# ON THE PARIS BOULEVARD.

## *GAY PROMENADE OF THE DUSK IN THE DOG DAYS.*

**Some Features of It That Shock English Visitors and That Please the Parisians—The Bunceed Tourist and the Book Sold in Secret—A French Kaleidoscope.**

PARIS, Aug. 1.—Though Paris is always full of English people, the Parisians never come to understand them.

This morning just around the corner of the Boulevard, in front of the Hotel St. Petersburg, there piled into a six-horse omnibus a personally-conducted party: little girls, old men, marriageable maidens, slim red-nosed maiden aunts and beefy mothers, with their bony brothers smoking bulldog pipes. They climbed the wheels, pulled themselves over the tailboard, and scaled the dasher, silent yet gesticulating, the girls as agile as the men, all showing splendid teeth, all in chip hats and Panamas, all using telescopes or opera glasses, whiskey flasks or sandwiches. In view of such grotesque *sans gêne* Parisians are puzzled; they suspect that they are victims of some great joke that these English tourists are exaggerating.

Last night these same personally-conducted ones irrupted on the Boulevard. From the Grand Café terrace they sat beaming on the ever-moving spectacle of Paris night-life in the dog days, pointing, criticising freely in good English, taking in the show with an air of superior indulgence. They recognize that everybody cannot be a Briton; that it is not the fault of the French. In fact they rather like the French, because they are such funny people.

THE LOP' BIRD.

But to the fakir of the Boulevard who tries to sell them a doped love bird clawing for dear life to a short stick, it is these same English who are funny. "Aoh, yes, I spik Ingleesh! volé-vos ce petit vols—oh! Ee spik Ingleesh, ze bird alzoh!"

"Oh, Bertie! Is it true? Can it speak? It is such a little bird! How much? Combeyan?"

The splendid blonde has spoken, the girl with milk and roses in her cheeks, the one redeeming feature of the combination, blue-eyed, with hair absolutely golden. Shuddering at her accent, the young Frenchmen still gaze at her as moths gaze into a flame.

The wretched fakir joggles the pipe-dreaming love bird on his stick; it is so filled with birdseed soaked in opium water that it does not know its tail from its bill.

"Ze lof' bird, mademoiselle! Ze bir—"

"Get out!" Like a true Briton Bertie has spoken briefly and to the point. "Get out That bird is sick! You ought to be arrested for cruelty. Do you hear?"

Bertie still thinks that it was his rebuke that sent the bird merchant flying. We know better. We see slowly strutting down the Boulevard the pair of agents, or policemen, from whom he fled. He had not their favor. Other fakirs ply fat more nefarious trades unmolested. A

THE OLIVE MAN.

mysterious young man with bulging pockets thrust a French book tied round tight with string into Bertie's lap and whispered swiftly and peremptorily: "Quick, three francs!" while looking nervously around.

"Get out!" says Bertie. The last time he was in Paris he gave three francs for a string-bound French book under circumstances very similar; it turned out to be a copy of "Le Péril Protestant!" Yet this experience will not prevent his giving up six francs in return for a sealed packet later on to-night when he strolls on the Boulevard alone. It will contain a dozen blameless illustrated post cards.

An interesting young man with a tub of pickled olives deftly places one of the "sour plums" upon each café terrace table.

"Samples," he says, "eat them." The French actually do eat them, that is to say, they eat up the samples.

"Nasty," exclaims the blonde English girl, while Bertie flips the dusty little olive angrily across the sidewalk. Had it hit some Frenchmen, Bertie would have been in for an "incident."

The electric lights are spitting in the foliage of the sidewalk trees; the atmosphere is redolent with mingled summer odors; yet a kindly breeze is blowing down the Boulevard and the great multitude is thankful. We are in the dog days. It is night upon the Boulevard. The brilliant semi-circle of broad streets, which, lined with cafés, hotels, theatres and bright shops, reflects with such accuracy our idea of Paris as we hoped to find it, seems a giddy summer garden full of easy-going sights and pleasures. Most Parisians of mark are out of town. We who are old-time residents are half ashamed, yet we enjoy it. We sit with uncounted thousands on the sidewalk watching the parade of Paris stay-at-homes and taking pleasure in the innocent delight of tourists.

To the Parisian there is but one great Boulevard—this semi-circle of broad shady streets that extend from the Church of the Madeline to the Place of the Bastile. Its upper end forms the true cosmopolitan parade of Paris in all seasons.

"Gold watch! Remarkable occasion!"

A man with a big mustache is whispering to Bertie while displaying in a most secretive way a really handsome timepiece. He wants to sell it for a hundred-franc note. Bertie gathers that the watch is stolen. "Get out!"

"Limping love! C'est bien dommage qu'elle boite comme ça!" vociferates a red-faced youth, who peddles songs. For

THE MOTHER OF SIX.

the first time this evening there is a brisk business done along the terrace of our café. Half a dozen outstretched hands solicit the song of the day. It is the tale of a compassionate young man who pitied a fair girl who seemed to be lame. Later on he learned that she had put a silver dollar in her stocking for safe keeping and that it had slipped down underneath her heel.

"The American ditcher! The Americans at Panama!" intones a graybeard as he hawks about an ancient wooden toy in which two wooden figures facing each other chop alternately as a string is pulled. Without the fakir's ingenuity in finding "names of actuality" for his poor merchandise, the Boulevard-by-Night would lose some of its geniality. Throughout the Madagascar campaign this same toy was sold to the cry of "The French Colonist! Grandeur of the Fatherland!" In the Dreyfus affair it figured as Picquart and Esterhazy. A month ago the graybeard tried to make connection with the Humbert-Crawford swindle, calling it "Les Crack-Forts," which is a pun—"crack-hard!"—and a possible pronunciation of the name for Frenchmen.

The Grand Café has a great awning, very broad, that stretches its whole breadth. Beneath this awning, on the sidewalk, the proprietor has set 200 little tables and 400 chairs. What happens here is happening throughout the whole length of the Boulevard.

Inside, the café is almost deserted; three old Polish refugees play Polish checkers in a corner; a few German clerks read German papers furnished by the café, while a spooning couple, holding hands beneath their table, by the world forgot, forget the world.

Underneath the awning sits the clientèle of the café; they have gone outdoors. On the sidewalk they sit nursing the one drink that pays for their front seat in a kaleidoscopic show, with a cool breeze that rustles in the tree tops thrown in for nothing. Before them promenade the damsels of the night; they are quite ladylike. Beside them promenade Parisian families. Mingling with them promenade a thousand young clerks, a thousand tourists, a thousand newly-married couples and another thousand not yet married, the great Boulevard-by-Night throng that continually seeks sights, chats incessantly, laughs at its own jokes and collects in dense groups at the slightest excuse. Just now at the corner of the rue Scribe they have got around a tipsy and dilapidated orator, who tells his confidential tale to three well-known army officers in mufti seated at the corner table of the terrace.

"Ruined by the Humberts, messieurs, to whom I loaned in one month some 80,000 francs——"

"Skip!" It is a General of the French Army who gives the disreputable fraud "the office," and it is the delighted crowd that finishes the saving of him, as it quickly opens a way for him to the street and innocently blocks off the policemen.

Bertie and his blond companion find it "nice." Really, this seems to be the one English adjective. Before the Obelisk in the Place de la Concorde, at the tomb of Abélard and Héloïse in Père Lachaise or eating in a cheap Duval restaurant, they say it is "nice!"

The sewers are nice, the Bon Marché is nice, French coffee is nice, automobiles are nice; in fact, listening to Bertie's blond beside us we learn that they have only found two things that are not nice, French tea and the French soldiers.

"But, Bertie dear, they are such little men!" we hear her coo. The author of "Pendennis" fifty years ago had the same

SITTING ON THE HIGH STOOLS OF THE AMERICAN BAR.

fixed prejudice; and British tourists hug it in spite of the evidence of their own eyes.

"It's their trousers!" explains Bertie. "It's a crime to put able-bodied men into such——bags!"

And so the British tourists sit and criticize in breezy English, utterly oblivious of the fact that more than onehalf of the French folks around them catch at least the drift of what they say.

The French folks are puzzled to guess whether the superb blond girl is Bertie's wife or sister or his mere acquaintance of the evening. They can never understand these English girls. A young clerk of the great Louvre shop who sits just behind us tells his neighbors—listening delightedly though utter strangers to him—how they come to his establishment.

"Ces Anglaises suaves, ces chics jeunes miss," he speaks of are the real thing, well-dressed elegant young girls, not bony tourists in chip hats, but demoiselles du grand monde, speaking good French!

"They are arrant flirts!" explains the young clerk, "and yet in their very flirting they seek to evangelize us! While trying on gloves and inviting their hand to be squeezed, while darting their bewildering glances at us with their great blue eyes—they give us tracts! Yes, I swear it, silly little religious tracts in bad French! They are astonished that there is no chapel attached to the Louvre! They ask: 'Are you married? How many children have you? Are your parents living? How much rent do you pay?' All that for an excuse to flirt with the French clerk!"

It is well Bertie cannot understand the conversation. He and his companions are just now cross-examining in broken French the blear-eyed, well fed, alleged mother of six, three of which, together with their alleged father-with-a-broken-arm she has brought out as samples to aid in her begging.

"How did that child get the sore on his scalp?" asks the old lady of the party.

"What is the matter with your eye?" asks Bertie. For the credit of our common origin and language, we await with trembling the Louvre clerk's own examples: "Are your parents living? What rent do you pay" but we are spared them by the approach of the two policemen. The fat mother of six whisks her brood away from the cross-examination before Bertie's party can give them the pennies they expected.

"Sales Anglais!" she mutters. "Dirty English!"

A long-legged varlet with a foghorn voice darts past her, crying the late 10 o'clock edition of *Le Soir*. A bolder fakir, selling plaster figurines that work outrageously

RUINED BY THE HUMBERT FAMILY.

if true to nature, thanks to a glass tube containing a small quantity of very volatile liquid, stood for a moment unashamed while calling out: "La fuite de Mme. Humbert!"—a bad pun in a bad cause—till Bertie saw him.

"Get out!"

The young Briton muttered the words furiously, blushing crimson as he rose and jerked them across the sidewalk. The crowd murmurs: "Posing English! If it shocks them let them stay at home! He will come and buy one when his family is in bed!"

The old aunt gives the alarm; the party rises, forms a hollow square with Bertie in the centre to protect it, and stalks off with dignity. The Boulevard has shocked them!

Do you understand why every Frenchman round about the spot feels hot within him puzzled anger and resentment, why his mother, wife or mistress sitting peacefully beside him, pinches her lips in a dubious sarcastic smile yet feels uncomfortable? They hate that English party. It has "made the moral" to them, declared its superiority;

THE KITTEN IN BLACK.

and in a dumb uncertain way they feel that it has also cheated at the game.

"These English tourists sat the whole show out with interest, and now we know that it was prurient interest," they say to themselves. "Then when at last they had seen enough, they seized on a pretext to show themselves scandalized, to make a protest and to disengage themselves from all responsibility."

"Vive la République!" yells a tough young man. He is selling little artificial red flowers, the red eglantines adopted by the Socialists.

"Vive les Sœurs!" calls out a courageous lady from the café terrace.

This is something we had never seen in Paris—women, yes, and ladies, making themselves public "manifestants!" It began the other Sunday, when the Baronne de Reille and the Comtesse de Munito mention only two names among many) called upon the "mothers of France" to show in the public streets their reprobation of the recent suppressions of the Sisters' schools.

"Hurrah for the good Sisters!"

"Vive la Liberté!"

These are their two cries. You hear them everywhere in public places—from the mouths of ladies of society and from the mouths of working women.

"Vive la République!"

The other party has abducted the Republic and yells itself hoarse hurrahing for it. It is a family quarrel of the French; and we outsiders, their guests for the moment, express no opinions. We stare at the moving panorama of the Boulevard by night. Observe that timid little shopgirl all in black, how daintily she carries that large pasteboard box containing a new gown or hat! Undoubtedly she is on her way to deliver it to some great lady in a hurry. Hélas, we have seen that box before! So demure in her black gown, she goes with it every evening up and down the Boulevard!

"The matrimonial journal! *Le Journal des Jeunes Filles à Marier!*"

"The true method of laying the cards, according to Mme. Lenormand!"

These last two cries we have heard for the last ten years and more. Indeed, the celebrated fortune-teller Lenormand flourished in the time of the First Empire; and the Journal of Young Girls to Marry never had but one edition run off.

Now there plump themselves down at the table just beside us two fine girls in tricorne hats and tailor costumes, and immediately they take out their purses and begin to count their money with a line of complicated conversation. Naturally, everybody listens.

Just below us in the café basement there is a large billiard-room exploited at the present moment by a band of very honest professional billiard players. They play matches; and the fine thing for the public tis hat pools are made upon each game, so that if you have judgment you can win good money. All you need to judge is who will win. An American bar annex is there ready to serve consolation to the losers.

These two girls were sitting on the high stools of the bar. They love to sit thus, swinging their legs freely as they take iced drinks through straws and make a pretty picture. The high stools are new; and all these girls are just big children! Sitting on their high stools, the girls picked up a tip for the billiards. How they got it they did not say; but they played it and won four times. They were full of money.

And now they displayed a charming trait of character. An unhappy little boy came lugging wearily along a basket full of plaster of Paris statuettes. He was not pretty; but he was pale and looked weakly.

"Do you know," said one of the girls to the other, "that poor *gosse* (kid) dare not show up at home until he has so much money to hand over? Come, *petit!*" she called to him, "when do you go in?"

"When I sell these two!" he said, showing a Napoleon, and a nude nymph. "You take them? Six francs the two?"

The boy had no grace, no charm; he was not one of those cherubic little fellows who seduce the ladies into buying with their pretty faces and great black liquid eyes. He was ugly and pathetic.

"Give me the art objects!" said the kind girl as she handed him two silver five-franc pieces and refused the change. "Now you are paid—go off to bed!"

And I assure you that—as Bertie's party was no longer with us—not a wife or mother on the café terrace looked on the two girls with other glances than of kindly interest.

It is midnight now and raining. You would scarcely think it summer now, but for the low shoes and the filmy skirts that scurry by. Men and women still sit at the café sidewalk tables, huddled underneath the awnings, doggedly holding their places. They wish that the evening would not end. They know that to-morrow will be sticky, hot, oppressive. The night breeze brings rheumatism, but it also brings cool air and leisure—for most of us are working people.

The fakirs cease to cry their job-lot "actualities." With them the music of the Boulevard has stilled itself. With the light shower the promenade has finished. It now only lacks that the electric lights should be put out.

At 2 o'clock the yellow points of the remaining gas lamps cast a sickly light on the last café customers and sleepy waiters piling up the chairs. At 3 A. M. the dawn will break in this high northern summer. Another day of heat and dust will be begun, until another sunset brings its grateful coolness and the Boulevard-by-Night!

IN THE DOG DAYS

# CHORUS GIRLS, OH, SO SCARCE!

## *AND MANAGERS SAY THEY WON'T KEEP THEIR CONTRACTS.*

**Difficulties This Year About Filling the Ranks—The Search for Front Row Beauties—Anarchists in the Profesh—Case Stated by a Chorus Girl.**

"The crying need of the hour among managers of big productions is a clearing house for chorus girls."

So exclaimed a Broadway stage director as he entered his office after a protracted rehearsal, during which he had heard that three of his most attractive young women had gone over to the enemy, which, being interpreted, meant that they had broken their contracts with him and signed with his rival, a block below.

"For the past few seasons the demand for chorus girls has grown steadily heavier, but never have we been threatened with such a famine as this year," he went on. "Not because the girls are becoming more scarce, but because productions are growing bigger and there are more of them.

"No one knows this better than the girls, and the way they ignore managerial rights is enough to start gray hairs by the million. We have a girl in the second or third row pretty well rehearsed and some other manager offers her a place in the front row or a line to speak or her name on the programme, and we get a letter something like this:

"MY DEAR MR. SMITH: I am sorry I cannot remain with your company. I have enjoyed the work very much, but I find it impossible to remain. I hope to work for you again some time. Thanking you, etc."

"Delightfully vague, is it not? We know where to find her—with a rival show. And that is where we need the clearing house, to keep tab on these irresponsible but unfortunately essential butterflies.

"Think of the number of chorus girls playing or rehearsing on Broadway to-day. 'A Chinese Honeymoon' is using eighty, 'The Defender' sixty, 'The Wild Rose' fifty. Weber & Fields are rehearsing sixty, Rogers brothers sixty, Jerome Sykes in 'The Billionaire' as many more. 'The Liberty Belles' are all girls. 'The Sleeping Beauty and the Beast' will absorb 150; so will 'Ben Hur.'

"F. C. Whitney needs sixty to support Lulu Glaser and 100 for 'When Johnny Comes Marching Home.' Sixty will be needed for 'The Toreador,' and the various 'Florodora' companies will employ about 300. Henry W. Savage will divide among his Grand English Opera company, two 'King Dodo' companies, 'The Prince of Pilsen' and 'The Sultan of Sulu' fully 500 young women. And this is only a partial enumeration.

"Managers or their agents scour the conservatories of the provinces for recruits. They visit such cities as Pittsburg, Buffalo, Milwaukee, St. Paul, Minneapolis, St. Louis and Kansas City in search of chorus girls.

"The girls thus secured have as a rule good musical training, but no stage presence, and after the stage director has done his missionary work with them for perhaps a year they are brought to New York. They will pronounce Broadway good enough for them, and when the show returns to Chicago or Boston they calmly sign with some show booked for a long metropolitan run. And the manager then has to start out on a fresh hunt.

"A man who can bring out the best there is in chorus girls and keep the bunch in line can name his price to the manager.

"It costs from $12 to $200 to costume a chorus girl to-day, and the show girls are the most expensive factor. And, by the way, when the real chorus girl reaches the 'show line' she feels that she is about the real thing.

"This generally involves a snug apartment, her hansom or brougham, a few diamonds and little or nothing to do except during the performances. A Broadway production has only occasional rehearsals. Ask this same girl to be photographed in the interests of the manager and she 'phones down that she is ill, can't leave the house, and the next day you hear that she won at the races.

"But we have to stand for it. We must have them. The public demands them.

"The terror of every manager is the chorus Anarchist. She is smooth as velvet, on the surface, and usually is one of the most proficient girls in the bunch. She it is who, watching an enthusiastic novice, will whisper that she is foolish to waste so much energy; it stamps her as new in the business. Whereupon the novice considers herself bound to become bored to the correct degree, and the manager loses that much ginger and vim.

"It is the chorus Anarchist, too, who makes things interesting for the wardrobe mistress, when she starts something like this: 'My dear, I hate to mention it, but I wouldn't be seen in a dress fitting like yours. Of course, you're the one who must wear it, but if you could see——' &c.

"Considering the present stringency in the chorus girl market and the consequent independence of the young women, it will be a wonder if the Forrest Home is not compelled to open an annex for mental wrecks of former stage directors."

How the chorus girls would regard a managerial clearing house is quite a different story. Most of those approached on the subject dismissed it with a shrug of the shoulder as an impossible proposition.

Some went further and declared that the managers had no one but themselves to thank for existing conditions. Each was ready to outwit his competitors in order to secure desirable and presentable young women wherewith to dress his stage.

Here is the chorus girl's side of the matter as given by a young woman who came here from Cincinnati without any idea of going on the stage, but for the purpose of having her voice cultivated, and who decided six months ago to pay for her musical education by entering a metropolitan chorus. She is therefore able to discuss the question untrammeled by the prejudices of the average professional.

"The chorus girl of 1902-1903 is the natural result of evolution," she said. "She is just what the stage director has been trying to make her for the past few years, one of the big features of his show, pleasing to the senses, chic, a magnet that will fill the two-dollar seats every night.

"Time was when a girl could stay in the chorus until she was 60, if her voice held out. Now a girl who enters the ranks at 18 with the expectation of never rising beyond the chorus knows that she is good for perhaps five or six years. With her freshness goes her adaptability to the needs of the stage director.

"Voice is no longer the gift above all others needed for this business. The girl with the fine voice but homely features and angular figure goes into the back row, if she gets in at all, and out front you'll find the girl who has little or no voice, but skill in handling her beruffled skirts.

"Beauty will cover a multitude of other defects, but when a girl gets on the front line she knows that the manager has put her in the beauty class. And, moreover, she knows that if she wants to stay there, she must not gaze haughtily at the man down front who casts a languishing smile in her direction.

"In the early days of comic opera, no chorus girl ever had her picture in the papers. To-day the press agent asks her to pose for anything, from fashions to how to darn baby's socks. Then when she has topped it off as the favorite model in a 'beauty series' the same press agent wails that she is getting the swelled head.

"Chorus girls do not draw fancy salaries. In the regular season, the average salary is $18, while the 'show girls' draw $25. This may sound large, but out of this come living expenses, which in New York are high, and very few girls on the metropolitan stage live with their parents.

"Most of them come from other cities. They must keep up appearances. Well-made frocks, no matter how simple in material, are essential, for the managerial eye scans frocks when his ear fails to catch pure tones. The girl who wants to rise can push herself by way of her dressmaker better than by any other route that I know of. She also buys her own stage shoes.

"And why should we wish to leave New York? Why should we yearn for one night stands and bad hotels, long jumps and irregular hours, when here on Broadway we have every advantage and no discomforts? Here are the best teachers in singing and dancing, and here are the great managers who may detect latent power in some simple chorus maid and who have the cash to push her toward stardom.

"There are all sorts of chorus girls, girls who really expect to rise, and who take stars like Marie Cahill, Edna May and Lillian Russell as their beacon of hope. All those women sang in the chorus.

"Then there are girls who have their living to earn and prefer to sing and dance their way to bread and butter. And last there are girls who see in the stage an easy way to what they consider the right sort of matrimony. They know the fascination the stage exerts over some men, especially young men.

"These girls as a rule make the greatest mistake of all. I have never seen a marriage of this sort turn out happily. As a rule the man's parents absolutely refuse to give the girl a hearing, the slightest chance of showing whether she is worthy of the chap's love.

"They settle the matter by withdrawing his allowance, and, whether you believe this or not, the man seldom fails to give up the girl rather than the allowance. All this twaddle about the girl's missing her hot birds and cold bottles reads well, but in reality, the man is just at that age when life is summed up in rounding up the theatres and cafés night after night.

"After all, he figures it out, there are other girls who can console him later on, and his little actress wife, dutifully accepts her divorce and goes back to the 'front row,' with the added notoriety of a legal separation.

"Actresses are often accidents. In the second or third row you may spend a whole season in a state of theatrical innocuous desuetude. No manager knows you are on earth. No one gives you a chance.

"Then some manager pressed for chorus, girls, hears of you through a friend, sends for you, offers you a place on the front row, or your name on the programme as a tea girl or a flower girl, and you snap at the chance of even this insignificant promotion.

"Wherefore, your erstwhile manager calls you an ingrate, for has he not made you? Not at all. But the accidental word in season from your best friend may make you.

"In the commercial world if a stenographer or a bookkeeper seizes an opportunity for advancement, no one thinks of blaming him. True, he may give longer notice than we stage folk, but it must be remembered that a manager thrusts a contract under your nose, with, 'Sign this and report for rehearsal to-morrow, or there is nothing doing.' Managers and opportunities wait for no insignificant chorus girls."

## *BACKING IN A FIRE TRUCK.*

**The Beautiful Handling of a Land Craft Which Always Carries Two Pilots.**

It takes no mean skill, as any amateur would discover who should try it, to back a truck up to the sidewalk exactly where it is wanted and with both wheels hitting the curb together, as many a truckman can do it, at the first crack; but it takes a higher skill still, and this though there is a man at each end of it, the driver at one one end and the tillerman at the other, to back a fire truck into a firehouse.

Even a big double business truck is of some sort of reasonable length; but the fire truck, sixty-five or seventy feet long, is twice as long as the street is wide. When the truck comes back from a fire the driver goes on past the house with it, or with his end of it, quite a piece, and over to the opposite side of the street before he halts; the tillerman meanwhile throwing his end of the truck in toward the front door of the firehouse. But the moment they get into this position, with the truck stretching thus diagonally across the street, at once without any heming or hawing whatever, they begin backing in.

The rear end of the long extension ladder projects beyond the rear axle, over which the tillerman sits, twenty feet, as the end of a long stick of timber is often seen sticking out beyond the rear axle of a timber truck. The first thing the tillerman has now laid out for him to do is to go the long projecting end of that ladder, now pointing at it diagonally, in past the door jamb and inside the house without hitting anything. To do that he may be compelled to run one of the truck wheels across the very end of the grating over the street gutter in front of the house, which he does, however, with perfect certainty everytime the truck backs in; the wheel just escaping dropping off into the gutter, at this point, and the end of the ladder clearing the door jamb by a scant few inches at the other.

All this is being done, it will be understood, with the truck constantly in motion; the driver, the pilot at the forward end of this wonderful land craft keeping the team of three tremendous horses backing steadily, while the pilot at the after end, the tillerman, is guiding the truck into the house.

As the rear end of the truck rolls into the house under the tillerman's guidance, the driver, all the time backing, is at the same time all the while throwing the splendid team over, as fast as he can gain ground, until, at the end, the team is in front of the house and he is backing straight in, or pretty nearly so; at the very end, anyway, he backs plumb straight. And so without stopping from start to finish, the great truck is landed exactly where it belongs.

In the case of a truck with rubber tired wheels it is necessary not only to back the truck into the house true and straight and into exactly its proper location, but to back it literally to a mark, or rather to four marks, in the shape of four short sections of channel steel set, edges up in the floor, each receiving and supporting when it comes to it, in such a manner that the rubber tire on it is held just clear of the floor, one of the truck's wheels. When the truck is backed in it must be so handled that the four wheels will finally roll truly each into its own separate little section of channel. A miscalculation of an inch or two with either pair of wheels would make it necessary to try for the channels again, but as a matter of fact they get the bunch at the first trial almost every time.

Of course the two pilots who handle a fire truck in this manner in getting the truck into the house have some marks to go by. As the pilot of a steamboat, whose beautiful landings excite the admiration of everybody, has all his shore marks down to a dot, so these two pilots of the fire truck have their marks down very fine. The tillerman knows just how far he can go, this way or that, outside the house, and the instant he gets inside he gets a line on something that serves as a guide to him there in the exact measurement of distances; and the driver fixes on some object in a similar manner.

But, even so, to back the great truck into the house and into the exact appointed place in which it should stand, as they do it, the whole business right off the reel, like that, calls for the exercise of skill. There are lots of truckmen, who, with unfailing art, can back a truck in just where they want it every time, and that it takes skill to do this probably nobody would deny, but at the same time the truckmen themselves that can do that, would doubtless be the first to admit that the very slickest thing of all done in the way of backing up is the backing in of a fire truck.

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## *POOR FARMING IN RUSSIA.*

**Complete Exhaustion of the Soil Threatened Unless Methods Are Improved.**

Russia is essentially an agricultural country. Ninety per cent. of the inhabitants till the soil for a living, but farming among the peasants is not very profitable and seems to be growing worse instead of better.

Three years ago the attention of the Czar was called to the very backward condition of agriculture. He appointed a commission to investigate the question. A part of its work was delegated to the well-known agricultural expert, Prof. Lenz, who has just presented to the commission a report of a pessimistic character.

Prof. Lenz says that the irrational system of farming practised by the majority of small Russian farmers may easily lead to complete exhaustion of the soil. This exhaustion, he says, cannot be made up to the soil even by the use of the best of fertilizers for a long series of years.

Vast as Russia's agricultural interests are, the peasantry are among the poorest farmers in the world. One reason is because, except in Poland and some other districts, the land they till is not owned by them. They live in villages and the land belongs to these communities, or mirs, each taxpaying individual having the use of a part of the land held in common, and being responsible for the taxes on the patch of ground he cultivates.

The result is that the moujik, or peasant, knowing that at the end of a short period his allotment of the land will be subject to a redistribution, does not care to improve the soil by careful cultivation. He has no ambition to expend upon it time and money with an eye to the future. Should he do this he would expect to lose all he expended upon improvements. Hence he barely skims over the surface with his rude plough, not only to save labor, but also that the manure he ploughs in may benefit only his own crop and not the future harvest which some other may reap. He has no attachment to the soil, no interest except the present. The system is thoroughly bad.

The result is that English farmers raise from three to four times as much grain to the acre as Russian farmers. If land were tilled in Russia as it is in England, that country would to-day be the greatest wheat raiser in the world. As it is, with only eight or nine bushels of wheat to the acre, the Russian crop varies from 375,000,000 bushels to 450,000,000 bushels a year.

It will probably take a long time to make very noticeable improvement in Russian agriculture, but some of the ablest men in the country are now studying this problem. Agricultural schools and experiment stations are beginning to be maintained in widely separated parts of the farming area, so that better ideas as to practical agriculture may be diffused among the whole people. The tariff on most kinds of agricultural machinery has been removed to encourage the introduction of improved farming implements. Thus, an educational work is going on which will some day, doubtless, have a profound influence for the betterment of agricultural conditions in Russia.

## *DAMAGED BY SEA WATER.*

**The Rapid Corrosion of Steel Rails in the Tropics Near the Sea.**

Mr. Bricks, one of the engineers in charge of the railroads owned by the French Government, recently read a paper in which he said that sea water, particularly in tropical countries, has a very destructive influence on steel rails. A few weeks ago the same observation was made by Mr. Delprat, the engineer in charge of the Dutch railroads in Sumatra.

This gentleman says that the short railroad at Port Emma, on the coast of Sumatra, which has been in operation for ten years and which occupies a position only a little above mean high tide, has been greatly damaged by sea water, the rails having been largely eaten away by rust. The rails on one of the short branches of this road, which runs over a breakwater, have been diminished in weight by about two and a half pounds for every three and a half feet of the length of the rails. He says that every year these rails are losing about 4 per cent. of the weight of new rails. The width of the rail surface has been diminished about one inch.

The engineer urges that for all railroads and street car routes occupying a position near the sea in the tropics rails of unusual width of surface should be employed. He says that any one who may discover a method of protecting steel rails from the corrosive action of salt water will make a fortune.

**Mr. Allman's Big Radish.**

*From the Nashville Banner.*

UNION CITY, Aug. 4.—Ernest Allman, who lives near Clayton, in the western part of this county, has just brought a radish to town which weighs 11½ pounds, is 13½ inches in length and 25½ inches in circumference.

# CASUALTY LIST OF THE RAILS.

## *MORE THAN 10,000 PERSONS HURT IN THREE MONTHS.*

**Of These 665 Killed—Surprising Figures in the Interstate Commerce Bulletin for the First Quarter of 1902—Causes of the Accidents—The Money Loss.**

Since the law passed a year and a half ago made it the duty of the Interstate Commerce Commission to issue railroad accident bulletins every three months, three bulletins have been published. The third, covering the months of January, February and March of the present year, has just appeared, and like its two predecessors, which covered the last six months of 1901, it gives figures which are surprising to persons unacquainted with accident statistics in this country.

The number of persons killed in railroad accidents during the first quarter of the present year was 212, and the number injured was 2,111. Accidents of other kinds, including those met with by employees while on duty, and by passengers in getting on or off cars, bring the total number of casualties up to 10,225. The total number of persons killed was 665.

The Interstate Commerce Commission has printed an analysis of these casualties which shows that of the dead, 26 passengers, 95 trainmen, 1 yardman, 2 switchmen and 6 general employees were killed in collisions; 15 passengers and 53 employees in derailments; 1 passenger and 21 employees by being struck by bridges or side structures while on moving trains, and 8 passengers and 124 employees by falling from cars or engines while getting on or off.

The commission refers at some length to the Park avenue tunnel disaster in this city in January. In view of the opposite conclusions concerning this accident reached by the Coroner's Jury and the Grand Jury, what the commission says of it is interesting. Here it is:

The collision was due to the carelessness or incompetency of the engineman of the rear train, who disregarded two fixed signals which showed warnings designed to protect the preceding standing train. This engineman had filled one position or another in train service for about twelve years, but he had been engineman on this line (where the collision occurred) for a period of only five months, and had been in charge of a passenger train on this line for only a few trips.

The line is one on which trains follow one another (in the morning and in the evening) at very short intervals—two or three minutes—yet it appears, from the report of the State Railroad Commissioners, who investigated the accident, that this engineman was inexperienced, lacked reasonable presence of mind when he failed to see the signals, and unmistakably violated a well-known rule. The State Railroad Commissioners also characterized the engineman as of "unascertained capacity," and they declare, therefore, that the railroad company was grossly negligent.

The total number of collisions during the three months was 1,220 of which 194 were caused by trains separating. There were 838 derailments from the following causes: 143 from defects of roadway; 369 from defects in equipment; 55 from negligence; the same number from accidents and unknown causes; 10 from malicious obstruction of tracks and 206 from miscellaneous causes.

Two hundred and twenty-one of the collisions and 84 of the derailments affected passenger trains and the total loss to the railroad companies from both causes in three months was $1,914,258. Of this amount the loss by collisions were $1,005,024 and by derailments $909,234.

The loss by months was: January, $651,751; February, $955,969 and March, $994,538. The average loss by each collision was $824 and by each derailment, $1,085.

Rear collisions were more prominent during the first quarter of this year than in any other similar period since the commission has been tabulating the railroad accidents of the country. Forty-three accidents of this kind are tabulated in the bulletin and the explanatory text shows a wide variety of causes. Here are some of the causes mentioned:

Train approached water tank at uncontrollable speed.

Block signal set at clear when block section was not clear.

Special passenger overtook freight. Weather thick and flagman could not be seen.

Engineman (and brakeman) asleep on engine. Fireman did not watch for signal.

Runaway on steep grade.

Failure of an automatic block signal.

Runaway on steep grade of thirty-seven cars, only eight cars air-braked. Crew had been on duty twenty-five hours; three brakemen had had less than three months' experience.

Freight overtook passenger train, which by reason of leaky boiler was losing time and was not protected by flag.

Most of the other rear-end collisions were caused by improper flagging, improper switching, disobedience of orders, inexperienced or overworked train crews and downright carelessness.

Thirty-five brakemen were killed and 550 injured during the quarter, while coupling cars. Accidents of this kind were due almost entirely to defective mechanism and carelessness, although some of the deaths were unavoidable, like those of brakemen who slipped on snow or ice, just as cars were about to be coupled.

Other deaths of employees while getting on or off cars or engines were due to a variety of causes. Many slipped from ice-covered cars, others were thrown off by sudden jerks of the trains, many fell because of defective hand holds and sill steps, and not a few, in stepping from trains, were caught by the feet in frogs, guard rails and switches and then run down by other trains.

The railroad casualties during the last three months of last year were even more numerous than those of the first quarter of the present year. They numbered 11,048 and 813 persons were killed. The preceding quarter, July, August, September, 1901, had a still greater accident list. There were 11,212 casualties and 725 persons were killed.

## *A TANK OF LIVELY FISH.*

**They Are Just Porgies, Blue Crabs and Lobsters, but They Catch the Eye.**

A tank at the Aquarium that just now at once catches the eye and the fancy of visitors is occupied by porgies, blue crabs and lobsters, all commonplace and familiar enough, but all active and lively. What with the collisions between the crabs and blue crabs are natural-born fighters, and the encounters between the lobsters, not far behind in innate scrappiness, there's something doing in this tank pretty much all the time.

The lobsters are all little fellows, a bunch of fifteen of them, ranging from six to eleven inches in length, brought in last week from Gravesend Bay. They walk around on the bottom of the tank on their long, spindling, crooked legs, carrying their big claws ahead, or stand up on rocks on the bottom of the tank, astonishingly different, somehow, in appearance from lobsters as seen lying in a market stall.

But while scrapping is the lobster's natural bent, it would seem also to have some playfulness. Here, for instance, are two lobsters, one lying along on the bottom of the tank close in against the base of a rock on top of which another lobster is standing. And presently you see the lobster on top bend over the edge and reach down and tickle the lobster below with one of its long feelers.

Or at least that is what it seems to be doing. But the lobster uses its long feelers, which serve for the lobster's protection in many ways, in tickling the porgies to some purpose. If one of the porgies comes too close, perhaps with a view to nipping off one of the lobster's protruding, telescopic eyes, the crustacean lifts one of its feelers, and the tickling touch of this is enough to make the porgy sheer off.

When two of these lobsters meet, walking along the bottom of the tank by the glass, where one or the other must back down, or turn out or jump over the other to get by, it is a common thing for them to lam at each other with their big claws in the fiercest sort of fashion; but commonly one or the other gives way very quickly. But the lobster's first jump at its opponent is likely to be something fierce.

And a great jumper the lobster is, anyway, whether jumping into a fight or jumping away from danger. Jumping backward is its greatest feat, and it will do this with great suddenness.