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**WASHINGTON, D. C.**  
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**THE CONTRIBUTORS** are Business Men, Business Women, Scientists, Plain People, Travelers, Poets, etc., etc. In other words, people familiar wherever they write, who tell their stories in a way that will interest our suburban friends.

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We are glad the Commissioners in their report on Senate Bill 2329 to eliminate grade crossings on the B. & O., gave the Eekington Citizens' Association a good slap, because they were simply kicking against the bill to see themselves kick. Their objections had no foundation in fact.

The West is coming energetically to the front in manufactures, and in many branches of domestic production—notably in woodenware articles for household use, farm implements and appliances for transportation—commands the Western and successfully invades the Eastern markets, where it bids fair to be heard from with increasing enterprise as the years go on.

The Philadelphia Press takes an English publication to task for laughing at what was called in England "the Dewey hysteria," and replies in the following vein: "A people that view an engagement in Natal which did not involve as many men as were lost on both sides on the field at Gettysburg as the British have viewed the Colenso battle of Dec. 15, or as they are viewing Spion Kop fiasco, cannot talk of poise, as it is clearly wanting."

The movement to ameliorate the condition of the discharged convict is rapidly gaining ground in England. Judges, prosecuting attorneys, and city aldermen have united in the attempt to set ex-convicts upon their feet; and St. Giles Christian mission, London, gave 21,224 discharged prisoners last year their first meal out of prison, finding work for 5998 who were willing to accept it. In the last 22 years this association of Christian men and women has helped 361,000 prisoners after their liberation.

The opening up of Africa to civilization during the past 10 years is one of the wonders of the world's history, thinks the Atlanta Journal. A vast territory with natural resources of incalculable value has been placed within easy reach of capital and enterprise, and there is sure to be a phenomenal development in Africa in the early future. There is no longer a "dark continent," the light of civilization has penetrated even the most savage land in Africa and grows brighter every day. Steamboats ply all the great rivers of that Great continent and railroads now carry passengers through what were only a few years ago almost unknown deserts and unexplored jungles.

**PEEP AT SIEGE TRAIN**  
**WHAT IS MEANT BY SOME RECENT DESPATCHES.**

Some Points About the Wonderful Engines of War First Introduced by the Boers of South Africa — Accuracy of Fire a Certain Element.

The announcement recently made that a siege train was being mobilized for service in South Africa no doubt conveyed very little information to the non-military mind, as was shown a few days ago, when a writer in the London Daily Mail was asked, in all sincerity: "What is the difference between a siege train and an armored train?" As a matter of fact, a siege train is the name applied to the complement of guns, ammunition and store wagons, and men employed to conduct a siege. According to the "Siege Artillery Manual," a siege train may consist of any number of divisions, heavy, medium or light, according to the requirements of the service. A division, as a rule, consists of sixteen pieces of ordnance, exclusive of machine guns; each division requires a personnel consisting of four companies of garrison artillery, with the following staff: One lieutenant-colonel, one adjutant, one quartermaster, two staff non-commissioned officers, and two staff clerks, in addition to a total of 596 officers, non-commissioned officers and men. In the present instance the armament consists of the new five-inch breech-loading howitzers throwing lyddite shell. All siege guns and howitzers are fitted with special sights known as "French's sights," which enable them to be laid on an object that is invisible to the gunner. With this advantage it is possible to place the battery behind a hill totally obscured from the enemy's view, and to pound away until either all his guns are dismounted or the fort breached so as to enable the infantry to carry the place by assault. Siege gunnery has now arrived at such a pitch of perfection that there is absolutely nothing that can withstand the attack of a well-organized and well-equipped siege train. The shell fire is so accurate and searching and the high explosives so destructive that it is only a question of time in demolishing any defense that can possibly be erected. By means of an observing instrument invented by Capt. Tancred, each shot can be accurately observed as bursting so many yards short or over the object, thus enabling the necessary corrections to be made for the next round to strike the exact spot desired and insuring extreme accuracy of fire.

**THESE ARE SWELL DOGS.**

How Fashionable Pets Are Costumed in Paris.

Dog tailors have a good time in Paris. Under the impression that nature has not provided the right kind of coat for a dog, the dog lovers—of fashion lovers—of Paris has fostered a new industry, the providing of clothing for ladies' pets. Some very interesting and suggestive facts about this industry are collected by Good Words. "Our clients belong to the very highest classes of society," said one of these Parisian dog tailors. "We recently had a very remunerative order from the daughter of a diplomat in Paris for a set of gala clothes for her dog to match the liveries of her father's lackeys. She was about to be married, and as she entered the residence after the ceremony, her three dogs were to be waiting for her at the top of the grand staircase. They were to be dressed in their liveries, and each was to have a bouquet of orange blossoms attached to its collar." Even this was exceeded by another bride, who ordered for each of her half dozen dogs a regular bridesmaid's costume of white faille embroidered with lace and garlanded with orange blossoms. White satin slippers were also made to measure for each four-footed pet. One step further have these lovers of fashion gone in making their dogs an excuse for fresh display. Sets of fine linen must now be provided for the society dog. No self-respecting animal would think of possessing less than half a dozen undergarments of fine lawn, if he is in health, and of silk or surah if he is subject to colds. A dozen embroidered cambric handkerchiefs must be added to his equipment if he is troubled with watery eyes. A further trial awaits him in the shape of boots of leather or rubber, as the case may be. Bracelets and tie-pins, perfumery and fancy soaps, ivory combs and brushes make up the dog's toilet necessities. Surely if a fashionable Parisian dog could speak, he would explain that his foolish friends lead him the life of a dog in the worst sense.

**The Worst Way.**

Stranger—The cars don't run very regularly on this line, do they? Native—Not very. Are you in a hurry? Stranger—Yes, I am. I want to get down to the ferry the worst way. Native—O! you do? Well, this is the way I want to go.—Philadelphia Press.

**He Knew the Sex.**

Doctor—"Your wife is a very sick woman, and I have my doubts as to her recovery." Husband—"Oh, she'll pull through all right. Her dressmaker sent home a new gown yesterday and she hasn't tried it on."—Chicago News.

**Cure for Insomnia.**

A cup of very hot milk taken at bedtime will often prevent sleeplessness. Be careful that you don't do right in the wrong way.

**POPULAR SCIENCE.**

More steel is used in the manufacture of pens than in all the sword and gun factories in the world.

It is proposed in England to test the practicability of casting steel in a vacuum, the object being to get rid of air-bubbles, which cause flaws and weak points in the metal.

The efficacy of the serum treatment of diphtheria has again been demonstrated in Austria, where the mortality, in cases so treated last year, was only 15.89 per cent., while of those treated without serum 89.39 per cent. died.

There was recently an extraordinary parade of traction engines at Aldershot, fifteen engines and forty trucks. They were inspected previous to their departure to South Africa. A stretch of sandy road was selected for the test, and the country gave an excellent opportunity for observing the practical points of the engines. They will be dispatched to South Africa at once.

A new alloy has recently been patented in Germany which is intended to take the place of gold. It consists of copper and antimony in the proportion of 100 to 6, the antimony being added to the melted copper. After the antimony has melted and a union between the two metals has occurred some charcoal ashes, magnesium and lime are added, to the molten mass in the crucible. The alloy can be rolled and worked like gold, and will withstand for some time acid and ammoniacal vapors. It has a color quite similar to gold, which it does not lose by oxidation.

The lowest point of land between the two oceans on the American continent is the grand divide in Nicaragua, where the elevation is only 146 feet. The lowest point of land on the Isthmus of Panama, according to the report of the Canal Commission, is Culebra, which is 333 feet above tide-water, and is now the scene of active work by the Panama Canal Company, which is cutting a channel there. Several early explorers reported points on the Isthmus of Darien, between the Atrato River and the ocean, where the divide that separates the streams that flow into the Atlantic from those that flow into the Pacific is only a few feet high, but the Canal Commission has not been able to find any such place. The lowest level reported by the engineers is about 800 feet.

The instance is noted of a fire having originated, probably from spontaneous combustion, in a pile containing several tons of cotton seed, the interior of which was almost a solid body of live coal, which was completely smothered by the application of a half gallon of ammonia. In another case, which occurred in Savenay, France, the vapors of a tank containing fifty gallons of vasoline caught fire in the linen room of a laundry; the room was instantly in a mass of living flames, but a gallon and a half of ammonia water thrown into it completely and almost immediately extinguished the fire. The effect, as described, was instantaneous, torrents of black smoke rolling upward in place of flames, and in a moment every trace of fire was gone—so sudden and complete, indeed, being its extinction that workmen were enabled to enter the room almost immediately, where they found the iron tank of gasoline intact.

**The President as a Speaker.**

Much has been said and written of the President as an orator. He is surely notable in this regard. His short speeches are models of rhetoric and delivered in a pleasing style, but his talents as an auditor are equally remarkable, and surrounded by his Cabinet he is frequently called upon to show them. When he listens to a speech he sits tranquilly in the large chair generally placed for his convenience, gazing intently at the speaker and usually holding his silk hat in his hand. No nervousness marks his manner, except now and then he will tap quietly upon the arm of his chair with his gloved hand, or close and unclose it. He does not miss a single point the speaker makes; looks grave or smiles as the case may be, and often, as though carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, leads the applause. He is truly a sympathetic listener, and, as one of the younger orators put it, "an inspiration to the speaker."—Washington Correspondence New York Tribune.

When a girl thinks a man looks like he wants to kiss her she covers up her eyes so she can't see whether he really is going to or not till it is too late.

**THE IRONY OF FATE.**

A Lover's Strategy Turned to the Advantage of His Rival.

In a final and desperate effort to win the admiration of the girl he loved, and to make her realize that he was as brave and courageous as his rival, Lonis Humphrie, who lives in Philadelphia, almost drowned himself and his little sister on a recent afternoon in the Delaware River. The girl jumped into the river to give her brother the opportunity to save her life, but both of them were overcome by the cold water, and Walter Yoman, Humphrie's rival, pulled them out. That night it was announced that Yoman and the girl in question would soon be married.

Since she has been old enough to carry her father's dinner bucket Mamie Johnson has been the idol of the young rivermen. Among those who bowed before her were Humphrie and Yoman. Early in the winter Yoman was fortunate enough to save a child from drowning at the risk of his own life.

Humphrie went to see the girl on Friday night and laid his case before her. She told him that she had pledged her troth to Yoman.

With a dollar bill he secured the services of his ten year old sister in the morning and pledged her to secrecy. At noon, when Mamie climbed up the side of the barge, she was closely followed by Humphrie's little sister. Hardly had Humphrie reached the top of the barge when his sister, true to her word, fell headlong into the river. In an instant Humphrie had dived in behind her. He had not reckoned on the coldness of the water, and before he had taken half a dozen strokes his fingers became numb, he felt himself sinking and called for help.

Several ropes were thrown to him, but it happened that the one which fell into his hands was held by Yoman, who towed them in and lifted them both to the bank. Meanwhile, Mamie was fairly dancing with excitement, and when poor Humphrie was being led up the bank toward his home she ran to Yoman and throwing her arms around his neck, cried:

"I knew all the time that you could do it, and I'm so glad that you saved Louis. He is such a good friend of ours."

**The Telephone Voice a Mechanical Echo.**

It is hard to realize that the voice one hears over the telephone is not the voice of the person who is talking. It seems exactly like the real tones, drawn out thin and small and carried from a long distance by some mechanical means—but it is not. When one speaks into the instrument, a little diaphragm, like a drumhead, begins to vibrate, and each vibration sends a wave of electricity over the wire. These waves set up a mimic vibration in another diaphragm at the opposite end, which jars the air and produces an imitation of the original voice. This is not a very scientific explanation, but it's accurate. The autograph-telegraph, which makes a facsimile of handwriting, is a fair parallel. Your message is written with a pen attached to a special electric apparatus, and a little ink siphon at the other end of the line exactly imitates every dot and curve. The result seems like the real thing, but is merely a first-class counterfeit.

**Buller's Narrow Escape.**

It is related of General Buller that once he had a very narrow escape from having to abandon his military career. Shortly before he joined the regiment to which he had been gazetted as a subaltern he cut his knee very badly with an axe. The wound was so severe that the surgeon said the limb must be amputated. Buller, however, said that if he could not have two legs he would have none at all, and the result was that which usually happens in such stories, the doctor was all wrong and Buller was soon able to join his regiment.

**Portinent Impertinence.**

"Say, mister, do you want your bag carried?" asked a boy, running after a man who was hurrying along the street, evidently bound for the railway station.

"No, I don't," answered the man, a little sharply.

"I'll carry it all the way for a nickel," persisted the boy.

"I tell you I don't want it carried," said the man, quickening his pace.

"Don't you?" said the boy, breaking into a trot to keep abreast of his victim.

"No, I don't!" said the man, glancing fiercely at his small tormentor.

"Well, then, mister," said the urchin, with an expression of anxious and innocent inquiry on his round, dirty face, "what are you carrying it for? Why don't you set it down?"

He got the bag, and a dime.

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