Bradford Opinion.

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Watching.

He loitered up through the meadow,
His foot in the trailing swath;
He stooped where the keen scythe's blade had passed,
And plucked the aftermath.
And oh, love! and ah, love!
And what shall my sad heart say?
What bold prayer breathe by night, love,
It durst not breathe by day?

She sat by the open window,
Looking unto the west;
And the sun went down, and the stars came up
Beyond the gray hill's crest.
And oh, love! and ah, love!
And when will his footsteps fall?
The skies are empty and barren, love,
But God is over all!

A step on the garden walk,
A shadow under the elars,
And the moon's first gleam slides sudden through
The twilight's jealous bars.
And oh, love! and ah, love!
And open love to me!
My heart is knocking at thy door,
Ah! lift the latch and see!

Membranous Croup.

A SKETCH BY "MARK TWAIN."

"Well," said McWilliams, "to go back to where I was before I digressed to explain to you how that frightful and incurable disease, membranous croup, was ravaging the town and driving all mothers mad with terror, I called Mrs. McWilliams' attention to little Penelope, and said:

"Darling, I wouldn't let that child be chewing that pine stick if I were you."

"Precious, where's the harm in it?" said she, but at the same time preparing to take away the stick, for women cannot receive even the most palpably judicious suggestion without arguing it—that is, married women.

"Love, it is notorious that pine is the least nutritious wood that a child can eat."

My wife's hand paused, in the act of taking the stick, and returned it to her lap. She bridled perceptibly, and said:

"Hubby, you know better than that. You know you do. Doctors all say that the turpentine in pine wood is good for weak back and the kidneys."

"Ah! I was under a misapprehension. I did not know that the child's kidneys and spine were affected, and that the family physician had recommended"—

"Who said that the child's spine and kidneys were affected?"

"My love, you intimated it."

"The idea! I never intimated anything of the kind."

"Why, my dear, it hasn't been two minutes since you said"—

"Bother what I said! I don't care what I did say. There isn't any harm in the child's chewing a bit of pine stick if she wants to, and you know it perfectly well. And she shall chew it, too! So there, now!"

"Say no more, my dear. I now see the force of your reasoning, and I will go and order two or three cords of the best pine wood to-day. No child of mine shall want while I"—

"Oh, please go along to your office and let me have some peace. A body can never make the simplest remark but you must take it up and go to arguing and arguing and arguing, till you don't know what you are talking about, and you never do."

"Very well, it shall be as you say. But there is a want of logic in your last remark which"—

However, she was gone with a flourish before I could finish, and had taken the child with her. That night at dinner she confronted me with a face as white as a sheet.

"Oh, Mortimer, there's another! Little Georgie Gordon is taken."

"Membranous croup?"

"Membranous croup."

"Is there any hope for him?"

"None in the wide world. Oh, what is to become of us?"

By-and-bye our nurse brought in our Penelope to say good-night and offer the customary prayer at the mother's knee. In the midst of "Now I lay me down to sleep," she gave a slight cough. My wife fell back like one stricken with death. But the next moment she was up and running away with the activeness which terror inspires.

She commanded that the child's crib be removed from the nursery to our bedroom; and she went along to see the order executed. She took me with her, of course. We got matters arranged with speed. A cot bed was put in my wife's dressing-room for the nurse. But now Mrs. McWilliams said we were too far away from the other baby, and what if he were to have the symptoms in the night—and she blanched again, poor thing.

We then restored the crib and the nurse to the nursery, and put up a bed for ourselves in a room adjoining.

Presently, however, Mrs. McWilliams said, suppose the baby should catch it from Penelope? This thought struck a new panic to her heart, and the tribe of us couldn't get the crib out of the nursery again fast enough to satisfy my wife, though she assisted in her own person and well nigh pulled the crib to pieces in her frantic hurry.

We moved down stairs, but there was no place to stow the nurse, and Mrs. McWilliams said the nurse's experience would be an inestimable help. So we were turned, bag and baggage, to our own bedrooms once more, and felt a great gladness, like storm-buffeted birds that have found their nest again.

Mrs. McWilliams sped to the nursery to see how things were going on there. She was back in a moment with a new dread. She said:

"What can make the baby sleep so?"

I said:

"Why, my darling, baby always sleeps like a graven image."

"I know, I know; but there's something peculiar about his sleep now. He seems to breathe so regularly. Oh, this is dreadful!"

"But, my dear, he always breathes regularly."

"Oh, I know it, but there's something dreadful about it now. His nurse is too young and inexperienced. Maria shall stay there with her, and be on hand if anything happens."

"That is a good idea; but who will help you?"

"You can help me all I want. I wouldn't allow anybody to do anything but myself, anyhow, at such a time as this."

I said I would feel mean to lie abed and sleep, and leave her to watch and toil over our little patient all the weary night. But she reconciled me to it. So old Maria departed and took up her ancient quarters in the nursery.

Penelope coughed twice in her sleep.

"Oh, why don't the doctor come! Mortimer, this room is too warm. This room is certainly too warm. Turn off the register—quick!"

I shut it off, glancing at the thermometer at the same time, and wondering to myself if seventy was too warm for a sick child.

The coachman arrived from down town now with the news that our physician was ill and confined to his bed. Mrs. McWilliams turned a dead eye upon me, and said in a dead voice: "There is Providence in it. It is foreordained. He never was sick before. Never. We have not been living as we ought to live. Mortimer, time and time again I have told you so. Now you see the result. Our child will never get well. Be thankful if you can forgive yourself. I never can forgive myself."

I said, without intent to hurt, but with heedless choice of words, that I could not see that we had been living such an abandoned life.

"Mortimer! Do you want to bring the judgment upon the baby, too?"

Then she began to cry, but suddenly exclaimed:

"The doctor must have sent medicines!"

I said:

"Certainly; they are here. I was only waiting for you to give me a chance."

"Well, do give them to me! Don't you know that every moment is precious now! But what was the use in sending medicines when he knows that the disease is incurable!"

I said that while there was life there was hope.

"Hope! Mortimer, you know no more what you are talking about than the child unborn. If you would— As I live, the directions say give one teaspoonful once an hour! Once an hour—as if we had a whole year before us to save the child in! Mortimer, please hurry. Give the poor, perishing thing a tablespoonful, and try to be quick!"

"Why, my dear, a tablespoonful might"— "Don't drive me frantic! * * * There, there, there, my precious, my own; it's nasty, bitter stuff, but it's good for Nelly—good for mother's precious darling; and it will make her well. There, there, there; put the little head on mamma's breast, and go to sleep, and pretty soon— Oh, I know she can't live till morning! Mortimer, a tablespoonful every half hour will— Oh, the child needs belladonna, too; I know she does—and aconite. Get them, Mortimer. Now do let me have my way. You know nothing about these matters."

We now went to bed, placing the crib close to my wife's pillow. All this turmoil had worn upon me, and within two minutes I was something more than half asleep. Mrs. McWilliams roused me:

"Darling, is that register turned on?"

"No."

"I thought as much. Please turn it on at once. This room is cold."

I turned it on, and presently fell asleep again. I was aroused once more.

"Dearie, would you mind moving the crib to your side of the bed? It is nearer the register."

I moved it, but had a collision with the rug and woke up the child. I dozed off once more, while my wife quieted the sufferer. But in a little while these words came murmuring remotely through the fog of my drowsiness:

"Mortimer, if we only had some goose grease. Will you ring?"

I climbed drearily out, and stepped on a cat, which responded with a protest, and would have got a convincing kick for it if a chair had not got it instead.

"Now, Mortimer, why do you want to turn up the gas and wake up the child again?"

"Because I want to see how much I am hurt, Caroline."

"Well, look at the chair, too. I have no doubt it is ruined. Poor cat, suppose you had"—

"Now I am not going to suppose anything about the cat. It never would have occurred if Maria had been allowed to remain here and attend to these duties, which are in her line and are not in mine."

"Now, Mortimer, I should think you would be ashamed to make a remark like that. It is a pity if you cannot do the few little things that I ask of you at such an awful time as this, when our child"—

"There, there; I will do anything you want. But I can't raise anybody with this bell. They're all gone to bed. Where is the goose grease?"

"On the mantelpiece in the nursery. If you will step there and speak to Maria"—

I brought the goose grease and went to sleep again. Once more I was called.

"Mortimer, I so hate to disturb you, but the room is still too cold for me to try to apply this stuff. Would you mind lighting the fire? It is all ready to touch a match to."

I dragged myself out and lit the fire, and then sat down, disconsolate.

"Mortimer, don't sit there and catch your death of cold. Come to bed."

As I was stepping in, she said:

"But wait a moment. Please give the child some more of the medicine."

Which I did. It was a medicine which made a child more or less lively; so my wife made use of its waking interval to strip it and grease it all over with the goose oil. I was soon asleep once more, but once more I had to get up.

"Mortimer, I feel a draught. I feel it distinctly. There is nothing so bad for this disease as a draught. Please move the crib in front of the fire."

I did it and collided with the rug again, which I threw into the fire. Mrs. McWilliams sprang out of bed and rescued it, and we had some words. I had another trifling interval of sleep and then got up, by request, and constructed a flaxseed poultice. This was placed upon the child's breast and left there to do its healing work.

A wood fire is not a permanent thing. I got up every twenty minutes and renewed ours, and this gave Mrs. McWilliams an opportunity to shorten the times of giving the medicines by ten minutes, which was a great satisfaction to her. Now and then, between times, I reorganized the flaxseed poultices, and applied sinapisms and other blisters where unoccupied places could be found upon the child. Well, toward morning the wood gave out, and my wife wanted me to go down cellar and get some more. I said:

"My dear, it is a laborious job, and the child must be nearly warm enough, with her extra clothing. Now, mightn't we put on another layer of poultices and"—

I did not finish because I was interrupted. I lugged up wood from below for some little time, and then turned in and fell to snoring as only a man can whose soul is worn out. Last at broad daylight I felt a grip on my shoulder that brought me to my senses suddenly. My wife was glaring down on me and gasping. As soon as she could command her tongue she said:

"It is over! All over! The child's perspiring! What shall we do."

"Mercy, how you terrify me! I don't know what we ought to do. Maybe if we scraped her and put her in the draft again"—

"Oh, idiot! There is not a moment to lose. Go for the doctor. Go yourself. Tell him he must come, dead or alive."

I dragged that poor sick man from his bed and brought him. He looked at the child and said she was not dying. This was joy unspeakable to me, but it made my wife as if he had offered a personal affront. Then he said the child's cough was only caused by some trifling irritation or other in the throat. At this I thought my wife had a mind to show him the door. Now the doctor said he would make the child cough harder and dislodge the trouble. So he gave her something that sent her into a spasm of coughing, and presently up came a little wood splinter or so.

"This child has no membranous croup," said he. "She has been chewing a bit of pine shingle or something of the kind, and got some little slivers in her throat. They won't do her any hurt."

"No," said I. "I can well believe that. Indeed, the turpentine that is in them is very good for certain sorts of diseases that are peculiar to children. My wife will tell you so."

But she did not. She turned away in disdain, and left the room; and since that time there is one episode in our life which we never refer to. Hence the tide of our days flows by in deep and untroubled serenity.

Questions and Answers.

How can I made lime water? Answer.—Slake four ounces lime with a little distilled water, then add distilled water to make one gallon. Cover the vessel and set it aside for three hours. Pour off the clear liquor for use.

Is there any remedy for tender fingers? I am a printer, and my fingers get sore and the skin peels off. Answer.—Printers frequently burn paper on an iron surface, and rub the sore place with the resulting oil.

How can I prevent oil paintings from cracking? Answer.—Cracks occur in oil paintings when the colors were ground in oil containing impurity or otherwise unfit for the purpose. Linseed oil is the best, poppy oil the next; but purity is the essential quality of all vehicles for colors.

I am finishing wire work with paint mixed with varnish; it takes too long for it to dry hard. What will dry quickly and not break off easily? Answer.—Boil good linseed oil with enough litharge to make a stiff paint; add one part by weight of pigment to every ten parts of the litharge. Boil for three hours over a gentle fire.

How can I make a stain for wood to imitate mahogany? Answer.—A simple way of effecting the object is to brush the wood with aquafortis, and dry it at the fire. This is good for veined birch and beech. The latter may also be stained by putting two ounces dragon's blood into one quart rectified spirit; let the bottle stand in a warm place and shake it frequently; and when the gum is dissolved, the stain is fit for use.

Will you please inform me how I can restore edge tools, such as plane bits, chisels, etc., to their original temper, after they have gone through a fire? Answer.—Heat them to a cherry red, and quench them endwise in lukewarm clean water. Then brighten the surface with emery and reheat them slowly over a piece of heated iron until a brown color appears, then quench them in water.

Can you inform me how white wine or whisky vinegar is made? Answer.—Obtain a large cask, and about a foot above the bottom construct a false perforated bottom. Above this fill the cask with good, well burnt charcoal in coarse lumps, over which pour first a sufficient quantity of good vinegar to thoroughly moisten it. Let the whole stand for a short time, when it will be ready for the introduction of the alcoholic liquors. This should be introduced in small quantities at a time, and the apparatus kept in a moderately cool place to prevent too energetic an action. This method will give you a pure vinegar, which will suffer considerable dilution. Use a very small quantity of annatto as coloring matter.—*Scientific American.*

There Might Have Been.

A man in want of a load of wood visited one of the markets to make a choice. Finding a load that suited, he asked the owner if there was a cord on the wagon.

"I think there is," was the reply.

"Do you know that there is?"

"My son William loaded it up, and he said there was a cord."

"Well, what do you say?" asked the citizen.

"And my other son, John, helped William load it up, and he said there was a cord."

"Do you say so?"

"And my neighbor came along, and he said there was a cord."

"I don't believe there is."

"And my wife stood at the gate as I came away, and she said there was a cord," continued the farmer.

"There may be three-quarters," said the citizen.

"And as I came through the toll-gate the keeper said he'd eat it if there wasn't a cord and a half."

"He did?"

"And a policeman stopped me and wanted to know how much I asked for that cord and three-quarters of beautiful wood."

The citizen took it before the load could swell any more.—*Detroit Free Press.*

A child afflicted with diphtheria in Pittsfield, Mass., was poulticed with large Indian meal poultices which, after being used, were thrown out where a dog and a flock of hens fed on the meal of which the poultices had been made. Seventeen of the hens and the dog died, it is supposed from the poison absorbed into the poultice from the diseased throat. The child recovered.

The daughters of plumbers and coal dealers are not as much courted in society as they have been in previous seasons.

A LESSON TO A DEBTOR.

A Good Square Hit that was Well Deserved.

Says the Boston *Commercial Bulletin:* The following, with but slight variation, sufficient not to betray the identity of the parties, is the report of a recent actual interview; and the forcible truths expressed in the conclusion of the dialogue will doubtless be recognized as applicable to many similar cases of greater or lesser magnitude.

A business man in difficulties calls, with a long face, on one of his principal creditors, and says:

"Mr. Prompt, I find, owing to the pressure of the times, I shall be obliged to call a meeting of my creditors."

"Indeed," said Prompt, "then you cannot meet your liabilities."

Debtor—"I regret to say I cannot."

Prompt—"Well, let me see, how long have you been in business?"

Debtor—"About eight years."

Prompt—"How much capital did you have to start with?"

Debtor (proudly)—"I had only one thousand dollars, sir, and my knowledge of the business, in which I was salesman."

Prompt—"You were since married?"

Debtor—"Yes."

Prompt—"Wife any property?"

Debtor—"None at all; I have done everything by my own unaided exertions."

Prompt—"How much do you expect to be able to pay your creditors?"

Debtor—"Well, I think I could get out for twenty cents on a dollar."

Prompt—"How much would that leave you after you got your bankruptcy discharge?"

Debtor—"Well, if I could go right on with the old stock, I might realize a couple of thousand dollars, but the creditors couldn't do so much with it."

Prompt—"But how about your house in the suburbs? That goes in with the assets, I suppose."

Debtor—"Well, hardly. That's only worth six or seven thousand dollars, and I settled that on my wife two years ago."

Prompt—"H'm, hum! Let me see; what are your liabilities?"

Debtor—"I should say, at a rough calculation, twenty thousand dollars."

Prompt (indignantly)—"Why, confound it, sir, it is just such men as you that have been cheating and are cheating honest men either through your rascality or accursed ignorance. You haven't been solvent, according to your own confession, the whole eight years you've been in trade, I'll be bound. Here you acknowledge you started with only one thousand dollars of real capital; you have your family living eight years, saved out a $7,000 house, and after settling with your creditors will have double the capital you began with. Such men as you have no right to be in business for themselves, but should be the employees of those who have brains to guide them. I'll accept no proposition, and only wish creditors, instead of 'setting on their feet' such shams as you to compete with genuine business men, would send you back into the ranks where you belong."

A Hundred Years Ago.

A gentleman of the olden time, writing of the Maryland planter one hundred years ago, says: They shipped their own tobacco—brought to a landing in stout hogsheads, with a revolving axle driven through the middle, and dragged by a strong mule guided by a plantation hand, over what are still known as the rolling roads. In return they received not only all kinds of necessaries for their own consumption, but for supplying the lesser planters and their servants. Of provisions they never had any lack. They raised their own mutton and beef and pork; then there was venison to be had in the forest, wild ducks in abundance in their season, fish and oysters in the estuaries of the bay and in the rivers that flowed into it. They led a life of independence in a land of plenty; dwelt on their own estates, surrounded by their servants, and dispensed to all comers a lavish hospitality. Their chief pleasures were of the ruder sort. They had their horses and hounds, and hunted and fished; were fond of races and cock fighting; often drank freely, and sometimes gambled heavily. At Doughoregan manor saddle horses were regularly brought every summer morning and hitched under the trees in a picturesque, nervous group, and any one of the guests was free to take his choice, and gallop off over the hills either alone or with chosen companions. The custom is still kept up there. Ladies were among the boldest of riders. It was the only mode of quick journeying.

Turkish Honesty.

A little trait of Turkish honesty might be imitated: A gentleman wandering through the bazaars desired to buy an embroidered handkerchief of a Turkish shopkeeper. He asked the price. "Seventy-five piastres." "No," said the gentleman, aware that it is usual among all traders, whatever their creed, to ask at first more than the value; "that is too much; I will give you seventy;" and as the dealer seemed to assent he counted out the money. But great was his surprise when the heavy bearded Osmanl, gravely pushed back to him twenty piastres, observing: "This is more than the just price. It is always the custom here to bargain over a thing down to its fair value, and as fifty piastres is my fair price, these twenty belong to you."

A Large Increase.

It may be said that the population of England increased in the quarter of a century about twenty per cent.; that the people living in 1874 were, on an average, at least twice as well off as they were in 1851; that they drank in 1874 twice as much tea and sugar as they did in 1851, and forty per cent. more spirits, wine and beer; that they had saved twice as much and traveled nearly five times as much; that, taking the increase of population into account, serious crime had decreased by nearly seventy per cent., pauperism by more than twenty-five per cent., while primary education had become six times as general. These are striking symptoms of material and social progress.

That Rule.

A young woman who seems to be opposed to girls being taught to sew, writes as follows to the *Woman's Journal:* Some time since a gentleman of Ithaca said, in quite a company: "I mean to offer a prize for the best shirt made by the lady students of the university.' "If you do," I rejoined, impulsively, "I will offer an equal one for the best chemise made by a male student. It is a poor rule that won't work both ways."

MARCH, 1776.

An Eventful Month—The Beginning of the History of the United States.

The moon that rose full upon the night of March 4, 1776, saw the figure of destiny, wan with patriot vigils, stride up from the Cambridge meadows, mount to the crest of Dorchester heights, and from that holy spot stretch a strong hand of deliverance to the imprisoned town that slept below. It was the eve of the anniversary of the "Boston massacre," and the auspicious moment chosen to accomplish the final independence of the New England colonies. Rise, sharply defined from thy sisters of an all-glorious part, O night that first limned to the eye of prophecy the shadow of the Washington that was to be, and draw again before these reverent times thy memorable panorama! Behold in the town of Boston, a British army at nightfall given up, with scornful indifference to the power of the Yankee militia, to passing revels, desecrating the Old South church, perhaps, with a play, or the Province House with a masquerade; behold, in the harbor, Admiral Shuldham's fleet, riding drowsily at anchor; save for the sharp play of the batteries, replying with thoughtless voice to the American cannon at Cobble Hill, Lechmere's Point and Roxbury, Lord Howe's slumbers would be this night unbroken, for neither to soldier nor citizen is there consciousness of other danger than of a roof or two riddled in the thick of the firing. But look across the neck yonder, where the heavy frost lends a friendly mist to vail a shadowy something that produces no sound, yet seems possessed of motion!

Draw nearer, and you shall see first some eight hundred ragged Continentals marching to preoccupy the two extremities of Dorchester Heights; behind them, a force of twelve hundred more, equally quick with the spade or the rifle; last of all, a train of carts, drawn by oxen and laden with bundles of hay and other light material, such as make a fair cover for a redoubt. The sharp temper of the atmosphere lends exhilaration to the men, while the wind which blows from the west carries off from the town all sounds of footsteps, the rumbling of carts and the goading of the plodding cattle. We see the purpose of this hurried march when the fine deflects along the brow of the hill and General Thomas orders his men to throw up the redoubts. The scene is only martial in its consequences. Here the sentry walks his rounds to note the first sign of British wakefulness; there the walls of chandeliers, fascines and screwed hay rises steadily higher; to and fro the carts roll, and the barrels which they bring are filled with earth and stone, to be hurled on any assaulting party that may dare the slope; an adjacent orchard supplies trees for the construction of a strong abattis at the foot of the ridge; toward three o'clock a relief force arrives to complete the fortifications. The whole night is filled with the presence of Washington, and the dawn reveals him to the wondering villagers in the surrounding hamlets and the incredulous army in the town beneath, the predestined deliverer of his people. The histories detail the rest; how the British general, in the face of tempestuous weather and the memories of Bunker Hill, finally had not the heart to attempt the dislodgment of the Americans; how the latter, steadily advancing their lines, and only prevented from engaging the enemy in battle by the lack of ammunition, finally so completely invested the town that the British were forced to beat a precipitate retreat.

On the morning of the seventeenth they hastily embarked, and after a week's loitering in Nantasket road to take on water and repair their battered transports, set sail for Halifax, leaving behind them among other supplies two hundred and fifty pieces of cannon and seven times as much powder as their conquerors had altogether. Could the news of this humiliation have been flashed, as now, by cable to the Parliament, the madness and overweening confidence of the ministry in its power to humble the American rebels might have had effectual estoppel. But that was not to be, and when, on the twentieth, Washington entered Boston at the head of the New England soldiery, "approved by Heaven," as the resolutions of the Legislature voted nine days later, "revered by all good men, and dreaded by tyrants," the English king had finally hardened his heart against the colonies, and was already boasting of the speedy subjugation that was sure to be accomplished by his twenty thousand Hessian hirelings; and when, the following May, the news did reach England, the eloquent protests of the Duke of Manchester and the Marquis of Rockingham were powerless to stay his folly. History has no parallel for this achievement, so potent and enduring was its effect upon the fortunes of the colonies; so incommensurable with its cost in life and property, for the death-roll of the whole campaign is honored with but twenty names, and scarcely a building of any importance in Boston was destroyed in the siege. Released from the surveillance of an armed enemy, the New England colonies quietly but diligently set about establishing on a sure footing their necessary State and local governments, perfecting their coast defenses, accumulating the sinews of war, and during the months of immediate peace that ensued thoroughly preparing themselves for the state of independence to which all events combined to speed them. As for Washington, they deemed no honor too imposing for his merits, nor any confidence too weighty to be imposed within him, and in the darker hours, which latter even the great commander could not escape, the faith of New England remained to him inviolate.

Turning to the proceedings of the Congress for the month, we find them pervaded by an increasing sentiment of open and concerted resistance to the rule of the mother country; the leaven of such souls as the Adamses, Wythe, Henry and Lee had begun to work the inevitable inspiration of the whole Assembly. In the first days of March the colonies, to insure their more efficient defense, were constituted two military departments, the Potomac forming the division line, and six additional brigadier generals were commissioned. It was a matter of much greater difficulty to supply the means for meeting the expenses of the defense, and after the issue of four millions in bills, in addition to six millions already afloat, there still remained a grevious deficiency in the budget. Two committees, one of which included such notable financiers as Duane and Robert Morris, were successively appointed to raise the necessary supplies, and successively failed to accomplish their purpose, and, losing hope, a commissioner—one Silas Deane, who seems to have been wanting in those qualities most essential to his mission, was dispatched to France with authority to negotiate for the equipments of twenty-five thousand men, a hundred field pieces and ammunition in proportion, his instructions from the committee assigning as the reason of the selection of that country for the first application for assistance the fact that in the event of a total separation from Great Britain, France would be the power whose friendship it would be fittest to obtain and cultivate.

At the same time Congress had decided to send commissioners to Canada to foster a state of feeling similar to that pervading the colonies and especially to encourage the formation of a local government. John Adams mentions the commission in a letter to his wife, about this date, and dwells particularly on the important results anticipated from the good offices of the Rev. Carroll, the brother of Charles Carroll, of Carrollton, Md., who was to remove from the minds of the Canadian Catholics the fear of an anathema against American rebels; and, curiously enough, after speaking in the highest terms of the patriotism of the Carrolls, warns Mrs. Abigail to bear in mind the prejudices of the Puritans, and not to breathe it in New England. One clause in the official instructions issued by the Congress to the commissioners is significant as amounting almost to an actual declaration of independence, and it was not adopted without a vigorous debate. It was this: "You are to declare that it is our inclination that the people of Canada may set up such a form of government as will be most likely in their judgment to produce their happiness." But the commission proved a failure.

The news that Parliament had prohibited trade of every kind with the colonies and declared their ships and cargoes liable to confiscation, reached the Congress in the early part of the month, and on the sixteenth that body, sitting in committee of the whole, deliberated upon a remedy. Franklin was for extreme measures, and urged a declaration of war, while the most conservative delegates thought it wiser to take no action whatever. The discussion took a wide range and lasted two days, but on the eighteenth, against the votes of Pennsylvania and Maryland, resolutions were adopted authorizing privateers to cruise against the commerce of Great Britain, exclusive of Ireland and the West Indies. A still sharper debate sprang up on the twenty-second on the preamble, to which Wythe moved an amendment, definitely accusing the king himself as the cause of their oppression, in that he had "rejected their petitions with scorn and contempt." It was but a step from this declaration to that which formally severed the allegiance of the colonies forever, and its importance was at once recognized. Lee seconded the amendment, but the opposition was so strong that it went over for the day. On the twenty-third, however, it was triumphantly carried, to be followed the next month by what historians tell us was the first real act of independence, the abolition of the British custom house and the opening of our ports to the commerce of the world.

So important was the month. In it King George abandoned finally the thought of reconciliation, Washington won his first great victory, the Congress first definitely asserted the principle of colonial liberty, and France began to consider the wisdom of an American alliance. The child still clung to the name of mother, but the leading strings had been snapped forever.—*Philadelphia Times.*

UNITED STATES PUBLIC DEBT.

Reduction of $3,272,733 in February—Contraction in Bank Circulation in Eight Months About Sixteen Millions.

A Washington dispatch to the New York *Times* says:

The February debt statement shows a decrease in the public debt for the month of $3,272,733, and for eight months of $13,728,420. For the same eight months of last year the reduction was $5,772,252, or less than one-half of the amount of reduction during the eight months ending March 1st. The reduction for the last eight months was within seven hundred thousand dollars of the aggregate reduction for the last fiscal year. The statement that this amount of reduction has been made does not mean, of course, that the public indebtedness equal to that sum has been actually paid off and redeemed. It means that the Treasury has accumulated money enough to pay off that amount in the last eight months; in other words, the balance sheet shows that the government is nearly fourteen millions of dollars better off than eight months ago. The coin balance now in the treasury, after deducting $32,915,000 outstanding coin certificates, is $37,120,773; deducting from that the $14,000,000 in silver coin and bullion reported by the secretary, leaves $23,000,000 as the balance in gold coin. The coin balance now is about the same as last month, but if the excess in the reduction of the debt over January be added to this balance our financial condition is shown to be better by over one and one-half million dollars, than on Feb. 1. The currency balance is now over nine and one-half million dollars, a falling off from last month of nearly two and one-half millions. During the month there was a decrease of legal tenders to the amount of $329,748, and in fractional currency, $744,250. In the same time there were deposited by national banks to secure circulation bonds valued at $1,090,200, while the bonds withdrawn for circulation surrendered were $5,754,512, showing a contraction in national bank currency for the month of nearly four million dollars. The contraction in national bank circulation for the past eight months has been $17,624,115. In the same period the increase in greenbacks and fractional currency has been over one-quarter million dollars, leaving the net contraction in the circulating medium for the eight months about $16,000,000. The customs receipts for February were $12,937,835, and the internal revenue receipts, $8,253,238. Compared with January the customs receipts increased $1,859,961, while the internal revenue receipts fell off nearly six hundred thousand dollars. The aggregate receipts from these two sources for February show an increase over January of $1,280,000. The expenditures for the month, exclusive of interest on the public debt, were $12,219,421.

Pennsylvania court stenographers have to take this oath: "You solemnly swear that the testimony that you take in this case shall be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth." This would seem to do away entirely with the necessity of swearing witnesses.

Western Love.

A youth of Indiana, in love with a girl in Minnesota, addresses her in this beautiful strain:

I just come down from the buck-eye state—
some pleasure for to find a handsome
girl from minaplis just suited to my
mind.

Her roey cheeks and rolling eyes like arrows
pearced my brest and they called her
handsome clara the liley of the west.

I corted her for just three days, her love I
thought to gain to soon, to soon she
slited me which gave me grief and
pain.

she robbed me of my liberty and deprived me
of my rest but still I love my clara the
liley of the west.

MY DREAM.

I dreamp a dream the other night down by
yon shady grove I saw a chap of high
degree converging with my love.

he sung he sung so merryly while I was soar
oprest and he sung to lovely clara the
liley of the west.

I rushed up to my rival a dager in my hand
I tore him from my true love and boldly
bad him stand.

being mad to desperation my dagger pearced
his brest, and I was betrade by clara
the liley of the west.

Items of Interest.

Fortune is like a market, where many times, if you wait, the price will fall.

Lisbon, N. H., raises 100,000 bushels of potatoes a year, which are converted into starch.

The Legislature of Maine has determined to sell all the islands off the coast owned by the State.

A seam of fine hard coal, nine feet four inches in thickness, has been struck at a depth of five hundred feet at Nanaimo, British Columbia.

Rev. Brooke Herford, of England, says that what most impresses a foreigner visiting America is the half finished appearance of everything.

A recent marriage notice ends with the singular expression, probably added by a waggish friend: "May their future troubles be little ones."

A survey of all the large merchant steamships has been made by the British government, with the view to their use as a part of the royal navy in case of a foreign war.

A Portsmouth baby which recently died was mourned by a father and mother, two grandfathers, and two grandmothers, three great grandfathers, and three great grandmothers.

During the reign of the present czar Russia has gained 35,347 square miles of territory and 22,546,000 souls in population, and reduced the national debt by 50,000,000 roubles.

A purchaser of a riverside property asked the real estate agent if the river didn't sometimes overflow its banks. "Well," responded he, "it isn't one of those sickly streams that are always confined to beds."

Bad luck is a man with his hands in his pockets and his pipe in his mouth, looking on to see how it will come out. Good luck is a man of pluck with his sleeves rolled up and working to make it come out right.

The Farmers' club of the American Institute have asked Congress to make the subject of tree culture and economy a standing branch of study in agricultural colleges receiving aid or support from the government.

A Middletown compositor has calculated that in the course of a year's type setting the average compositor will put up more than 7,000,000 separate pieces, which, with their distribution, requires 15,000,000 motions of the hand.

By the German census, taken Dec. 1, it appears that the population of Berlin has increased since 1871 about 16.7 per cent.;