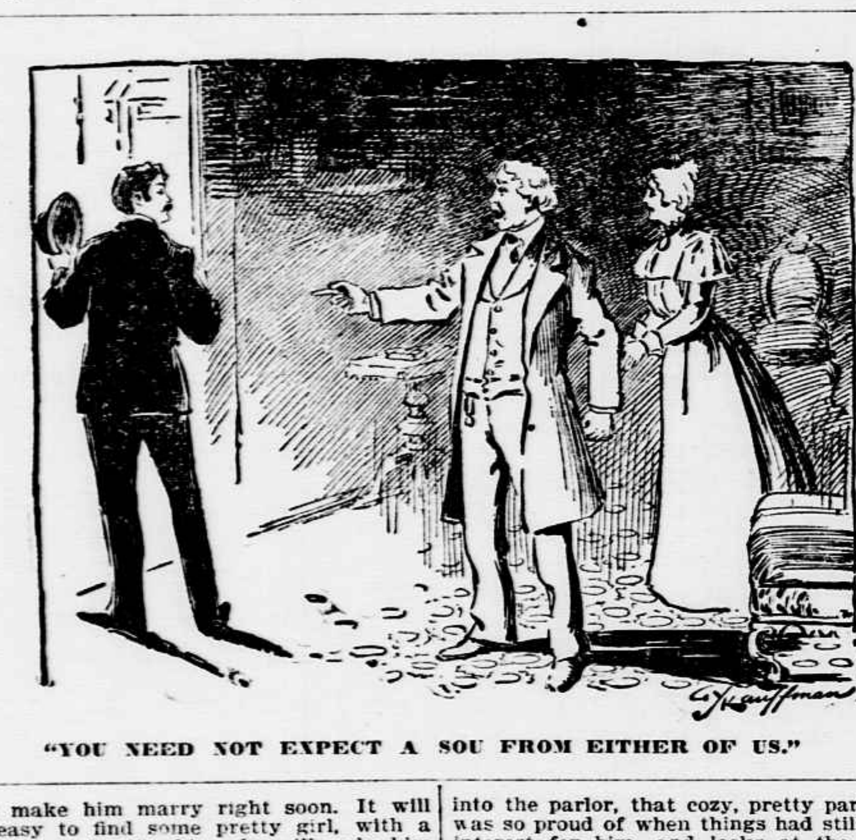
AN EASTER STORY

BY FRANCOIS COPPEE, of the French Academy

"Never!" cried Bourgueil, rising with violence and throwing his napkin on the table. "Never! Do you hear me? Never!" and the old master mason paced up and down the cozy dining room, turning on his heel furiously, like a bear in a cage; while poor mother Bourgueil, her tearful eyes lowered on her plate, was disconsolately nibbling almonds.

For two years the same dispute had been springing up between the old couple—just as now at the end of their evening meal. For it was two years since they had fallen out with their son, Edward, who, in spite of their opposition, had married a woman picked up somewhere in the Latin quarter—just when he was about to take his degree as a lawyer, too. How they had loved him and petted him, this Edward—this long wished for child, who had come after ten long years of married life, when they had almost given up hoping for a son. The happy Bourgueil, then only a simple builder, had rubbed his hands, saying to his wife: "You know, Clemence, that smart fellow Haussmann is improving and changing the whole of Paris, from one end to another. Here is a good chance for me. If things go on this way, I can make a fortune in twelve or fifteen years. And I know one thing, the little rascal of ours won't need to climb up into scaffoldings, like his father, nor come home every night with spots of plaster all over his gray vest, and fit to drop with fatigue. We will make a real gentleman of him, won't we, Clemence?"

All Bourgueil's ambitions had been realized. At college Edward was a brilliant pupil, and the old peasant who had come to Paris many years ago, carrying his shoes on his back and a little silver tied up in a corner of his handkerchief, had the satisfaction of seeing his son congratulated and loaded with prizes by the minister of instruction himself. What a future the boy had before him! He would pass the most difficult examinations without any trouble—they would be a mere joke for him—and then choose any career he had a fancy for. "We will leave the boy a good 25,000 francs income," father Bourgueil would say, cheerfully, slapping his wife's shoulder with his strong, broad hand. "And, saperlotte! we



"YOU NEED NOT EXPECT A SOU FROM EITHER OF US."

will make him marry right soon. It will be easy to find some pretty girl, with a good education like his, who will make him happy, and of whom we can feel proud!"

Ah, those lovely plans! where had they gone? The kind old parents had been foolish enough to furnish a room in town for their boy, that he might be more independent. Then he met that woman, and immediately his studies were dropped. At twenty-five he had not even taken his licentiate's degree. They were dreadfully disappointed, after having built such fine castles; still they did not give up all hope. They consoled themselves saying: "He is so young! It will pass. Let him alone awhile."

But one day the imbecile had the audacity to inform them that he had adored this girl, and was determined to make her his wife. This was too much. If Bourgueil did not fall with a stroke of apoplexy it was a miracle indeed; the veins in his neck were swollen like cords. He ordered his son out of the house and cut off his income.

"If you dare to give your name to that woman," the old man roared, crimson with wrath, "you need not expect a sou from either of us as long as we live."

But the stubborn, ungrateful boy had outraged them to the end, and now he was married to this doll of his, and living on a wretched clerk's salary, in a suburb of the city—like some vagabond! Poor old couple! How their son's conduct had made them suffer for these two horrible years! Life was a pleasure no longer, and lately the situation was getting worse every day. It was the mother's fault—she was too wretched and she had relented at last. Her sorrow had got the better of her resentment, and now she was actually inclined to forgive. One day she mustered up sufficient courage to mention the subject to her husband. But he fell into a frenzy of passion, crying "Never!" with a force that shook the doors and windows, forbidding the poor woman to say another word about it. She had not the heart to obey him, and pleaded the cause of the guilty son again and again. And at every new attempt Bourgueil was furious and made a terrible scene. Their home became a purgatory. These two old people, who had nothing to reproach themselves with, who had loved each other faithfully, who had lived and toiled side by side for more than thirty years, became almost hostile. Every night at the dinner table the quarrel broke out anew, and it always ended with some of those stinging thrusts that wound the heart.

"Do you want me to tell you what I think, Bourgueil?" the old woman would say. "You are without pity!"

"And you are a coward to want to give in," the mason replied, leaving the room with a stamp of his heavy foot.

Left alone in the soft light of the lamp in the comfortable parlor, the poor mother, who was still true to her peasant customs and retained her white linen caps, would quietly drop burning tears on her knitting and pray for her boy. Bourgueil had lost all love for his home, now that he had continually a sad face to look upon. He had got into the habit of joining some friends in a cafe close by where they waited for him for a game of manilla. In dealing out the cards the irritated mason made long and violent speeches against the present state of morals, where paternal authority was concerned by children. But he swore that he, at least, would set a good example; he would be stern to the end. He could speak of nothing else, and his partners proclaimed him "a tiresome old fellow," as soon as his back was turned. In his presence, however, they deplored his ill-luck in having such a scamp of a son, and highly praised his firmness. One man in the group, especially, invariably hailed the mason's imprecations with an approving word or two: "Bravo! Father Bourguel, you are a Roman!"

Bourgueil was from the province of Marche, and possessed very indistinct notions on antiquity. Still, he had some inkling of the story of old Brutus, and felt highly flattered to be compared to such a personage. Yet when he left the cafe and found himself in the cold dark night, he would say to himself—oh! very softly—that Brutus must have had a cruel, hard heart, and that it was a horrible thing to condemn a son to death.

Easter Sunday has come—a joyous, bright, happy day, merry with the chimes of bells and the promise of warm spring days. The city itself looks gay and coquettish. Women are coming home from church, and all are carrying a bunch of box-plant that fills the air with sweet, fresh odor. Even the old cab horses have a bit of it stuck behind their ears!

Bourgueil, who sat up last evening at the cafe, playing cards till midnight, wakes up very late. He is in a horrible mood; and what man would not be, I should like to know? Last night, at the usual hour, he had again to listen to his wife's absurdities. She again mentioned Edward, and tried to soften him, Bourgueil! She had made inquiries, she said, and learned that their daughter-in-law, for she was that in spite of all his anger, was not the bad woman they had first thought. A poor girl? Yes; she had worked in a store. But what of that? What were they themselves but simple working people, even if they had become well off? Could they expect their son to marry some rich marquis' daughter? And ever since Angelina—an ugly name, but it wasn't the girl's fault after all—ever since Angelina had been his wife, no one could breathe a word against her. She was a model little wife. "Can it be that you will not have pity on these poor children?" the old mother had asked him, tearfully. "They are poor, very poor. What do you think Edward earns in that insurance company where he has found a place? It breaks my heart to think of it; only 200 francs a month! As much as you spend on your cafe and your cigars. I don't ask you to see them; but won't you help them, just a little? We are living in plenty, while they—" and receiving no answer from Bourgueil, who was pensively turning the glass he had just emptied between his fingers, the old woman had risen from her seat and come up to him, putting a trembling hand on his shoulder, silently pleading. Vain effort! Bourgueil, suddenly remembering that he was a Roman, had again poured forth maledictions and his formidable "never."

And on this lovely Easter morning he is more than usually sad and ill-tempered—this strong-minded old mason. He feels very nervous; he has cut his chin twice while shaving. Oh, no; he will not be weak enough to pay an income to his unduitful son. A Roman, I tell you. Would old Brutus have relented? Of course not. And last night he was on the point of yielding! That is what comes of listening to women. They haven't energy for two sous, the women haven't. Bourgueil is firmer than ever in his resolutions as he puts on a white shirt and his gray holiday suit. He goes into the parlor, that cozy, pretty parlor he was so proud of when things had still some interest for him, and looks at the clock. It is only 11 o'clock, and Bourgueil, who has a fine appetite this morning, feels cross at the thought of eating only at 12. Soon Mother Bourgueil returns from church with a large bunch of box plant. She places it on a little side table, and suddenly the whole room is filled with the strong, fresh odor. Bourgueil is no poet; he has not a very refined nature. Yet he is impressionable for all that—like you or me—and the sight of the green branches recalls far-off memories. While the old woman is busy taking apart the twigs to decorate the rooms with them, the penetrating perfume affects his old heart. He remembers a certain Easter morning—ah, so long, long ago—when he was still a workman, and his young wife a dressmaker's apprentice. It was their honeymoon, for they had married a few days before Lent. Then, too, she had returned from church with a fragrant burden and made their only room bright and festive. How pretty she looked, and how he loved her! And by a rapid effort of imagination he recalls in an instant their long years of married life; she has ever been so industrious, so thrifty, so devoted. And now he tortures her—this good, brave woman—he makes her suffer on account of his wicked son.

But is Edward really so wicked as all that? Of course a fellow ought to honor his father and mother, and obey them; but then, are not youth and love sufficient excuses for many a fault? He watches Mother Bourgueil with moist eyes, as she goes to place a spray of box above Edward's picture on the wall—a picture of their boy in his college suit, when they felt so proud of him and of his studies.

What is the matter? The old mason hardly knows what he is about. His head swims; it is that strong odor of the plant, doubtless. But his heart fills with something that seems very much like mercy and pardon. He goes up to his wife, takes her hands, and, looking at the picture, mutters, his rough voice grown strangely soft: "Say, Clemence, shall we—forgive him?" Ah; the cry of joy that bursts from the mother's lips! And he has called her "Clemence," just as in their young days. He has not given her that name for more than fifteen years. And she understands that he loves her still—her husband, her old companion.

She throws herself in his arms and kisses him frantically, all over his face, takes his head in both her hands, and whispers in his ear. The other day—she couldn't help it, really—she went to see their boy. He is so unhappy to have offended them. And if he has not come a hundred times to beg their forgiveness, it is simply because he did not dare. "You know," she adds—and her voice becomes soft and caressing—"you know I have seen his wife, and you really cannot blame him for loving her, she is so sweet, and as fresh as a rose. She just worships our Edward—one can see that at once; and she keeps their little home in such apple-pie order. Yes, yes, I know; her past. But if Edward loves her as she is?—And after all, we are not of the fashionable world, and in our class one is not so particular."

Bourgueil feels oppressed—he is choking. Putting a trembling finger on his wife's lips: "That will do!" he says. "Send for a cab. Let us take some of these sprays to them in sign of peace, and bring them home with us!"

And while the old mother, stunned with joy, falls sobbing on her husband's shoulder, Bourgueil—the Roman, the old Brutus—begins to cry softly, like a child.

How the Baby Looked.

From Harlem Life.

Young Mother (displaying the baby)—"Do you think he looks like his father, Mr. Oldboy?"

Mr. Oldboy—"Well, yes; there is a family resemblance; but it isn't striking enough to worry about."

The Reason.

From the Boston Transcript.

Fogg says that sometimes he is led to believe that there are people in the world who are religious not because it does them any good, but because it puts them in a way to make a great many other persons uncomfortable.

Dr. Bull's Cough Syrup leads all others.

THE BLOCK SYSTEM

Importance of This Feature in Modern Railroad Equipment.

PROPOSED LEGISLATION ON THE SUBJECT

In Favor of the Plan of Abolishing Grade Crossings.

PUBLIC SAFEGUARDS

THE MOST EFFECTive railroad legislation in recent years was the passage of the law requiring all railroads to equip their cars with patent couplers and sidebars. Through this law the lives of thousands of employes have been saved. One of the keenest members of the Pennsylvania delegation in the lower house, while discussing railroad matters with a Star reporter, said:

"I have always been an advocate of legislation looking to the protection of the lives of workingmen, and will always continue on that line; but I am drawing up a bill, which I want to introduce before Congress adjourns, that will throw safeguards around the traveling public. In the rough, its chief features will be the compulsory establishment of the block signal system on all railroads over a certain tonnage and the abolition of grade crossings, not only in the cities, but all along the lines.

"Of course, a majority of the big roads already have the block signal system in operation, but I know of several corporations that can almost be classed among the first in the country that use the system only in the cities, or for a few miles out. Without investigation, it would appear as if the entire road was being run under this system, but when a disastrous wreck occurs then the public learns for the first time that old-fashioned methods are still in use.

"State legislation won't do. The lobby employed by the railroads can do almost anything with a state representative, but here in Congress it is quite different.

"The legislator that will introduce a bill that will wipe out grade crossings all over the country will, in time, be looked upon as one of the greatest benefactors of his race the century has brought out. No one knows better than I do the opposition that will be developed to this measure and to the block system.

As a Preventive of Accidents.

"I have been watching the railroads for the past fifteen years, and noting every phase of an accident. A large percentage of the wrecks in the east occurring on railroads that have adopted the block signal system throughout their systems have been caused by carelessness on the part of employes or the breaking down of the car equipment or the defects in roadbed. Out in the western country the block signal system, if generally adopted, can prevent seven-eighths of the accidents. Railroads of small tonnage throughout the country are, as a rule, under the management of a parent company that can stand the expense of the introduction of the system, and only want vigorous pushing to place the safeguards in use throughout their lines.

"As to what particular system of block signaling shall be adopted, that question will be left to the common sense of each corporation. There are at present several systems in use that do the most effective work. One of the roads up in our country has been equipping its road with the automatic electric-pneumatic signal system, which may or may not be the system of the future. It is worked by the passing of a train over a certain portion of the tracks. This portion is connected with the signals by electricity, and as the locomotive passes over it a current is made and the signal arms go up and remain up in that position until the trains have passed out of the block.

"This system, so a prominent railroad manager writes me, not only covers one block, but the signals tell whether a train is in the adjoining block or the next one. If both signals are open then two blocks are clear. This alone gives notice to the engineer of how the tracks are for two blocks ahead.

"As the only expense attached to this system is the furnishing of electricity and the cost of the apparatus for signaling, the blocks can be made considerably shorter and signals placed at more frequent intervals. Should this system prove to be a success a majority of the big roads of the country will adopt it, but what I want is all the roads to be equipped in like manner.

Rather Crude Then.

"The more I study over railroad methods the more positive I become that the system of running will soon be almost perfect. The day was when engineers drove their great machines through the night without the glimmer of a signal light at a switch or station. It takes a man of iron nerve to be a competent engineer, but in the old days his daring knew no limit. His machine was then crude in mechanism, the roadbed was usually wretched, and precautions against the loss of life were so uncertain as to be of little use. The misplaced switch was usually found at night only when the forward trucks of the engine left the rails. There was a wildcat system of moving trains on many of the roads, and the only warning the public had at crossings in town and country was found in a ghastly looking cross-shaped board.

"All the earlier automatic systems depended for communication between the block stations upon a wire strung upon poles, and as a train might break apart and leave a portion of the cars obstructing the track when it had apparently cleared the block, and as by a violation of the rules the engineer of the second train might enter a section before the first train had cleared it, the track circuit was proposed, and proved to be highly practical.

By Electric Signals.

"Now, in the new system, the electric current is conducted by the rails of the track and any metallic connection between the right-hand and the left-hand rails may be made to so alter the strength of an electro-magnet as to change a signal from safety to danger. The signal stands at safety so long as the current is uninterrupted, but when a pair of wheels enters the section and affords the requisite metallic connection, the greater part of the current is withdrawn from the electro-magnet holding the signal in the safety position, and it moves by the power of clockwork or compressed air to the danger position.

"Another system that is spoken very highly of on account of its cheapness and accuracy is one that is wholly worked by electricity. The principle on which this signal is constructed and operated is that the first wheel entering the block sets the signal at danger, and at the same time breaks an electric current in such a way that under no possible contingency can the signal again show safety until the train passes out of the block and operates the track instrument which restores the circuit. The disk assumes the danger position by gravity whenever the power exerted by the electric current is withdrawn. In other words, the safety position of the signal is dependent upon an uninterrupted circuit through the magnet of the signal instrument. It is simply and only the attractive power of electro-magnetism which holds the signal at safety.

"An engineer wholly color blind can make no mistake in reading the signal, even if the engine is plunging through darkness at furious speed. When the signal stands at danger the center is red and the surrounding surface dark; but a color-blind person even then, it is claimed, would experience no difficulty in correctly reading the indication, as he would be compelled to note the absence of white in the center, and only after clearly seeing white would he have a right to proceed.

Day and Night Systems.

"I consider the arrangement for day and night signaling as being almost perfect. For the day signal reliance is placed on the aperture and disk. Night signaling is accomplished by a subsidiary aperture just above that used during the day. Behind it is placed an ordinary signal lantern, and a red glass disk carried by an extension of the same arm that supports the danger signal by day provides the means for showing the danger signal at night.

"Where it is found that a road has not enough tonnage to warrant the adoption of the block system in its entirety, these electric block signals might be substituted, as they do away with the cost of employing people to work them, the usual every-day track walker keeping the signals in order as he goes over the road inspecting the track.

"As to the doing away with the grade crossing, I am satisfied seven-eighths of the people are with me. Here and there a state has adopted the necessary legislation to wipe out this great evil, but national legislation is necessary."

FOUND THE WHISKY.

The Somewhat Unusual Experience of a Revenue Officer in North Carolina.

Spikeville, N. C., Corres. Phila. Times.

A remarkable story has just come to light, in which figure moonshiners, a revenue officer, a beautiful mountain maid, cupid and bicycles.

In the summer a suspicion which the revenue department had long entertained ripened into certainty that there was an illicit still somewhere in this vicinity which was producing large quantities of "Mountain Dew." The local officials being well known to the inhabitants, the department sent here a young man from New York, one Jack Dickson by name, whose instructions were to ferret out such information as he could get, while apparently occupied solely in fishing, hunting and otherwise passing a month's vacation.

The program was duly carried out. Dickson hunted and fished and kept his eyes open, but not even a whiff could he get of the forbidden liquor.

Naturally he had to seek his information with the utmost care, and fearful of arousing suspicion by direct inquiry, he confined his efforts principally to keeping his eyes open and his mouth shut.

On day, nearly two weeks after his arrival, he took his fishing rod and journeyed in a direction not hitherto taken. Trying many mountain streams, he caught a few fish, but his spying efforts were as vain as heretofore.

Evening came on, and not knowing his whereabouts, he was delighted to succeed in getting out of the underbrush onto a wagon road. Undecided which direction to take, he paused by the roadside a moment, when an apparition darted around the bend of the road which fairly took away his breath. A bicycle in this wilderness, and, what is more, ridden by a most attractive girl! She saw him, of course, and as he admitted himself to be lost, she directed him how to reach her father's farmhouse, extending a cordial invitation to stop, with all the free good-fellowship for which our girls hereabouts are noted. Then mounting her wheel, she sped away, while Dickson hurried behind.

The farmer insisted upon his staying all night, and he did so. It was a case of love at first sight. Dickson being an expert wheelman himself, was captivated by the beautiful mountain rider. Moonshiners were forgotten in the next few days. Within a week he had his own wheel sent hither by express, and was more than pleased to comply with Sallie Newman's laughing orders that it must be kept at the farm. Every day they went out together, starting from the farm in the afternoon and riding through the leafy byways, frequently stopping at the residence of Sallie's aunt in the village for supper, and then going home in the moonlight.

Weeks sped away, until one day Dickson was rudely awakened from his dream of bliss by a peremptory order from Washington to return home, his mission having proven fruitless. Sadly he started out with Sallie for a final ride. All unconscious of his woes, Sallie twitted him upon his strange silence, and then challenged him to a race. Away she sped, and he was sorely tried to keep at her side. Neither noticed the fragments of a pane of window glass, dropped on the road by some unlucky farmer, until too late.

"Hold on,our tires are punctured," shouted Dickson, jumping from his wheel; "by the great horn spoon, what's that," he added, gazing with amazement at a tiny stream of liquor spurting from both front and rear tires. A moment later the whole situation fell upon him. "Oh, you little moonshiner," he murmured, and then he let his wheel fall, and sprang to catch Sallie, who had swooned.

For six weeks the valiant Dickson had been assisting unawares the moonshiners by carrying whisky in his pneumatic tires, inserted at the farmhouse and deftly removed by Aunt Jane in the village.

Did he arrest the guilty maid? Not much. He resigned his position and married her, and the happy pair now live in Philadelphia, where they are often seen on a tandem in the park.

It is scarcely necessary to add the tires are now inflated solely with air.

A PARSON AND A PIG.

What Was Effective in One Case Was Tried in the Other.

From the Sunday Magazine.

A poor woman came to the parson of the parish with the request: "Please, pass'n! my ou'd sow be took cruel bad. I wish, now, you'd be so good as to come and say a prayer over her."

"A prayer! Goodness preserve us! I cannot come and pray over a pig—a pig, my dear Sally—that is not possible."

"Her be cruel bad, groaning, and won't eat her meat. If her dies, pass'n—whativer shall we do i' the winter wi'out bacon sides and ham? Oh, dear! Do'y, now, pass'n, come and say a prayer over my old sow."

"I really, really must not degrade my sacred office. Sally! indeed, I must not!"

"Oh, pass'n! do'y, now!" and the good creature began to sob.

The parson was a tender-hearted man, and tears were too much. He agreed to go to the cottage, see the pig, and do what he could.

Accordingly, he visited the patient, which lay groaning in the stye.

The woman gazed wistfully at the pastor, and waited for the prayer. Then the clergyman raised his right hand, pointed with one finger at the sow and said solemnly: "If thou livest, O pig! then thou livest. If thou diest, O pig! then thou diest."

Singularly enough, the sow was better that same evening, and ate a little wash. She was well, and had recovered her appetite wholly next day.

Now, it happened, some months after this, that the rector fell very ill, with a quinsy that nearly choked him. He could not swallow, he could hardly breathe. His life was in imminent danger.

Sally was a visitor every day at the rectory, and was urgent to see the sick man. She was refused admission, but pressed so vehemently that finally she was suffered—just to see him, but she was warned not to speak to him or expect him to speak, as he was unable to utter a word.

She was conducted to the sick room, and the door thrown open. There she beheld the pastor lying in bed, groaning, almost in extremities.

Raising her hand, she pointed at him with one finger and said: "If thou livest, O pass'n! then thou livest! If thou diest, O passn't! then thou diest."

The effect on the sick man was—an explosion of laughter that burst the quinsy, and his recovery.

A Definition.

From the Chicago Record.

"What is a critic?"

"He is a man who rips things to pieces without knowing how to put them together again."

The Light Side of Nature.

From the Sketch.

My new model.

HUMOR OF ARTEMUS WARD.

With Reminiscences of His Earlier Life in Cleveland, Ohio.

From the New York Sun.

In November, 1857, Charles Farrar Browne, otherwise known as Artemus Ward, went from Toledo to Cleveland to become city editor of the Plain Dealer, at that time and now the leading democratic journal in northern Ohio, whose proprietor, Joseph W. Gray, was a passionate friend and supporter of Stephen A. Douglas.

Within a few weeks after becoming connected with the Plain Dealer—an afternoon paper—Browne began his career as "Artemus Ward" by the publication of a letter dated at Pittsburg, January 27, 1857, printed in the Plain Dealer on January 30, addressed to the editor and signed by that name.

"I rite to no," said Mr. Ward, "how is the show bisnes in Cleeveland, i have a show consisting in part of a Californy Bare 2 snaiks tame foxies &c. also wax works my wax works is hard to beat all say they is lifelike and nateral curiosities among my wax works is our Saveyer, Gen tayler and Dokter Webster in the ackt of killing Dokter Parkman. now mr editor scratch off a few lines and tel me how is the show business in yure city i shal have hanbils printed at yure offis you scratch my back and ile scratch yure back also git up a grate blow in the paper about my show."

The public reception of this short letter was an unexpected surprise to Browne. It was talked about at Cleveland; it was extensively printed everywhere throughout the country, and singularly tickled the popular fancy; and when Browne, extremely gratified and stimulated by the reception of his letter from Pittsburg, printed two or three additional letters in the same vein, equally droll and characteristic, a new figure had appeared in American humorous literature, which at once took the leading place, and whose name—so far as it is now possible to judge—is as permanently enduring as that of any writer of his time. Mr. Lincoln's love of Browne's fun was very keen; and certainly no historian, giving an account of that memorable meeting of his cabinet on September 22, 1862, at which final action was taken on the emancipation proclamation, can omit Mr. Lincoln's reading of Ward's letter entitled "A High-handed Outrage at Utica," as preliminary to the discussion of that supreme act of his administration.

During a considerable period of his residence in Cleveland Browne occupied a room on the fourth floor of the post office building, on Water street, the windows of which looked out over Lake Erie and upon the beautiful country to the west of the Cuyahoga river; a majestic view, of which he was extremely fond. He had in this room a little pine writing table, three or four chairs—one of which was a "rocker"—and a venerable sofa. It was here that he did some of his best work; that work, at any rate, that earliest attracted the attention of the country.

His Sunday mornings were given up to visits from his friends, among whom were George B. Lester, a brother-in-law of Senator John P. Jones of Nevada; Charles E. Wilson, now cashier of the First National Bank of Litchfield, Conn.; Mr. J. F. Ryder, still resident at Cleveland, and two or three others.

Browne was a delightful companion at all times, but specially so on these Sunday morning occasions; full of fun, and oddities not in the least easy to describe—one of which was that of always speaking of his mother as Caroline. Sometimes he would read what he had written for use in the Plain Dealer during the week, these readings being usually accompanied with running comments that were in themselves as droll, or even more droll, because they were more free, than his written drolliness. He was a good deal of an actor, withal, and made use of his mimicry with exceeding effect.

As a lecturer on natural philosophy, one Sunday, he was irresistibly ridiculous. "It is susceptible of absolute proof," he solemnly declared, "that a ball will run down an inclined plane, and yet how few people there are who know it! An earthern bowl dropped from the roof of a three-story house will, if it strike a stone pavement, be shattered into many pieces! A bean pole, legitimately used, is an instrument of good, yet if it be sharpened at one end and run through a man, it will cause the most intense pain and perhaps produce contortions. The wick of an unlighted candle may safely be manipulated, but if you light that wick and thrust your hand into the blaze and keep it there half an hour, a sensation of excessive and disagreeable warmth will be experienced. A dozen wrought iron nails may be dashed violently from the steeple of a large meeting house to a brick sidewalk and sustain no injury, but the same experiment with a dozen clay pipes will result differently.

"The effect upon the sidewalk in either case, however, will be the same. You may lie down upon the ground and let a kitten walk over you with perfect safety, but if you put a heavy dray horse in the place of the kitten, you will immediately experience a disagreeable pressure. Hasty pudding and milk are a harmless diet if eaten moderately, but if you eat it incessantly for six consecutive weeks it will produce instant death. You gaze with indifference upon a bull when he is placidly eating grass in a pasture, but if the animal becomes infuriated and attempts to assist you over a rail fence with those horns, they immediately become objects of a deep-seated disgust. On the same principle we can easily hold in our arms an infant, and experience delight in doing so, but it would be very difficult for us to perform a similar experiment with a corpulent old gentleman who is in a state of unconscious inebriety, while the delight afforded by the performance in this instance would hardly be worth mentioning. All these things seem wonderful at first blush, but science makes them clear as clear can be."

These propositions, addressed to his visitors as "Mine Ancient Pistols," were delivered with a persistent serious gravity that was wholly delicious.

Some "Washington gossip, from our own correspondent," under date of January 30, 1859, was read on still another Sunday. "The capital just now," said "our correspondent," "is a scene of unprecedented gayety. The beau monde is quite recherche. Bal masques, sorrees dansantes, etc., are nightly occurrences, to say nothing of the dancing parties, where—as the poet felicitously hath it, " 'Bright the lamps shone o'er fair women and brave men.'

"Last night Mrs. De Snobbe, the lovely wife of the noble ambassador from the Lobos Islands, gave a grand 'social.' It was truly a recherche sorry dansante. Wit, sparkling repartee, and bon hominy crowned the golden hours. There was the stalwart and princely Snodgrass, with bright buttons all over him, and there was his wife also, who, although she had but lately recovered from a severe attack of embonpoint, looked quite ad infinitum. But n'importe. To return to the gay scene: Here comes the fascinating and truly beautiful Miss Smythe, daughter of the elder Smythe of Beanville. Her features are classic, but tinged with just enough bon hominy to make them au fait. She is dressed in gorgeous style. I asked her how much her things cost, but she, with beautiful naivete, told me that when I found out she wished I'd let her know—saying which she whirled her fan (which is dove-white silk covered all over with little silver spangles) around, with delightful abandon. Depend upon it, however, that Miss Smythe's things cost a large sum of money. But old Smythe has lots of that article. He made a princely fortune publishing a country newspaper before he was elected to Congress. But—soft, with stately tread, proud, defiant mien, et cetera, now comes Lord Boozle. Gold buttons flash all over his gorgeously embroidered coat and snow-white silk stockings. He meets Count Alfred de Flatte. They smile, halt and accost each other—in the original Greek. They then retire to the table d'hote. Other celebrities, male and female, pour in sparkling, dazzling torrents past me, but I cannot describe them now. I cannot refrain from mentioning the fact, however, as an evidence of the wealth and intelligence of the persons in attendance at this matinee, that the gold buttons on Count de Snoffers' coat cost $273! ! !

"I am stopping at the Bunker House. The table d'hote abounds with the best the market affords, and Mrs. Bunker sees to it that everything is au fait and E Pluribus Unum. Mr. Bunker's gentlemanly clerks, Messrs. Nossle and Gossle, are princes of good fellows. Gossle, en passant, is a great deal of a wag. More anon. Au reservoir. J. A."

About Letters.

From the Yonkers Statesman.

Mr. Crimsonbeak—"The time for a person to learn is when he is young. As a proof of this, remember that a man never forgets his letters."

Mrs. Crimsonbeak—"He may not forget his own, but I take notice he often forgets those of his wife."

Badinage in the Barracks.

From Vanity.

First Officer—"Say, captain, what does the air do after a shot leaves a cannon?"

Second Officer—"Give it up."

First Officer—"Whistles 'After the Ball.' "

BANK PRESIDENT BEALS.

The Great Financier Found Health in Paine's Celery Compound.

Prominent among the New England men whose brains and energy have helped to make the western states rich and powerful is General David T. Beals, president of the Union National Bank of Kansas City. Successful in his many enterprises, he lives today in a fine mansion at the corner of Independence and Wabash avenues.

The work and the responsibility incumbent on the president of so important a banking institution as the Union National would endanger the sturdiest health. General Beals' clear-headedness and good sense were as manifest in the choice of a remedy as in his business enterprises. He strengthened his tired nervous system by the use of Paine's celery compound. Its invigorating, health-giving effects justified his expectations, and showed in his own case the remarkable power of this much-discussed remedy for thoroughly restoring and strengthening the "run-down" system.

"I found Paine's celery compound an agreeable tonic and soothing to the nerves," says General Beals.

These are the concise words of commendation characteristic of the conservative business man and the influential banker, who has learned to weigh well his words.

The scanty sunlight and the stagnant, used-up air of living rooms during the winter reduce the strength and nervous energy, especially of persons employed constantly indoors. The need—the absolute necessity—of a genuine invigorator at this spring season has impressed itself on the attention of all thinking people.

In the famous laboratory of Dartmouth Medical School Prof. Edward E. Phelps, M.D., LL.D., discovered the formula of Paine's celery compound, a remedy that has become the standard nerve restorer, blood purifier and strengthener from one end of the country to the other, a preparation that stands unrivaled as the medicine that makes people well.

It is a fact much commented upon that men and women of national reputation and prominence, like General Beals, State Treasurer Colvin of New York, Mr. Carlisle's private secretary, Mayor McShane of Montreal, Rev. Fr. Ouellet, Gen. Howell, ex-Minister to Austria John M. Francis, and a host of others who are careful what they employ when sick, and have the amplest opportunities for finding out what is best, have of their own accord sent letters describing fully their permanent recovery from rheumatism, heart weakness, sleeplessness, debility, kidney troubles and diseases of the stomach and liver. In all these cases Paine's celery compound was the one remedy that was able to completely and permanently bring back health, make poor blood again rich and pure, and regulate and build up the nervous system when weakened and deranged.

DEATH ON THE CROSS.

How It Was Inflicted in the Time of the Romans.

From the New York Herald.

It was only natural that the early and mediaeval Christians, finding the cross a symbol of life among the nations of antiquity, should look curiously into the Old Testament to see whether there were not foreshadowings in it of "the wood whereby righteousness cometh." Nor was their search unrewarded. In Isaac leaving the wood of the sacrifice they saw prefigured both Christ and the cross. They saw the cross in Moses with arms expanded on the Mount, in the pole, with transverse bars, upon which was wreathed the brazen serpent, in the two sticks gathered by the widow of Sarpeta. But plainest of all they read it in Ezekiel, ix, 4, 6, "Go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and set a mark upon the foreheads of the men" that are to be saved from destruction by the sword. The word here rendered "mark" is in the Vulgate "signa thau." The Thau was the old Hebrew character, shaped like a cross, which was regarded as the sign of life, felicity and safety.

Yet the cross was not always a symbol of honor. Among the Phoenicians and Syrians, and later among the Romans, it was punishment inflicted on slaves, robbers, assassins and rebels—among which last Jesus was reckoned, on account of His proclaiming Himself King, or Messiah. The person sentenced to this punishment was stripped of his clothes, except a covering around the loins. In a state of nudity he was beaten with whips. Such was the severity of this flagellation that numbers died of it. Jesus was crowned with thorns, and was made the subject of mockery; but insults of this kind were not common. In this instance they were owing to the petulance of the Roman soldiers.

The criminal, having been beaten, was condemned to the further suffering of carrying the cross to the place of punishment, which was commonly a hill near the public highway, and out of the city. The place of crucifixion at Jerusalem was a hill to the northwest of the city. The cross, otherwise called the "post"—the unpropitious or ominous tree—consisted of a piece of wood erected perpendicularly, and intersected by another one at right angles, near the top. The crime for which the culprit suffered was inscribed on the transverse piece, near the top of the perpendicular one. There is no mention made by the ancient writers of anything on which the feet of the crucified person rested. It is known, however, that near the base of the perpendicular beam there projected a piece of wood, on which he sat, and which answered as a support to the body—since the weight of the latter might have otherwise torn the hands by the nails driven through them.

The cross, when driven firmly in the ground, rarely exceeded ten feet in height. The victim was elevated, and his hands were bound by a rope around the transverse beam and nailed through the palm. His feet were also nailed. He thus remained fastened until death ended his sufferings. While he exhibited any signs of life he was watched by guards; but they left him when it appeared that he was dead. If there was no prospect that the victim would die on the day of execution, the executioners hastened the end by kindling a fire at the foot of the cross, so as to suffocate him with smoke; or by letting loose upon him wild beasts; or occasionally, when in particular haste, by breaking his bones upon the cross with a mallet, as upon an anvil. It was at one time customary to offer the criminal, before the commencement of his sufferings, a medicated drink, compounded of wine and myrrh. The object of this was to produce intoxication, and thereby to lessen the suffering.

Crucifixion was not only the most ignominious, but by far the most cruel, mode of punishment. The victim sometimes lived until the seventh day. The thieves who were executed at the same time with our Savior were broken with mallets on the same day; and in order to ascertain the condition of Jesus a lance was thrust in His side, but no signs of life appeared.

Cicero says the very name of the cross should be removed afar, "not only from the body, but from the thoughts, the eyes, the ears of Roman citizens, for of all these things, not only the actual occurrence and endurance, but the very contingency and expectation, nay, the mention itself, are unworthy of a Roman citizen and a free man." Hence the force of St. Paul's frequent allusions to the humiliation which Christ endured when He suffered death upon the cross.

It was precisely this idea which made the early Christians seize upon the cross as the emblem of their faith. That which had been the symbol of shame now became their glory. The instrument of Christ's passion, by His death upon it, became hallowed for all time.

A General Experience.

From Tid Bits.

Lady Customer (in china shop)—"Do you break these sets?"

Dealer—"No, madam; the purchasers' servants usually attend to that."

WHY HIS WIFE WAS NOT THERE.

The Man in the Dress Suit Becomes Confidential in Explaining Matters.

From the Chicago Post.

"Why isn't your wife here?" asked the floor manager, as he stopped for a minute to chat with the man in the shabby dress suit.

"Why-ah-the-ah-the fact is she never goes to these full dress affairs," explained the man in the shabby dress suit.

"Now you speak of it," said the floor manager, "I am reminded of the fact that I never did see her at one of our dances."

"Quite right," replied the man in the shabby dress suit with evident relief. "She never attends them."

"But on the other hand," continued the floor manager, "she always attends the informal entertainments, while I don't recall that I ever saw you at one of them."

"That's right, too," admitted the man in the shabby dress suit, shifting uneasily from one foot to the other. "You see, we were lacking in foresight this year, and it has been rather awkward, but next year we expect to appear together again."

The floor manager looked puzzled and the man in the shabby dress suit appeared ill at ease.

"I don't believe I quite understand," said the floor manager at last.

"No?"

"No."

The man in the shabby dress suit pulled the floor manager a little to one side, where they couldn't be overheard.

"My wife thinks we ought to be represented in society," he said, "but we made an error in our plans. We could only afford one suit for each of us, and she got a gown for afternoon teas and such things, while I bought a dress suit. Her gown is out of place where I can wear my suit, and I can't wear my suit where her gown is the proper caper. We must make the best of it this year, but next year we intend to try to get into the same class."

Written for The Evening Star.

Cuba.

O Caribbean bird of Spain!
Long mute amid thy fluting bays,
Save twice across thy coral cays
Arose a feeble strain.

Soon silenced by tumultuous roar,
And steel that reddened at thy breast,
Till Leeward dune and Windward crest
Heard thy faint plaint no more.

But now from out thy tropic throat,
Because thou pantest to be free,
Thrills through impassioned threnody,
One long and piercing note.

Across Floridian keys, and round
The labyrinthine Everglades,
Beyond the pillared Palisade
And to the Puget Sound,

One long and piercing note that smites
The chords of every patriot heart,
Till sympathy's responses start
In free and kindred knights.

O Cuba! Is thy pleading vain?
And can Columbia's sons forget
Love's gifts grown into later debt
Since earlier days of pain?

In this the world's superior time,
'Tis sacred truth, whene'er the cries
Of earth's opprest for freedom rise,
That silence leagues with crime.

—LYMAN WHITNEY ALLEN.

Names for Her Guests.

From the Louisville (Ky.) Post.

A well-known Louisville girl, whose brains have won for her the reputation of being one of the most brilliant women in the city, recently held a book party at her house, and the names she gave some of her acquaintances were so excellent that I feel it is my duty to give the public the benefit of them. My consideration for the people named will not allow me to give their right names, but you can draw your own conclusions, and I dare say that the right people will be spotted in more than one instance. "Great Expectations" is the pseudonym which has been given to a young lady who believes that she will eventually win the heart and hand of a man of birth and fortune. Unfortunately, she has not yet met this man. The "Sign of the Lyre" is the name that has been given to a well-known matron, for what reason I can only guess. Several well-known spinsters have been dubbed "Plain Tales From the Hills." These ladies—or girls, as they prefer to be called—are just chock full of stories which have become threadbare from constant telling.

Expert Opinion.

From the Boston Gazette.

Gizball—"Guzler, what's your opinion of the gold cure?"

Guzler—"It's simply great. I tried it no less than five times, and I was cured every time."