THE BOERS' LOST CHANCE.

EXPLANATION OF THEIR FAILURE TO STRIKE SOONER.

Their Commissariat Was Not Ready as Soon as Their Soldiers and So the Invasion of Natal Was Deferred—Correspondents' Views of the Boers and the Situation.

LONDON, Nov. 15.—Now that the cable news of the war has dwindled to the barest negative announcements, the story as told in the uncensored letters from muzzled correspondents becomes increasingly important and interesting. We are told for instance by the *Times* correspondent, who was in Pretoria at the outbreak of the war, how it happened that the Boers failed in their plan to seize all Natal as they might have done if they had begun the campaign a single week earlier. Writing under date of Oct. 25, this correspondent says:

"From the Boer point of view there was, it must be admitted, a great deal to be said for the policy of taking the bull by the horns. If they were determined to fight sooner than make the least concession it was evidently better to fight with 15,000 men than with 50,000. They were confident they could crush the small force in Natal long before re-enforcements could arrive, and could raise a vast region of Cape Colony in revolt by the mere presence of their invading commandos. Mr. Reitz's ultimatum, which was not handed in to the British Agent till Oct. 9, was decided on and actually framed before the end of September. The intention of the Transvaal Government was to present that ultimatum on Oct. 1 or 2 and commence hostilities at the expiration of the forty-eight hours. At this moment a hitch occurred which temporarily upset the whole arrangement. In the evening of Sept. 30 and the morning of Oct. 1 the Executive made two unwelcome discoveries. The first was that their forces were not ready. They had mobilized almost the whole male population of the country, supplied them with arms and ammunition, and sent them to the front in the remarkably short space of four days; but they had done so only by dint of neglecting all arrangements for transport and commissariat. The men, and with them the rolling-stock, had all gone off to the borders of the Republic, while the food was left in Pretoria without means of conveyance. The other unwelcome discovery was that the Free State army was equally unready. Accordingly, on Oct. 1, the uncompromising attitude of Pretoria was slightly modified. Rumors of some last attempt to make peace, of an impending visit to Pretoria of Messrs. Schreiner and Hofmeyr, of divisions in the British Cabinet, were given free play. After the lapse of another week the mobilization had been really as well as nominally carried out and the Transvaal was ready to come out and challenge the British Empire to battle. But in that short interval over 5,000 troops from India had landed in Natal and the policy of attack had already lost some of its justification."

The same correspondent uses strong language, but not too strong, upon the subject of the danger of a native rising in connection with the war. Hostile feeling is so strong in this country against the Boers that the idea of turning the Basutos loose against the burghers is not everywhere rejected with the scorn that such a proposition merits. The following clear statement of what such a thing would mean for British interests in South Africa is therefore very timely:

"The one serious danger that remains is the possibility of a native rising, especially among the Basutos or Swazis. Nothing could do such incalculable mischief to the Imperial power as to tolerate even for a moment the possibility of a native attack upon the Boers. Nothing in such an event as an invasion of the Free State by the Basutos could prevent the Dutch in the colony from going to the help of their kinsfolk, and nothing could do more to alienate the sympathy of all colonists, English or Dutch, from Great Britain than any weakness or hesitation in dealing with such an issue. It is the absolute duty of the Imperial authorities to do all in their power to avert such a rising, by sending up troops, if need be, and to that duty all purely military considerations must for the time give way."

There is no abler war correspondent in Ladysmith to-day than William Maxwell of the *Standard*. His descriptions of Kitchener's march to Khartoum were perhaps the best that were printed and he has already distinguished himself in the present campaign. He sends to his paper this week a description of the Boer as he finds him which is the best and on the whole the most impartial character sketch that has come from an English pen. In the course of a most interesting letter Mr. Maxwell says:

"Between the Boer of fiction and of fact there is no affinity. They differ as much as the 'noble redman' who scalps his way through the pages of Fenimore Cooper differs from his squalid, degenerate son in the native reserve. The Boer of fiction is a chivalrous, though somewhat sleepy, gentleman in corduroy—a mountain of beef and bone, given to solitary musing, and to the shooting of buck or 'redcoats,' whichever happen to cross his path. Hunter and hermit, patriot and philosopher, is the mixture out of which he is compounded. The Boer of fact is a creature of another clay. He is a dull, lumpish, lazy animal, with a capacity for ignorance, superstition, and tyranny unsurpassed by any white race. His good qualities—for he has redeeming characteristics—appeal strongly to the imagination. He clings with the passionate fervor of a Covenanter to the simple and sublime faith of the literal teaching of the Bible. Love of independence is deep rooted in his nature. The history of South Africa during two and a half centuries is full of examples of his dogged and unconquerable spirit. But he has in overpowering degree the defects of these qualities. His piety is apt to degenerate into superstition and sanctimonious Pharisaism. Love of independence has begot in him hate of everything that might tend to disturb his reverence for the past, and suspicion of the stranger who threatens to 'tread him to death,' in the solitude of the veldt. The unconquerable spirit that has made him one of the boldest pioneers the world has seen has become corrupted into obstinate conceit.

"The absolute seclusion and independence of the pastoral life of the Boer farmer are accountable for his ignorance. His education is limited to six months' instruction by a tutor, who visits the farm on the silent veldt as soon as the children of the family are grown up. Few of them can read, and still fewer are able to write. Yet the Boer will tolerate nothing that would dispel his ignorance or contradict his superstitions. He is still convinced that the sun moves round the earth, and that the earth is a flat and solid substance resting on unseen foundations. 'What is this nonsense in which you English believe about the earth being round?' asked a wealthy Boer who is a member of the Volksraad. It was vain to offer Galileo's explanation, 'I have seen the shadow of the earth on the moon.' The familiar proof of a ship on the horizon was treated with derision. 'Do you not always see the top of a thing first?' was the retort. 'No,' said my friend, the Boer legislator; 'I can believe none of this newfangled nonsense. Many a time, returning to my home on the veldt, have I thought over these things. I have watched for hours in the moonlight to see whether the kopje near my homestead really did move, but it is always there—always in the same place. And as for the sun, did not Joshua bid it stand still?' Against arguments of this kind reason avails not; yet I ventured to ask how the sun managed to get under the foundations of the earth every night so as to be in his place in the morning. This difficulty had never presented itself, and the only reply, uttered with unswerving conviction, was, 'Well, I do not believe this nonsense, and Oom Paul does not believe it.'

"Should you suffer from malarial fever contracted in the marshy country, the Dutch pastor, who has heard nothing of the latest researches into mosquito virus, and is sublimely unconscious of his own case, will console you with the warning that it is a Divine punishment for having left the land of your birth. Persistence in the ways of his fathers is a strong characteristic of the Boer. Except in the Free State, where a few farmers have outraged public opinion and flown in the face of Providence by introducing machinery, the method of cultivating the soil is that of Syria and Palestine. Corn is still trodden, and the law, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.' But the ox that presumes to think himself worthy of his reward is beaten unmercifully. Thus is the letter of the Law of Moses observed. There is nothing the Boer is not capable of doing with a good conscience. He will beat a Kaffir to death, yet he never believe that the native is not his loyal and devoted friend. At this moment, when every Kaffir in the land is eager to murder his white oppressor, the Boer imagines that he has only to say the word, and Basutos, Swazi, Matabele, Zulu, and all the black tribes would fall upon and destroy his enemies. This confidence in his destiny and consciousness of superiority over every created thing would be sublime were it not ridiculous.

"As a family man, the Boer's reputation would justify him in becoming a candidate for the Dunmow Flitch. Surly and suspicious in manner, heavy and uncouth in his ways, shy and reserved among strangers, you may win him to a gruff cordiality, if you are a husband and father, and care to listen to the details of his domestic life. But although the Boer certainly cherishes with deep affection his wife and children, he treats them according to Oriental rather than European ideas. The women always stand until the men are seated, and are not served until the wants of their lords and masters are satisfied. I am describing the customs of the farmer who lives on the veldt, and has no acquaintance with Western manners. Such a man is little removed from a state of barbarism, and his surroundings are often as squalid as those of a Kaffir. Despite this patriarchal rule, the vrouw has great influence over her man, and is credited with having on more than one occasion screwed his courage up to the fighting point. The Boer vrouw is not a beauty, notwithstanding the care with which she preserves her complexion from the effects of the sun. Her ambition, like that of the fishwives at Scheveningen, is to become as fat as an ox, though, unlike the Dutch wife, she is not an example of scrupulous cleanliness. The Boer is not hospitable. He resents the presence of strangers, and, being too lazy to cultivate more than is necessary for the immediate wants of his family, he has nothing to spare for uninvited guests.

"I have endeavored to point out some of the most striking characteristics of these people, who have cast a malign spell over civilization and progress in South Africa. There is a higher type of Boer, who is comparatively clean in person and almost European in thought and habit. He may be as corrupt and sly—'slim' is the word they use,—as his detractors make out, yet he is less objectionable than the semi-barbarous fanatic on the veldt. His sense of honor may not be keen, and his disregard for the truth may indicate a low moral standard. But his capacity for mischief is modified by the European environment with which he surrounds himself. Where he is in a decided majority, his disposition is arrogant and overbearing, but he is easily cowed by the display of physical force. The Boer of the farm and the veldt, as well as of the border towns, is less amenable to reason. His phenomenal ignorance, his monumental conceit, his unconquerable hatred of the British, make him a tyrant. It would astound many who have been loud in denouncing war if they could realize, from personal observation or experience, the nature of this Boer tyranny. So subtle and far reaching are its effects, that in many districts on British soil our fellow-countrymen pass their lives in subjection. They are compelled to endure slights and to swallow insults that would have long since driven a less patient people to civil war. The Boer is firmly convinced that the British are a race of cowards. Not all the eloquence of Mr. Gladstone could persuade him that the color of the British flag is not white, or that the independence of the Transvaal was not won by arms at Langs Nek and Majuba."

Many cable despatches have come from Ladysmith since war began, but they have not been allowed to tell us what things were really like in the town. At last the mail brings matter more than a month old, but, unlike so many of the cables despatches, it contains news. Writing on Oct. 11 the *Chronicle's* correspondent says:

"Ladysmith breathes freely to-day, but a week ago she seemed likely to become another Lucknow. Of line battalions only the Liverpools were here, besides two batteries of field artillery, some of the Eighteenth Hussars, and the Fifth Lancers. If Kruger or Joubert had then allowed the Boers encamped on the Free State border to have their own way, no one can say what might have happened. Our force would have been outnumbered at least four to one, and probably more. In event of disaster the Boers would have seized an immense quantity of military stores accumulated in the camp and at the railway station. What is worse, they would have isolated the still smaller force lately thrown forward to Dundee, so as to break the strong defensive position of the Biggarsberg, which cuts off the north of Natal and can only be traversed by three difficult passes. Dundee was just as much threatened from the east frontier beyond the Buffalo River, where the Transvaal Boers of the Utrecht and Vryheid district have been mustered in strong force for nearly a fortnight now. With our two advanced posts 'lapped up' (the phrase is a little musty here), our stores lost and our reputation among the Dutch and native populations entirely ruined, the campaign would have begun badly. For the Boers it was a fine strategic opportunity, and they were perfectly aware of that. But 'the Old Man,' as they affectionally call the President, had his own prudent reasons for refusing it. 'Let the enemy fire first,' he says, like the famous Frenchman, and so far he has been able to hold the most ardent of the encamped burghers in check. 'If he should not be able!' we kept saying. We still say it morning and evening, but the pinch of the danger is passed."

For additional troops came in to wait for the beginning of war. What kind of time they are having now may be imagined from this description of Ladysmith, early in October. "It has an evil reputation," says the correspondent. "Last year the troops here were prostrated with enteric. There is a little fever and a good deal of dysentery even now among the regulars. The stream by the camp is condemned, and all water is supplied in tiny rations from pumps. The main permanent camp is built of corrugated iron, practically the sole building material in South Africa, and quite universal for roofs, so that the country has few 'architectural features' to boast of. The cavalry are quartered in tin huts, but the Liverpools, Devons, Gordons and Volunteers have pitched their own tents, and a terrible time they are having of it. Dust is the curse of the place. We remember the Long Valley as an Arcadian dell. Veterans of the Soudan recall the black sandstorms with regretful sights. The thin red dust comes everywhere, and never stops. It blinds your eyes, it stops your nose, it scorches your throat till the invariable shilling for a little glass of any liquid seems cheap as dirt. It turns the whitest shirt brown in half an hour, it creeps into the works of your watch. It lies in a layer mixed with flies on the top of your rations. The white ants eat away the flaps of the tents, and the men wake up covered with dust, like children in a hayfield. Even mules die of it in convulsions. It was in this land that the ostrich developed its world-renowned digestive powers, and no wonder.

"The camp stands on a barren plain, nearly two miles northwest of the town—if we may so call the one straight road of stores and tin-roofed bungalows. Low flat-topped hills surround it, bare and rocky. The frontier, marked by a barbed wire fence across the summit of Van Reenen's Pass, must be nearly forty miles from Ladysmith, but from the cliffs above it the little British camp can be seen like a toy through this clear African air, and Boer sentries watch it all day, ready to signal the least movement of its troops, betrayed by the dust. Their own main force is distributed in camps along the hills well beyond the nine-mile limit ordained by the Convention.

"Meanwhile refugees from the Free State are constantly passing through. Every resident is liable to be commandeered, and forty-eight hours counts as residence. The few British who remain have had all their horses, carts and supplies taken. Most are set to serve the ambulance. A few will be sent to watch Basutoland. But very nearly all of them have abandoned their property and risked the escape to Natal, slipping down the railway under bales or built up in the luggage vans like nuns in a brick wall. In one case the Boers commandeered three wool trucks on the frontier. Those trucks were shunted on to a siding for the night, and in the morning the wool looked strangely shrunk somehow. Yet it was not wool that had been taken out and smuggled through by the next train. For Scot helps Scot, and it is Scots who work the railway. It pays to be a Scot out here. I have only met one Irishman, and he was unhappy.

"But for the grotesque side of refugee unhappiness, one should see the native train which comes down every night from Newcastle way, and disappears toward Maritzburg and safety. Native workers of every kind—servants, laborers, miners—are throwing up their places and rushing toward the sea. The few who can speak English say, 'Too plenty bom-bom!' as sufficient explanation of their panic. The Government has now fitted the open trucks with cross-seats and side bars for their convenience, and so, hardly visible in the darkness, the black crowd rolls up to the platform. Instantly black hands with pinkish palms are thrust through all the bars, as in a monkey house. Black heads jabber and click with excitement. White teeth suddenly appear from nowhere. It is for bread and tin-meats they clamor, and they are willing to pay. But a loaf costs a shilling. Everything costs a shilling here, unless it costs half-a-crown; and Natal grows fat on war. A shilling for a bit of bread! What is the good of Christianity? So the dusky hands are withdrawn, and the poor Zulu with untutored maw goes starving on. But if any still doubt our primitive ancestry, let them hear that Zulu's outcries of pain, or watch the fortunate man who has really got a loaf, and gripping it with both hands, gnaws it in his corner turning his eyes to right and left with fear."

By Oct. 19 the Boers had been for a week making their invasion of Natal. "Slim Piet" Joubert has been doing well. He has given the Boers an appearance of triumph, writes the correspondent, not knowing then that this "appearance" was backed by stern reality. Still it is acknowledged that, "their flag waves where the English flag waved before. The effect on the native mind, and on the spirits of his men is greater than people in England probably think," says the correspondent. "Before the war the young Boers said they would be in Durban in a month, and the Kaffirs half believed it. Well, they have got nearly a third of the way in a week."

And now the attack on Ladysmith was expected any moment. Then the camp has to be broken up. It was found to be "incapable of defence. Artillery could command it from half a dozen hills. Whoever placed it there was neither strategist nor humanitarian. It is like the bottom of a frying pan with a low rim. The fire is hot, and sand is frying. But, indeed, the whole of Ladysmith is like that. The flat-topped hills stand round it reflecting the heat, and in the middle we are now all frying together, with sand for seasoning."

Communication with Dundee is cut off by now, and people in Ladysmith, unable to foresee the forced march after the fruitless "victory" on Smith's Hill, congratulate themselves on the fact that the camp there is "in a stronger position, and not mixed up with the town." But both places are besieged and the English correspondent seems to base his hopes on the ability of the British to stand still, which the Boers cannot do. He has a suspicion of what may happen, as he writes "For the moment, it seems just possible that the great force, which we vaguely hear is coming out from England (all English news is hopelessly vague), will have to send the bulk of its troops to fight up Natal for our relief."

THE DOCTOR'S BILLS.

A Man Whose Business It Is to Make Patients Pay Promptly.

CHICAGO, Nov. 25.—There was nothing remarkable about the appearance of the man. Nevertheless one of the party felt himself called upon to say that he probably had the most curious job of anybody in the city. "He's a business manager for doctors," he explained.

"There's nothing new in that," was the retort of another member of the party. "I know of a number of physicians and dentists who pay a certain sum each month to have their bills made out. The man so employed goes to their offices for a day or two, writes up their books, makes out their bills and mails them. Sometimes three or four doctors having offices in the same building will employ one man among them for this purpose. Members of these professions are notoriously poor business men and some of them lose about half they make owing to that fact."

"But this man," persisted the first speaker, "does even more than that. He has taken up that idea and carried it to its logical conclusion. He has an office of his own, and all bills are payable at that office. He takes the books of his clients to his own office, makes out the bills and collects the money. Of course he has to be a man of standing, in whom the professional men he serves place confidence, but he is all of that, and he does just the work a physician needs to have done. For some reason a doctor's bill is the very last one that most men pay. The average citizen will pay his grocer or his butcher or any other tradesmen with reasonable promptness, but will let his doctor wait. I don't know why this should be so, but it is. Perhaps it is due to the fact that the doctor has been in the habit of letting his bills run. He sends them out, but he doesn't follow them up. If a bill sent out by a business house doesn't receive attention within a reasonable time a duplicate is mailed, and if that is ignored a collector calls on the debtor to remind him that it is time to pay up. That is regarded as business and no exception is taken to it. If the debtor doesn't like to have a call from the collector he knows he can avoid it by paying the bill when he first receives it. The doctor's account, however, does not receive any such attention ordinarily. If the doctor is busy and undertakes to look after his financial affairs himself it may be two or even three months after the services are rendered before the bill is sent, and it may be another two or three months before a duplicate statement is mailed. And by that time it has come pretty close to becoming a bad debt, unless put into the hands of a lawyer. It's the old bill that one doesn't like to pay. Every business man realizes that.

"Now this young man of whom I am speaking simply conducts the financial part of the doctor's business on business principles. He does just as much as a merchant would do and no more. The first bill is followed by another, and if that receives no attention he goes out as a collector and presents the third in person. But, he says, the mere fact of the bills being sent out on time and followed up with reasonable promptness, sometimes with a courteous letter requesting that they receive early attention, has had a wonderful effect in increasing the number that are paid promptly, for, after all, the doctors are largely responsible for their own trouble in getting pay for their services. The young man is not a lawyer and he never sues for the money. He does not pose as a bad debt collector, never writes threatening letters and never resorts to bulldozing tactics. Yet, as I say, he has been most successful, and has proved himself worth far more to his clients than they have to pay for having their business affairs methodically conducted. After he is through, if he has failed to get the money, it rests with the doctor to decide whether he wants the bill put into the hands of a lawyer, and he has the further satisfaction of finding out in a much shorter time than ever before just what bad debts he has on his books.

"Of course every doctor has some charity patients and some others that, for one reason or another, he does not want pressed, and these are indicated on the books when they are turned over to the professional business manager. The doctor still controls his own business, but he has the satisfaction of knowing that details which have been neglected previously are now receiving the same attention that they would in a large commercial house."

KNOWS EVERY DOG IN TOWN.

Former Lightning Calculator of the Treasury Can Tell the Ownership of Washington Curs.

The man who knows everybody, and the way to every place in the town where he lives is quite common. But there is a man in Washington who was "born and raised here," as the native Washingtonian speaks it, who knows everybody's dog, and the dog's name. He will stand on a corner and point out a dog as it trots hither and yon. He was in front of Willard's the other day when a cur of low degree poked his nose around the corner.

"That's Beriah Wilkins's dog," he said to his acquaintances who also prides himself upon knowing a good deal about everything in Washington. "It looks more like Jim Riley's dog," said the acquaintance.

"Jim Riley's dog don't wear any collar," replied the authority.

"Cause that dog wears a collar it's no sign he's Beriah Wilkins's dog."

"No, that's so. But Beriah's dog has got a goitre in his neck, and is a little off in one eye."

The authority whistled to the cur and when he came up familiarly the authority placed his finger on the marks of Mr. Wilkins's dog. This led to a bet that the authority could name the owner of every dog that passed the corner, and in thirty minutes he called the ownership of fourteen, and offered as testimony of his claim to follow the dogs home. It may have been a bluff, but people who know say it wasn't. Not only dogs he declare that he knows these things, but he offers a wager that he can tell the ownership of the dogs by their bark.

This man was at one time known as the lightning calculator of the Treasury Department, and now sells dogs for a livelihood.

HOODOOS ON THE STAGE.

ACTORS BELIEVED BY THE PROFESSION TO BE ALWAYS UNLUCKY.

Recent Protest of an English Hoodoo—He Tells of the Misfortunes of the Blight—An Actress Whose Name Is Associated With Bad Luck—Causes of the Belief.

An English actor whose name has been well known in theatricals for nearly forty years, has protested emphatically against the charge that he is personally unlucky and has been identified with a much greater number of failures than those falling to the average player. "This remark," he said in effect, "was made about me by a friend about fifteen years ago after the failure of a play in which I had a part. 'Poor fellow,' he said, 'he is always unlucky.' The man who said that intended it as an expression of sympathy, but it has cost me the money I would have made as a successful actor, and has practically put my career under a blight since it began to spread through the profession.

"Every actor cannot appear always in successful plays. He is bound to take part in failures, and I don't think I had a share in any more than falls to the usual lot of men in my profession. But the impression got around that I was unlucky in my influence on productions. Managers did not care to engage me, for they are sometimes superstitious. The press began to expect that anything that I was concerned in would fail because the impression that I was to exercise some baleful influence on every play was also communicated to them. So my professional career has been wrecked by a careless remark of a sympathetic friend until the impression got about that I failed always and so did everybody connected with me. I attained as many successes as any actor who meets his regular alternation of good plays and bad ones."

If this actor had lived in the United States he would have been known as a hoodoo and his career proves the existence of the same superstition here as in England. Certain actors, presumably for no more fault of their own than in the case just mentioned, seem to be looked upon as unlucky to any theatrical venture, quite independent of what their talent may be. One notable case of this is an actress still on the stage and for two years past connected with a successful company. She is no longer a beginner, and has in fact had a long career which began in a somewhat different branch of her profession from that in which she is now active. She has always occupied a respectable place and at one time promised to take a brilliant one, but that was never realized and is now not likely to be. For what could have been no more than coincidence she was connected from time to time with plays that did not succeed, and made in fact, rather conspicuous failures. If she had not, at that time, occupied a considerable share of the attention devoted to the stage, nobody would have known that she was concerned in them, but she came to be known as a hoodoo in the profession. One Boston manager who died several years ago, had refused for several seasons before his death to receive at his theatre any company in which she was. He looked upon her as a hoodoo and felt certain that he would have a failure on his hands.

"Look here," said an agent to him one day, "I want to get three weeks' time at your theatre for 'The Rhinestone Pin' which is going to be produced in New York. We think the play is a good one, have engaged a first-class company, and here is the list of actors."

The name of the tabooed leading woman was in the cast.

"I wouldn't take you in on any terms," was the manager's answer, "as long as that woman is in the company. She is a hoodoo, and for the last three seasons she has been here every play was a failure. Two of those plays were productions I made myself with every chance of success until I engaged her. So I can't book you."

"I will tell you what I will do," was the agent's compromise, "for it is impossible to change the cast on account of any superstition against her. She has the part that suits her splendidly and there is no woman in the business who could do it as well. If the play doesn't go along I will put her out the first thing and get some one else for the rôle, and believe forever afterward that you are right."

The Boston manager had the satisfaction early in the season, when the new play had not been on the road for more than six weeks, of seeing the unlucky actress replaced by somebody else. The enterprise was successful, and after the objectionable member of the company had been removed, played a profitable season at his theatre. His superstition seemed to be verified, although as a matter of fact the woman concerned in the play was unfortunate only in that she had a part unsuited to her. It was more adapted to the personality and talent of the second, and naturally that change was sufficient to make a success of what might have been a failure with such an important phase of it inappropriately looked after.

But to this day the actress is known as a hoodoo in her profession. Managers are loath to engage her and her own profession looks upon her as one of its predestined unfortunate members who exercises a spell almost as bad as the evil eye upon all her associates in the business. From a matter-of-fact point of view it is almost impossible to sympathize with any such transcendental idea, and the facts of her failures could be explained in a much more practical manner. Whether the woman knows or not that she is regarded in the profession as an unlucky influence nobody has ever heard. It ought not to bother her much as there is no doubt of the managers for whose production she has been engaged. In spite of the prejudice against her, she has always had sufficient engagements enough to keep her employed and to accumulate a very comfortable competency as a result of her long labors. During recent seasons, however, she appeared usually in combinations of a less pretentious order than those in which she used to act.

Prosperity and the hoodoos are by no means irreconcilable. A popular comedian who retired from the stage a long time ago, took with him into private life a small fortune, quite sufficient for his needs, yet he had come to be looked upon as a hoodoo by the few men who could never, by any chance, be associated with a success, and was said to bring misfortune to his managers and everybody associated with him in business.

The disparity between the actual facts and the common impression about a person is shown in his case, for instead of being a failure, as the world had always taken him to be, he was quietly laying by a competency in spite of few brilliant successes. If this impression about him had not existed, he might have accumulated more money and might have played more often. Another comedian who acts in comic opera now as often as he can get the opportunity, has for years been looked upon by managers as a hoodoo, whose existence it is impossible to counteract.

"I knew what it would be when I engaged Will," said a manager the other day, "and I don't know that I would have done it if I could have put my hands just at that moment on somebody else for the part. He was the easiest man to get and willing to take what I wanted to pay, so I ran against my own judgment and hired him. I don't know whether the show was any good or not, and whether it had any real chances of success. At all events it only took Will to knock them sky high and close up the house in two weeks. Business had been good before I put him in the cast, but it went down from the minute he came on, as he appeared."

This experience, of course, satisfied one more manager that the unfortunate actor was a hoodoo, when as a matter of fact he had been called in to take the part of a more expensive and popular performer, who was the sole attraction of a weak comic opera. He could never have been a great success under any circumstances, and with the retirement of the one popular favorite it had come quickly. It is from such accidental experiences as this that the actor may acquire a reputation as a hoodoo, when he may be nothing of the kind and might, under favorable circumstances, prove a valuable member of a company. Just now one of the most popular actresses in New York is a woman who, a few years ago, came dangerously near to being declared a hoodoo. She was dismally placed in poor or unattractive plays, and the public interest in her was not commensurate to her great talent. She was charming personally and the public liked her, but did not turn out to see her in numbers sufficient to make a success financially. Three or four bad plays following one another, in which her acting was praised without attracting the public, gave ground for the growing theory that she might develop into a hoodoo. One successful, well-written play, in which her own work was not better than it had been in half a dozen others before, was enough to take a firm hold on public taste and there is no longer any reason for any discussion of this young woman as a hoodoo.

A SUN reporter asked a manager the other day how actors came to be looked on as hoodoos, or at least, came to be thought so, by members of their profession. "It happens in this way," he said. "After an actor or an actress has acquired a certain prominence and is able to demand a certain salary, the manager who engages them relies in a measure on their share in making his enterprise a success. If it falls on account of the quality of the play itself, or for any other reason not connected with the abilities or personalities of the actor, the manager is likely to mark down the piece a failure and look upon everybody concerned in it as having done their part in accomplishing that result. After a man or a woman has been identified for two or three years with unsuccessful plays it takes a mighty far-seeing, unbiased man to have confidence in their abilities and to believe that the failure would have come apart from what they did. A manager is likely to approach every new production with as much uncertainty and nervousness as if it were the most important he had ever made. I have known men to control half a dozen important theatrical enterprises at once; yet, on the day preceding the least important play they undertake, their nervousness and apprehension will be just as great as if they had never been through that experience before. If it fails they may be good losers and take the event philosophically; but before its production there they will neglect no precaution to ensure success and be very respectful of what may seem like mere superstition.

"If it comes to the question of engaging a man or woman who has been identified with failures, they are likely to look everywhere else before settling on them. Naturally, these people find it harder and harder to get the best engagements. More failures mean the strengthening of the prejudice against them, and it takes considerable strength of character on the part of a man or woman to struggle against this sort of opinion when it begins to exist. If a man happens to be a star and continues to fail, he will drop out of that position, unless he has the money or a manager who has confidence enough in him to continue the effort until luck has turned. It is not a different matter for a star who has been a failure in that capacity to find employment in less exacting positions. The same thing is true of a woman. It is the stock actor or actress who has never emerged from that sphere on whom the blight of the hoodoo rests most heavily. It is impossible for him to drop back, because he has never got out of the ranks. So, gradually, these actors find employment more difficult to obtain, have to work with smaller companies, and find their professional career is to lie in very humble lines.

"Mind you, I have no belief in the theory that any man or woman ever acts as a hoodoo so long as they are sufficiently competent and talented to play the part that falls to them. Some persons have more magnetism for the public than others, and that quality is valuable in an actor, but yet the play is good in every particular, or, at all events, good enough to make a moderate success, is going to fail because this man or that woman with a past full of failures happens to play a leading or important rôle. At the same time, I can't say that I would ever engage, if I could help it, anybody who had come to be looked upon as a hoodoo. I am not prejudiced against them and I don't believe in their influence on a play's success or failure, but, at the same time, I would rather have somebody who hasn't been called by that baleful name when I pick out a company of actors."

ISN'T BINKS BINKS?

Painful Loss of the Little Man's Identity at the Opening of the New Saloon.

When the big, new saloon in the biggest, newest office building finally received its last decoration, the proprietor set the day for the opening and decided to make it memorable by a grand reception. He invited to the feast all the men he knew were in politics, and their friends. Most of the invitations were accepted, and on the night of the opening the place was crowded by the proprietor's friends, and their friends, and others who followed the crowd. The proprietor dispensed liquid hospitality freely, so that before long things began to move. It had been decided by the guests unanimously that the reception was a huge success, and a large, fat, smooth-faced man was cogitating regretfully on the limited capacity of the human frame to absorb liquids, and still retain the capacity to feel joy in his fellow creature's peculiarities, when a short, bearded man bore down on him.

"D'you know whether there's a detective here?" demanded the bearded one.

"No," replied the smooth-faced man, "I don't, I don't know any."

"I do," volunteered the other. "Good fellows. I want to thank 'em. I'm Binks, the banjo man."

The fat man gazed at him long and earnestly. Then in a tone of conviction he spoke. "Go on, you ain't," he said. "Oh, yes I am," said Binks. "I am, I'm Binks the banjo man." "Naw you ain't either. Why're you trying to fool me?" asked the big man.

"But I ain't foolin'," said Binks. "I aint. Honest. I am Binks the banjo man. Honest, I am."

"You can't fool me," said the other positively. "No, it won't do. You can't be Binks the banjo man."

"But I am. I tell you true. I am," said the other. By this time he had decided that it was necessary to his happiness to convince the stranger of his identity. "That's right. Sure I am him. Yessir. Sure. Why, I know myself. Of course. Well, too, I know. I am Binks. Old Binks. Make banjos. Yessir."

The smooth-shaven man regarded him coldly.

"Now why do you try to fool me?" he asked. "you oughtn't to do it. Besides, I'm no farmer. You needn't think I'm buying gold bricks. If you do, you'd better stop thinking it. I'm no come-on. Besides, I know Binks. He's seven foot high."

"No I ain't," said he of the beard, his voice rising and quivering with each word. "I ain't seven foot tall, not hear. He used to work for me. He wasn't Binks. Really, he wasn't. I tell you true. I'm Binks. That's straight."

"Look here, you"—began the fat man, as though he were tired of parley. "Well, I won't say it. But to have a little sawed-off snip try to tell me he's Binks is too much. I say, now, it won't do. Bite it off."

The little man began to dance. The big man looked him over. The little man was reiterating "I am Binks, the banjo man," in tones that his life depended on it. Then a third man caught sight of the two. The fat man winked at him. Then he spoke to the little man.

"There's the Deputy Mayor over there," he said. "I'll tell you what I'll do. If he says it's all right, all right. If he says no, all right. See?"

"Of course," said the little man. The two approached the third man, the fat one with dignified tread, the little one hopping along.

"Now, Mr. Deputy," said the fat man, "this man will have it that he is Binks, the banjo man. Now I say he ain't. If you say yes, it goes; otherwise, no."

"I apprehend the situation," responded the third man with dignity, "what is the statement?"

"I'm Binks, the banjo man, and he won't believe me," said the bearded man.

The others both gazed at him. Neither spoke until the claimant of the name of Binks had grown nervous under the strain. Then the umpire spoke:

"Like thunder you are," he said.

"Good God," gasped the claimant.

Two hours later the fat man and the umpire left the new saloon together. As they walked through the hall they caught sight of a bleary-eyed, bearded man, who stood at the entrance, buttonholing every man who went out. All he said was:

"I am Binks, the banjo man."

PHASES OF THE TALL BUILDING.

International and Scenic Features of One That Overlooks the Bay.

In one modern tall building downtown, overlooking the bay, there are a dozen foreign consulates. As one goes skyward in the elevator he may see on doors across the halls of the several floors as he shoots past "Consul-General of the So-and-so," and "Consulate of this" and "Consulate of that," and when he gets up to where he is going and looks out seaward this seems a very appropriate place for such offices, as it must seem to everybody who has occasion to visit them. For from the windows of this building may be seen coming in the steamers from the various countries represented within it, as, in due course, they may be seen passing out. From one land and another the steamers are coming and going all the time. Where one can thus see the means of actual communication the other land is brought nearer; and going and coming one is more and more inclined to regard them simply as plying on so many ocean ferries, and it seems altogether appropriate to have these consular offices all in one building.

Another thing likely to impress the visitor to the tall building overlooking the bay is the bay itself, with its shipping. Doubtless, many times, he has looked out on the tall buildings from the water, from the decks of ferryboats or other steam craft, and thought they were great; now let him look the other way on the ships and its boats, and he will find that from the tall building point of view the water and the craft upon it have decidedly a novel interest. From the shore or from the deck of another boat he sees only the side and the elevation of a passing steamer; from here, upon the nearer ones at least, he may look down upon them and take in their shape and dimensions, and he gets a new idea of their sharpness and their narrowness; and as he sees a steamer coming up, say, to a wharf, to make a landing, she seems, even from here, more than ever to be endowed with some sort of life, and to be feeling her own way, cautiously, to the landing place. Seen from this elevation, the bay, with its varied moving boats takes on a pictorial aspect, and the scene that it presents is one of great interest.

One of the most marvellous sights among the works of man is the spectacle presented by the tall buildings of the city after nightfall in the winter season, when, darkness coming on before the closing hour of business, these cliff-like buildings are all lighted up. This is a sight that is peculiarly modern and wonderful. The rivers and the bay, seen after nightfall from the tall building, present a spectacle as wonderful as the buildings themselves do, seen at that hour from the river; but from this point of view, the silently moving boats, some brightly, some dimly lighted, and all picked out with red lights and green do present a striking and fascinating picture.

Dr. Greene's NERVURA
BLOOD NERVE REMEDY.

MAKES CHILDREN WELL AND STRONG.

WILL CURE YOUR CHILD.

Mr. James Benway, Whallonsburg, N. Y., says: "Two years ago my little son, Ernest, was taken with a terrible case of eczema so bad that his head was one complete scab. He had a good head of hair but the scab was so thick that we could not see a single hair on his head. When we carried him on our arm, the matter would drip off his head. We did not think he would live, but we gave him Dr. Greene's Nervura blood and nerve remedy and he got well and is now as bright and healthy a child as any and has no return of the disease. I send this letter for publication for the good of others."

If your child is sick or not feeling right, give it Dr. Greene's wonderful Nervura, which is purely vegetable and harmless. If you wish you can have the advice of Dr. Greene, 35 West 14th St., New York City, about your child free of charge. Write at once.

X RAYS AND LONGEVITY.

The Discoveries of a German Doctor—Some Queer Old Cases on Record.

Paris Correspondence of the Courrier des Etats Unis.

If there is anything in nature calculated to interest the people of this world, it certainly must be the knowledge of the approximate number of years that one can live, leaving out, of course, accidents impossible to foresee.

Flourens, with his figures, told us that the average length of life in Europe was from 36 to 40 years, that the ordinary limit might be fixed, without exaggeration, at 75 years, and that the abnormal length of life reached to 125 years. But how is one to know whether he belongs to the average class, the ordinary, or the abnormal in longevity? Until recently the clairvoyants alone could reply to that formidable question. But unfortunately, we found out long ago that their prognostics should be received with great reserve. Thanks to the progress of science, and especially to the marvellous X-rays, the savants of to-day are able to deal with the question, and the results of their experiments are followed with the greatest curiosity. People speak very disparagingly about this life and of this poor world, and, nevertheless, there are few who do not cherish a secret ambition to become centenarians.

Can it be possible to predict with precision the length of life of a human being? Up to the present the greater number of doctors have replied negatively, because it requires so little to make a man pass from life to death. Nevertheless, certain American scientific men have been able to establish on the basis of statistics some distinctive characteristics of hereditary longevity. One of them was able to tell on sight with considerable success the probable length of life of his patients. In this way, it is said, he amassed a fortune amounting to several millions.

But the other day a German doctor, M. Richter, sent a communication to the Imperial College of Medicine of Berlin, which has made quite a stir in Germany. He avers that by a thorough study of the organs by means of X-rays one may determine pretty exactly the length of life of a human being. It was known for a long time that the size of the heart, the lungs, the digestive organs and the brain might be considered among the best conditions of longevity; but M. Richter goes still further. He holds that there exists a close correlation between the length of life and the dimensions of the different organs, and it is upon this supposed correlation that he bases a system supported by numerous observations and statistics.

Fortunately, Richter admits himself that there are "individual exceptions." Without those exceptions, his discovery might be considered one of the most terrible plagues that ever threatened humanity. The idea of changing the entire world into one immense troop of people condemned to death, and knowing the precise hour when they would quit this world could only originate in the brain of a German.

Notwithstanding this, M. Richter is good enough to admit that there are natures which seem rebellious to every "interview" of this kind. Science has heard of the case of an Englishman, born in 1483, whose delicate appearance made all the doctors give him up when he was in the cradle. His chest was so narrow, says the report, that he seemed to have difficulty in breathing. Well, this young moribund, condemned by the doctors to die in short order, died in 1651 at the age of 169. He saw the reign of ten Kings, and when he was 101 years old he was put in the public stocks for licentiousness.

Secundi Hango, Consul of Venice at Smyrna, measured only 57 centimetres around the chest, and one of his lungs was diseased. Nevertheless, he lived to the age of 115 years. He was married five times and had forty-nine children. When he was 100 years old he got his wisdom teeth. When he was 110 his hair turned black again. At 112 his eyebrows and his beard turned black.

What a fine blunder the learned men of his time would have made if they applied to him "the distinctive characteristics of longevity!" But M. Richter classes these anomalies among the "individual exceptions." Still, there is good reason to believe that these exceptions are sufficiently numerous to leave very little authority to the rule, because Nature does not like to have her secrets penetrated, and often laughs at appearances.

An Incident of Fast Railway Travel.

From the Cincinnati Enquirer.

WABASH, Ind., Nov. 17.—Yesterday afternoon two miles from Treaty, Conductor Brooks of the northbound "Flyer" stepped to the rear platform of the last coach and pulled two ten-dollar bills from the depth of his vest pocket. The stiff breeze blowing carried them from his hand and back along the track.

He frantically grasped the bell cord and gave it a mighty pull, but Engineer John Critz, supposing that it was a signal to stop at Treaty to let off a passenger, responded with two blasts of his whistle, and did not slacken speed. Treaty was soon reached, and when the train halted Conductor Brooks hastened around to the engine and related the tale of his loss. The return trip was begun, with the conductor and brakeman on the rear of the train eagerly scanning the track in the hope of finding the currency. Finally the train was stopped and the crew got off and prosecuted the search all over the right of way, sympathetic passengers joining in the quest. The search was abandoned and the conductor told all hands to get on the train, when the brakeman came upon both bills lying within three feet of each other, and then the train sped on.

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FOR CONSTIPATION.
FOR SALLOW SKIN.
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GENUINE MUST HAVE SIGNATURE.

Price 25 Cents. Purely Vegetable. Brent Good

CURE SICK HEADACHE.

NOTES OF MUSIC EVENTS.

Mark Hambourg and Alexander Petschnikoff are to be the leading soloists at the Metropolitan Opera House to-night. The full programme is as follows:

Overture, "Masaniello."	Auber
"On, Away, Awake Beloved," from "Hiawatha's Wedding Feast." George Hamlin.	S. Coleridge Taylor
Concerto, E minor, op. 11. Mark Hambourg.	Chopin
Prelude, "Die Meistersinger."	Wagner
Dream Music, from "Haensel und Gretel."	Humperdinck
Concerto (for violin), E minor, op. 64. Alexander Petschnikoff.	Mendelssohn
"Le Tambour Major," from "Le Cadi." Frank Clark.	Ambroise Thomas
Rakoczy March, from "Damnation of Faust."	Berlioz

Edward Bromberg, assisted by Marguerite Stilwell and Eva G. Coleman, will give a song recital in the Knabe Hall on Tuesday evening at 8:15. Mr. Bromberg will sing arias by Mozart and Verdi, and songs by Schumann, Denza, Elliott Schenk, Massenet and Brounoff.

Vladimir de Pachmann's last recital in the Mendelssohn Hall on next Saturday afternoon will be devoted wholly to the works of Chopin. The programme will be:

Sonata	Op. 35, B-flat minor
Grave—Doppio movemento—Scherzo—Marche Funebre Finale.	
Ballade	Op. 23, G minor
Barcarole	Op. 60, F-sharp major
Etude	Op. 25, No. 1, A-flat
Nocturne	Op. 55, No. 1
Valse	Op. 64, No. 2
Trois Mazurkas,	Op. 56, No. 2; Op. 67, No. 1; Op. 63, No. 1
Berceuse	Op. 57, D flat
Grand Polonaise	Op. 53, A-flat major

Francis Rogers, a baritone, formerly of Boston, will give a song recital in the Mendelssohn Hall on Wednesday afternoon, Dec. 6, at 3:15 o'clock.

Emma Dambmann will be heard in concert at Knabe Hall on Wednesday evening in numbers by Verdi, Fehr and Murio-Celli.

David Bispham will give his annual recital in Mendelssohn Hall on Thursday afternoon, Dec. 7, at 3 o'clock. Walter Damrosch will play the accompaniments. Mr. Bispham's songs will include Schumann's "Dichterliebe," Damrosch's "The World Well Lost," "First Love Remembered," "The Deserted Plantation," and "Danny Deever," and Liza Lehmann's new song cycle from Tennyson's "In Memoriam." This is announced as Mr. Bispham's only recital in New York during the present season.

The New York Quartette will give three concerts at Knabe Hall on Dec. 7, Jan. 15, and Feb. 15. The members of the quartette are Bernard Sinsheimer, John Spargur and Jacob and Modest Altschuler.

The Musical Arts Society will hold its first concert of the present season on Dec. 16 at Carnegie Hall.

Arthur Whiting will give the first of two piano recitals at Mendelssohn Hall on next Tuesday afternoon, beginning at 3 o'clock. His programme includes Brahms's sonata, op. 5, in F minor; the waltzes, op. 39; intermezzo, B flat minor, op. 117; romanze, F major, op. 118; capriccio, D minor, op. 116, and capriccio, B minor, op. 76, all by Brahms, and, finally, a "Suite Moderne," op. 15, in nine divisions, by Mr. Whiting himself.

Mme. Tischer, soprano, assisted by Emilio de Gogorza, baritone, and Albert Lockwood, pianist, will be heard in a concert on Tuesday evening next in Mendelssohn Hall.

Albert Lockwood, in a piano recital at Mendelssohn Hall at 2:30 o'clock next Wednesday afternoon will play the Schubert-Liszt fantasie, op. 15; Chopin's nocturne, op. 27, No. 1; Rameau's "Le Tambourin;" Schubert's Impromptu, op. 90, No. 3; Liszt's "Waldesrauschen," a Grieg ballade; Brahms's sonata, op. 5, the ballade after Burger's "Lenore," and also the "Contredanse" of Rubinstein.

The second of the series of morning musicales given by Townsend H. Fellows at Carnegie Lyceum, is set for next Wednesday at 11 o'clock. Those taking part next week will be Alexander Rihm, pianist; Henry Schradieck, violinist; William J. Moser, viola; and Leo Schulz, 'cello, with Townsend H. Fellows, baritone. The programme includes the following numbers: Quartet, G minor, op. 25, Brahms; baritone solos, "Das Madchen an das erste Schneeglocken," Weber, and "Gruss," Mendelssohn; "Der Doppelganger," Schubert, and trio, B flat, op. 52, Rubinstein.

The oratorio of "Elijah" will be sung at the praise service of the South Church, at Madison avenue and Thirty-eighth street, at 4 o'clock this afternoon. The choir, under Dr. Gerrit Smith, includes Mrs. Smith, Marguerite Hall, Frederick Jameson, Ericsson Bushnell and a chorus of forty-four voices.

A performance of portions of Handel's oratorio "Judas Maccabeus" will be given on Saturday evening, Dec. 2, at the West End Synagogue, in West Eighty-second street. The soloists are Eva Gardner Coleman, soprano; Emma Mueller, contralto; Edward Mallette, tenor, and Edward Bromberg, bass. The Cantata Society, under J. B. Zellman, will sing the choruses.

Johanna Gadski, Grace Preston, George Hamlin and David Bispham will be soloists for the Oratorio Society's performances of the "Messiah" on Friday afternoon and Saturday evening, Dec. 29 and 30. At the society's April concert, as already announced, Bach's Mass in B minor will be sung. The society has invited all trained singers to join its chorus and assist in this performance.

At the first lecture on "The Classic and Romantic in Piano Music" given by W. J. Henderson at the New York College of Music on Wednesday afternoon Florence Terrel will play compositions by Bach, Scarlatti, Clementi and Beethoven.

Wanda Koppel is to give three song recitals in Mendelssohn Hall, on Dec. 7, Jan. 18 and March 1. Kaltenborn Quartette is announced to assist. The object of the recitals is to assist the young singer to finish her musical education abroad.

Mary Bailey announces a series of ten talks on the origin, spirit and form of the lyric opera, at her studio, 557 Fifth avenue, beginning Thursday morning, Dec. 7. A second course on Monday afternoon is also announced. Lotta Mills, pianist, will assist.

At Delmonico's on Tuesday afternoon next at 4 o'clock Frank Damrosch will address the subscribers to the six symphony concerts for young people to be given by him at Carnegie Hall on the Saturday afternoons of Dec. 2, Jan. 18, Feb. 3, Feb. 24, March 10, March 31, on the importance of musical culture and of teaching young people how to listen to music intelligently. Mr. Damrosch will discuss the different programmes chosen, and will explain why a special series of five concerts for very young children has been arranged in Mendelssohn Hall. All those interested in general musical education are invited.

Adrienne Remenyi, Victor Beige and Herwegh von Ende will be heard in concert at the Waldorf on Dec. 21.

The Kneisel Quartette will play at Association Hall in Brooklyn on Wednesday night. Mozart's quartette in B flat, variations from Schubert's quartette in D minor, Brahms's sonata in A minor for piano and violin, and the first movement from C. M. Loeffler's suite "Les Veillées de l'Ukraine" will compose the programme. Lotta Mills will assist.