Major General Crook says: "It is my firm conviction that the Indian should have the full rights of the American citizen, including the ballot. I know that I may be considered hasty, but I say: 'Give them the ballot now.'"

The retired list of our navy is swelling. There are fifty Rear Admirals, fifteen Commodores, fourteen Captains, twelve Commanders, twenty Lieutenant Commanders, forty-one Lieutenants, forty-six Surgeons, twenty Paymasters, and seventy-two Engineers.

There is a good deal of abuse heaped upon Americans for sins of omission and commission performed while traveling in Europe, but it is to be set down to their credit that the American travelers are said to have been the coolest and most self-possessed class during the recent earthquakes. Their superiority to fear was marked and commented on all sides.

It is impossible not to admire the pluck of the Mayor of Nice, France, who undertook to restore the confidence of the frightened people by giving his official assurance immediately after the recent earthquake that the worst was over, and that they had nothing more to fear. A Mayor who can guarantee a city against an earthquake shock is a Mayor worth having.

The managers of the International Jubilee of railways at Paris are actively engaged in preparing for the opening. The various modes and methods of railroad operation in different countries will be illustrated, and a belt line constructed, on which English, Austrian and Russian trains will pass up and down steep gradients, switch from track to track and run through tunnels.

Now a scientific person has explained why Hanlan is the great rower that he is. Dr. Sargent, of the Harvard gymnasium, has examined him, and says that he has "a great head and an excellent body all the way down to the legs." Judged by a standard of perfection the oarsman's legs and arms are too short. Dr. Sargent says that this defect has made Hanlan the oarsman he is, and that the power from the shoulders, back and loins, together with the immense leverage given by the short legs and arms, is what has made him almost the perfection in build for a sculler.

The people of Dodge City, Kansas, are now marveling over the discovery of a large bone, which has recently been brought into that city from a point about sixty-five miles southwest, near the Cimarron river. This mammoth fossil was unearthed by some workmen while digging a well at the depth of about forty-five feet, and below a stratum of sandstone. The length of this colossal femur is about 6 feet 8 1-2 inches; weight, 96 pounds; circumference of shaft, 20 inches; head of bone, (femur,) 24 inches in circumference; lower end or knee, 39 inches in circumference. Further excavations will be made at an early date with the hope of discovering the entire skeleton.

Do you know that people like to be humbugged?" asked a physician of a Philadelphia *Call* reporter. "It's a fact, and a large percentage of the practice of the most successful doctors is pure humbuggery. A great many people are filled with immaginary aches and pains. They've had them for years in their imagination, and have grown to regard them with a tenacious affection. When they consult a physician about them they do not like to have the matter pooh-poohed. They do not wish to be told there is nothing the matter with them. They want to be told they are sick; to be sympathized with, and to be prescribed for. They then pay the fee willingly. Some of the best and most persistent patients I have are as sound as a dollar. I listen to their recital of their symptoms right along, prescribe some harmless as well as useless dose and charge it in my little bill. It is to this little diplomacy of mine that I attribute much of my success."

The Department of Agriculture reports an increase in the total number of horses, mules, cows and oxen owned in this country as compared with last year. The greatest increase, says *Bradstreet*, is shown in oxen, while mules show a slight excess over last year. In the case of sheep and hogs considerable decreases are shown. The following table shows the total number at this time and at a corresponding period last year:

Stock.	1886.	1887.
Horses	12,077,657	12,496,743
Mules	2,052,593	1,117,141
Milch cows	14,235,388	14,552,083
Oxen and other cattle	31,275,242	33,511,750
Sheep	48,322,331	44,759,314
Swine	46,002,043	44,612,836

As to values, the decline has not been very large, being greatest in the case of cattle, which show the largest increase in number. Horses, sheep and hogs have increased in value, while mules have slightly decreased. The total values of the various classes of animals are shown in the following:

Stock.	1886.	1887.
Horses	$980,823,206	$991,685,755
Mules	163,381,076	167,957,388
Milch cows	389,985,523	378,789,569
Oxen and other cattle	661,956,274	669,137,936
Sheep	92,443,897	89,872,830
Swine	197,909,804	200,043,291
Totals	$2,365,159,802	$2,490,586,938

The total value of all the farm animals of the country is placed at $2,490,586,938, an increase of $125,427,076 over this time last year. The greater share of the increase is due to the increased number and value of horses. The decline in the value of cows has been charged chiefly to the low price of butter.

THE FIRST VIOLET.

Sweet violet, starred with the dew,
What wondrous pains I took
To hunt its pretty eyes of blue,
Along the babbling brook;
Sweet violet that bloomed for you
Within that sunny nook.

The loving warmth of southern skies
Shone on its mossy bed.
And soon it oped its sleepy eyes,
And raised its drooping head,
And gazed about in wild surprise
To find the snow had fled.

Blue as the waters of the bay,
Sweet herald of the spring;
To him whose skies are cold and gray,
I said, perchance 'twill bring
A dream of bursting buds to-day,
And whir of robin's wing.

—*Belle Bremer, in The Current.*

CAMELEON.

BY ROSE H. LATHROP.

"What I am astonished at is your power over the confirmed bachelors," said Felina Drake. "You are too young for that; but something compensates, evidently."

Melly, whom some of her friends called Cameleon, was sitting over the fire in her private parlor discussing her various lovers with Felina. Fortunately Felina was engaged to be married, and was not in a position to feel envy or to watch unsympathetically the preliminary steps toward an engagement on the part of her friend. It was an event which she eagerly desired, that they might be entirely mutual in their experiences. Felina might have been jealous of the Cameleon's beauty; but the young girl was of that charming class of lovely women whose members appeal to their own sex by their perfect good nature and childlike innocence.

"Oh, I can tell you how that happens," the Cameleon responded, in her cheerful voice. "Clever Mr. Courtney told me that my face would last well, and that he had seen hundreds of belles fade in a few seasons, which had almost made a misanthrope of him."

"Well, I think it was fine distinction," Felina acquiesced. "Younger men don't think of that, and fancy that what is chiefly youth is downright beauty. But your precious countenance will certainly mature to its credit, and I can't imagine you anything but excellent, whether time pulls your face perpendicularly or horizontally! Plump or thin, pale or rosy, Cameleon, it will be sure to remain a face to conquer everybody."

Melly sighed.

"Are you sorry for anything," asked Felina.

"Why, it seems rather laborious," the young belle answered. "You see, I have got to accept one of them—these inevitable men—and it is so hard to choose. There are so many professions represented, for one thing. The handsomest and most fascinating of all my admirers, in a way, is Mr. Bruce-Lyman; and you will admit that his being in preparation for a fashionable doctor of medicine is fatal. I had not been engaged to him for two days, Felina (I never told you that I did accept him at first), when he prescribed for a little cough which I quite enjoyed and would not have had cured for the world. But it was so lucky! I might have actually married him and heard all my life about drugs." Melly discussed her friend's hand-embroidery for a moment and then continued: "I suppose I rushed to the other extreme after breaking with the doctor, for I allowed Mr. William Fenimore to give me an exhaustive catalogue of his qualifications for making me a good husband. He has all his time to himself until he inherits from his father, when he must devote some attention to the estates; and he said that we could travel all over the world, and that he did not need any society but mine, and should be happy in China if I were his wife. It looked to me like too much leisure, you know, and I was afraid that he had a passion for traveling, and that I should become a thorough Arab if I married him. How could I employ Redfern in Asia? I decided positively against Mr. Fenimore. When Mr. Dalgian offered himself I was very much puzzled. Here was a fine social position, in which I should probably have been a leader from beginning to end and gone down in civic history as the beautiful Mrs. Dalgian, who entertained the elite of both hemispheres with such consummate grace. Mr. Dalgian is not by any means uninteresting. I often think of him, and the flowers he sent me were something astonishing, Felina; they showed such imaginative taste, and he insisted on my keeping this ring as an act of charity. Isn't it beautiful? He made his family call upon me, and seemed to think he had accomplished a great work for his century when they had paid me their respects. But oh, Felina, I could not endure those Miss Dalgians. I was afraid I should grow to be like them. They seemed to be inconvenienced by their ancestors, as if they had them still with them, and in a particularly paralyzing condition, either as ghosts or mummies; and they neither looked to the right nor to the left for fear of catching sight of one of the old curmudgeons. It was such a pity, but I had to tell Mr. Dalgian that I could not think of it—that I was too fond of the present."

"I must say, Cameleon, that is one of your little naughtinesses to keep the poor youth's gift on your finger. Just as long as you keep it he will think that you may relent; and I hope you will send it back to-morrow, dear. Meanwhile, give it to me," Felina felt bound to say.

The girl complied, pouting, and handing her the ring.

"Then there was Dick. Dear Dick! He had no money in particular, and his family were up-country people. But how equal to anything he was, Felina! How, he talked of anything, from apple cider to the queer old college professors when they were quizzed. I wanted dreadfully to accept Dick. But he would not give me a single definite idea of what he could offer me in the way of an establishment. He said, to be sure, that we should live in Connecticut somewhere, at the old homestead—where I suppose the ceilings were rickety, you know—until he had made a reputation as an architect. It was very vague. It would be so nice if one were allowed to take a fine young man like Dick and give him Mr. Dalgian's position and Mr. Bruce Lyman's reputation, with Mr. Fenimore's money.

"It is to be hoped, Cameleon, that you will find some one who combines almost everything. I wish he would hasten to the front, or our chance of getting married on the same day will be very slim, indeed. I almost feel inclined to "will" you to fall in love in spite of yourself."

"Why, I *do* fall in love, dear," pleaded Melly, "but something always changes my mind. As I say, it is becoming a positive labor to consider the matter so closely, day after day. It is like skating—love is charming, but requires constant attention, or one ends a complete wreck somewhere under the ice. There's the hall bell now. I wonder if it is any one for me."

"If it is," replied Felina, "let me wait here for you, Melly. I would rather go on with my embroidery than sit by while they talk to you."

"It is some one I have not told you about," said Melly, a moment later, looking up from the card; "he has such a queer name, hasn't he! Anthony Cowl. It is quite a new experience to be admired by a man of such a name and a character which well coincides with it. Excuse me, Felina dear; and wouldn't it be funny if I came back engaged?" The Cameleon embraced and kissed her friend with genuine fervor and arranged her lovely hair at the mirror, and then swept out of room. She stood at the head of the stairs for a breath's space, and then returned to her parlor and put her lips near Felina's ear, whispering: "If Mr. Cowl would only prove irresistible!"

As Felina sewed she often smiled. It was amusing to her to guess, every few minutes, how the courtship was progressing; how the suitor with the odd name was becoming elated and how the rare young flirt upon whom he gazed was involuntarily bringing him to the denouement which had proved so fatal to a dozen other men, as if the girl's heart were Swiss machinery which could only accomplish one thing, although it seemed so human. And Felina also gave a smile to the reflection that the Cameleon herself was acting in perfectly good faith, and was most eager to discover a genuine interest in one of these admirers; but her good sense and her unlimited opportunities stood much in the way of a final decision.

"I really don't know what to say," the Cameleon hesitatingly confessed to Mr. Anthony Cowl, looking down at her lapful of black lace, as she locked her fingers together. "I do like you so much; and I think your mother is perfectly sweet. But I suppose I am awfully young to choose what my destiny shall be; and perhaps you are a little old to be my destiny; and then, I never expected so be a Mrs. 'Cowl.' It would seem so strange!" The Cameleon had a mental vision in which people talked about "the beautiful Mrs. Cowl."

"Seems to me," said her lover, with glistening eyes and flushed cheeks, glad enough to find himself in the girl's presence again after a miserable absence, "seems to me it is a pity to put me off because my name is Cowl, and I have five years more in my existence than I exactly reqire. Life is short, at any rate, and happiness is never at its climax for a very long space, no matter what our fortune is. Perhaps if you married me your happiness would be as complete for as long a season as if you married a young fellow nearer your own age. And as for name you might find people paid a good deal of respect to it when coupled with fine dinners and a box at the opera."

The Cameleon looked up at him somewhat furtively, but he caught her glance as he devoured every motion she made. He became eagerly expectant.

"I was thinking to tell the truth," said she, "that you kept your temper wonderfully under a severe test; for people usually adore their own names. I am sure I am much obliged to you for bearing with my whims, Mr. Cowl."

"Don't—don't be so gentle and encouraging," he exclaimed, "unless you will let me kiss your hand!"

Again she gazed at him from under her lashes, while her lover was on the alert to spring to his feet and kneel at her side if he saw a permission in her face.

"May I—may I kiss your hand?" he asked, with trembling lips.

"I was just thinking how very—very considerate you are of my wishes," she murmured, but shaking her hand. "I do think your mother is so sweet. Mr. Cowl," she added, irrelevantly; and then explained, with a burst of confidence: "You know what a lady would not like!" In a moment she went on: "Did you ever do anything which people told you was remarkably noble?"

"No, indeed. Why?"

Again Melly treated Anthony Cowl to a searching but subtle glance.

"You're the first man I ever met who failed to tell me so," she said, smiling. "But wouldn't you make a great sacrifice for me?"

"I hardly believe I would," answered her admirer. "A sacrifice would necessitate my being wholly absent from you, or something of the sort, to strike a death-blow to my happiness in you. I should be a fool to make any sacrifice for you worthy of the name."

The Cameleon laughed outright.

"You seem willing to be quite honest," she commented. "But, Mr. Cowl, aren't you afraid to become engaged to me, even if I am to be persuaded, considering that I have changed my mind very often already, so that they actually call me a Cameleon? I was talking about it with your mother the last time I called, and she said that I would probably go on changing my mind until I was 20 unless something very extraordinary happened, just as a brook runs ever so irregularly down a mountain-side until it reaches a great fissure which hems it firmly in."

"Well, I shall be satisfied if you become engaged to me," Anthony Cowl replied. "I can't ask you to marry me first, you know, and have the engagement afterward, although I might prefer it. It is just possible you might really marry me, after all."

"I suppose I am very ambitious," Melly remarked. "I suppose I have such a sense of my own importance that I think only of myself and believe that nothing is good enough for me."

"I certainly don't feel good enough for you," Cowl declared, with a little sigh. "But I don't pay so much attention to that. I love you with my whole soul, as the most beautiful woman I could ever dream of seeing; and a woman with a look in her eyes and a tone in her voice that awakened something in my heart that gives me the greatest joy I ever felt. You're just the sort of woman to grow nobler and stronger every year and face the misfortunes of life as bravely as if you were a sister of mercy."

The Cameleon turned a little toward him. "Why, don't I seem frivolous in the extreme?" And isn't that agreeable to you?"

"Who dares call you frivolous?" cried Anthony Cowl, springing up.

"Oh, I shouldn't know what to do with myself if I was anything but silly and easy-go-lucky," she protested, merrily smiling. "Oh, I am so sorry! For I see that you would tire of my frivolity!"

"If you would only promise to be my wife!" he exclaimed, sitting down nearer to her, and gazing deeply into her eyes.

"Bless me, I never do that! I just consent to be 'engaged,' and they go to papa and have a talk; and then, in a few days, I tell papa that I have been forgetting an objection, and he will have to manage to break the engagement for me."

The Cameleon looked so innocent, startled, and half-amused that Cowl burst out laughing.

"Ah, well," he said, "it will not be very hard for you to become engaged to me, then, will it? That is all I ask, with all its risks and possible calamity. Let me hear you say that you 'engage' yourself to me and I will rejoice very much, and call every day, and leave it to your generosity to do me justice, and weigh my love at your leasure."

Melly sagely shook her head.

"If it only wasn't for Dick," she sighed, sinking back into an attitude of dejected musing.

"'Dick' is of no consequence," Anthony Cowl calmly answered. "Let him go, and give your hand to me."

She had covered her eyes for an instant, but she quickly glanced up. She laughed, blushed, and clapped her hands in delight.

"Why, I certainly thought that would make you angry!" she confided to him, giving him a melting look. "I wonder what your mother could have said to you about me! Did she tell you anything that we had said?"

"She only told me you were in every way adorable."

"I thought possible she had seen now much I c-cared——" All at once the Cameleon held out one of her hands to her enchanted lover, with a radiant face and lowered eyes. "You may kiss it!" she said.

It was a love-match.—*The Epoch.*

A Fight With Wildcats.

A California letter in the *Atlanta Constitution* says: "You may talk about your mountain lion," said an old hunter, as we rode slowly up the Arroyo one early morning after the rain, with the whimpering dogs all about, "but I would rather take my chances with one at any time than with a pair of wildcats at close quarters. It just seems as if a cat loses its head like. They know they're caught, and they are just bound to have it out if it takes all summer. They fight worse when there is a pair, just like a mountain lion. I remember one day, I was out on a hunt in the winter of 1877, when game was so thick here you could have it for the asking, and I never went down into the Arroyo without seeing a deer. We started down where the railroad bridge is now and worked up. I, having about ten hounds, covered the track very well. We had had a rain the day before and there were so many tracks that the dogs were baying in every direction—enough to set a man crazy. I had one old dog that I thought everything of. I knew her voice out of the whole pack, and when it began to speak I knew there was music in the air and game too. All at once she let out up in a little canyon that they use now to get up on the highlands, and, putting the spurs into my horse, I was over there in a few minutes. There she was, rushing this way and that, nosing here and there, and there soon, was a growl and a snarl and it seemed to me as if a dozen wild cats and dogs had come together. I saw that the dog was in for it, so I tumbled off the horse, and, with gun as a club, literally waded in. As is generally the case, at such times, being carried away with excitement, I nearly laid my dog out at the first blow, and before I could make another attempt, one of the cats, for there were two of them, flew at me and took me by the shirt just at the breast, and in a moment I was in tatters and rags, after the fashion of the beggar who is supposed to have come to town. The beast had me by such a firm grasp that I dropped the gun and took her in both hands and attempted to tear her off, she biting and clawing me all the time. Finally I got out my knife and drove it into her, and she dropped, snarling and clawing and reaching for my legs until the last, a type of viciousness. While I had been entertaining this one the old hound had been attending to the other, and had, though fearfully torn, mastered the big cat and killed it. So we went out ahead, but when we compared notes the old dog and me were in much the same box and didn't get over it for weeks."

The Versatile Drummer.

Have you ever considered the drummer and the important part he plays in an orchestra? The little boys always keep their eyes on him, but grown up people pay him the least attention of any of the musicians. Why, he works harder than any of them, and if you have ever sat near the corner of the theatre occupied by him you will learn what a versatile man he must be to hold the position. He has kettle drums, bass drums, snare drums, cymbals and triangle to keep constantly employed, but these are not all of the incidentals of his position, by any means. Have you ever heard him play the xylophone, blow the bird whistle, the rooster call, the cuckoo and the locomotive whistle? Every drummer has these instruments to handle at least once a week, but he has besides sleigh bells to jingle, castanets to rattle, anvil to beat, tambourines, bones, sandpaper and half a dozen other things to introduce on occasions. Sometimes he has to combine two or three of them—in fact he is the effect of the orchestra.

If he wanted to do so, he could throw his brethren into irretrievable confusion, and to show what he can do if he desires, see the case of Field Musician Francis Wild, who was court-martialed for a funny offense, included under the head of insubordination. He was stationed on Governor's Island and a member of Company C, and he effectually routed the band in which he played. When Schubert's serenade was played, instead of remaining silent, he flourished his drumsticks and disconcerted the leader, and he remained silent when a martial piece was being played. He broke the heart of the cornetist, for during a pathetic ballad when the B flat was "soloing," Drummer Wild broke in upon it with a series of thumps on his kettle drum, and at the close wound up with a solo on the bass drum. He got fifteen days at hard labor, but he proved the power of the drummer. —*Globe Democrat.*

Marching Step of European Soldiers.

A report has been drawn up at the German Ministry for War on the marching capabilities of the different European armies. It appears that the length of each step of a Russian soldier, according to regulations, is 71 centimetres; the German, 80; the French, Austrian, Italian, Belgian, Swedish, and Swiss, 75, an average of about 29½ inches. The Italian soldier does 120 steps in a minute; the French from 112 to 116; the German, 115; the Austrian, 118, and the Belgian, 110. An Italian regiment marches at the rate of 90 metres in the minute; a German regiment 89; an English, 88, and a French, 86.

Testing Kerosene Oil.

Manufacturers of kerosene oil say that all lamps are safe with good oil, and that the quality of oil can be ascertained by the following test: Take a pint tin cup, fill it nearly full of water warmed so that an ordinary thermometer immersed in it will show 120°, pour a small quantity of oil on the water, stir it a little, then pass a lighted match quickly but closely over the surface of the oil once; if it ignites, the oil is unsafe. If from three to five gallons at a time be purchased, and this test be made, people can protect themselves.—*Frank Leslie's.*

THE WHITE HOUSE.

THE PRIVATE APARTMENTS IN THE EXECUTIVE MANSION.

How They Are Decorated and Furnished and Pervaded by a Womanly Presence—A Peep at Presidential Privacy.

No greater contrast can be imagined than that between the east and west extremities of the second floor of the White House, writes Hester M. Poole in the New York *Commercial*. In the one are waiting rooms and the offices of the chief executive; in the other, the private sitting and sleeping rooms of the family of the President. Here congregate diplomats, statesmen and office seekers; there flits a youthful figure, sparkling with careless happiness. Only a few feet separate the centres of official and of social life—yet what a space divides them.

The west corridor, directly over that separating the state and family dining rooms, is sufficiently commodious and pleasant to be used as a private sitting room, in place of any specially arranged for that purpose. Forty feet long by nearly half that width, the stairway encroaches but little upon its spaciousness. A low, semi-circular window, ten feet wide, overlooking the magnificent state building at the west, and a skylight of stained glass, lately added, give ample light.

Indeed, it is a very inviting spot. The axminster carpet of wine color, amber and blue, harmonizes sufficiently well with the light gray walls, which are finished with a frieze of Japanese figures and a ceiling of silver and brown. Ebony cabinets bearing treasures of porcelain, alabaster and bronze break the corner angles; ebony tables, over which are flung scarfs of old gold and crimson, stand in elegant confusion, a long pier glass reflects the graceful form of the mistress of the mansion, and Turkish chairs and lounges woo to revery and repose. Many a womanly touch on every hand betrays a charm that only delicacy and refinement can command.

On either side of the deep-seated, quaint west window, draped with Madras muslin, and bordered with jeweled glass, are stands of growing plants, and the corridor is rendered brilliant with one of those luminous canvases, by Bierstadt, which seems to palpitate with light. Here it is that all the ladies of the White House—especially the immediate predecessor of Mrs. Cleveland—have informally entertained their intimate friends.

On either side of the corridor, portiere-covered doors give entrance to the private chambers, That on the north front overlooking Lafayette square and separated only from the western corner by a narrow room now used as a private sitting room by Mrs. Cleveland, was refitted for Mr. Arthur's occupancy after the death of General Garfield. The chamber, about twenty feet square, remains almost exactly as it was during the occupancy of Mr. Arthur. Not so the long, narrow room adjacent on the west, used as a sleeping chamber, dressing room or office, according to the requirements of the household; it has now reached the dignity of the boudoir of the youthful mistress, who sheds over this portion of the domicile the radiance of her winning presence. Gone is the office furniture with which it was filled before her advent; its place is filled with all sorts of things calculated to make a beauty-loving woman comfortable and content. The old gray-green walls shine with blue and gold, and the hangings of the same colors are enlivened, here and there, with touches of red. Here birds, dogs and cats of rare breeds form the nucleus of a happy family, and here the bright, cheery young mistress finds relief from those formal receptions which must sorely tax the patience of even the gayest and sweetest-tempered soul.

The portion north of the corridor has never before been taken by the family of the President; on the other side, the south side, with its far outlook over the sinuous Potomac and the blue hills beyond, are situated those rooms which are filled with reminiscences of the last half-century. Directly opposite the blue room is the dainty chamber occupied last year by Miss Cleveland, the same in which Garfield spent those long weeks of patient suffering. In the red room, then given up to the use of his attendant physicians, Grant slept, and before that Lincoln there nightly laid the head that grew weary unto death with the weight of a nation's woes. Before him, these two rooms were occupied by Buchanan and Pierce and their predecessors.

To-day General Garfield's room, occupied by Mrs. Folsom whenever she visits the White House, is as bright and cheery as possible. It was Miss Cleveland's chamber, and the narrow dressing-room on the west, opposite Mrs. Cleveland's private sitting-room, contained her desk and library. Seated in the corner overlooking the State Department and the lovely view to the south, the sister of the President sought that congenial literary occupation which was her peculiar relief from official duties.

The red chamber, or Prince of Wales room, as it is sometimes called, was fitted up many years ago when the heir of the English throne made his only tour through this country. Situated next to the room just described, it will be remembered as that in which Garfield's physicians held their famous consultations. Furniture of solid rosewood, curtains and hangings of dark, mixed colors, in which crimson and gold are dominant, a cabinet of curious Japanese workmanship, sevres vases of fine quality—these are its principal features.

Next comes the library, formerly used as the sitting-room. Through the encroachments of official business it is now the private office of the President. Here he may be seen by the privileged visitor sitting day after day at his desk in front of the window, through which the sun streams in over his shoulder. Though there seems nothing wonderful about it, this desk has a history. Years ago, after incredible hardships, in search of Sir John Franklin, the staunch English ship Resolute was abandoned by the crew in the Arctic Ocean. A portion of the heart of oak was, in another voyage, carried back to England, and from it this desk was made at Victoria's command. Presented by her to General Grant, it has become a part of the fixtures of the White House.

The library, which measures about thirty feet by twenty, follows, in shape and size, the blue parlor immediately underneath. Over the book cases encircling the wall are hung with wine-colored leather, the same material forming the covering of the ebony framed furniture.

The cabinet-room adjoining is furnished for use, not show. Everything is well-worn, plain, serviceable. Walls of gray, carpet of green, chairs of mahogany, all have remained the same through several administrations. A couple of piazza chairs with splint bottoms and red frames show marks of constant usage. There is nothing characteristic of cabinet meetings held here except a large globe, a point of interest, no doubt, on many occasions. What weighty matters of state are discussed over this hollow simulacre of a world, not even the world which it represents can wholly know.

The Admiral's Mushrooms.

The following yarn was spun me several years ago by one of Courbet's former messmates:

Some years ago when the hero of Tonquin was a simple lieutenant he was detailed in company with half a dozen sailors to explore a savage portion of the West African coast near Dahomey. For days they had traversed the wilderness without meeting anything in the shape of animal life save monkeys, squirrels, small birds and like game, too spry to admit of capture. Exhausted by fatigue and famine, the little caravan found itself one day at eventide wandering helplessly about in a jungle of umbrageous verdure. Suddenly one of the men espied a hut, neatly ensconced in a group of palms. Entering they found three feminine natives in the act of making their simple toilet. Having conciliated the swarthy forest nymphs by the gift of some glass beads, Courbet demanded food. The dusky "maitresses de la maison" bestirred themselves with generous zeal and soon produced some eggs, which one of the sailors broke into a saucepan and placed upon the fire.

"Now, what shall we put with them?" asked Courbet. We have neither butter, lard nor cheese."

Gazing round the hut, one of the sailors espied a bunch of mushrooms hanging on the wall.

In a twinkling the mushrooms were seized upon and delivered to the cook pro tem., who speedily sliced them up and flung them in the saucepan.

Upon beholding this brisk appropriation of their stores, the three dusky dames gave a frightful screech, threw themselves on their knees before Courbet, and seemed by their gestures to implore restitution of their mushrooms. Vain prayers.

In due time the omelet was cooked, served and eaten. Their hunger appeased the unceremonious Gauls were about taking leave of the victimized ladies, when five savages dashed into the hut with a blood-curdling yell. It was the proprietor accompanied by his four sons. Immediately the women broke out afresh with their plaintive howls, pointing to the place whence the mushrooms had been so ravenously snatched. The savages took in the situation at a glance and rushed upon Courbet and party, ferociously brandishing their clubs. Courbet lost no time in drawing his revolver and his men followed suit. Thus armed, they advanced threateningly toward the infuriated natives, who, finding themselves immensely in the minority, hastily modified their manœuvres, while the father of the flock stammered out a few words of mangled English by way of explanation.

Horrible revelation! From the words of this old cannibal Courbet learned that the supposed mushrooms were no mushrooms at all, but simply human brains which the provident housewife was drying in the sun against a rainy day.

Courbet acknowledged afterward that he had never eaten so savory an omelet. Albeit the immediate effects were disastrous.—*Detroit Free Press.*

The Hyacinth Trade.

The hyacinth trade is an important branch of horticultural commerce. For at least 300 years it has been cultivated, and as early as 1597 Gerard mentions six varieties as grown in England. Less than a century later the six had multiplied into many single and double forms, and in the middle of last century the famous Dutch growers of this bloom, supreme among the flowers of spring, offered for sale fifty single-flowered and nearly 100 double-flowered varieties.

The original of all these plants is not, as many people suppose, the wild hyacinth of our woods, but a scarcely less insignificant Oriental form, bearing on a single spike only a few narrowed-lobed "washy blue flowers." The improvements in it are all due to the skill of the gardener, who selects his breeding forms with all the care which the grazier bestows on his Durhams and Ayrshires.

The result is that it is by no means uncommon to see spikes of hyacinths six or seven inches long, and thickly set with blooms which measure in circumference from seven to nine inches. The English nurserymen have, no doubt, done much to bring this plant to what they are pleased to call perfection, though the botanist considers it the acme of monstrosity. But the Dutch growers still maintain their traditional eminence as the champion hyacinth rearers of the world.

There is something in the soil of Holland, something also in the humid atmosphere, congenial to these plants, and a great deal in the patient, unexcitable character of its excellent people which peculiarly suits them for the placid labor of growing bulbs. Haarlem, which in the height of the tulip mania was the metropolis of this trade, is still preeminently the home of the bulb merchants. In April and the beginning of May the suburbs for miles and miles will be perfectly aglow with the most delicately scented flowers.—*London Standard.*

An Eel-Skinning Contest.

Down at Fulton Market the fish men often try conclusions as to who is the champion eel-skinner. As the flaying of eels has grown to be quite an industry, the universal Yankee, as might be guessed, soon sets his inventive genius to work to devise a machine to do the work. In due course, accordingly, a patent eel-skinner made its appearance, and the inventor took it to Fulton Market to introduce it. But the fish merchants were not satisfied that it was all that was claimed for it. It worked to a charm, tossing the skins to one side and dropping the cleaned fish into a basket. A man had to turn a crank, that was all. In their uncertainty the dealers sent for an old expert in the business, "Si" Topping, from down on Long Island. He looked at it and said it was pretty, but slow, and that he had a machine in his pocket that could beat it all to pieces. This excited surprise, and he was asked what his machine was.

"This is it," said Si, bringing out a big knife from his pantaloons.

They laughed at him, of course; but he wagered $2 that he could skin and clean more eels in an hour with his knife than the inventor could with his patent. The wager was accepted and the match began. For half an hour there was great sport. Si's fingers moved like magic. The blade of the old knife flashed incessantly. At the end of the half hour it became evident that the only chance of beating him lay in his tiring out. But he showed no signs of fatigue, and at the expiration of the hour had finished thirty dozen eels, while the machine had done only about half that quantity. The man with the patent contrivance went away, sad and conquered. An eel-skinning machine is yet to be invented.—*Brooklyn Citizen.*

An English inventor claims that bells made by soldering together pieces of bent metal give a much better volume of sound than cast bells.

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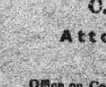
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