

The sergeant looked at Ned. "It was a sort of scratching, like some one slipping down. And we all looked in the cupboard, and there was no one there." "The affair was most mysterious, as well as ghoulish. Eben wiped his wet forehead again and stared at the cupboard door. "A doctor ought to be sent for," said Ned. "What good can he do now?" moaned Minnie, with a sob. "He can tell us how she died, perhaps," Eben stared at him. "Was I drunk last night?" asked he. "Well, I had no idea you were, until you went to sleep with your head on the table." "I suppose I must have been," muttered the sergeant. "And yet—"

"Yes, we've got the door locked." "That's all right." Robert France followed the constable, and the crowd made way for them. In the club room the doctor was standing at the head of the table, on which the body of Harriet France lay, covered with a sheet. The sergeant and Minnie were no longer there. "Where is he? Where is the murderer?" asked France, casting an anxious and angry glance around the room. "Oh, never mind him now, Mr. France," said the doctor. "I want you to give me a little information now." "Anything to the world that I can, sir, to bring the man who killed my poor wife to justice." "And you can help us to that, I know," said the doctor quietly. "In the first place, where was the body lying when you came in? And what was the exact cause of your coming?" Robert France answered at once: "I heard a noise, a woman's shriek. I rushed out, came in here, and saw Sergeant Miles with his hand on my wife's mouth. They were on the floor. She gave another shriek when I came in, and I pulled him away. But my wife was dead." "You say she was not dead when you entered?" "She was all but dead. She must have been in that cupboard all night. In fact, we heard a noise when we were having supper, and we looked in. But she must have been lying under the things that were in there." The constable opened the door of the cupboard, and lifted a pile of curtains which were on top of the heap. The linen underneath was much disarranged, and the



AND NED WAS THE ONLY WITNESS.

whole pile sloped down toward the floor of the room. "You have made a mistake, Mr. France," remarked the doctor rather drily. "For I have examined the body of your wife, and I can prove that she has been dead twelve hours at least. The body is stiff in every part." A sudden change came over Robert France. It almost seemed that his jaw dropped. After a short pause he said surlily: "That is only your opinion." "It is more than that," said the doctor quietly. "Even Mr. Brown here," and he indicated the constable, "could tell that this woman had been dead many hours. That she was murdered, suffocated, in fact, before you came up here to supper." Robert looked up. Then he turned round sharply, and made for the door. "The sergeant! Where is he?" said he between his set teeth. "You will see him all in good time, Mr. France," said the constable, laying a strong hand on the landlord's shoulder. "In the meantime I'm sorry to say I've got to take you into custody on suspicion of murdering your wife." Robert France uttered a low sound, like a growl, but he did not speak again. Like a whipped round he passed out of his house, in the custody of the constable, between long rows of wondering, horror-struck spectators. People wondered what it meant, this sudden, sullen submission, without protest, without struggle. The fact was that he had seen, at one stroke, his carefully thought out story scattered like chaff in the wind. Like most criminals, he had forgotten something; and that thing was the tell-tale rigor mortis, which, having had time to become complete, proved it to have been absolutely impossible for the woman to have been killed during the three hours which Sergt. Miles had passed alone in the club room. And this suggestion once disposed of, there were innumerable other circumstances to prove that Sergt. Miles, not being the murderer, that person was Robert France. In the first place, there was the fact that he had sent all the servants about the place on different errands on the preceding afternoon. There was, therefore, the knowledge that he and his wife had been left in the inn together. He was known not to have left the house himself, while she had never been seen alive again. Bit by bit, before the trial came on, the story got known in all its horrors. How Robert France in a culminating fit of jealous, morbid rage, had strangled his wife as she was getting some linen out of the cupboard, stifling her cries under the curtains and cloths among which he held her down. How he had left the body in the cupboard, covered over, and had concocted the plot by which he hoped to throw suspicion upon the man he hated. How the gradual slipping of the body had made the noise which had obliged him to open the cupboard door, without, however, betraying the fact that the dead woman was concealed there. How, after he had drugged the sergeant's wine, and left him alone in the room, the body had slipped right down, bursting open the door, which France had taken care not to fasten again. How he had been on the watch for the least noise from the club room, and had rushed to the room on hearing the cry the sergeant uttered when he made the ghastly discovery that he was in the room with the dead body of Harriet France. At the trial itself came Minnie's evidence that it was her scream which had rebuffed through the house when she heard Eben's cry. Robert France was tried, condemned and executed within three months of the commission of his crime. And it was not until two years later, when the horror and the scandal had died down, that Sergeant Miles came down to carry away from the scene which kept alive such terrible memories, the little sister Minnie, who had believed in his innocence, and had danced the waltz and excitement of the false charge. And Ned Fothergill was the only witness, besides the clergyman and the clerk, of the marriage.

THE UP-TO-DATE FOOD.



Murphy (as the museum freak passes; "This must be one of them fellows that's been brought up on condensed food."

THE NEW DANCES.

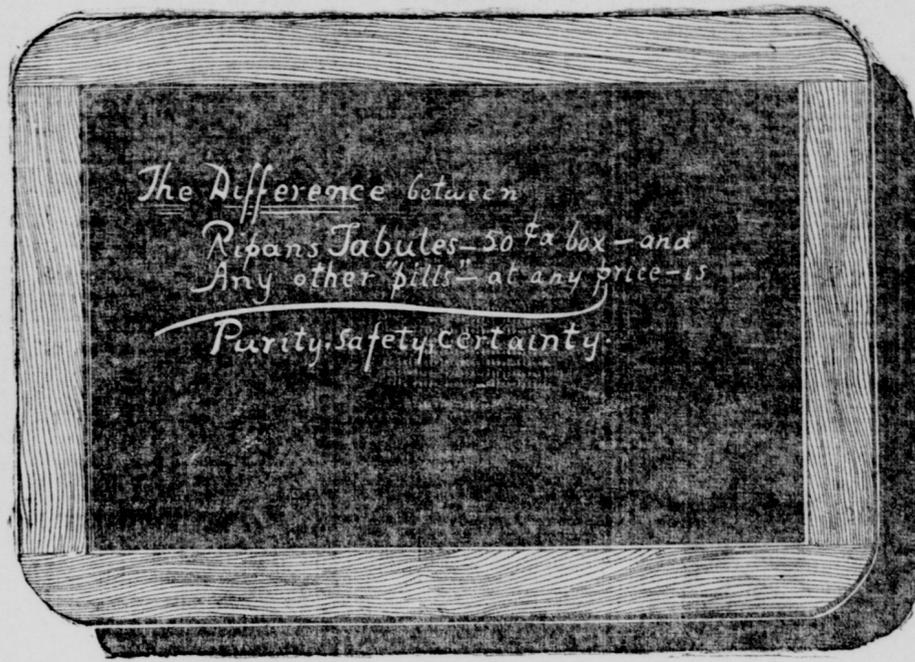
The Lancers Is Slightly Changed—Pretty German Figures. The two-step heads the list of even the new dances planned for the coming season. It masquerades under a new name, as the "tribly," but it is the same old waltz, in a favorite which every one enjoys. Another variation of the dance is the Yale two-step, where four walking steps are introduced. It is a trifle more dignified, but none the less a trifle more dignified. The new standard lancers omits the salute and is cut down to four figures. The first figure is danced four times. A new feature this year of the german is to change the music at every change of figure. The coach figure is a novelty which the debutantes and young beaux are diligently practicing. Three couples rise at the blast of a horn. They are joined by brightly colored ribbon reins and then dance twice about the room, being followed by as many couples as the top of a coach can carry. When six groups of this description, or less, are on the floor the music changes rapidly from two-step to waltz, polka and York, changes which the dancers must instantly follow. Each group must also keep together as it gayly whisks by the judges' stand. At the end of the figure a series of prize favors is awarded. They are given to the most graceful dancers, to those who dance in the best time and to those whose group has kept the best form. The favors pertain entirely to coaches. There are white whips, spurs, stirrups and little lanterns which are lighted and look gay and bright.

somebody in the neighborhood was burning rubber. "Hiram," said Editor Clugston, "see if you can find out where that horrible odor comes from." The foreman called out and sniffed the air. On returning he gave it as his decided opinion that some cook not far away had inadvertently burnt a beefsteak. "You are both right," said Editor Clugston, seizing his pen and beginning to write, his lofty brow aflame with the light of a sudden inspiration. The next number of the Spiketown Blizzard contained this item: "The frightful smell that permeated the atmosphere last Monday was caused by the accidental burning of one of those rubber steaks which the restaurant always supplies to its customers. S—Unless satisfactory arrangements are made at the business department of this office, this same item will appear in the next issue of the Blizzard, with the blank properly filled out."

A Perilous Cross-Examination. Boston Budget. It was a Tennessee Methodist class leader who had before him a six months probationer whom he was questioning for admission to all the privileges of the church. "Well, Sambo," said the class leader, "I hope you are prepared to live a Christian life in accordance with your profession. Have you stolen any chickens during the last six months?" "No, sah! I done stole no chickens." "Have you stolen any turkeys or pigs?" Sambo looked grieved. "No, sah!" "I am very glad to hear this good report," continued the class leader, "and I trust you will continue to live an honest, Christian life." After church Sambo hurried home with his wife, who had overheard the catechism. When they were fairly out of everybody's hearing he drew a long breath of relief and turned a self-approving glance to his better half. "Golly," he said, in a half-cautious whisper, "if he'd or said ducks I'd be'n a lost nigger, sah!"

Effective Electioneering. Washington City Star. "Well," said the Kentucky campaigner, "I have left absolutely nothing undone to win friends for our cause." "That's good," replied the candidate. "I have considered no personal sacrifice too great." "That's very kind of you." "I know you would appreciate it, so I did not hesitate. Why, sir, I have trodden everybody in the country. I even drank water with the Prohibitionist party—and he's going to be right with us."

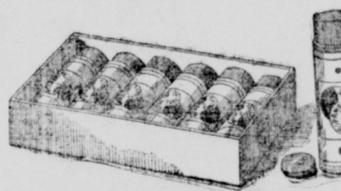
Autumn in California. Here Autumn is the looking-glass of Spring. No flaming leaves that hold the frost's cool fire. And show the young, untutored eye a blue that sees the woods ablaze, and the blue of azure distance—smoke, to prove the thing. No dead brown weeds afield to turn a lyre. And voice the mournful winds as they expire. The blue of sky the wild geese harrowing. I take me to my almanac and leave The green pine woods to those who have not seen Each leaf a flame to warm the chilly air. In this fair Sunshine Land should one's face be faded into ashes. Lazy run. Like boys at school grown weary of their fun. The silver burnished streams whereon The fish fall in shadow where the fish-hawk sees. A forest all in water colors done. Beneath the mellow sun no field of corn Waves with a million trembling blades of gold. Snowdrift the windy and complaining skies. Through these unfrosted woods no hunt-er's horn. Lends Music's story to the singing wind. Yet snowflakes seem now melting in my eye. —Lee Fairchild in the Overland.



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