

**WHISTLE AND HOE.**  
There is a boy just over the garden fence,  
Who is whistling all through the livelong day,  
And his work is not just a mere pretense,  
For you see the weeds he has cut away.  
Whistle and hoe,  
Sing as you go,  
Shorten the row  
By the songs you know.

Not a word of bemoaning his task I hear,  
He has scarcely time for a growl I know,  
For his whistle sounds so merry and clear,  
He must find some pleasure in every row.  
Whistle and hoe,  
Sing as you go,  
Shorten the row  
By the songs you know.

But then while you whistle, be sure that you  
hoe,  
For, if you are idle, the briars will spread;  
And whistle alone to the end of the row  
May do for the weeds, but is bad for the bread.  
Whistle and hoe,  
Sing as you go,  
Shorten the row  
By the songs you know.

**Minnie and Minnie's Mother.**  
A poor and respectable woman of Augusta, Ga., is in a quandary, and when the moralists, and philosophers, and philanthropist to help her out. Her case may be briefly stated. The woman has a drunken, worthless, vagabond husband, who deserted her two years ago, and wandered away to parts unknown, taking with him their only child, then not quite three years old. Minnie was an uncommonly bright, curly head, and could not fail to attract attention whenever she appeared. The mother was poor and powerless to follow her husband and child. She was naturally very much distressed and anxious about the fate of the child in such hands. But she could do nothing but wait and listen. She first heard of a little girl called Minnie, answering to the description of her child, in New Orleans. But this Minnie appeared to have parents, and was well provided for by them. They were traveling people, reputed wealthy, and were staying at a hotel. But Minnie's mother was too poor to make the journey in search of her little wanderer. The lady and gentleman and Minnie finally disappeared from New Orleans. This was at the close of the winter. With the migrating birds they had probably gone North following up the spring.

A few days ago the bereaved mother heard another voice that told her of her darling Minnie. It came from Aiken, S. C. The description was of a little girl with glossy, curly hair, dark sparkling eyes, and skin as fair as a lily—a little beauty of five years, answering to the name of Minnie. She was living with stylish people in a splendid country-seat near Aiken. The mother could bear the agony of suspense no longer. Some of her friends who knew her story and sympathized with the impulses of a mother's heart, aided her, and saw her off for Aiken. She found the family and Minnie and that Minnie was her child. Better still, or worse as the case may be, Minnie knew her mother, and their meeting, after a painful separation of two years, was a humanizing spectacle. There could be no doubt that the poor woman and that child of luxury knew each other. What next? The child's story is told by her protectors. They were a gentleman and lady of fortune of New York, and childless. They were traveling for pleasure and made Memphis, Tenn., a stopping place. Here the lady happened one day to remark to her washerwoman that she had long desired to adopt some handsome child, as a care and a companion.

The woman had a child in her charge, who had been left with her by a man of whom she knew nothing, except that she had done washing for him. He had disappeared, and she had never seen or heard of him since. Minnie was produced and suited the lady. The couple adopted the little girl in Memphis, and at length pursued their journey to New Orleans. Finally they returned to their home in New York. Last fall they went to Aiken and purchased an elegant water residence there. And Minnie was the love and center of that home when her natural mother found her. Minnie was bright, beautiful and haasomely attired; her mother was coarsely clad, and on her worn features were pictured privation and pain. With her adopted parent Minnie would be educated and become the heiress of a million; with her mother, she might become, what?

The gentleman and lady are so well convinced that the mother has found her child that they are perfectly willing to give up the little girl if the mother insists upon it, or they are willing to keep and train her as their daughter. This is the question the mother has to decide for herself, and yet she cannot do it under the imposed conditions.

With the adopted parents, the child must be brought up to know no other mother than the adopted one, and can have no intercourse with parent or any blood relation. The natural mother can never see her offspring again. In other terms, she must forever abandon her child, and the child must be weaned from her memory. Or she has the privilege of taking Minnie back to poverty, and toil, and pinching want. There is no other alternative or compromise and the stipulated conditions are certainly just. They are equally hard for both parties—for the adopted parents to lose the being they had built their hopes on, and for the mother to break her ties of blood for the problematic benefit of her own darling. Negotiations for the settlement of this puzzling family question are still pending, and it presents a mother's dilemma of a very remarkable character. Minnie's adopted parents offer special inducements to the mother to decide in their favor by treating her with great kindness, bestowing upon her presents, and offering to aid her in various ways. For Minnie they will be the friends of both, with out her, the acquaintance ceases forever. How should the mother solve this problem of love and duty?

**To Cure Dogs of Worrying Sheep.**  
Wrap a narrow strip of sheepskin that has much wool on it round the dog's lower jaw, the wool outward, and fasten it so that he cannot get rid of it. Put this on him for a few times daily, and there is a chance that he will become as thoroughly disgusted as you could wish with every animal of the race whose coat furnishes such odious mouthfuls; but prevention being better than cure, pay great attention to your dog's morals dur-

ing the lambing season. Dogs not led away by evil companionship rarely commit their depredations upon sober, full-grown sheep. In ninety-nine cases out of 100 they have previously yielded to the great temptation of running down some flisking lamb whose animated gambols seemed to court pursuit.—*Land and Water.*

**CAUGHT IN A STEEL TRAP.**

The following story was told to me by my old friend, the venerable Dr. L. G. I sat one evening on the verandah of the principle hotel of a city on the N. Y. and E. R. R., smoking and watching the persons loitering about the entrance.

Among these was a strange-looking man who had excited my curiosity at dinner by his peculiar dress and appearance.

He was very tall and strongly built, had large, fierce, black eyes, a dark, pale complexion, a huge, carefully waxed, jetty mustache, and he wore his thick, coarse, black hair, somewhat long. His dress was striking, although of fine black material and fashionable make. But, doubtless, the "loud" effect was produced by the long cape, the flaunting red necktie and the broad-brimmed, picturesque hat he always wore. He exhibited also his prodigious diamonds to profuse use for good taste. The cane he carried was unique, its gold head being shaped precisely like a small pistol.

As I watched him, one of the under waiters of the hotel came whistling into the small reception room behind me. This waiter was called Matthew Sparks, and I especially disliked him. He was as cunning as an Indian, talkative and grotesquely polite, and loved money like a miser, while he was as full of pranks and funny jests as a court fool or the clown of a circus.

"Matthew!" I called to this under-sized buffoon of sixteen.

He reared his heels in the air, attempted a waltz on his hands, turned a somersault and landed on his feet by my side.

"What can I do for you, sir?" he inquired, with a courtesy that was laughably like that of a trained monkey.

"Who is the gentleman yonder, with the red necktie and the broad-brimmed hat?"

"Where, sir," he asked, innocently, looking everywhere except in the direction I indicated vainly, until I directed his vision by the magical touch of silver, when he became as communicative as I could wish.

"O, that fellow!—looks like one of the pictures on the bill post yonder, don't he?" and my comic and sordid informant grinned and looked wise.

"Is he an actor?" I demanded impatiently.

"Bless me, no. He's the Count—count Pedro Colombo. He's a fellow who does nuthin' but travel and spend money. And his diamonds! O, lor! worth thirty thousand dollars—I heard him say so."

This was all the information I could obtain from the promising young waiter, and it seemed without a doubt correct, as I soon discovered that the Count's magnificent diamonds, his apparent extravagance with money, and his evident ignorance of American customs, made the gossip of the hotel.

"Why," said the clerk to me one morning, "the Count is probably the richest man in the country. He has a large estate in Mexico and mines in South America. He lives high, too. He has the best rooms, the best wines, and most costly dinners. He makes odd mistakes occasionally, gets on the wrong floors and into the wrong rooms, and scarcely can speak nor understand a word of English. He came on from New York, and by some mistake his trunks were sent the wrong way. He is kept here waiting for them."

Just then the subject of his remarks came into the office.

His hair was in disorder, he wore neither coat nor vest, and his suspenders were flying behind his heels.

"I have been robbed. See!" he cried in his broken English, exhibiting his wristband and shirt-front, from which his studs and buttons had seemingly been roughly torn away.

And then gesticulating violently and muttering Spanish curses, he demanded to see the proprietor, who at once came to hear the complaint of the distinguished and unfortunate guest.

The count's complaint was something like this: He was sure he was in the land of thieves; his trunks probably had been stolen, and all the money he had in them, as well as the letters of credit. He was in a strange place and he couldn't pay his board, and now he was robbed of all he had that was worth security, and he would be put in the streets or perhaps in prison. But he would go to Washington, he would see the Minister of Spain or somebody, and the scoundrels who had taken advantage of his ignorance should hang—very high indeed!

In vain the landlord assured him that he should be kindly treated until his missing property should be recovered, which likely would be soon—the count only rolled out big Spanish oaths, and frantically waved his arms and pointed to the places his lost diamonds had adorned, and groaned, and muttered that "they would kill him if he stayed in the diabolical country—the beasts, the llains, the assassin."

The proprietor was greatly disturbed, and finally persuaded the high-minded count to accept fifty dollars as a loan and not to hesitate to ask for more if he should need it, and somewhat appeased, the guest went out of the office.

"I am sorry the count," observed the landlord to me; "and doubt if he ever recovers anything he has lost. For some time a gang of thieves has been working between here and New York and scarcely any hotel has escaped. In several instances checks for baggage have been taken with other things, and of course when the checks were presented at the proper place the baggage has been given to the thief. And, doctor, I don't mind telling you, that the count was not the only loser last night. At least five of my transient guests were robbed of money and jewelry."

"A detective would be a good fellow to have around," I ventured to say.

"I shall telegraph to New York for one immediately," he answered.

For hours in succession that day Count Pedro Colombo sat near the telephone operator's desk, now watching he in-

strument with his fierce black eyes, and the people who passed constantly to and fro past him into the hotel office.

But no news came of his missing trunks, and his pale face seemed to grow paler than ever.

"I shall be killed if I stay here," was his constant prediction.

The next morning the landlord came to me. He looked grave and troubled.

"Doctor," he said, "a half dozen more of my guests, were robbed last night. If this thing goes on I shall be ruined. What shall I do?"

I could not advise him. It was impossible to always escape misfortunes of this kind in a hotel situated at the junction of several great railroads, where hundreds of guests were coming and going every day.

"It is a case for a shrewd detective," I answered, and went up to the reading-room.

This room was on the second floor, close to the ladies' parlor, and directly across the hall was a very small apartment fitted up with immovable desks, inkstands, etc. for the accommodation of those who wished to write in quiet.

My footsteps made no sound on the thick velvet carpet of the hall, and I reached the reading-room door unseen by two persons whose voices I heard in the apartment opposite.

"A doctor, eh?" it was the count's tones, and it was Matthew Sparks who answered.

"A doctor and a good feller," Matthew said. "Come out here to a funeral of an old aunt with greenbacks this ere place wouldn't hold. She give 'em all to him, and he's got 'em in his pill bags—and ahin' else, too."

"What do you tell me for?" asked the count in his queer English.

The boy shuffled his feet and winked to keep time.

"We are paid for given' gents information in this country," was the reply.

The distinguished guest grumbled something about "robbers," "murder," his "trunk," and "jewels," and then tossed the young clown a coin.

I disliked Matthew Sparks then more than I had before. All he had told the count about my visit to that place was utterly false. I had been not so furtive, and I never had an aunt in that part of the country. I never had carried "pill bags" in my life, nor did I ever carry greenbacks in my valise, nor very many in my pocket.

"The miserab' idiot! What did he want to lie like that for?" I mused.

And then I turned to my paper and thought no more about it.

That evening when I went up to my room what was my surprise when I unlocked the door and entered to see Matthew Sparks sitting unconcernedly on the floor in the middle of the chamber with my valise between his knees and in his hands a curious looking implement of rusty steel.

With significant gravity he put his fingers on his lips and motioned for me to lock the door. I did so.

"Now tell me," I said, sternly; "why are you in here, and what are you doing?"

"You'll be mad, mister," he answered, audaciously.

"If you do not tell me I will send for the police and have you locked up, Mathew."

"Whew," he whistled softly, still wearing that provoking grave expression that I saw for once was not assumed.

"Dew you know what this be?"

He held up that queer thing of rusty steel.

"Well, it is a steel trap," he went on; "you jest let me fix this 'ere thing in your pill bags, and when that ar thief comes to get the greenbacks to night it will hold him tight. See?"

He opened the sharp teeth of the steel jaws and suggested, to illustrate his proposed experiment I should put my hand inside.

I declined the offer of this voluntary detective, and wondered if he were fool, knave, or a very cunning and keenwitted boy.

"What makes you think the thief will come in here to-night?" I asked him.

"Well, you see, I told a fellow you had lots of money and other things in 'ere."

"And you knew I did not."

"I reckon," he returned with a grin, "we'll fix your thier-trip."

I said: "I only hope you may catch him."

And he did fix it in a way I could not comprehend and cannot explain; and then he turned to me for what, as he had informed the count, "gents always give information."

I gave it cheerfully.

"You shall have more than that, Mathew," I said, "if you trap the thief."

"I told him the fellow, you know—that you would be out to-night," he said.

"You did? For what?"

"So you could wait in the closet here and watch him," answered Matthew, jingling his coin, apparently.

And Matthew got another ten cents.

"I shall act on the boy's suggestion," I thought to myself. "There may be something in his suspicions, and his absurd plan may not be so bad after all."

So I turned the gas very low, prepared everything carefully, and made myself comfortable in my hiding place.

I had not long to wait—not more than an hour—when I fancied that my room had an occupant.

Cautiously I peered through the crack I had left as I closed the closet door, and I distinctly saw a dark form between me and the gaslight.

Still, for a moment, I fancied that I might be the dupe of one of Matthew Sparks' practical jokes, but as the intruder bent over the valise, I saw from his movement that he meant robbery and nothing else.

Breathless I waited for the result of Matthew's stratagem.

The tiny click in the small locks. The man thrust in his hand.

There was a snap of steel, the crunching of flesh and bone, and then a full, round curse in unmistakable English followed by a long-drawn gasp of pain.

I sprang into the room and turned up the gas, and the bright light streamed upon our foreign count.

Count Pedro Colombo, dressed as if he had just come in from the street, wearing the cape, flaunting red necktie and broad-brimmed hat, and carrying his cane with a pistol-shaped golden head, stood before me, fierce and desperate.

"You are caught, imposter," I cried,

springing for the bell beside the door.

As I did so, he lifted his cane in his left hand, twisted it suddenly, and I saw that which I had supposed to be the semblance of a pistol was a real weapon, ingeniously serving as a walking-stick.

Like lightning he flung the gilded muzzle towards me.

"Touch that bell and you are a dead man," Release me from this accursed trap."

"I faced him coolly.

"Fire if you like," I said; "if you do you will be convicted of murder as well as robbery, for you can't get away unless you leave your hand behind you or take the steel trap with you."

That speech threw him off his guard, and I darted through the door into the hall, locking it behind me.

In five minutes more the room was filled with strong men, and although the thief resisted desperately, he was overpowered and taken to prison.

He proved to be an old offender, and was born in New York and had never been out of the United States.

The story of his trunks was of course false, and his wonderful diamonds, that were found in his room with much of the property stolen from the guests, were not worth the gold plate of the setting.

"If you suspected the fellow, Mathew," said the landlord, "why did you not tell us before?"

"Well, you see," answered the honest youth, jingling his nickles, "I thought I could catch him myself and perhaps I would get more for my information."

"You are quite smart enough, Mathew, and quite honest enough to deserve and get a good share of prosperity as long as you live," answered his employer; "but I do not approve of your being paid for information."

But Matthew got his reward and was highly satisfied therewith, and he thinks he made his best practical joke when he caught a thief in a steel trap.

**THE BACKBITER.**  
There's some one living in this town  
Who's always breathing down  
Your own neck, and I write it down,  
Your own might prove the same,  
Who, when you say, "He's good," will cry,  
"Indeed! You think she's true,  
But I'm very confidentially  
"You wouldn't, if you knew!"

One says: "What pretty girls go by?"  
"O horrors! you don't think  
So!—since we're you and I,  
I'll say, her parents drink  
And she—well, well, I won't tell it out,  
Though I've no doubt 'tis true.  
You think she's nice and pretty—but  
You wouldn't, if you knew!"

If one sings sweetly, "How she fits!"  
"It doesn't taste," "What atyic!"  
"Supremely 'vulgar!' all her hair,  
Her dresses simply 'vile.'  
And when good Deacon Bueby failed  
(A noble man and true),  
She sees but thees and thees and thees  
"You wouldn't, if you knew!"

Let those admire and love who can  
The thing that's breathing down  
Who seems to think a prosperous man  
Must surely be to blame;  
That beauty is a mark of sin;  
That goodness must be crime;  
She sees but thees and thees and thees  
The heroes of the time.

Something she doesn't hesitate  
To tell us what she knows,  
And in nine cases out of eight  
A lie is all she shows.  
For virtue's sake, I hope to find  
One good old doctrine true,  
Some, who, for such I should not mind,  
You wouldn't, if you knew,  
—Kate Clark, in Springfield (Mass.) Republican.

**A Widow Marries a Swiss Baron Without His Knowledge.**  
A few weeks ago a native of Switzerland, a man of intelligence, a good Latin scholar and master of three languages, arrived at New Rochelle, Westchester County, N. Y., on a visit to a former comrade in arms, to whom he casually mentioned that, although he was destitute of funds, he had ample means available in Switzerland if he could only find a responsible party who would take the proper steps to obtain them. The N. Y. Rochelle friend introduced him to the law firm of Banks & Keene, in that village, who, after a careful examination of the documents of the Swiss, volunteered to transact the business. The latter, whose real name is withheld for the present for prudential reasons, but who is familiarly known by his old associates as the "Baron," decided to remain in New Rochelle until he should hear from Switzerland in reply to the communication of Messrs. Banks & Keene; and with a view of living in the meantime as economically and as quietly as possible, spent some time in looking round for a plain and respectable family with whom he could board.

In the course of his rambles he called upon the widow of a shoemaker in Mechanics street, who is represented to be between fifty and sixty years old, and a mother of three children. The "Baron," believing that the accommodations offered him would meet his requirements, engaged board. From the day he entered the house the widow, he says, appeared resolved to "set her cap" for him and a conquest if possible. According to his story he was well supplied with intoxicating drinks, and while under the influence, Mrs. Delmar hired a carriage to convey himself and the "Baron" to the railway station, although living within three minutes' walk from it, and then proceeded by rail to New York, where the widow induced her companion to accompany her to Mayor Ely's office in the City Hall, where the couple were joined together in the bonds of matrimony. When the attendants in a good looking and intelligent man as the bridegroom evidently was should marry so old and homely a woman, and attributed his folly to a free use of the beverage he had imbibed, the late widow remarked that the "Baron" had been suffering terrible from chills and fever and was still almost delirious; that she wanted to take him home and nurse him properly, which she could do with more propriety, after their marriage.

On their return home the late widow feeling exceedingly joyous over her success in capturing the "Baron," with the prospective fortune, could not help telling her friends all about her wedding and her new husband. The "boys" of the village took the hint and were not slow in getting ready to give the happy couple a rousing serenade, and on Saturday evening a motley crowd assembled with fish horns, tin pans and patent screechers, and rendered Mechanics-street a pandemonium; but the bridegroom was still too far gone to understand and appreciate the fact that the "serenade" was intended for his ears. By Monday morning last he was so far recovered as to venture down stairs, when he was wished much joy and many other pleasant things which he could not understand. Perceiving that the hostess had lost her teeth, he jocularly asked her what she had done with them, when she replied that she was going to the city to get a new set, which she would have charged to him, and when questioned as to what she meant by that she remarked that as he was now her husband it was only right for her to foot the bills. The "Baron" then began to realize his real status, precipitately left the house, and proceeded to the office of his counsel and communicated to them all he knew. Inquiries at the Mayor's office confirmed the story, and his counsel at once commenced proceedings to have the marriage annulled.

**Influence of Flowers.**  
The pleasure of cultivating a flower garden, and the particular love for its products, are of late growth in me, but I confess it the more willingly because I think it the result of increasing wisdom rather than the folly of age. It affords a quiet amusement, full of subjects for observation and thought, and I find pleasure in all the work. I love to dig in the loose mold that seems to move almost as if it were alive. We should naturally have a liking for what we are made of and for what is made of us, and can get no where so near to ourselves, as by contact with the brown mold, that is nature's unspicily and unmanufactured material, alive with all the wonders of creation. No laboratory can produce such wonderful combinations as the earth. It dissolves, absorbs and purifies all things. The Parsee who, in their love and reverence for the earth, feared to pollute it with any corruption, overlooked its most beneficent attribute. It takes into itself all corruption and returns only purity and beauty. And for a little work what great returns one gets. I but give a little seed and the small charity of burial, (and it is not a mournful funeral either,) and an unpaid not only with plenty of flowers and seeds, but with the perpetual pleasure of its constant growth.

One must give care and companionship to plants and flowers to learn their grateful nature and feel their beneficent influences. Their healing virtues are not alone in their juices. Their "sweet influences" come nearer and stronger than that of the Pleiades. They are unrivaled, too, as friends and companions. Their conversation is always in charity and good sense. Spiciness, egotism, envy are never heard in a garden from anything that grows out of the ground. There are noxious gases that flowers can't abide. (are there people who can't succeed in growing flowers?) as a consequence they are always agreeable companions; never loud and disturbing; never cross and irritating. Go into the garden weary, angry or disappointed, and relief comes without rest, or the nauseous dose of rebuke or condolence. There is a presence—a spright in the woods that becomes domesticated in the garden. The "solitude" of the garden is pleasing, because in reality it is the choicest companionship. I would not have statues in a garden. The timid sylvan spirits that might hide behind a rock or a fountain, would flee from the glare of cut marble.

Then, how many things a little ground will make room for. My garden is scarce four square rods, and yet it would make a respectable catalogue to name all the plants in it. Almost all the countries of earth have contributed to it; and though I think that Flora has been about equally generous to all parts of the world, it is a satisfaction that our republic of flowers, like our political one, should be strengthened from all countries. The growth of flowers, too, is full of surprises; you wait for the bloom of a favorite with great interest, to-day you can find no sign of a bud, to-morrow the sly thing will, perhaps, show you half developed. Something has come to you from half round the world, you have read descriptions or seen pictures of its flowers, and you know just how they look; or you are watching patiently for a bloom you do not know, but suppose to be very rare and beautiful—or you failed to get flowers from a plant last year, and you do not think it will do better this year—in these, and a hundred other ways, they surprise, please, and disappoint you, and keep up your interest, so that having once fairly made their acquaintance, you dislike in a double sense to cut them.—*D. V. D. in Vick's Monthly for June.*

**A Regiment Marching Through Naples.**  
A regiment of infantry was coming down the strada. If I do not describe this regiment as the poorest regiment in the world, it is because it was precisely like every other body of Italian soldiery that I have seen. The men were small, spindle-legged, and slouchy. One might have taken them for raw recruits if their badly fitted white-duck uniforms had not shown signs of veteran service. As they wheeled into the Chiatamone, each man trudging along at his own gait, they looked like a flock of sheep. The bobbing mass recalled to my mind—by that law of contraries which makes one thing suggest another totally different—the compact grand swing of the New York seventh regiment as it swept up Broadway the morning it returned from Pennsylvania at the close of the draft riots in 1863. If the National guard had shuffled by in the loose Garibaidian fashion New York would not have slept with so keen a sense of security as it did that July night. The room directly under mine was occupied by a young English lady, who attracted by the roll of the drums, stepped out on her balcony just as the head of the column reached the hotel. In her innocent desire to witness a military display she probably had no anticipation of the tender fusillade she would have to undergo.

That the colonel should give the fair stranger a half furtive salute, in which he cut nothing in two with his sabre, was well enough; but that was no reason why every mother's son in each platoon should look up at the balcony as he passed, and then turn and glance back at her over his shoulder. This singular military evolution which I cannot find set down anywhere in Hardee's tactics, was performed by every man in the regiment. That these 1,000 or 1,200 warriors refrained from

kissing their hands to the blonde lady shows the severe discipline which prevails in the Italian army. Possible there was not a man of them, from the colonel's valet down to the colonel himself, who did not march off with the conviction that he had pierced that blue muslin wrapper somewhere in the region of the left breast. I must say that the meddlesome young English woman stood this enfilading fire admirably, though it made white and red roses of her complexion. The rear of the column was brought up, and emphasized, if I may say it, by an exclamation point of a personage so richly gilded and of such gorgeous plumage that I should instantly have accepted him as the king of Italy if I had not long ago discovered that fine feathers do not always make fine birds. It was only the regimental physician. Of course, he tossed up a couple of pill-like eyes to the balcony as he straggled by, with his plume standing out horizontally—like that thin line of black smoke which just then caught my attention in the offing.

**A Fatal Explosion.**  
That it is as dangerous to sleep over a toy shop as over a powder magazine was shown one evening in Paris recently when a small stock of ammunition for drawing-room pistols exploded in the Rue Beranger with such force that it brought to the ground a house inhabited by over 100 persons. The terror which the explosion caused in the immediate neighborhood was immense; and the audience in the Troisième Theatre Francaise, waiting for the curtain to rise, rushed from the house in alarm. The ground floor of the house was a toy shop and manufactory owned by a man named Blanchon. Above the shop there were twenty-eight rooms, all of which were tenanted, the total number of occupants being ninety-two; besides the Maison Blanchon itself, which employed sixty workmen and women. The explosion took place, luckily, at the Paris dinner time, about eight o'clock, so that most of the people were away. At half-past nine o'clock followed a second explosion bringing down the walls of the contiguous houses. This caused another panic for the moment. Many of the women had fainted from fright, and were brought down in the arms of the firemen. Others tore up their sheets and blankets and made ropes to descend with. One poor old man who had been paralyzed for years was rescued just as the floor of his room was about to fall in. Three little girls, who had been locked up while the mother went out to fetch some bread for dinner, were found playing in an attic, unconscious of the danger which surrounded them. Many other striking escapes occurred, such as that of a little girl who was found buried in the ruins with a table over her, which had to be sawed in two before she could be rescued, when she was found safe and sound. The rescuers worked all night at the ruins, beneath which the groans and shrieks of human beings were heard. A dozen bodies were found before morning.

**Little Johnny on the Opossum.**  
If there is anything in names this animal comes from Ireland, but them that's here calls themselves Jossams, like they were natif born. Jossams has a sharp nose and long, bald-headed tale, which is all ways cold, never mind the wether. Its jess like their tates was ded and money for the funeral pormance. The old ones has got a tobacco pouch on the outside of their stummucks, and wen the little ones is afraid they snuggles in and don't care a copper wot becomes of their old mother which is outside. When a dog finds a possum and it cant get to a tree it lays and pretends like ded. One time there was a dog, wich didnt kan possums found one a lyn lik ded; after rollin it over a wile an smellin it the dog winked his ear much as to say: "Mity good job for you, old feller, that you was dead fore I come along." And then the dog he lay down and went a sleep. Wen the possum see the dog a sleep it stood up on its feets to go a way, but jest then the dog woke up. Such a friten dog you never see too, but the dog most.

It got up, the dog did, and made for home yellin like its heart was brok, and fore it got home it had changed with scare from black Nufoundland pup to a ole-bul, wite like Gaffer Peterses hed! A man wich had a pet se possum, and a little chicken wich he thro ever so much of was a settin at his table one day ritin, when he seen the possum come in at the dore, and try to sneek under the bed. So the man he said: "Cleopatry," wich was the possum's name, "come here and do some tricks on the table." But the possum took lots of coaxin, and at last wex it was a settin up on the table beggin like dogs, the man heard his chicken go "Yeep yeep, yeep." Cleopatry she start-d, and stared ol around the room, like she said: "Wy, bless my sole, were is that poor chicken?" But the man he knew were it was well enough. Then the chicken went "Yeep, yeep," another time, and Cleopatry she ran to every side of the table and look over the edge and come back to the middle a shakin her hed, like she said: "I cant make it out at all; it beats me." But wen the man he went "Cluck cluck." Like a hen, the chicken stuck its hed out of the tobacco pouch on Cleopatry's stummuck, were it had been put away for to be eat.

Margaret Preston has a beautiful tender poem in harper's for May about Petrarch and Lauri. Petrarch; that was the fellow who died of a broken heart. For his love was another man's wife. Broke his heart when he was twenty-three, and died forty-seven years afterward, at the ripe old age of seventy years. A tough old cartilage, this masculine human heart, sisters. A man will smash it all to pieces in poetry and want to die in sonnet, and yet be as careful of his health and live on as long and persistently as though he was a Justice of the Supreme Court and never intended to die. We probably misjudge Petrarch, but he always struck us as a "heart-broken" old fraud, with more dyspepsia than heartache. Still we may have felt a little badly about it. Margaret Preston has seen his picture and she aught to know. *Haack-Eye.*

There is something sad about a harp, but whether it's the tone or the collection taken up by the player is what puzzles the philosophical mind.—*Detroit Free Press.*