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Selected Miscellany.

THE RUBY AND THE ROSE.

He was the Lord of Merlintower,
And I was but of low degree;
She had her beauty for her dower,
No other treasure needed she;
He came, when hawthorns were a-flower,
And strove to steal my love from me.

Oh! she was sweeter than the wind
That bloweth over Indian isles;
As April bright, than June more kind,
Fawn-wild, and full of winsome wiles
And I, alas! had learnt to find
My only life beneath her smiles.

He sent my love a ruby rare,
That might have graced imperial brows.
No gem had I. To deck her hair
I sent her—but a simple rose,
And prayed her, on a night, to wear
The gift of him whose love she chose.

"Come, queen of all my heart's desire!
Crown me or slay! My soul is stirred
To challenge fate. My pulses tire
Of fear's chill tremor. Sings the bird
Of hope for him who dares aspire?"
A lover's scroll, and wild of word!

We watched her coming, he and I,
With utter dread my heart stood still.
The moon's wan crescent waned on high,
The nightingale had sung his fill,
In the dim distance seemed to die
The echo of his latest trill.

The flower-trailed gate, our tryst of old,
Gleamed whitely 'neath the clustering bloom
Of the dusk-starring jasmine. Cold
His shadow fell, a ghostly gloom
Lurked where it lay. Oh, heart o'er bold!
Hast thou but hastened utter doom?

A still, cold smile slept on his face,
That all my hope to anguish froze;
Then, in the silence of the place,
We heard her flower-pied porch unclose,
And—in her hair's silk-soft embrace,
There nestled warm a ripe-red rose!

—*All the Year Round.*

BABY SWEET!

Papa calls her sweetheart,
Mamma calls her love,
She is Grandpa's darling,
Grandma's sweetest dove;
Little, laughing baby,
Everybody's pet,
Though she has been with us
Not a six-month yet!

Snow flakes white and fleecy
Fall down from the sky,
All this wintry weather
On Earth's bosom lie;
So her baby spirit,
Pure as falling snow,
Came to us from Heaven
Little time ago!

What her real name is,
That I cannot tell,
Lest the listening angels
Call her home to dwell.
Trust to God the future,
He will guide her feet;
In the happy present
She is Baby Sweet!

—*Rural New Yorker.*

THE BAG OF GOLD.

"Money is a great trial," said the widow Peckington, impressively. "I declare I did not know what care meant before brother Gabriel died and left me all the money."

"Well, Cousin Clarissa," observed George Merrilton, who was assidously engaged in entangling the widow's work to the very best or the very worst of his ability, "in case you find yourself unequal to the strain, all you have to do is to leave me the five thousand dollars."

"The first thing in the morning," went on Mrs. Peckington, unheeding Mr. Merilton's modest hint, "and the last at night I'm thinking about it. First I put it in Deacon Eliah Horton's bank, and then I drew it out again—banks aren't noways safe nowdays. And then I buried it in the east cellar, close to the apple bin, and then came the deluging rain and I knowed the cellar would be three inches deep in water. So up it came again, and then I could not rest in my bed for fear of fire. So I got it changed into gold, and I guess it's safe enough."

"In the bottom of your big red chest?" mischievously hazarded George.

"No matter where, sir," said the widow, nodding her head.

"Oh, but you might tell us," persisted Merrilton. "We are all your own folks, Cora and I."

Cora Dallas sat stitching quietly in the corner—the pretty orphan whom good Mrs. Peckington had taken out of the orphan asylum "to bring up" five years before.

"I don't expect to leave you nothing," Mrs. Peckington had said, "for I've relations of my own, but I'll give you a district school education, and a decent bringing up, and a good chance to do for yourself."

And Cora had accepted the good dame's offer with meek gratitude.

She had grown very pretty in the last few years, this solitary child of nobody. Dark-eyed, with hair full of deep chestnut golden shadows, a peach-blossom skin, where the rosy blood glowed brightly through on the slightest provocation, and a mouth like Hebe, it seemed as if nature had made a solemn compact with herself to atone for all social slights that might be cast across Cora Dallas' path.

"Well," said Mrs. Peckington, seriously, "I don't mind telling you, but mind you don't repeat it—the bag's hung half-way up the chimney, on an iron hook."

"But suppose the chimney should take fire," said Merrilton.

"It won't. I keep it well swept; and besides, if it should, it takes a pretty good heat to melt gold."

"Upon my word, Cousin Clarissa," said Merrilton, "you are a second Machiavelli."

"Who in pity sakes was he?" asked Mrs. Peckington. "There's Neighbor Simkins at the door—jump and let him in, Cora, for it's beginning to snow like all possessed."

And Neighbor Simkins came in—a broad-faced, jovial agriculturist, who lived on the next farm, and was suspected of matrimonial designs on the heart of Widow Peckington.

"Set by, Mr. Simkins," said the widow, hospitably, putting another moss-fringed log on the fire; "seems like we're going to have another spell of weather."

And while the widow and her middle-aged lover discussed the weather, George took occasion to help Cora get down a half bushel of red apples from the garret, and was unnecessarily long about it, too.

"I should think you would be ashamed of yourself, George Merrilton," said Cora, dimpling and blushing, and trying to look very angry, in which she succeeded very indifferently.

"What for?" audaciously demanded George. "One doesn't get a chance to kiss a pretty girl every day in the year."

"What would Mrs. Peckington say?"

"I dare say she's doing the very same thing herself down stairs with Jehorum Simkins."

And Cora burst out laughing at the preposterous idea, just as the widow came in to bustle around after quince jelly and apple butter, and to tell Cora to mix up a batch of muffins, for Neighbor Simkins was going to stay to tea.

And then Mr. Simkins took his leave with a roguish twinkle of his eye toward the young people, and Mrs. Peckington went over to spend the evening with Mrs. Dottleford, her pet crony, and Cora sat all alone in the firelight, sewing and sighing and thinking. For George Merrilton had gone home early to secure Mr. Simkins' companionship a part of the way through the lonely roads which already were becoming veiled in snow.

The tall, old-fashioned clock in the angle of the old-fashioned kitchen chimney had just struck midnight when Cora Dallas was roused from her sleep by a sheeted form at the foot of her bed—tall and narrow, clad in white—but no ghost nevertheless, but Mrs. Peckington's self.

"What's the matter?" cried Cora, breathlessly.

"My money!" gasped the widow, waving her hand tragically in the air.

"But what of it?"

"It's stolen!"

"Are you sure?" eagerly demanded Cora

"As sure as I am that you're staring at me now. I felt up the chimney for it the last thing afore I got ready to go to bed, and—it was gone."

In vain proved all search. Neither up chimney, nor down cellar, nor in any imaginable corner was the bag of gold pieces to be found.

"Mrs. Peckington," said Cora, huskily, "it must have been stolen."

"Yes," said Mrs. Peckington, whose lips were now compressed, and there was something in her manner that Cora never before noticed, as she called the white-headed farm boy, and told him to run over and ask Farmer Simkins to step to the Peckington place that morning.

"And you may as well stop for George Merrilton, as you come back," said she.

When he was gone she came close up to Cora Dallas.

"Cora," said she, "we two are alone together now, and I am the last one to be hard on you. Confess now, and we'll see how the matter can be cleared up."

Cora opened wide her brown eyes.

"Confess what?" she asked, innocently.

"That you took the money; there was no one else that could have done it. You were here all alone yesterday evening, and I know it was a strong temptation to a gal that never had five dollars of her own in the world. Cora, you're young, child, and I don't believe you're altogether bad, but Satan sifts us all as wheat, and—"

"Stop!" cried Cora, growing white and breathless; "you suspect me—you think I am a thief! Mrs. Peckington, may God forgive you; forgive you for your very cruel suspicion!"

Mrs. Peckington was silent. She knew not how she could help the impression which so strongly bore upon her mind. Who but Cora Dallas could have taken the missing gold?

"George, George!" gasped the poor girl, flitting up to him as for safety, as the door opened and the stalwart form of George Merrilton appeared; "she believes that I stole the money; you do not think so, do you?"

George Merrilton's eyes sparkled nervously. "Cousin Clarissa, I would stake my life on Cora's innocence."

Mrs. Peckington shook her head.

"It looks very ugly for her," she said, "but of course if she can prove it—"

"It needs no proof in my eyes," said George, quietly, as he drew Cora's arm within his. "There, little one, don't tremble so, and look so wonderfully frightened—no one shall dare harm you as long as I am by your side."

"But where's Mr. Simkins?" asked the widow, missing her strongest ally in this hour of need.

"If you please, ma'am," said the white-headed farm boy, "he had gone away suddenly to Alleaville at four o'clock this morning to see his father, as he had a stroke, and they don't expect him back not until the last of next week."

Mrs. Peckington stood undecided.

"At all events," she said, turning to Cora Dallas, "you can't expect shelter under my roof no longer. I didn't look for such treatment from you."

"Cousin Clarissa," said Merrilton, bravely, "I love Cora Dallas, and I stand here to espouse her cause. "You may sue her if you like."

"I shan't do that," said the widow; "leastwise not until Jehorum Simkins comes home to advise me what's best."

"But," went on George Merrilton, "I shall make her my wife this very day, in order that I can offer her a home in place of the one of which you cruelly deprived her."

The widow, albeit naturally a kind-hearted woman, fired up at this.

"Of course I've nothing to say," she said, "if you chose to marry a thief—"

But she stopped here—the upblazing fire in Merrilton's eye admonished her to go no further.

It was lonely enough those cold winter days, sitting at her fireside, the money gone, the merry sound of George Merrilton's voice silent and Cora's bright presence vanished.

"If I should be wrong in 'sposing she took it," she said to herself, "I should be dreadful sorry to think of all the ugly names I called her—but I don't see as there can possibly be any doubt to it. Any way, Jehorum will advise me when he comes."

And on the dusky eve of Saturday night Farmer Simkins came.

"I never was so glad to see anybody in all my born days," said Mrs. Peckington, impulsively jumping from her seat—and she told him the story of the vanished bag of gold before he had a chance to deposit his portly bulk upon the chair she hospitably drew forward.

Mr. Simkins turned doll red—then a tallow white—got up and sat down again, and finally dragged a leather bag from the recess of his butternut-colored coat-tail.

"I'll never play off a practical joke again, blamed ef I do," he ejaculated; "for I declare to gracious I hadn't any idea of the mischief I was a doin'! Here's the money, Clarissy—I heard you tell the folks where it was as I was a scrapin' the snow off my feet under the window that night, and I reached it down just for a joke when you was gone to see about the supper. I meant to have brought it back the next morning, and have a good laugh with you about the burglars, but you see how I was fixed—father got poorly, and I couldn't think of nothin' but him—but you won't lay it up again me, Clarissy, now will you?"

"But Cora Dallas!" gasped the astonisned widow, "I've told everybody that she took it."

"Then you and I must go round and explain matters to everybody, that's all," said the farmer.

And Mrs. Peckington began to cry.

"Poor Cora!" she sobbed; "poor motherless child! I could bite out my tongue when I think what wicked things I have spoken with it. But I'll go right over there and beg her pardon, and George's, too."

Cora Merrilton forgave Mrs. Peckington—more than her husband could bring himself to do—and she even came over to help the widow make wedding cake for her own matrimonial benefit.

"For, of course, I knew it would all be set right sooner or later," said Cora, cheerfully, "and we'll let by-gones be by-gones."

And the widow solaced her conscience by presenting Mrs. Cora with just half the contents of the mischievous leather bag for a wedding present.

Butter Nuts.

BY JOSH BILLINGS.

Sum men pay their dets bi driving them out ov their memory.

True grateness konsists in allwuss appearing abuv our fortune, be the same hi or low.

We seldum do the best we kan—not bekause we kant, but bekauze we wont.

Pride seems to be pretty equally divided. i have seen just az mutch pride in a stage driver and dansing-master az i hav ever seen in a newly-elekted member to the legislatur.

Good luk makes a wize man karephull, but a phool it makes kareless.

The world judges ov us bi what they see, not bi what they know. It iz a good plan, then, to sho them a bold front.

It would seem that the poorest friend and the wust enemy a man haz got iz himself.

It iz the eazyest thing in natur to be honest, yet most men make dredful hard work ov it.

He who iz allwuss hunting for friends seldum finds enny.

I kan most generally tell how other people ought to akt, but how to akt miself frequently bothers me.

A thoroly vain man, after he haz exhausted all hiz virtews, will begin to brag to yu about hiz vices.

People are apt to complain ov the phools in the world; but the phools are vittles and drink to the wize man.

He who iz reddy at enny time to leave the sosiety ov others for the sosiety ov himself iz possessed ov one grate element ov happiness.

The grate truths are fu and simple, and those who talk mutch are the ones who say little.

All flatterers live upon flattery, and the best way to git rid ov them iz not to flatter them in return, and they will soon leave yu.

If it want for kuriosity I don't suppoze thare would be mutch enterprize or improvement in the world; but the kuriosity that prompts a man to stick hiz fingers into a trap to see whether it will spring or not seems to me aint wuth the investment.

Noboddy really luvs to be cheated, but it duz seem az tho everyboddy waz anxious to see how near they could cum to it.

I am afrade thare iz more fear than humility in most kinds ov repentanse.

Whenever yu kan extrakt hunny from wormwood then yu may expekt to git happiness out ov unlawful plezzures.

Every boddy notisses a flaw in a diamond, but a flaw in a pebble excites no interest.

Most people repent ov their sins bi thanking God that they are not so wicked az other pholks are.

He who iz vain ov hiz virtews (if he iz sure he haz got them) haz the best and only excuse thare iz for vanity.

I suppoze if thare want a solitary human being on the face ov the earth, the sun would still rise in the east and set in the west, the volkanoes would ockashionally vomit fire, and Niagara would keep on roaring, but thare's lots ov pholks who don't think so.—*N. Y. Weekly.*

An Astonishing Feat.

A LETTER from Siam to the New York *World* thus describes a scene at an exhibition given by some native jugglers: "That is Norodom," whispered Woun-Tajac in my ear. Another actor now came upon the scene, whom I recognized to be the tall athlete Tepada. Behind him came a smaller man, whose name, Woun-Tajac informed me, was Minhman, and a boy, probably twelve years old, called Tsin-ki. These four began some of the most wonderful athletic exhibitions that can be conceived. It is impossible to believe, unless you saw it, what work these men put human muscle to. I am not going to provoke the credulity of your readers by attempting to describe the majority of them. In one feat Tepada seized Norodom by his long white beard, held him off at arm's length, and spun around with him until the old man's legs were horizontal to the athlete's shoulders. Then, while they still spun with the fury of dervishes, Minhman sprang up, seized upon Norodom's feet, and spun out a horizontal continuation of the ancient, and when Minhman was firmly established the boy Tsin-ki caught to his feet in like manner, and the tall athlete, every muscle in him straining, continued to whirl the human, jointless lever around. At last, slowing slightly, Tepada drew in his arms till the old man's white beard touched his body. There was a sudden strain and the arms of the men from being horizontal became perpendicular, Norodom's head resting atop of Tepada's, and Minhman's head upon Norodom's feet, and Tsin-ki's head on Minhman's feet. A pause for breath, then the column of men was propelled into the air, and *presto!* Tepada's head was on the ground. Norodom's feet to his, Minhman's feet upon Norodom's head, Tsin-ki's feet on Minhman's head. Each had turned a somersault, and the column was unbroken.

—The value of the timber used for fuel annually in the United States is $75,000,000, and for fencing, $150,000,000. The number of railway ties in use is 150,000,000. The average yield of timber land per acre is 200 ties; hence 750,000 acres of land have been cleared to furnish the present supply. Railway ties last about five years; therefore 30,000,000 ties are used annually in the repairs of railways, taking the timber on 150,000 acres. There is consumed in the manufacture of rolling stock the timber of 350,000 acres, and the growth of 500,000 acres more for other purposes every year. Our railways are stripping the country of 1,000,000 acres per annum, and the demand is fast increasing.

—The *Mark Lane Express* places the annual production of Indian corn in portions of Europe as follows: France, 30,000,000 bushels; Italy, 45,000,000 bushels; Austria, 11,000,000 bushels; Hungary, 66,000,000 bushels; Greece, 8,000,000 bushels; Portugal, 15,000,000 bushels. The total area seeded in corn is placed at 48,000,000 acres, and the production at 1,160,575,000 bushels.

A Hallucination.

My aunt and cousins were going to Brighton for several weeks, and had asked me down to see them. As I was not certain on which day they intended to leave London, I thought I should call at my uncle's house in Westend Square and inquire. When I rang the bell the door was opened by a tall woman respectably dressed in gray. She did not look at all like a servant, and seemed between forty and fifty. Her features were good, but masculine, and she was very pale, but her paleness was not unhealthy. To my inquiry if Mrs. —— was at home, she said: "No; they have all gone;" and before I had time to ask when they left the door was shut. I knew that my uncle did not intend leaving town till the dissolution of Parliament, and that, when his family were from home, he generally stayed at the Palace Hotel; so I went in search of him. I found he was staying there, but was not in. I then went to his club, but was unable to find him. I wished to know when I was expected at Brighton; but, as I was aware that I should be welcome at any time, my chief reason in looking for him was to find out who the strange woman was that was taking care of his house, as I could not get her face out of my head. I did not see him, however, and the next day I left for Brighton. I took the earliest opportunity of asking my aunt in whose charge she had left her house.

"There is no one in the house," she said; "it is locked up."

I then told her that I had gone to the house; and described the woman who had opened the door, adding that she was one of the strangest-looking women I had ever seen. My aunt said that I must be mistaken, as it was quite impossible there could be any one there. My cousin agreed with her, and asked me, among other things, whether I had dined before going to the square.

"I know what he has done," cried Amy, a smart child of eight—"he has rung the wrong bell." The theory appeared to receive general acceptance; but I was not to be done out of my belief in this manner, and stuck firmly to my original assertion. My favorite cousin, Annie, was the only one who took my part, and said that, for all they knew, some one might have got into the house.

"If any one had got into the house," said my aunt, "it is quite evident that they would not open the door to any person who came to it."

"But," pleaded Annie, "if they were there for no harm!"

"Nonsense," said one of her sisters; "it's a *hallucination.*" At this they all laughed, and I joined them, though I was in no laughing mood.

As Annie had taken my part, she did not desert me, but telegraphed to her papa to go to their house and ring the bell, knock at the door three times and say "Open sesame." When she told us her message, she added: "If there is any one in the house they are certain to come for that;" to which we all agreed. My uncle, who would do anything for his daughter, did as he was requested and telegraphed back that all his efforts had made no impression on the door. I was then left alone. Annie sided with the rest in telling me I had made a mistake. I was unshaken, however, and the recollection of the strange appearance of the person who had opened the door made me feel very uncomfortable. I made some excuse to go up town the next day and determined to investigate the matter for myself. On arriving in London, I went at once to my uncle's house. I rang the bell, but no answer. I knocked, but all was still. I again rang furiously and even kicked the door; but in vain. I began to think that I must on the former occasion have gone to the wrong door, and went out some distance from the house to look at it before leaving. The blinds were all down; but just as I was turning to go away I saw a hand holding the bottom of one of them, and which was at once withdrawn. It was merely for an instant that I saw this, and left, feeling rather sick.

I returned to Brighton the next day, and told what I had seen. I could not, however, affirm that I had seen the hand with the same confidence as I had spoken about the woman. The action was so instantaneous that I felt I might have been deceived; so that when my cousins began to cross-examine me on the subject, and show its unlikelihood, I rather wavered. When I admitted that I had rung and knocked for about five minutes without any one coming, they evidently thought that I was mistaken on both occasions, and had seen nothing. My aunt had not this time ventured to give any opinion. Much to my disgust, they then began to talk of people who had imagined they saw all sorts of strange things, till at last my aunt stopped them. She was looking very grave, and put numerous questions to me about my health. Was I quite certain I had not been reading too hard, lately? My cousins understood her and were silent. I saw Annie looking very pitifully at me. They evidently thought my mind was affected. This was more than I could bear, and I quite believed what they told me the next few days, that I was looking very unwell indeed. My uncle came down for a night. He took me aside, and began talking very mysteriously. "Young men," he said, "reading law in chambers ought to take great care of their health, and not overwork themselves." I had not had a book in my hand for about a month, but I did not tell him so. He strongly advised me to take a tour on the Continent. When I saw my aunt she repeated what her husband had said. They had evidently had a conference about me. As I did feel a little unwell, and had no desire to stay among people who thought I was a little crazed, I replied that I thought a little traveling would do me good. I found some men whom I had known at college who were going to Switzerland, and they asked me to join them. We spent three very pleasant weeks in rambling about, and then we went to Vienna. I saw many people I knew, and quite forgot why I had left England. The memory of that strange-looking woman never haunted me while I was away. I was away altogether about five weeks. The day after I returned to London, as I was going to Westend Square to see if my uncle had returned before going to Scotland, the thought of what I had seen at his house darted into my mind. Just then I met a friend. "Have you heard of the great robbery at your uncle's?" he said. I was unable to answer him. "I have not heard particulars," he continued, "but it seems to have been a very wholesale one." While they were at Brighton the house had actually been gutted. Pictures, carpets, and even chairs had been taken away. In fact, almost every article that was portable had been carried off. There had been no plate left in the house, so that was the only thing of value that was saved. It could be seen that the burglars had actually lived in the house; they had made a raid on the wine cellar and had left the empty bottles in all corners of the house. They had left a well-written letter, thanking my uncle for the use of his house and for what they had taken, and stating that on some future occasion they might pay him another visit. Not the slightest clew to the thieves was ever, so far as I am aware, discovered. The police did not allow the thing to get into the papers, as they thought it might hinder them in finding out the burglars. I expected some apologies for my statements having been doubted. Instead of that, however, I was told it was very foolish of me not to have informed the police of what I had seen. The reader may judge for himself whether I was more to blame than those I did inform.—*Chambers' Journal.*

An Unkissed Little Girl.

Can any one imagine a little girl eight or ten years old who has never been kissed? Caressing is such an early and often experience of children, and sweetens so many of the little bitternesses of their young lives, that it seems almost incredible that a girl, poor or rich, could live eight years without feeling the pressure of fond lips to hers. Yet one such has been found in New York, and her existence suggests that many others may not only be going unkissed by affection, but starved and beaten and outrageously abused by barbarity. A charitable lady was on a visit to a poor, dying woman, in a miserable quarter, and heard wild screams, apparently of a child suffering abuse. She inquired about it, and the neighbors told her they were made familiar with that music by hearing it every day. It was the Connollys beating a child. The neighbors had never seen the child, but knew it was there, and had been for years, by its daily and nightly wails of distress and shrieks of torment.

Now there happens to be no society for the prevention of cruelty to young children. The law is supposed to protect them by giving them to their masters, parents or guardians. The law contemplates and presupposes humanity in a civilized state, and there's where it sometimes errs. Where the error exists, there the poor little babes are worse off than the brutes. The best the lady could do under the circumstances was to go to Mr. Henry Bergh, President of the Society for Protection of Dumb Brutes, and report the case. If it had been a dog or a cat or a rat, Mr. Bergh would have had undoubted and complete jurisdiction to liberate the animal and punish its tormentors. But it was a child, and in truth Mr. Bergh had nothing to do with the case. He, however, interested himself in it, and collected evidence, and heard for himself, and laid the matter before a Judge. The Judge issued a writ to bring the child before him. Her appearance revealed years of torture, and her manner confessed that she told the truth when she gave in her young experience to the court.

She said her name was Mary Ellen McCormack, and that she did not know how old she was. Her parents were both dead, but she called Mrs. Connolly mamma; never had but one pair of shoes; had no shoes or stockings this winter; had never been allowed to go out of the rooms where the Connollys live except in the night, and then only in the yard; had never been in the street that she recollected; never wore flannels, only a frock; slept on a piece of carpet, with a quilt over her. Mrs. Connolly whipped her every day; the whip made black marks on her; never knew what she was whipped for; supposed it was the way all children had to be served. A deep cut over her forehead was made with a pair of scissors in mamma's hand. She had no recollection of ever being taken on anybody's lap and kissed. Didn't know what kissing is. She was always locked up in a bed-room when Mrs. Connolly went out, and whipped when she came in. This was the substance of her story.

The Judge declined to let Mary Ellen go back to the Connollys, and the little girl will probably be placed some day where she will be kissed, but she can never make up for lost time. A society for the prevention of cruelty to young children could probably find hundreds of such cases in every large city.—*St. Louis Republican.*

A Sell, Not a Sale.

Amiable shopkeepers deserve to be canonized. Here is an illustration of the trials to which they are constantly subjected: One midsummer day, when Æolus slept and the thermometer stood in the nineties, a lady entered a store not a thousand miles off, and inquired for parasols. The obliging proprietor spread out before her samples of a large and varied stock. "Have you any of this shade, a size larger?" said the lady. The size larger was produced. "I think on the whole I prefer the size smaller." The size smaller was presented. "Have you any of this size a still lighter shade of blue?" The required shade was brought out. "Haven't you any of this kind with a crooked handle?" The shade with the crooked handle appeared. "Have you any with the crooked handle not quite so heavy?" said the lady, and so continued her inquiries for every conceivable size, shade and weight possible in the line of parasols. After nearly an hour had been thus consumed, the fair shopper gathered up her handkerchief and gloves and moved for the door. "Can't I sell you a parasol?" inquired the exhausted proprietor. "O dear! no," replied the lady, "I was merely inquiring the price. I am going into mourning myself, and have one for sale."—*New Bedford Mercury.*

Congressional Speeches With the Laugh Left Out.

Henceforth the words "laughter," "applause," "sensation" and other parenthetical remarks indicative of the hilarious or appreciative demonstrations of the House are to be omitted from the official report of the debates, which will now be drier reading than ever. The intelligent constituent, while perusing the dreary efforts of his member to be witty, will have to judge for himself where the laugh came in, and will be thrown back upon his unaided imagination for a picture of the applause which greeted the flights of eloquence. This important decision was made to-day at the instance of George F. Hoar, who asked by what rule or authority the words in question were put in. The Speaker said there was no rule for it, and that, as the words only put on record the fact that the members had violated the rules which forbade applause or other demonstrations, they had better be omitted, and he would direct the reporters to cease putting them in.—*Washington Notes in N. Y. Tribune.*

CURRENT ITEMS.

Gratitude is the throwing out of our hearts in the light of another's kindness

There are twenty counties in Pennsylvania which do not owe a dollar of public debt.

Bringing a Limburger cheese into Denver is punishable by a fine of $10 for the first offense.

The Eastern oyster refuses to spawn in the bay of San Francisco. He grows very fat and then dies.

It has been decided in Wisconsin that a lady who is kissed by a conductor can bring action against the company.

A Dubuque man has asked the courts to protect him against three widows who are trying to force him into a marriage.

A Brooklyn sewing society fines any member who talks scandal $1 for each offense; only the wealthy are able to attend.

The Niagara hotel-keepers announce that they are going to put a stop to hack swindling, but what about hotel swindling?

A boy in St. Louis swallowed seven brass buttons because another boy dared him to, and is now laid up for internal repairs.

Vermont boys threaten to run away and become pirates unless they are given hunks of maple sugar, and mothers have to submit.

People who propose to explore Africa ought to know that it takes a whole month to dry a dead explorer so that he can be shipped home.

"Kind words are wonderful in their way," says an exchange, "but so far as children go a boot-jack exerts a more powerful influence."

An agricultural society in New York is discussing the morality of raising hops and is getting rather hoppy over the question. Try rye, says an exchange.

"The human fiend in plum-colored kids who spit tobacco on my hat is marked for death," says John Lane in an advertisement in a Memphis paper.

A Detroit paper noting, the fact that a man fell down dead while combing his hair, says: "And yet there are people who will persist in that dangerous habit."

Wood ashes and common salt made compact with water will stop the cracks of a stove, and prevent the smoke from escaping.

Pittsburgh is going to cast a cannon twenty-eight feet long. If the ball don't kill they can punch a man in the stomach with the muzzle of the gun and severely injure him.

Braintree, Vt., had but one marriage during 1873. The groom was a gay young spark of 73, while the bride was a giddy thing of 74. It was her second and his fifth marriage.

There's nothing like persistency. John Couch was married in Philadelphia the other day to a girl who had refused him eighteen times. She wanted to see if he really loved her.

You may talk yourself into a bronchial affection but you can't convince a Vermont woman that there won't be a death in the family if she dreams of seeing a hen walking a picket fence.

The Maine people are waking up to the enforcement of the Fish laws, and a man was fined fifty dollars the other day for merely bringing a salmon to market in Bangor out of season.

In a house at Augusta, Me., a rat's nest recently discovered contained four silver spoons, a three-tined fork, thirteen cotton stockings and a half a peck of butternuts. Quite a stylish housekeeper for a rat.

After years of careful study and close observation an Iowa professor is able to announce that frogs can see sideways, and that music has more of influence on them than this careless world has any idea of.

A North Carolina Judge added three years to a man's sentence because the fellow hit him on the pate with a quid of tobacco and called him "old hoss." It does seem as if the word "freedom" had no business in this country.

A citizen of Vicksburg advertises: "My attention has been called to an editorial in the Vicksburg *Herald* of to-day, which might reflect upon me. I denounce the author of said article as a liar, scoundrel and a coward."

Mrs. J. H. Blackman, of East Sharon, Mass., who had been paralyzed in one of her legs three years so as not to be able to walk a step, fully recovered the use of her limb a few weeks ago, as she claims, by the efficacy of prayer alone.

Two hundred people in a Colorado town recently turned out in a body to look upon a bedstead with casters, it being the first ever seen in the county. The possessor had his hat over his left ear, and was for a time a greater man than the Mayor.

The quickest way we know of to make a man believe that there's nothing in the world worth living for is to excite him into chasing a cat across a yard where two or three clothes-lines are innocently swaying in the evening breeze.—*Detroit Free Press.*

The most astonishing case of spontaneous nuptials has occurred in Iowa, where a couple were recently married, and after the ceremony the bride was obliged to ask her husband what her new name was. The parties had been acquainted only a few hours.

How rapid is the march of civilization. There is a county in Kansas where only a few weeks ago the buffalo fed and the antelope sported, now showing evidence of modern civilization by bearing on the docket of the District Court three divorce suits.—*Exchange.*

Speaking of cremation, an exchange utters the following:

"And this is all that's left of thee.
Thou fairest of earth's daughters;
Only four pounds of ashes white
Out of one hundred and fourteen and three-quarters."

Fashionable milliners are finally indignant, and assert that after this season they will never have "openings." It seems that the manipulation of bonnets this year has ruined many hundred dollars' worth of goods, and they say that this sort of thing can't go on forever, more especially as they do not get any orders.

"How much better it would have been to have shaken hands and allow it was all a mistake," said a Detroit Judge. "Then the lion and the lamb would have lain down together, and white-robed peace would have fanned you with her wings and elevated you with her smiles of approbation. But no; you went to clawing and biting and rolling in the mud, and here you are. It's five dollars apiece."

There was a "sewing party" (charity) at Mrs. Basteemup's the other evening, and during the affair the father of one of the young ladies present appeared upon the scene unexpectedly. He was so much gratified at the cleverness exhibited by his daughter with her needle that he then and there resolved that he would never pay another dressmaker's bill. That young lady has now a strong prejudice against "sewing parties," and says she was an idiot ever to attend such an affair.

The Brooklyn *Eagle* has discovered the existence, just beyond the limits of that city, in stables filled with filth and dirt, packed together in the closest possible space and in all conditions of disease, 800 cows fed upon hot swill emptied from an adjoining distillery, and publishes the names of some twenty dealers who peddle the swill milk as "Orange County milk" to retail dealers and citizens of the two cities.

A successful April hoax, or a series of hoaxes, was perpetrated by the attaches of the Howard Athenæum last evening. A wire skeleton was dressed as a woman and placed in a seat. The pulling of a string caused it to fall to the floor, when several of the audience were deceived into giving the supposititious fainter their assistance. The device worked so well in the theater that it was carried into the streets, and several patrolmen became victims of the hoax, which was oft repeated during the night. One was induced to awaken the women asleep in a doorway; another was called to the woman dead; and so on, until the effigy was thrown from one of the wharves, and a sympathizing sailor recovered the supposed body.—*Boston Transcript, April 2.*

A Kentucky paper tells this: One night last week Mr. Arch Fuller, who lives on the river, below Barboursville, was aroused from his slumbers about midnight by a peculiar noise in his yard. He got up and, upon opening the door, beheld standing within thirty feet of his house a large black bear. He sprang for his pistol and immediately opened fire on Bruin. The night was dark, but Arch could see the bear's eyes and knew it was a bear, and kept on shooting until he had emptied his revolver. Having no other weapon about the house he closed and barred the door and sat down to await the dawn of day. As soon as daylight appeared Arch concluded that, as he had heard no further noise during the night, he had killed the huge beast and proposed to make a survey of the battle-field. He approached the spot where Bruin had stood, and there, lying prostrate, with six bullet-holes through its body, was found—his wife's wash-tub. Arch had seen the brass hoops on the tub shining, and took them for bear's eyes.

Bread Upon the Waters.

One day, not long ago, while an English merchantman was on a voyage in the Mediterranean, the Captain was called to the hammock of a dying sailor who had asked to see him. The invalid seafarer desired his commander to draw up for him a last will and testament, wherein the sum of $7,000 in English sovereigns was to be devised to a citizen of Memphis, in Tennessee, U. S., and the uncontrollable surprise of the Captain in his performance of the request of the sinking man caused the latter to make the following explanation of the past circumstances enabling him to bequeath such a sum of money: An Englishman by birth, he was a mechanic in Memphis in the year 1861. No matter about the causes of his expatriation and humble foreign occupation. Suffice it to say he had chosen to be a mechanic in America. Only for a short time, though; for when the secession war began he enlisted in one of the Tennessee regiments, having been scarcely able to earn a living as an artisan, and being just recovered from a weary sickness of which he must have died but for the generous ministrations of a family of strangers. Shortly after the discouraged convalescent's enlistment, and before his regiment marched further southward, he received from his family in England the sum of $7,000 in gold, which had been left to him by a dying uncle. Instead of availing himself of this windfall, however, to withdraw from the army and devote himself otherwise than as a soldier, it was his eccentric whim to bury his whole treasure under a tree, in a lot belonging to the gentleman whose family had been so kind to him in his sickness, and to neither speak nor act as though he had ever received any such money at all. Leaving the gold thus secretly placed he marched away with his military comrades.

Not long was it though before his eccentric character again displayed itself. Becoming speedily weary of the precarious fortunes of war, he deserted from the army into Mexico, and from thence embarked on an English vessel as a common seaman. Reaching England in due time, instead of rejoining his family there, he at once became a sailor on another vessel for a voyage around the world, and had remained an obscure sailor until the fatal sickness overtook him in the Mediterranean and an expiring impulse of gratitude induced him to bequeath his gold yet hidden in Memphis to those who had so long ago befriended him in that city.

Such was the strange, scarcely credible story which he told to the Captain in explanation of his curious will; and, after signing the latter with another name than that by which he had been known on shipboard, he carried the remaining mystery of his career with him into the world of shadows.

The Captain hardly knew whether to regard either story or will as anything more than the diseased fancy of a madman, but, upon reaching port, mailed the document, as he had solemnly promised, to the address of the Memphis gentleman to whom the buried gold had been devised. And, according to a late issue of the Memphis *Register*, that gentleman's reception of the will, together with the Captain's explanation of the foregoing circumstances, has been followed by a realization proving that the dying wanderer of land and sea spoke truly. The gentleman in question "had some time before sold and delivered to another party the lot on which the valuable sovereigns were deposited. How to get at it now without incurring opposition and perhaps litigation was the question which arose in his mind. After taking the advice of counsel he concluded to develop the whole matter to the purchaser and owner of the place and ask for the right to make search. This was done, and the new proprietor generously forwarded his wishes and gave him every facility to possess himself of the treasure. On digging at the foot of the tree described in the will the gold, amounting to $7,000, was happily found and the new owner made glad by the glittering heap." Who the departed giver of this little fortune was in his native personality is not known, and the secret is buried with him beneath the blue waves of the Mediterranean.—*New York Graphic.*