THE PLANET

SATURDAY, OCT 20 1900

A Smooth Swindle.

A prominent Barton county (Kan.) farmer was made the victim of a smooth, although by no means new, swindle recently, through which he was worked for $375. Several weeks ago a man claiming to be a real estate dealer approached the farmer with a proposition for the purchase of his land. An offer of $50 was paid down to bind the bargain, the "purchaser" giving a Carthage address on his departure. Some days afterward, relates the Kansas City Journal, another farmseeker came along and offered $65 an acre for the same land. Of course, the owner wanted to sell to the second man at the higher figure, although he had tied himself in a previous contract. So he wrote the "Carthage" dealer with reference to a cancellation of his contract, and after some dickering succeeded in persuading the latter to accept $400 in cash in lieu of the privilege of buying at the $50 rate. Then he was ready for the $65 man. But, strangely enough, he had disappeared, and so, it was shortly afterward discovered, had purchaser No. 1. Then the farmer began to appreciate that he had been swindled. He at once began a hot search for the artists who had separated him from his cash, but, of course, their apprehension, to say nothing of the recovery of any of the money, is well-nigh hopeless.

Ingenuity of a Criminal.

One of the most ingenious attempts at escape ever known was lately nipped in the bud by Warden Dowe, of the Utah state penitentiary. The convict who tried the plan is Clarence L. Maxwell, bank robber, horse thief, author and inventor, who is serving an 18-year sentence for the robbery of the Springfield bank in 1898. Maxwell took a piece of pipe an inch in diameter and eight inches long from the foot railing of his iron bed, bent the end to form a handle, filled this with lead. Then he rimmed out the barrel of the improvised pistol until it was smooth and drilled a touch-hole in the top. This is as far as he got when the weapon was discovered. He had planned a spring which would serve as a hammer and strike the head of a match, thus exploding the weapon. How he accomplished all this is a mystery. His powder was the heads of parlor matches ground fine and his bullets pieces of lead and iron. The guards tested some of the powder in a rifle and found it effective. It is supposed he intended to escape when he was being taken into court next month to testify in a case.

Working in an unfrequented part of Washington, or out in the country in Maryland, or at the various experiment stations which are usually connected with agricultural colleges are about 3,000 people. Of the 2,000 in Washington about one-half are scientific men. There are two large bureaus, 22 divisions, offices or surveys. Of these seven are administrative, eight technical and seven are purely scientific. To these must be added the offices of the weather bureau, which include 154 observer stations and 52 stations along the coast and on the great lakes. The bureau of animal industry has 152 technical stations engaged in meat inspection and quarantine work, and three labratories where the diseases of animals and their causes are investigated.

John Vogel, a saloon-keeper of New Albany, Ind., had the reputation of being vastly methodical in all his actions. He was taken sick a few days ago and was informed that he had only a few hours to live. Mr. Vogel got out of bed quickly, went to the telephone and called up a friend, to whom he gave most minute instructions as to the coming funeral. Then he called up his bartender and gave similar complete directions regarding his business affairs. All this having been attended to, he went to bed again and was dead in 40 minutes.

Doctors' and Lawyers' Bills.

This is one of the periods of the year at which bills assume a reality which in the eyes of most people they do not possess at other times. Perhaps that is the reason which has prompted a correspondent to write on the subject of doctors' bills. He complains that medical men are looked upon as well-nigh infallible, and that no doubt is why we accept in their case that which we would strongly criticise in the case of others. A doctor's bills runs something like this: "January to June, attending Mr. Jones and family, £15 10s." There are no items and no means of checking the doctor's visits, and the recipient, after grumbling a little to himself or more often to his family, pays in the dark. But for some reason or other it is quite different with the lawyers. From them is demanded a very full and detailed account of the work done, and no client has yet complained of a want of alacrity on a lawyer's part in complying with this demand. There is reason in our correspondent's complaint. Many doctors do send their accounts with every visit set out in full, but they are in a minority. The majority content themselves with the formula given by our correspondent. There seems no reason why a full statement should not be made. If one profession can do it, surely the other can without loss of dignity. After all, most of us like to know what we are paying for, and though we have no doubt that all is right, and that it is our want of memory which makes us fancy that we could never have been as ill as all that, yet detailed accounts would add to the confidence existing between the medical man and his patient.

Supervisor Tom B. Smith, of Ursa, Ill., according to the Quincy Herald, has something to report that may prove of interest to farmers and perhaps everybody else. He had 40 acres of his farm in wheat, and when it looked as if the Hessian fly had ruined it he turned the tract over to his sheep for pasture. They nibbled it down until it looked as if no wheat was left. When the sheep were taken out the grain took fresh hold and duly came to a head. Now the fortunate supervisor has just finished thrashing the yield of 40 acres, and finds himself in possession of 1,000 bushels of as pretty wheat as was ever raised in the county. He says it's just like finding it. He believes that the flies were destroyed by the sheep and the roots then took fresh hold.

Chicago is congratulating itself—and with good reason—on the steady improvement in the health of its inhabitants. Records kept by the board of health show a constant decrease in the death rate during the last 20 years, particularly among children. Out of every 1,000 deaths during the first quarter of this 20-year period, 522 were those of children under five years of age. During the last quarter the number has been only 338. The gain is attributed to the diligence of the board of health in spreading a knowledge among the poorer people of the best way of feeding infants during hot weather, and to the establishment of day nurseries, sterilized milk depots, floating hospitals and other admirable charities.

Dangers on the battlefield are not the only perils federal troops are called upon to face. Those at Fort Snelling, Minn., had a short-breathing time of it a few nights ago during a violent thunder storm. While lightning was doing its most terrifying stunts one of the soldiers asked what would become of them all if a bolt should strike the 22,000 pounds of powder stored in the fort. Just then there was a terrifying crash and half a dozen of the men saw the ground torn up less than 15 feet from the mass of powder. Everybody cowered for an instant and it was some time before anyone breathed freely.

For months past one Bruce Benner has been coining money by exhibiting in various parts of the sunflower state a "feathered dog." An unbelieving reporter went to view the alleged freak. He slyly pulled half a dozen feathers from the dog's back, but the animal never winced. Then it was discovered that the dog had been covered from head to tail with a tight-fitting coat of Canton flannel on which pigeon feathers had been so skillfully sewn as to seem natural. Benner made his escape.

Left-handed parties have been amusing some of the Chicago stay-at-homes during the recent hot season. The invitations written out with the left hand and the host greets with the left hand instead of the right hand. The guests must draw pictures or write with their left hands and prizes are given for the best and worst efforts.

In Ohio they have revived a half-forgotten law against keeping native song birds in confinement. In one month 28 persons have been arrested in Cincinnati for this offense, and thousands of birds have been set free.

Referring to the shirtwaist men, they broil not when they go out to take a spin, and Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

In Campaign Times.

They sang long ago in dull accents of woe
A delicate dirge of "The Man with the Hoe."
But now when political strife stirs the throng
It's the man with the barrel who most moves the throng.
—Washington Star.

In Demand.

"Do you expect to be as much in demand among your constituents as usual?" asked the friend.

"Yes," answered Senator Sorghum. "I'm in all kinds of demand. Some of my constituents want to reelect me and some of them want to have me indicted by the grand jury."—Washington Star.

Ode to the Mosquito.

Musician of the midnight hour,
Perdition seize thy cruel power;
Oft has thy buzzing minstrelsy,
'Most to destruction driven me,
As thou didst wildly hover near,
Buzzing about my slumbering ear;
Oh, would that I might end it all
By smashing thee against the wall.
—Chicago Daily News.

A JUVENILE LAMENT.

Great-Grandpa — What's wrong, Mary?

Little Mary Morse (remorsefully)—Every sing goes wrong all time. Wish't I had my whole life to live over agin!—Philadelphia Press.

Discreet Young Gentleman.

Governess—Who was the wisest man?

Little Dick—Solomon.

Governess—Correct; name the wisest woman.

Little Dick (after meditation)—Well, if I say you, ma will get angry; and if I say ma, you will get so.—Tit-Bits.

Mean Thing.

Rosalie—Have you chosen any of your bridesmaids yet?

May—Yes, Fanny Lyon.

Rosalie—Why, I thought you hated her.

May—No, not exactly; but the bridesmaids are to wear yellow, and you can't imagine how that will go with Fanny's complexion.—N. Y. World.

Beating the Record.

Brown—That is a beautiful medal Smith has.

Jones—Yes; that's for beating the bicycle record.

Brown—What is his record?

Jones—Ran over 17 men in a week.—Tit-Bits.

WOULD NOT REPEAT HIMSELF.

Miss Sorryforit—Can you remember; it was on this very spot you proposed to me last year and I rejected you. Now I might—

Mr. Offit (anticipating her)—Aw, thanks. I never give encores.—Ally Sloper.

Stating the Case Correctly.

"You took me for better or for worse!" cried Henry Peck.

"Oh, no, my dear," replied Mrs. Peck, sweetly. "You took me for better, and I took you for worse."—Tit-Bits.

Good News for the Unemployed.

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