QUEER MATTERS DOWN EAST.

RECENT ECCENTRIC HAPPENINGS IN AND ABOUT CONNECTICUT.

Behavior on the Part of Men and Animals Quite Contrary to What is Expected—The Horse and the Ball of Twine.

NORWICH, Dec. 22.—Oddities in human and animal life have been rather numerous in Connecticut this season; men and animal have vied with each other in doing queer things to attract the smiles of the world.

A venerable and sedate horse at East Great Plain, near this city, which has an inquiring mind and is disposed to swallow things, depending on chance for favorable results, recently bolted a large ball of wrapping twine. The ball rolled in easily, but a knob at the end of the cord anchored itself to windward between the animal's front teeth, and the knot and the visible piece of twine served as a key to the situation when the young groomswoman visited the stable and inspected her steed. There was a somewhat troubled look on the horse's face as he stood with feet braced, ears lopped, mouth open, and in his eyes was a mute appeal that betokened a growing suspicion that probably the case was hopeless. The young lady unloosed the knot, wound six inches of the cord around her hand, and began to unravel the mystery. The horse kept his mouth open, looked wise, and seemed perfectly to understand what was going on; and out, yard after yard, fathom by fathom, the animal compliantly yielded up his peculiar dinner, and on neither side of the manger was a comment uttered, except that now and then the grateful beast emitted a sigh, as he observed the external ball swelling in magnitude and felt the internal one steadily diminishing. Finally the last yard of cord was reeled out of the horse, wound up, and the ball taken into the house, where the animal couldn't get at it again; and his look of contaminged penitence and thanksgiving was sufficient assurance that he had had twine enough for all coming time.

THE LOVE OF MICE FOR THEIR TAILS.

In Norwich the other night a young lady set a mouse trap in her parlor—a trap that was like a diminutive railroad round house, with arched doorways, and with a delicate little loop of steel under each doorsill to fly up and catch a mouse by the muzzle. The steel nooses snapped busily all night, and next morning the lady found five mice clinging in five of the inhospitable doorways, and, what was very mysterious to her, three long mouse tails hanging from the three other entrances. She puzzled her head long over the inscrutable problem. Why did three mice visit her trap overnight and deliberately leave their tails behind them? But there was no answer to it. A very bright idea, however, flashed into her mind, and she set her trap again. Verily, the three tailless mice came back to recover their tails, and in the gray dawn of the following day the young lady found three tailless mice dangling from the trap.

AGILE ROBBER MICE.

A New London citizen suspected that mice were visiting his canary bird cage, which dangled at the end of a chain six feet from the floor, above a stand of tall, slender plants, and he set a six-holed trap on the bottom of the cage. Something had eaten the seeds in the birds' tiny vessels each night for a week, and though it was hard to believe that vermin could scale the lofty perch, it was still more unreasonable to suspect any other pilferer. The trap was a feint in the dark. On the morning following the setting of the trap the gentleman's cleverness was rewarded with four dead mice in it. The thieves had reached the cage by climbing the swaying plants, leaping from the pendant tips to its bottom, and then squeezing their bodies between the wires. The stand of plants was removed, and thereafter the canary granaries were safe.

TRAGIC END OF A LILIPUTIAN MOUSE.

In one hat store in this city a clerk, who ate his luncheon in the store, scraped acquaintance with a mouse that was hardly so big as a nickel-clip, and each noon for several months the small chap trotted out of his hole and ate dinner daily with the clerk, sitting at the latter's feet and gobbling the crumbs that were tossed to him. He frequently hopped upon the clerk's foot and eyed the food greedily, smacking his chops and whisking his tail, which was no thicker than a broom corn, but as soon as the meal was over he became coy again, darting quickly into his hole, and he never appeared in other hours of the day. On one fatal noon the clerk was called suddenly and unexpectedly to the counter to sell a muff to a girl with red cheeks and a dimple, and he strode away so precipitately that he trod on his pet. The wee animal had time merely to squeak once and all was over. The clerk was very sorry, and he tenderly picked up the remains, which were a little strip of thin, furry surface, hardly enough to make into an ear tab.

GREAT SKILL OF A CAT.

At East Great Plain there is a black cat, with a dash of white on his nose, that has learned to open doors by jumping and twirling the smooth round knobs with his paws. He is fond of indoor idleness and luxury, and in order to pamper his tastes had to penetrate the mystery of knobs and catches.

The first time he did the trick his owner was sitting in the gloaming, and in a rocking chair, and in his porch, and he knew there was no one in the dark house. So his hair rose somewhat when he heard the deft and delicate tampering with the door knob right behind him, and he stopped rocking, but said nothing; though he noiselessly turned his face toward the door to catch an awesome glimpse of a witch, with withered face and a hair mole, stalking out. The mysterious work went on for an almost endless moment; then the door swung slowly open and the black cat came out—the lady with the hair mole did not come at all. The cat's name is "Tige."

The same cat, which is extremely partial to heat, crawled into a hot oven one day last summer and was comfortably "basted," with the doors closed; but he was in the way of the rest of the cooking, and was discovered and dislodged.

AN UNLUCKY BROOD.

In Hartford, not long ago, one Martin street cat gave birth to thirteen kittens in one litter. The number was unlucky and they all died of immersion.

A WICKED COON.

Fred Still of Potter Hill, R. I., has no cat, but he plumed himself until a few weeks ago on having the finest coon in the little State. He had caught the animal, and was training him to be happy and innocuous in captivity; but after he had got him almost perfectly tamed and trained, the coon one afternoon slipped out a door of his cage and stepped into the world. Before hitting the woods, however, he has not returned, he slew all of Mr. Sill's fine flock of pullets and all but two of the roosters, leaving their unpicked remains dotting the barnyard. One of Mr. Sill's neighbors recommended that he inscribe on the empty coon cage, the words: "He was overtrained," and the epitaph, "Gone, but not forgotten!"

REASONS FOR KEEPING SKUNKS.

Alex. Hale of Portland captured five young skunks, and gave all but one of them to his neighbors, to be reared by them as pets; the fifth he retained, and the half-grown animal frisks about Mr. Hale's kitchen and the children play with it. In this town a full-grown skunk has inhabited one house cellar for more than a year. The first efforts to drive it out were ineffectual, and as it molests no one the owner of the place has become reconciled to the strange tenant since he has learned that it has rid his house and barns of mice and rats. Skunks are excellent mousers.

MRS. LANGWORTHY'S WOODCHUCK.

Mrs. John M. Langworthy of Pawcatuck has a unique house pet in a woodchuck, which she captured when it was little, a year and a half ago. She fed it at first with milk from a spoon, then from a cup, until it became large enough to feed itself. It runs about the house and garden, cocks itself in front of the fire, and is delighted to sit in anybody's lap. It lives mainly on vegetables, but does not decline food from the pantry.

CAPT. OSTMAN'S SEAL.

Capt. Fred Ostman of Mystic recently caught a small seal in one of his nets, and, as it was uninjured, he put a rope about its neck and tethered it at the ocean side. The animal divides his time about equally in waddling on the shore and frolicking on the ocean waves, as far as his rope will permit. He recognizes the Captain, is not afraid of him, but does not fancy the hempen tie that binds him to the land.

ALBINO SQUIRRELS AND A QUEER GROUSE.

An unusual number of albino squirrels have been taken this fall. Two were shot in the southern part of this county, one was killed in the Free Academy woods in this town, and Mrs. Patrick Vaughn of Pomfret Landing, Windham county, caught one, together with its red mate, in a trap. All these were of the red squirrel species; but a party of hunters in Ashford, a few weeks ago, shot an albino of the gray squirrel species, a very rare curiosity. It is described as being beautiful, of a pure white hue, with clear lustrous pink eyes and delicately pink feet. It has been set very handsomely on a pronong of spotwood root.

A remarkable ruffed grouse, unlike the native bird, was shot recently by E. T. Smith, of Worcester, Mass., in the northern part of this State. The plumage was of a pronounced brownish color, that was still more marked on the ruffs, and there were other, though less noticeable, peculiarities. Local sportsmen never saw any bird exactly like it before.

MEN AGAINST BEES.

There was considerable fun in antique Lebanon, Gov. Jonathan Trumbull's old home, the other day, after it had been discovered by a sharp-eyed boy that a swarm of D. T. Fuller's bees, which disappeared last spring, was up in the old Congregational Church steeple, and had probably been there all summer, making honey. The proposition was advanced by a village sage that some one go and rob the bees. The steeple is high, and the ascent a giddy one by means of ladders and ropes from the outside, but Frank P. Ayer, Lafayette Hyde, and other agile youths said they would go. Long ladders and stout ropes were procured, fixed in position, and up the young men went in the crisp autumn air; but they had no sooner reached the neighborhood of the high church swarm than the bees buzzed out and met them half way. Then followed a lively battle between insects and men, but the men came off victorious, though well stung, and they got the honey, too, about thirty or forty pounds. But before the bees surrendered they compelled their assailants to retreat several times to the foot of the steeple.

AN EPIDEMIC OF TUMBLES.

Queer incidents have happened in the everyday history of not a few Connecticut men this fall. An epidemic of falling appeared in East Hampton the other day, a town in which the sleigh bells of the world are manufactured; and though its continuance was brief, its ravages were notable. In one day and almost at the same hour six respectable citizens fell, and were more or less severely hurt, and then the noxious influence passed off as mysteriously as it had come.

First, Wallace Chapman, a charcoal burner, fell into his dully burning pit through the treacherous top and went to the bottom of it. With great difficulty he scrambled out of the smoking, smouldering volcano, badly burned about the feet and legs, and with every part of his body as black as was his hat.

At about the same moment Mrs. John Stewart, in another part of the town, was falling out of a chair in which she had been standing, and she got so many cuts that the village doctor had to put seven stitches in her wounds.

Next, an employee of the tinware company fell into a machine and left his fore finger in it; then a small boy fell in the street and his thigh was dislocated; after him a citizen of Middletown, who apparently had come seven miles to East Hampton for the purpose of falling, undertook to stand on his head on the sidewalk suddenly and without adequate premeditation. His nose was driven so far into his head that the East Hampton physician, in making his diagnosis, spoke flippantly about getting a search warrant. Lastly, a Swede was run away with by his horse, and he fell out of his wagon, narrowly escaping with a whole neck.

SYMPATHETIC TWINS.

Stafford had a strange pair of twin brothers, until one of them died a few weeks ago. Each was marvellously responsive to the other's mood and bodily condition. They were Erskine and Carmine H. Kemp. They had passed middle life. Whenever one was sad or joyous the other was similarly affected, and this idiosyncrasy of relationship had existed since their birth. If one was ill the other was soon overcome by a similar ailment, and both brothers believed, their belief being shared by their friends, that when one died the others would not survive him. Not long ago Erskine was attacked with typhoid fever, and thirty-four hours later Carmine was prostrated with the same disease. Erskine soon succumbed to the malady, and every one was confident that Carmine would soon follow his brother to the grave; but, although he lay for many days in a critical condition, he finally rallied, and then announced to his friends that the strange influence had passed off, and that he would recover. Thereafter his recovery was speedy.

THE NEW LONDONER AND THE FLY.

An East New London man, who had come home weary from business one day recently, retired to his chamber for a brief afternoon nap, but he had barely closed his eyes, after stretching himself comfortably on a sofa, before a peculiarly nefarious, alert, and sportive fly, which had been meditating impassively in the centre of the ceiling, spread his wings and dropped casually, and with a wicked z-z-z-zp! on the man's nose.

The gentleman sleepily opened one eye, gazed fluttering down his cheek bone to the nose, and spasmodically felt for the fly with his left hand. The fly was not where he had been; he had gone over to the window casing, and he was watching the New Londoner, mentally taking his gauge and estimating the probable amount of fun in him for an energetic fly.

In the interim the man had closed his eyes again, and he had just begun to rock gently over the first hillock of dreamland, which for a New London man always undulates away into the halcyon whale-catching pastures of the north pole, when z-z-z-zp!—zp!—swat!—that fly was back again.

The man was wide awake now, and the one eye that the bad open looked wicked, while one hand swayed menacingly, but the fly was nowhere in the neighborhood of the nose now. On the contrary, he had resumed his quiet business at the old stand on the window casing, but he was coolly watching the man.

The New London man did not see the fly. He soon closed his eyes again, but not tightly, and he didn't go to sleep, because he had resolved on a deep scheme to draw that fly out, to tempt him on, and then shrewdly to swat him in cold blood, just as he descended on the nose. So he waited for above three minutes and not a zp! was heard, and the enemy came not. The fly was no novice, and he had sized up his victim's game, which was not new to him, he having been very old at the time of the first Punic war.

And the fly sat on the casing waiting, and the man lay on the lounge plotting, for full five minutes; then the man hastily concluded that he had scared the fly; and as the room was becoming very drowsy, and as there was no earthly use of keeping awake all the afternoon to watch with a fly, and—in about five seconds the breezy hyperborean whale chase had resumed its glittering prehistoric activity, when—zp!—we had swat!

But a third time the man had missed the fly, though in this instance he had not missed the nose; the blow fell squarely on that member and knocked it so far askew that its owner could plainly see around its twisted point and see the fly enjoying the spectacle from his window perch.

Then the man got up, and, snatching his pillow, he murderously assailed the fly. So effective was his warfare that within about ten seconds he had kicked over three chairs, cracked one pane of window glass, knocked down and smashed a handsome parlor lamp, demolished a bureau, broke the centre table, accomplishing in all the wreck of about $450 of property. And during the entire act of onslaught and ruin the fly is said to have calmly watched the proceedings from the ceiling. The man's neighbors stigmatize his performance as being unquestionably the queerest and most inexcusable antic of the whole queer season in Connecticut.

MR. LOOMER'S WELL-HIDDEN TREASURE.

An almost equally inexplicable freak was that of a Lebanon bachelor, Mr. Loomer, who dwells in a big house on a big farm, keeping a maid of all work, who has a beau whom the farmer does not like. Mr. Loomer, a few days ago, became convinced that the maid and her sweetheart were scheming to rob him of his wealth, which consisted of a $10 bill, besides his real estate, and, to thwart their designs, he converted the greenback into ten silver dollars, which he sewed into a bag, and the bag he furtively buried at dead of night, by lantern light, spading a deep hole in his yard, and smoothing down the turf above the hiding place after he had deposited his treasure therein. He carefully marked the spot—"it is so many feet," he reflected, "from the corner of the ell, and at the junction of two imaginary lines from the horse stable and the southeast corner of the well-curb"—and then he went back to bed. In that same night a heavy rain washed out all trace of his digging, and, as the farmer cannot now conciliate the well-curb and stable lines into a clue, he has thus far searched in vain for his bank.

HEAVEN HELPS THE INEBRIATED.

A week or ten days ago, as a west-bound passenger train was laboriously climbing the heavy grade among the mountains at Bolton, Notch, west of Willimantic, the engineer, looking up the track, observed a handsome top buggy, drawn by a spirited horse, with a stylish gentleman holding the reins, bearing down on the train at terrific speed. The engineer whistled "down brakes," but he could not stop his heavy train, and the driver, who was approaching, wouldn't stop his team and wouldn't turn out.

The climax of coming events was speedily reached. The stylish man in the buggy drove straight into the locomotive at full tilt, and his horse climbed over the cowcatcher on one side of the track, while he vaulted through the air to the other side; the carriage was shivered on the pilot. The driver picked himself up unhurt, and then the engineer, who had stopped his train, got off his engine and helped him to catch the horse. The vehicle was picked off the track.

After the wreck had been cleared away the engineer asked the man "what in the name of common sense he was running on the railroad and trying to shove the regular trains off the rails for;" and the gentleman, who was very mellow and still more dazed, explained that he supposed he was on the turnpike; that he had been driving that way for several miles; that he had noticed that the roadbed was somewhat uneven, but that he was in a hurry and was making the best time he could; that when he saw the locomotive coming for him he supposed the blanketed thing had got loose and was running cross country. The engineer excused the mistake, and the gentleman, taking as much of his buggy as he could carry on his arm, and leading his snorting steed, marched off across the lots.

Contracts for Ordnance Awarded.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22.—The Secretary of War has awarded the contract for furnishing $1,500,000 worth of steel forgings for 8, 10, and 12-inch high-power guns to the Bethlehem Iron Company, their bid being the lowest and within the statutory price. Award has also been made of the contract for furnishing cast-iron bodies for thirty mortars to the Builders' Company of Providence, R. I., and that for the steel parts of the mortars to the Midvale Steel Company. The bids for assembling and completing the mortars were rejected as excessive.

A Special Election Ordered.

ALBANY, Dec. 22.—Gov. Hill has ordered a special election in the Thirteenth Senate district, comprising the counties of Orange and Sullivan, on Tuesday, Jan. 29, 1889, for the purpose of choosing a Senator in place of Henry B. Law, deceased, whose term of office will expire on Dec. 31, 1889.

THE SPEAKER'S WIFE.

Who Will she be During the Next Congress?—Some of the Possible Ladies.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—The absorbing topic of conversation among the wives of members of Congress just now is, "Who will be the next Mrs. Speaker?" a position coveted, as little social glory comes ordinarily to the wives of the members. Mrs. Carlisle has been popular during her husband's five years of service, and her brilliant receptions in the red parlor of the Rigg's House—where she has in turn asked the wives of the Congressmen to receive with her—were noted social events. The wife of the next Speaker, whoever that fortunate individual may be, will have a difficult task in occupying the position where Mrs. Carlisle has made herself so beloved. Of all the candidates, Mr. Burrows of Michigan is the man most anxious for this position, which very fact may defeat his election; but should he be elected the Speaker's home will have a clever head. Mrs. Burrows is a handsome woman, somewhere in the forties, whose slender figure, graceful carriage, clear complexion, dazzlingly brilliant eyes, and a wealth of black hair brushed back from an intellectual forehead, make her a striking figure at all the social gatherings, though she has not plunged herself into the vortex of dissipation, like so many of her sisters, but has reserved her strength and brilliancy for the state receptions given by the President and Cabinet. Mrs. Burrows is quite an artist, and an insatiate reader, giving sometimes at her weekly receptions good criticisms of new books.

Mr. Cannon, who believes implicitly that he will be elected Speaker, has with him this winter his wife, a handsome matron, who has for the last sixteen years held a conspicuous position in life at the capital, and his two daughters, who are very enthusiastic over their Washington winters. Miss Cannon is a tall, handsome girl, with ideas and opinions of her own, which she is entitled to express, inasmuch as she has been out for several winters. Her sister, who is younger, is cast in a more delicate mould, and was a débutante of last season. The Cannons live at Willard's. Mrs. Cannon is very expert with her needle, and has always some beautiful piece of fancy work by her. She frequently appears in sumptuous dresses for her own embroidering.

Mr. Reed is personally a popular man on the floor of the House. His funny stories, cheery smile, and hearty hand grasp are irresistible, and if popularity dictates the choice for the next Speaker this jolly fellow from Maine will sit in the chair. His wife is as petite as her husband is big and as conservative, both in character and conduct, as her husband is radical. The Reeds spend part of the Maine circle at the Hamilton House, of which Mrs. Frye, the wife of the Senator, is the centre. Another candidate for the Speakership is Mr. Butterworth of Ohio. One would never imagine from the merry twinkle in his eyes that he came from good old Yankee stock, but such is the fact, though he has dropped everything that might connect him with his ancestors and is an interested onlooker at the Washington balls, a participator in all the gayeties of the winter, even going to the german with his daughter, who was a rosebud last season. The Butterworths have a charming home at Le Droit Park, in which suburb they have more elbow room than in the city. Mrs. Butterworth is not unlike Mrs. Burrows in appearance, with the same graceful figure and strong coloring, and being equally cultured.

Mr. McKinley, the promising candidate for Speaker, is known among his friends as the Napoleon of the House, and is said to resemble the "Little Corporal," not only in appearance, but character. The feeling among those on the inside circle is that he will be elected. His wife, who is almost a confirmed invalid, will hardly be able to take a prominent part in social circles, though this winter she is with her husband at the Ebbitt House, has been able to drive out, and is rapidly convalescing from her severe, tedious illness of last winter.

Mr. Henderson, the one-legged soldier, is making a strong canvass, though he has no-be-feared rivals in Mr. Reed and McKinley. He is very popular, perhaps because of the personal magnetism which has played such a rôle in American politics since Blaine made it popular, or, perhaps, because he makes a splendid antagonist at poker, of which game he is very fond. Mrs. Henderson never comes to Washington, though she might be tempted should her husband make a successful fight for the Speakership.

Before the holidays, when the social machine is still inactive, and the world it keeps in motion is occupied with dressmakers and such like, speculations are always rife as to what the winter will bring in a social way, and there are audible groans when the prospect is for a slow season, for society's votaries are like drinking men, a day or two of total abstinence from the social whirl takes the color out of their cheeks, brings on an attack of nerves, and leaves them in a blue and miserable mood. But when the days fill, the hours, the minutes—anything for excitement, the stimulus which keeps dames and daughters up to the demand. There is, of course, then, genuine sorrow over every entertainer who closes her doors and hies away; and genuine rejoicing when, after a winter in Florida or California, or a year or two spent with her children abroad, she returns and takes up the dropped threads. Mrs. Hale, the wife of the senior Senator from Maine, who has known social life at the capital since she made her début, when her father, stanch old Zach Chandler of Michigan, represented his State in the Senate, opens her mansion after a two years' residence abroad with her three sons, and the receptions and dinners for which the Hale home was famous will again be a feature in society here.

The Hales have taken the magnificent house of the MacPhersons on Vermont avenue—Mrs. MacPherson, spending abroad—which was built with an especial idea for entertaining. Mrs. Hale is a stylish woman, some past 35, no handsome in the accepted meaning of the word, but possessing that peculiar grace for which American women are noted. She is not fond of society, her forced position as leader of the gay world being rather a trial than joy to her. Her visit on the other side was an agreeable change, and she returns to the old circle and old duties with renewed health and vigor. Her husband, on the contrary, is devoted to Vanity Fair, and there are no receptions at which his carefully groomed, carefully dressed figure is not conspicuous. He is famous for his quickness at repartee and good stories, and is always the centre of an admiring circle. When Wilson Barrett, the actor, was in Washington he was due at a lady's house for breakfast or luncheon; but the time came and as he did not put in an appearance after the hostess had waited the polite fifteen minutes for him, the meal was served. In the afternoon Mr. Barrett called to make his excuses, covered with the confusion that an actor can blush—at his breach of etiquette.

"Senator Hale to blame," said Mr. Barrett. "He took me home with him after the theatre last night, and we drank some fine old Holland gin from his cellar and told stories. The Senator's stories—not the gin, mind—got into my head, and it was quite morning before I could get home, so that I slept right through my engagement."

The hostess, who was an old friend of the Senator, understanding the cause, gracefully forgave Mr. Barrett for spoiling her breakfast party.

The Hales are very rich, having inherited the major part of Senator Chandler's immense fortune, which, invested and reinvested, has become colossal. The Senator's family consists of three boys, and when each one was born his Grandfather Chandler gave to him as a christening gift the sum of $25,000. With such wealth, their father's brilliant intellect, and their mother's grace of mind, the Hale boys will make excellent catches; and, indeed, managing mammas begin already to count the years which will set them free from college and make them victims to their daughters' charms.

EXECUTIONS BY ELECTRICITY.

District Attorney Fellows Says that the Non-Publication Law Won't Stand.

District Attorney Fellows said yesterday that the clause of the law for the execution of death sentences by electricity which forbids newspapers from printing the description of an execution is clearly unconstitutional.

"Among those whom the Sheriff has a right under the law to invite to witness the execution," he said, "there is no reason why newspaper reporters may not be invited. In fact, they probably will be present. If they were not invited what is there to prevent myself or any one else present to recite the facts in conversation after the execution is over? To forbid that I should recite the facts would be to forbid free speech. And, furthermore, what does a reporter do but recite the facts to half a million readers instead of to a group of friends. Of course, if an indictment should be found against the Sheriff for printing and reporting the execution I should be compelled to prosecute, but in my opinion the Judge would hold the law to be unconstitutional, or at any rate the trial would not result in a conviction."

The Amount of Air Allotted to the Children.

According to the report of Joseph C. Hendrix, President of the Brooklyn Board of Education, to Mayor Chapin, the largest item of increase in the annual expenditures was that for teachers' salaries, and the largest decrease was in the appropriation for new schoolhouses. The teachers got $973,433.98. The total expenditure for the first eleven months of the year was $3,116,645. There has been a marked increase during the year in the seating capacity, but many children were excluded from the schools through lack of room.

Mr. Hendrix speaks particularly of the efforts made during the year for the proper ventilation of the schools. At present each primary pupil is allowed 12 square feet of floor space and 250 entire feet of air space; each grammar pupil below the fifth grade receives 14 square feet of floor space and 250 entire feet of air space, and each grammar pupil above the sixth grade 14 square feet of floor space and 250 cubic feet of air space.

WITH BARRETT AND BOOTH.

THE GIRLS WHO PLAY THE MOB AND OTHER LIKE PARTS.

It's Just Gay, and They Get Real Near the Two Great Men and Learn Lots—An Enthusiast Tells Her Experiences.

"'Suping for Booth and Barrett.' Yes, that is the way a rude outside world would put it. But we aren't supes. We are the auxiliaries, and to be an auxiliary is to be a very different thing from having simply a place among the men who carry spears. They are rehearsed by themselves. We rehearse with the principals. I hope I have made the distinction clear, although I notice that there are newspapers who speak of us incorrectly as 'the chorus.'

"Our first appearance was to be in 'Othello,' and on the first Monday morning of the engagement we stood among the dark shadows of the Fifth Avenue stage. All else was glamour. Here was real life. The gods and goddesses of our adoration, in greatcoats and ulsters and hands in pockets, trod the uncarpeted boards; piercing draughts nipped our ears; a pervading dampness came up from the amphitheatre; the cold gray light from the dome struggled with solitary gas jets; stage hands, grimy with dust, rushed to and fro. Like timid swimmers about to make their first dive into the blackness of cold water we stood tremblingly amid the gloom. Some of the girls took fright and ran; it was all so different from our cosey Madison Square stage, the blazing footlights and the interested faces of our fellow students filling the front seats. But we who were more courageous stuck it out, and awfully glad we are now that we did.

"And how we opened our eyes at a real rehearsal. At the school we put it all in, while Mr. Boucicault, a genial mentor in an easy chair, punctuates our performances with wisdom, sarcasm, and wit. Here the underlying mechanism alone was revealed.

"'Yum, yum, yum, yum,' said Miss Gale, tapping her forehead, then plunged into a loving attitude. 'Ho, but still my lord!' with all the endearing accents that elocution can command.

"'Tum, tum, tum, tum,' muttered Mr. Barrett in his time, then drew himself up like a noble gentleman. 'My life upon her faith!' And so it went, muttering, tapping of foreheads, then striking of attitudes and throwing of cues, tossed from right to left, up stage and down, while we took it all in like a new revelation. And through it all Mr. Barrett moved like an inspiring genius, working until the great drops stood on his forehead and his voice grew hoarse.

"When our time came we were worse scared than ever. Everybody wanted to be in the back row. We stepped behind one another and tried to screen ourselves behind the real supes, the men. But we have gotten all over that now, and we could stand right out in front if needed.

"Will one of us ever forget the first performance? Although we didn't go on until the third act, we were promptly on hand an hour before the first act. Of course we had to have plenty of time to make up. Everybody knows that to a novice the making up appears to be a matter of more moment than the lines. A few of the girls had played before, and some of us on amateur stages; but it was evident that in a real theatre, and one as large as the Fifth Avenue, to make up properly and effectively required serious consideration. As soon as we were assigned to our various dressing rooms the business began. How many times we laid on that grease, paint, and rouge and rubbed it off again I shall not undertake to say. Somebody suggested putting pink dots in the corners of the eyes, and then every girl came out in pink dots. Another said that Miss Gale shaded a natural beauty mole beneath her mouth, and she made herself a beautiful black one. All this used to take a full hour. Now we can do it in ten minutes. Of course we loaded on as much as possible, and came down looking like lovely wax dolls from the Palais Royal. When we met the girls from the other dressing room everybody said: 'How do you like my make up?'

"But one of the real company said, 'It's no difference; nobody will see you.' We thought that was a very queer speech, and a little heartless. Promptly at 8 o'clock we were in the green room. Oh, how gay it was, and just like a fancy dress party. We were in peasant costumes, and the men were in court dress. We were the men from our own school. Why, we hardly knew one another. So exciting and romantic it was that one couldn't help acting in character.

"We come on at the beginning of the third act. I must confess our lines are limited. What we do: We wave our handkerchiefs and cry 'Hooray!' and Mr. Dowd, our stage manager, says he never had assistants that did it better. At Chicago the society people had our parts. One of the men was a millionaire, and his carriage waited outside every night by the side of Mr. Booth's. I'll tell you one thing very funny: He chose to wave the handkerchiefs and cry 'Hooray!' the Chicago ladies—now this isn't a stale newspaper joke—and it is a fact that they are all fives and sevens, and we are having a serious time to keep them on, they flap so.

"When we first went on we were afraid of being unladylike, and that our friends would recognize us. We were so careful to throw our handkerchiefs and change our names, although they don't appear on the bills. When we went on we turned our heads and held up our hands to screen our faces. But we are rather indifferent to that sort of thing now, and we can shout with the best of mobs. The girls even don't hesitate to try to see individual their costumes in some way or another. As I say, in 'Othello' our duties are to wave our handkerchiefs and cry 'Hooray!' One night the order had been changed. We were to save our 'Hoorays' and give them three times at the end of the herald's speech. But one of the girls hadn't been told. When we got out we cried, 'Come to dinner,' came one solitary 'Hooray!' like the crow of a lone rooster on a barn fence. Then she turned and looked righteously indignant at us for our neglect. Then came the second cue, 'Some to build bonfires!' Again she cried, 'Hooray!' more emphatic than before, and feeling, doubtless, the full responsibility of the occasion. Everybody giggled, and a look of dazed horror crept over her face.

"The hardest work of all is to keep from laughing. You should hear our stage conversations. In the court scene of the 'Merchant of Venice' is a little darky in Moorish dress, with straight black legs, whose wornout knees are a standing joke. When *Bassanio* has to choose the casket somebody is sure to say, 'I shouldn't wonder if he will get it to-night;' or, 'Do you suppose that the chrono will go with the tea?' If the chrono goes with the tea, *Portia* will go with the casket. And when we are groaning, as the mob in 'Julius Cæsar,' what do you suppose we are saying. Only this: 'It's a could day for Ireland! It's a could day for Ireland!' It's such fun. We drilled three days for that mob, and Mr. Dowd says we are the best he ever trained. Our clothes are not very interesting, just dark-colored Mother Hubbards with two armholes. We did feel so queer, so undressed. But for all the clothes are ugly we like being the mob.

"Oh, it is so interesting to see them behind the scenes. I need scarcely tell you that we hang, metaphorically, on every word and movement of Mr. Booth. You know it's good luck to touch him. I don't think there's a girl there who hasn't caught sly hold of that red drapery. And if he looks at one of us on the stage—and he has to look some place—it sets a girl up for a week. One of the girls said, 'Oh, Mr. Booth looked at me after the scene in the pistol and cocktail.' And she never had a cocktail in her life, but she knew it was exhilarating. Sometimes, though, he sits down in the greenroom and talks, and tells an anecdote. Then you should see us listening to every word. One night he was at the wings waiting to lead *Desdemona* on, and the orchestra was playing a waltz. His face lighted up with a lovely smile and he said, 'I don't know anything of music, but I always wish that nature had made me a light opera dancer instead of a tragedian.' He always keeps time to the music, notice, and seems to enjoy it so much. Mr. Barrett has much more to do with us, and, naturally, we are more afraid of him.

"But don't think this is all fun and nonsense for us. We regard it as the greatest of privileges to be able to study so thoroughly such plays under two of the foremost exponents of Shakespeare in the world. Every girl says if instead of receiving a salary she had to pay she would still regard it as a privilege. I believe we know every word of the plays, and in any emergency any one of us could be called on, and that far, at least, take the part. We study the plays attentively at the wings. Many of us have stage copies, and mark every intonation and peculiarity of the reading. We watch the business. Then we often stand back of the scenes and listen merely to the reading. There will be long pauses, deep, subtle quiets, then bursts of laughter. It is a very interesting fand I have found it a valuable exercise. Then, of course, we have learned to make our entrances to grow accustomed to the footlights, to observe unconsciously the balancing of the stage. I could never get in the way now of the principals, and do those clumsy things which the novice will do. From Mr. Barrett's stage training we have learned a great deal. We gain from him in tragedy what Mr. Boucicault gives us in society plays. One supplements the other. Then we are treated so well—like guests—every one is kindly, nothing disagreeable takes place. Then, of course, there is the salary. Oh, that first week's pay! I have put it away as a souvenir. The first I spent for gut make up. That's what all the girls did. You see, you might just as well get a good make up to begin with, and grease paint and all those things do cost so much.

"Oh, it has been a great engagement, and we all feel that, in after years, no matter how famous we may become, and of course that is in the possibilities, or we wouldn't be there now, that we will always feel it was a lucky chance that we were permitted to make our first entrance into that strange, fascinating world bounded by the footlights under the auspices of Booth and Barrett."

FINE PRESENT FOR MR. MACKAY.

Members of the Commercial Cable Company's Staff Send Him a Splendid Jardiniere.

To-morrow will be the fourth anniversary of the opening of the Commercial Cable Company's system, and to commemorate the event the members of the staff of the company in the United States and Europe have sent to the President, John W. Mackay, a big piece of silver. Mr. Mackay is in San Francisco, and the Christmas present will reach him just before New Year's Day. It was shipped last night. He doesn't know anything about the gift yet, and the staff here hope that it may be a complete surprise to him. The big piece of silver is just the thing to give to the President of a cable company. It is a jardinière in the shape of a globe resting on a concave base. The picture printed herewith fairly represents the proportions, but, of course, it isn't quite as pretty as 480 ounces of silver can be made in the artistic hands of the Gorham Manufacturing Company at a cost of $2,500.

The concave base is 22¼ inches in diameter and is supported by four standards. The interior of the base is gilded and shines like gold satin. The rim of this bowl is a fac-simile of

a telegraphic cable with the many strands closely twisted. Over each standard sits a figure typifying the four points of the compass, and indicating also the temperament of the peoples of the four quarters of the globe. The north is represented by the figure of a woman holding a magnet to signify the influence of the lode star. Her face is intellectual. The woman's figure symbolizing the south is more sensuous. She bears a palm and tropical fruits in her hands. The east is presented in the form of a man carrying a shield graven with an Egyptian motif; the west by a man who shades his eyes with his right hand and peers forward into the future to discover the possibilities of coming time.

From the centre of the hollow base rises an ornate raffle upon which dashes and surges the foam of a restless sea. In the centre of this are three dolphins bearing upon their backs the globe. From the mouth of each dolphin hangs a miniature submarine cable resting upon the bed of the ocean.

The globe is a fine specimen of silver etching. You can pick out every country, with its divisions, political and natural. Every mountain range, every river, every lake, all the cities and towns of importance, and all the gulfs and capes are shown. But more interesting than these things alone is the little thread of gold which crosses the silver Atlantic and winds about the shores of England, France, and the United States to show the Mackay-Bennett system of knocking out time. By very artistic oxidization there is a distribution of light and shadow which give to the whole piece an intelligence that becomes its chief charm.

The sphere is divided into quarters so that the top may be taken off and the lower half used as a receptacle for fruit or flowers. The total height is 19 inches. On the globe is the inscription:

> To John W. Mackay,
> Presented by the Officers and Staff of the Commercial Cable Company,
> Dec. 24, 1888.

Accompanying the forty pounds of silver is a letter telling Mr. Mackay how much his employees think of him. It is a document containing the signatures of every member of the staff, both in the United States and Europe.

TRIAL DAY AND WEDDING DAY.

This Young Stamp Collector Stumbles on an Unusual Combination.

Superintendent John Richards of the Post Office saw Eugene Rathe, a letter carrier, take from another carrier's pile a fat letter from Hong Kong, remove the cancelled stamps, and then put them on again. Rathe was taken before Post Office Inspector George P. Stewart, and explained that he was a stamp collector, and had sent his brother, in Berlin, 1,600 or 1,700 stamps. He showed 100 stamps of every nation, most of which he had removed from letters since he was appointed a letter carrier, last July. After removing the stamp from the Hong Kong letter he found he had one in his collection, and hence he put it back on the envelope. Rathe was informed that for each offence he was liable to a fine of not more than $100 or imprisonment for not more than six months. Commissioner Shields let him go on $250 bail.

Rathe's sweetheart, Rosa Rogewsky, was in court, and when Commissioner Shields told Rathe that if he would come around on Jan. 9, the first day for holding the court, he could be tried right away, the tears came into Rosa's eyes, and Rathe cried out:

"Why, Jan. 9 is my wedding day. I am to be married to Rosa on that day, at 5 o'clock in the afternoon."

Commissioner Shields, backed up by Assistant District Attorney Rose, comforted him and told him that only a light fine would be imposed. He could pay it, and be ready at 5 o'clock to marry Rosa.

"You hear what the gentlemens says, Rosa," Rathe said. "The marriage'll be all right."

The rain ceased and the sun shone in Rosa's face again.

PERFORATED DR. PERRY'S GLASS DOOR.

Newspaper Annie Saw a Little Boy of Innocent Opinions Throw the Stone.

A stone about the size of a bantam's egg sailed through the air in front of THE SUN building at 6:05 o'clock yesterday evening, and crashed through the vestibule window of Dr. Perry's pharmacy, carrying away a crescent-shaped piece of glass as large as a man's hand, and shivering the pane in all directions. The only witness to be found was Annie, the good-looking woman who sells papers on that beat. She says she saw two boys skylarking in the street a little west by north of the main peanut stand.

"I seen a lad throw the stone," said Annie, "but he was only throwing it at a man who happened to be going into the drug store. I don't think he had any opinion of hitting the glass."

The stone is of the kind used in Mr. George Jones's *New York Times* building, but the police do not regard that fact as a clue of any considerable importance.

Capt. Washburn Sticking to It.

The Court of Appeals having sustained the Police Board in retiring two Captains and other officers because they were 60 years old, Capt. Washburn, one of the victims, is going to try a new point on them. The Police Commissioners occasioned a great deal of talk in the spring of 1886 by discharging two Police Captains, a police surge