A Queer Spanish Custom.

The presence of the Spanish schoolship Nautilus in the North River recalls a curious custom in vogue on war vessels of that nationality. It originated in superstition and has long been the subject of many jeers from English-speaking mariners.

Years ago, so the legend runs, a Spanish man-of-war was lost under peculiar circumstances. The ship was careening before a Levant breeze, when suddenly the heavens grew dark with an approaching squall.

It became necessary to shorten sail quickly and the seamen were hurried to their stations. The vessel heeled under her bellying canvas and the sailors tugged at the clew-lines, but not a sheet would start.

As a last resort the halyards were cut, and under ordinary circumstances the yards would have fallen upon the caps and spilled the wind out of the sails. But they remained mast-headed, and in a few moments the vessel capsized.

It was afterwards discovered that the sheaves, through which the ropes for shortening sails were rove, had been so tightly plugged up with sticks and other small obstructions that it was impossible for the ropes to slide through. It was urged that no human agency could have done it, and the deed was laid at the door of the evil one.

Shortly after the fateful occurrence a general order was promulgated directing that the crew of every Spanish war vessel be sent aloft to chase His Majesty out of the sheave every evening at sundown.

From that day to the present it has been the custom for the crew to go aloft for this purpose when the colors are lowered at sunset. They scramble up the rigging as the flag comes down, run out upon the yard-arms and closely examine every hole and crevice.

Their patient search for the elusive old gentleman has hitherto been as fruitless and tireless as that instituted by single ladies under beds for lost burglars.

What would happen if they should ever find what they search for can only be imagined.—*New York Times.*

Preserve Your Vigor.

A healthy, vigorous system resists disease. Worms burrow in decaying trees; not in the young, the vigorous, and the thrifty. Some persons can almost defy the deadliest disease. Others fall before the slightest attacks. Many diseases come from germs, which plant themselves within the body, and then multiply and destroy. If we have the vigor that can resist the *first* of these little germs, we escape. But if the system is debilitated; if bad food and bad air have impaired vitality; if stimulants, strong drink, sensual and vicious indulgences, excessive strains, idleness or inactivity, have sapped the vigor of the system, then disease lays hold upon the enfeebled frame and works its overthrow. Many a poor fellow whose life is wasting and wearing away with some incurable malady, is only paying the penalty for the excesses of those young days, when nothing he could eat, drink, or do, ever injured him! He had the treasure of health,—he squandered it, and now comes the time of settlement, and he finds that "the wages of sin is death."—*Medical Brief.*

I Lost

My confidence, was all run down and unable to work—in an extreme condition of general debility, when I was told that Hood's Sarsaparilla was just what I needed. As a drowning man grasps at a straw I decided to try this medicine, and to my great surprise, from the first day I began to improve. By the time I had finished my second bottle I had regained my health and strength, and from that day I can say I have been perfectly well. I have recommended Hood's Sarsaparilla to my friends, whom I know have been benefited by it. It is indeed peculiar to itself, in that

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not only helps, but it cures. H. C. PIDCOCK, 49 Delevan Street, Lambertville, N. J.

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THE COLORADO DESERT

THE WEIRD WASTE WHERE A SEA HAS FORMED.

Walking on What was Once a Part of the Ocean's Bed—A Mosaic Floor of Gems.

The Colorado desert, a great part of which has been transformed into an inland sea, may soon be explored by the government. Of late the Department of Agriculture has been devoting much of its attention to investigating the waste regions of the United States with a view to finding out what things, animal and vegetable, live in them. Two years ago the so-called Painted Desert of Arizona was the object of inquiry, and, in addition to zoological and botanical specimens for enriching collections, vivid pictures were brought back of that red expanse of barrenness, with its scattered cliffs of rainbow hues, topped by heaps of fossil wood, and its sand storms, threatening the luckless traveller with their towering columns of whirling sand dancing over the plain.

Not less weird are the descriptions sent by the present expedition to Death Valley respecting scenes and experiences in that strange alkali sink. But even Death Valley is nothing as to heat and picturesqueness when compared with the Colorado Desert, which was the original Jornado del Muerto, or Valley of Death of the Mexicans. That region is 200 miles south of the so-called Death Valley in almost a straight line, being that much nearer the equator, and is a considerably deeper hole. It covers 9,000 square miles, and more than a quarter of this area, a space 100 miles long by an average width of twenty-five miles, is below the level of the ocean. In some parts its bottom is 230 feet below tide-water. Reliable authorities assert that it is the most intensely hot spot on the face of the earth; the Sahara is nowhere compared with it. Expedition after expedition has been lost in attempts to cross it. Prof. Gilbert Thompson, of the Geological Survey, tells of an occasion some years ago when a railway train on which he was a passenger broke down in the Colorado Desert. By good luck the nearest station was only three-quarters of a mile away, and a number of people started out to walk the distance over the ties. Before reaching their destination twelve of them were struck down by the heat, so that a rescuing party had to be sent out for them. The thermometer stood at 126 degrees in the shade. Under such conditions people cannot live long witeout copious draughts of water. The water in the blood dries rapidly, and all the secretions of the body thicken.

It might be said that this Jornado del Muerto is the ideal desert of the world. In no other of the earth's most fearful wastes can be found such natural conditions of ideal horror. Even the mirage, tempter of the dying traveller's despair, reaches a more extraordinary development there than anywhere else. One can behold in the Colorado Desert, where all is hopeless misery, beautiful lakes, tempting verdure, and even towns with houses and churches within distances apparently small.

The explorer who is bold enough to venture into this region for purposes of investigation is struck, to begin with, with the weirdness of finding himself walking in what was once the bed of the ocean, hundreds of feet lower down than Neptune's waves are flowing a few miles away. He knows that this branch of the sea subsequently became an inland lake, and it is with interest that he looks upon the shores of what was erstwhile a mighty body of water. A great shallow lake it was ages ago, and the rocky banks which enclosed it still remain—cliffs of imperishable stone, with the ancient water marks still on them. When water was there the lime which it contained was gradually deposited on the rocky shores for thousands of years, so that now the cliffs are coated with it three feet thick in many parts, and one is thus enabled to observe just how high this strange inland reservoir threw its waves in times gone by.

Its bed to day may well afford a study to the seeker after marvels, as well as to the geologist. It is a desert wonderland. Imagine a plain of clay, monotonously level, relieved here and there by hills of sand built in beautiful wave-like outlines. These hills are not stationary; they travel constantly, though slowly, journeying over the plain as the winds direct. The sand of which they are composed is not like ordinary sand. Most of the grains are transparent; others are translucent, while many are of rainbow hues, being in fact small gems of red carnelian, green chrysolite, and vari-colored garnet. Beneath a microscope they are most interesting. A majority of them are perfect spheres, rounded and polished by attrition with one another. When mixed with a certain acid they effervesce like Seidlitz powders. Composed of these strangely wrought materials the sand hills look like great snow drifts, with here and there a gleam of color.

In some parts of the desert, here and there, water boils up from springs, which are surrounded by circular hillocks of carbonate of lime from four to eight feet in height, the material of which has been deposited from the flowing fluid. The latter is so highly charged with gas that it is very difficult to keep corks in bottles filled with it. It seems queer to find in such a desolate country real soda-water fountains supplied by nature. Syrups are not offered to order, unfortunately. The lime deposited on the rocky shores was contributed by such springs as these, bubbling up from what was then the bottom of the lake.

The atmosphere of the desert is so clear, owing to the absence of moisture, that small objects at a great distance seem close at hand. All sorts of illusions deceive the eye. A man far away on the plain assumes gigantic stature. Ranges of hills take on wonderful effects of color—rose, violet and yellow. The phenomenon of the mirage is developed on a gigantic scale. Mountains below the horizon rise into view, and vast lakes invite the traveler to turn aside for refreshments.

The northern part of the desert is paved with the most wonderful pebbles in the world—in many places so exquisitely laid that they defy successful imitation by the most skilled worker in mosaic flooring. These pebbles are porphyry, agates, carnelian, quartz, crystals, garnets, chrysolite, and other beautiful materials. They are packed together so that the surface composed of them is like a floor, and they look as if pressed into it with a roller. As a rule, they are of nearly uniform size, and each one is polished brilliantly, as if oiled and rubbed. Most of them are perfect spheres, and the reflection from them of the sun's rays is gorgeous beyond description. Each convex surface gives back a ray of light, and the ground for miles seems as if literally paved with gems. Thus the surface is a combination of myriads of reflectors.

Everybody knows, without looking at the map, how Lower California runs south from the Pacific coast like a sort of tail, separated from the United States—for it is a part of Mexico, as some people are not aware—by a long arm of the sea called the Gulf of California. Once the gulf extended in a northerly direction 300 miles beyond its present inland limit. Into that northern extension the great Colorado River emptied millions of tons of detritus annually, until the deposit accumulated in quantity sufficient to shut off the upper part of the gulf, which was thus transformed into a lake. To begin with, of course, it was a salt lake, but it gradually became fresh through the influx of water from the Colorado. Thereupon fresh water fishes, mollusks, and other creatures not of the brine were developed in it, and in this way it happens that the dry bottom of to-day is covered with their fossil remains.

However, the Colorado, like other rivers, has been steadily diminishing in volume as centuries have gone by; so that its supply of water was at length cut off from the lake, only dry channels remaining where once torrents flowed. One of these old channels is known as the New River. Within the memory of tradition of man there has been no flow worth mentioning through this New River; but in 1853 a geologist, Prof. William G. Blake, attached to a party of United States engineers which first explored this region, said in his report that the desert would again become a lake for a time, if there should be an unusual rising of the Colorado. Now that is exactly what has occurred recently. A large tributary of the Colorado, called the Gila River, has been affected by such a flood as has never been heard of there before. Consequently the Colorado, augmented in volume by this swollen stream, has poured a part of its overflow through the New River channel and the ancient lake bed has become inundated. Necessarily the water will soon dry up.—[Boston Transcript.

A Voracious Fish.

In a water-trough in front of Sullivan's Hotel on Chelten avenue, Germantown, there is a black bass that has attracted the attention of hundreds of people because of his peculiarities and the degree of intelligence exhibited on many occasions, says the Philadelphia Times. The fish is the only inmate of the trough and has occupied it for two years, to the exclusion of 200 others which had been put in it for propagation purposes, but the bass killed them one by one until the entire number had fallen victims to his voracity. He not only killed the fish but ate them. He swallows flies by the dozen, which the boys of the neighborhood gather for him, and the more they give him the better he appreciates them. He is fed almost daily on cheese, lobsters and choice beef-steak, and after he receives his morning complement of the latter he rises to the surface and splashes the water furiously with his tail. This is presumed to be his method of returning thanks.

He also eats mice, and several times during the past week John Leithead, of engine 19, provided him with this quality of bait, only to be swallowed without any ceremony. He likewise eats birds, and hardly a day passes that he does not dispose of at least two sparrows and two chippies. The fact that the feathers are upon the bodies of the birds makes little difference to him, and it is only when the legs have not been removed that he refuses to touch them. Otherwise he gulps them down with great rapidity. Although he measures eighteen inches in length and weighs about five pounds he causes no trouble to horses at the trough, and never has been known to molest one of them, excepting Joe Ladley's gray mare, and several times he has risen out of the water and snapped at her while she was drinking.

How an Oarsman Trains.

When I am in training, says Edward Hanlan, I get up at 6 or 6:30 o'clock, walk one mile, running perhaps two hundred yards at a stiff speed, sufficiently to get my wind. Then I return and take a light shower-bath, after which my man rubs me down with flesh gloves, rubbing in all directions. Afterward he goes over me with his hands and then fans me dry with a towel. I then rest for twenty minutes before sitting down to breakfast. I eat for this meal some fruit and a small steak and drink a glass of milk and cream. After sitting around for an hour I go for a two or three mile walk. Then I go to my boathouse and am rubbed down. After this I take a spin over the course, rowing from twenty-six to thirty-two strokes a minute. This is simply an exercise row.

The rubbing process is gone over again when I return. For dinner I have roast beef or mutton, sometimes a fowl, with vegetables. I rest until 2:30 o'clock, take a walk, and then go for another exercise row. Once or twice a week I take a "speeder" over the course. One thing amateurs should bear in mind—never leave your race on the river; that is, never row six races a week before the day of the race comes. It stands to reason that no man can row as hard as he is able each day and be in better condition the day of the race than when he began training.—[Ladies' Home Journal.

A Gigantic Wooden Statue.

In the Japanese capital there is a gigantic image of a woman, made of wood and plaster, and dedicated to Hachiman, the god of war. In height it measures fifty-four feet; the head alone, which is reached by a winding stairway in the interior of the figure, being large enough to comfortably hold twenty persons. The figure holds a huge wooden sword in one hand, the blade of the weapon being twenty-seven feet long, and a ball twelve feet in diameter in the other. Internally the model is fitted up with extraordinary anatomical arrangement which is supposed to represent the different portions of the brain. A fine view of the country is obtained by looking through one of the eyes of the figure. The admission to all parts of the structure is two cents.

Japanese tradition says that during the time of the Te-Shomeng rebellion, in 1522, hundreds of cords of wood were piled around it and fired, but that the sacred object itself failed to burn or to even be scorched by the flames.—[St. Louis Republic.

Chinese Love Pork.

The principal article of meat diet with the Chinese is pork. It is to them what beef is to the true son of Albion's isle. The Chinese butcher having only the one species of animal on which to exercise his skill, has become by practice a hog anatomist in the full sense of the word. A fat porker as soon as it is placed on the block in a retail Chinese butcher shop is scientifically rid of all its bones. The carcass is expertly cut into strips, so that every customer gets an equal quantity of fat and lean with his purchase. It is sold salted, smoked or roasted ready for eating.

It is also smeared with nut oil and disposed of in a semi-dried state. The hungry Celestial is frequently to be seen investing a five-cent piece in a large strip of roasted pork, which he eats with every evidence of satisfactory relish as he strolls along.—[New York Press.

WENT ON WITH HIS DYING.

Pathetic Story of a Hod-Carrier Injured Unto Death.

A hod-carrier had been badly crushed by the fall of a scaffolding while he was at work on a tall building in Wall street. His fellows had picked him up as tenderly as possible and had borne him bleeding and dusty to a shady spot to wait for the ambulance. It was a long wait for the man in torture, for the day was an intensely hot one, and people were being prostrated by the heat all over the city, and the ambulances had been on the run all day. An hour is not a long time for an ambulance to set out from a hospital, bring back a patient and then reach another one, but to those who watch a man slowly bleeding to death for want of medical assistance, it seems an age.

Big, rough men stood around the fallen hod-carrier with tears in their eyes, uttering low curses at the tardiness of the ambulance. But the victim of the contractor's greed or carelessness was the most patient of them all. As the minutes passed along he uttered no word of impatience, only he looked wistfully on those about him. After about half an hour of this suspense a doctor who was passing was called over. He knelt down by the man, felt his crushed-in side and examined his fractured skull. Then he shook his head and asked softly:

"Has he any friends among you?"

"None of us knows him, sir," said the foreman. "He struck me for a job this morning, and as I was short-handed I put him to work without asking him any questions."

"Well, if any of you can get any information from him about his people you'd better do so at once. He'll soon become unconscious and will die, without doubt, before night, no matter if fifty ambulances came for him. Nothing can save him. It's only a question of a few hours."

A flask of brandy was procured and a few drops put between the sufferer's lips. They seemed to revive him, and he opened his eyes and looked around, but to all questions as to his name, his home, his parents, his wife, his children, etc., he gave no answer.

"Well, old man," said the foreman at last, tenderly, "we can't do nothing at all for you, the doctor says, though you know we would if we could. The day is wearing on and our job must be finished. The ambulance will soon be here, so you won't take it hard if we leave you now, will you?"

The hod-carrier looked up at him slowly and spoke with a great effort.

"I've got to die, eh?"

"Doctor says so."

"How soon?"

"Before sundown, my boy."

"No help for it?"

"No."

"Well," with a long sigh, "you go on with your work and I'll go on with my dyin'," and he turned his head—shut his eyes—and—waited.—[New York Tribune.

Who Were "Hook and Crook?"

There have been many attempts made to explain the origin of the phrase, "By Hook or Crook." The Boston News-Letter of January, 1776, explains the expression thus: "Hook and Crook were the names of two English Judges at the beginning of the last century. They were both men of eminence in their profession, but not more remarkable for anything than the perpetual diversity of opinion that prevailed between them on matters of legal jurisprudence. Be the case what it would, every suitor was sure to have either Hook or Crook on his side."

Wilson's "Origin of Familiar Words and Phrases" says that it probably means "foully like a thief or holily like a bishop," the hook being used by burglars, the crook being the Bishop's crozier. "The Hand-Book of Fact and Fancy" gives the following story under the heading of "By Hook or Crook:" "The great fire at London in 1666 destroyed 13,200 houses, and in many cases obliterated all the boundary marks requisite to determine the sites occupied by buildings previous to the fire. When the rubbish was removed, disputes arose among the people as to the position and extent of their landed estates. These contentions promised not only interminable lawsuits, but also delayed the rebuilding of the city until they could be settled. Accordingly two of the most experienced surveyors of the day, Mr. Charles Hook and Mr. George Crook, were called upon to act as arbitrators in the matter, land-owners entering into a compact to take the decision of Hook and Crook as final and binding. From this fact arose the famous phrase which heads this article."

As a fourth and last solution of the mystery, an old London legend tells us that the numerous families of Hook and Crook formerly did the ferry business for the whole of the British metropolis. No odds on what boat you crossed the Thames you were sure to ride with Hook or Crook.—[St. Louis Republic.

He Liked the Family.

Governor Jackson, of Missouri, was a great favorite among the fair sex. His first wife was a Miss Sappington. His second wife was a Miss Sappington, sister of his first wife. His third wife was also a Miss Sappington, sister of the first and second wife. When he came the third time to ask old Colonel Sappington for his daughter the Colonel said:

"Jackson, you have been here three times now, and I haven't anything left but the old woman. I suppose you will come for her next, but I give you due notice that she is my own private property, and you can't have her."

Governor Jackson laughed immoderately at the Colonel's joke, but he never had occasion to make a fourth call upon the Sappington family.—[St. Louis Republic.

Reminiscence of the War.

A large turtle, bearing upon its upper shell the inscription "A. H. N., First Illinois Cavalry, 1861," was captured the other day in a pond at Linwood Lawn farm, near Lexington, Mo., and the shell preserved. In August, 1861, part of Marshall's company of Union troops, belonging to the First Illinois Cavalry, was camped at Linwood Lawn, and the inscription was no doubt made by one of these troopers.

NOTES AND COMMENTS.

THERE are 46,000 oil wells in the United States, representing a capital of $120,000,000, with an output of 130,000 barrels per day. The refining capacity of the country is 140,000 barrels per day, while 15,000 barrels are consumed as fuel. A surplus stock is held in tanks of more than 35,000,000 barrels.

AT Brussels, the German government supports nine hundred lace schools for making the lace to which the city gives name. Children begin to learn the art when very young, sometimes not over five years. Owing to some peculiarity of the soil or climate, Brussels has so far proved to be the only city in which the precious lace can be made successfully. Both cotton and linen threads are used in the manufacture, the former being spun by hand in dark, damp cellars with only a single ray of light falling on the hand of the spinner. The best of Brabant flax is used, and fine, soft cotton furnishes the filling for flowers and leaves.

A LONG time ago the distinguished French astronomer, Flammarion, expressed the belief that communication would be established one day between the earth and the planet Mars. The idea seems to have appealed very strongly to the fancy of an old lady at Pau, who died the other day after bequeathing a legacy of 100,000 francs as a reward to the first scientist who may devise a scheme for successfully accomplishing the feat. The money is to be held in trust by the Frenc Institute. It is not likely, however, that messages will be sent to Mars just yet, as the legacy is only to be payable for ten years, a limit too brief for the most sanguine experimenter.

AT a recent meeting of the General Practitioners' Alliance in Exeter Hall, London, a mass of testimony was produced to show that a great many well-to-do persons, in no sense proper recipients of charity, were getting free treatment at the hospitals, to the injury of the real poor and the loss of the medical profession. In one case a man who had received free treatment for a long time proved to be worth $250,000 when he died, and another free out-patient at the Middlesex hospital used to be driven to the institution in her own carriage, which she left "around the corner" to avert suspicion. It was alleged also that certain hospital doctors had accepted "tips" from prosperous patients, giving them in return prompter and better attendance than was vouchsafed to more indigent sufferers. Other serious abuses were hinted at, and resolutions were adopted asking for an investigation by the Committee of the House of Lords on Metropolitan Medical Charities.

PEOPLE in the South, particularly in Louisiana, are much disgusted with the settler who seeks the arid lands of the West and then calls on the Federal Government for money to make them productive by irrigation. Their contention is that he would exhibit a better claim to common sense if he would select lands that did not need irrigation to produce more abundantly than any territory in the West. The New Orleans New Delta tells him that in the Opelousas, the Attakapas, and Calcasieu country lying west of the Teche beyond the Atchafalaya bottoms, and extending from the Gulf nearly to the Red River, he can find a farming district that is superior to any in the United States. It can be bought for less money than much Western land, and yields four staple crops a year, an agricultural feat that cannot be performed north of Mason and Dixon's line. The lands are gently rolling, mainly prairie, and easily drained. Instead of clamoring for Federal assistance, the Northern people that are beginning to settle on them are converting them into garden spots, and adding to a gratifying degree to their bank accounts.

THE decorator at work on the White House will, he says, finish the vestibule in "the style of the American Renaissance." The coloring will be a mingling of soft browns and terra cotta. The walls will be done in a kind of panelled effect. Over the mantel, where there are portraits of Washington and Lincoln, there will be medallions of these distinguished men modelled in bold and striking relief. The framework around the heads and the shield and pair of flags over each medallion will also be in relief. The only decided tints will be the bright red and blue of the flags. The ceiling will be in soft shades, and the graceful turns and curves will converge towards the chandelier in the centre. Small gold stars also will be a feature of the ceiling. The style of the Green Room will be rococo, and the tint that gives the room its name will be accentuated by the pink of the peach-blow and touches of gilt. The walls, which will be of a color known as absinthe-green, will be divided into panels framed in bas-relief design. The state dining-room will be finished in colonial designs to conform to its architecture. The coloring will be a blending of fawn and golden-brown shades. The ceiling will be bordered in a garden of laurel leaves, and at each corner there will be a medallion to represent a horn of plenty overflowing with fruits and flowers.

CALIFORNIA'S Coyote Bounty Law, which was passed last winter for the benefit of the sheep-owners, and which went into operation on the 29th of May, is operating in a manner that is filling the taxpayers and the fruit-growers of the State with dismay. It provides that for each coyote killed five dollars shall be paid out of the State Treasury to the person presenting the scalp to the Clerk of the Board of Supervisors of each county. Although only eleven of fifty-four counties in the State have been heard from, the claims for bounty aggregated on July 11 $10,890. A banking firm in Tulare County, which has not yet reported, has notified the State Comptroller that it holds claims for $1,000. Were all these claims based on the scalps of coyotes killed in California the case would not be so scandalous. But it has been learned that enterprising Californians are importing scalps from Arizona, New Mexico, and Lower California. A Customs Inspector on the lookout for Chinese on the Mexican frontier recently seized a package of fifty coyote skins that the owner was trying to smuggle into the State. It is learned, furthermore, that the bounty has called into existence a new and profitable industry—that of breeding coyotes. As a female coyote can produce three litters of seven pups each a year, she is worth something like $100 to her owner. But this is not all the evil of this ridiculous piece of legislation. One of the most serious pests the California fruit-grower has to contend against is the rabbit, which is a particularly fine tid-bit for a hungry coyote. Consequently the extermination of the coyote for the benefit of the sheep-owners of half a dozen counties will be followed by such an increase of rabbits that the fruit interests will suffer seriously. This, with thousands and thousands of dollars that will be paid out for bounties during the two years that the law has to run, has aroused the press of the State, and there is a universal demand that au end shall be put to the evil at the earliest possible moment.

"WHAT do you think of Dr. Holmes idea that a fish diet gives a man many fishy characteristics?" "I think the statement a little indefinite. He does not state whether the man becomes a shark or a sucker."

Money the Year Round.

Miss Smith says: "Can I make $25 per week in the plating business?" Yes. I make $4 to $8 per day plating tableware and jewelry and selling platers. H. K. Delno & Co., Columbus, O., will give you full information. A plater costs $5. Business is light and honorable and makes money the year round. A READER.

Grover Cleveland was born in Caldwell, N. J., in 1837.

"Guide to Health and Etiquette," is a beautiful illustrated book. The Lydia E. Pinkham Medicine Co., Lynn, Mass., send it free for two 2c. stamps. The ladies appreciate it.

The women in Prussia, according to statistical reports, far outnumber the men.

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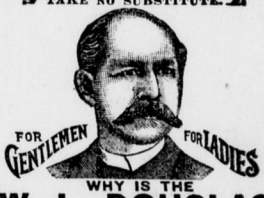

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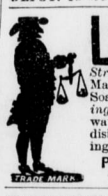

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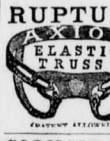

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