

Great Britain is coming more and more to the opinion that Russia's occupation of Constantinople is inevitable.

Nebraska is the least illiterate State of the Union, the State in which the percentage of persons of school age who cannot read or write is the smallest.

The Hartford (Conn.) Courant is of the opinion that, as a rule, the American farmer is superior in intelligence, in cultivation, in physique, in morality to the average inhabitant of the city, who assumes to laugh at him.

Mexico evidently sees the evils which may accrue to the country through the destruction of the timber. A commission of five has just been appointed by President Diaz to report on the best means of preserving the timber throughout the republic.

Mr. Joseph Chamberlain of England says that he does not believe in cheap education. Nobody should, adds the Independent. "It does not pay to economize on wit and culture. Money spent on education is well spent, provided the training given be moral as well as mental."

During 1896 the United Kingdom purchased on this country 17,939 horses, compared with only 10,351 in 1895. England bought nearly 12,000 horses in Canada, or no increase over a year previous. Total imports of horses into the United Kingdom in 1896 were 49,677, an increase of nearly 7000 compared with the previous year. The average value of horses shipped into the United Kingdom last year from the United States was about \$145. All this goes to show reasons for encouragement in the horse industry, especially that part of it devoted to raising serviceable animals suitable for foreign trade.

A novel point in that part of international law that deals with the exterritoriality of foreign embassies has just been decided in the Berlin sheriff's court. A parrot belonging to the Japanese embassy escaped from its cage and took refuge on a high tree in a garden next door. To get it down some of the embassy servants played on the bird with a garden hose, and drenched at the same time the owner of the garden, who happened to be sitting under the tree. He brought suit for trespass, and received twenty marks damages, the injury having been inflicted on German soil, though the perpetrators had not left Japanese territory.

The clever forgery of notes of the Bank of England, which recently came to light quite by accident, has created a sensation from the fact that the bank's own paper, with the proper watermark was reproduced. This had never before been done. The forged notes were absolutely perfect, excepting that the secret cipher marks were lacking. The discovery that the notes were not genuine was made by a cashier, who happened to have reason formally to check the validity of the notes by reference to the cipher books. About £10,000 of the forged notes have turned up so far, and it has been discovered that they were all put in circulation in one day by being changed simultaneously at twenty-five different exchanges in Paris. The gang is known to be a large one, but so far the police have been unable to trace its members.

Our English contemporary, Industries and Iron, presents the following pleasing list of inventions which it says are claimed by Americans. We ourselves have never heard of any of them, but then one must go abroad to get the news. It says: "One has heard less lately of those of Mr. Edison's inventions which are to be employed in case of war, more especially of his 'sniggling chains' and 'electric water,' but still one does occasionally hear of some tall 'inventions' of our consins in the United States. It has been gravely announced in some of the American journals that a native inventor has perfected 'a deep-sea locomotive and train, capable of moving on the surface or beneath the water, or at the bottom of the sea.' Another inventor has designed a torpedo, carrying in its bows a powerful electro-magnet, which will be attracted by the steel hull of a vessel, and affix itself there until explosion takes place. A submarine boat is also spoken of, which can be separated in parts, each part remaining 'alive' and intact. A leading feature of the last 'invention' is that when destruction is imminent (we are surprised to learn they are not invulnerable) the crew escape through water-tight doors. Having done this, the escaped crew will probably take a seat in the Pullman cars of the 'deep-sea locomotive train.'"

The Date for Easter.

"Thirty days hath September,
Every person can remember;
But to know when Easter's come
Puzzles even scholars, some.

When March the twenty-first is past,
Just watch the silvery moon,
And when you see it full and round,
Know Easter'll be here soon.

After the moon has reached its full,
Then Easter will be here,
The very Sunday after
In each and every year.

And if it should hap on Sunday
The moon should reach its height,
The Sunday following this event
Will be the Easter bright.

—Boston Transcript.

EASTER LILIES.



DEARLY I think she's quite above her station," said Miss Plantagenet, languidly. "I always tell Mrs. Seawell to send her into me, when I go there to have a dress fitted. She has such a pretty way, don't you know, and such lovely eye lashes, and she understands her business to perfection!"

"She is a very beautiful girl," said Mr. Elwood, calmly. "And she has helped me wonderfully with those shy children, at the Sunday afternoon services. They seem to take to her by instinct."

"Some people have a way with children," said Mrs. Plantagenet. "Now I never could endure the idea of teaching until you came to take charge of our church, Dear Mr. Elwood; then, of course, everything was different."

Mr. Elwood smiled a little. If Miss Plantagenet had been less lovely and dimpled, sitting there, with a blue ribboned pug in her lap, and the colored lights from the stained glass window making a sort of aureole around her face, he might have set her down for a fool; as it was, he mentally characterized her as merely a "thoughtless child."

Yes, Marien Plantagenet was certainly very lovely. And the reduced family of Plantagenet were reckoning largely on this innocent, infantine beauty to build up their fortunes again.

Mrs. Plantagenet, a hatchet-faced widow of fifty, went around cutting down the daily expenses, directing the servants to make Irish stews, hashes, and divers other mixtures, out of the scraps of cold meat, instead of bestowing them on beggars, taking big coals off the fire with a pair of tongs, and peering into the ash can to make sure that no solitary cinder had been smuggled unnoted into its depths.

She studied the butcher's book, beat down the baker's account and economized in everything, "in order," as she said, "to give Marien a good chance to marry."

In the article of white satin shoes, cut flowers and ball dresses, she was compelled to loose her purse strings, groan as she might.

And when Mr. Elwood, the nephew and adopted son of a wealthy old bachelor, came to assume the charge of the nearest fashionable church, Mrs. Plantagenet rejoiced greatly.

"It's all plain sailing now," she thought. "For nobody can deny that Marien is a beauty."

"Mamma," Miss Marien had said, "I must have a new dress for Easter. I did think my pearl silk would do, but it is too tight, and I've worn it so often."

"Nonsense!" said Widow Plantagenet. "Where in the world do you suppose it is to come from?"

"From the stores, to be sure!" said Marien, with a saucy toss of her head. "And I've promised Mr. Elwood to send a cross of lilies for the font. I must be looking around for that."

"My goodness me!" groaned Mrs. Plantagenet. "Do you know, child, what they are asking for white lilies now at the florists? Twenty-five cents each. And they'll go up, of course, as Easter approaches. They always do."

"I couldn't manage with less than a dozen," said Marien, immediately. "For the centre piece, you know. I might arrange jonquils, and hyacinths, and white carnations, and those cheaper spring flowers, around the base, with plenty of climbing fern and rose geranium leaves, and violets—if violets aren't too dear."

"Well, we must contrive some way," said Mrs. Plantagenet wearily.

Would this everlasting warfare of ways and means never cease? Would the time ever come when everybody would be paid, and no army of clamorous duns would longer besiege the door?

Mrs. Plantagenet hoped for this happy state of things, but it was very much as she hoped for the millennium—in a vague, indefinite sort of way.

CUPID'S PRANK AT EASTER-TIDE.



Said Cupid: "Now, I'll lay aside My arrows and my bow; To play a prank this Easter-tide Upon the eyes I know."



"Who'll pluck with me to win or lose?" In whistling tones he begs; Of all he met none could refuse— And Cupid won their eggs."

"Mamma, I tell you what!" said Marien, starting from a reverie. "I won't say a word to old Seawell about this dress. Her prices are so exorbitant! I'll go directly to little Eunice Perry."

"And who is Eunice Perry?" said Mrs. Plantagenet, opening her faded blue eyes.

"Don't you know? I'm sure I must have mentioned her a thousand times. That little sewing girl who fits me so beautifully. She is Mrs. Seawell's forewoman or something. I dare say I can make a special bargain with her to get me up a gown at some what short of the regular price. Of course the profits will all be hers. Old Seawell wouldn't like it if she knew, but nobody is going to tell her. I'll go there to-morrow, the very first thing, before Eunice goes out; afterwards I'll go to church. Mr. Elwood likes us to be devout."

"It's an excellent idea, my dear!" said Mrs. Plantagenet, who caught eagerly at everything that involved the saving of money.

Early as Marien Plantagenet rose from her downy pillow the next morning, Eunice Perry was earlier still. The morning services in the dimly-lighted church were very dear to her. They seemed to shield and shelter her from all the pricks and arrows of the day, and up to this time she had not missed one.

She lighted the fire, put over the coffee-pot for her old aunt's breakfast, tidied up the room, and before she went out, sprinkled a little water over the magnificent calla lilies that were unrolling their superb scrolls of white velvet in the windows that fronted to the east.

"There will be thirteen," said she, to herself, her cheeks flushing with natural pride. "Thirteen! I didn't think when I planted the roots in the fall how splendidly they would grow and thrive! Oh, you darlings, I could kiss you, if I wasn't afraid of spoiling the white purity of your hearts!"

There is no accounting for the freaks of the flower world. These lilies had blossomed royally out in the sunshine of those low, little three-story windows when, perhaps, beneath the arched crystal roof of a steam-heated conservatory they would have put forth nothing but leaves.

Did they know how Eunice loved them? Did they feel the magnetic current of her liquid hazel eye every time that she looked at them? Who could answer? Not Eunice, certainly. She had been gone some time, when Miss Plantagenet leisurely ascended the stairs, turning up her aristocratic nose at the various sights and sounds, and smells which are inseparable from a tenement house. Only the old aunt was in the room, moving leisurely about as she put away the remains of her frugal breakfast.

Marien opened the door, and came in without the preliminary ceremony of knocking. According to her platform, the poor had no feelings that it was necessary to consult or regard.

"Is Miss Perry at home?" said she. "Good gracious, what beautiful lilies! Where did you buy them, my good woman?"

Old Mrs. Perry smiled complacently. "We didn't buy them," said she. "Eunice has grown them herself. My niece, Miss!" with a little courtesy.

"How much are they?" said Marien, greedily.

"They are not for sale," said the old aunt, with rather a frightened air.

"Oh, but I must have them!" said Marien, smilingly arrogant. "They are just precisely what I want. Such a perfect shape—so unusually large! I dare say she'd sell them all for seventy-five cents; for of course they can be of no use to you here?" with a scorn, full glance around the room. Did you say she was out?"

"She has gone to church," said Mrs. Perry, who instinctively approached a step or so nearer the lilies. "If you want to see her, she will be at Mrs.

Seawell's rooms at nine o'clock this morning."

In her own mind, Marien Plantagenet abandoned the idea of the dress at once. She could make her violet suit do—or else the despised pearl-colored silk, perhaps. And, after all, there was scarcely time for the proper making up of an Easter costume; and Sharke & Seabury were advertising some very cheap ready-made suits from Paris. But the lilies she must have!

"We are very old friends, Miss Perry and I," said Marien, turning with a hard, polished smile to the old woman. "And I'm quite sure that if she knew I had taken a fancy to your lilies she would be glad to give them to me. I am Miss Plantagenet, one of Mrs. Seawell's best customers, you know, and a word from me would dismiss any of her workmen. Here is a dollar. Of course the flowers aren't worth that, but I have a horror of any meanness. And now if you'll get me a piece of paper to wrap them in, I'll cut the lilies at once."

So, nolens volens, Miss Plantagenet carried off poor Eunice's white-souled darlings in a piece of tissue-paper, leaving her crumpled dollar-bill on the window-sill.

"A capital morning's work," said Marien to herself.

On Saturday morning the exquisite bunch of lilies arrived for the font, with a card on which was scribbled the prettiest of messages for the rector.

He looked at them with admiration. "I never saw lovelier lilies in my life," he said. And then, with a not unnatural sequence of ideas, he added to himself, "I wonder why Eunice Perry has not sent the flowers that she promised?"

Eunice came into her prayers that Easter Eve, pale and silent, with eyelids just flushed, as if she had been secretly crying, but she brought no flowers.

The rector perceived in an instant that something was wrong.

She was stealing quietly away, when he came out from the robing-room door and intercepted her.

"Eunice," said he, gently, separating himself from the crowd of young girls who came thither to help arrange the chancel, font and rails with leaf and blossom for the morrow's joyful festivity, "don't go. I want to speak to you."

"About the flowers?" said Eunice, lifting her soft, shy eyes to his. "Oh, Mr. Elwood, I am so sorry! But—they were taken away."

"Taken away?" he repeated, with surprise.

"Yes," said Eunice. "Miss Plantagenet came to our house, while I was gone, and carried them away, without leave or permission. She left a dollar for them. No money would have bought them of me, after watching the earliest buds swell into bloom."

"Miss Plantagenet," he repeated, slowly, as if in thought. "Are these flowers yours, Eunice?"

He took the stately cross of callalilies from the centre of the white marble font.

Eunice Perry clasped her hands.

"Yes," she said; "they are mine. I should know them anywhere."

"I thought so," said Mr. Elwood, drily. "She sent them here this morning. It is the old story of the rich man and the little ewe-lamb over again, Eunice. But do not weep; the sweetest lily that ever bloomed is not worth your tears."

He walked home with her a part of the way, and when they passed on the street corner nearest her home, he took the little cold hand in his.

"Eunice," he said, "I wish I could comfort you."

"You have comforted me," she uttered.

"If I could make your life easier!" he exclaimed, earnestly. "Eunice, do you think that I could? Sweet one, will you let me try? Will you be my wife?"

So he wooed his wife, and so he won

her, on Easter Eve. And, as he afterward told her, he never knew how well he loved her until he saw her crying over those mute, magnificent Easter lilies.

As for Marien Plantagenet, she gained her lilies, but she lost the man she loved. The calls were not such a bargain after all! For, if Marien had ever cared for any one, it was for Mr. Elwood. But she failed to perceive that her mistake was rooted in her own selfishness. People never see quite straight where their own follies are concerned.

And Mrs. Plantagenet, poor soul, is as far away from her millennium as ever!

Easter Song.

Awaken, sweet flowers!
The snow in the valleys has melted at last,
And the desolate night of the year is past;
The ice-chains are broken, the robins are singing,
Awake to the call of the Easter bells ringing!

Awaken, O heart!
In bondage of sin thou hast slumbered so long,
Arise in thy beauty and rapture of song,
Arise in the gladness of nature's adorning,
Come forth in thy strength on this glad Easter morning!

—Rose Hartwick Thorpe, in Demorest's.

Meaning of the Easter Egg.

As Easter represents a new birth into the best life of all, it is easily seen how the pagan idea that the egg was the beginning of all kinds of life should become purified in the minds of the Christians, and accepted as the typical offering of good wishes and emblematic of pleasant hopes between believers of the glad Easter day. The egg in some form or other has been the unquestioned type of the new life from the very dawn of the Christian era.

In Russia as early as 1589 eggs colored red, typifying the blood of Christ shed as an atonement for our sins, were the most treasured of exchanges of Easter. Every believer went abroad at this season with his pockets well supplied with Easter eggs, as the society man of to-day attends to his well filled card case. When two Russians met for the first time during the Easter holidays, if they had not met on the day itself, the belated Easter compliments were passed, first by solemnly shaking hands in silence; then the elder (or the younger, if he outranked the elder) would say, "The Lord is risen," and his companion would reply, "It is true;" then they kissed each other and ceremoniously drew from their respective pockets the Easter emblem, and exchanged eggs.

The Syrians believed also that the gods from whom they claimed descent were hatched from mysteriously laid eggs. Hence we infer that our present custom of offering the Easter egg emblem has the heathen legends for its origin; in fact, all our most precious festivals come down from similar sources, but purified with the light of Christianity.—Chautauquan.

The Moravian Way of Celebrating Easter

One of the most significant and picturesque celebrations of Easter is that of the Moravian Christians, of whom there are many congregations in the United States. At Bethlehem, Penn., and other towns where Moravians abound some musicians with brass instruments go at earliest dawn to the roof of the church and play music signifying the calling forth of the dead. The people immediately flock to the church and begin the service of the day, most of it being musical. At a given signal the entire congregation rise, and, preceded by the ministers and trumpeters, leave the church and march to the cemetery. In Moravian cemeteries all the gravestones are alike—small, flat slabs laid upon the graves, "for," say the simple, literal people, "in the grave all men are equal." The procedure of the service is so timed that the musico-prayerful rejoicing reaches its highest expression just as the sun rises.

A Belgian Easter Tradition.

The offering of the Easter egg is also an ancient and popular tradition of the Belgians. It is customary there every Sunday for the young men to exchange bouquets of flowers with their fiancées, but at Easter time these gifts are varied by eggs colored and having inscriptions on them similar to the poetical lines one finds in cheap holiday confectionery. Among the wealthier classes in Belgium, as in Paris, eggs adorned with beautiful miniature portraits were exchanged. Flemish chronicles relate that under the reign of Maria Christina Easter eggs to the value of twenty francs were often distributed.

This expensive adorning of the Easter egg has lost its popularity, and to-day the eggs in general are simply colored by boiling or staining. They also are to be given and exchanged by adults, but are colored for children's amusement and pleasure.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

There is no rainbow without a cloud.
The greatest difficulties lie where we are not looking for them.

In wishing for his neighbor's possessions, the covetous man loses his own.

Strength is not a blessing when it is used to take advantage of a brother's weakness.

We have rarely known a man to be convinced of the error of his opinions by being called a fool.

Men do not always love those they esteem; women, on the contrary, esteem only those they love.

He alone is great and happy who fills his own station of independence, and has neither to command nor to obey.

Nothing pays smaller dividends in spiritual results than making a specialty of discovering the shortcomings of others.

The blossoms of spring are the prophets of autumn. So a joyful service in youth promises a rich fruitage in after years.

There is no good in arguing with the inevitable. The only argument available with an east wind is to put on your overcoat.

There are people who would do great acts; but because they wait for great opportunities, life passes, and the acts of love are not done at all.

Teach self-denial, and make its practice pleasurable, and you create for the world a destiny more sublime than ever issued from the brain of the wildest dreamer.

Art is long, life is short; judgment is difficult, opportunity fleeting. To act is easy—to think is difficult, and to act pursuant to one thought is troublesome.

Cost of Big Tunnels.

A recently published item relative to the comparative cost of the world's four great tunnels places the cost of Hoosac tunnel in the United States, the oldest one of the lot, at £76, or about \$380, a foot, says the New York Times. The Mount Conis tunnel, the next in date, cost, according to the same item, £71, or about \$355, a foot; the St. Gothard cost £16, of \$233 a foot, and the Arlberg, the latest in date, cost only £11, or \$155 a foot. The rapid decrease in cost, within comparatively few years, is cited as a marked indication of the great progress in mechanical methods and improvements in rock excavating tools. A still more striking result exists in the case of a tunnel through the Cascade mountains, on the line of the Northern Pacific railroad, in the United States. This, unlike those named, which were excavated in old, settled countries, with the terminal easy of access, was in a peculiarly difficult location, so much so that it took months to convey the machinery to the spot. Rivers had to be turned aside, bridges built and material transported over improvised roads through nearly 100 miles of forest, mud and snowfields, yet the tunnel, which is sixteen and one-half feet wide, twenty-two feet high, and 8950 feet long, was bored through the mountain in twenty-two months, at the rate of 413 feet a month, and at a cost for the completed tunnel of only £24, or about \$120 a foot.

Jubal's Call.

The daughter of Dr. Edward Hodges, the organist, says that her father had a delightful way of calling all the children musically. One Sunday morning, when he was playing in St. John's chapel, New York, he said to her:

"I am going to call Jubal. Watch him."

Jubal was sitting in his accustomed place near the middle aisle. Doctor Hodges' volitional began thoughtfully and smoothly, but in the course of it a significant phrase of two notes was twice repeated. It was distinct, and yet so truly a part of the improvisation that no stranger would have noticed it at all.

The first time Jubal's attention was arrested; the second, he turned and looked up, but saw no sign. At the third call he deliberately took up his hat, left the pew, walked straight up to his father and said:

"Do you want me, sir?"

"Yes," said Dr. Hodges. "Go home and get my gold snuffbox."

The errand was speedily executed, for the house stood near. Jubal handed the snuffbox to his father and returned to his seat.—Youth's Companion.

A Bad Case.

"He is so good that I fear his wings are about to sprout."

"Is it as bad as all that? I always knew he was a bit flighty."