Over the Hills.

Over the crests of the hills that lie
Veiled in a distant blue,
In the mysterious By and By,
What will there be to do?
What will a boy, from ball and kite
Called by the deeds that wait,
Find when he strides like an ardent knight
Through the horizon's gate?

Marvelous ventures, and hazards rare,
Bidding a master hand?
Country and city and sky more fair,
Forming a wondrous land?
Narrow the limits that hedge to-day—
Mother and school and home,
Over the borders and far away
Eager the lad to roam.

Over the hilltops fame is won;
Cities and towns stretch far
Noble achievements by men are done;
Glory and wealth there are.
But we who have seen the land and sea,
Wide plains and mountains tall,
Gladly would turn us again, for we
At home might have found it all.
—Edwin L. Sabin.

ON THE CATTLESHIP

The afternoon before the cattle-steamer Earldorman sailed for Liverpool, Clyde Amidown and Arthur Cranston sat talking earnestly in the writing-room of a Portland hotel. Amidown, from New York, had never been obliged to earn a single dollar of the generous number at his command; Cranston, a native of Kansas, had never spent a cent that had not cost him effort of brain or muscle. Despite this difference, the two were close friends. They had just graduated from the same college, and were off that summer for a three months' tour of Europe.

Amidown would gladly have paid the expenses of the trip out of his own pocket for the sake of his friend's company; but he knew the self-respecting Westerner too well to make such a proposition. So they decided to cross the Atlantic on a cattle-steamer. Amidown had secured a cabin passage, while Cranston had that morning signed papers as one of the cattlemen.

The two had just returned from inspecting Cranston's stuffy quarters. Amidown's heart misgave him, and he tried to persuade his friend to share his stateroom.

"What's sixty-five dollars, Arthur?" expostulated he. "You can make it up in a short time. I wont charge you usury on it."

"That's all right, old man," returned the other, "but I don't see any easier way of earning it than by nine days' work aboard ship. I'm not to be frightened out of it because my room happens to be a little cramped and the work promises to be dirty."

Amidown held his peace, and that night they took their baggage to the ship.

At nine the next morning the sheep and cattle began to come on board from the cars. Cranston, arrayed in old football clothes, was stationed near one of the gangways, stick in hand, to prod along recalcitrant steers. His friend was an interested spectator on the bridge. By two o'clock fifteen hundred sheep were bleating in the pens on the upper deck, while nine hundred wild ranch cattle from the Canadian Northwest shouldered one another in their narrow quarters on the three decks below. At three the ship steamed slowly out of the harbor and the voyage was fairly begun.

Cranston found his daily routine novel and by no means unpleasant. In all there were forty-five cattlemen, one-fifth of them professionals or "paid men," and the remainder green hands, or "stiffs," as their fellow workmen termed them, crossing in this way to save their passage money. A dozen nationalities and as many callings were represented. There were Poles and Huns returning from the Pennsylvania coal mines, shipwrecked English sailors, an electrician, a music teacher, a doctor, and half a dozen college men They were divided into squads, each in charge of an experienced man.

At half-past four in the morning they "turned out" and had breakfast. Then the cattle and sheep were given all the water they could drink. This was followed by a hearty feed of hay. At eleven o'clock shorts and cracked corn were served out. In the afternoon came more hay and more water. It made a full day for Cranston and his associates.

Five days out severe storms burst over the Earldorman. The cattlemen had their hands full, getting up beasts that were down, patroling the gangways and repairing damage of different sorts.

Now a port would burst open, and a solid spout of water deluge the shrinking steers from behind. Now a pile of hay bales or grain sacks would come tumbling down. A dozen of the "stiffs" were so seasick that they could not work, and this made it harder for the others.

The great mass of the cattle were thoroughly frightened by the storm. On some, however, it had an opposite effect. One small black steer on the port side of the lowest deck became so maddened by the unaccustomed uproar that it was actually dangerous to pass him.

He stood with three others in a space ten feet wide, partitioned off by uprights from the adjacent spaces. In front of the animals was a stout "headboard," running between the uprights about three feet above the deck. In this headboard were bored four holes, through which passed the ropes tied around the necks of the cattle. The care of the animals in this section of the ship had been entrusted to a "paid man," Sandy Withers, under whom were Cranston and four green hands.

It was midnight and the storm had abated considerably, although the sea ran as high as ever. Half the cattlemen were off duty and asleep. A single sentinel was patroling each deck with a lantern, the ship's electric light plant being temporarily disabled. Cranston, after three hours of sleep, was coming down to relieve Withers, who had been in charge of the lowest deck for that period. As the college man started to descend the ladder a yell rose below. There was a clatter of hoofs. Withers came scrambling up the iron rounds, his right sleeve hanging in shreds and the blood running freely from a long gash in his arm.

"The black steer's loose!" he panted. "Just as I got by him he jumped his headboard and chased me to the foot of the ladder. Until he's tied up or shot I don't go down on that deck again for any man."

As Withers had passed, swinging his lantern, the animal had flung its head violently down. His head rope, already frayed by its constant chafing against the sharp edge of the hole bored in the headboard, snapped off, leaving only its loop hanging about his neck. An instant later he had leaped over the plank in front of him, a mere trifle for so active a beast, and was after the cattleman, who escaped up the ladder with the loss of his lantern and with the ugly wound in his arm.

A little group of men gathered round the black opening that led to the lowest deck. They knew the steer must be captured, but no one was eager to go down into the darkness to quell the mad brute on the reeling deck. Presently the foreman came hurrying up, limping from a strain received that afternoon. He had been roused from a sound sleep and was in bad humor.

"Steer loose, eh?" he growled. "Whose lot does he belong to?"

"Withers', sir," volunteered a man from another deck.

"Then why doesn't Withers take his men and tie him up?" snarled the foreman.

Withers displayed his injured arm, and reiterated his determination not to be found below until the beast was secured. Cranston stepped forward.

"If somebody will go with me, I believe the two of us can catch the steer," he said.

Another member of the squad, an English sailor called by his mates "Yorkshire Jemmy," offered to accompany him. The foreman gladly availed himself of the services of the two men, and supplied each with a small coil of rope.

The passage through which the steer was ranging was seventy-five feet long and barely four feet wide. On its left ran a row of cattle spaces; on its right were two piles of baled hay and one of corn sacks, with pens for about twenty animals; while at its ends and in the middle, narrow alleys led off at right angles to the other side of the ship. At each end also was a short iron ladder connecting the decks.

"Remember you've got an ugly brute to deal with," said the foreman.

Cranston took the forward ladder, while the Yorkshireman started for the one aft. Each had made a slip noose in his rope. They took no lanterns, for these would have shown the animal their whereabouts and made him more dangerous and difficult to capture. It was to be a contest in the dark. They planned to creep quietly upon the steer, one before and one behind, and entangle him in the ropes before he realized what was afoot.

The two were soon at their stations on the lower deck at each end of the passage. The gale was shrieking down the ventilators, making such a tumult below that it was hardly possible to hear anything.

Very cautiously Cranston began to creep aft along the passage, sticking close to the left wall and straining his eyes to pierce the gloom. From the other end Jemmy was approaching in the same way.

Without warning, not ten feet in front of the American, came a bellow that echoed above the roar of the storm. The steer had chanced to be in the middle of the passage and facing in the direction from which Cranston was coming. Keen of scent and eyesight, the animal was forewarned of the approach of his would-be captor. He lowered his head and charged.

Cranston's European trip was in danger of being terminated then and there. He heard the deepening bellow and the clatter of hoofs, and was alive to the peril rushing down upon him in the pitch blackness.

He had no time to regain the alley at the end of the passage and dodge round its corner. If he hesitated he would be impaled upon the keen horns or trampled to death under the beating hoofs. He took the only course that, dangerous though it was, had any promise of safety.

Flinging himself forward to the deck, he flattened his body hard against the hay bales that formed the passage wall at the spot. A lurch of the steamer to starboard aided him.

He was not a quarter second too soon. As the steer thundered by with lowered head, the tip of his long, sharp horn caught in the shoulder of Cranston's sweater, shearing through it like a steel lance, but not touching the skin. One of the hoofs almost brushed his face.

Without an instant's delay the American sprang to his feet.

He knew that as soon as the animal reached the end of the passage and could turn he would come charging back again. To remain prone on the deck would be to tempt destruction. Rope in hand, he ran forward to gain the alley leading off at right angles to the other side of the ship. Just at its entrance he collided with Jemmy and sent him sprawling. Cranston groped for the sailor, caught him by the shoulder, and dragged him into the alley just as the steer careened by in the other direction. It was close work.

Across the passage and directly opposite the entrance of the alley stood a post marking the partition between two cattle spaces, and upholding the ends of the headboards three feet above the deck.

Cranston remembered this, and devised a simple, although perilous, plan for mastering the steer, which had meanwhile passed down the gangway again.

Tying one end of a rope to a stanchion in the alley, he enlarged the slip-noose in the other end until it was at least a yard in diameter. Letting Jemmy hold one side of the loop, and keeping the other in his own hands, he sprang across the passage, and was soon perched on a headboard, with one arm around the post. The darkness was so dense that he was obliged to depend entirely upon touch.

The two men waited breathlessly, holding the open noose across the way. Cranston's position was more than ever a dangerous one. If he slipped forward he would be directly under the feet of the charging steer. If backward, he would tumble among the untied cattle, from which even now he was risking a horn thrust in the back.

Again came the clatter of hoofs. The rope was torn suddenly from the American's hands. He lost his balance, tumbled forward on a hairy flank, and was hurled to the deck. Jemmy sprang back into the alley just in time to void being caught between the taut rope and the corner. The animal had put his head and left fore-leg fairly through the noose; and when the rope tightened he was thrown in a heap.

Lanterns were now brought down, he was quickly overpowered, and ten minutes later was in his place again, securely fastened to his headboard.

The remainder of the trip was uneventful, and Cranston began his European itinerary at Liverpool, none the worse for his ten days' work upon the cattle decks.—Youth's Companion.

A Homesteader in the Quicksands.

"The mover's wagon," canvas-covered and travel-worn, is always picturesque. The traveling home for a family and all their worldly goods from furniture to poultry, is still a familiar sight on Western roads. The spirit of dissatisfaction and longing for newer fields that lurks under that broad-brimmed hat is a spark of the same fire that has been the theme of our history. By some stream under the cotton-woods of an evening you may sometimes see this half-gypsy, and the fire with its accompanying smell of bacon and beans or the song and accordion will suggest, as you drive by, why the roving has always its fascinations.

There are, however, the long dusty days of travel, and sore-backed horses; the occasional swollen fords, and always present, though seldom encountered, are the quicksands of the dry bottom streams. They are indistinguishable and silent. The shallow ribbons of water flow over them as over all the rest of the river bed, but once fairly in their grasp there is a remorseless, certain settling—which a struggle only hastens and which ends in an everlasting disappearance. Cattle and horses are caught in it oftenest and if seen in time can be pulled out with a rope and a horse, but into its hungry maw have gone horses, wagons and men, and even a locomotive going through a bridge has been know to disappear in this bottomless mystery.—Allen True in "The Teaming of the West" in the Outing Magazine.

The Guileless Housemaid.

"It is no wonder to me,' said a member of the detective force the other day, "that the fake telephone linemen and other sneak thieves find Washington an easy mark. I had a fine example of that a few days back. There had been a family robbed over in Georgetown on the fake telephone game, and I was sent over to look into the case. The maid met me at the front door, said her mistress was busy at the moment, but would see me in a little while. Then she walked off and left me setting in the hall for twenty minutes. She did not know me from a basket of walnuts. I had on plain clothes and my badge was inside my coat. But she took my word for who I was and left me alone long enough to have cleaned out the entire lower floor, if I had been so minded. This, too, after the family had been robbed.

"Well, when her mistress came downstairs I told her gently and diplomatically what I thought of her servant. Of course she had to admit I was right, but it was the first time the case had occured to her in that light. People ought never to allow strangers in their house a minute out of their sight."—Washington Star.

Heligoland Disappearing.

Recent news from Heligoland, according to the London Standard, speaks of further encroachments by the sea on Heligoland, in the North Sea. Since the island was ceded to Germany, in 1890, in exchange for Zanzibar, it has lost a considerable area, not alone through the collapse of the sandy cliffs which surround its shores, but also through a definite sinking on the south side. Engineers have been at work since the cession in a continuous endeavor to safeguard the island from demolition, and considerable work has been performed in filling crevices in the rocks while breakwaters have been built to break the force of the sea. It has been found, however, that the very sea floor on which these are constructed is without stability, and it is believed that the work can only serve to delay the encroachment of the sea on the friable cliffs. It has now a circumference of a little less than three miles, as against three and three-fourths in 1890. The island has little importance and is known chiefly as a watering place. Its population numbers about 2:000, and the natives of Heligoland are creditably known among the North Sea and Baltic pilots.

Revised Proverbs.

It's a wise son who knows when to ask his father for money.

The best policy is paid-up life insurance.

A lawsuit is the thief of time.

A dollar in hand is worth two loaned to a friend.

Do a man today; he'll do you tomorrow.

It is folly to be wise to all you see and hear.

Where there's a will there's a feast for lawyers.

It is never too late to love or go home.

Nothing will be done well that you do yourself if you don't know how.

Go slow and get left.

When the cat is away the night is quiet.

A friend in need is a friend to steer shy of.

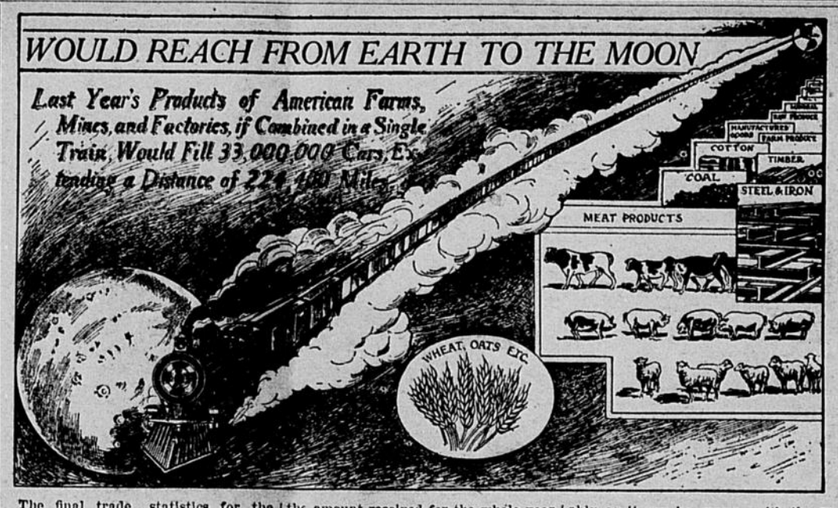
An honest man's word is as good as his bond when you've nothing to lose.

Don't look before leaping when an automobile comes scorching your way.—Lippincott's.

Feeding and Stabling a Motor Car.

A young motorist, endeavoring to convince a country inn-keeper that the decay of coaching was more than compensated for by the spread of motoring as a pastime, exclaimed, as a final argument, that his car was of forty-horsepower, "the equal, sir, of ten relays of coach horses." The next morning he read in his bill: "To feeding and stabling, 80 shillings." He asked the landlord for an explanation. "The charge for 'osses is 2 shillin' a head, sir," was the reply. 'That machine of yours is equal to forty 'oses, which is 80 shillin'."—St. James Gazette.

The wettest place in the world is Cherrapunji, in Assam.



The final trade statistics for the year 1905 confirm the figures of the preliminary forecasts and show a phenomenal degree of prosperity throughout the country. So enormous was the product of farm, mine and factory that had it been moved at one time it would have filled 33,184,857 freight cars, 4,000,000 more than would have been required in the prosperous year of 1904. Thirty-three million freight-cars, if made up into one train of fabulous length, would extend for a distance of 224,400 miles, or would girdle the earth about nine times at the equator. If this mythical train, with the 825,000 locomotives which would be required to haul it, had traveled out into space on a trip to the moon, the leading moguls would have been puffing through the valleys of earth's satellite before the conductor's buggy had rumbled out of the freight yards at the starting point. Merely to store the cars and engines in such a train would require the use of nearly all the railway mileage in the United States.

One of the most striking examples of the vast increase in the volume of business for the year is to be found in the western livestock industry. During the summer and in the fall of 1905 the tourist on any of the big western trunk lines caught flying glimpses of stockpens filled with long-horned, ferocious-looking steers, flocks of huddled sheep and carloads of horses and mules. All these pens were filled and emptied many times during the year, each contributing its quota to the enormous total of livestock that was shipped from the trans-Mississippi territory to the markets of Chicago, Kansas City, Omaha, and St. Joseph, a total that approximated 38,000,000 head. This multitude of animals constituted 678,369 carloads, 30,000 more than were required in 1904 and 90,000 more than in 1902.

In the grain trade the American farmers are still increasing their output and adding to the strength of our claim to be called the granary of the world. The reports for 1905 from twelve private primary grain markets show that there has been poured into them from their tributary territory the enormous quantity of 750,000,000 bushels of grain, to be distributed from these primary markets to all corners of the globe. American grain to-day is fighting to supplant rice among the Asiatics and has already partly displaced rye as the food staple of the peasantry of Europe. Within a few years, at the rate our crop is increasing and with the extremely low rates the railroads give on grain for export, American loaves will be, indeed, the staff of life in every country of Europe.

A comparison of the amount of grain received during eleven months of 1905 at a few of the primary markets with the amount received for the whole year of 1904 brings out clearly the remarkable increase in grain traffic. Chicago, the greatest primary grain market, received 220,759,215 bushels in 1904. During the first eleven months of 1905 the receipts were 239,133,362 bushels. Louisville's record for 1904 was 23,555,618 bushels, while up to Dec. 1, 1905, 23,916,310 bushels had been received. The receipts at Kansas City for 1904 were 58,830,900 bushels; for the eleven months of 1905 they were 60,121,700 bushels.

On the Pacific coast, where fifty years ago a few gold-mad prospectors, acting as an advance guard for eastern civilization, carried on a desultory warfare with Indians, there are to-day thriving, hustling towns and thickly settled farming communities. One of the most important factors in this prosperity is the huge lumber traffic that originates in the vast forests of northern California, Oregon and Washington. Annually for the last three years more than 1,000,000,000 feet of redwood, pine and fir have been taken from these almost inexhaustible timber tracts and shipped to California coast points. During the year just past the arrivals at these same points averaged more than 100,000,000 feet a month, a record that no former year can surpass. In 1904 lumber shipments from Washington to Oregon reached a total of 606,000,000 feet, 195,500,000 feet of which went to foreign markets. The completed figures for the lumber trade of 1905 from these two States have not been issued as yet, but as more than 600,000,000 feet passed into domestic and foreign trade from Tacoma alone it is taken for granted that in this industry, as in all the others, there has been the same astounding gain.

Not only do the United States contribute more than their share of foodstuffs to the world, but they furnish a large percentage of the coal to cook it with. America's coal resources, anthracite and bituminous, are among her greatest assets and have contributed more than any other single product to make the United States the leading industrial nation of the world. It needed 61,000,000 tons of anthracite to keep the wheels of American commerce spinning in 1905, while only 57,500,000 tons were needed in 1904.

For many years raw cotton has played a leading part in American industrial affairs. Indeed, the interest in this important crop is worldwide and on it depends the welfare of the cotton manufacturers of England and Germany. Formerly the commercial distribution of this staple was along fixed lines from the cotton fields in the south, north to the Atlantic coast. Within comparatively few years, however, the southern business men have awakened to the fact that cotton can be manufactured in the south as profitably as it can be grown, with the result that cotton mills have sprung up all over the south, especially in the Carolinas. These southern mills have brought about a decided change in the lines of commercial distribution and have likewise stimulated competition to such an extent that cotton prices are soaring, to the intense satisfaction of the southern planter. The increased activity of the gulf ports within the last decade has been another large factor in contributing to the present prosperity of ten southern States. Of last year's cotton crop of 10,271,612 bales the gulf ports received 6,692,761 bales, or two-thirds, while the Atlantic ports had to be content with only 3,578,851 bales. Figures of the export trade in cotton show that 86 per cent of the crop sought foreign markets.

Different factors have contributed to this era of plenty. The first, undoubtedly, is the marvelous resources with which this country is blessed. Next as a factor in industrial greatness comes the business ability of Americans. In inventiveness and aptitude to adjust himself rapidly to changing conditions and willingness to discard old and obsolete methods for those new and untried, in imagination to see industrial possibilities and courage to act on his convictions, the American business man is without a peer.

The American railroad is another factor, and by no means a small one, in the country's abounding prosperity. Ever since the first steel rails, the precursors of civilization, pushed their way slowly cross the prairies of the middle west, climbed the Rocky Mountains by tortuous paths and came to a stop only when the waves of the Pacific confronted them the great problem of railroad managers has been to develop the country, to increase traffic and to cause two blades of grass to grow where but one has grown before. That they have succeeded beyond all hopes is proved by the commercial reports and the industrial statistics of the year just passed, and this success has been won under a system free from onerous government regulation. It has not been necessary to submit every emergency rate to a government commission for approval or condemnation nor to conduct business according to rates fixed by a body of laymen chosen by the president, possibly for political reasons. The experience of European countries whose railroads are under government control gives reason for the assertion, made by competent authorities, that if American railways were managed as are those in old world lands American railroad managers would not have been called upon to furnish facilities for moving more than 33,000,000 carloads in 1905 nor would the new cars and locomotives ordered in the first forty-one weeks of 1905 be equal to the entire number ordered in 1904.

PARIS "OUT OF DOORS."

Restaurateur Serves His Patrons Even in Winter Al Fresco.

Last year a cafe manager in Paris had a happy thought that will save lives. Why, he asked himself, should his patrons retreat indoors when cold weather comes, to be stifled by close air and tobacco smoke? All summer they had eaten and drunk at peace upon the wide space between his building and the sidewalk, says the New York World.

So he put a brazier of blazing coals on the pavement. Merely that.

This year it is a fashion. The London Outlook's correspondent says people throng outside the cafes as in June. "From the Madeleine to the Bastile dozens of braziers are alight." The correspondent adds:

"It is pleasant to see how much the great fires are appreciated by the cab drivers, policemen, artisans, dressmakers, milliners and apprentices, a flower in their button-holes, a ribbon in their hair, who crowd around and enjoy their pennyworth of hot coffee. In the richer neighborhoods further refinements are in vogue. At one place are to be seen plates of sheet iron that draw the heat upon the pavement; at another glazed screens from a hot house and soft carpets cover the damp and chilly flagstones, or, again, the table legs are hollowed and transformed into foot-warmers."

So Paris, "au soleil" or "au plein air" even in December along every boulevard. So Rome, "al fresco" in the Piazza Colona and Venice in the Piazza San Marco. Here in America we have not even a name for this joyous, healthful open-air, breakfasting and dining. "Out of doors," the nearest approach, has an exclusive, melancholy sound. New York's whole architectural arrangement is against it.

Health taps at the window, knocks at the door, whistles its invitation at the keyhole, but in this most shut-in nation only the few have ears to hear. The rest close the windows and doors and put on weather strips to invite pneumonia and consumption.

Compared with other constitutionally governed countries, Sweden has the most limited suffrage in the world. According to Swedish statistics, only one-fourth of the grown men who are personally qualified have a political vote. The lower house of Parliament, which should represent the great body of the people, in reality represents only a small fraction, while the upper house is exclusively in the hands of the moneyed classes.

No one can become a member of the upper house unless, first, he owns and for three years previous to voting has owned property to the tax value of at least 80,000 crowns (roughly speaking, $20,000) or, second, has for three years paid taxes on an income of at least 3,000 crowns, either from capital or labor.

But this is not all. A constitutional law still further strengthens the power of money in the election of the upper house. Its members are chosen not directly by the voters at large, but by county and city authorities. The election of these county and city officials is conducted according to "graded suffrage laws" based upon value of property or size of income.

By means of this arrangement many thousands of voters are in the hands of wealthy men and business corporations in a single community. A few rich men or a couple of corporations can thus entirely control the situation in a number of communities and decide the election of county officials wholly after their own will, in spite of the opposing votes of the rest of the population.

GREAT SUFFERING AMONG THE POOR OF PARIS.

—Chicago Tribune.

He Did.

"We should always," said the jail evangelist, "consider any circumstances which add weight to the steps we take."

"I do," murmured the convict, sadly, as he cast a casual glance at his ball and chain."—Baltimore American.

Correct Car Time.

Several years ago, says a writer in the Boston Herald, a party of friends traveling by trolley had occasion to ask the starter on a certain line how often the cars ran, to which question he made the following reply:

"Quarter arter, ha' arter, quarter to, and at."

Mexican Indians.

One of the most popular theories with respect to the North American Indians is that they are the lost tribes of Israel who wandered across Asia and entered America by Bering straits. But now a new idea has just been put forward, for it appears that a Turk who is living in Mexico was very much surprised, when out walking in the country near the capital, to hear the native speaking in a language which greatly resembled his own. He spoke to them in Turkish, and found that they understood him perfectly and that he could make out what they said.

The case has been submitted to an American professor of philology, and his report is awaited with some interest, as it will be curious, to say the least of it, if he can establish an analogy between the dialects of the Mexican Indian and the Turks.—The Sketch.

Slow but Sure.

"Have you a street cleaning system?"

"Yes," answered the man who never loses his local pride. "It takes a little time, but it is thorough. We wait for a thaw."—Washington Star.

Knicker—Did you ask her to be your wife? Bocker—Yes, but she declined the nomination.—New York Sun.

The pessimist is a misfortune teller.

FOR YOUNG FOLKS

KIDS.

I wonder why some pas have none,
And others have so many,
It seems the poor pas have the most,
And rich ones haven't any.

The richest man I know in town
Has just one small boy only;
But pa says, Gad! he pities him
In that big house so lonely.

It seems to me 'twould be so nice
If kids all come out even;
And when I asked pa why they don't,
He said, "Be quiet, Stephen!"

Then fam'lies all'd have bills like pa,
For us five kids together,
He says, would bust a cattle man,
We wear out so much leather.

But when the circus comes to town
Pas glad he has so many,
For he has more fun takin' us
'Man if he hadn't any.

My pa says some day that he'll be
Too old to go on workin',
And then he hopes that none of us
Our duty will be shirkin'.

You bet we won't! We all love pa.
But wouldn't it be funny
To have your father hangin' round
And askin' you for money?

I've most a quarter in my bank
To buy a bullet moulder.
But now I think I'll save it up
For pa when he gets older.
—May Kelly, in Lippincott's.

THE LETTERS MOTHER SENT

It was a rainy day, and the children were lonely. Bobby had drawn his little cart up by the fire and sat looking into the flames, wondering if the feeling he had was what sister called "homesick." It seemed queer if one could have it right in one's own home. Molly was drumming on the window-pane, and there was no doubt in her mind about the matter; she knew it was homesick. The boys, Tom and Ned, were in the woodshed whittling out a boat for Bobby. They did not seem to mind.

The reason for this cloud on the house was that mother had gone away and would not return until the next day. At first they had amused themselves by saying, "Now she has reached the station," and after a long time and much discussion, "She's at grandma's now." Somehow, when they reached this point in the journey this strange lonesomeness had settled on the house. They knew she would be back the next day; but that was to-morrow, and to-day it was raining.

When this moment of the afternoon had come and the shadows were getting a little longer, Molly saw the postman coming up the walk. She almost flew to the door, although she thought it could not be possible mother had written a letter.

"Here are letters enough for two postmen," said the man, fumbling the pile he had in his hand and counting off five letters. "I guess you can find out who they are for."

Molly took the letters and began to jump up and down in delight. "Run and call the boys," she told Bobby, and he hurried away as fast as his fat little legs could carry him.

Soon they were all seated by the fire, and what do you think they found?

Each envelope bore the address in the lower corner, but at the top was a photograph of the one for whom the letter was intended. There was a picture of Bobby drawing his cart across the lawn. There was one of Molly standing by the grape arbor. The boys were taken coming through the gate; Ned's letter showed him tossing his cap, while Tom's picture looked as if he were walking right down the envelope. There was one of nurse holding a tray of cookies. Molly ran to call her in.

Mother had made snapshots of them long before, when they had not even guessed it, and had made the plans to surprise them while she was away. Somehow it took away all the lonesomeness to find that mother had realized just how it would be, and that her love had looked forward to this very minute, when they would need the letters so much. And then it came out that nurse was in the secret, for while they were reading the letters and looking at the picture the door opened, and there she stood with the tray of cookies, looking just like her photograph.—Mary Wight Saunders, in the Youth's Companion.

RED-WINGED SEA ROBINS.

I suppose the peculiarity which would be noticed first about the sea robin; grunter, or gurnard, as he is variously called, would be his clumsy shape. The head is large and deep in comparison with the body. One of our observing young folks, looking at him alive in his tank of the United States Fish Commission, Washington, would be apt to exclaim: "Oh, see, he has little hook-claws, which help him crawl along!" Sure enough, just in front of the pectoral or side fins are three little, finger-like processes on each side, which are used to stir up weeds and sand, and to rake around among the pebbles and rout out the small animals upon which the sea robin feeds in its native waters. While doing this it seems to be crawling along over the bottom by hooking these peculiar claws into the sand. Sea robins feed on small crabs, fish, shrimp and other diminutive animals which they find in among the loose stones. In Europe all the gurnard family of fishes are eagerly sought, as they find a ready sale in the fish market. They attain a length of two feet and a weight of eleven pounds. Our species of the sea robin, a cousin to the European variety, is found on our northern coast, and is taken in great numbers in the pound nets along Vineyard Sound, where they spawn during the summer months.

They are much esteemed for the table, being one of the most delicate of the edible fishes. The flesh is firm snow-white and hard to be distinguished from that of the kingfish. The American sea robin is fifteen to eighteen inches long and weights from one and a quarter to two pounds. When taken from the water they grunt quite loudly, and if placed on the ground give a little hop forward of a few inches, grunting as they do so. This grunting sound can be heard quite plainly if one is in a boat lying quietly in shallow water near where they are.

The head is sheathed with bony plates and armed with sharp points, which are rather hard to distinguish at first, as they lie quite flat against it. When caught they erect all their spines, and inflict very painful wounds on those who try to handle them. The pectoral fins are a little more than half as long as the body, and may be extended like a fan when in use, or folded quite close together when on the bottom, thus giving them the name of "butterfly fish."

The rays of the tail may also be much extended to look like a Japanese fan.

The color of this peculiar fish is a brownish yellow over the back and sides and cream and white below. The pectoral fins are deep orange color, with a blackish marking toward the tips, crossed all over with little dark brown lines and edged with light yellow orange color. The lower jaw and sides are light orange color; the eye is a beautiful turquoise blue, edged with a vein of brassy yellow.—American Cultivator.

CLOSING PEKIN'S GATES.

Noisy Ceremony Performed Daily at the Chinese Capital.

The closing of the gates in Pekin, just because it goes on daily and may apparently go on daily for centuries to come, is probably one of the "sights" least witnessed and talked of, save by those foreigners who may have chanced to "run for it" near closing time. The daily performance is marked with a due ceremony which is quaint and full of interest to the intelligent onlooker, as the closing by no means signifies the mere bringing together of the heavy wooden doors and barring the emperor's highway against all comers.

At the appointed hour a preliminary signal is given by a large gong or iron shield being struck with a big iron bar fifty times in such quick succession as to almost defy calculation. This is followed by a signal of one hundred blows repeated in precisely the same fashion three times. When the third and last cycle of gong strokes is entered on a number of old and at this season very much bewadded and muffled up old "Charlies" start a series of discordant yells to all and sundry to "hasten" or they will be shut out. The combination of signals is followed by a jostling stream of people from both directions.

Presently the rush slackens, until only a solitary pedestrian, or possibly a man on a donkey, full tilt, a belated rickshaw or a heavily laden cart struggles through. Then a movement is made with the gates, yelling bursts out afresh, and another rush ensues, the gates being meanwhile half closed and occasionally opened a little way again until the outgoers having meanwhile ceased there is a final scrimmage to get into the city, and the process of closing, which has taken some half hour in all, is concluded.

The huge iron-plated doors having clanged to, a monster iron pole is dragged up and placed across them on iron supports, being retained in position by a padlock of enormous proportions and of the well-known Chinese type. There are in all the cities of Peking some nineteen gates, and the same ceremony is observed at each, but at such thoroughfares as the Hatamen there is naturally more traffic, and the process is probably proportionately longer.—Pekin Times.

Facts About the Russian Duma.

The qualifications necessary th members of the Russian Imperial Duma are outlined in an article by Charles Johnston in Harper's Weekly. The four hundred members of this important body must be able to speak Russian and they must take the oath of allegiance on qualification. They will draw five dollars a day allowance during the session of the Duma, and mileage at the rate of two and a half cents a mile to and from the capital. The method of electing the members was a somewhat roundabout one as at first planned, says Mr. Johnston. Groups of electors were to be chosen from the three great classes of Russian society: the land-owners, the village communities, and the municipalities. The first extension of the scheme admitted large numbers of the artisan class; the latest development of the idea seems to admit everybody including the army and navy. It is worth noting, says Mr. Johnston, as showing that Russia is still a vast, growing village, that of four hundred members to be returned to the Duma, only twenty-eight will represent cities.

But He Swung His Lantern.

Representative J. Sharp Williams tells a tale of the days when he was counsel for a railway line.

At one point on its line the company had stationed an old negro watchman whose duties consisted in warning travelers, when a train approached. One night a wagon belonging to a farmer was struck, resulting in a bad accident. The company was sued for damages and the old colored man was the principal witness for his employers. Among the questions was one as to whether he was sure that he had swung his lantern across the road when he perceived the train approaching. The negro replied:

"I shorely did, sah!"

The trial resulted in a verdict for the company, and Mr. Williams, as counsel took early occasion to compliment the aged negro on his excellent testimony, to which the latter replied:

"Thankee, Marse John, but I was sorely skeered when dat lawyer man begin to ask me about de lantern. I was afreaed for a minute dat he was goin' to ask me if it was lit or not. De oil done give out some time befo' de accident!"—Success.

Indiscriminate Kissing.

Careful mothers, who have for a long time recognized the danger to which a baby is exposed through indiscriminate kissing, will sympathize with Queen Maude's troubles in Norway, now that she has attempted to stem the wholesale osculation by which women and children of every degree have desired to show their fealty to the little Crown Prince Olaf. There is great liability of all sorts of dreadful diseases being conveyed in this way, and it seems a pity that the good people of Christiania cannot comprehend this A B C of hygiene without the necessity of the gardens of the palace being closed against them, while the crown prince takes his daily airing.—Weekly Witness.