

Spain's diplomats seem to be hoping for an unforeseen mine explosion under the peace negotiations.

The value of American manufacturers sold abroad last year was \$288,871,499, an increase of 100 per cent. over the figures for 1888.

The returns show that in the war with Spain twelve men were killed in the navy—not quite one-twenty-second of the number killed on the Maine in a single instant of peace.

According to returns published by the British board of trade, the imports of American pig iron into Great Britain during the first six months of 1898 aggregated 30,231 tons, valued at \$332,157, and of American steel, unwrought, 12,832 tons, valued at \$325,980.

Maine is again to enter the list of copper-mining states. The deposits, which are numerous and valuable, were worked more than twenty-five years ago, but a sudden decline in the price of copper made them unprofitable; improved and cheapened method of production is the cause of resumption of work.

A San Francisco court has just decided that couples wedded at sea are not legally married. This ruling brings consternation to many families in that city. Some months ago a romantic pair hired a tug and steamed out on the Pacific to be united in the holy bonds. The idea caught the fancy of young people, and since then there have been forty or fifty marriages of that sort off the Golden Gate.

Here are some of the conclusions that English experts have arrived at concerning the naval features of the war: Fast battleships are everything; have big batteries aboard; teach the men to shoot well; as for personnel, the Anglo-Saxon can beat anything that floats. These specifications govern the ground pretty well, though it might be well to mention the importance of personal heroism, says the Boston Herald.

The only significance in the small increase in railway mileage in the United States last year is that pretty nearly every available section of the country is now fully accessible by railroad. The railway mileage will of course continue to increase in the future, but not at such a rate as in the past. With improvements that have been made in engine power and carrying capacity of cars, moreover, the present lines are able to accommodate more traffic. This means that fewer railroad lines are likely to go into the hands of receivers hereafter and at the same time that demands of traffic will be met.

The prune industry in California has had a remarkable growth in the last decade. In 1888 there were about 11,000 acres of bearing prune trees, and about 8000 acres more of young orchards. Between 1890 and 1894 about 40,000 acres of prune orchards were planted. Since then the growth has proceeded in lesser degree, but the total bearing area is now estimated at 55,000 acres, with 10,000 more to come into bearing within the next year or two. The investment in lands, trees, irrigation systems, agricultural tools, and packing houses is estimated at \$25,000,000. This year's production of green fruit will amount to about 84,000 tons, and growers anticipate a crop of 100,000 tons within a few years. Of this year's yield, about one-fifth will be shipped east as green fruit; the remainder will be dried, making, with the water evaporated, about 24,000 tons.

A writer in the Scientific American seems to have taken careful note of the lifeboats on ocean steamers. He says: "Any one who has traveled to and fro a few times can but notice the paucity of lifeboats and the fact that the davit room is not all utilized. The examination of fifteen photographs, representing as many liners, showed an average of seven boats on each side; one ship only showing an interrupted line of ten large boats on each side. What does this average of fourteen boats to the ship represent? The fact that only those on the lee side can be used in rough weather reduces the total to seven; two must be considered as sacrificed, smashed or capsized during launching. Five are left, with a capacity of about 140 persons—less than the ship's crew. Lifeboats? If they are lifeboats, why do they fill and sink with such rapidity? What use are rats and life preservers in such calamities as that of the Elbe and the Bourgogne? These are alarming statements, and they are evidently made by somebody with knowledge of his topic.

### THE CALL.

The clouds grow dark as the people pause,  
A people of peace and toil,  
And there came a cry from all the sky:  
"Come, children of mart and soil,  
Your mother needs you—hear her voice!  
Though she has not a son to spare,  
She has spoken the word that ye all have  
From west to east,  
Come, answer ye everywhere!"

They need no urging to stir them on,  
They yearn for no battle-cry.  
At the word that their country calls for men  
They throw down hammer and sledge and  
pen,

And are ready to serve and die!  
From the North, from the South, from East,  
from West,  
Hear the thrill of the rousing drum?  
Ender one flag they march along,  
With their voices swelling a single song,  
Here they come, they come, they come!  
List! the North men cheer the men from  
the South.

And the South returns the cheer,  
For there is no question of East or West,  
For hearts are at one in every breast,  
'Tis a nation answering here.

It is elbow to elbow and knee to knee,  
One land for each and for all,  
And the veterans' eyes see their children  
rise

To answer their country's call,  
They have not forgotten—God grant not so!  
(Ah, we know of the graves on the hill),  
But these eager feet make the old hearts  
beat.

And the old eyes dim and fill!  
The Past sweeps out and the Present comes,  
A Present that all have wrought,  
And the sons of these sires, at the same  
camp fires,

Cheer one flag where their fathers fought!  
Yes, we know of the graves on the Southern  
hills.  
That are filled with the Blue and the  
Gray.

We know how they fought and how they  
died,  
We honor them both there side by side,  
And their brothers again today,  
Brothers again—thank God on high!  
(Here's a hand-clasp all around).

The sons of one race now take their place  
On one common and holy ground,  
—Richard Barry, in Harper's Weekly.

### A Soldier's Cap.

The western city where Minnie Tilford lived with her mother, brother and sister was full of excitement. Its boys were going to war. Minnie's father had been one of the boys in the old war, and 15-year-old Minnie, the oldest of the three children, was thinking about it while the drums beat and the flags waved.

"How old was papa when he went, mamma?"

"Barely 18, dear."

"Did you know him then?"

"No; I was a baby then. The war had been over fifteen years when I first met your father."

Mrs. Tilford had not passed in her sewing as she answered her daughter's questions. She was sewing to earn money to pay the rent.

"Were we always poor?" went on Minnie.

"No, dear. We had plenty while your father lived."

It seemed to Minnie that her father had been dead a long while. Eleven years. Just as many years as her younger brother, Allan, was old.

"I can't seem to remember what plenty is like, mamma," she said at last. And she looked around the small and faded room.

Mrs. Tilford thought of the poor advisers she had had, who had squandered her all in bad investments, and said nothing. She could remember what plenty was like, and the contrast between her former and her present circumstances was painful to her.

"When I'm a man," said 13-year-old Bert, "I'm going to Washington and get you a pension. That's the thing to do. Then you won't have to sew. I guess. I was talking to George Hooper about it and he said that was the thing to do. His aunt gets a pension, and she don't have to sew."

"I should like to have a pension, certainly," said Mrs. Tilford.

"Well, I'm going to get you one," declared Bert grandly. Then he seized his hat and rushed out, attached by a noise in the street.

There had never been any talk of a pension in Mrs. Tilford's flat of two rooms until now. And Minnie turned curiously to her mother. "Can Bert do it, mamma?" she asked.

"No, dear, I am afraid he can't. But there is no need to discourage him. He isn't a man yet, you know," and she smiled.

"But why, mamma? Why can't he?"

"Because your father's papers are lost," answered Mrs. Tilford, gravely. "I knew nothing about business when your father died. His army papers may have been among his other papers. I do not know. But four or five years ago I made a search for them and could not find them. If I could find them—"

she paused and looked dreamily out of the window while a vision of good food and comfortable clothing for her children passed before her.

"Could you get the pension if you found them?" asked Minnie eagerly.

"Yes, I am sure of it."

"I wish I could help more!" exclaimed the girl, looking up from the bastings she was patiently pulling out.

"We are poor."

"You help all you are able," answered the mother, fondly. "Mother appreciates her big girl who helps sew and wash dishes and cook and scrub and wash and iron for us all. It is because you help so much that I have the good chance I have to earn."

"Where did you look, mamma?" she asked, presently.

"Everywhere," answered Mrs. Tilford, briefly. "Don't think any more about it, daughter. It will only make you unhappy."

the letter ran, "I send you a soldier's cap."

Hastily Minnie opened the small package and took therefrom a bonbonniere, which was the "soldier's cap," and it was filled with chocolate creams. "How lovely!" cried Minnie, passing the candy to her mother. "Isn't it a dear little soldier's cap, mamma?"

And without waiting to hear her mother's reply she went on with her letter. "The shops are full of pretty conceits in bonbonnières," wrote the cousin. "Knapsacks, sailor hats, shells, shield-shaped boxes, tents with a soldier on guard at the door. But I chose to take off my hat, as it were, to my western cousin—" So the letter ran on.

For two or three days Minnie's thoughts were in a whirl. Now she thought of Willie off for the south, now of her father's papers. And out of the chaos at last darted an idea.

"Mamma!" she cried. "Come!"

"Come! Where?" asked the mother in astonishment.

But Minnie held out her hand almost impatiently, her eyes shining with excitement. "I've a thought, mamma. Come!" she repeated.

Without a word Mrs. Tilford laid down her sewing and rose to follow her daughter into their tiny sleeping room. Down dropped Minnie on the floor, and groping under the bed brought out a long flat box.

"What do you mean, Minnie?" demanded Mrs. Tilford. "That is your father's old uniform."

"I know it, mamma. Open the box; open it quick!"

"The child has been too much excited the last few days," thought Mrs. Tilford, glancing at her daughter's flushed cheeks. "I will humor her." She opened the box.

Impatiently Minnie reached past her mother and picked up her father's cap. Her sensitive fingers felt of the crown. "They are!" she cried.

"They are here! Feel, mamma! Don't you feel paper in the crown?"

A few moments' careful work took out the lining, and out fell the papers.

"Your father was wise," said the mother, brokenly. "He knew I was careless and young. And, he knew, too, that I loved him and would never part with his uniform."

She said no more, but her heart went out in gratitude to that Higher Power that had directed her through means to this piece of good fortune.

"How came you to think of it?" asked the mother, when the papers had been placed in the hands of an agent and the pension and back pay assured.

"I thought," said Minnie, "if a soldier's cap would hold chocolates why not a soldier's cap hold papers? It was Cousin Willie's bonbonniere."

—Gulielena Zollinger in Chicago Record.

### ALMOST A TRAGEDY.

Why the Bungling Bucksaw Was Relegated to the Barn.

"What I want," said the young wife who is bravely starting to do her own work, "is a saw for general use about a house. Here I am chopping away with a dull hatchet at this ham bone," and the vigor with which she hacked expressed her feelings better than words could have done.

"I can get you just what you want," volunteered the man who was attaching weights to the kitchen windows so they could be more easily manipulated, "and it won't cost over thirty cents."

He received the commission and the result was a bucksaw with a particularly large frame, cost seventy-five cents.

"There's a saw," said the purchaser, "as is a saw. When your trees blow down you can cut them up into stove lengths, or you can cut an old broomstick in two with it to make a clothes stick, or you can use it in cutting a bone when it has to be done. That's a great all around saw, mum."

There was another ham bone to be cut, and she called her husband to hold the ham while she did the sawing. He laughed outrageously at her purchase, but she stuck up for it and made plain the opinion that his judgment in practical matters was very undesirable. Of course the long, sharp teeth of the saw struck too deep into the bone and made it impossible for him to hold the ham steadily.

"Give me that saw," he said, testily. "There are some things beside throwing a stone that a woman can't do."

He tried and she tried, but results were no different.

"If you'd just go away and leave the whole thing to me," she said, "I could get along nicely."

He went as far as the door and stood there laughing while she held the ham with her left hand and made frantic efforts to saw with her right. When the ham made a dash from the table and slid clear across the floor and down the cellar way, he leaned against the door sill and she began making arrangements to go home to her mother. When they seriously talked the matter over half an hour later the bucksaw was relegated to the barn and he went down town to buy a meat saw.

### A Physician's Opinion.

An eminent physician of St. Louis, Mo., says that no person should be permitted to drink tea or coffee until he or she has attained the age of 15 years. In the young those beverages unduly excite the nervous system and have an injurious effect upon the digestive organs.

### A Generous Dentist.

A Toronto (Ontario) dentist gratuitously cares for the teeth of children whose parents are too poor to pay for the service. Last year he attended over 2000 children.

### FOR FARM AND GARDEN.

#### When Hens Lay Best.

Hens lay better when the nests are dark. If the present nests cannot be so arranged that they will occupy the dark part of the house, make new ones after this plan. Select a box about two feet square, making one end higher than the other. Cut a hole in one side near the end, large enough for the hen to pass through; cover the box with a lid hinged at one side so that the eggs can be easily taken out. Such a nest will be dark and inviting to the hens.

#### Potatoes Make Salty Butter.

Every farmer who has ever grown potatoes knows that they are of little value for feeding raw to stock, and that they are especially objectionable as feed for cows giving milk. We have known potato peelings to be given to cows, and while the milk was not lessened, its quality was injured, as it lacked the fine aroma given by feeding the cows on grass or corn fodder. The butter made from milk of cows to which potatoes have been fed, is white and salty, lacking the grain which is the characteristic of good butter.

#### Surfacing Flower Beds.

The system of spreading some light material on the surface of all flower-beds and borders, now that planting is complete, is worthy of more attention than is usually accorded to it. It serves two distinctly useful purposes, namely: it preserves the moisture in the soil during dry weather, and improves the general appearance of the garden. An excellent material for the purpose is the refuse from an old mushroom bed, if such be at command, and if not, leaf-mould answers equally as well. Either would, however, be too rough and untidy in the ordinary state, and must therefore be passed through a half-inch sieve. Spread over the surface of the beds to a depth of about half an inch, it keeps the soil cool and moist and encourages a freer flowing habit in the plants in the garden. Every few days the surfacing should be lightly passed over with the hoe or rake, going no deeper than is necessary to keep it loose and open, as in this lies a greater part of its value.—Household Words.

#### Disorning Mature Cattle.

So general has become the practice of disorning calves that much attention is now being paid to performing the operation of mature animals, both milk cows and steers for fattening. The operation can be performed more easily and humanely in calfhood, but when one sees the most vicious steers turned to lamblike tameness by the process of disorning, it is proof abundant that the practice is not only desirable but necessary to the safety of those in charge of the animals. The old method of disorning was to use a saw, but this has been abandoned for the knife, made for the purpose, which cuts the horn clean without crushing. The work is easily and quickly done by the use of a slatted pen with a yoke to hold the head of the animal securely. The frame is short so the animal cannot get away. In many sections where cattle are raised extensively men are located who do the work cheaply and scientifically, and it is best to have disorning done by such persons if possible, but have it done, at all events.—Atlanta Journal.

#### The Cost of Noise in the Dairy.

The cost of noise in the dairy can be figured to a certainty; and the man who doubts this may gain some valuable information by making a few experiments on his own account.

A neighbor of mine has been doing this and the result is decidedly startling. This man has a dairy of about twenty cows, mostly grade Jerseys. A quiet man by nature, his cows were accustomed to receive only the kindest treatment.

A few years ago this neighbor bought a Babcock test for use in his own dairy. One day he directed the hired man to shut the cows in the yard and to let the dog in with them. The hired man thought his employer must be going daff but he obeyed instructions. The two men took sticks in their hands and went into the yard with the cows and began to shout, the dog barked and pandemonium reigned for a few minutes, although not a blow was struck nor a cow bitten. The herd was then brought into the barn and milked.

The falling off in yield was quite noticeable, but the test when applied showed a loss of forty per cent. in butter fat on the basis of the week previous! Think of that, ye men who yourselves shout, kick, thump and bang your cows and permit the hired help to do the same.

Suppose these cows gave at a milking three hundred pounds of five per cent. milk when treated kindly. The loss in weight placed at a low figure must have been at least five per cent. or fifteen pounds. While the loss in butter fat, forty per cent. would bring the test down to three per cent.

What does this really mean? At twenty cents per pound my neighbor's three hundred pounds of milk, testing five per cent., would have been worth to him \$3.00. As a matter of fact, it brought him only \$1.74, a loss on one milking of \$1.26. After such a result who can wonder if this dairyman laid down some laws and insisted on their rigid enforcement?—E. L. Vincent in Farm, Field and Fireside.

#### Hawks and Farmers.

An illustrated article which appeared in the year book of the United States department of agriculture for 1894 has furnished wisdom for the class of

### GENERAL SHAFTER'S JOKE.

How He Gave an Exhibition of His Unerring Marksmanship.

Colonel Thomas H. Barry, adjutant general to Major-General Otis, before leaving for Manila told a good story of Major-General Shafter's shooting in the days when he was a colonel on the Mexican border. A day before he took ship for the Philippines Barry, with Brigadier-General Hughes and a Chronicle representative, discussing Shafter's gallantry before Santiago, said:

"I was Shafter's aide three years ago when we both were bronzing under the hottest sun that shines in these states. Shafter was known as the best shot not only in his regiment, but in the whole country about. One day an officer from another regiment, not acquainted with Shafter's ability in this line, visited the post and soon made it apparent to us that he esteemed himself about as expert a marksman as ever pulled a trigger. We secretly laughed at his opinion of himself, and whispered to each other, 'Just wait till Pecos Bill gets after him.'"

"Well, his time came. One morning Shafter and I started out to ride forty miles or more to another post, and the visitor asked to be allowed to accompany us. We trotted along easily until about noon, when we halted to eat our luncheon, which we packed with us. At that time officers carried short carbines on such service, and I had one strapped to my saddle. The conversation drifted from the topography of the country to marksmanship, and the officer—call him Smith—said: 'Say, colonel, have you got any shots in your regiment?'

"Shafter smiled and replied: 'Have I? Why, I've got some men that can dismount the sharpshooter's you read about. Officers, too. I'm not much myself, but when you get back to the fort I'll tell a few of the good ones to show you a thing or two.'"

"Just then an antelope sprang up a quarter of a mile away, and all seeing it at the same moment reached for their carbines. Shafter was quickest, and in a second adjusted the sights to 600 feet and blazed away. Down came Mr. Antelope, and when we rode up to where he lay we found a bullet hole over his heart."

"Smith examined the wound, looked over the carbine, and then muttered, half aside, 'Not bad. You say you're not in it with other officers in your regiment, colonel?'

"So," said Shafter, "I'm ashamed of myself alongside of them." "A couple of hours later another antelope appeared, but farther away. Smith fidgeted a moment and then said eagerly, 'Colonel, may I go after him?'

"Pshaw. You wouldn't educe him on horseback at that distance," exclaimed Shafter, seizing the weapon and leveling it as he spoke. "I'll put lead in his head."

"He fired and we saw the animal bound away. Smith was gleeful. 'A little high, colonel,' he shouted as we galloped on. Reaching the place where the game had been, we were on a high rising piece of ground, and, looking down fifty feet, Shafter pointed to a dark object and said quietly, 'I guess I got the head.'"

"Sure enough, the antelope was lying dead, with a bullet hole through his left ear. Smith looked as disgruntled as any man I ever saw. "'And the officers are better?' he queried."

"Shafter's eyes twinkled. 'Lieut. Smith,' he replied, with assumed sternness, 'I want you to say nothing of this at the post. I ought to have hit him in the eye, and I feel ashamed of my poor aim.'"

"Smith, who had no sense of humor, was dumfounded. For years after he spread the fame of Colonel Shafter as a marksman far and wide."—San Francisco Chronicle.

### A Railroad's Thoughtfulness.

Commuters on the Delaware, Lackawanna & Western railroad in New Jersey are inclined to challenge a new regulation which has just been enforced on the ground that it smacks of paternalism. As each brakeman calls a station, as, for instance, Hackensack, he does it in this fashion: "Hackensack! Don't forget your bun-d-l-e-s." Occasional passengers find these calls very amusing and as each station is announced they grin at the brakeman, who doesn't enjoy the new regulation, and then look around to see the commuters pick up their bundles. Undoubtedly this new regulation was suggested by the number of bundles which commuters left behind them in the cars and then bothered the railroad company to look up for them. "I object to this regulation," said one of the commuters. "If the railroads are going into this business, the first thing we will know the brakeman will call out: 'Hackensack! Have you forgotten to mail your wife's letter?' or perhaps it will be 'Montclair! Remember to stop at the butcher's.' I invited a friend to come out and spend the night with me a short time ago, and he began to laugh when the first station was announced. At station after station was reached and the brakeman sung out monotonously at each: 'Don't forget your bundles, his merriment increased. He would talk about nothing else at dinner, and when he said good night to us he added: 'Don't forget your bundles. It's kind of the railroad, of course but I don't like it.'"

### Veuvius' Output of Lava.

Lava streams that have flowed out at Veuvius during the last three years have deposited 105,000,000 cubic metres of lava on the sides of the mountain. A cone of lava 330 feet high has been formed, out of which streams are flowing. The valleys on either side of the observatory peak have been completely filled up.

Of British birds the cuckoo lays the smallest egg in proportion to its size.