

Of all men in the world, drug clerks and railroad engineers should not be so overworked as to imperil their presence of mind, observes the New York Tribune.

Science having demonstrated that the stomach is superfluous, dyspeptic gentlemen who contemplate a trip to the Klondike region this spring should be careful to check all unnecessary baggage at home.

The loosening of white doves at the launching of the Japanese cruiser prompts the Philadelphia Press to suggest the appropriateness of setting free a young eagle when a United States war vessel first meets the water.

Philatelists are protesting against the proposed new issue of stamps commemorative of the Omaha (Neb.) exhibition. They say the issue will serve no good purpose, and speculators will buy the stamps and hold them for a high price.

The pastor of a London church, in order to popularize his service, permits the male members of his congregation to smoke, and furnishes the tobacco. New Jersey is bound to keep pace, Rector Stoddard of Jersey City having started a dancing class in his church.

Prussia's paternal government has ordered two private schools in a little town near Potsdam to be closed because they interfere with a rival establishment. One may be kept open for a year longer provided the proprietor engages to take in only twenty pupils and to teach them no foreign languages.

Early morning exercise is denounced nowadays by the majority of hygienic teachers. At that time, they say, vitality is at its lowest ebb, and needs the stimulation of food. About mid-afternoon is the best time for gentle outdoor exercise. At this time, too, it is most desirable that mental labor should cease.

A great improvement has been made in Parisian duels. The seconds in an affair of honor between a dramatic author and one of his critics made a mistake in the place of meeting, there by sending their principals to opposite ends of Paris. This made a subsequent meeting at close quarters unnecessary.

A recent writer on the Chinese cotton industry states, as a remarkable fact, that in China cotton yarn can be produced for ten cents per pound. In our southern mills cotton undershirts can be produced for a fraction over ten cents apiece. There is hope for our cotton manufacturers, even in competition with the Chinese.

The chief aid-de-camp of Don Carlos is quoted as saying that all his master wants to enable him to get the crown of Spain is the help of "God and His Vicar-General." Being interrogated as to the individuality of the latter, without whose aid even Divine help is vain, he frankly explains that the Vicar-General is no other than—money! A potent vicar, truly! exclaims the New York Tribune.

England's scheme to get China heavily in her debt is shrewd in more ways than one. By that course China can be made to leave her customs in British hands, which implies that the great trade ports are not to be ceded away, nor territorial relations changed. Then by insisting that part of the loan shall be used to pay off Japan, the latter power is given the means to buy more ships and guns in the British market. The thrifty side of British diplomacy was never more apparent than it is in this Chinese undertaking, which sufficiently accounts, thinks the San Francisco Chronicle, for the alarm in other quarters.

The present year will not be lacking in political interest. In twenty-five states of the Union elections for governor will be held, and these elections will serve to throw much light upon national issues. Governors and statehouse officers are to be elected in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Connecticut, Georgia, Idaho, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Nevada, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Wisconsin and Wyoming. In the above list of states every section of the country is represented. Rhode Island's state election will occur in April, Alabama's in August, Arkansas's in September and Georgia's in October. The remaining ones will all occur in November. With this outlook ahead, there is not apt to be much idleness among the politicians.

## FIGHTING SNOW DRIFTS.

THE WHITE FOE OF TRAFFIC IN THE CANADIAN NORTHWEST.

Gateway Lines Blocked by Sweeping Avalanches—An Army of Men Recruited to Clear the Tracks—Great Snow Sheds For Protecting the Trains.

"North America is the battle ground of the biggest snow fights on earth. There are thousands of men in the northwest whose only occupation during the winter months is to fight snow. It is exciting work, too, a life that involves the greatest hardships and continual risks. One might search the world over for a more desperate and dangerous employment."

It was a Canadian Pacific engineer who spoke. We were traveling over the Rocky Mountains at midnight. Through the glass-paneled door at the tail of the train one could see the icy crests of the Mountains in the pale moonlight. In the wake of the summer fires the trees stood up thin and rakish, like the masts of ships. Elsewhere they were shrouded with drooping branches and spattered stems, in the universal snow. The snow gave an impressive sense of peacefulness to the impenetrable silence of the mountains. I looked out upon the solemn stillness, the broad stretches of motionless white, the deep passages of avalanches carved along the mountain sides, with a feeling of awe for the immensity of the power that had so changed the face of nature.

But the railroad man had no illusions. To him the snow was a foe, a foe to be feared, a foe against whom men and engines had often measured their strength in vain.

Every now and then the scenery

dust has cleared sufficiently for the engineers to see around them, it may be that they have only advanced a yard, possibly the engine fires have been extinguished, not improbably the engine may have been thrown off the line.

The one recourse which then remains is to call in the assistance of a small army of men, that a way may be forced through the snow with pick and shovel, and, while these operations are progressing, the passenger train has to be kept constantly on the move, lest in a few hours it become incapable of movement at all.

At such a time it is no unusual thing to see several hundred men at work on a single drift. Perhaps eight or a dozen platforms are cut in the snow, and thus what is removed from the line is passed upward from stage to stage, climbing the steep walls in tiny shovelfuls, until it finally reaches the open waste, thirty or forty feet above the heads of the workers on the ground level.

The men are brought to the spot in special trains and fed and housed as best they can be. They work day and night, sometimes shoveling for thirty-six hours at a stretch.

The thing that has simplified the task of snow fighting more than anything else, especially in the prairie country, is the rotary plow. The appearance of the "rotary," as it is familiarly called by railroad men, reminds one of nothing so much as the screw propeller of a steamship. It is a huge rosette of flanges, about twelve feet in diameter, that bores its way into snowbanks, clearing just enough space to enable the waiting train to pass through. As the winter goes on, the snow is piled higher and higher on both sides, until we have the per-



THE ROTARY PLOW AT WORK.

pendicular embankment through which the train often passes for miles without a break. As the wheel revolves, the snow chips pass back through the intervals between the shovels, fall into a large-sized fan elevator, and are hurled forth on this side or that side of the line, according to the quarter from which the wind is blowing. In a graceful arch of silver dust, the snow is flung into the air to a height of sixty or seventy feet, descending like a fountain over the half-buried posts of the telegraph. From the smoke stack a volume of fire is rising. There is an uproar like the sound of artillery galloping over a cobbled street. As a spectacular effect the snow plow is a great success. Some of the bigger plows weigh over fifty tons by themselves, and with the machinery that operates them the total weight is over 100 tons.

The cutter, with its own private engine, as it were, is placed on a massive truck which is inclosed like the cab of a locomotive and linked to a heavy freight engine, the "Hog." Following behind this travels another engine drawing its load of tools and its complement of workers. The men who operate a snow plow draw high wages, the expenses in this respect on one job amounting to over a \$150 a day. A rotary in good hands will clear a snow blockaded track at the rate from two to twelve miles an hour;

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THE ENGINEER AFTER A RIDE IN A STORM.

but the consumption of coal is one ton in 30 minutes.

With a rotary plow the engineers do not run the same risk as they do on the plow of the old-fashioned type, with which it is often necessary to charge the snowbank at top speed, not merely cutting through, but burrowing under the snow. But even the rotary plow is liable to be disabled by encountering the frozen carcass of a horse or a steer in a snowbank, or the Jabris of fallen telegraph poles, or among the mountains, the trunks of gigantic trees. It is nominally the

duty of the section men to look out for this, and if possible, to warn the engine driver, and to telegraph for a gang of workmen with pick and shovel to clear the track in the old-fashioned way. But it is needless to say that the most vigilant section men cannot always be relied upon in such a matter as this.

## PREFERS BICYCLE TO BRONCO.

This Indian Rides the Wheel With Ease and Grace.

Onward progress in the case of the bicycle in the affections of the American people was never better illustrated than when Hole-in-the-Day of Devil's Lake, N. D., swapped his sure-footed



HOLE-IN-THE-DAY ON HIS WHEEL.

bronco for a "bike." The manœuvres of the bicycle squad attached to the military post at that point filled him with admiration and a desire, and now he can ride with the ease and grace of an old-timer. Hard falls and punctures came his way while learning to master the silent steel, but such trials did not cause him to waver in his affection for the pneumatic-shod vehicle. Hole-in-the-Day's example has been followed by other Indians, and an Indian cycling club may now be organized.

## How a Chameleon Changes Color.

The chameleon is a little lizard, who possesses the wonderful power of changing his color to suit his own convenience. Florida produces several species of these lizards in abundance. Up to the present day no one has understood the process by which the little lizard effects his changes. Now it is known.

Certain colors through the medium of the optic nerve produce a contraction or expansion of the pigment or color cells. The result is a protective tint or one which resembles that upon which the animal is resting. The eye receives the stimulus or impression, which passes from the optic nerve to the sympathetic nerve, so reaching the various series of the lizard's little color cells under the skin.

The pigment cells are distributed all over the body with more or less regularity, and upon their contraction and



THE LITTLE CHAMELEON WHEN BLINDFOLDED CAN'T CHANGE COLOR.

expansion depends the prevailing color of the animal.

The scientist discovered this by blindfolding a lizard, and found that when it couldn't see the color of the surrounding foliage it ceased to change its own color.

## Disappointed in Love.

There is an old lady residing south of Kokomo, near the Howard-Tipton county line, who has been a "man hater" for forty years. She is a spinster leading a hermit's life, and has a comfortable sum of money secreted in her home.

Since being disappointed in love forty years ago she has never spoken to a man. She is seldom seen in town, and her small trading is always done with women clerks. She has made a will and purchased a cemetery lot. Explicit directions have been given that no man shall preach her funeral sermon nor act as pall-bearer. A woman is to offer prayer at the grave. Women shall act as pall-bearers, a woman shall drive the hearse, and women lower the body and fill the grave. No men are to be allowed in the funeral procession, and newspapers are forbidden to mention her demise.—Indianapolis (Ind.) Sentinel.

## How to Avoid Colds.

Cold and exposed extremities and too much wrapping around the body create congestion and pave the way for disease. The hygienic and sensible method is to give the throat, chest and arms a dash of cold salt and water every morning upon rising. An entire sponge bath of this sort is of great advantage, but this treatment of the throat and chest is almost absolutely necessary if one would avoid a multitude of ills that affect this portion of the system.

## A Much-Prized Coin.

Among numismatics one of the most sought after colonial coins is the Highly copper. They are of several varieties, and were struck in 1737 by Samuel Highly, who was a physician and a blacksmith at Granby, Conn. He obtained the copper from a mine near by and shaped the coins at his forge.

# Children's Column



## The Scaram Cat.

Precious dolly Dorothy,  
I've been having trouble,  
And the weight of anxiousness  
Nearly beat me double;  
For I saw the Scaram cat,  
In the slumber pillows,  
Creeping, creeping toward me  
Through the bending willows.

Oh, my dolly Dorothy,  
I was frightened, frightened!  
For the clouds were very dark,  
And it lightened, lightened!  
And the creeping Scaram cat,  
Coming through the willows,  
Made my heart go pit-a-pat,  
In the slumber pillows!

And I wanted to cry out,  
But, oh dear, I couldn't!  
And I hoped the cat would turn,  
But, oh dear, 'twouldn't!  
And I tried to run away,  
But could not leave the willows,  
And the creeping Scaram cat,  
In the slumber pillows!

Then, my dolly Dorothy,  
I was nearly frantic,  
When a foamy wave came up  
From the big Atlantic—  
Caught me from the Scaram cat,  
Among the bending willows,  
And dropped me in my little bed,  
And woke me—in the pillows.

Mamma said, though dreams are dread  
They vanish like a bubble;  
"But," said she, "a single toe  
Would save you such a trouble.  
If you eat just bread and milk,  
You will not see the willows,  
And the creeping Scaram cat  
In the slumber pillows."  
—Mary Elizabeth Stone.

## Why Do Your Skates Slip?

Why do your skates slip on ice? Glass is just as smooth, but you couldn't possibly skate on it. If you doubt it try your skates on a piece of glass and see whether they will slip or not.

The reason why ice is slippery and glass is not is very simple. Ice always melts a little under pressure and friction. When the steel of the skate touches it a little water is formed, and this acts as oil between the skate and the ice, and the skater slips merrily along. The expression in regard to glare ice, "It's as slippery as if it had been greased," is not far wrong. On glass this liquid lubricator is lacking, and the friction between the skate and the glass renders slipping impossible. Put two pieces of glass together with a few drops of water between them, and see how easily they will slip about, one over the other.—Chicago Record.

## A Curious Incident.

Horses will form strong attachments for dogs, but it does not often happen that a horse derives any real benefit from having a canine friend. The following case will show that a dog may sometimes return a horse's affection in a very practical manner. A man living in the country had a horse which happened to be turned out just as his carrots were ready for pulling. He also had a dog that was on the best of terms with the horse. One day he noticed that his carrots were disappearing very fast, but he was almost certain that no one had gotten in and stolen them. Still he determined to watch and see who was robbing him. His vigilance was rewarded, for he caught the thief in the very act of pulling up the carrots. Then he cautiously followed him from the garden and found that he went off in the direction of the field where the horse was. Arrived there, the owner of the carrots saw that his horse was the receiver of the stolen goods. The thief was his dog. In some way the dog had discovered that the horse had a partiality for carrots, and was unable to gratify its taste; but with a sagacity that is almost incredible, the dog found the means of obtaining the succulent morsels for his friend, and this he did without scruple at his master's expense. There was something more than instinct in this dog's head. But any one who takes real notice of the habits and curious doings of animals must inevitably come to the conclusion that the theory is not tenable which maintains that animals cannot think and reason.—Detroit Free Press.

## Cocoanuts in Hawaii.

Five years ago Hugh McIntyre imported 2000 nuts for E. Lindemann, which the latter planted along the sea coast at Wailua, Kauai. Today he has 2000 cocoanut trees in bearing and some of them had fruit when only four years old. Mr. Lindemann says that in some places he had to dig holes in the rocks to get the nuts planted. As copra and coconut, it is in great demand, the product of each tree being worth at a very low estimate 50 cents. You have \$1000 net, or say you value the tree (six years old) at \$10. There you have \$20,000 worth of property. Mr. Lindemann has now gone east to sell this year's crop. These are no fancy coffee figures, but facts. You can get one of these beautiful Samoan cocoanuts, sprouted, of Hugh McIntyre for 25 cents. They are worth \$5. If you have a place to plant them they will increase the value of your lot. After you get them growing these little cocoa palms are worth a dozen of the almost worthless trees (with fictitious names) that you get from the government nursery for nothing.

## How a Fox Is Caught.

Winter is the propitious season of the hunter and trapper. His game is out and nature obligingly acts the part of detective by spreading her mantle of snow to register their movements. Each kind of animal possesses its own peculiar habits and strategic methods which must be familiar to the pursuer who hopes for success. Any other denizen of the forest is believed to be more easily outwitted than the fox. All know how high his reputation is for caution and cunning, yet he has acquaintances of human kind so intimately acquainted with his ways as to see just how to overcome his scruples and make him an easy victim of the trap. If Reynard has paid a recent visit to the henhouse, or whether he has or not, if his den can be located with approximate certainty he may be approached in that locality on the subject of capture; not in plain language, to be sure; not by open methods, but in accordance with his own stealthy tactics. The whole plan rests on the tripod of caution, patience and perseverance.

## Financial Wrecks.

Boarding Mistress (indignantly)—Two of my boarders were brought home last night in cabs.

Friend—Disgraceful, ain't it?

Boarding Mistress—Worse! They haven't a cent left to pay their board.

—Puck.

## Not Apt Enough.

Mr. Middleflat—The professor says my daughter sings like a nightingale.

Mr. Topflat—Well, the professor is wrong. The nightingale sometimes rests.—Chicago News.

Take the remainder of the fowl he partly devoured, or, in absence of that, a freshly killed animal, or piece of butcher's meat, and at night place it under a log to which his instincts will be likely to lead him; if hunger is gnawing he will find it—and what fox is not hungry? The treat will not at first be accepted in good faith, but it will be sampled. Repeat the offering the same place night after night, till its daily disappearance shows that his confidence is gained and there is no evidence of hesitancy in his approach. Then set the trap; a strong steel one, well staked and entirely concealed with leaves. He will come as usual for his supper, and this time he becomes a prisoner.—M. A. Hoyt, in Farm, Field and Fireside.

## The Electric Eel.

This curious fish, which exhibits the singular phenomenon of voluntary electric power residing in a living animal, is an inhabitant of the fresh water rivers and ponds of Surinam and other parts of South America, where it was first discovered in the year 1677.

The power of emitting an electric shock is apparently given it in order to enable the creature to kill its prey. Those who have seen the electric eel in the Polytechnic while being fed will have little doubt of this. The fish given to it are, directly it becomes aware of their presence, instantly struck dead, and then devoured. This specimen is unfortunately blind, but it has learned to turn in the direction of a puddling in the water, made by the individual who feeds it. The fish is scarcely in the water before a shock from the gyno-notus kills it. The usual length of the gyno-notus is about three feet.

Captain Stedman, in his account of Surinam, gives an account of the electric eel, which he, of course, had many opportunities of seeing. He attempted, for a trifling wager, to lift up a gyno-notus in his hands, but according to his own words:

"I tried about twenty different times to grasp it with my hand, but all without effect, receiving just as many electrical shocks, which I felt even to the top of my shoulder. It has been said that this animal must be touched with both hands before it gives the shock, but this I must take the liberty of contradicting, having experienced the contrary effect." The eel mentioned was a small one, only two feet long, but one that had arrived at its full growth would have given a very much stronger shock. An English sailor was fairly knocked down by a shock from one of these eels, nor did he recover his senses for some time. It is said that the shock can pass up a stick, and strike the person holding it. Mr. Bryant and a companion were both struck while pouring off ice water from a tub in which the eel had been placed.

Humboldt, in his "Views of Nature," gives a very animated description of the method employed by the Indians to take these creatures—a method equally ingenious and cruel. Knowing from experience that the powers of the gyno-notus are not adequate to a constant volley of shocks, they contrive that shocks shall be expended on horses instead of themselves. Having found a pool containing electric eels, they force a troop of wild horses to enter the pool. The disturbed eels immediately attack intruders and destroy many of them by repeated shocks; but by constantly forcing fresh supplies of horses to invade the pool, the powers of the gyno-notus become exhausted, and they are then dragged out with impunity.—Detroit Free Press.