

HE WAS A TARGET

For the Importuning Class of Chronic Mendicants.

BARNUM'S MUSEUM OF LETTERS

Collected and Preserved by the Great Showman as Curious—People Who Insist Upon a Division.

Just before his death P. T. Barnum wrote an article in response to the request of a friend, giving in detail some of the peculiar and interesting letters received by him during his long and successful career.

"I have often asked my friends and visitors who have heard me punt a joke over the frequent curious and crank letters which I have been for many years receiving in large volume, to give some printed account of them; and I yield now to a strong impetuosity to do it.

One of our greatest American humorists, who once saw some of them at my house, considered them amazingly funny, and while they are certainly provocative of mirth, I am much more anxious, in this case to have them serve as a dreadful example to be shunned—and so point a moral to them—than to publish them for a humorous purpose solely.

Office of Security.

Some of the benevolent or charitable schemes brought to my attention for pecuniary help are grotesque and unparalleled. One writer proposed that I should wind up my benevolent career by building an immense sanitarium in Palestine for the benefit of the Jews, who are expected to return to Jerusalem and be converted to Christianity some time before the world comes to an end.

A Stone Woman.

A man in Ohio, who evidently thought he had a match for Lot's wife, wrote me as follows, on September 5, 1873: "Sir—I thought that I would drop you a few lines to let you know if you would like to buy a stone woman I mean she was dead and buried some years and turned to a stone I was told on about nine years ago to help to take this woman up and buried her in a number place a lady standing by."

A Mormon Whisker Chain.

From a Utah penitentiary came the following: "P. T. Barnum, Esq.—Sir, I suppose you have read and heard of the numerous arrests and convictions of some of the Mormons in this Territory for Polygamy and Conubation, under a special act of Congress known as the 'Edmunds-Tucker Bill.' Upon their arrival in the prison some of them have very long beards, but they share the fate of all convicts, lose their curly locks and flowing beards."

Offers a Phoenix.

The following writer, offers a phoenix and who would probably throw in a 'photo' to boot, is something of a humorist and punster. He writes from Illinois: "I have something more wonderful than any curiosity you have ever exhibited—Phoenix, that bird supposed hitherto, to exist only in fable and of which there are but one alive at a time. This fact alone makes it a one-of-a-kind. Each one lives a thousand years, and at its death a new one arises from its sackcloth and ashes. If you have studied the science of Phoenix, you will see at once that you will not get another opportunity of this kind, 'not in a thousand years.' This bird is a native of Arabia, and is able to speak a little Gumm-Arabic. I wish to make you a present of this bird, and you must not think I want any fee—no! I can not afford to keep it, and if you do not accept it will be obliged to eat it, and will have roast Phoenix a la mode on the bill of fair for the next few days. But, of course, this is strictly between menu (me and you.) Would it not be typical of some great show, which is unique, and Phoenix-like rises from its ashes?"

FACES OF THE FAIR

Noted Women and Their Unfamed Doubles.

STRIKING ARE RESEMBLANCES

Mrs. Cleveland and Her Pretty Foil—Miss Edith Gould and Mrs. W. K. Vanderbilt Look Like Others.

"There goes one of the doubles," said the chief of a well-known Broadway fancy notion store, as I chatted with him over a basket of new photographs of stage beauties and society stars.

"Doubles," said he; "don't you know what they are? They are women who look like somebody else, or think they do. That woman thinks she is the living image of Sarah Bernhardt. She was buying Sara's photographs. She took five, showing different aspects of her face. She will study them right along now, and make up to look like her model. I would make a dinner at Del's she was to see Bernhardt last night, and the resemblance struck her. It is really there. In nine cases out of ten the doubles are in fact like the person they make up for—it may be the build, the pose, the cast of features or

OUR SHIPS OF WAR

Uncle Sam's Great Monitors Putting to Sea.

MODERN IMPROVEMENTS MADE

The Miantonomah Has a Successful Trial Trip and the Terror is Getting Ready to Sail.

When Secretary Tracy recently visited the New York yard his official attention was drawn to the sturdy little monitor, the Miantonomah, on whose iron decks sounded the feet of busy workmen.

A few days after Secretary Tracy's visit the Miantonomah made her first trip, or perhaps I might say trips, for her formal "first trip" was accomplished in sections. She is not a massive engine of war as she appears above the water line. Her lines do not fascinate like those of a cruiser like the Chicago. But the Miantonomah is a little

marvel when it comes to close inspection, and the enemy who ever has the ill luck to meet her will find her a little marvel at a considerable distance. The Miantonomah is, indeed, one of the most formidable of our ships of war. Let us see why:

An American suggested turret ships before Cowper Phipps Coles brought up the matter before the British admiralty. Coles took a three-decker called the Royal Sovereign and adapted it to his turret plan. Although the nondescript warship resulting from this combination was not what a specially designed vessel might have been, the turreted Royal Sovereign was admitted to be the most powerful ship in the English navy.

Capt. Coles had a big turret ship, the Captain, built after his complete design. It was a very fine affair, but it turned bottom side up in the Bay of Biscay twelve years ago with Capt. Coles and six hundred men on board. Ericsson's Monitor differed from Coles' design in having the deck very close to the water line, leaving very little mark for the enemy's guns save the circular turret itself. Ericsson's ideas have dominated every movement that has since been made with the monitor design. England has built the Devastation, but has not shown so much enterprise with turrets in the monitor form as the leading spirits of the United States navy. The English ships carrying turrets include the Thunderer and the Agamemnon. Among her monitor types are the Glatton and the Cyclops.

Ericsson claimed, and experience has shown, that a monitor can carry much heavier ordnance than a ship having guns broadside. The rolling of the turret was naturally her immense advantage, since it not only gave a splendid range to the guns, but permitted the shielding of the gunners during the times of landing.

The United States laid the keels of three double turreted monitors in 1874 and 1875. They were named the Puritan, the Miantonomah and the Terror. The original designs were never carried out, for work on them was discontinued until 1888, when the government decided to go ahead with the monitors and fit them out with the best modern guns. The Miantonomah, as I have said, has just been completed. She is a splendid and terrible object. Her turrets are plated with eleven and a half inches of compound armor. Heavily armored also are the lower parts of the smokestack and the ventilators. Seven inches of steel are in the armor belt. The iron of the deck is two inches thick, and with all the weights on board

It is only two feet above water. Two 10-inch high power rifles of most threatening physiognomy protrude from each turret—a quartette of devastating engines. The machinery by which the turrets are moved is of the most ingenious description. The rollers are a superb device. It need scarcely be said that the propelling engines are massive and lusty. I have forgotten the exact speed of the Miantonomah but it is sufficient to guarantee a marvelous agility.

The Terror is the Miantonomah's sister ship. She is a month or two, if not further, away from completion. I suppose if we had to go after Chile the Terror could get down to business by March 1. The military mast is being placed in position. The military mast of steel and iron is an important feature of our modern warships. Around the little circular platform at the top of the mast runs a shattering rim. On this

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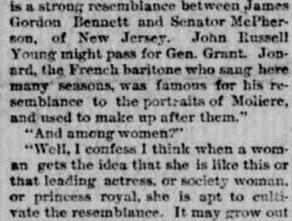
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MRS. GROVER CLEVELAND AND DOUBLE.



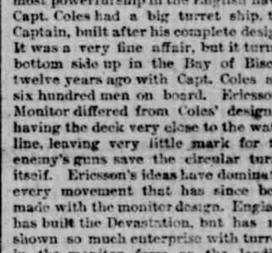
MRS. WILLIE E. VANDERBILT AND HER DOUBLE.



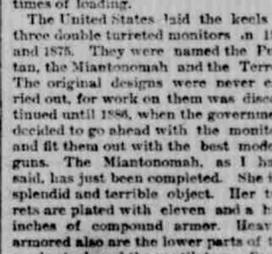
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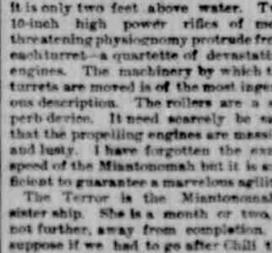
PRESENT CONDITION OF THE "TERROR."



BUILDING A MONITOR'S TURRET.



THE MIANTONOMAH.



THE MIANTONOMAH.

solid roll the men aloft may come. Getting guns. Like the Miantonomah, the Terror will have a displacement of 3,500 tons.

The Puritan will be a bigger monitor. Her displacement will, indeed, reach 5,000 tons. In this respect the place of turrets. The shielded guns will fire over the rim of these barbettes which are being covered with a 14-inch layer of steel. The two 10-inch guns in each of these barbettes are mounted on a superstructure on which will be carried four 4-inch guns. Within the superstructure will be two more 4-inch guns.

If what the avastmen say is true the Puritan will draw 10 feet less water than the big foreign battle ships, which she may easily be fitted. Her draught is 13 feet. The draught of the two other monitors is even less. Both the Miantonomah and the Terror draw only 14 feet. The importance of this fact will be seen when it is pointed out that the special utility of these ships is in coast defense. Powerful warships capable of carrying around in 14 and 18 feet of water will have an immense advantage over vessels that necessarily draw a much greater depth of water. Then a monitor rides as steadily as to form a fine basis for her guns, and an effective sighting point for her gunners.

No one who saw the Miantonomah move away from the dock will forget the sight. The first impression of a monitor is perhaps of a short, fat ship. But the Miantonomah is nearly 250 feet long. Her turret guns, capable of throwing a shell a distance of seven miles, were painted a glistening black. Everything on deck was spick and span, and in fighting trim. Fighting trim, in this case, means ready, if necessary, to go under water, for in action the Miantonomah will let water into her hold, with the deck beneath the level of the water, and leave the enemy nothing but the turret to pepper away at.

Among the other little giants of our navy which the New York yard has just been giving its parting blessing is the torpedo boat Cushing. The Cushing is a first attempt on the part of the United States navy, but it is probably true that she has no superior on the seas. She is a "nuster" for speed, her engines sending her through the water at a thrilling gait.

The little ram Alarm is being polished up. She was built from Admiral Porter's design, and has 800 tons displacement. Her ram bow has a wicked and aggressive look, and is provided with an opening through which a long shaft bearing a torpedo may be run out and drawn in. Originally a 15-inch gun was mounted at the bow with a 4-inch armored shield; but at present they

are planning to place a new 6-inch rifle at the bow, and use the little ship for training gunners. The navy in this, and other directions, is rapidly advancing with the work of modernizing the navy. Naval science advances with such rapid strides, and congress and shipyards move so slowly, that warships soon become unmodern. So far as goes the United States navy is now reasonably modern.