

A new trick pen has an explosive on the point to startle would-be users. It will be devoted to writing snappy paragraphs.

More than 20,000,000 acres of land in the United States are owned by the aristocracy of England. The heirs of Viscount Scully own 3,000,000 acres in Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, and Nebraska.

Pupils in the public schools of Copenhagen, Denmark, are required to take three baths a week in the public school building, and while they are bathing their clothes are sterilized in a steam oven. The Danes object to the regulation on the ground that it makes the children discontented with their home surroundings.

The advocates of woman's rights have reason to exult today. A woman who started life as a slave has made herself the acknowledged ruler of the countless millions of China. This queen not only rules but governs. In the apotheosis of Tuen, the oldest nation of the world betters the most advanced theories of the newest.

The civilized nations of the globe have just been taught the superb efficiency and great practical value of this government's signal service. Its work in the West Indies by serving the regions threatened by the recent hurricane with twenty-four hours' advance notice of its approach was the means of saving thousands of human lives and protecting incalculable millions of property.

The Greek government has prepared a bill to establish an "Antiquities-Gendarmerie," the special function of which will be the guardianship of the national Greek antiquities, including places where no excavations are at present in progress, in the interest of the Greek people. Every man who shall be admitted to this corps is to possess a certain degree of necessary culture, in order that he may understand what is confided to his observation and protection.

In western Austria they push the equality of the sexes to a conclusion that would satisfy even the most ardent "equal righters." In that land the men act on the principle that if women demand men's privileges they must take with them men's responsibilities. Accordingly, a bench of magistrates has charged a woman with deserting her husband, and what is more, they have sent her to prison for a month because she steadfastly refused to contribute to the domestic comfort of her life partner. A philosopher once remarked that human beings should have a care for what they wished, for that thing would surely come to them.

The Utica Press says: As to the financial part of it (the war), the situation is not less gratifying. Nothing more than inconceivable in using stamps is experienced from the special war revenue taxes. The people are not complaining of their burdens. The war loan bond issue was not half big enough to accommodate all the would-be investors. Another and another of the same size would be as quickly subscribed. The resources of the United States have not been tested to a tenth of their capacity. What has been done has not noticeably interfered with the usual run of affairs in any community. The war has been only an interesting and sometimes exciting incident in the United States. The foreigners who wonder at American achievements in this war should visit the country and see for themselves how really limitless its resources are.

The almost marvellous growth of trolley railroads in this country is graphically presented in some current figures, comparing mileage in this country with that in countries beyond the sea. Communities here may be contrasted with countries there. For instance, Allegheny county in Pennsylvania has 314 miles of electric railroads. Other communities may be as well or better supplied, but it is instructive to note that Allegheny's mileage is more than one-fifth of that of all the trolleys on the continent of Europe. It is greater than that of all the electric lines of France, more than three times that of the lines in England, Scotland and Wales, and nearly one-half that of Germany, which latter country has about one-half of the entire mileage of 1422 miles of Europe. France follows Germany with 246 miles; then comes Great Britain with 97, followed by Switzerland, Italy, and Austria-Hungary with 90, 82, and 66 miles respectively. The mileage of other countries is small, running as low as less than two miles in Holland and Portugal.

Since Betsy came from gay New York
Most everything is changed,
They've turned the farmhouse inside out
And fixed and rearranged.
I stood the new-style coppers
Till the budding social queen
Fitted out her father's parlor
A la Louis the fourteen.
The chairs are made so very frail
You dare not draw a breath,
And all so stiff you can't forget
She's now E-liz-abeth.
And in place of that old sofa,
Where at ease I used to lean,
Stands a spindle-legged divan
A la Louis the fourteen.

THE CULTURED MAID.
You can not dim electric lights,
To give your nerves a show;
The doors are now all port-a-cas-a-fra,
You're bound to whisper low;
But chairs are stuck on separate mats
With waxed floors in between;
Oh! you can't make love in parlors
A la Louis the fourteen.
You can't drop in promiscuous like,
To chat a little while;
You've got to wear your Sunday duds
To chime in with the style.
So I must give up Betsy,
For she, as Mistress Green,
Might want my parlor furnished
A la Louis the fourteen.
—Charles M. Bryan, in Puck.

A RACE FOR A GOLD MINE.

A Stirring Incident of Life Among the Australian Gold-Pioneers.
BY WILTON RIX AND V. T. KERRIDGE.

Bad luck! Hard work, sand and sun in profusion, water alarmingly scarce and gold scarce! Such is the lot of the Australian gold miner. True, there are exceptions, when gold can be picked up for the trouble of stooping and food and water freely purchased at reasonable prices. But, being exceptions, these cases only go to prove the rule. And so there is nothing surprising in the fact that three diggers, with whom we are now concerned, found themselves on the very edge of the Great Victorian desert in West Australia with pockets none too full and themselves often empty. They toiled patiently on against persistent ill-luck, hoping that each day might bring the turning-point in the tide of their affairs which would lead to fortune.

An Englishman, boyishly hopeful; an Irishman, humorously despondent; and an Australian with a strong antipathy to discuss his ancestors' origin—his grandfather had journeyed from England at the expense of the government—made up the party. Their camp lay at place called "Brook," in the neighborhood of Mount Weld. To the east the great sandy deserts stretched right away as far as the eye could reach in billowy sandhills dotted with spinifex—lonely, arid, impenetrable. To the north lay low ranges and stony plains, unknown, but seemingly good for gold. Thither they daily journeyed looking for likely spots, with variable luck—mostly indifferent.

On a certain day the Irishman, having wandered farther than his wont, was led by fickle fortune into the midst of a perfect paradise of reefs. Kindly-looking quartz grid-ironed and intersected the country for fully a square mile. Pat stood and looking round pulled thoughtfully at his scruffy beard and muttered:
"Great Christopher! Here we've been toiling to the tune of three or four weights a day when within two dozen miles there lay a sort of natural Bank of England, stuffed full of gold and ours for the asking!"

Selecting a likely-looking rock of a dark ferruginous color, he gave a convenient corner a crack with the poll-end of his pick. Off flew a fragment, which he examined carefully with the aid of a pocket lens.
"Good gold!"
But where there was quartz as rich as this, Pat knew that better could not be far. This would prove to be a "stringer" or "gash vein," one of several overflows of a great parent reef running through them all. He was right. Only a few minutes' walk brought him to a thick reef of quartz running north and south and crossing all the others. This was the "parent." Selecting a conveniently crumbled part, Pat knocked off a corner. Even before picking up the severed rock he could see the gold shining in bright beads.

"Be me sowl," he said, "that's koind stone!"
With a crack he knocked off another lump and broke it in two. Pat gasped. It was simply permeated with particles of gold. This was enough for Pat O'Lochin. That gold in unwonted abundance was here he now felt sure. The next thing was to secure it for himself and his mates.

Twenty-four acres is the full extent of one man's claim. This must be pegged out with four small stakes, a notice put up and the fact registered at the office of the neighboring warden. In case of two claimants, the one who first succeeds in registering his title is, ipso facto, in possession of the miner's rights over the claim in question.

Having made certain of the value of his find, Pat looked for pegs with which to mark the ground. He soon secured four from a dead mallee tree, two of which he rammed into the ground at the proper distance and proceeded, with the remaining couple over his shoulder, to step out the number of yards necessary to cover a full claim. As he walked he whistled and mentally patted himself on the back as the cleverest digger in the colony. In fact, Pat felt at that moment as proud as though he himself had dug out the gold in the reef and made the east of West Australia as well. Such is the miner's way. When gold is scarce he curses his ill-luck, the country, the sun, the absence of water—anything! But when his claim is rich, yielding ounces a week, and he finds himself on the high way to fortune, he never then suggests that plain strength and stupidity might account for his luck, or that anyone but the miner himself is accountable for the fact of gold being gold or its presence in the particular spot where he has found it.

Here Pat had come, all by himself, much farther than anyone else had ever dreamed of penetrating. No one, not a man in the country, had ever suspected what Pat, of course, so

he told himself, had well known for long—that this was the spot of spots, the only claim worth calling a claim, an Eldorado, a miner's ideal, a paradise, in short, Pat's claim. Who but Pat, clever Pat, would ever have thought for a moment of looking for gold in this wild wilderness, where man had surely never trod before? Surely no one!

No one. So far as Pat knew, no one. Half the distance had been paced, and Pat grew more elated as he walked. He saw himself and his chums each twice a millionaire. It was so easy.

They would be all alone. Among them they might take up the greater part of the reef, and then they had only to work for it—for they had none to disturb them.

Suddenly Pat's antiferous speculations came to a full stop with his feet. His keen bushman's ear had detected a sound. A rattling pebble, a crack of a dead, dry twig. Pat knew he was not alone. Then, peeping out from the scrub, he saw a face. He was being watched. A few strides brought him to the intruder, who sprang to his feet at Pat's approach. For fully a minute they stood and stared, each just as much astonished as the other. Simultaneously they found speech, and each inquired of the other what he was doing on his claim.

The dialogue then became involved. The stranger threw down the two pegs which he also was carrying and offered pugilistically to "fire" Pat out if he didn't shift. Pat, without shifting, snugged up in a few well-chosen words his opinion of the stranger. The stranger responded by comparing Pat to several unpleasant animals. This was merely preliminary and to show independence. Having done so, Pat felt able to propose without prejudice that, as each seemed to have found the claim simultaneously, a partnership and division of profits would be the fairest and most amicable way out of the difficulty.

"Your claim," indeed! Geordie Maxwell, ye are. Ye think I don't know ye! Well, we've got to know all sorts in this uncivilized land! Sure, what do ye mean?" he said. "Wasn't I here at the same instant as yourself and before? Haven't I two pegs down and two with me, like yourself? Half I've got, and half I'll have, friendly or otherwise. So think of that, Maxwell!"

Maxwell pushed Pat roughly aside, consigning him and his half to undesirable localities. Said he:
"It's the whole hog with me, or nothing!"
"Let it be nothing, then!" said Pat, and, striding on with his pegs, he placed them at the corners of his claim. Maxwell did the same. Both then placed the necessary notice, and Pat made the best of his way back to camp, as he came, on foot. He had five miles to go and could get there as soon as the interloper, of that he felt sure.

But Pat had not gone far before he heard a muffled, scrambling noise behind and turning saw his rival, mounted on a native pony—a brumby—close on him. It was a matter of time. The brumby could go. Pat knew that. And he was on foot, with his rival on horseback and the first at the warden's office to get the claim. Pat bemoaned his luck. Then dropping on his knee and pulling his revolver from his belt, betwought him evilly of the advantages to be gained, of the bad luck he had met hitherto. Was he to starve because men, with brumbies hidden in the bush, spied on him and wrested from him, by a quibble of law, what was rightly his own? Was he to lose his hard-found fortune or—?

No! He slipped the revolver back. Pat would none of it—not in that way. The first at the warden's office should win. A pony could gallop; but there was a camel-pad right down to the township, and—well, Pat had an idea. Scarcely more than three-quarters of an hour had elapsed when Pat dashed into camp, covered with sweat and dust.

"Pat! What's up?"
"A dhrink, boy! A dhrink! Then perhaps I'll speak."
They gave him a pannikin of water, at which he took great gulps, while they gazed astonished at a lump of quartz he handed them in exchange.

"Pat! Where did ye get it?"
"Never yer mind! Tell me"—Pat was still gasping—"have yer set eyes on Geordie Maxwell this hour?"
The old Australian looked serious, turned over the plug of tobacco he was chewing, spat and said:
"George is gone. Passed on his gray brumby this hour ago." Then, after a pause: "He meant getting there."

"Gittin' there, is it?" said Pat, jumping to his feet. "Gittin' there! Yer don't gather my meaning." "I do!" said the Australian.
"Then yer mean he's getting there

fast? Look at the specimen. There's tons and tons of it. Getting there first? Well, so he may, but we've got to be there before him!"
The English lad—he was scarcely more than a boy—pricked up his ears. "Is it gold yer've found, Pat?"
"Good gold," the colonial answered, curtly. "Good gold as ever I see. But Geordie's gone. There's no catching him. Did yer come across the claim together like?"
"We did," said Pat.

"Then," mused the colonial, "it's our's as much as it is his by right and, who's to say, not more? But the brumby is his as well, and there's no catching that, for we've not got a one in the camp. There's no catching him."

"I think—" the Englishman began.
"No use! Thinking won't stop George. Some years ago he might 'a' been stopped . . . my father . . . I've heard him say . . . Well, he knew me! Still, Geordie's gone."
"I'll catch him, I will! I rode a quad in England—I was a 'pro,' you know. But I rode big machines for shillings a week and made the pace for worse men than myself who earned their pounds. I've got my old machine in camp. It's a veteran, but I can push it, I can!"

Pat stood up and smiled, for this was his idea: The bicycle against the horse.
"Here, bring it out!" The lad was stripped to his waist already—it didn't take him long. He had little to shift. He took his bicycle from willing hands. With a leap and scramble he was into the saddle.

"Mount Margaret, you say?"
"Mount Margaret. And luck to yer!"
The English boy knew well the importance of saving himself. He had done his share of pacing for many a record bout of 50 or 100 miles. He was out of breath to start with, but that was from pride and excitement. It was like old times again. He would race and win gold for his partners and himself. He had not done much for the partnership as yet, but now he'd show them that Englishmen. . . . But, steady. He must get his wind. The path was smooth—worn smooth by camels' feet—but dangerously narrow and winding. But what did that matter to a "steerer" who could guide a "quad" at 30 miles an hour without swerving from a chalk-line? This was not half so bad as taking a triquet round the Olympia course in London, and that he could do right easily.

Steady! Steady! You're not at the Crystal Palace now, with half a dozen multicycles ready to take you on and shield you from the wind, Steady! But keep on riding. No time to lose. Phoo! the sun! Awful! He wished he had kept his shirt on. Plug, plug! And so close on an hour passed. Now comparatively fresh, now seemingly done; slow now, then fast again, and still there was nothing on the horizon but sand and sky.

Stay! There! Right straight ahead. No, it was gone. Yes, there it was again—a cloud of dust. A tiny cloud, but full of hope for the boy, for, as he went, it traveled still before.

Ha, ha! The dust grew near, took shape. It was the horse and on it, no doubt, Geordie Maxwell, the man he must pass. Was his horse beat? Why was he going so slow? Ride, ride! But still steady, steady, for there was distance to be traveled still.

Just then the pad ran round the great Salt lake that lies to the north of Mount Margaret. The bicycle came close and closer, but the horseman seemed at a loss. At length they came together, and then the cyclist saw his advantage. The edge of the lake, for some way round, was crusted with salt, a coating thicker than ice, but not so strong. Could one get over this, miles might be saved and the race won. Maxwell had tried and failed. His horse was too heavy for the salt and sunk in, almost helpless.

The English boy took stock. The brumby did not sink over much, but just enough to check his speed. Geordie had wasted much valuable time in taking this short cut. Still, the salt which would not bear the horse would carry the bicycle and its rider. So, while Maxwell wallowed as best he could to firmer ground, the cyclist sailed ahead, taking a cut across a corner of the lake. Then all seemed safe, until, looking, the lad espied another cloud of dust. Yes, there were two. The one was Maxwell's, who was following as best he could, and the other came along the track from the west. They met and stopped.

A change of horses. Maxwell had swapped with one of those belonging to the newcomers. Now ride, if ever you did. No matter the sun. No matter the dust and sweat which cling round your eyes, halt blinding you. Ride, Englishman, ride! The fresh horse drew on and on, but Maxwell was urging it beyond its strength, and the knowledge that he was doing so seemed to make him more than ever frantic. He could not save himself—he could not save the horse. He must have the claim—no matter who had to suffer.

Gradually the horse caught up and turned aside among the rocks, and then another short struggle and it was past and on the track again, this time ahead. But still the cyclist kept close at his heels, looking now to the right, now to the left, anxiously watching for a chance to pass.

Did Maxwell know the chance must come? Did he feel his horse giving way and see that the cyclist had settled down to ride "for ever," as he himself would say? Perhaps he did, for, galloping ahead for a few yards, he pulled up and, leaping from the saddle, rolled a great rock right in the path. The cyclist saw it just in time, but had to dismount. To yerge from the narrow path meant rocks and broken

limbs and buckled wheels. So the horse still kept ahead.
Again another rock rolled in the path. Dismount once more. Then on again. And so again and again. How long could this go on, and which would tire first? But, stay, the pace had been hot, and the brumby, not over fresh at the start, was tiring. So was the Englishman. A few more scrambles on and off, a few more liftings of the machine over obstructions placed in his way, and he would be done.

Maxwell slackened pace again. He was going to dismount. Once more he was going to block the way, or, if that failed, tackle the cyclist as he passed by. The lad was desperate. He could stand a fair race, but if it came to a fight he meant having the first blow. So he whipped out his revolver and spurring till he was close to the horse, let fly a heavy bullet right behind its shoulder, and the animal dropped with a crash, stone dead.

An hour later he had put in his application and obtained the necessary papers for a reef claim; and should you travel that pad from Mount Margaret to Mount Weld you will hear as you pass along the thunder of the five head of heavy stamps pounding the quartz and yielding three nice fat cakes of gold fortnightly for the plucky men who found the claim and made it their own with the help of a bicycle. The largest shareholders are an Englishman, boyishly hopeful; an Irishman, humorously despondent, and an Australian, who still has an antipathy to discuss atavism.—The Wide World Magazine.

FITTING UP TROOPSHIPS.

Important Preparations Now Under Way in the Navy.

The fitting up of troopships is one of the most important preparations under way in the navy department. The unexpected call to send soldiers to Santiago found the government with no suitable transports for troops, and to this fact was largely due the horrors of the returning ships loaded with sick and wounded. The maintenance of garrisons in distant islands makes it necessary for the government in the future to have regularly equipped troopships instead of hastily picking up merchantmen and cattle freight boats, as early in the war. The plans already made indicate that the troopships will have every reasonable provision for the health and comfort of soldiers at sea. The Mobile, for example, will be lighted with electricity. It will have a large distilling apparatus to furnish pure water. There will be ample refrigerator room to keep meat and vegetables fresh. The messroom of the men will be so arranged that the tables can be folded against the walls and the room used as a gymnasium, for which purpose there will be proper apparatus.

The bunks will be supplied with mattresses as well as blankets and may be folded against the sides of the ship, affording a roomy promenade. These quarters will be provided with bathrooms. The ship will be fitted with a hospital having seventy-six cots. The hospital will have a complete dispensary, an operating room and at least two bathrooms. There will be an open-air promenade for the men and awnings to protect invalids while taking an airing. There will be accommodations for eighty-four officers and a bathroom for about every twenty of them. Among the vessels to undergo this transformation are the Michigan, Mississippi, Manitoba, Massachusetts and Minnewaska. The Obdam, Panama and Romania may also be used. It is the aim of the government to have some of the finest troopships afloat, and it has excellent boats among its transports for that purpose. The troops who sail in these refitted ships will have little cause for complaint.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

Chinese coinage in the shape of a knife has been traced back as far as 2240 B. C.

The leaning tower of Pisa was built in the twelfth century, and is thirteen feet out of perpendicular.

A canal connecting the Mediterranean with the Red sea existed as early as 600 years before the Christian era. Its length is ninety-two miles.

From China \$150,000 worth of human hair is exported annually. It comes mostly from the heads of male-factors, paupers and dead people.

An Elizabethan seal-top silver spoon weighing one ounce and a half was sold in London recently for \$150; that is, \$100 an ounce. This is a record price for old silver.

The Victoria lily of Guiana has a circular leaf from 6 feet to 12 in diameter. It is turned up at the edge like a tray, and can support, according to its size, from 100 to 300 pounds.

The sea-cucumber, one of the curious jelly bodies that inhabit the ocean, can practically efface itself when in danger, by squeezing the water out of its body and forcing itself into a narrow crack, so narrow as not to be visible to the naked eye.

The Horrible Part.

"Oh," she said, "I had a horrible dream last night. And—and you were a part of it."
"It?" he exclaimed.
"Yes; I dreamed you and I were alone together upon a deserted island."
"Well," he replied, as he arose to go, "if that's your idea of a horrible dream I guess I may as well be saying good-bye."
"But wait," she cried, "until you have heard all. You were standing on the beach waving your coat as a signal for help."
When he left three hours later a great change had come into his life.

THE SONG OF THE CORN.

I was dry and dusty,
I was weak and weary;
Now I'm glad and lusty,
And the earth looks cheery.
Oh, the soaking,
Mirth-provoking,
Laughter-making rain!
Soft and silky,
Mild and milky,
Grows my golden grain.

Listen to the laughter
That my leaves are making
When the winds come after
Kisses, softly shaking.
Oh, the soaking,
Breathing, living,
Heaven-pouring rain!
Come, come me,
Kiss me, bless me,
Once and once again!

Let your hearts be singing,
Peal your psalms, peoples!
Set the joy bells ringing
In the lofty steeples;
Praises render
To the Sender
Of the joyous rain—
Of the living,
The life-giving,
Of the precious rain!
—San Francisco Chronicle.

HUMOROUS.

Long range practice—Twenty years' experience as a cook.

She—That war began the very day we were married. He—Most married couples can say that.

"I always like to fan myself with a sheet of gold music." "Why?" "Oh, there is considerable air in it."

"Does it hurt a dog to pat him over the head?" "Depends whether you do it with a feather or a baseball bat."

"What is the highest applause that can be bestowed upon you in the theatre?" "Applause from the gallery."

Life is short—only four letters in it. Some one has noticed that, curiously, three-quarters of it is a "lie" and a half of it is an "if."

"The war," she said reflectively, "brought about, or at least hurried, a great many marriages." "True," he replied, "but why dwell on the horrors of war?"

First Man—I wonder why these buns are called "Bath" buns? Second Ditto—Don't know, I'm sure, unless it is because they are hard enough to scrub yourself with.

"Dear Charlie," wrote a volunteer's sweetheart, "what a lovely lot of kisses I will give when you get home. I have been practicing all the time you were gone!"

Wife—John, is it true that you invited our cook's soldier-lover to my birthday dinner? Husband—Certainly. I did not want him to get the best morsels of every dish.

"The boat is sinking!" he cried. "We must take to the water!" "Impossible," she answered. "I've mislaid my oiled silk bathing cap and my hair would get all wet."

Magistrate (sternly)—You are a pitiable specimen of humanity. What brought you to all this degradation and disgrace? Prisoner (proudly)—It took three policemen.

Mother—Johnny, you go right to bed! Johnny—Yesum; but you bet yer life when I get big I'll join a club like pa belongs to, and then I won't have 't' go 't' bed at all if I don't want to.

"Pride and dignity are all right," remarked the philosopher, "but a little work now and then was never known to hurt anybody." And he continued rocking the cradle with his foot.

"I think," said the star boarder, "that patriotism can be carried too far. 'For instance?' queried the third floor front. "Well, there is no reason why the landlady should persist in feeding us on army rations."

"If you'll always give me full swing," observed the pendulum, "you will never have any trouble with your hands." "I don't know," replied the clock. "If it wasn't for your going back and forth in my works I never could have any strikes."

Barber—I've got a preparation that will prevent your hair from falling out. Customer—But you are bald-headed yourself. Barber—That's very true—but you overlook the fact, sir, that a bald-headed man is never troubled with hair falling out.

A lady told a schoolboy to name the presidents, and when he replied that he couldn't the teacher said, "When I was as old as you I could name all the presidents in their order." The boy replied with more candor than politeness, "There were only a few presidents then."

Noble Lords' Mean Trick.

Of William and John Scott, afterward Lord Stowell and Lord Elibon, Lord John Russell used to tell this story: When they were young men at the bar, having had a stroke of professional luck, they determined to celebrate the occasion by having a dinner at the tavern and going to the reckoning William Scott dropped a guinea. He and his brother searched for it in vain, and came to the conclusion that it had fallen between the boards of the uncarpeted floor.

"This is a bad job," said William, "we must give up the play."
"Stop a bit," said John. "I know a trick worth two of that," and he called a waitress.

"Betty," said he, "we've dropped two guineas. See if you can find them." Betty went down on her hands and knees and found the one guinea, which had rolled under the fender.

"That's a very good girl, Betty," said John Scott, pocketing the coin, "and when you find the other you can keep it for your trouble." And the prudent brothers went with light hearts to the play, and so eventually to the bench and the woolstack.—New York Tribune.