will find nothing. I can offer but one suggestion. That is either to blow out your brains or wed an American heiress."

"The first suggestion is concise and not devoid of your usual bad taste. The second is impossible."

"How impossible?"

De Lacaze shrugged his shoulders. They were narrow and a trifle bent. Then he raised his meager eyebrows suggestively.

"I have no acquaintance with American heiresses. If I had, who of them would be desirous of exchanging her millions for my title?"

"But that is what they are doing every day," remarked the duke, rising and beginning to pace the narrow room energetically. "Look at the past ten years' record. American girls give youth, their birthright, to marry the man of their heart, their money and their future to secure a title. Why not you as well as ——?" He mentioned the names of several well known French and Italian noblemen who had in this spirited fashion redressed their attenuated fortunes, thus altering their future into an established and roseate surety instead of a dark descent into the ignominy its projectors had done their best to attain.

"Listen," urged the duke. "I have a friend, a dramatic critic on the Eclair, a bright specimen of nineteenth century methods, who has analyzed the present situation and names it simple justice, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, so to speak." The duke was unaware that he was quoting from the Scriptures. He was merely repeating what he considered a clever saying of his friend Desmoulins. "Desmoulins knows to a die every American heiress in Paris," he continued. "He was telling me all their names yesterday at the Cercle—read them out of a book, figurez-vous—and has sent already to New York to an agency there, Brown's agency, I think it is called, where any one can make a calculation of the dot the daughter may expect from summing up her papa's possessions. It is as easy as A B C. Come with me. We will see Desmoulins. It is the hour for breakfast. We will meet him at Durand's."

"Done," said Lacaze.

He seized his hat and cane, walked briskly toward the restaurant, which faces the classical facade of the Madeleine, and found Desmoulins, a type of the modern boulevardier, a man some 30 years of age, with merry, laughing eyes, thick lips and a shifting expression as little to be trusted as it was undefinable.

In a few moments the subject was opened and discussed.

Desmoulins therewith drew out his little book from his pocket and began to turn the leaves, accompanying his act with a running fire of adjectives, side remarks, darts pithy and pertinent toward De Lacaze and amused glances in the direction of the duke, who was lazily discussing some hors d'œuvres while consulting the wine list.

"H'm," said Desmoulins, "here is just our affair. On the Avenue Montaigne, No. 53, in a magnificent apartment, dwells a ravissante Americaine. Arrived one year ago. Complexion blond, like white lace over pink silk," this last with a wink at the duke, who, broadly amused, was listening attentively, and a side glance at De Lacaze, who, scowling heavily, had bent his muddy eyes upon the floor.

"The young lady is just of age. Having pursued her studies at home, she comes abroad to accomplish herself in music. She is at present a pupil of Purrini, the great Purrini."

"H'm," interrupted De Lacaze, still scowling. "The most arrant humbug of the age. I knew him when he was starving in Marseilles. His father was a pork butcher, and his mother was a washerwoman."

Desmoulins smiled delightedly. "Exactly," said he. "That goes to prove that the young woman in question, who is traveling with her aunt and little sister, is no more capable of understanding the true inwardness of Life with a capital L than nous autres Francais can comprehend this little Americaine's mad desertion of her own country, so rife, we are informed, with opportunities for development and money making, neglecting it for ours, which her countrymen, also gratuitously, inform us to be old fashioned and out of date."

"Finish with your superfluous remarks," commanded De Lacaze furiously, "and get to business. What is her father's fortune in figures?"

"As yet, monsieur, I am unable to afford you that information au juste. But I am positive I can obtain it in a few days. I have at present a cousin in New York"—Desmoulins omitted to state that the aforesaid cousin was pursuing the modest calling of lifting trunks in a large caravansary on lower Fifth avenue—"who weekly forwards me a package containing such information. I will be able to give monsieur his facts within ten days. The young woman's father is a justice of the supreme court and enjoys a modest fortune. The young woman's mother is immensely wealthy and is notably ambitious. Indeed it is whispered that she has been said to have stated openly she was desirous her daughter should form an alliance with a noble French house."

"And where is she to be met with, this paragon of beauty, innocence and wherewithal?" De Lacaze had drawn himself up and was buttoning his shabby coat over his now well filled stomach. The wine and food had given substance to his fainting courage. Hope rushed into his veins. He looked as though once more there was a future ahead of him which promised almost forgotten prosperity.

"At the pension where I live," whispered Desmoulins, "there is a little girl named Constance Brilla, who is studying for the operatic stage. She told me of her friend quite artlessly. I listened just as artlessly. Then I made my calculations. Tonight there is a ball at the pension. We are requested each of us to invite our friends. You will come as my friend, and I will present you to Miss Priscilla Delno, the friend of Miss Brilla."

"Done," agreed De Lacaze.

"Softly, softly," murmured Desmoulins, his fine smile suddenly degenerating into a diabolical grin. "The agreement must be drawn up and signed, monsieur."

"What agreement?"

"An agreement that if monsieur succeeds he will pay into my hands the sum of 50,000 francs."

"And if I fail?"

"There is no such word as fail."

"Would it not be as well, De Lacaze," drawled the duke, who had been a cynical onlooker at this remarkable transaction and who was now smiling and rubbing his palms together delightedly—"would it not be as well to insert a clause in that little agreement—the clause that you refund me also my dues when the transaction is carried out?"

De Lacaze scowled fiercely. Then he lifted himself from the leather seat upon which he had lounged for the past half hour. In his face lurked no evidence of shame. It was indomitably resolved.

"My friends," he said ironically, "follow me to my office. We will make a note of this transaction, and in due time your appetites shall be appeased to their complete satisfaction."

CHAPTER V.

The Pension Picaud, with its stale, bouillon scented corridors, narrow and dark, its musty salon, its slippery parquet floors and ornaments under glass, its tiny piano rented by the month at 10 francs and its bedrooms whose windows overlooked dingy courts black as Erebus, roofed, among its other boarders, three maiden ladies who were known to their long suffering if merciless fellow boarders as "the World, the Flesh and the Devil."

Six years before the Misses Bigbee had come to Paris from Bangor, Me., and had elected to throw in their prejudice with the hard lines of their compatriots who frequent foreign shores for culture and learning and neglect personal adornment, home ordinances and

"What is her father's fortune in figures?"

individual dignity in the process, for between lights they lend their tongues to the discussion of unworthy littleness concerning their neighbors' affairs, thus exemplifying unconsciously that strange anomaly, so often met with in foreign pensions, of the weary physical degeneration rather than amelioration under an unwisely administered treatment of art too strenuously absorbed, plus economy of congenial company too sternly ignored.

Sophronia Bigbee was called the World. She was a busy, perpetually occupied little spinster, who knew to a dot every omnibus line in Paris, concerning which she never hesitated exhaustively to enlighten newcomers, willing or unwilling. She had also mastered the difficult if insignificant questions of when and how to administer fees, what to see and how to see it. She spent her evenings, after having poured out a record of the day's doings at table, recounting them to the boarders, who frequented the dingy salon in order to economize in light and fire in their own bedrooms, scouring the newspapers for the free exhibitions to be opened to the public the following day, and usually retired early, so as to rise with the lark for the forthcoming campaign.

Miss Catherine Bigbee, whose pseudonym was the Flesh, was a superlatively corpulent personage, carrying a gentle dignity in the wag of her good natured head, which head was surmounted by a frontispiece which, its owner fondly believed, so closely resembled nature's hirsute adornment that nobody suspected its counterfeit presentment's undeniable infidelity to any hair in color or texture ever fashioned before or since, happily, on land or sea. Her pale eyes were placid and furtive. Her plump hands were invariably folded over that portion of her anatomy which was presumed to contain her digestive organs. Her tongue was a mild echo of her more active sister's peregrinations—a course of things which never failed to annoy Miss Sophronia to a very perceptible extent. Miss Sophronia and Miss Catherine, however, were tolerably good friends, whereas the third sister, well named the Devil, was their proclaimed backbiter and enemy, to the intense amusement of every member of the pension and the devil's own unmitigated satisfaction.

Miss Penelope Bigbee, in Bangor, Me., some 30 years before, had been known as "the beautiful Miss Bigbee." Then tall and slender, she was now skinny and spare. Then fine featured and delicate, she was now the epitome of a knife blade ancestry as to physiognomy. Her countenance, too, was impregnated with a contemptuous sneer, which, in her palmy days, had been designated as carrying the indelible impress of the Bigbee pride.

Today all that remained of that aforesaid pride was a pitiful record of incarnate spitefulness, which never lost an opportunity to flash forth from Miss Penelope's lips at the smallest provocation, cutting like a two edged sword both ways as it marched on its triumphant way. She had a large following of persons who had not the courage of their convictions, but who took every auspicious occasion to rejoice openly in a person who had the courage of theirs and her own. They regarded Miss Penelope's utterances as proof of rare strength of character in telling the truth, of undeniable perspicacity in rooting out and exposing fraud, and they laughed shrilly over her so called witticisms, which, had her followers been wise enough to discern it, were very inadequate attempts at that sort of accomplishment indeed.

Mme. Picaud was the widow of a diplomat. At least so she advertised herself in the newspapers in the columns which were most likely to fall under the eyes of gullible foreigners in search of a French family which combined with the comforts of home the discomforts of a foreign language radically administered in allopathic doses at the hours of breakfast and dinner.

Mme. Picaud wisely refrained from mentioning in what her defunct partner had been diplomatic, but nobody ever dared to doubt that M. Picaud had once existed in that capacity if only from the marvelous talent his widow displayed in her emulative policy. Having made his mark, he had gone out, leaving his widow to languish under the shadow of his greatness, her sole visible inheritance the aforesaid diplomacy.

The butcher could have told of it, but he did not. The baker might have done so, but being wise in his generation he refrained. Once a recalcitrant foreigner, struggling frantically with a strange tongue, was caught gossiping, whereupon Mme. Picaud swooped down upon him—this was whispered in the pension with bated breath—like a vulture upon carrion and bore him off to the juge de paix, who "forced the wretched creature to pay 200 francs, my dear, for his impudence and go without his trunks"—until Mme. Picaud had handed them over silently after a pertinent visit from the American vice consul.

This goes to show that it was pretty generally considered safer to bear with Mme. Picaud's diplomacy. It consisted of meager fires for mellow prices, bad wine for good money, inferior candles in return for honest gold, meat which was evidently as fresh as paint as well as tougher than sole leather, and vegetables which had long ago seen their best days.

Perhaps, therefore, the little pension was more to be pitied than blamed for having deteriorated into a gossip caldron instead of a mere innocent lodging for man and beast, a scandal bureau instead of a registry office.

Thursday night was ball night. That evening the pension rejected its dingy weekday curtains, to replace them with stiffly starched epitomes of the washerwoman's art; a frotteur came in shirt sleeves and felt slippers to polish the freshly waxed parquet floors, one of the boarders played the role of the visiting pianist who hammered out a mixture of waltzes and polkas according to orders, in return for innumerable

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

On a parade ground at Calcutta are several adjutants, or argalas. These birds, which belong to the stork tribe, walk up and down the ground, and they look so much like soldiers that at a distance strangers often mistake them for grenadiers.

One Definition.

"What is your idea of a political economist?"

"Well," replied Senator Sorghum reflectively, "there's lots of different kinds. But my idea of the genuine article is the man who manages to put by enough while he has an office to pay the expense of getting it for another term."—Washington Star.

Papa's Business.

"What does your father do, little girl?" asked the new teacher.

"He is a conflagration ejector," said the little girl from Boston.

"A what?"

"He puts fires out."—Philadelphia North American.

Goose on Friday.

"You never heard about the time that Judge Egan gave that prince of birds, the goose, a new place in natural history, I suppose?" said M. W. Fitzgerald to the Philistine.

"Well, a couple of years ago Judge Egan and Tom Conroy went over to lunch togetner one noon. 'What'll you have?' asked the judge.

"'It's Friday,' said Tom. 'Give me some fish.'

"Judge Egan let his eye wander down the bill of fare. He saw that there was goose on the bill and the soul of him hungered for goose. He framed up a decision to make the punishment fit the crime.

"'Goose,' said he. 'A goose is a bird that swims in the water. That's clear enough. Waiter, bring me some goose!'"—St. Paul Globe.

A Distressing Outlook.

A little Cleveland girl was greatly worried by the misfortune of a favorite playmate. The latter injured her knee by a fall, and for a time it was feared she might lose the limb. Happily this contingency was avoided, and in time the sufferer completely recovered. But when the outlook was dark indeed the sympathetic girl burst in on her mamma one day with the following excited query:

"Oh, mamma, did you know it was Bella's vaccination leg that was hurted?"

No, mamma didn't know it.

"Well, it is," cried the little sympathizer, "and, oh, mamma, just think, if they cut off her leg she'll have to be vaccinated all over again!"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Laughed Away the Danger.

Ben Cable of Illinois tells of an experience of his in midocean. The day was foggy, and most of the passengers were below listening to two evangelists who were holding a particularly fervid gospel meeting in the saloon. Suddenly and without the slightest warning there was a terrific crash and the engines stopped. Every one rushed on deck. The steamer had run into an iceberg.

Nobody knew what damage had been done, and everybody was ready to fly into a panic. The boats were lowered, and then for the first time the two evangelists, who had been forgotten in the saloon, appeared on deck. They wore their overcoats and their hats and they carried rugs and handbags. They elbowed their way rudely to the rail, with the evident intent of securing for themselves first places in the boat. It was just at a time when a breath would have sent the passengers panic stricken into the boats.

The sight of the two evangelists was about to undo the work of cool headed officers, when a pert little cockney stepped up to the gentlemen with the rugs and handbags.

"Beg pardon," said he, tipping his cap, "'ave a cab, sir?"

And in the general laugh the danger of panic was averted.—Washington Post.

The Horses of Manila.

Among the first things to impress a stranger are the horses. Descended from horses brought from Mexico, they have become much smaller, while they are also much more shapely. In fact, I have never seen a better looking breed. There is nothing of the pony in their shape, though in size they range between 48 and 52 inches. At first it looked absurd to see them ridden by big men whose stirrups hung down to the horses' knees, but I soon found out that they easily carried a rider weighing 200 pounds. The foreigners have a jockey club, which holds two meetings a year at the beautiful turf track at Santa Mesa. To avoid sharp practice members of the club only are eligible to ride. This necessitates a scale of weights starting at 132 pounds and rising to 154 pounds. It demonstrates the speed and strength of these miniature horses that a mile has been run in 2:10 by a pony carrying 150 pounds. Only stallions are used. Mares cannot even be brought into the city. Nobody walks; everybody rides, and on any special fiesta thousands of carriages fill the streets. I doubt if there is a city in the world that can turn out half the number of private vehicles in proportion to the population.

Faithful Unto Death.

On the point of courage we have not yet seen in print a very notable instance that is current in service circles. It relates to one of the numerous heroic but useless struggles on the northwest frontier of India when our men were sent forward to carry positions that had to be relinquished as soon as occupied. When the men were retiring, harassed by the fire of the hillsmen and bewildered by the growing darkness, a party of 13 went astray and found themselves in a position where resistance and retreat were alike hopeless. They were exposed without protection and were shot down one by one.

When their comrades retook the valley and discovered the bodies, they discovered also the evidences of a rare act of courage, devotion and cool judgment. Knowing that their end had come, and, knowing further that every Lee-Metford rifle that fell into the hands of the Afridis meant the loss of many English lives, the men had extracted the breech locks from the rifles and hurled them down the ravine, so that the rifles when taken should be useless to their captors.—London Saturday Review.

The Nagur and the Fiddle.

Here is a story that the late Frederick Douglass used to tell about himself, says the Buffalo Express. Once when he was in Dublin he felt very lonesome. He was wandering about the streets when he was attracted by two violins in the window of a secondhand dealer. Frederick entered and asked the price of one of the instruments.

"Five shillings, sor," said the Irish dealer.

Frederick tuned the violin and began to play "Rocky Road to Dublin." Soon the proprietor's wife heard the music and entered the rear door. Then Frederick started in on "The Irish Washerwoman," and the couple began to dance for dear life. When the music and dancing stopped, Frederick tendered the dealer 5 shillings, but his performance on the violin had greatly enhanced its value in the mind of the storekeeper, and as he hurried away to a place of security he exclaimed:

"If a black nagur can git sich chunes out of that fiddle, I'll never sell it at any price, begorrah!"

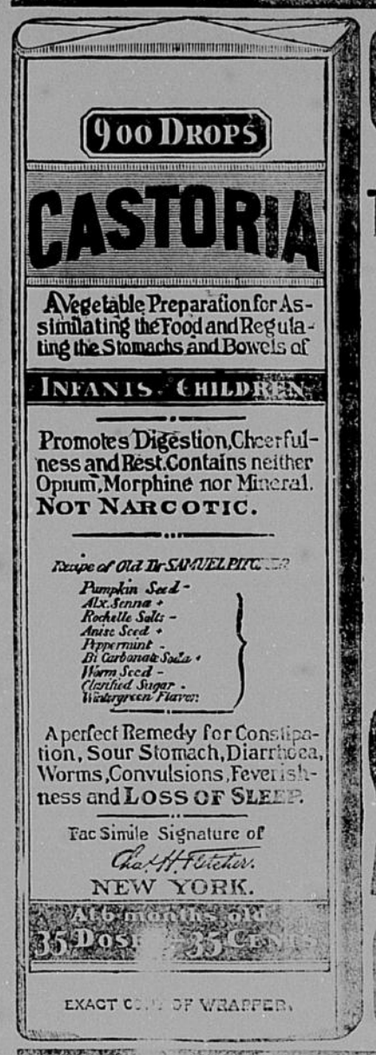
A Wonderful Time Divider.

The new pendulum chronoscope is said to be the most wonderful timing instrument in the world. It measures accurately down to the one-thousandth part of a second. It can be used with the quickness of a stop watch, and neither electrician nor mathematician is needed to operate the instrument, which is mechanical, with simple electrical attachments. The speed of a cannon ball can be determined by the new timer, and it will tell the lapse of time between the firing of a revolver and the starting of a runner, or determine how long it takes a boxer to deliver a blow.

Where She Got Them.

"But," said the inquisitive bachelor after the baby had been carefully placed in his arms, "where does she get her blue eyes? Yours are dark and so are her papa's."

"Oh," the fond young mother explained, "she inherits them from my side of the family. My brother Will's wife has just such eyes exactly."—Cleveland Leader



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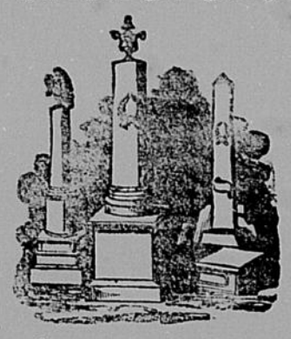

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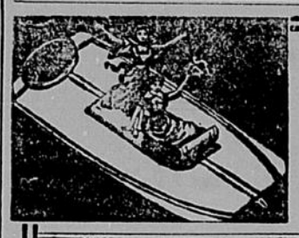

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