cles in the house are grouped together and sold in lots—things such as the kitchen utensils, china and other dining room properties and it is astonishing to note how low the values of these articles run. In fact, at one of these residence auctions, the sales will balance pretty evenly in the end, for if you pay too much for one thing you can get others at ridiculously low figures.

LITTLE BUTTER PLATES.

For a lot of little gold-rimmed butter plates of very ordinary china, a dollar is given while a good, substantial dining room extension table goes for the same amount. A great quantity of absolutely useless stuff is purchased just because it is cheap. A small fire screen, which can be bought brand new at any hardware or department store for 50 cents, is "bid up," 10 cents at a time, until an excited woman pays $1.50 for it—a victory for the auctioneer that tickles him all over, as may be seen from the expression of heavenly bliss that spreads itself over his perspiring face. As the sale progresses the downright genius of this man-of-the-red-flag shows itself more and more. The manner in which he is able to keep up such a constant flow of chatter and never lose his head when the bidding is at its highest pitch of excitement, is really an art. He has his crowd well in hand long before one-quarter of the things in the house are sold; he knows who has money and who has none, and he seems to be perfectly aware of what is going on in the minds of most of his auditors. He is on terms of the closest familiarity with everybody present, and somehow manages to make remarks of a very personal nature without stirring up any noticeable ill humor or antagonism. He has named a group of young women in one corner of the room "the Yucatan Club"—as each member of the party is chewing gum as if her life depended upon it. "I once chewed gum myself—never mind, ladies," he calls out to them reassuringly. "I chew the rag now."

"Now here is a bust—or should I say a burst?—of William Shakspeare," rattles on the irrepressible salesman, as he holds up on view a cheap plaster cast of the Bard of Avon. "What am I bid for the gent who wrote 'The Tempest in a Tea Pot,' 'A Midsummer Nightmare' and other beautiful things? How about the Yucatan Club? The worthy ladies who compose that busy organization are casting sheep's eyes at the bard, I observe. What says the president of the society? Fifteen cents! For the love of mercy, she has the audacity to offer only 15 cents for Bill Shakspeare, the greatest poet that ever happened. Fifteen cents—by the powers! I can just see Bill turning over in his grave at this very instant. Fifteen cents!—am I offered, no more? Well, then, let him go at that. Good-bye, Bill, take keer yerself."

SALE GOES ON.

And so the sale goes on through the summer afternoon. In the midst of it a party of neatly dressed women, who live near by and who have "just dropped in to see how things are going," tell each other their experiences, to which the newspaper visitor listens eagerly. "I went to an auction once," says a pretty little woman with large eyes and soft brown hair, "and got so awfully excited while the auctioneer was selling off a cheap old pressed-glass dish, that never cost a penny over 20 cents, that I bid right up to 60 cents for it and got it, much to my horror afterward. I can't imagine who the idiot bidding against me could have been. The dish has the name 'Davis' marked in the glass. I have stored it away out of sight and when I meet some one by the name of Davis I am going to present that person with the thing."

"Once upon a time," said another woman of the party, "I went to an auction and bought a really curious old thing, though my family have not stopped laughing at me yet for buying it. It is a very large, framed fruit-piece, as the auctioneer called it. The fruit is made of wax. There are great clusters of grapes, cherries, plums, currents, peaches and pears inclosed by glass with a wide gold frame. I bought it for a dollar, and the owner of it told me that fifty years ago he had ordered it for his wife and had paid $100 for it. It is really quite a curiosity."

"A funny thing happened here in Indianapolis not long ago," contributed a third woman of the group. "We were to have had an auction in our neighborhood, but it didn't come off. A woman just across the street from me received a letter from her husband, who had left town to enter into a new business in another city, instructing her to sell all their household belongings at once and join him in the Ohio town where he intended to locate. So the wife advertised in the newspapers and had handbills thrown about the neighborhood announcing the auction sale. So thoroughly had the auction been heralded that when the day for the event came the woman had to get out of bed earlier than usual to answer the doorbell.

CROWDED WITH PEOPLE.

"Soon her house was crowded with people who wanted to investigate everything before the sale opened. Just a few minutes before the auctioneer arrived on the scene a messenger boy came with a telegram from the woman's husband. She nearly fainted when she read the words, 'Don't sell anything. Have given up the new venture.'

"Now, wasn't that just like a man? As if it was an easy matter to stop an auction sale with hundreds of people on hand and determined to buy? Well, there was nothing for her to do but to break the news to the would-be buyers and oh, but they were mad! Some of them even threatened to have her arrested, saying that she had robbed them of their valuable time under false pretenses. But that wasn't the worst of it. All day long visitors came in droves to that house; even transfer wagons lined up in front of the place for the purpose of hauling away the things that were to have been sold. Some of the people who came felt so injured when they were told that there would be no sale that they refused to go away and sat about on the porch in chairs that they had hoped to possess, while the poor little wife hid down in the cellar expecting every moment to be sold out in spite of herself."

More Profit-Sharing.

Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

The general depression in the stock market from the high prices of last autumn, which carried the securities of some standard railway systems down as much as $40 a share, affords an opportunity for investors who have faith in the country's future to make purchases which will certainly afford far more satisfactory returns than if made when stocks were high and advices to buy were numerous. It is a queer commentary on human nature that the heaviest buying by the public is when securities are high, and the heaviest selling is when they are low. Yet the rational way to make money is to buy when commodities are low and to sell when they are high. Among the investors who are buying now is the committee of the United States Steel Corporation which has charge of the profit-sharing plan. It is said that preferred stock is being bought at the present low prices to be offered later to employes on terms similar to those which were accepted some time ago by 28,000 workmen of the big corporation. Such purchases would be wise, and such distribution is wise. The plan takes the men into partnership and gives them a deeper interest in the concerns of the corporation. It helps to harmonize capital and labor, to encourage industry and economy, and to produce better results all around.

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IN THE LITERARY FIELD

SALE OF BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS INVOLVING PATHETIC STORY.

Verse but Not Poetry Written in These Days—Novels Written to Order for Would-Be Authors.

Behind the sale last month of the famous library, manuscripts and library collections of Edwin P. Whipple by his widow, says the New York Commercial, there is a touching tale of a Boston woman's pride, poverty and suffering. Mrs. Charlotte Hastings Whipple is now nearly eighty-three years old, and has, since her husband's death, in 1886, been in "reduced circumstances," although always able to maintain the old house in Pinckney street—once the resort of the world's most famous litterateurs—and to keep a maid to look after her personal comfort. Last winter, however, she found herself without means enough to afford a servant, so she discharged her, and later friends found Mrs. Whipple alone in the house, without coal or food in it, and very feeble from lack of proper nourishment and warmth. They sent her at once to a family hotel near by, and as soon as she was able she returned to the house and arranged for the sale of the library and its contents in order to be independent during the remainder of her days. The sale attracted buyers from all over the country, and yielded a large amount of money.

Among other things sold was the original manuscript of "The Chambered Nautilus," by Oliver Wendell Holmes. Mrs. Whipple inspired this poem; or, rather, she was the means of inspiring it. The captain of a vessel brought her a beautiful nautilus shell, which she presented to the poet, who was a constant visitor at the Whipple house, on Pinckney street. The result was the poem. Dr. Holmes was so grateful for the inspiration that he presented the manuscript copy to Mrs. Whipple. It is now in the possession of some collector, who purchased it for a few dollars at the sale.

Longfellow was inspired to write "The Rainy Day" when Mrs. Whipple at one time suffered a great grief. He gave her the original manuscript of the poem, and it, too, was sold. There were letters from Hawthorne, Whittier, Emerson, Boyle O'Reilly and other men, which were eagerly snapped up, and now the collection is scattered to the four winds.

Charles Sumner used to dine with the Whipples nearly every evening when he was in Boston. Longfellow and Holmes and Whittier were constant visitors, and Emerson and Hawthorne not infrequently, when they strayed away to Boston and Concord. Mrs. Whipple was a brilliant woman, a splendid conversationalist, and possessed of a tact that won many friends. Her husband was also a brilliant man. He was editor of the Nation then. Dickens and Thackeray called at the Whipple home, and so did about all of the famous men who visited America in those days.

It was Whipple who made this never-to-be-forgotten criticism of Walt Whitman's "Leaves of Grass:" "It had every leaf except the fig leaf."

As to Contemporary Poetry.

New York Tribune.

Every now and then some one writes to the papers plaintively to inquire why contemporary poetry is not read. If we may risk the locution it is because contemporary poetry is not written. We get verse—a word for which we should be perpetually grateful to the genius of our language—in overwhelming abundance, and it is often very good—as verse. But if, as the famous line has it, "The poetry of earth is never dead," its authorized hierophants are now either dead or mute. A suggestive note on the barrenness of the poetic field at the present moment is offered in the announcement that the Newdigate prize for English verse has not been awarded at Oxford this year, the lapse occurring for the first time in over fifty years. The subject set was "Charles I at Oxford." This strikes the editor of the Academy and Literature as being the most hopeful set for many years, and, seeking for an explanation of its failure to spur the university poets to activity, he remarks that perhaps it suggested too much romance, "and possibly the judges were afraid of Jacobite enthusiasm." Perhaps. Possibly. But it seems to us more likely that there were no poets to come to the front. Of course, one contemplates an idea of the sort with a certain ruefulness. But it seems to us much wiser to accept the situation than to do as so many writers and readers seem to think it necessary to do, to sneer at publishers and at those who will not read the "poetry" put before them.

Novels to Order.

New York Letter in Washington Star.

There is a writer over here—"commercial fictionist" is the appellation which he sardonically bestows upon himself—who makes a business, not to mention a first-class living, by writing novels to order for well-to-do individuals, usually women, who are ambitious to shine as literary stars, but who know themselves to be absolutely devoid of literary ability. This man writes the novels and sells them out of hand to the persons who have the money to pay the price for them. The purchaser assumes the chance of being able to find a publisher. But, as the novels are all of them pretty good stuff of their sort, none of the writer's "customers," it seems, has yet been unable to dig up a publisher. The novels, of course, are published under the names of the purchasers. Not a few of them have been quite highly praised by the critics, and thus the persons able to afford to buy the brains of the "commercial fictionist" have basked in the more or less ephemeral frame which comes to those whose names find their way onto the covers of sure-enough, honest-Injun printed books. It is a cheating scheme, of course, but the "commercial fictionist" states that this fact does not rest heavily upon his conscience, since he is only a sort of accessory before the fact in the cheating, the people who consent to having another's work appear under their own names being the reprehensible parties in such transactions. The "commercial fictionist" lives in right royal style, and he has all of the novel writing that he can possibly attend to. He says that he can "slap together" a novel that has nine chances out of ten of being accepted by a publisher in three or four weeks, and he gets from $500 to $1,000 each, in advance, be it understood, for writing the novels—which is a good deal more money than the average published novel earns for its writer, since it has been estimated by a publisher with the "figgering" habit that only one novel out of about 2,000 succeeds in earning a profit for the publisher and writer thereof. The "commercial fictionist" sometimes writes his "to order" novels from scenarios submitted by his "customers," but as a general thing he is given carte blanche to go ahead and write any old thing that he chooses, "so that he makes it clever," his clients add.

All of which would seem to make the fact stand out that "them d——d lit'rary fellers" are assuredly getting their business down to a pretty fine point here in little old New York.

The Making of Dictionaries.

New York Evening Post.

The average person seems somehow to think of dictionaries as the invention of Dr. Johnson, and an altogether modern product. Dr. Murray corrected that idea. They were not the work of one or of several men, he told his audience, but a growth developed through the ages. They began with the glosses—that is, the explanations in easy Latin or English—of hard Latin words, written by the monks between the lines of the manuscripts. The glosses grew into translations, and collections of glosses by this monk or that from all the sources available to him made glossaries or dictionaries. Little by little English supplanted the easy Latin explanations, and the words were arranged in a rudimentary alphabetical order, thus forming, so long ago as 1000 A. D., Latin-English dictionaries. The uneducated Normans overthrew English learning; and it was not until the fifteenth century that the revival came.

The first book with the title of 'An English Dictionary' was published in 1623. These words were mainly compiled for the use of "women and other unskilled persons." In the year 1721 appeared the first attempt at a complete dictionary of the English language, remarkable also for the introduction of the etymological treatment of words—that of Nathaniel Bailey. His folio edition, published in 1730, was the working basis of Dr. Johnson's Dictionary. In the reign of Anne—an age of rest and subsidence from troubles—when the language had reached maturity, the demand arose for a standard dictionary which should fix for ever (a childlike and pathetic aim) the correct usage. Pope interested himself in the plan. It fell to Johnson to execute it, at a cost of time, labor, and money that far exceeded the original calculations of himself or his syndicate of booksellers. The specially new feature of the work was the quotations, all gathered by Johnson himself, and copied by six assistants. They were printed without verification or reference, and the proofs were not carefully read, hence many curious errors.

Some Types of Readers.

Bernard G. Richards, in The Reader.

I am saying nothing about the omnivorous reader, who reads so much that he has not any time to think; the skipping reader, who finds everything too long; the reader with the made-up mind, who has decided just what the book is; the careless reader, who forgets between one page and the other what it is all about; the all-wise reader, who knows everything, and the reader who does not know and "never could know." There are many more, and with all those above they constitute a strange, heterogeneous and promiscuous assemblage, an audience seemingly impossible to please, and take hold of; and yet when the master arrives he soothes the nervous reader into some state of serenity; arrests the abnormal scrutiny of the reader with the penetrating eye; stirs the indifferent reader into enthusiasm; takes the reader who reads for a line out of his line-limit and helps him to see more; leads the dramatizing reader away from his plotting efforts to a better recognition of things; makes the careful reader forget the superfluous comma and reminds him of that which is greater; satisfies at last the omnivorous reader; and compels all others to listen, rise somewhat above their enslaving habits and follow the true word. Thus doeth the master when he cometh, and the types of readers are no longer so peculiar and pronounced, but mingle in the obscuring throng of followers.

Domestic Criticism.

Philadelphia Press.

"I don't mind adverse criticism in print," remarked the Literary Man—he is a very young literary man—"but I hate it in talk, and especially in the talk of the family. 'No prophet is without honor,' says the Bible, 'save in his own country'—no author to be never so poor a one is without admirers, say I, save in his own family. Admirers? Why, he's lucky if he has readers! 'No,' says his sister, 'I haven't read Tom's book. He talked so much about it that I felt I knew all about it even before he got the proofs.' But his mother, she reads it? Not a word more than his sister. She may be a well-read woman, but she won't read Tom's book. Not she. Why should she? She told Tom stories before he ever dreamed of writing them.

"Why, look here. The other day I got a request from the publishers of 'Who's Who in America' for a brief biographical sketch of myself for the new edition of that volume. It was quite flattering, and I felt that when I made the important announcement people ought to be impressed. But what do you think my aunt said?

"'Who's Who' is to include your biography?' she repeated.

"'Yes,' I replied, 'what do you think of it?'

"'I think,' she said, 'that it must be a very large book.'"

A Plea for Descriptive Titles.

Theodore T. Munger, in Booklovers' Magazine.

Setting aside the flood not to be counted as literature, the naming of a book that is worthy of a name is a matter of real moment. Two methods seem to have been followed: That of using the name of the leading character, as "Jane Eyre" and "Rob Roy;" the other that of giving some hint of the nature of the book—as in "Vanity Fair" and "The Cloister and the Hearth." The first method has no justification. What we plead for is that a title shall contain the soul or the keynote of the book. Then the author and reader start on fair terms. Jane Austen, a consummate artist, understood this well, as in "Pride and Prejudice," but forsook her advantage in "Emma"—a better book and susceptible to as telling a title. Miss Johnston covers both methods in her three books. The first two could hardly be better named—especially the second, "To Have and To Hold"—but "Audrey" signifies nothing. It is difficult to estimate what would have been the loss to literature if "The Scarlet Letter" had been labeled "Hester Prynne," and "The House of Seven Gables"—a title that has worked its way into architecture—had been called "The Pyncheons."

Art of the Short Story.

Sunset Magazine.

While the novel has its own proper place, of course, it may well be contended that the short story is the true form of prose fiction as an art; it being the only form which may be read through directly without a considerable pause intervening to break the continuity of the impression. And even if, as it may be urged, one were to read a novel through without stopping, the work itself, if long, is necessarily broken into a string of episodes. Thus the short story has, what the novel cannot have, "totality." Great conciseness, which is frequently lacking in the novel, is the prime virtue in the short story; so it may be urged that even as a form in which the future novelist shall serve his apprenticeship the short story is enormously important.

In America and France the short story is a permanent institution. As to the quality of those produced by the Americans, one has but to pick up a copy of any of our better magazines to discover what careful work is bestowed upon them and to be convinced of their general excellence. The whole trend of French thought being toward compression in expression, that language is especially fitted for this form, and one cannot do better than to take as a subject for study in construction such a master as Maupassant, for instance.

Not a New Story.

New York Tribune.

Mr. Thomas Hardy wrote to the Athenaeum the other day to dispose of some inquiries he had received concerning his "new story" recently published in a London weekly. "So far from being new," he says, "it is a resuscitated old story which appeared in a country journal nearly twenty years ago." And he protests that he is in no way responsible for its publication as if it were new. Mr. Hardy's comment on the episode takes the form of a reminder to inexperienced writers of fiction that "in disposing of 'serial rights' in their production they should take care to limit the time during which such rights may be exercised." The penalty incurred by a failure to exercise this care seems to be paid pretty often in England. Mr. Hardy's complaint has a familiar ring. Perhaps the same sort of thing happens in America from time to time, but from our own observation we should say that it was far less often known in this country than abroad. Indeed, we have frequently been struck by the readiness of our authors and publishers to give in a new book the fullest information as to the previous publication of anything appearing between its covers.

A Sensible Conclusion.

Springfield Republican.

The Bookman has decided to stop printing the pictures of nobodies who have written books, and is to be congratulated upon its decision. When an author achieves real fame the public is glad to have a portrait, but there is no more reason for printing a picture of every young man or woman who writes a novel or a half dozen magazine stories than of giving portraits of all the young lawyers and doctors who hang out their shingles. To write a book and get it published is but the beginning of the practice of a profession; it is commonly a long way from that to reputation, and a still longer way from reputation to fame. The indiscriminate publication of portraits of literary novices in reputable magazines is apt to beget a confusion as to these distinctions—particularly among the young writers themselves; the public is not so deeply impressed by factitious celebrity of this sort.

A Book Review.

In this strange book no hero walks,
And through this book no villain stalks,
And o'er no maiden's sunny head
Is any mother's blessing said.
This book contains no secret grim,
Nor ghosts that flit through turrets dim,
No wit enlivens any page,
No wrongs that stir the soul to rage,
It lauds no lovely heroine,
It has no lover her to win,
No deeds are told, or good or bad—
No mention made of lass or lad,
No word is therein writ or said—
For 'tis a blankbook ruled in red.

—George Hyde Preston, in Lippincott's.

Literary Notes.

Ruskin's favorite adverb, as his readers have often noticed, was "entirely." Over the grave of his father he put a memorial stone describing the elder Ruskin as "an entirely honest merchant." A friend of his says that he once described the mother of a certain notorious illdoer as "an entirely d——ble old woman."

Another of London's many literary landmarks is about to be destroped. An order was recently issued to the owner of 6 Wine Office Court to take down within the next fourteen days the front of the structure, which is in a dangerous condition. This doubtless means that the whole building will be torn down. It was here that Oliver Goldsmith lived while he was writing "The Vicar of Wakefield."

Miss Marietta Holly ("Josiah Allen's Wife"), who has a story in the June number of Lippincott's Magazine, is widely known for her humorous work. She is always busy and gives the winter up to her writing; in the summer she potters about her summer home, "Bonnie View," Adams county, New York, among her flowers, though she occasionally dictates to a typewriter during the early portion of the evening. "Bonnie View" is surrounded by long winding walks and miniature fish pond, and is a dwelling place for many birds. Miss Holly is very fond of music. She has been spending the early spring in New York.

Isobel, the heroine of James Lane Allen's new novel, "The Mettle of the Pasture," which is down for publication on June 24, is thus described: "As she strolled around the garden, under cloudy flush of the evening sky, dressed in white, a shawl of white lace over one arm, a rose on her breast, she had an exquisiteness of a long past, during which women have been chosen in marriage for health and beauty and children, and the power to charm. The very curve of her neck implied generations of mothers who had valued grace. Generations of forefathers had imparted to her walk and bearing, their courage and their pride." She is a Bluegrass maiden, of course.

It is said by one who is well acquainted with Joseph Conrad that each one of this author's stories—"Youth," "Heart of Darkness" and "The End of the Tether"—are almost autobiographical. When a lad Conrad shipped on a voyage to Australia. Out of that voyage grew "Youth." In the Eastern seas he worked on both sailing and steam vessels, and it was during that time he met with the type of man whom he made into the hero of "The End of the Tether," the faithful captain of the Sofala. In 1891 Mr. Conrad went to the Congo Free State, where his experiences on his return to England crystallized into the weird tale of adventure in the African jungle called "The Heart of Darkness."

Something entirely new in the way of the encouragement of literary criticism by publishers has been invented in the West. A publishing house in the lake region has just sent out a circular on which are printed side by side a favorable and an unfavorable criticism of a book it has recently issued. This offer accompanies the two reviews:

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION OF ——?

The publishers will pay $100 ($1.00 each) to the first One Hundred Literary Editors who have read and will give expression as to which is the nearer correct view.

No recompense is promised to the other hundreds of literary editors; hence promptness is advisable.

FARMERS RARELY BALD.

Disquisition by the Barber on Why They're Not When City Folks Are.

New York Sun.

"Ever see a real back country farmer with a bald head?" asked the suburban barber, replying to the request of his intellectual sitter for a reason for the thinning of his capillary thatch.

"Now, I have worked in fully half the States in the Union, in town and country, and I never have. The head of the kind of a farmer I'm thinking of may be well supplied with hayseed and barn dust, but the hair is generally very silky and well nourished.

"No, I don't believe that dust or seeds are good for the hair. Don't make any mistake there. But I am sure that the continual washing of the scalp is about the worst thing possible for the roots of the hair. Now, gentlemen think nothing of taking a bath every day. Some use a little ammonia in the water to soften it. Most of them make sure of a clean scalp by using soap. The effect upon the head is the same in both cases. The natural oil, which ought to exist about every healthy scalp, is completely removed. And that just starves out the roots of the hair, as really as though you wash a lily bulb clear of its soil and set it to grow on that slab.

"Pomatum? Say, I can sell you cheap as you can buy anywhere, pretty nearly every kind used in the profession. Maybe they are pretty good, most of them, any way. But no maker has yet claimed to have discovered a hair preserver quite as good as the natural oil which you find about the heads of healthy young children, for instance. If I could discover just how to make that and how to apply it I could strike a fortune in no time. Now, the back country farmer I am talking about washes his head maybe twice or three times a year—that is in threshing time, or when he takes a dip in the creek. And you see the result.

"Then there's another thing to remember. The farmer lives pretty much by physical labor. That means he does not, as a rule, overheat his head by planning and thinking, like the city man, or the rest who get their living by their brains. Such men dry up all the natural oil springs nature stuck about the head, by their inside heat. We find when we cut it that their hair is quite crisp and hard what there is of it."

"Then your advice would be to 'keep cool and let your hair grow,' as the boys used to say."

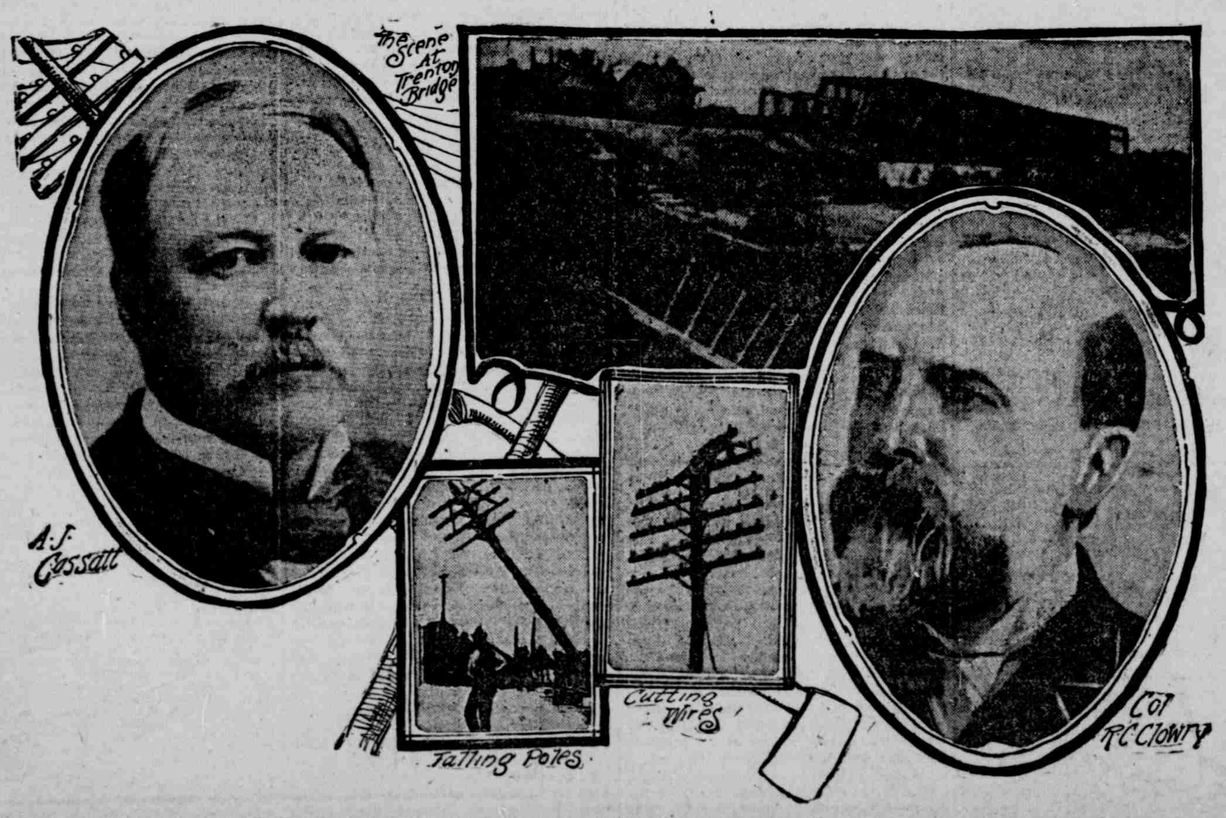
"Sure, and more important still, never wash your head with anything which will make a lather unless you are obliged to. If you have to, be sure you wash all the lye and amonia and such like well out of the scalp, with water, to give the oil a chance to do its best.

"Next!"

BRYAN'S CANDIDATE FOR THE PRESIDENCY

W. J. Bryan is said to favor Judge Clark's nomination for the presidency. He is a Bryan Democrat, fifty-six years old and a jurist of ability.

TWO GREAT CORPORATIONS AT WAR OVER WIRES



The fight between the Pennsylvania Railway Company and the Western Union Telegraph Company over the removal of the latter's poles and wires from the railroad company's property is interesting and may result in a big damage suit. President Cassatt, of the Pennsylvania, is backed by decisions of the federal courts, but President Clowry, of the Western Union, is relying on the United States Supreme Court for relief.

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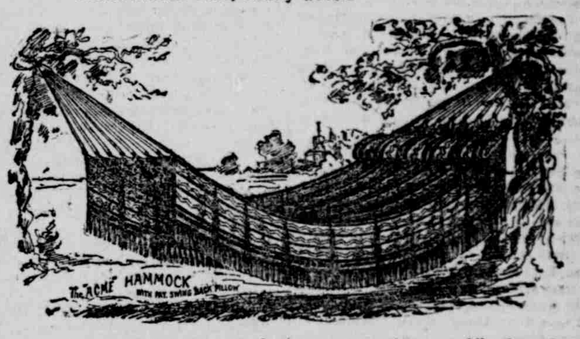

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