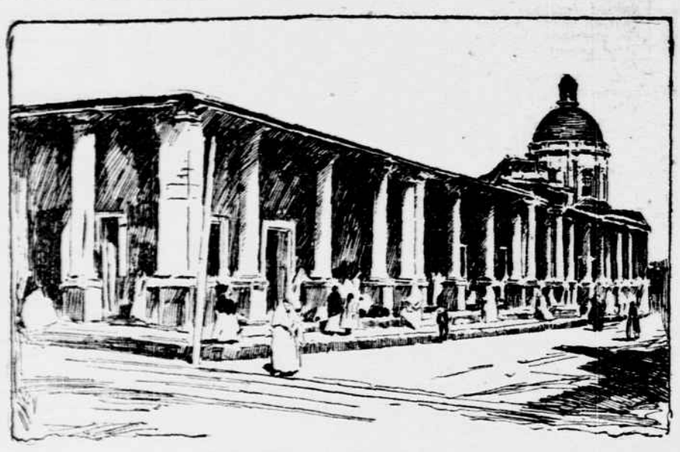

MARKET AT ASUNCION.

GIRLS OF PARAGUAY

A Land Where There Are More Women Than Men.

THE PARADISE OF SOUTH AMERICA

Interesting Scenes in the Big Market of Asuncion.

HOW THE NATIVES LIVE

(Copyright, 1899, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

Special Correspondence of The Evening Star.

ASUNCION, December 28, 1898.

PARAGUAY IS THE paradise of South America. Its climate is delightful, its semi-tropical vegetation as luxuriant as that of the Garden of Eden, and it has about three Eves to every Adam. I have never been in a country where there are so many women. They swarm. They trot by the scores through the streets of the cities. They walk by you and with you on the highways and byways and they are so many that you find it hard to get out of their sight.

The women of Paraguay are so much in the majority that they do the work of the country. They are the buyers and sellers of every community, and outside the cities the men are the drones. Any bachelor in the United States can find a wife in Paraguay if he wants one, for the men are now so few that any two-legged animal without feathers, of the masculine gender, will here be greedily grabbed. The sexes were once about equally divided, but Paraguay had a war which killed off the men. It was just before the close of our trouble between the north and the south. At that time Paraguay was the leading country of this part of the world. It was about the richest of all South America, and its wealth and influence angered the Argentine, Uruguay and Brazil. They combined against it and their joint army attacked the Paraguayans. The struggle lasted five years, but it ended in the wiping out, as it were, of the Paraguayan men. It is said that one hundred thousand of them died in battle and that thousands of women and children were starved to death.

It is hard to get accurate figures in any South American country, but, according to the best estimates, the population of Paraguay was cut down by this war so that there was only one man to six women, while another statistician gives it that three-fourths of all the people in Paraguay, numbering about 800,000, were destroyed. When the war ended there were only 200,000 left, of whom about 25,000 were men and 106,000 were women over fifteen years of age. The rest were children. Paraguay thus became a land of women, and nature seems to be keeping it so. Since the war I am told that more girls have been born every year than boys. In Asuncion the girl births exceed the boy births by more than five to the hundred, and outside the city the percentage of girl babies is greater.

The Women of the Higher Class.

The most of the women of Paraguay are poor. Many of them are hewers of wood and drawers of water; but there are some who are rich. There are class distinctions here as everywhere, and the people of the better classes dress and act much the same as those of other parts of the continent. Paraguayan high-class ladies wear clothes not unlike those of our American girls. They wear bonnets or hats when out on the streets and a few of them actually import their dresses from Paris. They speak Spanish when in society—at least, when on dress parade—and some are so well educated that they are able to read both English and French. Such women are usually interested in politics and, through their husbands, have much influence upon what is done by the government. They are good housekeepers, excellent wives and are, I may say, the equals of their sisters of any part of this continent.

Many of the Paraguayan women are very good looking. This is so of all classes, and especially so of the young. A Paraguayan maiden is a trifle under middle height. She is as straight as an arrow and as limber as a willow tree branch, though inclined to be voluptuous in form. Her complexion is of the Jersey cream order and often of the reddish brown of the Guarani Indians. She has, as a rule, more or less Indian blood in her veins. When the Spaniards came here this country was inhabited by the gentle and semi-civilized Guaranis. The two races intermarried. Their descendants took wives from the same tribes, so that today there are comparatively few Paraguayans who have not a large proportion of Guarani blood. The Indian mixture has resulted in the adoption of many Indian customs, and the language most spoken by the people today is the Guarani. In the country districts else is used, and in the schools of Asuncion there are notices on the walls that scholars must not speak Guarani during school hours. The Guarani is a soft language and the Paraguayan girls have sweet voices. Indeed, their tones fall softly on my ears after the parrot-like accent which has sawed my tympanum during my association with their Argentine sisters.

Paraguayan Lace.

One of the chief industries of the Paraguayan women is lace making. It is true that the lower classes do all kinds of work, but all the women make beautiful lace. They spin webs as delicately as though they were spiders and every house is full of beautiful cobwebs made by its women. They make lace handkerchiefs, fichus and embroideries and weave great hammocks of thread so fine and so strong that they will outlast a generation. They have patterns of their own which they have taken from nature. One of the most beautiful is called the cobweb pattern, the threads of which are as delicately joined as though made by one of the big spiders which live here in the semi-tropics. Some of these handkerchiefs are of silk, others of linen and some of fiber grown in the country. It takes a long time to weave them, but there are so many at work that they are wonderfully cheap, so that an article upon which a month or so has been spent can be bought for $5 and upwards of our money. A good hammock will cost you $10 and a lace shawl perhaps twice that amount.

Paraguay is a land of oranges. It is perhaps the only place in the world where the orange grows wild. There are oranges in every thicket and in almost every forest. The villages are built in orange groves, and there are so many oranges that they often rot on the ground. The fruit is delicious. It is the best I believe of its kind in the world. It is eaten by everyone, and the orange girls are among the picturesque features of Paraguay. You meet women peddling oranges at the stations. You find them surrounded by piles of golden fruit in every market and all along the Paraguay river they are to be seen carrying oranges from the land to the boats, which are to take them to the markets of the south. It is estimated that sixty million oranges are thus annually shipped down the Paraguay river to Buenos Ayres, and the loading of this fruit is one of the great sights of the voyage.

As we came up to Asuncion we saw at every town mountains of oranges on the shores with hundreds of Paraguay girls kneeling before them and putting them in baskets, while other hundreds were carrying them on to the steamers.

The scene is one that you cannot have outside this country. Stop with me at Villa Pilar and look at it. Villa Pilar has about 10,000 people. It is a town on the east bank of the Paraguay river, a day or so's ride below Asuncion. As the steamer stops at the landing we notice that every garden has its orange tree and that such trees shade the streets. We see ox carts coming in from the orchards creaking under their golden loads. Each cart holds about 5,000 oranges, piled loosely within it like so many potatoes. The driver directs his oxen to the piles of oranges on the banks, backs his cart up to them and dumps out the fruit just as our workmen dump dirt when repairing the roads. Oranges are indeed worth little more than dirt here. That whole cart full will sell for $5, and we can buy all we want for 2 cents.

And still every orange is counted. Those women on their knees are putting the fruit into the baskets. They count as they work and a careful tally is kept.

The oranges are carried on board by women who balance their loads on their heads and walk over a gangway to the steamer. There are a hundred women at this work now, and the ship is already so loaded with oranges that a wire netting has been stretched around its outside like a fence and the fruit piled up within. The deck is so filled with oranges, in fact, that the sailors are moving about on boards, which have been nailed up above it.

Stop and take a look at the girls. They are passing to and from the bank over that roadway of boards 500 feet long, which has been built upon trestles out to the steamers. Each has a round basket carefully poised on her head, and above these the golden oranges rise. The girls are dressed in white gowns, and the breeze which sweeps up the river wraps their thin skirts about their lithe forms. And still they walk without touching their burdens and the shaking of the planks and the breeze from the river do not disturb them.

Pretty Girls Who Smoke and Chew.

As you look you cannot help but admire the typical Paraguayan maiden. She is so well formed and she walks like a goddess. When young she is as plump as a partridge in autumn and were it not for some of her ways you might fall in love.

To an American her attractiveness is spoiled by the use of tobacco. I have thought until now that there was no greater beauty destroyer than the gum-chewing of the American girl, but the smoking of cigars, as it prevails among Paraguay women, is far worse. The Paraguay maiden smokes like a chimney. She begins to use tobacco when she begins to wear dresses, and even before, for you may see naked girls of six, eight and ten with cigars in their mouths. I have seen scores of little girls of seven and eight smoking cigars almost as big around as their wrists, and as to old women, it is hard to find one out in the country who does not smoke from morning till night. I speak, of course, of the women of the common people. Those who are not actually smoking have cigars between their teeth, which they chew without lighting for hours at a time. Many make their own cigars, and tobacco is so cheap here that you can get a dozen fairly good cigars for five cents and leaf tobacco is sold for a few cents a pound.

They Are Business Women.

The Paraguay girls remind me of the girls of Japan. They look not unlike them. The features of many Paraguayans are half Japanese, and their luxuriant black hair is of the same character as that you see in Japan. In the back districts they have the same delightful disregard for clothing. Very young girls, as I have said, and often some of the age of fourteen, wear nothing whatever. The Paraguayan women are not afraid of strangers. They are good-natured, and will laugh and joke for you just as readily as the Yum Yums off the east coast of Asia.

The Japanese women are good business women. This is also true of the Paraguayans. If you would see smart women traders, come and spend an hour with me in the market of Asuncion.

It is situated in the heart of the city. It covers an entire square, and it looks more like a monastery than a place for buying and selling. Its roof extends out over cloisters ten feet wide, and under it there is a tier of cells running about a hollow court and forming the walls of the market house proper.

The court, the cells and the cloisters are filled with women. There are hundreds of them all in their bare feet and many of them squatting on the bricks with their wares before them. Others stand behind butcher counters and others have little tables covered with vegetables, laces, jewelry, clothing or shoes.

Stop a bit and see how they sell. There are no scales or measures. That vegetable woman has a stock of green peas. She has arranged them in piles, about a pint to the pile, and sells by eye measure. That butcher woman behind her is cutting off meat in great strips. The customers judge what it is worth by its size and all meat is sold by the chunk.

Among the Butcher Women.

But let us go further into the market and take a look at the butchers! They stand in stalls with pieces of beef on their counters and strips of beef hung upon hooks at the back. The favorite cut is a strip, and much of the meat seems to have been cut from the animal in sheets so that the people buy as it were by the yard. The usual method is to tear or cut the meat from the animal's sides and back in layers about half an inch thick, one layer being cut off after another until the bone is reached. The sheets are then hung up in the market and sliced or chopped off as the customer desires. Each customer brings a cloth with her to wrap her purchase in, and she carries her meat or vegetables home in a basket, box or pan which she rests upon her head. No market woman ever furnishes paper or string for her customers. The most common market basket is a dishpan or tin wash basin, and this is always carried upon the head.

Carry Heavy Things on Their Heads.

The head and not the arms is the place of burden of the Paraguayan women. If we stand a moment at the corner of the market we can see all sorts of curious things coming and going on the heads of women. There comes a girl now at a two-forty pace with a demijohn on her crown and a load of wood in her arms. Her black face is wrapped in a black shawl and her black legs show out under her white skirt half way below her knees.

There is another woman with a white sheet around her head and shoulders. Notice that platter filled with oranges and vegetables upon her head. There is a great chunk of raw meat on its top. She walks along without touching her burden, and that is the case with all the women about us.

Here comes a young girl with a bundle of sticks perfectly balanced on the top of her cranium and with her hands at her sides. She has bought as much fire wood as you could hold in your arms and she is carrying it home.

Behind her comes a young mother with a similar bundle and a baby in her arms. See, she has stopped to make a purchase of that orange peddler over the way. Notice how carefully she stoops down without bending her back. There she has picked up a half dozen oranges and stuck them in among the fire wood and is walking off without trouble. But, wait, the woman of whom she has bought is excited. She is calling her back. The young mother returns, and, putting her hand away down inside her chemise, takes out a coin and gives it to the peddler, who in turn drops it in at the neck of her dress. The bosoms of the women are their pockets, and before they make change they often have to fish for some time for the coins.

And so we go in and out through the crowd, jostling and being jostled by women with bags of potatoes, baskets of corn, fire wood and bottles on the tops of their heads. We beg pardon at every step, for we fear that a push may throw a basket of eggs to the ground or a chunk of raw, red meat on some woman's head may be thrown off on our clothes. There is no danger, however, for every woman can handle her burden on her head quite as well as though she were carrying it in her arms.

Costs Little to Live.

The market is a good place to see how little it costs for a poor Paraguay family to live. Everything is sold in small quantity, and it cannot cost much for the average woman to keep house. The clothes of the poor are exceedingly scanty. All the women go barefooted and all go bareheaded. It does not cost much to dress them, and a full suit can be bought for $2 in gold. Nearly all wear shawls about their chocolate or cream-colored faces. Some have the

Paraguay Common Woman.

shawls thrown back so that you can see that the low-cut chemise, which reaches to their feet, forms the rest of their clothing. The shawls look like bed sheets, and I am told that they are used as such in many cases at night, so that a woman takes part of her bed for her clothes when she goes out to walk.

Housekeeping in Paraguay.

The common people here have indeed but few wants. They do not seem to care much for money, and think one who works like a foreigner is very foolish indeed.

I venture that the average family of Paraguay does not spend as much in a year as the family of our average laboring class spends a month. The houses outside the cities, of which I shall write more hereafter, are huts of poles chinked with mud and roofed with brown thatch. They have dirt floors, and there are, as a rule, neither fences nor gardens. The usual hut is not more than fifteen feet square, but it often has an open shed of the same size joined to it. As it is warm, the shed is frequently the most comfortable part of the house.

There is little furniture. A hammock or so, one or two cot beds made of canvas and stretchers, a table and a couple of chairs form a good housekeeping outfit. The cooking is often done over an open fire in the shed and cook stoves are not common.

The chief meals are breakfast at 11 and dinner at 6, with a cup of mate or Paraguayan tea in the morning. The food is chiefly puchero, a soup of boiled beef and vegetables, and mandioca, a kind of a potato like root, which is dried and ground into a flour. The soup is often eaten first and the boiled beef and vegetables brought in as a second course. But little coffee or tea is drunk at meals and the only liquor used by the common people is a villainous rum made of sugar called canya.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

JOHN BULL BANKRUPT.

The British Government Was Once Unable to Pay Its Debts.

From the London Mail.

"John Bull bankrupt" sounds strange today and the chancellor can afford to smile at the idea as he reckons up the nation's balance sheet for 1899; but it was not always so. Once, indeed—on this very day 102 years ago—the Bank of England virtually declared the British government bankrupt!

It came about in this way: Five years before the eighteenth century closed France declared war against Great Britain and Holland, and there was a great drain on the gold of the country. The most anxious man in Britain was Pitt, the minister of finance, whose resources were strained to the utmost.

For months Pitt had only obtained accommodation from the Bank of England by bringing great and constant pressure to bear upon that institution, but nobody was more astounded than Pitt when the "Old Lady of Threadneedle street" took it into her head to threaten England with bankruptcy.

A year or two before the bank had refused the paper of a private banking firm, and compelled it thereby to stop payment the next day for a million sterling, and in the universal sensation and confusion which overwhelmed the financial world a hundred country banks suspended payment. Then the government stepped in and saved the situation.

But now the government itself was in peril. The treasury had sent bills to the bank for payment amounting to over £200,000, and there not being sufficient gold in the country the bank resolved on a coup d'etat to save the situation.

The court of chartered moneychangers met in Threadneedle street, and resolved that the bills should not be discharged unless money was sent down for the purpose. The meaning of such a resolution, as those versed in the ways of financiers will not need to be told, was nothing more nor less than that the government could not meet its liabilities.

Pitt trembled when the news was brought to him, and everybody, from the king on the throne to the man in the street, talked of this and nothing else. How, people asked of one another, could the government get along without money?

The bank, of course, had promised to pay gold for its notes when demanded, and by refusing to do so it had broken its promise. But for the government to have pressed the bank would have intensified the trouble a hundredfold, as the government owed the bank an enormous debt.

The king and the ministers were summoned to town on Sunday morning; a privy council was held at Whitehall and a meeting of ministers in Downing street, both of which the king attended. There was only one course by which the country could be saved, and, daring as it was, it had to be taken.

The government threw itself between the bank and its creditors, and commanded the bank to withhold all cash from the public until parliament had met and come to some decision. The prohibition was ordered to remain in force for six months after parliament met, and during that period small bank notes were issued, and were generally accepted as cash everywhere.

Matters in this way righted themselves, and the wheels of government went round again.

Bravery.

From Life.

She—"You might have been a hero in the war if you had wanted to."

He—"I was. I ate everything that was placed before me."

She Was Innocent.

From Puck.

Mrs. Gotrox—"Bridget, some of my jewelry is missing!"

Bridget—"Well, don't come to me about it, mum! I'm no kleptomaniac!"

WHEN OUT OF TOWN

Every Precaution Taken to Insure the President's Safety.

ALWAYS GUARDED BY DETECTIVES

But Frequently Their Task is Not an Easy One.

ON THE SOUTHERN TRIP

Written for The Evening Star.

The care with which President McKinley is guarded when away from Washington is known to only a few people in the country. The silent, observant men who are assigned to protect the chief executive naturally make no display of their business, and the chances are that the President himself knows not who they are. They do not make themselves known to him or to any one else unless absolutely necessary. Yet they are within speaking distance of him on all occasions when he appears in a crowded place or is riding along a crowded thoroughfare. That is what they are paid for. They are to keep their eyes open for suspicious characters and to protect the President against harm of any kind, either intentional or unintentional.

The men who do this work are from the secret service bureau. Nobody at the White House asks for them, as the President would probably be offended if he learned that any one thought he had to be protected from a people who love and like him. Chief Wilkie of the secret service assigns the men and holds them to account for their work. Their time is not wholly lost, as they ascertain facts of importance to the government wherever they go. In all cities visited by them they encounter the local detectives and learn whether there is counterfeit money in circulation in that section. They are awake and watchful nearly all the time. They see all that is going on and hear about all that is said. In the hotels where the President stops they mingle with the crowd, apparently as eager to get a glimpse of the chief executive as the throngs of curious people in the corridors and on the streets. They have to know everything about the program of the day—where the President is going, what time he will be there, who is expected and how best to get there themselves, along with him. The last is generally the most important question to the detectives—exactly what to do to be along with the President when he starts out on the street. They may have to bribe the driver of the President's carriage to get a seat beside him; they may have to bluff the driver; they may be unable to do either, and have to walk behind the carriage for miles. All the same, they go with him.

When He is at Home.

Up to the time of the war with Spain not so much care was taken in guarding the President. He went many places without a detective or policeman in sight. He does so in Washington yet, as the amiable and shrewd chief of the secret service is not always aware of the President's intention to take an unexpected walk or ride. The war with Spain, of course, increased the possibilities that some crazy Spaniard or Spanish sympathizer might watch an opportunity to do the President harm on some of his visits out of the city. Such a person could do no harm at the White House, as cranks and suspicious people never get access to the President at the Executive Mansion. They are promptly gobbled up when they appear around the building. Cranks who go to the White House on any business nearly always tell their stories to the doorkeepers or ushers at the front door, or before reaching the second story. If they manage to get through the cordon of watchful men on the first floor they are forced to tell somebody what they want, and that exposes their purposes. They are generally harmless, but no chances are taken with them. For weeks before Guiteau shot President Garfield he went to the White House almost daily to attempt to see the President. He was not arrested, but was given the usual "jolly" and put off as easily and smoothly as possible. Whether that treatment resulted in his determination to kill the President or whether his intention had been that from the start is not known.

On the Southern Trip.

On the President's recent trip to the south there were two secret service men along. They went to Atlanta ahead of the President's train and secured quarters at the hotel where the party would stop. They made themselves familiar with the program for the two days the President was to be in the city, and then began finding out everything to be learned. Wherever the President appeared they were near him. So were two local detectives assigned by the police department of Atlanta. After addressing the legislature of Georgia the President was to receive the public.

The President walked down the marble steps of the state house to hold the reception. An immense crowd swarmed from rear and front to shake hands with the President, who had stopped at the last step. He was protected from the jam by one of the local detectives and by one of the secret service men, while the others watched. The President did not have time to finish the reception, and literally had to be pushed through the surging, eager throng, the members of which had little thought whether they were tearing off a woman's dress or a man's coat or cuffs. In such a jam the watchful detectives are frequently carried off their feet, but when the President emerged from the throng they were still near him.

In the afternoon the event was a floral parade, which the President was to review from a stand several miles from his hotel. The secret service sleuths found no way of riding, and when the President's carriage rolled up to the stand the spectators, if they had been watching, would have seen two well-dressed men walking at the back of the vehicle. The next day, when the President went out to review a military parade, one of the men was perched upon the seat with the driver, while the other was walking. One remained on the ground in front of the stand, while the other took a place on the stand. He did not have a pass, but they know how to get to a place without passes and without causing any disturbance. The routine was the same throughout the trip, and the business was done so neatly and quietly that few people with the party inquired who they were. They found little, however, on which to base a report.

On the Special Train.

On the night when the presidential party left Atlanta for Tuskegee the two men had made no arrangements to go on the train. They did not care to announce who they were. They got on, nevertheless, found sleeping quarters in the front of the dining car, utilized the blankets to be found and went to sleep. When the force of dining car men turned into this section for the night they found two strange men there, leaving no room for some of the dining car people to sleep. Some comment was made, but the mysterious men quietly kept their places and slept comfortably. The next morning the waiters were in bad humor from loss of sleep. After that the detectives found other quarters at night.

For a long time during the war with Spain three or four city detectives and a secret service man were on duty at the White House. This was during the period when the President continued his tri-weekly receptions in the east room to the public. There was some danger then that cranks might attempt harm. The President did not abandon these receptions until the war had closed and work crowded upon him so heavily that he was forced to give all his time to his office and to the hundreds of matters before him. In addition to these receptions, which presented good chances for cranks, the President frequently took long walks during the day, generally accompanied by a member of his cabinet. Detectives were not with him, and if there was danger he was often exposed to it.

During the War.

During the war there was no unpleasant incident at the White House growing out of the visits of suspicious characters. The detectives closely scanned all visitors. Sometimes the President received as many as a thousand people at receptions, but all of them were patriotic Americans, loving and respecting their President. Every visitor who in any way resembled a Spaniard or a foreigner of southern birth was watched by three or four sets of keen eyes. The President was probably not aware that detectives were in the White House. The arrangements for them were made by the late Major Moore and Secretary Porter, who felt that it was best to have the men around. There were several times stories of suspicious people around the White House at night, and of an attempt to poison the spring from which the White House gets its supply of water. None of these stories was true.

THE DAY IN THE SOUTH.

Festival of St. Valentine is Enjoyed by Everyone.

There is nothing notable in the celebration of St. Valentine's day in the south. Many valentines, both comic and sentimental, are exchanged between the young people. This is done through the mails. No love-sick young man would think of allowing the day to pass without sending to his best girl a pretty valentine containing an abundance of tender words in poetical form. He sends it without anything to identify it as coming from him, but she is expecting it and has little trouble in guessing whom it is from. If she also likes the young man he likewise gets a token of her affection in the shape of a valentine. These sentimental tokens of the day are kept for many years.

Many times they result in "matches" and later in marriage. The love-sick young people always understand that what is sent on St. Valentine's day is in earnest, and lacks all suspicion of fickleness or flattery. This assurance, of course, gives seriousness to what passes between sweethearts and naturally soon leads to a more perfect and blissful understanding.

Southern young people have lots of fun with the cheap comic valentines. All old scores and bitterness are paid off with these missives. The matter is not always taken in good nature or meant that way. The youngster who receives a gorgeously grotesque valentine, picturing him in the worst possible light, immediately surmises that it comes from one of his enemies. The falling out may have been about some sweet maiden or about a game of marbles or base ball or most anything else. The recipient of the valentine tries in many ways to discover the sender, and there is not infrequently an attempt to settle the score in a way more physical than the sending of valentines. If, however, the young man has received a valentine which he suspects to have come from some girl he has been trying to make love to he at once knows that his hopes are dashed to the earth. He is humiliated and angered, and forever afterward is the enemy of that girl. He nevermore tries to say soft things to her when they meet, and there is nothing but contempt in his expression when he passes her on the street or their eyes meet at school.

There is no record that the Hatfield-McCoy and other noted feuds of the south grew out of the sending of comic valentines, but many a less serious feud has originated in the south from this practice. As these feuds are between juveniles, they may not result in bloodshed, but they do result in much hatred.

"Aunt Sallie," for instance, is one of the shining lights of the Swamp Creek Colored Baptist Church. She incurs the enmity of some sister of the church. The enmity is concealed for a long time. Just before St. Valentine's day the woman who wants to mortify Aunt Sallie goes to the "white folks" she knows and says: "I wants ter git eben wid dat nigger named Sallie. Can't yer giv me a nasty-looking ballentine and fix it up fer me to send her. She's cuttenly one of the most stuck-up niggers in dis naborhood." The white folks want to have some fun and they get a valentine portraying some colored woman as the ugliest and most horrible-looking creature imaginable. It is duly put in an envelope and mailed. On the appointed day Aunt Sallie gets the missive. She takes one glance at it, and then all the anger in her black system rises to the bursting point. She suppresses it long enough to meditate for a few minutes. Then she says: "I jess kno' who sent dis. It was dat hateful Becky. I wouldn't 'pint her on de committee to wait on de cake table at de last festivul, and she hes never liked me. Won't I settle wid her, though?" A bitter feud results, and the next time Aunt Sallie meets Becky in a crowded place she snubs her in the most wicked manner possible. Soon other members of the church are involved, and in the course of time the congregation splits, the seceding members going to some other church or putting up a church of their own.

Thus St. Valentine's day, in addition to cementing love matches, brings trouble. At least that is the way it results in the south.

GLASS SPONGES.

Beautiful Specimen Recently Found on the Coast of California.

From the Scientific American.

It is not generally known that the beautiful animals known as glass sponges are found within the borders of the United States, yet one species at least is common, though rarely taken, off the coast of the southern California islands, especially on the so-called grouper banks of Santa Catalina, where fishing is carried on in water five hundred or six hundred feet deep.

It was here that an attractive specimen was found, being brought up by a fish hock. The sponge was a species of Holtenia, probably Holtenia Carpenteria, about twelve inches in height and nearly six in diameter. The long glass-like roots had been torn off when it was brought up. In appearance the sponge was a veritable porcupine, long needle-like spicules standing out all over it, the longest three inches in length, needles so sharp and brittle that it was difficult to hold or touch the sponge, and at a glance it resembled some odd or fanciful cactus.

The sponge was vase-shaped, and would hold three pints of fluid, bulging out in the center, with an opening at the top sufficiently large to admit the closed hand. The long spicules reaching out from it presented a splendid appearance when held up to the sun, and resembled glossy hairs, gleaming and scintillating wherever the sun flashed along their surfaces. Many of the spicules were overgrown with an attractive coralline, so that they appeared branched like the limbs of a tree. In these mimic branches hung pendent many miniature pink-hued star fishes and shrimps, while fastened to them, coiled and interlaced, were the barrow-like egg cases of a skate.

That these sponges are fairly common in deep water off-shore is evident by the small specimens often brought up and the pieces found on the outer islands, especially San Nicolas; but never before has so large and perfect a specimen been seen.

The glass sponges are so called because their skeleton, or the spicules, resemble glass, being formed of silica instead of lime, and closely resembling spun glass.

The most beautiful of the group is the Venus flower basket, or Euplectella aspergillum, which represents a vase of spun glass of the most beautiful description. When the first specimen was found it was sold at a fabulous price, and its true nature was not suspected. But finally a specimen was taken by a naturalist, who made the interesting discovery that the delicate and fragile glass-like vase, that seemed to be the work of some cunning East Indian, was nothing more nor less than the skeleton of a sponge whose spicules were silicious. In the water and alive the sponge is not an attractive object, being of a gray color and half buried in the mud, anchored by long glass-like streamers. But once dead and relieved of its covering, it becomes one of the most resplendent objects of the sea—a fairy vase, that might well have been modeled by the sea gods as a gift to Venus.

This sponge has the spicules so arranged that they present the appearance of squares. It is closed at the top and sides, hollow in the interior, and is occasionally the prison of small crustaceans, which enter the interstices when very young, and, unable to escape, become prisoners for life, and in the skeleton may be seen with their claws protruding through the opening, creating much wonder among the uninitiated as to how they obtained ingress into the glassy prison.

Another interesting glass sponge is Hyalonema, which resembles a glass rope. The sponge itself is a small cup, perched upon a long series of glass-like stems, which is buried in the mud. This was for a long time sold as the skeleton of the little coral polyps which are parasites on its stems.

Djihan Begum is believed to be the smallest monarch in the world. This tiny queen, who is over fifty years old, but is no larger than a child of ten, reigns over more than 1,000,000 subjects in the Hindoo vassal state of Bhopal. But in this dwarf's realm peace and prosperity are supreme, for, despite her size, she has a firm grip on the reins of government, and her rule is as strong as if she were ten times as large.

ON A MODERN SHIP

New Devices That Lighten the Labors of the Men.

STEAM TAKES THE PLACE OF MUSCLE

Has Put an End to the Romance of a Sailor's Life.

INCREASES HIS COMFORT

Written for The Evening Star.

IF STEAM AND electricity have, as has been said, "killed romance at sea," they have also relieved Jack Tar and his officers of most of the soul-killing work and a majority of the perils which formerly made their practical lives anything but romantic in fact.

Most of the modern ships' heavy work is done by machinery, and the orders for its doing are conveyed, not by "the hoarse note of the speaking trumpet," but by precise electrical impulses communicated through the agency of the mechanical-magnetic telegraph.

Only old-fashioned wooden vessels or coasters of inconsiderable tonnage depend today upon the "beef and brawn" of the men in their forecastles for the performance of those tasks of drudgery which in the days of yore occupied much of a sailor's time and made of his existence afloat and alongside the dock of arrival or departure a burden to be borne only in the hope of easier times in the future.

The modern ocean-going vessel, be her means of propulsion steam or sails, and be her business the carrying of freight, passengers or mails, is equipped with a great variety of mechanical devices which relieve the men of her company of most of the work demanding nothing but physical exertion. Incidentally, these devices, of course, reduce the numbers of men employed in the ships, on the man-per-ton ratio, and make necessary the presence in the forecastles and engine rooms of a higher quality of intelligence than was necessary under the simple old system.

But the reduction of men is compensated by the multiplicity of the ships, and the circumstance of constantly increasing tonnage.

The Blow to Romance.

Doubtless romance, or picturesque effect suffers in the substitution of a puffing, rattling steam-windlass for the old-fashioned capstan around which thirty men crept in slow, circular procession, timing their steps to the cadence of a sailor's "chantey," as they laboriously "broke out" an anchor or warped their craft to mid-stream preparatory to sailing.

The "chantey's" characteristic words and music would be drowned in the clatter of pistons and cogs aboard a modern ship, but the anchor comes aboard in half the time it used to take to hoist it, and the thirty men may be bending intelligent effort to performing tasks more important and infinitely less straining than that of raising it.

So, too, with the work of hoisting the heavy sails aboard a modern freighter, which depends upon canvas for its mobility. In the old days a ship of 800 tons would perforce carry a crew of sixty men. When sail was to be made or shortened quickly the yards of her thin spars would swarm with agile figures, long lines of men would "tail on" to her braces, halliards and stays, and the canvases would laboriously rise in regular impulses to the lugubrious measures of a song.

The sailing ship of today carries donkey engines, steam windlasses at every hatch for hoisting cargo, and another on her forecastle for use in handling the anchors. She has steam "gypsies" fed from her donkey boilers, at every mast-foot, and the work of getting her anchor or hoisting her canvas involves only the expert effort of an engineer and a dozen or so men aloft, who, as they perform the light labor of loosing reef-points and overhauling clew-garnets, do not think of "Paddy Jones" or his traditional boots unless it be to offer up a thanksgiving that the system associated with their memory has passed.

The Ship of Today.

But the profitable ship of today, freighter or liner, is the steam-driven, twin-screwed carrier of tremendous tonnage and high speed. She earns dividends where the best of the sailing ships eat up their profits in delays due to wind and weather—even after the important item of coal consumption has been taken into account. And the profitable ship is profitable because applied science has substituted the machine which draws no wage for the man, who must be paid, and because the coal she burns gives her practical independence of the moods of wind, wave and current.

The modern freight carrier and the modern "ocean greyhound" differ only in their interior arrangements and exterior lines. One is a floating hotel, built for high speed; the other a floating warehouse built for cargo capacity and steady going. Their machinery, with a few individual peculiarities, is the same, and of that machinery there is no end—at least to the eye of a layman.

Most of the new ships of the merchant marine are propelled by twin-screws driven each by a triple expansion engine of highest efficiency. A dozen double-ended Scotch boilers supply their main and auxiliary engines with steam at a pressure of 150 to 200 pounds to the square inch.

Besides the main engines, a modern vessel will contain in the depths below her water line, and on her decks, from ten to thirty smaller engines, each adapted for its special purpose. The pumps, feed pumps, bilge pumps, fire pumps, circulating pumps for the condensers and air pumps for the vacuum chambers, usually in duplicate in case of accident, will number fifteen or twenty separate engines. The dynamos, which supply the ship's every compartment with light and give her the wonderful "night eyes" called search lights, purr in airs in the shaft tunnel.

Steam at the Wheel.

In a special compartment a double-cylindered engine, always busy while the ship is at sea, answering the impulses of a toy wheel in the pilot house or on the bridge, pushes the massive rudder this way or that, making it possible for a single helmsman to control the leviathan's every movement by a finger touch. With the old hand gear four men, reinforced by block and tackle, had their hands full with the steering of a big vessel in heavy weather.

On deck, under the forecastle head, a steam windlass with the latent power of 200 horses, hoists the anchors that a hundred men could not "break out" of a muddy bottom, as if they were toys. At every hatchway there is another windlass or winch, driven by double engines, for hoisting and lowering cargo in loading or unloading, and for handling boats or sails in case of necessity.

Men must still stow the cargo and man the boats—the machine does the rest.

Special engines hoist the ashes from the boiler room of the modern ship to the deck—a daily task which made the fire room force grumble sorely in the early days of steam navigation, and yet other engines driving immense fans ventilate the cabins and stokeholds and supply a forced pressure of air to assist the perfect combustion of the furnaces.

Modern ships, freighters or liners, are most of them equipped with refrigerator compartments for the storage of perishable supplies.

Ice has no part in the ship's system of refrigeration. Ammonia gas, compressed by a powerful engine and forced through miles of steel tubes, makes possible any desired temperature in any refrigerative compartment. The modern ship, indeed, makes her own ice, as she distills her own fresh water while at sea.

The vitals of the modern ship are below the water line. The engine room and stokeholds contain her lungs, heart and stomach. But the brains—represented by the captain and his officers—are placed afar off—high up on the flying bridge or behind the glass windows of the pilot house.

It is imperative that the brains should be in a position to convey direct and instant suggestions to all the other members of the floating aggregation of entities which for the nonce exists as an individual. To that end the ship has a delicate and highly organized nervous system, consisting of an infinity of tubes, wires, dials and bells.

One-Man Power.

From bridge or pilot house the captain or executive officer dominates the entire massive fabric as readily as he dominates the members of his own body. A desk equipped with a number of labeled electrical buttons enables him to control instantly his signal lights, high up on the masts—to flash a message to any passing ship or to any station on a near-by shore. The same keyboard enables him to communicate with any compartment of the vessel—to summon any man or men of his company.

Beside the keyboard is the electrical "telegraph," or teleseme, more properly, which leads to the engine room. It is outwardly a glass-faced dial on a tall brass standard. A little hand line controlling an indicator and the printed divisions in the segments of the dial's circle show its use and purpose, "ahead," "astern," "half speed," "full speed," "stop." Those are the few orders which the bridge must send to the engine room frequently and instantly. The teleseme does it by a mere turn of the lever to the proper signal.

Of barometers, sextants, range finders, compasses and chronometers every modern ship carries a dozen or more; but they, like the patent log, trailing far astern and registering the ship's speed, are instruments, not machines—adapted to the solution of problems of geographical position and meteorological condition, not to the solution of the basic problem of relieving the man of physical labor and multiplying his working efficiency.

The old ship was a graceful fabric in which man was the slave and plaything of the elements. The modern ship is a scientific instrument in which man is the dominant, serene controller of the natural laws and natural forces which for 3,000 years have had their whimsical will of him and his.

Spreewald's Hair Market.

From the New York Herald.

In the lower German Spreewald there is a famous market for women's hair, supplied almost entirely by peasant girls, especially those between the ages of twelve and thirteen. The industry is carried on chiefly by old women, who secure orders from wealthy patrons, and, with a sample of the sort desired, set out among the Spreewald peasants and tempt the girls, or, rather, their parents, to give them what they seek. The reason for the selection of girls of the age mentioned is that they are young enough to have perhaps a second or even third "crop" of hair to reward other journeys into the region. The sum usually paid for a "crop" ranges from $4.50 to $7.50, according to color, thickness and length.

There is an understanding among the women in the nature of a "trust" to keep down prices among the peasants as much as possible.

These women go to a town or village and stop at the chief tavern, whence the news of their arrival quickly spreads, and girls soon appear in long lines, under the care of mothers or other relatives. Brides are the easiest victims, for the sum received is a very material aid in the establishment of a new peasant household.

When the bargaining time comes the buyers are not above the use of influence of the baser sort. They usually supply some strong drinks, and the "hospitality" thus offered is not without its influence in securing some pretty hard bargains from the unlucky girls, or, rather, from their parents, who are the ones to profit in the great majority of instances.

Anæmia

is another name for poor, thin blood. To overcome Anaemia, as well as other conditions arising from the blood being in a bad state, a blood maker is needed.

Johann Hoff's Malt Extract

is a blood maker in the true sense of the word. It makes rich, red blood, and supplies force and energy to the body.

Dr. P. T. Gilgour of Cincinnati, Ohio, writes: "I have used Johann Hoff's Malt Extract with excellent results in cases of persistent anaemia, which failed to respond to any other treatment at the hands of myself and other physicians. It is always taken, too, with great relish."

JOHANN HOFF'S MALT EXTRACT

is the pioneer and standard—was introduced in 1847. All others are imitations.

Johan Hoff: New York, Berlin, Paris.

The little god of love turns away from a sickly, sallow, nervous, head-achey, back-achey, lifeless woman. Every woman should have the beauty, vivacity, and vigor of perfect health. The bright glow of health, bright eyes, clear skin, red lips are more attractive than any mere regularity of feature. A woman can't change the shape of her features but any woman may have the beauty of health. No healthy woman can be ugly. No sickly woman can be beautiful.