

IDA LEWIS AT HOME.

How the Famous Heroine Lives in Newport Harbor.

Running from the mainland into the west side of Newport harbor is a long, stanchly built wharf. Were you to find your way to the end, you would ere long see from the lighthouse beyond a woman appear and glance in your direction. Presently, with agile step, she stuns down the narrow ladder fastened to the stone wall, jumps nimbly into a boat, unties it from its moorings, takes the heavy oars, and with a beauty of stroke all her own pulls with a long and a strong pull that sends her flying toward the steps of the pier on which you wait. Her back is as erect as that of a young girl, her powerful strength manifests itself when she strikes the rowboat makes, and yet, when she deftly turns it round and you get a good look at her face, it can be seen that it belongs to a woman in middle life, but upon whom time has left few tell-tale marks. She puts on a welcoming hand with a beautiful white smile, adding a cheery smile and a word of greeting as she makes ready to take you over to Lime Rock as her guest. You have cause for self-congratulation in being thus favored by the heroine, Ida Lewis.

Life on a lighthouse, situated as is Lime Rock light, is not the gruesome thing generally imagined. With a six-roomed house there are cares that fill the day, and like any other "grudge wife," Miss Lewis has her pots, kettles, and pans to attend to, rooms to sweep, beds to make, papers and magazines to read, letters to write, and all the various duties that manage which fill the time of a busy woman. A devoted church woman, she spends Sunday on shore whenever her brother is at home.

As the only woman lighthouse keeper in our country, and the last one that will be given a light—for such is the verdict of the powers that be—Miss Lewis has other duties that are unique. Exactly at sundown she must light her lamp, and precisely at midnight another must be substituted. All through the night it must be watched, and Miss Lewis law requires her lamp, like the foolish virgins, to have gone out, and from this she is an early riser. The responsibility is no small one, for the slightest neglect of duty or accident to her light or lenses would bring a report from the first seaman who suffered by it. Lives hang on her vigilance, but to her credit, light on all the coast is as regularly or perfectly attended to, nor does any other gain from the Government Inspector so high a report. Miss Lewis keeps a daily expense book, noting just the amount of wick and oil burnt, and the time to a second of the lighting and putting out of the lamp. In addition, a record of the weather must be entered. At Lime Rock light is a first-class light, no rations are allowed, the yearly salary being \$750 and two tons of coal.—(Ladies' Home Journal.)

Russian Growth in Asia.

At this moment, a quarter of a century since the capture of Tashkend, the Russian possessions in Central Asia already extended over an area of 20,000 square miles, rich in fertile oases, and counting a population of about three million inhabitants.

The respect of property and legality have been introduced into that country. The population, harassed by despotism and plunder, now reposes under the scepter of the "White Tsar."

The works of peace and commerce are rapidly developing, and by the completion of a railway which will link Samarcand to the Caspian Sea. The agriculturists at Tashkend has just demonstrated with evidence what Russian domination has done for the country.

And all this is due to the intrepidity and heroic patience of a handful of soldiers led by Tchernoff. The wars of Central Asia, like those of former days of the Caucasus, were an excellent school for the Russian troops; not only did they form men but they created brave officers. The names of Tchernoff, Skobeleff, Koropatkine, Abramoff, Golovatchoff, Kolpakovskiy, etc., are there to prove the fact.

The capture of Tashkend was no small thing when one thinks that a detachment of 1,300 infantry and cavaliers, backed by ten pieces of artillery, besieged such a large town, having a circumference of sixteen miles and over 100,000 inhabitants, sixty-three cannons, defended by a garrison of 30,000 men. The fight in the streets, and the capture of the Russian troops took over fifty barricades, sixty-three cannons, sixteen large batteries, several thousand guns, thirty-six tons of powder, whereas they lost in all only 157 men.—(New York Mail and Express.)

A Banker's Experience With Brigands.

Signor Arrigo, one of the wealthiest bankers and most extensive land-owners of Sicily, has just effected his release from a captivity of twenty-one days in the mountains by the payment of a ransom of one hundred thousand dollars to the brigands who had kidnapped him. Twenty-one days had elapsed before the negotiations on the subject were completed, and during this time the captive millionaire lived in a mountain cave, sleeping on a bundle of hay, and forced to content himself with a diet of black bread, fruit, and a cheap, but very powerful Marsala wine. On the day of his release, he had not gone far when he happened to meet a patrol of three carabinieri. So ragged, unkempt, and generally disreputable did he appear to them, that the worthy gentlemen were convinced that he was one of the band of banditti for whom they were hunting, while he was equally confirmed in his belief that the gentlemen were nothing but brigands in disguise. It was not until the police station at the gate of Palermo was reached that the carabinieri became assured of his identity and consented to cut the cords with which they had secured him.—Argonaut.

A Shrinking Desert.

Already the area of California's desert lands is shrinking like the waters of Lake Tulare, and it will be only a few years before it will no longer be seen on the maps of the State. Every day people are finding out that desert does not mean irreclaimable and that underneath the gray and drab desolation of these lands lies the richest of fertility. All the elements of productiveness are latent there, and only need the revivifying influence of water to wake into activity and usefulness. Eastern capitalists have not been slow to see this and to act accordingly. The latest evidence

comes from Chicago, where, it is said, a gigantic scheme is on foot for irrigating over 300,000 acres of desert land in Southern California. This is to be accomplished by impounding the waters from the mountains in immense storage reservoirs, whence it will be conducted to the land by a system of pipes, ditches, and flumes. This is just what has been done at Riverside, Redlands, Los Angeles, Pasadena, Fresno, and a score of other places, where the results have been most gratifying and the profits ample.—(San Francisco Chronicle.)

ASBESTOS AND ITS USES.

A Queer Mineral Which Serves Not a Few Vegetable Uses.

"Here is a towel that is never washed and yet is always kept clean," said a chemist to a Star reporter, handing to him at the same time what appeared to be nothing more than a piece of coarse cotton toweling. "What sort of laundry do you send it to?" was the natural query. "This kind," replied the man of science, going over to the corner of his laboratory and stuffing the towel into a small stove that was burning brightly there for chemical purposes. "I understand," said the visitor, "you never use such a towel more than once." "You are very much mistaken there," responded the chemist. "I use such towels almost forever, and they almost never wear out."

With that he lifted off the lid of the stove again and took out the towel with the tongs, dipping it in cold water and then handing it once more to the newspaper man. "Why," exclaimed the latter, "it is not even injured! What is it made of?" "It is made of rock," answered the chemist, "but a very peculiar kind of rock—so peculiar, indeed, that the ancients supposed the stuff of which this towel is woven to be of a vegetable nature. They used to wrap bodies that were to be burned in cloths made of the same flax-like substance in order to keep the ashes from being lost among the charred wood of the funeral pyre. Also they used it for napkins and for lamp wicks."

"But what is it called?" "You have often heard of it under the name of 'asbestos,' though very few people apparently have any notion as to what it really is. Enormous deposits of it exist in Canada and elsewhere. It is a form of a very hard rock called hornblende and is found in strata of a fibrous consistency, readily divisible into silky strands resembling flax. This likeness has given it the name of 'earth flax.' You can see for yourself from this towel how much it looks like a vegetable fabric when woven. An asbestos towel may be used for pretty nearly the same purposes as an ordinary towel, and, when it is dirty, all you have to do is to throw it into the fire and rake it out after a little while perfectly clean."

"Is asbestos used for any other purposes in these days?" "Oh, yes. It is employed for roofing material, boiler felting, paper stock and in the mixing of the foot paints for stage scenery. Also clothes for firemen and gloves to handle red-hot iron with are made of it. Sometimes the mineral is found in thin sheets of interlaced fibres, known as 'mountain leather.' Elsewhere it is not infrequently procured in thick sheets, and in that condition is called 'mountain cork.'"—(Washington Star.)

The Value of Oysters.

The Maryland Oyster Commission has been examining the oyster-beds of that State, and finds the possible wealth in them far greater than has ever been imagined.

Maryland leads the Union in the production of oysters, yet the industry is declared to be undeveloped even there, and awaiting more systematic methods. The thousands of acres suitable for oysters in Chesapeake Bay can be made more valuable and productive than any other ground water yield, if properly cultivated, an annual oyster crop of fully \$1,000,000 per acre, and the minimum profit of the entire district, under any system of cultivation, would be \$100 per acre, or \$64,000,000 annually for the entire oyster district.

Rhode Island, which has a very small oyster area, is getting from \$500 to \$600 an acre. Next to Maryland, no State in the Union has finer opportunities for oyster culture than Louisiana, which, in its numerous bays and so-called lakes, has an area suitable to this industry even greater than Maryland.—(New Orleans Times-Democrat.)

Why Do The Heathen Rage.

Not long ago the British ambassador at the Persian court publicly presented a copy of the Bible to the shah. At once there was an outburst of rage among the Mohammedan population and the guard of the British legation was doubled! The matter with the Mohammedans? Suppose the Persian ambassador should bring a magnificent copy of the Koran to the queen of England or the president of the United States; and suppose the Chinese ambassador should follow with the writings of Confucius; suppose someone else should present a copy of the book of Mormon and others should bring volumes containing the writings of Zoroaster and Buddha; would there be a riot or earthquake? All these gifts would probably be received with thanks and perhaps deposited in some great library and left to slumber there in peace till disturbed by the research of the curious. Christianity can afford to hear what men say and read what men write. It can tolerate free speech, and free discussion. Its foundations are too broad for panics; but when the Bible appears on the scene it seems to just set the devil crazy to do something to oppose it.—(Argonaut.)

Our Children's Inheritance.

Unless we are now able to preserve our mental and bodily forces intact, our grandchildren will be victims to our faults. They would even have the right to a certain extent to call to account for our careless conduct. "What did you do with that vigorous body and healthy and sturdy mind that were given you by your parents? for it is by your fault that you are miserable and sickly." The importance of the question is thus well established. Since the future depends on the present, it is no less than a question of the future of man. This being fixed, the query arises, Is there mental overstrain? A careful examination of the

facts gives us occasion to answer affirmatively. In consequence of the prodigiously artificial conditions of existence which our advanced civilization has imposed upon us, we have greatly modified the habitual and physiological life of our organism. A close study of the habits of contemporary men, such as the author of this book has made, will show that nothing is less in agreement with a healthy vitality than the mode of living of to-day.—(The Popular Science Monthly.)

FOREIGN FIENDS.

Murdering Travelers by Means of Opium and Chloroform.

The New York Sun writes about the gangs of miscreants who travel over the European railroads offering drugged refreshments to travelers of opulent appearance. If the traveler refuses the refreshment, the robber waits for an opportunity to hold chloroform under his nose. An overdose of chloroform, which results in death, is not infrequently administered, and the murderers are never caught. On one French railroad two travelers were found dead from some inexplicable cause in one day. The deaths were attributed to apoplexy or heart disease, but there is very little doubt that the deceased persons had fallen into the hands of the chloroform gang.

There are also opium gangs, whose work is less deadly, but not less effective from the robbing point of view. The members of this gang are provided with cases containing cigarette or cigar soaked with opium, which they offer to passengers they intend to rob.

The methods of these ingenious villains are apparently borrowed from the East, where ingenuity in crime has been highly developed during a period of several thousand years. There poison pure and simple is used.

The following notice has recently been posted in all the stations of the Eastern Bengal Railway:

"Travelers are warned against accepting liquid or solid refreshment from persons unknown to them, as many persons make a trade of poisoning travelers. They first enter into conversation with the latter in a casual or friendly way, and then endeavor to gain their confidence by sipping from the refreshment they offer to passengers to the same station. When they arrive at a place suitable for their designs, they offer the travelers poisoned food, or poison the drink or food which the travelers are about to take; then they make their escape after plundering them. Sometimes they throw poison into the water of the travelers' canteens, or into the well; at other times, they poison sweetmeats bought at bazaars, or else ready cooked food."

This is certainly the kind of literature calculated to interfere with the monotony of traveling for those who are alone, separated by hundreds of miles from their families or friends. The knowledge that such a notice is considered necessary by the railway company would scarcely reassure those families. The rapid progress which the Bengalee has made in learning the English language has opened up a new field of industry to him.

It would be worth while for the French and other nations to inquire whether the chloroform and opium gangs do not themselves hail from the East. The development of this branch of crime in America is next in order. The place is getting two crowded for road agents and old-fashioned highwaymen.

Race Between an Air Ship and a Train.

As the Spencer war balloon, in a recent ascent from the Royal Military Exhibition, now being held in England, reached Plaitow a train was passing through the tunnel at Shoeburyness. To the surprise of the guard, the balloonists were quietly waiting for him to take them and their machine back to London, the balloon having accomplished the journey in twenty minutes less than the train, says an exchange. The voyage across the pond at Shoeburyness, when at an altitude of 3,000 feet, as recorded by the aneroid barometer, the throbbing of the steam engine could be distinctly heard, also the report of a sportsman's gun, accompanied by the bark of a dog. The traveling was at the rate of about twenty-five miles an hour, but to the aeronauts the balloon was apparently stationary, and it was with great surprise that, on emerging from the clouds, they found what distance had been actually covered.—(New York Telegram.)

A Substitute for Gunpowder.

A Paris newspaper, the Paix, states that a French scientist has made a discovery which is likely to revolutionize the art of war. M. Paul Gifford has found out a liquid gas, which can be used to propel bullets, cannon shot, or shell. The Chamber of Commerce of St. Etienne has been so impressed by the value of the discovery that it has conferred upon him a gold medal and a more substantial reward of 10,000 francs. A small steel receptacle is placed under the barrel of the rifle containing 300 drops of this liquid gas. At each pull of the trigger one drop falls into the breach of the barrel behind the bullet, and contact with the atmospheric air causes it to volatilize instantaneously and with a force of expansion exceeding that of gunpowder, and drives the bullet before it with equal or greater velocity than gunpowder. No sound or smoke is produced.—(London Standard.)

England's Beauties.

The far-famed beauty—and it still exists—of England is only to be found in the middle and lower classes. The aristocrats are absolutely ugly in the general sense, and the ugliness of the lot are the maids of honor generally in attendance on Her Majesty. On the other hand, the shop girls, the waitresses and barmaids of London are often absolutely beautiful in both face and figure. The trim black dresses which they wear, free from trimmings or adornment of any kind, and their snowy aprons only enhance their charms. The contrast sometimes of a heavy waiting woman in attendance at one of the great mansions is so strange that one begins to wonder how it is that the lady cannot discover the secrets which enable her maid to possess and preserve her good looks.—(Philadelphia Times.)

All Belles.

They are all belles, the women of Montevideo, so say enraptured sojourners in that favored land. Beauty is there the heritage of every daughter of Eve, from the humble flower girl to the fashionable demoiselle who flattens her pretty nose against the jewellers' shop windows in the Calle Vieata Cinco.—(London Herald.)

In proportion as nations get more corrupt more disgrace will be considered to attach to poverty and more respect to wealth.

A STORY OF FREMONT.

Pardoning a Prisoner About to be Led to Execution.

Captain Swasey is an enthusiastic admirer of Fremont's career on the coast and declares he is deserving of every word of praise which has been given him and more too. The veteran is about to express his views on the much-mooted subject of General Fremont's career in an historical and biographical work. In reference to the charges of excessive severity and of brutal treatment to the prisoners who fell into his hands, Captain Swasey relates the following dramatic incident:

Just before the capture of San Luis Obispo, the men under Fremont had been subjected to great exposure to privation and hardship of all kinds, and their hatred of the Mexicans had reached its height. In fact, it was pretty clearly understood that if any of the enemy was unfortunate enough to fall into their hands they would spend but little time or sentiment in disposing of him.

On December 17, two days after the taking of Don Jose de Jesus Pico, who was called Tono. He was tried by court-martial on the charge of breaking his parole, was found guilty and was sentenced to be shot. The fact that Pico was a leader rendered him still more an object of hatred and distrust, and on every side were heard murmurs of approval when it was decided that he should pay the penalty of his treachery with his life. The execution was ordered for 10:30 o'clock in the morning, and at 10 o'clock the whole battalion was ordered to parade on the plaza, where the execution was to take place. The prisoner was confined in a room in the Mission. Fremont with two or three of his officers was present awaiting the coming of the prisoner's family to take their last farewell of the beloved husband and father. The prisoner, with bowed head, was seated on one side and opposite stood Fremont with folded arms and face unmoved from its usual stern demeanor. The usual grim silence were grouped about them, the wife with her eight or nine young children entered, dressed in the deepest mourning. The wife was a beautiful woman of stately bearing and the children of delicate and refined appearance. No word was uttered to break the silence until the grown-up children. Then the children fell on their knees with outstretched hands mutely begged for the life so dear to them.

Among the officers present was that stern soldier Captain Richard Owens, who had never feared a living foe, but whose eyes were then dimmed with tears at the pathetic sight before him. Suddenly, for he could no longer control himself, he uttered the one word: "Colonel!" Fremont's face relaxed its determined expression, and he exclaimed: "Yes, Dick, I know we had rather meet a thousand of them in the field to-morrow than take this one life." Then, turning to the prisoner, he said: "You are pardoned, you are free."

The prisoner fell upon his knees at Fremont's feet and pressed the hem of his cloak to his lips, exclaiming brokenly in Spanish: "My life was forfeit. You have given it back, and henceforth it shall be devoted to you." Instantly Pico ordered that his horse be saddled, and from that day on there was no more danger of every kind that the man whose life he had given back to him.—(San Francisco Examiner.)

How Gold is Shipped.

When one recalls the fact that millions upon millions of dollars in gold annually seek Europe to provide for the necessities of our import trade, the question of how gold is shipped to Europe becomes an interesting one. The Bank of America is the largest shipper of gold from New York, and indeed from the United States. Since the advent of the steamships, very much like the ordinary beer keg, every one contains \$50,000 in coin or bar gold. The latter is the favorite for these shipments, since the government permits the sub-treasury to exchange coin for bar gold, as coin, in a single million dollar shipment is liable to loss by abrasion of from eight to twenty ounces, or from \$120 to \$200, while the bar only loses about three-fourths of that value. Where coin is sent double eagles are preferred. They are put in stout canvas bags, each one containing 125 double eagles, or \$5,000; and ten bags fill each keg. About the only precaution taken against tampering with kegs, is a treatment of the kegs with a solution of "tapin." Four holes are bored at equal intervals in the projecting rim of the staves above the head. Red tap is run through these, crossing on the keg's head the ends meeting at the centre, where they are sealed to the head by the hardest of wax, and stamped with the consignee's name. The average insurance is about \$1,500 per keg. Then there is an expense of about \$2 per keg for package and cartage aboard ship, or \$200 for the same sum and the inevitable loss by abrasion, whatever it may prove to be. There are great Wall Street firms shipping from \$25,000,000 to \$40,000,000 annually. Some of these have for years insured themselves, and ascertained the saving has been sufficient to replace a loss of \$1,000,000. These are large figures, but this has become a country of large figures and affairs.—(American Banker.)

Singing Psalms.

In singing the psalms, the old custom was for the clerk to read each line—sometimes two lines—before the people joined in with the music. This practice is supposed to have originated in a desire to assist members of congregations who were unable to read. It began in England, and by-and-by it was taken up by the Scotch people, who, instead of looking at it in the light of convenience, began to consider it a matter of principle; so much so that when efforts were made to abolish it great opposition arose and many people left the church.

It is to be noted in a recent issue of the Argonaut, that, though living by herself, she went through the form of family prayers every day, and read aloud to herself each line of the psalm before singing it! The celebrated Dr. Chalmers related on one occasion his own experience of trying to abolish this old practice at Kilmory. There was one old woman who stoutly maintained that the change was anti-Scriptural. Dr. Chalmers took an early opportunity of visiting her, and on inquiring what was the Scripture on which she regarded the change as a contra-vention, at once was answered by her citing the text, "Line upon line." It is to be noted in a recent issue of the Argonaut, that, though living by herself, she went through the form of family prayers every day, and read aloud to herself each line of the psalm before singing it! The celebrated Dr. Chalmers related on one occasion his own experience of trying to abolish this old practice at Kilmory. 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