

## EPIDEMIC.

Lady met a brigand,  
 Captive she was took;  
 People raised a ransom—  
 Goin' to write a book.

Lovesick girl got jilted,  
 Sought a distant nook;  
 Brooded on her troubles—  
 Goin' to write a book.

Man, he thought he'd travel  
 Took a flying look  
 At some foreign countries—  
 Goin' to write a book.

Millionaire an' pauper,  
 Valet, maid, an' cook,  
 Everybody's got it—  
 Goin' to write a book.

—Washington Evening Star.

## THE PROOF OF THE PUDDING.

"That has always been my opinion, or, at least, always since I stopped letting mamma form my opinions for me," said a distinctly pleasing feminine voice behind him.

Colton turned casually around from the desk by the wall, where he was writing his usual grist of Sunday letters, not so much because the hotel stationery is both excellent and inexpensive, as because his own room was lonely, to see who the speaker might be. The great room was filled with men and a few women, seated at the small tables drinking and chatting, while the waiters moved silently about, well-groomed products of the tipping system. The table a few feet from Colton's elbow was now occupied by a wholly charming girl and a young man who Colton instantly decided was unworthy of her. In the first place he was a touch too good looking, and in the second place his clothes fitted his figure too well, so Colton thought, for a man evidently in his senior year in Divinity.

Colton turned back to his desk, not to write, but to listen. "I'm glad to hear you say so," the student said, continuing the conversation begun before entering the room. "I've found lots of girls, up-to-date girls, too, who didn't agree with me. But what will you have to drink?" "Lemonade," said the girl.

"Oh, try a cocktail," urged her companion. "No, thank you," she answered, with that peculiar half laugh those who know women are aware is the expression of finality. Colton mentally scored one for the girl, while her companion, calling a waiter, ordered a lemonade and a Scotch.

"Yes," the man continued, "I have always said that it was unjust and silly in a country so universally respectful to women as ours, to deny a girl the opportunity of making chance acquaintances, say during a long, tiresome railway trip, or something of that sort. If a girl is coming alone from Cleveland to New York on a Pullman car, and if there is a young man near her, evidently a gentleman and of her social position, why on earth isn't it all right for her to accept his offers to make her more comfortable and to pass away the dismal time of the journey in conversation pleasant for both of them? I can see no harm in it."

"Nor I," said the girl. "I have always thought that, as I told you, if one has common sense, such things can be managed all right. The trouble is, girls put our theory into practice too young, when they don't know the world, and get scared into primness." "Now, if they'd only wait till they are grown up and sensible like you," said the man, with what Colton decided was undue effusiveness, "how much more delightful a time they could have, with something of the freedom in getting fresh viewpoints from strangers a man enjoys?"

Colton stole another look at the girl. Yes, she was decidedly charming. He began to wish he were a hypnotist and could make the man ask her on what day and train she would return to Cleveland. Just then she glanced at him. He turned back quickly. Could it be possible? No, he told himself; on the train, perhaps, but not here while her caller was with her; it was only his hope of reading fulfillment into what was not there. As the dramatist said, there is a limit to all vanity, even that of a Harvard man.

"Again, haven't you been forced to wait alone sometimes for a long while in a place where it was not wholly pleasant for a girl to be without an escort?" continued the young woman's companion. "Such situations are bound to occur. Now, wouldn't it be much more pleasant for you if a nice man, perhaps seeing your embarrassing position, spoke to you, to feel free to accept his friendliness in the spirit intended, and to chat with him to pass away the tedious wait?"

"I should feel quite free to talk with him," said the girl, "if he behaved himself." "And if he didn't you girls have always a way of artistically turning us down," said her companion, with a "worldly snigger," (so Colton mentally tagged his laugh).

"Rather!" said the girl. "But I'll tell you what makes me angry," the man went on. "That is to have a girl, when she has met a man in this fashion and found him perfectly presentable, introduce him to her friends as 'Mr. So-and-so, whom I met at the beach,' or otherwise invent a lie to cover up what needs no covering. Even from a worldly point of view, lying is to be indulged in as rarely as possible. Besides a girl, though she needn't go out of her way to stick up for her principle, shouldn't back down from it when—when—"

"When she's caught with the goods," laughed the girl. "Let me help you out with a lay phrase. No, you are quite right. I've known girls to do just what you say. It's a touch of their feminine timidity that causes them to do it. Of course, as a matter of fact, they don't need to make any explanation, one way or the other, when they introduce a chance acquaintance."

"I'm glad to see we agree so thoroughly," said the man. Colton turned, for he did not like the tone. "The flirt!" Colton muttered, and dropped a book from the desk with a loud noise.

It had the desired effect, for the man straightened up. His cigar was burned out, and he remarked to the girl: "If you'll excuse me I'll get a fresh cigar. I know the kind I want, but I've forgotten the name, so I cannot order from the waiter. You don't mind being alone a minute, do you?" "Certainly not," she said. "I shouldn't think she would," thought Colton, as he watched her companion go out of the room.

Five, 10 minutes, passed, and he did not return. Colton stole a look at the girl. She was sitting alone at the table, looking about her nervously, for the room was now filled almost entirely with thirsty men. Fifteen minutes passed, and two large specimens of the west entered, portly and red faced as the indirect result of fortunate mining speculations. They approached her table, the only one with vacant chairs. Her nervousness increased. She looked embarrassed and very lonely. Should he or should he not? Colton debated. Wasn't the game worth the candle, anyway—or rather the snuffer? Just then she glanced at him again. The westerners were almost there. He decided.

"Pardon me," he said, "but when a girl is forced to wait alone in a place where it is not wholly pleasant to be without an escort—"

"You have good ears," she interrupted coolly.

"Then you acknowledge that they haven't deceived me," he replied, sitting down, for the westerners had turned away.

"They have not," the girl said, "but the conversation you took the liberty of overhearing, like the chair you are sitting in, was not meant for you."

"True," returned Colton, "nor was the chair reserved for those broad, departing backs from Colorado, if I mistake not."

"Thank you for that," said the girl, softening a bit. "I should thank you for that. But you have done your duty now—they are gone."

"Oh, no, my duty is not done—they, may remain!" said Colton. "But so may my escort," the girl said hurriedly. "A touch of feminine timidity," Colton smiled. "And you know you two agree so well," he added, mockingly.

The girl acknowledged the touch by shifting ground. "But I haven't time to find out if you are presentable," she said. "My ancestors came over in the Mayflower," Colton answered meekly. "Oh, everybody's did that!" said she. "Your point," laughed Colton. "But my name is Standish. That should pass me."

"I can hardly believe you," the girl retorted. "You would never need a John Alden."

Then they both laughed. And from a mutual laugh there is no return. Presently the student came back, and started to ask pardon for his delay. The girl interrupted. "Let me introduce to you," she said, pausing to watch Colton's face, "my friend Mr. Standish, whom I met last summer in the White Mountains. Isn't it too bad that he's got to run right away to make a horrid call? Mr. Addington, Mr. Standish."

Colton braced to the shock, and said blandly: "I am delighted to meet you, Mr. Addington. I wish you had been with us last summer at the Crawford House."

"The Crawford House," exclaimed Addington. "I thought Miss Bates always went to Bethlehem." Colton backed off and gathered up his letter. "Perhaps it was Bethlehem," he said, looking straight into the girl's face. "One meets so many girls in a summer it is hard to keep them differentiated."

Then he went on his way. Not long after he might have been seen in his lonely room writing to his college chum on the unholly joy of having in the last word.—New York Times.



**When Animals Thrive.**  
 Both very young and very old animals thrive better if their food is made easy of digestion. Cut clover, mixed with grain meal, is more digestible than grain only. A small quantity of the clover is enough to prevent the grain meal from clogging in the stomach.

**Effect of Feed Upon Beef.**  
 That the feed has its effects upon the beef is well illustrated by the communication of an Illinois feeder to the Indiana Farmer. He said that when at the Chicago stock yards with a load of steers he met another man who had also a carload that looked as fine as his. They both sold to packers the same morning. The writer sold his at \$8 per hundredweight, and the other received only \$6.50. Both lots were grade Shorthorns, a little more than 2 years old. He had fed his on corn, stover, clover hay, cowpea hay and wheat bran. The other had fed only corn and stover. The expert buyer said the other man's cattle were very good, but they were deficient in the thick loin beef which his had, which made his beef more valuable. In this case it was not "half in the feed and half in the feed," but all in the feed. The cowpea hay, clover and wheat bran were richer in protein than corn and stover.—The Cultivator.

**Growth of Spring-Set Trees.**  
 Many people have wondered why spring-set trees, with which much care had been taken, should live and thrive the first season apparently as the best, and the next season should fail to put forth a leaf, or after a scanty growth should drop their leaves and die, and yet the solution is very natural. The growth of wood and foliage the first season is from the food that was stored up in the roots, but the tree does not put out such a growth another season. If limbs and foliage are reduced the first year, more energy will be given to the root growth, as there will be less loss of moisture through the transpiration of the leaves, and the second year the tree may be permitted to make some new wood and to produce more foliage. While this is more true of some of the hardwood shade trees than of the fruit trees, it is to some extent true of the latter, and we prefer fast to spring settings, other things being equal, because we can induce a good root growth the next spring. This is not to be done by the application of nitrogenous manures, or stable manure especially, nor by liberal watering after they are set. Both defeat the desired results by stimulating the growth of wood and foliage, the wood often being so rank in growth, and so tender as to be winter killed, but is best done by having the soil mellow and moderately rich with the manure used for previous crops, to tempt the roots out beyond the branches, and the keeping of the wood growth limited by taking out of all the superfluous branches and heading in the others.

**What to Do With Unripe Squashes.**  
 The question which confronts the farmer is, what to do with the unripe specimens. Shall he feed them to his cows or store them. Though cows like them at any stage of growth, there can be but little food value either for milk or beef making in a half-grown squash, though I have always fed such, rather than throw them on the manure pile. The squashes which are full grown, but not yet ripe, make another class, which for best economy should neither be left in the field at the mercy of frosts, thrown on the manure pile, nor fed to the cows. Under proper treatment these can be ripened with a loss of but a small percent of their number, and keeping well after ripening, can be put on the market late in the season, when they often bring a higher price than the field-ripened ones known by the gathering in of the stem where it joins the flesh. When fully ripe the stem shrinks and divides, assuming a woody appearance. When not full grown both the outside and the stem have a shiny, varnished look. When full grown they lose this appearance and become dull in color. Now if these full grown ones are treated as the ripe ones, piled in with them in the bins of the squash house, they will rot soon after the low temperature without compels the closing of the windows.

If, instead, they are carried into the upper story of the building and stored in the warmest place, especially just over where the funnel of the stove runs, my experience has been that they keep well there and gradually mature. Though there may not be a sound seed among them when gathered, such a change toward maturity takes place that the seed of nearly all of them will grow, plump out and fully mature with as good vitality as is possessed with seed taken from squashes that fully matured in the field.—American Agriculturist.

**Mutton Breeds of Sheep.**  
 But few sheep are kept on farms, but they pay well, considering their cost. Farmers who make a specialty of sheep find it profitable to give up the best pastures for that purpose, but as a rule sheep are kept by some farmers simply to serve as scavengers. As the sheep will consume young weeds, shoots and many kinds of herbage that is refused by the larger stock, they do the greater portion of their food and need but little grain. To make a profit on sheep the plan of giving them the poorest and most inferior foods will not lead to the results. It is a system that belongs to

the past, and prevents improvement of the breeds. It is a fact well known that there are farmers who have persistently refused to grade up their flocks by the use of males of the large breeds, because it lessens the foraging capacity and activity of members of the flock; and if improvement was made at any time, in order to avoid too close inbreeding, only the Merino or Southdown was resorted to, they being the smallest of the improved breeds. With the attention given principally to the growing of wool the farmers have failed to take advantage of the profits that can be derived from mutton. Those that have not inspected the mutton breeds cannot realize the great improvement that has been made in the size of such sheep, and also in the quality of the meat therefrom. No animal has been brought to a higher point of excellence than the sheep. Highly fed lambs have been made to weigh 100 pounds (live weight) when three months old. In the face of these facts it is but surprising that those who fail to improve with the Oxford, Shropshires or Hampshire find it impossible to derive a profit. The large breeds of sheep cannot be turned out on an inferior pasture to be compelled to find their food. They must, like the steer, be made to produce as much as possible in the shortest period of time. They will not grow rapidly and fatten readily if they are to forage over the whole farm and be forced to work for all they get. The foraging system will answer for the Merino, but the heavy breeds do not thrive so well in large numbers. Only the best of pastures, the flocks divided, and a mess of grain at night, will force them. True, it requires more labor and care, but it pays, and as the matter of sheep raising is one for profit, the labor will always be paid for before the estimate of profit can be made. If more money can be made on one good sheep than from three inferior ones it is a waste of time and pasture to keep the natives. The greatest profit is derived from the mutton breeds, and the best pastures on the farm can be given up to them with profit.—Philadelphia Record.

**Wood Ashes as a Fertilizer.**  
 I think the average farmer does not fully realize the value of wood ashes as a fertilizer, consequently they are in many instances made little or no account of. This is a grave mistake and should be speedily remedied, for ashes allowed to waste are dollars thrown away, something New England farmers can ill afford. Wood ashes are generally considered unavailable for low meadow land. My experience proves this to be untrue.

I consider them fully as efficient on damp ground as on dry land. My farm is a low brook meadow. What ashes I make and obtain otherwise are sown broadcast, to the fall on that portion of the farm which is losing its fertility and is manifest by a light, thin crop of grass. The result is astonishing. The spring following the application a perfect mat of white clover comes in with an increased growth of her grass. Land that was cutting three-fourths ton per acre before this application cut from one and three-quarters to two tons per acre afterward.

The peculiar part of the process, and what I do not understand, is where the white clover comes from. It always comes in where it was not seen before, frequently when it is not on any other part of the farm. The ashes are responsible for it, but how I do not know. I have sown ashes on a clean piece of herd's grass and the next spring there would be a thick bottom of white clover in addition. This admixture makes an admirable feed in winter for the milk cows, which they respond to by filling the pails.

I have no definite plan in applying ashes for grass. I simply sow on liberally and nature does the rest. The fall is the best time to top-dress with ashes. The winter rains and snows tend to aid assimilation. The ashes are leached down to where the grass roots are and they promptly respond. I much prefer ashes to manure for top-dressing. Manure stimulates a rank growth of herd's grass, which cows dislike, and without materially increasing the bottom ground. Again, unless you have a manure spreader, the dressing in applied in lumps and in consequence the growth is uneven. Ashes are fully as efficient if applied to plowed ground and stocked with grass, although the white clover is not quite so much in evidence unless it is sown at seeding.

Grass is not the only crop benefited by ashes. They cannot be equalled for cultivated strawberries and are invaluable when sown on to the onion bed in conjunction with the droppings from the hen roost. They are beneficial to corn, applied about the stalks at the first hoeing. I do not need to mention their value for grain, especially oats. Farmers that have raised oats on burned ground realize the value. More farmers are using ashes than formerly. Carloads are shipped into this section every year from Canada and nearly every village has an ash merchant who picks up his merchandise from house to house. The lasting qualities of ashes are remarkable. One application will make a heavy crop of hay for years. Their lasting qualities are far ahead of manure.—J. Newell Colton, in New England Homestead

**Public Library Advantages.**  
 Barnes—I suspect that Pingrey is quite a literary man. I know he spends the greater part of his time in the public library.

Howes—Yes; he tells me it is so quiet there he can get a nap almost any time without being awakened.—Boston Transcript.

## MORE BACHELORS THAN SPINSTERS.

**Matrimonial Possibilities of the Various States of the Union.**  
 A careful reckoning of the number of men in the various states of the Union who are available matrimonially has just been finished by the census office. It finds that in the aggregate there are 6,726,779 bachelors of 21 or over, and makes record of the remarkable fact that there are at present in the United States 2,509,000 more single men than single women of that age and above.

The exact figures are 4,195,446 maidens, so that the latter are in the minority 2,531,333. In other words, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer, there are 2,531,333 unattached males who could not possibly get wives unless they fell back upon the widows or upon girls under 20.

New England has always been supposed to be overburdened with single women, and yet the census reckoning shows that there is not a state in that group which has not more bachelors than spinsters. Even Massachusetts, long declared to be the chosen home and resort of the old maid, has a slight surplus of unmarried men, the figures being 282,932 single males, against 277,711 females similarly situated. Maine has 60,878 bachelors, against 43,790 spinsters; New Hampshire 28,713 bachelors and 36,554 spinsters; Vermont, 29,132 bachelors and 19,749 spinsters; Rhode Island, 41,645 bachelors and 39,405 spinsters, and Connecticut, 94,158 bachelors against 74,751 spinsters.

It is clear from a glance at the census figures, however, that the unmarried women of the east ought to migrate to the great and growing west, where the available supply of husbands is relatively enormous. Just think of California, for example, where there are 239,504 bachelors and only 88,755 maidens of 20 and upward!

But the opportunity in Idaho is much more attractive, the single men numbering 23,421 and the spinsters only 3556. Montana is another state rich in chances of marriage, its bachelors numbering 55,457, against 7560 spinsters. Oregon has 60,525 bachelors and 16,775 maidens, while Washington claims 90,014 single men and 16,318 women. But the banner state for bachelors is Wyoming, which has 2347 spinsters against 20,927 unmarried persons of the sterner sex. It must be very difficult for a woman to become an old maid in Wyoming.

The excess of bachelors over spinsters of 20 years and upward in Massachusetts is nearly 2 percent. In Rhode Island it is 5 percent, in Connecticut 25 percent, in Maine 39 percent, in New Hampshire 26 percent, and in Vermont 45 percent. New York shows a surplus of 23 percent. New Jersey 29 percent, Pennsylvania 38 percent, Ohio 38 percent, Indiana 60 percent, and Illinois 68 percent. Kansas rises to an excess in bachelors to 108 percent, while Missouri shows a surplus of 72 percent. Michigan has an excess of 77 percent of single men.

In this country the males outnumber the females 24 in every 1000, and thus it is obvious that, if all of the women do not get husbands, it is not for lack of available material.

**The Difficulties of Animal Training.**  
 The most difficult feat in animal training is to make a number of beasts of different species perform together. In this art Mr. Carl Hagenbeck, the famous Hamburg naturalist, is supreme. He it was who first conceived the idea of doing such a thing, and to him is due the credit of having brought before the public some of the finest and most imposing spectacles of their kind ever witnessed. To preparing these for the public eye he devotes infinite pains. He has to select animals which have not only sufficient intelligence to perform as he wants, but a disposition which will make any quarrelling improbable. And to obtain this result he had to do a great deal of weeding out. For one group of 15 animals he bought and trained more than 60 before he could get those he wanted. Over 45 of his investment turned out to be worthless for his special purpose, and were got rid of as opportunity offered. The training of the beasts was consequently a slow process, lasting as it did four years. During the whole of that time three men did nothing else but attend on the animals, and very frequently one or more actually slept in the cage with the big creatures, so as to intervene immediately if there was any fighting—a precaution which forms an important feature of Mr. Hagenbeck's system. Some animals under training in his establishment are never left alone, attendants remaining with them night and day, and as a result they eventually become peaceable and chummy.—Chums.

**Stratford-on-Avon Fair.**  
 Though no longer a centre for the hiring of domestic and agricultural labor, says the London Graphic, the fair at Stratford-on-Avon is an immense attraction to the neighborhood, and deserves to rank with the famous fair on the Tombland at Norwich. Four roundabouts, shooting galleries innumerable and several streets of stalls, to say nothing of booths, circuses and menageries, transform the quiet town into a veritable pandemonium, which would have delighted the heart of Shakespeare, however much it may annoy his cultured readers and students. Quite early in the afternoon the carcasses of the eight oxen were reduced to skeletons, while the many hot sausage stalls did a roaring trade, and no one went away without a large stick of "genuine Stratford-on-Avon rock."

Former Senator Jewett of St. Louis, Mo., who is 94 years old, says that a man should quit work at the age of 90.

## PORTO RICAN CHOCOLATE.

**How the Bon-Bons of Mayaguez Differ From Those of Other Countries.**  
 The new territory, Porto Rico, is beginning to put itself in evidence here and there in the big American cities. Its fruits, cigars, cigarettes, sugar and coffee are now familiar sights, and in the past three months the chocolates and bon-bons of Mayaguez have appeared at one or two stores in the Broadway district.

The proprietor of one of these, a bright-eyed and swarthy West Indian, said: "It will take some time for Americans to appreciate the Porto Rico chocolate, for the simple reason that it is the very best in the world. For 200 years it has been cultivated in Mayaguez and the surrounding district, where the manufacture has been developed into a fine art, as well as an industry. For more than a century the bon-bons and confections of Mayaguez have been standard luxuries among the wealthy classes of Cuba, Spain and southern France. So large has been the demand that at times the supply of the bean ran short and the Portoriquense manufacturer has been obliged to import from Venezuela. They are so proud of their goods that when this happens they label the wares second quality, or else give it no label at all. The finished chocolate differs in many respects from that in general use in the American cities. More care is bestowed in selecting the beans and in the preliminary treatment. There are no quick systems such as the Dutch method or the acid method or the treatment by alkalies. The finished chocolate is purer and contains almost no sugar. It never is diluted or blended with starch, arrowroot, tapioca, or other amylaceous materials, much less with burnt amber, burnt sienna and other clays which are so common an adulterant in Europe and America."

"When made into bon-bons the practice runs more along Parisian than New York lines. Every ingredient employed is ground and boiled until it is a powder as fine as flour, while soft substances are rolled or milled until they are as smooth as cream. The manufacturers give a greater variety in combination flavors. In this city the average chocolate is flavored with vanilla and the cheap qualities with tonka bean. In Mayaguez there are many standard flavors, and, in addition, any patron can have confections flavored according to his own formula or taste."—New York Post.

**Mendall's Law.**  
 Mendall's law is an illustration of the strange neglect of a discovery by the official scientists when it is made by a layman and not published in the regular way, says American Medicine. In this instance the "layman" was a priest—a German monk—who published his excellent scientific thesis in an obscure German village in 1865. Within the last two years the law has been rediscovered, practically independently and simultaneously, by four biologic investigators, one of whom, Correns, of Germany, discovered Mendall's thesis. Briefly stated, the law is that a first cross will result in offspring resembling one or the other parent, but possessing in an undeveloped form, termed by German scientists "recessive," the attributes of the other. The second cross will result in fixed types possessing, respectively, the characteristics of one parent, of both parents, and of both parents in varying degrees. If true, the law, it will be seen, will have a tremendous effect upon the hybridization of plants and the breeding of animals.

**A Medieval Megaphone.**  
 A curiosity of great antiquity is still to be seen within St. Andrew's church at Willoughton, near Gainsborough. This is a quaint speaking trumpet, with an obscure early history dating back to the times of the Knights Templar. In shape it resembles a French horn, and is more than five feet long, having a bell at the end of the graduated tube. It was formerly six feet in length, but is now telescoped at the joints, where the metal has apparently decayed. Tradition declares it was formerly sounded from the tower to summon aid in case of need, as when blown at a height the weird, deep notes the trumpet produced could be heard a great distance away in bygone days. It is believed that this curious instrument has often been used to call together the villagers, thus dispensing with the usual bell, and to give additional power and strength to the choir, being probably used by the chief singer, as the trumpet intensifies vocal sound to a marked degree.—St. James' Gazette.

**A Matter of Business.**  
 The members of the Chinese legation in Washington have always been very fond of American society. Some years ago a secretary, a portly and disfigured Mandarin, and two younger attaches of the legation graced with their presence the parlor of the wife of a government official. During the conversation the four-year-old nephew of the hostess, a bright little fellow, walked in and announced his preference for the above-mentioned secretary by climbing on his lap. Mr. Cheng—as we shall call this dignitary—was well pleased with the youngster's attentions. After Young America had sufficiently admired the great man's silks and buttons, he turned to the distinguished visitor with the most bewitching of smiles and inquired, "Where is your laundry?" On this occasion the Chinese friends did not unduly prolong their visit.—Lippincott's.

**Tell Out Again.**  
 Tom—I fell in love with her at first sight.  
 Jack—You did?  
 Tom—Yes, and then I took a second look.—Somerville (Mass.) Journal.

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