FIFTY POUNDS REWARD

By L. T. Meade.

"I will give," said Mr. Walter Seabrook, "fifty pounds reward. Yes, I know it is a big sum, but I must attract attention. Let the thing be advertised in the Times, the Standard, the Daily Telegraph, and all the big dailies. Let it be repeated every day for at least a week, that is, unless the goods are returned. You understand me, Heriot. Don't delay an instant. I would give one hundred—two hundred pounds to get the jewel-case back."

Mr. Seabrook strutted out of the room. He was a stout, red-faced man of about sixty years of age. His eyes protruded slightly and were bloodshot. He had a firm mouth.

James Heriot, detective, one of the keenest private detectives in the whole of London, sat for a time thinking very carefully. Then he touched a bell by his side, and a slim, pale, dark-eyed girl answered the summons.

"I want you to take this advertisement down from my dictation," said Heriot. "Send copies to all the dailies with the necessary money. See that the thing goes out before lunch to-day, and be as quick as you possibly can."

The girl said "Yes," in a low voice, and James Heriot dictated as follows:

"Fifty pounds reward—Lost between South Kensington and Regent's Park a small jeweler's box, marked with the words Denvers Bros., New York. Box contains four diamonds, twelve turquoises and a pearl brooch. The above reward will be paid on returning above to 14, Crouch-lane, Fetter-Lame, E. C."

The girl took down the description without a word, although had anyone noticed her that person might have seen her start very perceptibly. She went into her own office, wrote out the advertisement and sent it off immediately to the different newspapers. It would appear the next day.

The girl's name was Flavia Lascelles. She was partly of French extraction. Her hair was too black, her eyes too dark, her skin too smooth a brown for purely English parentage. She was a bright, clever girl, quite a favorite in the office. She did her work to the satisfaction of everyone; no one had a complaint to make of her.

Her fellow-typists now looked at her somewhat curiously.

"Are the secrets more wonderful than ever, Miss Lascelles?" said a girl called Rose Brunton, smiling as she spoke.

"Oh, no, things are dull this morning," replied Flavia.

Rose glanced at her companions. They did not believe what Miss Lascelles was saying. Why had she spots of color in her cheeks and why were her eyes so suspiciously bright?

She went out at the usual time for lunch and when office hours were over she returned to her home.

Flavia Lascelles had a tiny suite of rooms in a workman's flat in Bermondsey. The rooms were situated a good way from the office where she worked, but the air was comparatively pure and the flat was comparatively cheap. She had furnished it herself in the simplest fashion. She spent very little time there. When she left in the morning she always took the key in her pocket and when she went back at night she generally brought her dinner with her from an eating-house nearby. She was not a particularly strong girl, and when she had attended to her small household matters she invariably went to bed. She was tired and slept soundly until morning.

On this particular night she got home at her usual hour. She went into her room and sat down by the table. She had neglected her dinner. Presently she heard a tap at her door. She said "Come in," and a woman of about thirty years of age whose name was Mrs. Lawson, entered.

"Why, Flavia," she said, "where's your dinner? Why aren't you eating? Are you took bad with the headache, my dear?"

"No, it isn't that," said Flavia, looking up with bright eyes, "It's only that I'm not hungry."

"He's downstairs," said the woman. "Would you like to see him?"

The girl's face turned very white.

"Do you think I'd better?" she asked, rather anxiously.

"Better? Why, of course. I've been keeping him waiting for an hour or more. He's nearly mad. I never saw anything like it in the whole course of my life."

"Then you had best ask him to walk up, Mrs. Lawson, and if he stays too long and I can't get rid of him, why I'll just call out to you."

"Stamp on the floor, honey, and I'll hear," said the woman.

She left the room, and a moment later the door was burst open and a thin man, very like the girl in appearance, came in. He did not kiss her, or show any delight at seeing her. He sank down on a chair, flinging his hands to his sides, and looking straight into her face.

"I can't stand this sort of life any longer," he said. "Are you going to help me or are you not?"

"What do you mean, Andre?"

"You know what I mean. I want to get out of England. There are fine chances now for men of my stamp in South Africa. I want to go there. You never help me now—never."

"I earn two guineas a week."

"You earn it!" He said the words with a sneer. "What does that amount to, when you might get fifty?"

"Yes, but I earn this, and honestly," she replied, "and I give you ten shillings each week—one-quarter of my earnings. I can't and won't do more; and another thing, I won't go back to the old ways. I must and will be respectable. Detective Heriot won't give me work if I don't look the lady."

"The lady!" he answered, laughing at her.

"Yes, Andre, you needn't sneer. In some ways, for all my wickedness, I have the heart of a lady. I had when mother was alive, and when baby was born. When I looked at baby I——"

She burst into a passion of tears.

"You pass yourself off as an unmarried woman, and yet you have a husband, and, according to the world's code, not too respectable a one. And you had a child, and the child died—but it was yours all the same. If I liked I could go to the office and tell things about you."

"Are you mad, Andre?" she asked.

"I am very nearly mad," he answered. "I have been trying to get honest work. You may laugh, but I have. If I can't live in one way I will in another. If I can't live honest I will live dishonest. I've made up my mind, and I want to tell you so."

She saw that there was something new about him and looked at him in distress.

"You remember that night after you got well of the fever and I told you that the baby was dead and buried?"

She turned white as a sheet.

"Yes; don't remind me of it."

"Dead and buried," continued the man, and he laughed in a low, chuckling voice. "You raved and raved, and you got the fever back; you were like to die yourself."

"I wish I had died. Where's the good of reminding me of that awful past, Andre?"

"Because I want to confess something. The child ain't dead."

"What!" shrieked the girl.

Her cry was sharp and clear; it pierced like a sword. The man put his hands to his ears. She took him by the shoulders and shook him; then she drew down her face close to his; her eyes were like the eyes of a famished wolf.

"Say that again, and I'll tear you limb from limb!" she cried

"You are a goose, Flavia. Why should you get into such a fury? You were ill, and there was a lady who wanted to adopt a child. She was disappointed at having no children of her own. She saw our child and took a liking to it, and I—I sold it to her. Oh, I know where she lives; I could tell you if I pleased. You can see your baby again if I will it. What is the matter, Flavia?"

"You don't leave this room alive until you tell we where the child is."

"It's silly to talk like that, Flavia, and I'm not afraid of you. I will tell you everything when you give me——"

"What?"

"Two hundred pounds."

"Andre!"

Flavia sank down on her chair; her passionate rage left her. She felt cold and chill and heavy. For a time she was almost incapable of feeling. Then her heart beat hard. She went up again to the man.

"Fifty pounds," she said. "I could give you fifty pounds to-morrow."

"Fifty pounds? You have fifty pounds saved?"

"No, I haven't, but I can give it to you to-morrow if you will give me the lady's address and let me go to the child."

"No," he answered. "Two hundred pounds—not a penny less. I can't go to Africa with nothing. I will leave you and the child to make the best of your lives together if you get me the money. You and the child—it is a pretty one now. It has a look of you, Flavia; we called it Flavia, didn't we? You can have it, and I will promise never to worry you again. But not for a penny less—you understand?"

The man strode toward the door.

"I have a chance out yonder," he said. "You shall have the child's address for two hundred pounds. You know how to get it—with your pretty face and your nimble fingers. You can steal it, girl. You have done it before now. Go around to Jonathan Wheeler; you have been to his shop before now. He will show you the way. The chances of prison! Faugh! You have no spirit. If you love wour child you know how to get the money."

He slammed the door after him and stumbled downstairs.

Flavia sat very still after he had left her.

"To think that I could ever have loved him," she murmured.

Then she thought of the baby. She crossed the room, opened a drawer, and took out a little pair of blue silk shoes, and a little pair of white socks and a blue sash, and a baby's rattde. She kissed them one and all without any tears. Her face looked hard, and cold, and white.

"I thought you were in your grave, my little darling," she said; "but you are alive, and you shall come back to me. I will get you back, or I'll know the reason why."

There came a tap at her door, and Mrs. Lawson's kind voice called out:

"Flavia, I've brought you a cup of tea."

"Thank you, Mrs. Lawson," answered the girl, "but I couldn't eat or drink anything to-night. I am going to bed; I'm very tired. Thank you so much."

The woman went away and when all was still Flavia went softly across the room and, raising the valance of her bed, took out from thence a box. It was an old bandbox. She opened it, and from the inner recesses produced a little square wooden box. On the box were marked the words "Denver Bros., New York." She opened it and took out four diamonds, twelve turquoises, and a pearl brooch. Two of the diamonds were cut and glittered like living things, but the other two were unset; their value might be anything or nothing. The turquoises were on a stick and were large. The pearl brooch consisted of one pearl of enormous size and perfect symmetry.

"Fifty pounds!" muttered the girl.

She had found the box two nights ago and had brought it home. Jonathan Wheeler at the corner would give her two hundred pounds for it. It would be impossible to trace the theft to her, the girl who had written out the advertisement which Heriot, the famous detective, had caused to be put into the London dailies. A typist from Heriot's place of business would be the last person to be suspected of any theft. Yes, she could make money, she could give Andre what he wanted and the baby would be hers once again.

This was the position; she saw it quite clearly. She had all the night to think it over. The night—so many long, undisturbed, unbroken hours. The blessed night should witness her struggle and the morning should see her resolve.

She did not go to bed at all that night. In the morning she had made up her mind. She would go to Wheeler's. She would take the box and she would sell him the jewels. He should give her the two hundred pounds that were necessary for her husband. She would hand her husband the money all in gold, for she dared not take notes, when he gave her the address of the child. Bad as he was she did not think he would give her a false address. Years ago she had discovered that there was scarcely anywhere to be found a man more unscrupulous, more cruel, more sly than her husband. He had no manliness about him, and, as far as Flavia could make out, no virtue. She had married him just before her own mother's death, and while her mother lived she struggled hard to keep from following in his steps, from approaching any nearer to the edge of the gulf in which he wallowed. But after her mother's death she had not a single friend to appeal to, and the baby was born and from want of food and because of constant anxiety, Flavia's health gave way and then she became nervous and hysterical, and the clear, sharp dividing lines between right and wrong became less sharp and less distinctly apart, until they seemed to her to have merged one into the other. And one day, at Lascelles's instigation, she stole a watch from a woman who was standing by her side in the crowd. She did it so expeditiously and so skillfully that she was never suspected. She herself had a sweet, innocent, appealing sort of face and she was always particularly neat in her apparel and had a quiet almost ladylike look about her.

This was her first theft, but it was followed by others, and she had never been suspected, and no policeman had ever looked meaningly into her face. Lascelles also had hitherto escaped detection. When he and his wife found Paris too hot for them they came to London, and by means of false characters, and aided by Lascelles's pals, Flavia, who was very clever, a splendid linguist and well up in shorthand and typewriting, obtained a post in James Heriot's office. No one laughed louder and longer over this than did Andre Lascelles; but Flavia did not laugh, and from the moment she took the post she turned over a new leaf, as she expressed it. She had told her husband that she could not repay the past, but in the future she meant to live honest. She had told him this after a bad illness, during which she had been delirious, and in which she had been given to understand that her baby had died and was buried. It was when she came to herself again, and was told that the little cooing voice and the sweet, slow smile on the tiny face could never be hers again, that she made this vow.

"God took baby away because I was so bad," she thought. "God didn't want baby to grow up a thief. I have got a situation now and I will live honest in the future."

At first things went well after a fashion, and then one evening as Flavia was on her way home a sudden temptation was presented to her. She and a woman, who was dressed respectably and looked like a lady's maid, shared a third-class compartment together. Just as they got to St. James's Park the woman uttered an exclamation, found that she had gone a station too far, and hurried from the train, leaving a little box in the rack above her head. Flavia saw the box, and had she been a perfectly honest woman she would have called out. But she did not. A queer, tingling sensation took possession of her; she felt that she could not keep her hands off the treasure. The woman was gone into the darkness, the train moved out of the station. In an instant Flavia had seized the box, slipped it under her cloak, and when they got to South Kensington hastily left the carriage. Her own ticket was for Victoria, but no one noticed that. She went home by a circuitous route and no one observed that she was holding a box under her cloak. A strange mixture of pleasure and alarm filled her. When she got up to her flat he put the small wooden box into an old bandbox and pushed it under the bed, and tried to forget it. She had not even opened it. It was strapped with a strong leather strap, and she did not once loosen the buckle. She was a thief once more. She felt both bad and happy.

The next day nothing happened, but the day after there came the hue and cry—the entrance of the red-faced gentleman into Heriot's office, the advertisement which Flavia herself had to write out. To-morrow all the world would know that the little box which she—Flavia—possessed was lost. She, who had promised on the death of her child never to thieve again, had committed theft, and immediately afterwards she had heard that the child was alive. She sat cold and sick and trembling all night, but in the morning she roused herself.

"I must get rid of the box whatever happens," she thought. "If only Andre had been content with fifty pounds, I could have made up a story of how I found it, and I could have taken it this very morning to James Heriot's office and have got the money. But if fifty pounds is worse than useless, Andre must have the two hundred, for I will, I must have baby back again."

She tidied herself, changed her dress, and prepared her frugal breakfast. It almost choked her to eat it, but that did not matter. She then put on her cloak, put the box again under it and ran down stairs. She felt quite lost, utterly undone, but the awful starved feeling in her heart must be fed at any cost.

Mrs. Lawson saw her as she approached the ground floor. She was standing inside her doorway holding a letter in her hand.

"This came this morning," she said, "and it's for you. I told the postman I'd save him the trouble of going up so many stairs. You take it; it looks like the hand of a lady. I don't know what's in it."

Flavia took the letter between her finger and thumb. She looked at it apprehensively. No one ever wrote to her. Her face turned very white.

"Come in, honey, and rest by my fire. You look cold, and chilled, and starved. You always do when that brute of a husband of yours—(you'll forgive me speaking of him in that way, dear)—comes to see you. He was lurking round till ever so late last night. He was after no good. If I were you I'd make him feel that he had no call to interfere with you."

"I can't help it, Mrs. Lawson. When you are married, you know, you can't cut your husband adrift, can you?"

"Ah!" said Mrs. Lawson, "I wish to heaven you had a child of your own."

"So I had."

"To be sure, dear. Ah! there are tears now in your eyes. No, there ain't, only they look quite bright and burning as though there was a fire inside them. You ain't well, honey; I'm certain you ain't well."

"I am quite well, Mrs. Lawson, in body. I have a bad ache here, but that don't matter.

Flavia pressed her hand to her heart.

"That's the worst sort of all," said Mrs. Lawson. "I had it when my Danny died—bless him! He were seven years old. I'll never forget it—never. Perhaps if you'd talk sometimes of your little 'un you wouldn't feel so shut up like."

"I'd like to tell you something," said the girl, fiercely. "My baby ain't dead."

"Heaven help us! Have you lost your reason, dear?"

"Once I almost did, but that was long ago, when I thought she died; but she is alive. Somebody has her, and I don't know who. My cruel husband sold her—he sold my little baby. Oh, ah, oh!"

Flavia sobbed in a dry sort of way for a minute or two, but then she recovered herself. Mrs. Lawson stood with her arms akimbo looking down at her.

"Did I ever hear anything so monstrous before!" she cried. "And has the man told you, or can't you get the name of the one to whom he sold his own flesh and blood?"

"No, I can't," said Flavia, fiercely; "and yet—oh! I will."

"You are holding something in your arms; let me take it from you."

Before Flavia could prevent her Mrs. Lawson had taken the little wooden box and laid it on the table.

"Sakes!" she cried. "What a neat little thing!"

"It's got some ribbons and erasers and other things I want at my work," said Flavia, with the glib readiness of an accomplished thief.

Mrs. Lawson bent towards the box and looked at it with interest.

"It's the neatest thing," she said. "Have you it lined, or anything of that sort? I'd like to see inside it."

"Another time," said Flavia. "I must be off now. You mustn't keep me."

"It's a wonderful interesting story about the little child. Can't you get it back?"

"I will; I am going to by means of that box there."

Mrs. Lawson once again began to doubt Flavia's sanity.

"Well, read your letter, lovey," she said.

And then Flavia broke the seal. The letter was dated from South Kensington and ran as follows:

"Madam—I write to tell you that your child is very ill. I paid a certain sum of money in order to have the right of adopting your child, as your husband can tell you; but for some time it has been fading and fading, and I don't care to have an invalid child assuming the privileges of my own. If you care to come to see it, and would wish to have it back, I should be quite willing to pay you a small sum in order to get rid of it. I shall be in at any hour between 10 and 2 o'clock on the day you receive this letter. Yours faithfully,

"MARY SEABROOK."

Flavia read the letter once without in the least taking it in. She read it twice and her eyes began to sparkle. The third time she read it she laughed. Then she sprang to her feet and clapped her hands. Then she crushed the letter into the bosom of her dress and then she seized the little box.

"Mrs. Lawson," she said, "I want to kiss you."

"What in the world has happened now? For heaven's sake tell me what is in the letter, love."

"Nothing, nothing. Nothing that you need know. I know; that is enough. Let me kiss you, Mrs. Lawson. I must take the box and go. I said I was miserable, but I am miserable no longer. I thought my lot the hardest on earth, but it's about the happiest. If you will do me a good turn, go upstairs and clean my room, and make it pretty and fresh and suitable for a child, and put milk there, and—and a broken toy, an old doll, anything. Perhaps I am mad, Mrs. Lawson. I don't know. I am the happiest, happiest woman on earth."

Jonathan Wheeler was forgotten. James Heriot and his work were as though they did not exist. A girl with flushed cheeks, eyes bright as stars, tremulous hands, and yet a proud, erect figure, was going by train to South Kensington. She carried under her cloak a little wooden box. The very moment the clock struck ten there came a feverish ring at the door of a tall mansion in Cranley Gardens. A footman opened it. He looked superciliously at the dark-eyed, handsome girl who stood on the steps.

"I have come by request to visit Mrs. Seabrook. She asked me to call. Will you say that Mrs. Lacelles is downstairs?"

The man looked more supercilious than ever. He thought this somewhat seedy-looking young woman had made a mistake; but after a moment's hesitation he invited her into the hall.

Flavia was no longer ashamed of her box. She did not mind it. She was going to get fifty pounds reward for it. Fifty pounds would help baby. As to Andre—but Andre must shift for himself.

In a few minutes the man returned. His manner had slightly altered. He conducted Flavia up some stairs and down a long corridor, and up some more stairs, and then into a beautifully-furnished boudoir, all lit with rose-colored light. In the middle of it stood a tall woman in a morning wrapper. She was handsome and loud-looking and had quantities of fair hair, which was twisted and corkscrewed into every imaginable form of curl. Her cheeks were covered with powder, her arms were bare to the elbows. She came eagerly forward.

"Mrs. Lascelles?" she said.

"Yes."

"I am glad you have come. What is that in your hand?"

Flavia laid the box down serenely.

"It has nothing to do with you," she said; "I am taking it to Mr. James Heriot. I have come for my baby—my little child. Oh, I was mad, but your letter has given me life. You have been good to her; you have kissed her since I kissed her, and I love you—I love you!"

She fell on her knees, clasped the elder woman's hand, and began to shower kisses on it.

"Get up, girl; get up!" said Mrs. Seabrook, impatiently. "Why, this is most amazing. That box is mine—it contains my lost treasures. Where did you find it?"

"Yours?" cried Flavia.

"Yes; my maid lost it when she was out the other evening, I have been searching and advertising all over the country. Two detectives have been put on its track. Oh! where did you find it?"

Flavia laid her hand on the wooden box.

"I will tell you when I have seen the child."

"What a queer young woman you are. Do you know you have a look of that puny little child?"

Mrs. Seabrook crossed the room and rang the bell. A servant appeared.

"Tell the nurse to bring baby," she said, in an imperious voice.

A few moments later a grave-looking woman, dressed in the most severe hospital-nurse style, entered with a tiny baby robed in finest cambric and lovely lace. But Flavia looked neither at the cambric nor the lace; her starved eyes devoured the little face, and her lips rained kisses on the baby's mouth.

"Give her to me—the darling! Oh, the joy to hold her to my heart. But she does look bad. She is ill. Couldn't you do better for her than this?" she asked, turning to Mrs. Seabrook, her eyes fierce with passion and love.

But then the baby smiled, and Flavia forgot everything. She sank down on the nearest chair and for the next hour talked only to the baby, soothing it, kissing it, pressing it to her heart, fondling it with a wealth of mother-love. Perhaps it was that very same love that the baby needed, for it had never thrived at Mrs. Seabrook's. Mrs. Seabrook had wanted the child as she would want any other toy; but this child was not to her taste. She was tired of it. She looked on languidly.

"Deborah," she said after a pause, "perhaps you will order a cab and collect baby's clothes, and the little purse of gold I told you about. And perhaps this young woman will take her child away. I am rather tired of this scene. In the meantime, young woman, I take possession of my little box. Will you open it, Deborah, and see if the jewels are all right?"

Deborah opened it, and there lay the diamonds and the turquoises and the pearls.

"Beauties!" said Mrs. Seabrook. "They will make up exquisitely. We'll take them to Benson's in Bond street this morning."

Meanwhile Flavia rose.

"I have a confession to make," she said. "You can do with me what you like, but I am so happy that nothing matters. No one, no one can take this past hour away from me. Even in prison I shall remember it. You start, but I am the sort they put into prison. Yes, I am. Perhaps they'll let me have baby in prison. I don't know. I hope so. It was I who stole that box. Your maid left it in the railway carriage. I took it. I hid it under my cloak. I have stolen many things, but no one has ever discovered it. I am one of the clerks at James Heriot's office, and it was I who wrote out the advertisement which appears to-day in all the dailies. Nobody has ever suspected me. Last night when I went home I meant to take the box to James Heriot's office and claim the £50 reward; but last night I heard for the first time that my child who I thought was dead was alive. Ah, baby, hush! hush! my little darling. Sleep, baby. Sleep, my sweet."

She paused in her narrative to sway backwards and forwards, holding the baby to her breast.

"Last night I heard that the child was alive, but my husband would not tell me to whom he had sold it. He said he would if I gave him two hundred pounds and I made up my mind that I would sell the jewels and get the money. I was going out to sell them when your letter came. Now perhaps you would like to send me to prison."

Mrs. Seabrook looked at Deborah. "Deborah, you are witness to what this young woman has just said."

Deborah nodded. "The young woman has been greatly tempted, madam," she said after a pause. "It was very cruel to sell her child."

"Yes, yes, of course, perhaps so. This passion for infants as infants is more than I can understand. Young woman, I really wish you would go before the child cries again. Its cries have got terribly on my nerves. Yes, certainly you may go. I don't mean to interfere, I don't intend to prosecute you. I will write a line to James Heriot to say the box is found, and that he need do nothing further in the matter. You lose your place? No, certainly not, as far as I am concerned. I have no wish to be the means of your redemption. Doubtless that child you are so frantic about will do that. It's a remarkably troublesome infant, I can assure you. But, by the way, in bringing the box back, although you did not intend to, you have earned fifty pounds. Deborah, see that fifty additional pounds are put into the bag for Mrs. Lascelles. And now good-bye, Mrs. Lascelles. I wish you luck of the baby."

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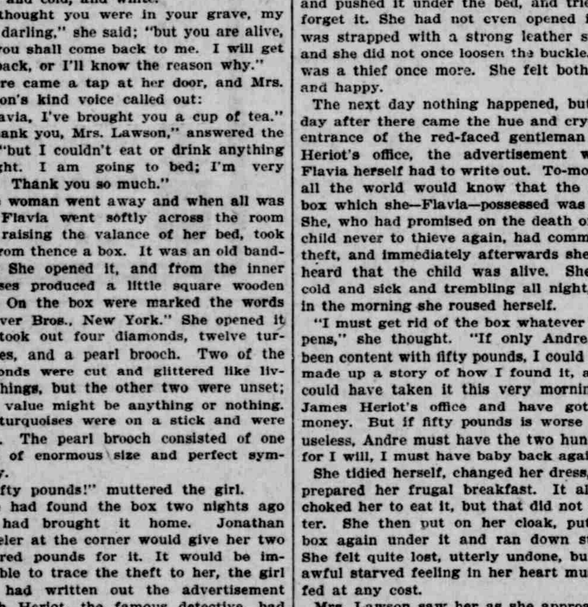

ALL ON HER SIDE.

He—Wasn't there some talk of her marrying a marquis?
She—Yes! but the marquis never said anything about it.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

The shooting of firecrackers is not American; it is Chinese.

Typewriters with Arabic letters are now being used in Egypt.

Seattle is 1,450 miles nearer China and Japan than San Francisco.

The Astor family in New York has bought land in Mexico for the largest cattle ranch in the world.

The Magyars rule Austria-Hungary, although they number but 6,000,000 or 7,000,000 in a total of 43,000,000.

Although one-fourth of the world's sugar crop is consumed in the United States, but one-twentieth of it is grown here.

The population of New York in 1902 was 3,437,202, of whom more than three-fourths were foreign-born or of foreign parentage.

Kilkenny Castle is one of the oldest inhabited houses in the world, many of the rooms being much as they were 800 years ago.

Ethnologists are of the opinion that when America was discovered there were not on the continent of North America any more Indians than exist now.

To collect a dollar of customs costs a trifle more than 3 cents, while the cost of collecting a dollar of internal revenue is a little less than 1¾ cents.

Stuttering children are numerous in the schools of Germany, and it is thought the ailment is contagious. At present there are 80,000 school children in that country whose speech is thus affected.

Immigration continues on the increase. For the first seventeen days of May, this year, 50,707 aliens passed through Ellis island, as against 45,486 last year and $36,371 in the same period of 1901.

The lock to be placed in the Danube-Oder Canal will be 131 feet high, and the highest in the world. The Austrian Minister of Commerce has offered prizes of 100,000, 75,000 and 50,000 crowns for the best plans for it.

It is said that nowhere in the old world do the Jews enjoy such a degree of liberty as in the country where their fathers were once slaves. This is probably because Egypt is subject to British rule. In Cairo there are five synagogues.

The United States is almost a goatless country compared with others, and the importations of goat skins, young and old, aggregate $35,000,000 a year—which represents the slaughter of 17,000,000 goats and kids. Germany has three million head, Spain five, Austria two, and France, Bulgaria and Italy about one and a half million each. In Turkey there are six goats for each person, the goat being the most important source of income.

In Denmark there are companies which insure women who have a fear of becoming old maids. They pay stated sums every year, and should they marry before they are forty what they have paid in goes to the less fortunate. After they are forty they receive pensions for life.

The death rate in Cuba before the war averaged about forty-two to 1,000, taking a period of several years. It is now but twenty-one. This means a decreased loss of time from illness, as well as saving of life. The result is due to the sanitary methods introduced by General Wood.

Ninety per cent. of the inhabitants of western and central Africa are Mohammedans, and every man of note in Central Africa owns slaves, his station in life being rated by the number of slaves he owns and the wives he possesses. When the girls reach the age of thirteen they are, as a rule, wedded.

One of the most remarkable cities in the world is Kelburg, near Cracow, Poland, for, besides being situated underground, it is excavated entirely in rock salt. The inhabitants, to the number of over 3,000, are, of course, workers in the famous salt mines, and all the streets and houses are of the purest white imaginable.

The Bible, translated into the language of Tibet, is now being carried even into that forbidden land, in advance of foreign commerce and travel. The Russian government, while hitherto intolerant of missionaries, gives the Bible itself free course among the people. It is admitted free of duty and has often been transported free of charge.

During the nineteenth century London grew from a city of 800,000 people to one of 6,500,000—that is, increased eight-fold. London is now increasing 17 per cent. in a decade and New York 35 per cent., or twice as fast. If this rate should hold good for fifty years more New York would have over 15,000,000 population and be 1,000,000 ahead of London.

Consul J. C. Covert writes from Lyons that an experienced manufacturer of silk muslins wishes to go to the United States and put up a factory. He thinks that $40,000 would suffice to start works, and if any town will furnish that sum he is ready to start at once. He calculates that his factory would pay a good dividend on $100,000, and he would be willing to take about half the stock and its dividends in return for his time and labor.

If the two new Cunard steamships are to have a speed of twenty-six knots it is estimated that they must be 780 feet long and have 68,000 horse power, cost $5,250,000 and employ in the machinery department alone 320 men. For such a vessel the government subsidy would be $1,020,000 a year. No builders have yet been found to take the contract for their building because of the stipulation that they must maintain an average speed of twenty-five knots for a season.

FREE SODA WATER.

Mrs. Bronson—My daughter, Ethel, married a druggist, and we were very well pleased.

Mrs. Johnson—He comes of good stock, eh?

Mrs. Bronson—Oh! yes; and, besides, it's so nice to have a soda fountain in the family during the summer.

SPHINX LORE

Enigmatic Knots of Odd and Ingenious Kind for the Leisure Hour.

[Any communication intended for this department should be addressed to E. R. Chadbourn, Lewiston, Maine.]

590.—IN THE AIR.

EL EM DEE.

591.—TRANSPOSITION.

His name is Vane; as vanes will do,
He ONE around as in an eddy;
TWOs every party, old or new,
Until another comes in view.
To find in him a convert ready.

Now vanes, you know, are set on high,
And hold a prominent position;
His kin were THREE in days gone by,
And were my FOUR sufficient, I
Would sing his changeable ambition.

To this he FIVES from clan and clique,
And whirls about like any dervish;
If I his office might bespeak,
I'd perch him on some mountain peak,
There to assist the Signal Service.

M. C. S.

592.—DIVIDED WORDS.

1. Hal, being in a bad ******, *** very little Christmas dinner, and was praised for being so *********. 2. At the hospital I *** * *********, who is also quite a *************. 3. Her ******* ways will certainly *** **** of the pupils, if not all of them. 4. Come ***** with me. I have * **** story to tell you.

M. W. B.

593.—ENIGMA.

Fixed on the bridge all day—a bridge of size—
We rest upon the center; if our eyes
Were made for seeing silver rings below,
And crystal gleaming where the waters flow,
This our excuse for being, on the crest.

We cross the bridge at night—'tis tubular,
Suspended o'er a chasm, secure we are;
No interviewer comes with queries bold
To put us out of countenance when told
And published in the papers East and West.

We never leave the bridge—that is to say,
We hardly ever bow ourselves away;
Inseparable and well-balanced pair,
We bend upon the arch, thus to declare
and magnify our office, and attest.

DELIAN.

594.—SYLLABIC DECAPITATION.

1. Behead TRUSTWORTHINESS, and have RESPONSIBILITY; behead again, and have POWER. 2. Behead EXCHANGEABLE, and have INCONSTANT; behead again, and have A FLAT SURFACE. 3. Behead A NOTED ENGLISH HISTORICAL BOOK, and have "A JOURNAL OF ACCOUNTS;" behead again, and have a TREATISE. 4. Behead ASSIDITY, and have a FOLDING; behead again, and have "AN ELECTRO-POSITIVE ELEMENT."

CHOPOFF.

595.—ANAGRAM.

NO SENSE IN ALL THIS SCENE.

High in the West the rising sun
Proclaims approaching eve.
The matin bells are sounding forth;
Their toil the toilers leave.
The dewdrops sparkle on the grass,
All parched with noonday heat,
And o'er the busy, bustling world
The silence reigns complete.

The purple apples on the vines
Are swinging in the breeze;
And crimson pumpkins cluster thick
Upon the leafless trees.
The skylark floats, with raucous croak,
Across the moonlit lake,
While bullfrogs trill with sweet accord
From moor and bog and brake.

ARTY ESS.

596.—CHARACTERISTIC INITIALS.

(Noted Americans.)

It was not John Kendrick Bangs's party in a boathouse on the Styx, but another. The host, that (1) Eerie, Awful Poet, who was a famous puzzler also, seemed in his element now, as he sat explaining a cryptogram to his friends. Among these were the (2) Daring Borderer whom the Shawnee Indians called "son;" the (3) Philanthropic Cabinet maker, who was a founder of ocean telegraphy, and that (4) Judge-Orator, who died as he wished, by a lightning stroke. That (5) Wonderful Artist, dubbed "American Titan," was at his easel, while the (6) Wise, Clever Bard, who wrote notable poems in the thirteenth year, read aloud bits from his own works. The (7) Greatest Warrior of our Country had a slight disagreement with the (8) Jolly Loyalist, who delivered the funeral oration of Peter Faneuil; but that (9) Just Arbitrator, who once undertook an important mission to Spain, soon settled the difficulty amicably. The (10) Credulous Minister alternately whittled at an old broomstick and stroked a big black cat—two objects that recalled vividly a period of his life in another sphere; while the (11) Gallant Minister Plenipotentiary, who prepared the Constitution of the United States, recounted tales of the Court of France, as he remembered it in 1782. The (12) Dearly-Loved Statesman of North Carolina, who was mortally injured while on a pleasure drive, was enjoying a gossip with the (13) Ever Witty Newspaper man lately from Buncombe county, when a discussion arose as to the propriety of a certain grammatical construction. Fortunately the (14) Linguistic Master, who is still an authority on such matters, came by just then, and cited the rule in such cases. Immediately after the dinner bell rang and the deck was deserted, save for old Charon himself, nodding contentedly over his tiller.

MABEL P.

597.—CHARADE.

Young Arthur De Smyth was a TOTAL of twenty,
Whose manner was quite debonair;
And though of bright ducats this youth had a plenty,
Of brains he had nothing to spare.
When Arthur first entered the halls of the college,
He met an intelligent Soph,
Who straightway impressed on this seeker for knowledge,
That HE was the peer of the "Prof."
He spoke of his skill in abstruse mathematics,
Of calculus, conics, and such;
And Arthur, recalling his Simple Qaudratics,
Thought humbly: "How learned he so much?"
Then, leaving behind all this busy employment,
He told of PRIME pleasures galore;
Of outings, and conquests, and other enjoyment,
The future for him had in store.
And so the poor greenhorn received with elation
This tale of collegiate joys,
Accepting with pleasure the kind invitation,
That evening to spend with the boys.
The Sophomore's friends paid him ev'ry attention,
The elephant took him to view,
The deeds that they did, there is no need to mention,
They painted things carmine in hue.
But when he awoke with his head feeling funny,
Behind the iron bars of a cell,
And found himself wanting both honor and money,
His feelings no FINAL can tell.

—H. C. L.

PRIZE NAMES.

An attractive prize—one of our best—is to be given for the best lot of names answering No. 596. The solutions are to be forwarded within one week, and in case of doubt the winner will be decided by any special neatness or other feature that may be noted in one of the nearest complete lists.

The prize for 570 is taken by Katherine L. Dorsey, 45 Blacherne, Indianapolis. Other excellent solutions are acknowledged from Alice Newell, to 570; H. L. Scott, 570; M. J. Morse, 570; Mrs. Thomas Flaherty, 566, 568, 570, 573; Ellen Marble, 570; W. A. Bennett, 570; Arthur J. Holmes, 570; Ida Phinney, 570; Josephine K. Thomas, 570; F. L. Harlow, 570; Robert C. Chard, 570; A. J. Wing, 570; Mrs. C. A. White, 566, 568, 569, 570, 572; N. F. Lewis, 570; Otis Pratt, 570; R. B. Shaw, 570; N. W. Morey, 570; J. H. Sears, 570; Arthur K. Lambert, 570; S. C. Burgess, 570; M. R. Dill, 570.

ANSWERS.

574.—"Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest."

575.—Mothers, others, the, H.

576.—Lictor, victor.

577.—Cowherd, chowder.

578.—4 9 2
3 5 7
8 1 6

This is the well-known magic square of nine figures. By reading forward, backward, up and down, twelve numbers of three digits are found, and the diagonals, if counted, make four more.

579.—Work-man-like.

580.—1. Poultice. 2. Edifice. 3. Pumice. 4. Avarice. 5. Service. 6. Solstice. 7. Office. 8. Suffice. 9. Chalice. 10. Cowardice. 11. Justice. 12. Venice. 13. Eunice. 14. Allspice. 15. Beatrice. 16. Malice. 17. Lattice. 18. Jaundice.

581.—LAX.

GOOD WAGES PROFITABLE.

One of the Things That Makes American Industry Pre-Eminent.

Detroit Free Press.

"You pay too much for labor," said a German traveler who was a guest at a Detroit hotel last week. "That is where we have you." It would be less difficult to establish the converse. We pay more for labor than European countries, and paradoxical as it may seem, that is where we have them. If American industrial advancement has proved one thing more clearly than another, it is the fact that good wages is a profitable investment on the part of the employer. It produces a standard of efficiency which more than offsets the added expense. The older economists used to think that the lowest rate of wages for which men would work was the highest rate of wages that the employer could afford to pay. This economy theorem was maintained in elaborate demonstrations which were satisfactory enough in logic, but which have not proved so satisfactory in experience. Good wages means well-fed and well-clothed labor. If a well-cared-for horse can do more work than one which is half starved and neglected it is safe to assume that a well-fed man will accomplish more than one who is indifferently nourished. The world has come to understand that race and national supremacies are questions largely of a food supply, and high wages usually means good food in sufficient quantities to meet all the needs of the individual.

Long before the Constitution of the United States was adopted the North found slave labor unprofitable, and it has remained for the United States to discover, too, that poorly paid labor is unprofitable. The industries in which the greatest fortunes have been accumulated have been those which paid the highest rate of wages, and this practice has enabled American manufacturers to compete with their European rivals successfully in the latter's own markets and in every corner of the globe. Instead of the higher rate of wages being a handicap in the struggle for markets it has proved a direct advantage to the American employer.