yorker of moderate means may own the house he lives in if he be centrally located, but on the other hand there are men abundantly able to own their own homes who deliberately prefer to be renters because they believe that the money represented by the value of a house such as they choose to occupy is more profitable in the form of active capital. Many wealthy business men postpone to old age the building of a house chiefly because of such considerations.

A Possibility.

Marguerite—May is engaged to that millionaire? She won't have to worry about money any more.

Marie—No, but he may.—Truth.

TERRAPIN TALK.

A Food Dainty Worth Almost Its Weight in Gold.

Most Expensive Kind Caught in Chesapeake Bay.

First catch your terrapin. This requires a golden hook if you are not an expert angler in the waters of Chesapeake Bay, for the diamond-backed terrapin is an aristocratic denizen of those waters and worth almost his weight in gold to the epicure of the fashionable cafe. This value set upon the terrapin prevents the edible reptile from becoming food for the masses, his scarcity enhancing his worth and making him a more toothsome tid-bit for the ennuied digestion of the professional diner-out.

The diamond-back terrapin is only another name for a small species of turtle, and time was when the colored people of Maryland ate them after roasting them in their shells, and never dreamed of their value as food for a royal menu. Now a terrapin-farm is a mine of wealth to its possessor. A true story is told of a poor negro fisherman who chanced upon a nest of diamond-backs near Tangier Island in 1893. In four hours he took out twelve hundred dollars' worth and stopped only when too exhausted to work.

Terrapins "in pound" present an interesting but by no means an appetizing appearance. The pound is a place where the fishermen keep the turtles until they are shipped to some city to the markets. There is a prejudice in the minds of the dealers against pound terrapin as losing some of their delicacy when kept from salt water, but only an epicure could distinguish a difference. The farms where they are cultivated are flooded with sea water, so that the little object preserves its delicateness unimpaired.

There are certain rules understood by those who purchase terrapin. They are careful to observe that the extreme tip or muzzle of the head is not injured, that the bottom of the feet are not worn off, that the head is prettily shaped—small, thin and pointed, and the eyes brilliant. The feet should be small and slender. Those who have seen these same diamond-backs crawling over each other in the windows of fish stores did not perhaps appreciate their great worth.

Cooking terrapin properly is such an art that only a chef or a Marylander should be permitted to give instructions. It is rather hard on the epicure to be told that unless the small bones of the terrapin are left in he will not know whether he is eating the genuine article or not. But it is absolutely true that the only people who can cook it as it demands are the Maryland cooks who learned from the colored people, and their secret of success is to handle it as little as possible, and to serve it from the dish in which it was cooked, thus preserving its native juices and aromas.

On the terrapin farms of the Chesapeake a peculiar sport is indulged in by the men, called "terrappin racing." The turtles are let loose in a large room, where at one end a hot fire is blazing, protected by a guard. They all begin a scramble for the light and warmth, the men betting on particular ones. They have no continuity of purpose, and are likely to branch off in a dozen devious routes, but the terrapin that first puts its nose against the fire guard wins the race.

Terrapin are rated according to their value with a family pedigree tag, which simply gives the name of the state whence they come. First on the list for its terrapin is Chesapeake Bay. Next comes Long Island. Then Virginia, Charleston and Savannah, Florida, Mobile and the gulf follow. Mississippi and North Carolina and other points south furnish excellent terrapin.

Eighty dollars a dozen is not considered high for choice terrapin at certain seasons and on special occasions. A modest housekeeper saw one crawling over some lobsters in a fish market, and out of curiosity inquired the price.

"What time is it?" asked the market man, looking at his watch. "You may have it for \$3, but if it was 6 o'clock tonight and I only had that one I should have to charge you more. I expect some in any moment." —Detroit Free Press.

One on Mamma.

"Papa, what does teacher mean by saying I must have inherited my bad temper?"

"She means, Fannie, that you are your mother's own girl." —Texas Sifters.

Suicides Increasing in Japan.

An essay on the prevalence of suicide in Japan has been written by Mr. Saito Kokufu, a native statistician. The statistics extend over ten years, and show that suicide has been on the increase in Japan, both actually and in proportion to the total number of deaths. In 1885 and 1886 the number in proportion to the population reached its highest. Mr. Saito observes that during these years there was a great rise in the price of the necessaries of life. In the case of Japanese women, the age at which suicide is most frequent is about twenty; the corresponding period with men is twenty-five. Comparatively few women commit suicide after the twenty-fifth year, but men are not safe until they are past forty. Female suicides are rather more than half those of males, but with a distinct tendency to increase. From January to May are the worst months for suicides. The number mounts rapidly month by month from January to May, and keeps high until July, falling to its lowest in November. The suicides of December and January are attributed partly to pecuniary troubles at the close of the year, when all accounts are supposed to be closed and all liabilities met. A rise in July is attributed to financial troubles at the half-year. In recent years the use of the sword by suicides has decreased greatly; hanging is the method most frequently employed, nearly three-fourths of the male suicides and nearly half the females terminating their lives in this way; but among women drowning is more common even than hanging. Firearms and poison are very rarely used, probably because they are not readily obtainable, while a Japanese of either sex always has a long grille and always has water sufficient in the deep wells in every village and adjacent to almost every house. The figures show that the number of suicides varies year by year with the price of rice.

Travel to Europe Increasing.

Never before, probably, have so many Americans gone to Europe as during the last summer. The annual migration of Americans to Europe has, in fact, become an event of far-reaching importance to Europe itself, maintaining the New York Tribune. Its tradesmen grow prosperous from the patronage of wealthy Americans. Its health resorts find their best customers in Americans who have wealth, but not health. Its railways are able to declare larger dividends because so many thousand Americans travel on them as first class passengers. Of course, if it were not for Americans many flourishing hotels would have to close their doors and a small army of guides and couriers would have to go into some other business, while last, but not least, the somewhat unconventional ways of a few Americans are an unending source of amusement to our European cousins. Not only are there flourishing American colonies in the larger cities of Europe, but they are found in its most remote corners, so that many of them return home knowing much more of the Old World than they do of their own country.

Nor is there any prospect that this preference of Americans for Europe will die out. The Daily Messenger of Paris estimates that during the last summer Americans have left \$100,000,000 in gold in Europe; and there is every reason to believe that this enormous expenditure will continue to increase in the future.

How Comstock Lode Was Discovered.

In January, 1859, a streak of warm weather tempting some of them out, Comstock, "Old Virginia," and several others found "surface diggings" near "Slippery Gulch." They named the place "Gold Hill," and, staking out claims, proceeded to work the decomposed outcroppings over Crown Point, Yellow Jacket, Becher, Kentucky, and other great mines as yet undiscovered. From the time they started the rockers, using water from a spring close by, Gold Hill averaged twenty dollars a day to the man. June 1st, O'Riley and McLaughlin, whose claim in Six Mts Canon paid only two or three dollars a day, suddenly cut into the rock on the surface of Ophir, at the north end of the Comstock, and began to take out gold at the rate of a thousand dollars a day. They had only been working a few hours when Comstock happened along, saw the value of the discovery, laid a general floating claim to a mythical stock ranch in the region, and fairly bluffed the good-natured discoverer into taking himself and Manny Penrod as equal partners. "Kentuck" Osborne afterward came in, and the five took up the original Ophir claim. —Appleton's Popular Science Monthly.