

## IN THE ODD CORNER.

### QUEER AND CURIOUS THINGS AND EVENTS.

**Strange Cases of Disappearance—Remarkable Mysteries the Police Have Had to Solve—The Mystery of Dreams—Training Horses to Face Fire.**

**The Trout and the Ring.**  
The tale I sing is a song of spring,  
And is true beyond a doubt;  
The players are Miss Clara Carr,  
Myself, Uncle Jess and a trout.

\*Twas Clara's wish to take a fish  
From the bridge across the brook;  
So I rigged her a line, both strong and fine,  
And baited her Limerick hook.

With a spring and a snap a speckled old chap  
Snatched the bait and made the line sing;  
I gave her a shout at the sight of the trout,  
And Clara dropped her ring.

We searched for days, in many ways,  
We raked and dugged and sounded;  
We sifted ooze, but 'twas no use—  
In short, we never found it.

Many a trout was taken out  
Of the pool where the stream was crossed,  
And opened with care, but no ring was there,  
And we gave it up for lost.

\*Twas a year, I guess, when Uncle Jess  
Caught a big trout on the fly;  
It was plump and round, and weighed a pound,  
And he brought it home to fry.

His eyes shone bright as he told, that night,  
Of the ring lost a year ago;  
On the very spot where his trout was got,  
And never found, high nor low.

"Now what do you think?" asked he with a wink;  
'Til be you never could guess  
What was in that trout." "The ring!"  
they shout!  
"Nothing but in-ards," said Jess,  
—Forrest and Stream.

### Strange Cases of Disappearance.

The numerous mysterious disappearances which have been reported to the police in the past few weeks in this country recall some remarkable cases that occurred a few years ago in Europe.

One of these—the disappearance of a Chester governess—bears a striking resemblance to a famous case which occurred in the middle of the last century. A domestic servant named Elizabeth Canning suddenly disappeared from her home at Aldermanbury about 9 o'clock on the first night of 1753. There was not the slightest clue to her whereabouts, and every search made for her was in vain. Special prayers were offered in churches that the girl might return to her home. Four weeks passed, and then, on Jan. 29, hungry and half-clad, the girl knocked at her mother's door. She told an amazing story to the effect that she had been carried off by gypsies to a lonely house, where she had been starved and cruelly treated by an old woman, and at length two gypsies were arrested. They appeared before Henry Fielding, the novelist, who was at that time a magistrate at Bow street, and were afterwards sentenced at the Old Bailey—one to be hanged, and the other to be burned in the hand. The lord mayor was, however, by no means satisfied as to the truth of the girl's story, and caused fresh inquiries to be set afoot. The whole town was moved, and the people were split up into "Canningites" and "Gypsyites," just as France is now divided over the Dreyfus case. It created as much excitement throughout the country as the Tichborne case, and ultimately the girl was tried at the Old Bailey for perjury. The gypsies were set free, and after a trial of eight days, in which thirty-seven witnesses on one side contradicted twenty-seven on the other, Elizabeth Canning was transported for seven years. But nobody ever found out where she had spent those four weeks.

The disappearance of the Archduke Johann, of Austria, is, perhaps, the strangest story in the strange annals of the Austrian court. There are those who believe the archduke to be alive today, but his fate will probably remain a mystery. He married an opera singer in London, in spite of the fact that he was a nephew of the reigning emperor, and set sail from Liverpool for South America, in a ship which he bought and christened after his wife. The vessel was reported from Montevideo, but since that time nothing has been either heard or seen of the archduke. He has disappeared into space, and although repeated searches have been made by order of the Austrian emperor and the Hungarian government, no news has been received of his whereabouts since, many years ago, his ship was seen at Montevideo. His mother, who died not long ago, believed at the time of her death that her son was still alive.

The circumstances surrounding the disappearance of Sir Arthur Curtis, a Hampshire baronet, are very peculiar. He left England with a gold mining party bound for Klondike, and disappeared from the camp after some trifling dispute about the cooking. He left the camp on foot, without food or weapons, at a place fifty miles from any other habitation. A thorough search was made, but no trace could be found of the missing baronet, and Lady Curtis has obtained leave to presume that he is dead. But it is quite within the bounds of possibility that the baronet may walk into his house one of these days.

### Training Horses to Face Fire.

In the British army the four-legged recruits are drawn up in a ring round an instructor who fires a pistol. Some take the flash and report very quietly, and these are soon passed on to severer trials, while the others have les-

son after lesson until they are quite convinced that there is no danger to them, and before long you might fire a 7-pounder within a yard of them and they would hardly look around. After this they are taught to face fire—that is to say, to gallop fearlessly up to a line or square of infantry, blazing away with their rifles, and to charge batteries of quick-firing guns. Of course, only blank cartridges are used, and so to a trained horse going into battle for the first time there is no difference between the harmless thunder of the maneuvers and the death-dealing storm which sweeps over a battlefield. The poor brute only learns what the difference really is by bitter experience. When smokeless powder came into general use it was found that in many cases horses which would face the smoke of guns using black powder without flinching flinched and shied at the flash and roar unaccompanied by smoke. Continental opinion is somewhat divided as to the moral effect of smokeless powder on men and horses, but the general conclusion seems to be that in daylight it is not more terrifying than black powder, although some hold that to see men and horses struck down by an invisible agency must necessarily be so. But it is generally agreed that the use of smokeless powder at night has a much more disturbing effect than that of the old powder, because the flashes of the guns, unobscured by smoke, are a great deal more vivid. The fear thus inspired can, however, be overcome by training; but there is another fear which must, in the nature of the case, be felt for the first time on the battlefield, and that is the often uncontrollable terror produced both in men and horses by the whistling of bullets and the screaming and banging of shells. Some authorities have, indeed, said that since the introduction of smokeless powder and the great increase in the range and accuracy of weapons, it would be impossible to keep cavalry in hand under the fire of modern artillery, but this is probably an exaggeration.

### The Mystery of Dreams.

On an occasion during the civil war I dreamed that I was standing beside a road when there came marching along it a strong column of prisoners with guards, at intervals, on the flanks. I asked one of these guards who the prisoners were and where they had been captured. He informed me that they had been taken in an engagement with the enemy on the day before, and that there were nineteen hundred of them. I then asked some bystander what day of the month it was, and was told that it was such a day of a certain month, some six weeks later than the date of the dream. The whole dream was extremely distinct, and it made a strong impression on me. I related it to a number of my comrades within the next few days, and then thought of it no more.

Six weeks later, on the morning of the very day that had been mentioned in the dream as the date when the column of prisoners had passed before me, I was on picket two miles distant from the point where I had seemed to be when I saw them. It was soon after breakfast, and I was standing by the side of the road at the fire, talking to the officer of the picket, when an aide to the commanding general came riding down the road. He had been in a schoolfellow of our officer's at West Point, and reined up when he recognized his friend. He told us that he had good news, that there had been a sharp engagement with the enemy the day before, and that our people had captured nineteen hundred prisoners, who had just passed the headquarters that morning on their way to the rear. —New York Post.

### A Stenographer's Feat.

From the London Telegraph: Concerning the stenographic prowess of the late Thomas Allen Reed, whose death was recorded in these columns yesterday, a correspondent sends a curious anecdote. The late shorthand writer was once on professional business in Liverpool, and stayed in the same hotel as Charles Mathews, the actor. The latter had appeared in "My Awful Dad," and after the performance he strolled into the smoking room. Having heard of Mr. Reed's expertness as a note taker Mathews challenged the reporter to jot down certain passages from the character of Puff in Richard Brinsley Sheridan's "Critic." Reed expressed his willingness to have a try. Mathews, who was one of the best "patter" speakers on the stage, began to gabble the lines with startling rapidity, and the other strained every nerve to follow him. When the test was finished Reed, whose notes, despite the terrific speed at which he had been writing, were of neat and legible outline, merely inserted a vowel mark or two and handed them to an assistant who was called into the room, and who transcribed the characters with but few mistakes backward! "I should hardly have thought it possible, Mr. Reed!" was the astonished Charles Mathews' comment.

### Electric Power in Mining.

The application of electrically transmitted power to ore-crushing mills, situated at the mines is regarded as working almost a revolution in some mining operations. At the Sheba gold mines in Africa, water power is transmitted by wire for a distance of five miles, and an enormous saving in the cost of milling the ore has thus been effected. In a mountainous country no other means of conveying power is comparable with a flexible copper wire, which crosses hills and valleys, and winds one way or another with equal ease.

Gen. Shafter has a brother, James, who is a sheriff in Illinois.

## NOTES OF THE WHEEL.

### MATTERS OF INTEREST TO DEVOTEES OF THE BICYCLE.

**Century Runs and the Collins Bill in New York Towns—Bald Will Endeavor to Retain His Title—Hints for the Trade.**

### Century Runs and the Collins Bill.

Century, double century, and triple century runs have for some years been a feature of cycling life in and about New York city and other New York towns. Since the recent passage of the Collins bill to limit athletic contests to twelve hours' continuous duration certain interested individuals have begun to speculate regarding the legality of organizing and participating in such runs hereafter. These centuries amount to more than ordinary club runs, since medals and prizes of some value are offered to the winners and to all who complete the one, two or three hundred miles within the time limits set. They bring out sometimes 100 or 200 contestants of both sexes and all ages, from the immature youth to the venerable white-haired enthusiast.

While there is no reason for condemning the century run per se, there have been many objectionable features in some of these runs, and their elimination would be for the elevation of the pastime of cycling in the eyes of the general public. If, then, the Collins measure can be construed to cover these contests there will be small cause for regret. It would have the effect of shutting out those women and children and aged men who have too frequently figured in them, riding through rain and mud and finishing after twelve hours or more of exhausting exertion in a state miserable to behold. Any cyclist who is unable to ride 100 miles over ordinary country roads in twelve hours ought to be excluded from such a contest.

There is apparently nothing in the new law which will prevent any individual from going for a road record over any distance during any length of time nor to prevent ordinary club runs of 100 miles or more organized solely for the pleasure of the ride.

### The Valdare.

James Valdare, of this team, is one of the oldest trick bicyclists now before the public. He was born in Denver, Col., in which city he made his first appearance on Dec. 25, 1897, as one of the Kennedy brothers. In November, 1899, he branched out alone, and continued with his single act until May, 1894, when he married Bessie Carle, a non-professional, at Wilkes-Barre, Pa. After practicing two weeks Mrs. Valdare made her first appearance on the stage with her husband, forming the present team, at Holyoke, Mass. Since that date they have appeared in all the principal vaudeville houses in the east and were with Tony Pastor's road show for three successive seasons. In October, 1896, they appeared at Hammerstein's Olympia, this city, for eight weeks, after which they went to London and opened at the Alhambra in December and continued at that hall until April, 1897. They played at all the leading halls in England and on the continent for two years, and returned to America in November, 1898, opening at Keith's Union Square, New York and afterward playing Weber & Fields' music hall and Proctor's houses, also in this city. They were to have returned to Europe in February last, to open in Cologne, Germany, March 1, and fill other engagements, but the illness of Mrs. Valdare prevented them making the trip. During the current month they will play the Orpheum circuit, and the middle of May



THE VALDARES.

they intend to sail for Australia, where they will fill a six months' engagement with Harry Rickards. They return to Europe in February, 1900, where they are booked for twelve months.—New York Clipper.

### Bouhours-Walters Team Wins.

A large crowd of spectators was attracted to the Parc des Princes track, in Paris, by the announcement that Bouhours and Walters, respectively middle-distance champions of France and England, would be team mates in the fifty-kilometer paced tandem race. Four teams took part in the event, paced by eight electric tandems. At the start Champion and Digeon took the lead and gained 100 meters, Bouhours and Walters bringing up the rear. In the twelfth kilometer an accident happened to the tandem pacing Champion and Digeon and they lost 200 meters,

but a new motorcycle was put in and in the next two laps they were pulled into the lead again. Another accident in the twenty-first kilometer put them out of the race for good, however, and the Bouhours and Walters went to the front and steadily increased their lead until at the end of the thirty-one miles they were 1,000 meters ahead of the Foster brothers, who finished second. The time was 57 minutes, or a little more than 1:50 per mile.

### Bald Will Defend His Title.

Eddie Bald, the champion cyclist, will defend his title this year. Bald is the champion of America. He has held this title four years, and it is the attempt to retain the honor that has led many to marvel at his wonderful vitality and physical endurance. Never in the history of cycle racing has one man shown such form as Bald has displayed. His work has been phenomenal and his success the wonder of the cycling world. Today he is America's undisputed champion short-distance rider. In the flush of manhood, unmarked by the froads of time and training, this man stands the ideal athlete, with his gauntlet still in the arena, where he shied it when he first mounted a wheel in 1890. Bald is in excellent health, and his preliminary training demonstrates that his speed for which he is noted has not left him.

Racing cyclists in Canada will be compelled to take out licenses before



EDDIE BALD.

they will be permitted to ride at Canadian Wheelmen association meets. Each rider will be assessed 50 cents by the racing board. The licenses will be a sort of identification card, and will, it is thought, put a stop to "ringing," which has been so prevalent in late years.

Angus McLeod, the Canadian professional cyclist, of whose speed every Canadian interested in cycling is proud, is desirous of meeting Eddie Bald, Tom Cooper or any of the leading United States professionals in a match race.

### Value of New Zealand Trade.

In spite of the fact that the native Maoris do not take kindly to the bicycle, the volume of cycle trade transacted by New Zealand dealers is very extensive. Moreover, the country buys cycle material and parts in considerable quantities and the small maker does a thriving business. In the eyes of the Maoris, the bicycle is the latest instance of the white man's folly. The leading medicine man of a large Maori township has declared with unanswerable logic that "the man who rides a horse and shoves it along with his foot is a fool, and might as well walk." The saying is accepted as wisdom by the tribes, for the Maori holds that exertion of all kinds is an abomination, and that exertion which is not necessary for the primal needs of existence is self-exposed folly.

To illustrate the value of New Zealand as a foreign market, it may be stated that during the first three months of last year 1,955 bicycles were imported, valued at \$97,815. This, however, shows a considerable decrease from the corresponding period for 1897, for during that period 3,438 machines were imported, having a total valuation of \$194,190.

The four leading ports of entry are Wellington, Dunedin, Lyttelton and Auckland. Throughout the year 1897 there were 11,496 machines imported. Since 1894 New Zealand has taken upwards of \$2,000,000 worth of cycle goods from England and America.

### Cycle Path Movement Growing.

There has been a rush in New York to take advantage of the provisions of the Ellsworth side path bill, the preliminary steps to the appointment of sidepath commissions having already been taken by the wheelmen in twenty-one counties. This bill requires the county judge, upon the application of fifty resident wheelmen, to appoint a sidepath commission to raise by voluntary assessment a fund for the construction of the cycle paths, which are open solely to the use of those who have contributed to their construction and bear the evidence of having so done in the form of tags on the front forks of their bicycles. In Pennsylvania they are also pushing sidepath work under the Parshall bill, but under its provisions the paths will be open to all wheelmen, the expense of construction being borne by a general tax on cyclists. This cycle path legislation is the newest feature of the good roads movement.

### Why Tommy Is Good.

Aunt Sophia—"And is Tommy a good little boy at school?" Tommy—"Yes, auntie." Aunt Sophia—"And why is Tommy a good little boy?" Tommy—"Cause it's better fun to see the other boys get a licking than to get one yourself."—Boston Transcript.

## SCIENTIFIC TOPICS.

### CURRENT NOTES OF DISCOVERY AND INVENTION.

**A Million Million—The Probable Age of the World—Turning Wine into Water, an Experiment—Electricity as a Purifier—Saluting a Phonograph.**

### A Million Million.

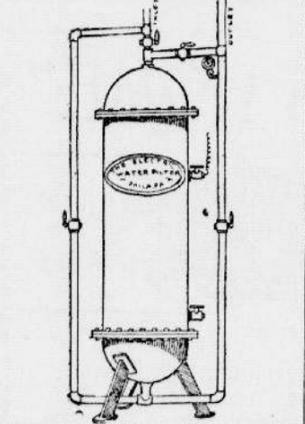
Prof. Wagstaff, whose very name suggests a pleasing first cousinship to Shakespeare, has lately been amusing himself and his audience at Gresham College by speculations as to what might have happened if the father of our human race had given up delving and taken to figures. Let us suppose that Adam had set himself to count a million million, or, in figures, 1,000,000,000,000. We will imagine that he could count three in a second, which, though not exactly rapid ciphering, will be found ample, if taken continuously. Now, if 6,000 years have elapsed since the gracious amenities of Eden formed the cradle of humanity, Adam would have been working for 189,216,000 seconds, and have reached a total of 567,648,000,000 figures. In other words, his task of counting a million millions would still have been unaccomplished by over 400,000,000,000 of digits.

All of which goes to prove what? There are many possible conclusions. The first is, of course, that Prof. Wagstaff is a very ingenious and by no means melancholy mathematician, but that hardly needed proof. A second deduction, which we advance with all humility, is that if Adam had only had habitual recourse to harmless dissipation of this arithmetical kind, instead of betraying marital weakness and a fondness for fruit, his descendants would have been very much better off morally and spiritually, though not, perhaps, in material comforts. And a third conclusion, eminently gratifying to those who refuse to believe that there is any serious discord between religion and science, is that Prof. Wagstaff, no doubt a man of distinction in scientific attainments, accepts without any demur Bishop Ussher's chronology.

According to the divine, the world was created in 4004 B. C., and that added to the 1898 years which have elapsed since the Christian era, makes in round numbers the six thousand years on which the whole calculation depends. Some wayward "scientists" have dogmatically affirmed that the world has been wagging along a good many more centuries than Ussher supposed, although there is a serious difference, it is true, in his matter before the astronomers and the geologists. So, after all, perhaps if Adam had been reasonably industrious, he would have had time to accomplish his task, unless his brain had given way under the strain. Most of us have such vague ideas as to the meaning of larger figures that it is as well to be reminded by so happy an illustration how many units go to the making of a million. The only other conceivable fashion in which such instruction could be acquired is to become a South African "boss" of mines and diamonds, and that process, much as we may desire it, is, fortunately or unfortunately, not open to the majority of us.—London Telegraph.

### Purified by Electricity.

The value of electricity as a means of purifying water has long been known, but it is only recently that the current has been applied to clearing water, in small quantities for household use. Such a filter is shown herewith. The current has, it is claimed, the power of decomposing and destroying all existing micro-organisms, dis-



case germs, noxious gases, disagreeable tastes and odors. The water, upon entering the inlet pipe, is conveyed to the top of the filter, where it passes through a very fine-mesh sieve, with a view of catching the larger foreign particles, and, after leaving the sieve, it is brought into direct contact and forced to pass through two perforated metallic plates, both charged with the electric current, which causes a thorough killing and destruction of all live matter. In order to cleanse the filter it is only necessary to reverse the stream, as in the ordinary types of filters.

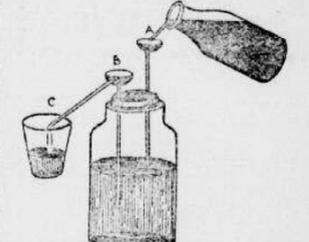
### Saluting a Phonograph.

It will be remembered that Queen Victoria spoke a message of friendship and good will to Emperor Menelek of Abyssinia after the recent victory in the Sudan. The message created a marked impression on his majesty. The royal words were delivered on a Sunday, the phonograph working excellently. The tones of her majesty's voice were repro-

duced with remarkable clearness, and Menelek was so pleased that nothing would satisfy him but to hear the message at least a dozen times. First he would listen to the words as they came from the trumpet of the phonograph, and then he would use the ear tubes. When his curiosity and delight had been satisfied, he relapsed into solemn silence and ordered the royal salute, and remained standing while seventeen guns were fired. Menelek himself has tried to send a message by the phonograph, so that he appreciates the difficulty of securing a satisfactory record. —Scientific American.

### Turning Wine into Water.

Turning wine into water is by no means a profitable business, but it requires little outlay for machinery, etc., in order to make water from wine. A



glass pickle bottle is required, and the outside of it must be covered with paper or painted black. You also require a walnut and a few feet of very thin glass tubing.

First partly fill the jar with water and then cork the bottle tightly with a large cork, through which two holes, large enough to admit the glass tubing, have been bored. Divide your tubing into three parts and place one through the cork into the bottle, but not touching the water. Another part is to be pushed through the cork and into the center of the liquid. Now take one-half walnut shell, and bore in the bottom of it a small hole and affix it to the top of the piece of tubing which is not touching the water. The other half shell is to have a similar hole in the center, and the tubing which goes into the water is to be pushed through it, leaving about one-quarter of an inch protruding from the bottom of the shell, as shown in the diagram. A second hole is now to be cut in this shell and the third piece of tubing inserted, just as shown in the illustration. All joints should then be sealed up with wax.

Now, if some claret be gently poured into the shell marked A, the air in the bottle will force the water up the other tube into the shell, B, where it will find its level and run out of the third tube. Thus wine is poured into the bottle and water comes out. The bottle must be coated with black or paper in order that the water inside is not seen. In the illustration an ordinary glass bottle is shown in order to clearly define the arrangements of the tubes.

### Walking on Water.

There is a man in Berlin who surprises onlookers by exhibiting himself walking on the River Spree. He uses water shoes, not unlike snowshoes, they being about twelve feet long and no broader than his foot. The shoes are, however, not broad pieces of wood, but hollow zinc cylinders, tapering to a point at each end, the feet being strapped to the centers. Along the bottoms of each shoe five square flaps are hinged at right angles to the length of the shoe. The hinges of the flaps allow them to bend backward but not forward, so that when he moves one foot forward through the water the flaps beneath that shoe swing back and lie flat, offering no resistance to the movement, while the flaps on the other shoe remain vertical and resist to some extent the tendency of that foot to slide back. By this means, though every forward step involves a slight slide backward, he shuffles along with surprising speed and safety.—Philadelphia Times.

### Hair Green as Grass.

In the districts surrounding the copper mines of Cornwall, Cuba, Chile and other places where the ore is abundantly found a curious sight is to be seen in the shape of men with hair that is quite green. This is not, as might be imagined, a fashionable fad, but the grave result produced by the men's surroundings. The crude ore, in order to secure a more marketable article, is roasted in enormous furnaces, and it is some strange emanation from the smelted copper that effects this chemical change in the hair of the miners and turns it as green as grass. Investigations have proved that the fumes from the furnaces contain a certain quantity of arsenical matter, and this causes the startling change, although the texture and growth of the hair suffers no injury.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

### Dollar Watches Popular.

About 175,000 dollar watches were sold by a single firm of manufacturers last year. The same firm estimates that the sale for this year will reach a million. This is a pretty good advance from the figures of 1894, the first year that the dollar watch really dawned upon the country. The firm sold 30,000 that year. The price of the watch is surprising enough, but the really astonishing thing about it is the fact that a guarantee goes with the time-piece. A dollar watch is one thing. A guaranteed dollar watch is another. The dollar watch is really an evolution of the small clock.

In his younger days Lyman J. Gage, secretary of the treasury, was an athlete, and could lift a thousand pounds. —Philadelphia Press.