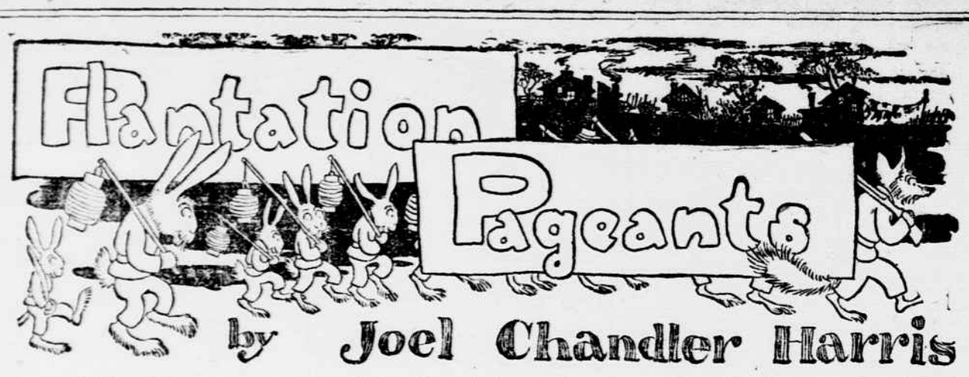


by Joel Chandler Harris

PART XII.

The Story of Mr. Coon.

Aaron smiled when the children told him how Mr. Bobs could set a crow to catch a crow. He said the same plan had been practiced for many long years. He had heard his father, Ben Ali, tell about it. Indeed, the probability is that out of this practice the saying, "Set a thief to catch a thief," had arisen, for nobody could trust a thief to catch a thief unless the first thief was securely fastened.

But Aaron, on his side, had something quite as interesting to tell the children. From a negro whom he knew he had bought a raccoon, a genuine, full-grown raccoon. This was news, indeed, and so exciting in its character that Aaron was compelled to answer, or to parry, volley after volley of questions.

"Oh, how old is it, and what does it look like?" cried Sweetest Susan.

"And who is it to belong to, and is it tame, so tame that you can put your hand on it?" asked Buster John.

"Why didn't dey kill it an' cook it?" inquired Drusilla.

Aaron put his fingers in his ears. He couldn't answer all the questions put to him. Finally there was a lull in the excitement.

"What did you give for him?" Buster John asked after a pause.

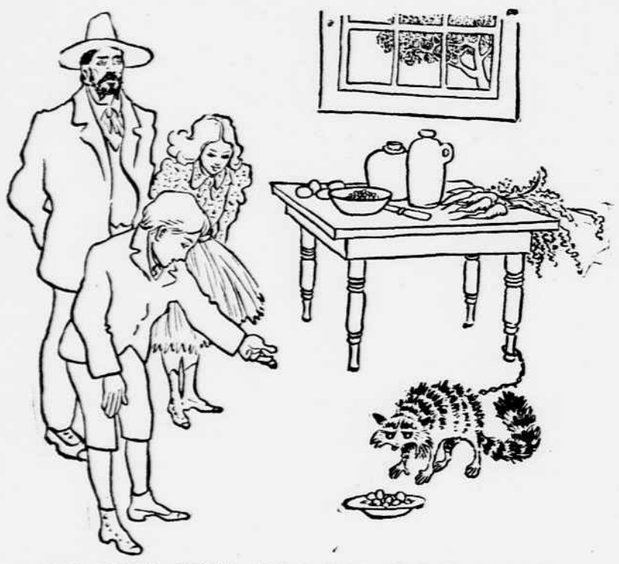
"Something, replied Aaron, smiling.

"But how much?"

"Enough."

"Shucks," cried Buster John; "if I had known there was some great secret about it I wouldn't have asked."

Aaron pinched the boy's ears gently and said "Come!" He went to his cabin, the children following, and when they went in the first thing they saw was Mr. Coon, pacing back and forth the length of the small steel chain which held him. He paused and regarded them curiously, twisting the end of his sharp nose about, and mechanically feeling in the cracks of the floor with his forepaws, which seemed to be as supple and as useful as a boy's hands.



THE FIRST THING THEY SAW WAS HEr COON.

When Buster John went nearer, Mr. Coon raised himself on his hind legs and uttered a cry almost identical with the scream of a rooster when a bird suddenly flies over or a hawk appears in sight. Buster John knew it was a warning and so he stopped.

"What is the trouble, Frog-Eater—Tadpole-Catcher?" the Son of Ben Ali sharply inquired.

"You can't fool me," snarled Mr. Coon. "I've seen creatures like him before. They poked my sides with sticks and pulled my tail."

"But this one is different, Bug-Eater," said Aaron.

"Oh, call me what you please, Son of Ben Ali. I was glad to come with you, but I didn't invite myself here, did I? If you were hungry, and thirsty and tied fast, and saw coming toward you one of the creatures that had made misery for you, would you grin and say, 'Welcome, friend?'"

"Likely not," replied Aaron. "But you have been fed, Frog-Eater. You said you had enough."

"Enough of the kind, Son of Ben Ali; yes, and too much. If you want me to eat corn get some that is soft on the cob and juicy. If you want me to be nice fetch me a couple of young chickens—or a handful of black beetles." Sweetest Susan shivered.

"Well, Tadpole-Catcher," said Aaron, "if you want good things to eat go with these friends. They have been touched. They know everything you say, and when you are hungry or thirsty you have only to give the sign."

At this Mr. Coon paced back and forth very rapidly. This was the way he showed his impatience. He was anxious to go with them. Aaron unfastened the chain and placed one end in Buster John's hand. The youngster held it very gingerly and was inclined to shrink when Mr. Coon came too close, but he soon got over that feeling, and so did Sweetest Susan and Drusilla; so that, in a little while, they were more familiar with Mr. Coon than they had ever been with any of their pets.

I Crushed the Bird in My Teeth.

They lost no time in giving him his dinner, which consisted of chicken heads and giblets. Mr. Coon smacked his mouth over them, and when he had finished declared that he felt better than he had for many a day, and remarked:

"Eg liblum gig loblum og iggle!" which, literally translated, means "Big dinner, bigger bed." Freely interpreted, it means: "If I continue to get such fine fare, I'll have to get my clothes made larger."

It may interest readers who are no longer young to know that in the language of animals the root word lablam stands for things, and its variations, liblum, loblum, leblim, liblim, liblom, etc., mean the thing at hand, or, to be more exact, the thing under the nose—the thing talked about.

It is a pity that Joe Maxwell, who is responsible for these dry details, did not take the trouble to write the language down from Buster John's recipe. But he put it off from day to day, and now there is nothing left but the rough notes of these stories, and some scattered fragments of explanation, one of which is presented above.

Well (to shoo all this away) Mr. Coon was highly delighted with his dinner, and was ready to curl up and take a nap, or was willing to join the children in a frolic. So they led him into their play room in the attic, unsnapped the chain from his collar and gave him the freedom of the wide space.

First, Mr. Coon must poke his nose or his forepaws into everything. He paced round and round the room, smelling at or feeling in every nook and cranny. When he was satisfied with his inspection, nothing would do but he must feel in Buster John's pocket. He pulled out marbles, nails, fragments of chinaware, which the youngster used in place of money. With a few fragments of fine chinaware in his pocket Buster John always felt rich. With this form of currency he had bought whole droves of ponies and large arsenals of guns, pistols, swords and war cannon from imaginary vendors.

Piece by piece Mr. Coon brought Buster John's treasures to light and examined them carefully. The children noticed that Mr. Coon's forepaws were very much like tiny hands, and that his hind feet made tracks in the sand that looked like those of a wee baby. Of course, it was Sweetest Susan who made this discovery. Whenever Mr. Coon left the prints of his feet visible one could almost imagine that some small goblin in human shape had passed that way going on all-fours. Almost! Why, Sweetest Susan did imagine it—was sure of it, indeed—whenever she was in Make Believe land, where she lived most of the time. Surely it could not be more wonderful than the country next door to the world, where old Mr. Rabbit and Mrs. Meadows and the lookingglass children had their abode.

For a few days Mr. Coon feasted, and then the children thought he should begin to pay for his board; first, by giving an account of himself, and next in any other way that might be devised. So far as Mr. Coon was concerned, he was perfectly willing to accommodate the children. He was never bad tempered unless he saw a cat or dog, and such of these as were about the house and yard soon learned to give him a wide berth, for his claws and teeth were sharp and he was a born fighter.

In Joe Maxwell's rough notes, Mr. Coon began thus:

"If I had to tell my tale from the talk-think, as you talk your talk, I'd talk no talk of this thing." As this would be hard to follow, it has been rendered into a free translation from first to last.

"If I had to learn my language out of books, as you do yours," said Mr. Coon, leaning back in a corner of the playroom, and rubbing his face and nose with both hands, "I wouldn't have much to say about myself, for I wouldn't know how to say it. My home was in the hollow limb of a tree, and I can remember how nice it was to sleep in that soft, warm place. There were four others besides me, and we used to sleep close together till our mammy came home. We were always awake when she came, for we could hear her climbing the tree, and then, if it was not raining, she'd sit on the outside, and dry her feet and clothes with her tongue. Sometimes we'd get impatient and begin to cry, and once one of the others went to the door; the slap he got made him squeal, and none of us ever bothered our mammy any more by going to the door. But, my! How hungry and angry I used to get while mammy sat out there cleaning her feet and drying her clothes. But she always took her own time, and then, when she came in, what a scramble there was for the right teat. Mine was the middle one, but I always had to claw and be clawed before I could get it. We were all ravenous, and I never did get as much food as I wanted at one time till I came here. I think our kind are born hungry, and kept hungry that we may be able to escape from those that follow us.

"The first thing I really remember was once when I heard a bird chirping and whistling right at our very door. I trembled and shook all over. The others were asleep, and I was glad of it. Shaking and trembling, I crept to the door, and there, right at me, was a bird with a long bill, which he was poking under the bark. Shivering and shaking, I jumped on him, but I came near falling to the ground. He was stronger than he seemed to be, and he had claws, too. He clinched me with these and beat me over the head with his wings, but I didn't mind that. I didn't mind anything. I shook no longer. I felt my hair rising on my back. I heard myself growl. I didn't know why, but I was furious. I crushed the bird in my teeth until his wings ceased to move; but I was still angry. I had tasted blood; I had made my first kill. If one of the others had come out just then I think he would have been sorry. But they were all frightened by the noise and were huddled in the farthest corner. Then, when I was no longer angry, but proud, I went to the door, carrying the bird in my teeth. They smelt the blood and rushed at me, and then there was a fight."

"Why, you were fighting your own brothers and sisters!" said Sweetest Susan, severely.

"So would you, if you were of my kind," replied Mr. Coon. "There was a fight, but they all got a piece of the bird. After that we were changed. It seemed as if we had been asleep all the time and something had suddenly awakened us. Then mammy came home. She sniffed around and smelt the blood and saw the feathers. She nosed under us as we lay and rooted us out of the way, but she found nothin' more than feathers. 'Well, I declare!' she cried. 'Who's been bringing you a bird?'

"'Is that what you call a bird?' asked one of the others, and when she said it was they all squalled out, 'Oh, mammy, mammy, fetch us some more! Mammy, fetch us some more!'

"But she kept on asking, 'Who brought this one? Who brought this one?' I said nothing, but the others looked at me and said I was the one that brought the bird.

"'Where did you get it?' mammy asked.

"I told her I had grabbed the bird, and though she said nothing she seemed to be pleased, and I noticed that she combed my hair with her tongue a great deal longer than she ever did before. After that she began to bring us birds and frogs, and once she brought us a big fish, and that was fine."

"Frogs!" cried Drusilla. "You hear dat? Frogs!"

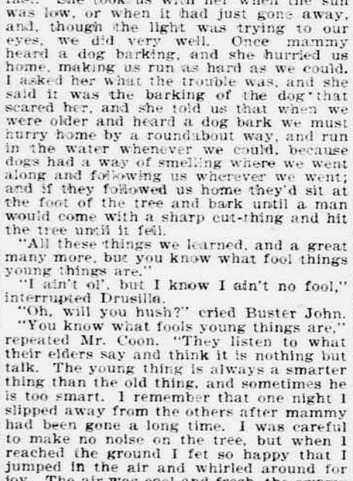
"Not the kind that live on land," explained Mr. Coon, making a wry face, "but the kind that hide on the bank of the creek and jump in when they hear you coming. You have to take many long and hard lessons before you can catch one. Fish are easier to catch. You turn your back to the creek, let the tip of your tail touch the top of the water, and move it about—and wait."

"Huh! I see myself!" exclaimed Drusilla resentfully.

"Hush up," said Buster John; "he's talking about coons."

"Well, some folks call niggers coons," replied Drusilla.

"All this time," Mr. Coon continued, paying no attention to the interruption, "you leave your body turned half around so you can see what is going on in the water. When the fish shows himself you reach down and flirt him out on the bank, and in reaching you have to be quicker than the fish—and fish are mighty quick. But a gnawing stomach (dag ig lublum; literally, crying-for-meat-thing) makes a quick hand.



I Jumped on His Head.

"Well, mammy was trying to teach us all these things, and we were learning very fast. She took us with her when the sun was low, or when it had just gone away, and, though the light was trying to our eyes, we did very well. Once mammy heard a dog barking, and she hurried us home, making us run as hard as we could. I asked her what the trouble was, and she said it was the barking of the dog that scared her, and she told us that when we were older and heard a dog bark we must hurry home by a roundabout way, and run in the water whenever we could, because dogs had a way of smelling where we went along and following us wherever we went; and if they followed us home they'd sit at the foot of the tree and bark until a man would come with a sharp cut-thing and hit the tree until it fell.

"All these things we learned, and a great many more, but you know what fool things young things are."

"I ain't ol', but I know I ain't no fool," interrupted Drusilla.

"Oh, will you hush?" cried Buster John.

"You know what fools young things are," repeated Mr. Coon. "They listen to what their elders say and think it is nothing but talk. The young thing is always a smarter thing than the old thing, and sometimes he is too smart. I remember that one night I slipped away from the others after mammy had been gone a long time. I was careful to make no noise on the tree, but when I reached the ground I fet so happy that I jumped in the air and whirled around for joy. The air was cool and fresh, the swamp smelt good and the dark was fine. I could see everything ever so much better than when the big shine-thing is blazing over the trees.

"So I shook myself and started for the pond in the swamp. There I caught some small fish, and they tasted ever so much better than those mammy brought home. Then I wandered out of the swamp and went on the hill where the brambles are, hunting for birds and birds' nests. I found two birds and one nest with two tiny eggs in it, and the eggs tasted so nice that I wanted more, and I went rambling all over the hill ever so far.

Dogs Came Charging.

"Suddenly I heard a dag bark. The sound of it made me shake and shiver, and I stood listening. Presently I heard the bark again, and it was so close at hand that it sounded like a dreadful roaring."

"I boun' you had ter hump yo'se'f den," suggested Drusilla.

Mr. Coon, with his eyes half shut, for he was sleepy, kept right on the track of his narrative.

"A dreadful roaring. I went away from there as fast as my legs could carry me, and ran right to the swamp. I could hear the dogs coming, too; and, far off, I could hear some one crying out."

"That was the man cheering the dog," Buster John explained.

"The dog," said Mr. Coon, "seemed to be coming closer and closer, and I began to run harder than ever. I remembered that my mammy had said something about water and dogs, and I ran straight for the big pond in the swamp; the Son of Ben Ali knows where it is. I slipped into the water and swam to the middle, where there's a stump of an old tree. I had hardly reached it when the dog came in sight on the bank of the pond, and began to whine and bark. He ran around to see if I had gone out on the opposite side, and then he caught sight of me. He jumped into the water with a great splash, and when I saw him coming fear seemed to leave me. I climbed upon the stump, and when he came near I jumped on his head and bit him on the neck with all my might. He went under, but I turned him loose, and came to the top and swam around and round. He came up trying to shake the water from his ears, and they flapped on the pond like the wings of a duck that is trying to rise in a hurry. Before he got through flapping I had jumped on his head again, and when he went down I clawed him with my hind feet. He tried to cry out, but all he could do was to make bubbles on the water. I jumped on his head twice after this, and the third time he never came up any more. I went out on the bank, shook the water off my clothes, and cantered toward home. As I went along, feeling very proud, I heard the man calling his dog. First he blew a horn. He blew it a long time, and then called and called; but the dog, being at the bottom of the mill pond, could make no answer.

"When I reached home I found mammy there. She had heard the dog bark and had made haste to get out of his way. Then, finding one of her children missing, she knew that something had happened or was going to happen. She was sure of it. She heard the dog running, and she knew the missing young one would be caught. If he wasn't caught, she hoped he would be badly scared; it would serve him right for not obeying the rules she had made.

"When I got home, you know I was tired. Mammy dried my clothes while I told her what had happened, and she would hardly believe it; but she could plainly hear the man calling his dog, first with his voice and then with his horn. He kept that up for some time, and, finally, on his way home, he passed right under our house, calling his dog and tooting his horn—and I was the only one of the family that dared to look out as he went by.

"Well, I had no more adventures until one night, having come home myself, I heard a crowd of dogs barking. The noise they made grew louder and louder, and presently I heard mammy climbing the tree as hard as she could. She came up so fast that I could hear pieces of bark fall to the ground. She was scared nearly to death.

"'They are after me,' she cried, 'and I didn't have time to take to water!' Sure enough, the dogs came charging through the bushes, howling and panting like mad, and they gathered around the tree and howled and barked until the men came up with torches. I was curious to see what was going on, though the others were too frightened to move. I came out and sat on the limb and looked down at them. They were all black men, except one. The one that had the biggest torch held it behind him and moved it back and forth behind him.

"'There he is,' he yelled, 'I see his eyes!' The man with a cut thing began to hit the tree. I never knew what was going to happen until the tree began to sway. Then I could feel it falling. As it fell, I ran down the tree until I came to one of the largest limbs, and, by the time I had climbed that, the tree hit the ground with a noise that sounded as the clouds sound when they clap together and make a big, quick shine. The limb shook so hard that I came near falling off; but I held on the best I could, and in a moment I heard a great noise of fighting, screaming, howling and growling. I was wild with fear, but I could do nothing. Close to the limb I was clinging to was a black man holding a torch. The light blinded my eyes, and the hot smoke stifled me. I thought none had seen me, but the man who was not a black man was standing apart from the others, and when I looked at him I found he was looking at me.

"I kept looking at him and he at me until I was no longer afraid. I had the feeling that he was a friend (close to cousin-thing) and I wanted to go to him. But how could I? It was the Son of Ben Ali, and he said nothing to the others. But the thick smoke came in my nose and I sneezed. The black man yelled, 'Here's another!' and climbed on the tree. He was about to strike me with the torch, but the Son of Ben Ali said, 'Wait!' He came to the limb, stretched out his hand to me and I touched it with my tongue. 'Come,' he said. I jumped to his shoulder and felt safe; but when he carried me among the strange ones, when I saw the dogs nosing around with blood on their ears, and when I saw my mammy and the others lying there moving no more, fear came again, and but for the Son of Ben Ali's hand and voice I should have jumped down into the middle of the pack.

"The Son of Ben Ali gave me to a friend to take care of, and though I went hungry many a time, it was not the fault of the black man. Maybe he was hungry himself, and his wife and children, too. But now I'm here, and if you'll excuse me I'll take a nap."

Mr. Coon opened his mouth wide to gape, cuddled down in the corner, and was soon sound asleep.

(End Part XII.)

HER IDOL SHATTERED.

Tore His Image From Her Heart, but It Left a Scar.

From the Kansas City Independent.

"It's all a mistake to think that us girls at the quick lunch counter don't have our romances same's folks in the higher walks of life, for while we may look frozen-faced it ain't nothin' but a bluff, an' down in our hearts we are every bit as susceptible to the tender passion as any of the high-born dames. Yes, you're right; I, too, have known what love is and felt it tell me that there were other things in life than 'Brown the wheats!' and 'Draw one!' but as Miss Libb has so beautifully said in 'Fair, but False,' 'the cup was not for my lips.'

"He came in one day and ordered a pan roast at 25 cents a throw. Now, only the real thing eats pan roasts, and I took notice of him right away. He came in reg'lar ev'ry noon, and I kinder got to watchin' for him. After he'd been comin' for some time we struck up conversation, an' he asked me how I liked 'Lost in London,' an' I told him I didn't like sensational plays, an' that real dramas like 'East Lynne' was more my style, an' he said I was a girl of considerable mind.

"I knew he loved me, for once I only put four oysters in his pan roast 'stead of six an' he never even noticed it. As for me, I own up to savin' the fattest oysters for him an' takin' special pains with the roast. Things went on that way for two months—I was in a dream—then came the cruel awakenin'.

"Beezie O'Brien came here to take direction of the pies—quite a promotion for Beezie, for she'd been workin' down at Jones', an awful cheap joint. That's Beezie over there with the red hair an' freckles, but don't mention freckles, 'cause she's mortal sensitive. Well, me an' Beezie was chinnin' when in walked me pan roast friend. The minute he set eyes on Beezie he turned pale as death an' shot out of the door. Ah, I can see his face yet—despair and agony wrote on it.

"Then the truth came out. Beezie gave it away that he was a steady customer at Jones' mornin' an' evenin', where he took nothin' but coffee and sinkers at 5 cents a throw, an' that the pan roast deal wasn't nothin' but a bluff he chucked to try an' win me affections. Yes; I've torn his image out of me heart, but the scar's still there.

"Ah, me!" wearily sighed the quick lunch girl as she made out my check, "It's mighty hard to find a real gent nowadays."

A Black Turning White.

From the Vienna Fremdenblatt.

Two years ago an Austrian merchant, who had been on a business trip to Africa, brought back with him from Egypt Ibual Lacho, a Soudanese negro, aged nineteen years. Speedily acclimated, the black immigrant soon learned the German dialect of the Viennese and surprised them by his clever manners and the elegant dress he displayed in the cafes and upon the "promenade." During the last autumn he became affected by nervous troubles, which a famous neuropathist of Vienna subjected to electrical treatment. Ibual Lacho's condition began to improve from day to day, and, strange to relate, in the same proportion as the disease seemed to leave him there disappeared the black dye of his skin. Paler and paler he grew, until, through the stages of Peruvian and Egyptian mummy coloration and the pallid tinge of embalmed beef, he blanched into gaining the true Caucasian complexion.

Ibual's doctor explains the decoloration of his patient from a process by which the black pigment in his skin was disintegrated and finally eliminated through electricity. This chief coloring matter, melanin, of pigmentum nigrum, found in the eye, the hair and the skin, contains iron, and strongly reacts upon electric application.

Lazy Gambling.

From the Atlanta Constitution.

The laziest man in Atlanta has been discovered. There can be no doubt of it. He himself admits the corn. By occupation he is a clerk in a wholesale grocery store, and by mutual predilection a sport.

Some days ago he invented a brand-new gambling scheme that beats anything yet. He places two tiny mounds of sugar on a box, both of the same size; then he proceeds to wager any friend who chances to drop in that the flies will eat up one mound before the other.

"No, there's not much profit in it," said he. "You can't tell which pile will be consumed first. I'm not personally acquainted with the sugar-eating propensities of the flies, and if I was I'd never know which flies were going to light on my pile. All sugar looks alike to flies. But the game's fun, and real exciting when they begin on the home-stretch. And then the flies do all the work, and do it so cheerfully!"

And he yawned and sighed as a customer asked him the price of flour.

A MODERN INDUSTRY

Supplying People With Newspaper Clippings on Many Topics.

THE CZAR IS A REGULAR PATRON

Others Who Want to Know What is Said About Them.

VALUABLE SCRAPBOOKS

Written for The Evening Star.

Eighteen years ago a man had an idea, which he developed with 50 cents, the last money in his pocket. Less than a month ago half a dozen firms engaged in the business resulting from that idea, coalesced and capitalized their joint undertaking at $5,000,000. Even at that they had no stock for sale—the capitalization was merely an equitable prorating. Unless all signs fail there will be handsome dividends. The business is international, and so solidly established that only a social cataclysm can overset it.

The story has been told more than once of how a young Russian-American at the end of his resources, saw a famous French artist pay handsomely for papers several days old, containing notices of his salon pictures, and was inspired by the sight with the thought of making a business of furnishing such notices to whoever had need of them. But the spread and development of the thing thus insignificantly begun will be news to the most part of the reading world.

Today 50,000 persons and $50,000,000 are employed in the business of making and distributing newspaper clippings. There are between fifty and one hundred bureaus in the United States, nearly as many in England and on the continent, others at Melbourne, Sydney, Calcutta, Yokahoma, Hong Kong, Johannesburg, Natal, Buenos Ayres and Rio de Janeiro. All the biggest of these are in effect international. If they have not branches all about, they have instead a sort of traffic arrangement, after the manner of the big banks, by which their foreign correspondents fill cabled orders quite as though they were received over their own counters.

Often of Great Value.

Even this does not mark the full spread of the idea. Railways, telegraph lines and express companies have gone into the business on their own account. At first they were among the regular bureaus' most paying subscribers, but presently they began ordering local agents to clip and file every line of railway matter appearing in local sheets, and to send the clippings to the main office, where they are indexed and put away. Several times an item so kept has proved to be worth a good many dollars to the company keeping it.

Among clippers as elsewhere specialization works. Some bureaus give their whole mind to things literary. To them the author, especially the fledgeling author, is as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land. The minute a book is out—sometimes even earlier—the writer of it receives their circular letter, enclosing a sample clipping—a notice of himself or his book, and asking his subscription. The rate is five dollars a hundred clippings, or if the writer be little known, five dollars a year. Where competition is keen figures are often lowered one-half. In case the author should already have engaged with another bureau, it is not uncommon to ask that the latter comer be allowed to send clippings also, receiving pay only for such as are not duplicates of those already received.

Besides notices and reviews the literary bureau, will, if ordered, send all manner of literary intelligence. It is thus a very present help to those who live away from the great centers. It is a question, however, if the bureau is not equally a boon to those in the great centers. Life there is so tense and crowded, one has but little time to seek out items for himself.

Certain facts in clipping history bear out the idea. Emperor William, for example, is much too busy to read the papers, yet needs strenuously to know what his world is saying of particular things. So he has a scrap book, in charge of a court officer, whose business it is to see that every morning it is brought strictly up to date, and duly submitted to the imperial eye. W. T. Stead, another very busy man, is credited with possessing a whole library of books made up of clippings. It fills three dingy rooms in a London house, and is said to have suggested to him the plan of the Review of Reviews.

Other bureaus concern themselves mainly with business affairs. They give to their subscribers not only all that appears in print concerning the subscribers' lines of business, but advance intelligence of such things as the letting of contracts, the adoption of building plans, new materials, inventions, discoveries, legal decisions affecting commercial interests, also legislation. While the Dingley bill was pending every firm interested in the wool trade received from a Chicago bureau every scrap of intelligence bearing on the wool schedules. It is the same with other staples—cotton, copper, wheat, live stock, crop prospects generally. The whole material world indeed is the business bureau's parish, and one that is very carefully looked after.

Medical Intelligence.

The very latest development is the bureau of medical intelligence, which collects and distributes whatever is new in medicine. This includes not merely the astounding discoveries that exploit themselves, but reports of operations, experiments, theories even, which men eminent in the profession put into print. They are, of course, always available to the men who know where to find them and have time to look.

One needs imagination to see anything picturesque in the mechanics of clipping. One establishment with over a hundred employes shows to the casual eye only ranks and rows of men and women, reading, blue pencilling, clipping, pasting and stamping. This bureau's usual output is 50,000 clippings a week. Under a rush order it could clip and mail a hundred thousand. There is an elaborate system of card classification. The cards are hung on hooks in a stairstepy rack some four feet across, and running the whole length of a very long room. Nearly every hook is filled, but the fact is far from being solely a comment on human vanity. It needs but a little reflection to see that the clippings run the whole gamut of human passions, necessities and desires.

With that in mind a certain sense of tragi-comedy, or comic tragedy comes as one looks. The commonplace manila envelopes fly out and about, freighted with many things. Ninety-nine may signify nothing, yet the hundredth be potential of joy or grief, of failure or success. Particularly among the personal clippings, which make still so large a part of the general business. Oddly enough it is not the class one would look for, actors, artists and authors—which is most avid of this sort of thing. Society people are even more anxious to see what the world outside thinks of them. This not only of the great lights, but those who affect to deplore publicity. The book of "latest orders" in a big New York establishment around horse show and dog show times, and in the era of important social functions, would reveal much as to the inwardness and inspiration of certain published things.

Actors as Patrons.

The professionals, however, by no means slight the bureau's good offices. They could not afford to—neither could the bureau afford to let them. Witness these two facts: Duse in the course of eleven weeks received two thousand eight hundred and eighty-eight personal clippings; Richard Mansfield's order excludes the works of his press agent and critiques of his plays as plays, yet in the season his weekly clippings bill often runs to thirty dollars.

Queen Victoria subscribes to more than one bureau, but never sees the clippings until they have been put in books under the editing of some of her family, which means, of course, the leaving out of anything unpleasant. The Prince of Wales also takes clippings from two sources. In addition he cuts out with his own royal hands all the pictures of himself which appear in the public prints. The greater the caricature the broader his chuckle over it. Slurs upon his family are said to touch him nearly, yet to things said against himself he is artlessly indifferent. One can readily credit that upon hearing that by his own order a scrap book was made for him containing American opinions in re the baccarat scandal.

The Czar of Russia.

However, the royal patron dearest to clippings bureau regard is his majesty the czar of all the Russias. He has shown himself exceedingly well disposed toward them. Some of their notable orders have come at his instance. A New York bureau man has made for him sumptuously bound scrap books, all Russia leather and gold clasps and gilt edges, first about the death and obsequies of his father, Alexander III, then about his own marriage and coronation ceremonies and later in regard to the American journey of Prince Hillkoff, his minister of railways. The same house has now in hand clippings about the peace conference, which are to form another in the series of imperial scrap books. They are the finest ever made in New York, exceeding even the magnificent volumes in which Mrs. Bradley-Martin is preserving the eight thousand-odd clippings in praise of her famous ball.

Uncle Sam himself has stolen the clippings idea, and keeps at the White House a corps of trained clippers and a government scrap book. President Cleveland is said to have looked at the scrap book just once in his last term—that was in the course of the Venezuelan crisis. Mrs. Harrison subscribed to the bureau on her own account, and her daughter has many books full of the things printed about "Baby" McKee. Mrs. Cleveland had a scrap book of personal notices—not, however, of herself, but of her husband.

In Public Life.

The wives of many other prominent men have similar books, which, it is both reasonable and charitable to hope, do not include the caricatures of their liege lords. Almost every man in public life is a bureau subscriber. "Himself" is the order oftenest written opposite a big name, though in many cases it is "Himself and Pacific railroads," or "Himself and the Nicaragua canal," or even "Himself and the Agricultural Department."

Uncle Sam is, however, not wholly without conscience in the matter of clippings, or perhaps he has learned wisdom by experience. It took fifteen thousand dollars to buy for his archives a complete file of a New York paper covering the period of the civil war; further, the Townsend scrap book history of that war cost Columbia College forty thousand. Whether from conscience or thrift, the government has just ordered and received from a New York establishment a scrap history of the war with Spain. It is in twenty big volumes, though most of the war pictures were left out. The volumes are bound in morocco cloth, and cost the government a thousand dollars.

That sum, indeed, hardly covered the cost of making, but the bureau man has gathered a duplicate set of clippings and books for his profit in them, whenever a rich and patriotic citizen decided to give a similar history to West Point or Annapolis. Stanford University has already a monumental set of scrap histories, bearing on everything American, and particularly the life and works of its founder.

Some Queer Orders.

John L. Sullivan gets clippings—subject not specified. Lord Randolph Churchill ordered "everything unfavorable," and was forced by the size of his first month's bill to exactly reverse his order. Nicola Tesla wants "electrical inventions." Edison is more comprehensive; he orders clippings upon above twenty subjects of living interest. W. D. Howells subscribes intermittently for real incidents going with whatever story he may have in hand. Many lesser lights of literature order "unusual real stories." One man who is said to have a plot factory patronized by both novelists and dramatists when imagination lags wants all sorts of hairbreadth happenings. "Stories of elopement" was another order. The maker of it, strange to relate, was not a realistic novelist, but a luckless lover, who hoped thus by vicarious example to persuade his sweetheart to defy her parents and make him happy. The Cramps get every line printed in any part of the world about any one of their ships. Dr. Seward Webb has everything about horses, and C. Oliver Iselin all about cup races. Mr. Iselin has already a very fine scrap book of Defender's exploits.

Von Blumer—"Well, old man, how did you like the Welsh rabbit I made you last night."

Kingley—"Can't tell yet. Just getting acquainted with it."—Life.

TATTOOED ROYALTY.

Distinguished People Who Have Been Decorated With the Needle.

From Harmsworth's Magazine.

Tattooing is just now the popular pastime of the leisured world. One of the best-known men in high European circles, the Grand Duke Alexis of Russia, is most elaborately tattooed. Prince and Princess Waldemar of Denmark, Queen Olga of Greece, King Oscar of Sweden, the Duke of York, the Grand Duke Constantine, Lady Randolph Churchill, with many others of royal and distinguished rank, have submitted themselves to the tickling but painless and albeit pleasant sensation afforded by the improved tattooing needle, which is nowadays worked on the simple plan, aided by the galvanic current, the genius of the artist supplying the rest of the operation. The Duke of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha, like his cousin, Alexis of Russia, is another elaborately tattooed man. Any one meeting the Duke of Newcastle, or the Earl of Portarlington, or Sir Edmund Lechmere in the street would hardly realize the fact that these gentlemen are proud wearers of tattoo marks—much so. The present fancy for being tattooed, according to Prof. Riley—than whom no artist has tattooed more distinguished people—mainly exists among men who have traveled much; while ladies have also taken a strong liking to this form of personal decoration, which, from a woman's point of view, is about as expensive as dress, but not so costly as good jewelry. In place of spending her spare time posing in front of a camera, or reclining her head in the dentist's chair, or placing herself resignedly in the hands of her coiffeur for want of something better to do, or for the purpose of passing her time in the "off" season, the lady about town now consents to be pricked by the tattoo artist's operating needle, and to have her forearm or shoulder adorned with a serpent holding its tail in its mouth—a symbol representing eternity.

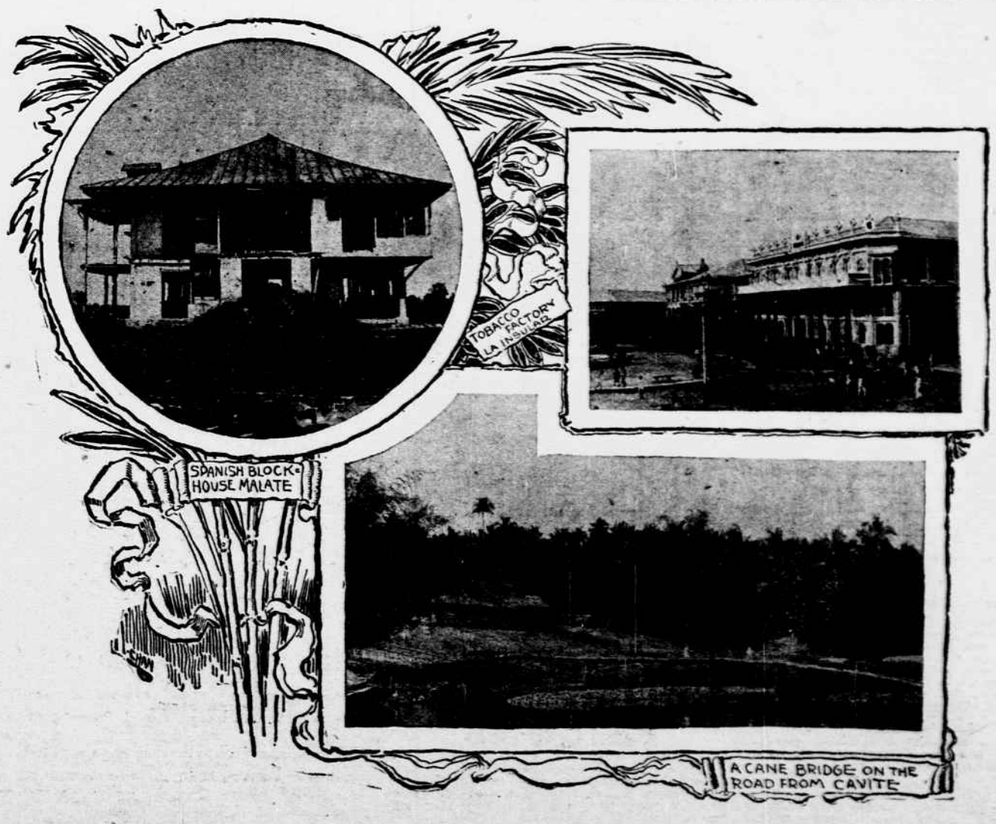
The skill of the tattoo artist, to be realized properly and fairly, must be seen in beautiful colors on a white skin — work which is amazing. The sketches he employs are made in various colored inks. His great skill is in the faithful reproduction of any symbol or picture desired by the sitter. These designs vary in size from a small fly or bee to that of an immense Chinese dragon occupying the whole space offered by the back or chest, or a huge snake many inches in thickness coiling round the body from the knees to the shoulders. Tattooing has its humorous side as well as its serious. A lover whose heart was once melted away in a soft, sweet, passionate love got the artist to imprint in indelible inks, over the region of his heart, a single heart of charming and delicate outline, colored, as it should be, in all the blushing tints, with the name of his loved one stamped thereon. Three years afterward he followed the artist to London, and, seeking him out, with face pallid, the light of his eye almost gone out, and looking utterly miserable and careworn, he requested the tattooer to imprint under that same symbol, in bold, big letters, the word "deceiver." A well-known army officer had tattooed over his heart the simple name of "Mary" with a lover's knot, but six months afterward the same man had the uncanny word "traitress" tattooed under it.

An English actress had a butterfly tattooed on her fair shoulder, the initials of her fiance, "F. V.," being placed underneath. Not long afterward she also came back and had the "F" converted into "E," and the "V" into "W," the letters reading "E. W." She eventually married "E. W.," and to this day "E. W." thinks his initials were the first tattooed on her arm. Colonials visiting England usually return home bearing on some part of their body an emblem of some national importance. This takes the shape of a portrait of the queen or the standard, the union jack, also, not being despised. A man may admire a favorite picture and desire a reproduction of it tattooed on his back or upon his chest. Prof. Riley is at the present time engaged "etching" on a man's back Landseer's famous picture, "Dignity and Impudence," and when finished it will measure 12 by 9 inches. The same artist is also outlining on the chest of a Scotch baron a copy of Constable's famous etching, "Mrs. Pelham," after Sir Joshua Reynolds, the original etching of which fetched, in June last, at Christie's, the record sum of £425.

While most people are pleased to go through the performance of being tattooed just for the fun of the thing, as it were, many, on the other hand, approach the tattooer with a serious object in view. Eschewing all fancy designs, they choose frequently their own name and address as an aid to identification in case of accident, or, as has been the case recently, a wife may induce her husband to have her name tattooed on his arm, as a guarantee of good faith.

An official connected with one of our leading railways has had tattooed around his arm, in snake fashion, a train going at full speed. The scene is laid at night. The shades of evening envelop the snorting locomotive and flying carriages, while the rays of light proceeding from the opened furnace of the locomotive are effectively shown lighting up the cars. There are lights, too, issuing from the carriages, showing how the passengers inside are passing away the time. Some of them are reading, some sleeping, some talking, some sullenly looking out of the windows. A darkened portion of the train is passing the signal box, and the dim light therefrom faintly lights up that part of the train. The picture is a perfect ideal of the tattooer's art and shows the great advance tattooing has made during recent years. Prof. Riley has never done anything more striking or effective, if perhaps we except the large snake he tattooed all around the body of a certain popular member of the royal family, which is an extremely life-like reptile. There are over 100,000 people in London alone who bear on some part of their anatomy some evidence of the tattooing needle.

The Longest Days.

From the Cincinnati Enquirer.

The following list shows the duration of the longest day in various places all over the world: New York has, so to say, the shortest longest day, which is about 15 hours long; while in Montreal it is 16. London and Bremen each bask in a 16½ hours' length of day, closely followed by Hamburg and Dantzig with 30 minutes more. The longest day in Stockholm last 18½ hours; but both St. Petersburg and Tobolsk, Siberia, go one better, with a day of exactly 19 hours—and their shortest, 5 hours. June 21 brings to Tornea, Finland, a summer day nearly 22 hours long—and Christmas day 2½ hours only. (How unfortunate are the children of Tornea!). The foregoing lengthy days, however, are easily left behind by Wardburg, Norway, which boasts of a day lasting without break from May 21 to July 22; but even this is surpassed by Spitzbergen, where—mirabile dictu!—the longest day is something like 3½ months.