THE MAJOR'S STORY.

BEN BUTLER'S HEROIC REMEDY FOR THE BOUNTY JUMPING DISEASE.

A Military Execution in '64—Fourteen Men Shot to Death for Desertion—The Provost Marshal's Pistol Finishes the Work Begun by the Blundering Firing Party.

"No, I thank you," said the major when offered a chance to witness the execution of the murderer Brice. "I've seen all of that sort of thing I want to; one that I witnessed during the war satisfied me for all time, and was one that I never will forget if I live to be as old as Gen. Harney. In 1864 I was serving in the army of the James, where there had been an immense number of cases of desertion of bounty jumpers. Those fellows used to play their game this way: They would enlist up north in some locality where big bounties or big amounts for substitutes were paid, and would get sometimes as much as $1,000, or may be more. Well, they would come down to the front, do every duty right up to the handle, and until the game was dropped to the officers would be half tickled to death at getting such splendid new material. Most of them showed that they had handled gun, saber, or rifle before. These fellows were always the cleanest and neatest of the troops for guard duty, and a good deal of the time took orderly duty on the guard inspection.

"Well, the game was this: When they had gained the confidence of officers and mates, they would quietly wait until the brigade or regiment went on picket duty or got into a little skirmish line circus; and then quietly skip across lots to the Johnnies, gun, accoutrements, ammunition, and all, and tell there a story of being southern born, or, if of foreign birth (that was their safest gag), that they were sympathizers with the heroic southern cause, and had enlisted in the d—d blue-bellied Yankee ranks just to get a chance to get through the lines safely and join the cause they had so close at heart. They were received with open arms, for the reba., to encourage desertion, had a law offering $100 cash to each deserter, and, besides, used to pay in gold the value of the munitions of war taken across the lines. Besides this, they were not obliged to enter the confederate service against their will, but were given civilian employment somewhere by the government.

"Of course, they would be sent up to Richmond when they came from the army of the Potomac, James, or the Valley, and there were lionized in a minor way for their brave devotion to the cause. What good did it do them? Just this: After looking round long enough to get posted and familiar with matters they would enlist as substitute for some rich banker or contractor or government official, and get as much as $1,500 to $2,000 in gold, and be sent to the front, where they would play the same racket, and come into our lines as loyal, northern-born men, who had been living south at the outbreak of the rebellion, unable to get north, forced into the rebel ranks, watched and suspected and abused for loyalty, and could not escape from the cruel bondage until now, when their d—d loyal hearts were almost bursting with emotion, and tears were streaming down their lying faces at the sight and embrace of the dear old flag that it had broken their hearts to fight against. Dern my buttons; I've seen those 'loyal North C'liny' fellows feel so good over the flag that it made me ashamed of my own loyalty and devotion to it. Same old game, all through. Pay for their rebel arms and equipments, transportation north, exemption from draft, good work in the quartermaster's or commissary's department, until their d—d red-hot loyalty made them go into the army to help the 'dear old flag' and scoop in another big bounty.

"Ben Butler wasn't very much of a general, although he would go poking in under fire every once in a while to make himself believe he was, but he is a keen one, and when any one picks him up for a flat, they will ascertain that a great mistake of judgment has been made. After a while Gen. Butler, who was commanding the army of the James in '64, dropped to the fact that a great many very loyal men were coming into our lines at a very late period in the war, and to the whole game. The next time rebel deserters came into our lines he gathered them up at his headquarters and had each one's story reduced to writing by one of the lot of lawyers he had on his staff, and then Mr. Johnny Reb Deserter was marched off to every white regiment in the 10th or 18th corps and introduced. In many cases they met whole regiments full of old acquaintances, and in such cases the smarty was introduced to a court martial. Court martial meant sentence of death, and with Butler commanding that meant a firing party, a volley, and—no more desertion.

"I don't recollect exactly the date this thing occurred that I am telling you of, but it was either the latter part of December, '64, or very early in January, '65, that it happened that fourteen of these poor devils, who had come to the end of their game, were collected in the 1st division, 10th army corps, all waiting action on their court martial sentences, when one day an order came over from Butler's headquarters approving the sentence of death in each case, and ordering the execution by shooting the very next day. The necessary orders were at once issued by Gen. Alfred H. Terry, then the division commander, and next morning about 10 o'clock the troops of the command were formed on three sides of a square in a broad field outside the line of breastworks, Gen. (now senator) Hawley's brigade facing north, and the others facing inward on the right and left. About the center of the field a row of fourteen graves had been dug in the frozen ground, and all was ready for the execution.

"The day was the most depressing that I have ever seen. Just before, it had snowed to the depth of perhaps fifteen inches, and then during all the night before slow, cold rain had steadily fallen, and was still falling, which had soaked the snow thoroughly without melting it or softening the frozen ground beneath. Some delay caused the troops to stand in line in deathlike silence for more than an hour before the weirdly mournful music of the 'Adeste Fidelis' was heard from the band, and soon after the long column slowly filed out from the dark pines over toward headquarters and approached the scene. Each wagon contained two of the condemned men, each sitting upon his own coffin, and the cortege was composed of the guards, firing parties, and the provost marshal and his aids. On arriving the coffins were taken out and placed before the row of graves, and the prisoners with bound arms placed kneeling upon them. Then came the weary reading of the orders and the sentence in each case, while the dull, gray clouds still dropped the sullen rain, which made the official witnesses in waiting feel as though it was better to die on such a day, because the regret at leaving life was lessened.

"At last the firing parties, ten men and a sergeant for each of the condemned, were ranged before the respective prisoners, who were made to kneel on the coffins, and soon came the orders of the provost to fire. There were few among the 6,000 in that division that watched with open eyes the volley, but as the smoke cleared away, to the horror of all, several of the men still remained upright on the coffins, others were writhing and struggling or screaming, and but four or five, I think it was, were still in death. The men of the firing parties, in horror of their stern duty, had fired high. It was a sight so horrible that I cannot describe it, and one I shall never forget. The rifles were hurriedly reloaded; this time every one with ball cartridge, and the parties whose victims were dead were withdrawn from the line. The wounded men were propped up against the coffins, and the second volley rang out over the slope. This time fewer stray bullets were heard whistling away aloft through the air, but horror upon horror added—seven men were still alive, although all were wounded. Murmurs of pity and horror were heard all around the lines, and many of the men of the firing parties—grim, battle-worn veterans—were in tears, while several were entirely overcome. Hurriedly a third volley was fired, and consternation was upon all, for three yet lived. Now came the most agonizing part of the whole thing.

"It became the duty of the provost marshal to end the execution in person. I don't remember who he was, but he was a captain of one of the infantry regiments, and, I think, from the 7th Connecticut, Terry's old regiment. We had become almost unmanned by the terrible scenes we had already witnessed, which were worse for him, as we in the lines could not hear the groans and supplications of the suffering wretches. When he was directed to complete the work, he went out-and-out crazy. I had an idea that he would shoot himself. He tendered his resignation at once; it could not be accepted. Place him in arrest or shoot him; it could not be done. He would not perform the duty. He must. Gen. Terry, the kindest, most tender hearted man that ever wore a saber, was in tears, but he was performing a stern, official duty. He was ordered to see that the execution was duly carried into effect, and the order must be obeyed.

"Sharp, low-spoken words of command kept quiet the men in the ranks, who were almost mutinous from their horror, and at last the poor provost marshal tottered forward, revolver in hand, toward the nearest of the still living victims. A brother officer supported him, and one after the other of the writhing men was put out of agony by a pistol shot, the captain looking at each only enough to direct his revolver, and covering his face with his handkerchief at each pull at the trigger.

"The lines were kept formed only long enough to witness the hurried coffining of the dead victims of stern military law, and until the first hard rain blackened clods fell in each grave, and then, without the usual pomp of music, were hurriedly marched back to their winter camping huts. It was an awful sight, that I can't describe. It was an awful necessity; a terrible one, but no more bounty jumpers deserted to the rebel lines from that command.

"That is the reason I told you I didn't want to see any more executions."

DOWN THE BAY.

Letter From Old Point—The Washingtonians Who Are Enjoying Salt Water and Fresh Air—The Beautiful Daughter of Stonewall Jackson.

OLD POINT COMFORT, VA., July 9.—The season at Old Point Comfort is at its height. There are 980 persons here, among them several notable beauties. Mrs. William Allen, of Richmond, Va., nee Anderson, of Mobile; Mrs. William Worthington, of Baltimore; Mrs. Charles Cowardin, of Richmond, Va.; Mrs. Taylor, of Nashville, Tenn., an exceptionally beautiful woman. Miss Julia Jackson and Mrs. Thomas Jackson, the widow and daughter of "Stonewall" Jackson are here. Miss Jackson is a slight young girl with large, dreamy blue eyes, brilliant color, and light flaxen hair. She swims like a swan, rides any sort of horse, in a confederate gray uniform trimmed with brass buttons, does not dance, since the regulations of a strict Presbyterian ancestry forbid such worldly amusements, and bears a close resemblance to the medallion of her father which she wears around her neck suspended by a tiny gold chain.

Mrs. Jackson is a sweet-looking, gentle woman, with retiring manners and low voice. All good southerners pay their respects to the family of their late chieftain, and it is said that Julia Jackson has shaken hands with more people than any woman in the United States.

Gen. and Mrs. Joseph R. Anderson, of Richmond, Va.; Gen. and Mrs. Bradley T. Johnson, of Baltimore; Mary Clemner Smith, of the *Century* staff, are here.

The sad drowning of Charlotte Randolph Williams and Susan Eleanor Gibson, of Richmond, Va., threw a gloom over the whole company here. They were bathing on the right of the wharf.

Several hundred persons were driving, bathing, and swimming on the other side of the wharf, who, had they but been on the spot, might have rescued the children without difficulty. As it was the parties on the wharf heard a slight scream, saw four white hands wave, and before their very eyes the idea of their danger presented itself, both children disappeared under the waves. Fifty men dived for the bodies for many hours. At 2 o'clock that of Susie Gibson was recovered. The little boy who found her is a son of a fort soldier, and when offered money drew up his little, slim shoulders and said: "No, sir; I takes no money for that," in a chivalrous tone worthy of a Bayard.

The body of Charlotte Williams was not recovered till 5 o'clock, but neither had suffered the least disfigurement, and in that of Miss Gibson the color had not left the cheeks.

The late arrivals here from Washington are James Morgan, Mrs. Drew, Miss Drew, W. N. S. Godwin, W. H. Blaine, William Bradey, Mr. and Mrs. E. G. Brown, Francis Formley, C. A. Walter, J. S. Smith, J. R. Vermileya, F. Dodge, C. C. Bassett, United States geodetic survey; Edward A. Oyster, United States geodetic survey; H. C. Evans, Miss Bennett, Mr. and Mrs. L. E. Grovesnor, R. C. Cay, Samuel Ross, V. Hackman, Mrs. Charles A. Elliot, Miss Elliott, W. J. Hutchinson, J. A. Dickenson, Mr. and Mrs. E. B. Fadeley, Mrs. H. C. Warner, and Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Woodman.

FEMALE PICKPOCKETS.

Young Girls Taught to Steal—Operations of the Woman Fagins in New York.

New York Letter in Detroit Free Press.

As the female hand is allowed to be more dexterous than the male it stands to reason that girls should learn the trade of pocket picking as least as readily as boys, if not more so. And they do. There are no smarter pickpockets in New York than the girls and young women who follow the trade among the shopkeepers on Broadway, Sixth avenue, Fourteenth street, and Twenty-third street. They can mingle among the women, push against them, and keep very close to them with less suspicion than men would excite, and they are as clever at getting away when their work is done as any artful dodger of the other sex.

You probably have heard of female Fagins in New York who teach young girls to become expert pickpockets. I think it is safe to say that there are quite as many women following this profession as men. The police know dozens of them in different parts of the city. They do not keep regular schools, but they are at no time without pupils. Most of them are to be found in the crowded tenement neighborhoods, some keeping small stores in which the plunder brought in by the pupils, if it is a thing that can be sold, is received and disposed of. Children of 8, 10, and 12 years are encouraged to go out and pick up anything they can get, and if they show smartness they are taken in hand and trained, often much more thoroughly than they would be for an honest calling. I speak only of girls; the training of boys for miscellaneous theft is so notorious that it need not be mentioned. Nearly all the trainers are old women, and there is not one who, if accused of villainous work, would not protest innocence and virtue till the accuser was glad to get out of the reach of her rasping tongue. It is characteristic of these women to invoke bushels of blessings on you one moment, and pour a torrent of anathemas the next. They live mainly on the spoils brought in by the children they employ and teach and prepare for the penitentiary, and some lay up a good deal of money, though they always pretend to be poor, and never spend much on themselves.

AYER'S Pills possess the positive virtues of some of the best known of medicinal plants, prepared and combined with scientific skill, rejecting the crude and drastic portions and retaining only the active principal—the part which cures and does not harm. If you are sick try them.

LONDON'S GREAT TAILOR.

Recollections of the Man Who Put Disraeli on the Road to Fame.

Philadelphia Times.

"I remember Henry Poole very well," said R. Day yesterday. "He was a fine, tall, handsome man, over six feet in height, with blushy blonde whiskers. He measured 42 inches round the chest. There was no mistaking the man when you saw him; he walked the streets as if London were his own private property. Henry Poole was the second son of the old tailor of that name. He was educated at Cambridge, and graduated with a bachelor of arts degree. He might never have taken to the tailoring business, but his brother died and then Henry thought he saw his way to making a big thing of it. You see, the large connection he had among his college friends helped him. He was a man who always dressed with great taste and not only expected but insisted on all of his employes dressing well, too. When Henry Poole took the business in hand first there were not more than a hundred men employed; in ten years there were nearer a thousand."

"Is there any truth in the story of Poole's patronage of Disraeli?"

"Oh, yes. Disraeli was in very poor circumstances when he first obtained the clerkship in the home office. Poole, who was always in and out of every place where young men congregate, saw him, took a fancy to him, and believed there was something great in him. He took Disraeli out with him one evening to dinner, and proposed that he should supply him with clothes suitable to the position in society that Disraeli ought to hold. The future prime minister jumped at the offer, and there is little doubt that he also received pecuniary assistance from the shrewd and generous tailor."

"Did he not assist the late emperor of the French in the same way?"

"Yes; but there was a reason for that, you know."

"No, no; there is not a word of truth in that. It was Miss Howard. She was a cousin of Poole's. Her mother kept a very fashionable little hotel in Dover street, Piccadilly, just behind the White Horse cellars. She was created Duchesse de Beauverne by Napoleon on his marriage to the present ex-empress on condition that she left France. He also settled a very good income on her. Poole did not marry until late in life. His wife was a lady with whom he had fallen in love while quite a young man at college."

"He was very strict, was he not, in business?"

"I should think he was, indeed. He never allowed anything to go out of his shop that had not been tried on and fitted over and over again. He would employ a man and keep him in his employ for the simple reason that he was of the same size and build as a good customer. I have known a man to sit for a couple of hours on a saddle-block, only having the creases in a pair of riding breeches rectified. He reduced tailoring to a science."

"Did he do any cutting or measuring himself?"

"No, sir! There is a story told of Lord Hardcastle meeting Poole on the chain pier at Brighton. He stopped him and said: 'Look here, Poole, I got this coat of you, and see how badly it fits.' Poole took a bit of chalk out of his waistcoat pocket and marked his lordship's coat all over and said: 'Take that coat to my cutter, my lord, and he will make the necessary alterations.'"

"He was very extravagant in his habits, was he not?"

"Very. He had a house at Brighton, another in Burlington street, near his store, which was a perfect mine of art, and on the Thames, at Hammersmith, he had a regular palace. His champagne luncheons must have cost him a fortune. He had one of the finest hunting studs in Great Britain. He never cared what he paid for a horse, and though he was such a big man he was a magnificent 'cross country rider.'"

"He did not die rich, did he?"

"No, he was worth about £25,000 when he died, and the result of the sale of his houses and horses barely settled the claims of his creditors. He was generous to a fault. He never could pass a beggar, and many a half sovereign he's given away to people who perhaps didn't deserve his charity. He was the best of employers, and he kept men with him for years, but there was never the least mistake about who was master on his premises."

A LAKESIDE MUSING.

The Chicago "Tribune" Horse Reporter is Interviewed by a Girl of the Period.

"Butch" White's Latest.

"Good-day, sir."

A young lady stood beside the horse reporter's desk. "I came up here," she said, "because I often read in the *Tribune*—papa takes it—about people that you give information to. Papa says I can have a horse, and one of those sweet little village carts. Won't it be just ovely?"

The horse reporter subscribed by an inclination of his head to the entrancing nature of the prospect alluded to.

"And I want to find out," she continued, "just what sort of a horse I ought to buy, because papa doesn't know anything at all about such matters, and I've got to do the whole thing."

"I suppose you want a horse that you can drive yourself?"

"Yes. And it must have its tail square, like those at the races. Weren't those lovely little horseys that ran last Tuesday?—the cute things! I won a box of candy on that delicious little Wanda. Isn't she splendid? Do you think I could get Wanda?

"You don't want a racehorse," said the horse reporter; "you want one you can drive. You can get a bay filly with her tail banged, though, and that will answer the description of Wanda pretty well."

"Get a what?"

"A bay filly."

"What's a filly? Is it a new kind of horse, and are they fashionable?"

"A filly," replied the horse reporter, "is a girl horse."

"Oh," said the young lady, blushing violently. "And do you think I'd better get a filly?"

"It will do as well as any. I suppose you want a gentle one?"

"Oh, yes. I want a sweet little horsey that won't kick, or run away, or anything like that. That would be perfectly terrible. Why, Belle Jones had a perfectly charming little donkey last summer, and the nasty little thing went right into the flower beds at Central park with her, and ate up a lot of begonias and things, and a horrid policeman said she ought to get married and practice on her husband a year or two before trying to drive a real donkey. Wasn't he mean?"

The scholarly forehead of the horse reporter was again inclined in an affirmative manner.

"And so," continued the young lady, "I want a nice horse—one that will do just whatever I want him to as soon as he finds it out. And it must be a bay horse with a square tail, and have white harness."

"They are not growing harness with horses this year," said the horse reporter. "They used to do it, but it is cheaper to let the horses grow up, and then have the harness made."

"Why, of course!" exclaimed the young lady. "I ought to have known better than that. Why, Gen. Grant was a harnessmaker, wasn't he? And that's how he came to be president. I remember papa saying that no matter how humble a station a man got on at he might attain any honor in this country."

"Gen. Grant was not a harnessmaker," said the horse reporter, "and your papa didn't say anything about a man getting on at a station. Prosperity isn't a railroad train."

"Well, perhaps he didn't, but anyhow I want a white harness, and a blue ribbon on the whip. It will be just too lovely"—and the young lady sat back in the chair and for a moment silently contemplated the ecstatic vision thus conjured up. Then she said: "What shall I call my horse?"

"Have you decided to get a filly?"

"Yes."

"Well, there are plenty of good names. How does 'Beatrice' strike you?"

"O, that would be elegant. And then I could call her 'Trixy' for short, couldn't I? It will be simply ravishing to have that dear, darling little horse, and a cunning cart with yellow wheels, and I think you're awfully good to tell me all about it. And will there be an item in next Sunday's paper that Miss Lillian Smith appears daily on the boulevard driving a beautiful bay filly?"

"Yes, we'll have an item prepared."

"And will it be in the society news?"

"No; we'll put it on the editorial page, where it will attract more attention."

"O! You're just lovely. You must let me take you out riding some day."

"Thanks," said the horse reporter, "but I love life with the strong, clinging love of buoyant youth—and I have seen women drive."

DRIFTING THE RIGHT WAY.

Florida Acknowledged to be a Doubtful State by Well Informed Democrats.

Macon Telegraph.

Recently, in view of the evident fact that politics in Florida were badly mixed, and that the state would become a very important issue in the presidential campaign, the *Telegraph* prepared a series of questions relating to the situation, and sent them to one of the most prominent gentlemen of that state, a man who is thoroughly conversant with the facts handled, having served the state in many important relations for years, and who has the welfare of the democratic party at heart. The following is the interview. It may be relied upon as expressing the opinions of the best informed man in Florida:

"What is the comparative strength of parties in Florida?"

"Well, it is not safe to base any computations on the election of 1880. There were many allegations of fraud, and it is not possible to assert confidently what the true vote was. In 1882 the democrats carried the state by 250 to 340 votes. The whole natural strength of the independents is between 2,000 and 3,000 votes."

"Will the independents support Blaine?"

"I think not."

"Has either party lost strength since 1876?"

"No; both parties have gained."

"How has immigration affected the state vote?"

"The vote of 1882 seems to indicate that the greatest gain has been with the republicans."

"Is the Cuban vote of any importance, and with what power is it allied?"

"There are 800 or 850 Cuban voters in the state, probably. Of these fully one-third are solidly democratic, and the remainder is variable and unreliable. On national questions they are controlled by the junta in New York, so I am informed."

"Will the large corporation interests be used to affect votes?"

"I think not."

"Is there any apparent preparation on the part of the republicans for the presidential campaign?"

"It is yet to early for that, I suppose, as they have not yet held their conventions."

"Is there any division in the democratic party in Florida?"

"Yes; there is a very unfortunate breach, which promises poorly for harmony and greatly endangers our success; a breach which ought never to have been created, and which might have been prevented or speedily healed."

"What are the nature and causes of this division?"

"Well, as to the nature of it, it is divided between 'regulars' and 'independents,' and between the liberal northern and western element and the prospective southern element. As to cause—first, there is a great distrust in the minds of many men as to the integrity of the present administration, and a widespread dissatisfaction as to its methods. Out of those have grown the independent movement, carrying with it some young men who are and have been highly useful to the democracy. Another cause of dissatisfaction is the 'Disston sale,' by which 4,000,000 acres of territory, nearly the entire public domain of the state, were disposed of to a northern speculator for 25 cents an acre, who in turn has been selling it rapidly at from $1.25 to $10 an acre. Another cause of dissatisfaction is the very general exclusion of northern democracy from office in the state; thus the governor, lieutenant governor, every cabinet officer, every circuit judge and state attorney, every sheriff, &c., is either southern born or served in the confederate army. This fact will not produce revolt, but it is prolific of apathy."

"To what extent will this condition of affairs affect the presidential campaign."

"It will make Florida a very doubtful state."

Explanatory of the above interview, and of Florida's political situation, it may be stated that the sale of the Disston lands narrowed the pastures and crippled the cattle business of the "crackers." Pope is the independent candidate, and has already captured the support of one republican district. The democratic candidate for governor is a northern man, but with a confederate record.

THE CHILDREN OF CRIMINALS.

The Taint of Crime Often Hereditary.

Boston Courier.

A London paper makes the sensible suggestion—which, however, nobody will follow—that the compassion which is often lavished by well-meaning persons upon notorious criminals who are caught and condemned would generally be far better bestowed upon their families or relatives. The very nature of the attentions which are shown to the vilest of criminals is sufficient to indicate that the class of people who bestow them are little likely to be influenced by motives of philanthropy, and it is not be hoped that anything good is to be expected from them. They gratify a prurient curiosity and a taste for abnormal amusements, but it is idle to look to them for any genuine work of beneficence.

The families of criminals, however, need to be more closely looked after than at present. The tendencies to crime in the blood and from the surroundings which are the fate of the children of confirmed criminals, need especial correctives. Both for its own sake and for the sake of the ill-fated victims of circumstances, society should put forth its most strenuous exertions to reclaim the children of those upon whom the law visits its penalties. Their case is always hard, and often profoundly pathetic.

The paper of which we speak above relates a touching story just reported from Paris, which illustrates most vividly how severely the lash may fall upon the most unoffending person, when it ought fairly to strike only the culprit himself.

Menesclou is the name of one of those monsters whose murderous exploits have within the last two or three years excited so much attention in France, and have been judged even by a Parisian jury too atrocious to be covered by extenuating circumstances. He was executed in due course at La Roquette, but at the same time his parents, who were both alive, suffered a still more pitiable fate. The mother fell into a condition of insanity, and was removed to the Saltpetriere hospital, where she has remained ever since, and is considered an incurable patient. The father was employed as an usher at the ministry of finance and bore an excellent character. But on the arrest and condemnation of his son he fell ill and became unable to work. He was mercifully pensioned off by the administrators of the department, though his time for a pension had not arrived, and has since been living on his allowance, without fear of absolute want, at Grenelle. But his health only got worse, and a few weeks ago he lost his reason. The cause of his mental affliction could not be for a moment doubted, as he made constant allusions to his son. Three days ago this wretched man was released by death, which overtook him in a moment of acute frenzy.

MEXICAN FARMING.

The Indian With His Primitive Methods, Small Gains, and Simple Habits—The Landed Proprietors and Their Luxurious Ways—Not a Promising Field.

Number 41 of the series of consular reports, now being published by the state department, contains an interesting article on the commerce and industries of Mexico, by Gen. David H. Strother, United States consul general at the City of Mexico. Gen. Strother is known to the magazine readers of twenty-five years ago as "Porte Crayon," and it may be remarked that in his official reports there are traces of the delightful and pleasant fancy which characterized his literary productions.

We give extracts from Gen. Strother's observations on Mexican agriculture. He says:

To appreciate and properly understand the agricultural capacities and prospects of this country it will be necessary to know something of the people directly engaged in the business. These are divided into two distinct classes, as different and distant from each other in character, methods, motives, and results as it is possible for us to imagine people cultivating the same soil and living under the same government. One class is the independent Indian, who is in all respects a communist, living in his village of adobe or cane-built huts, owning and cultivating the adjacent lands in common with the people of his tribe, working and dividing the proceeds according to laws which ante-date the Spanish conquest, and using the same implements that were used by his ancestors under the Montezumas.

In spite of his simple ways and primitive tools the aboriginal of this country seems to have possessed considerable skill and to have obtained very satisfactory results from his agriculture. He knew when to sow and how to gather. He understood all about irrigation, and the dikes and canals of former centuries still stand as monuments of his patient intelligence. Nor was he content with the simple necessities. He planned vast pleasure gardens, and planted stately parks and parterres of gorgeous flowers, and adorned his grounds with artificial lakes and fish ponds.

From his Spanish conquerors the Indian agriculturist doubtless learned something; notably the use of horses, asses, and mules. But the long and cruel despotism, which crushed out all the individual independence and dignity of the race, has left its humiliating impress upon this as upon all other arts practiced by the ancient Mexicans. At the present day the Indian agriculturist rarely accomplishes more than a meager and miserable maintenance for his family, a surplus, perhaps, to pay his taxes to the state, and his dues to his cure, and something over in prosperous seasons.

The other class is composed of the large landed proprietors, whose establishments are the historical feudal estates of the old world. These are generally men of wealth and education, with ideas liberalized by foreign travel and with a comprehensive knowledge of their business. With them agriculture is a science and they readily accept all improved methods, and are ready to experiment with new ideas and adopt any new agricultural machinery that may be presented. The establishment of a first-class "hacienda" will cost from $250,000 to $500,000.

The extensive and massive buildings of stone, adobe, and stucco, including dwellings, barns, stables, cattle sheds, chapel, and offices, are all inclosed in a heavy wall from 20 to 30 feet in height, the angles and the gate protected by projecting turrets pierced for musketry. This enceinte is frequently surrounded by a moat, the whole having more the aspect of a fortress than of a farm house. At night all the live stock of the estate, the proprietor and his family, his superintendents, assistants, paymasters, priest, and trained servants, with an ample supply of provisions and arms, are gathered within this castellated inclosure for rest and shelter, and, if summoned, to man the walls and defend the place against the predatory assaults of highwaymen or bands of hungry revolutionists. These attacks, frequent enough in former times to justify the defensive precautions of these agricultural castles, are becoming more rare of late years, although we still hear of them from time to time in distant parts of the country.

The laboring peons of these estates, secure in their poverty, generally live outside the walled inclosure in cane-built or adobe huts, grouped in irregular villages, picturesquely shaded by groves of plantains, papagas, and other tropical fruit trees. In some instances each hut has its patch of arable ground attached for the private benefit of the occupant. Sometimes these laborers are paid a per diem, with a stipulated allowance of food, amounting in all to about 37½ cents per day. In other haciendas they work by the job, and frequently can earn from 75 cents to $1 per day. As agriculture cannot be carried on in this country without irrigation, each hacienda or cultivated district must establish and maintain its system (more or less costly) of dams and canals, to secure and distribute the necessary supplies of water during the dry season, a fertilizer which costs the great proprietor considerable sums of money, and which the Indian communities obtain by combined and patient labor.

The lack of adequate transportation, which has heretofore discouraged production, will be supplied by the completion of the present and projection railroads. The vexatious and oppressive system of internal and interstate duties, imposts, taxes, tolls, charges, forfeits, fines, penalties, and confiscations, crushing to all enterprise and ruinous to productive industry, will also disappear before the requirements and the commercial enlightenment which accompanies an extended railroad traffic.

With the question of "scarcity of water," it will require time and money to treat successfully. This scarcity affects in a greater or less degree all the elevated lands in the republic and those regions where the climate is most healthful and agreeable. Immense districts of country, otherwise fertile and arable, now lie waste and uncultivated for the absolute lack of this essential element of life and growth for seven or eight months consecutively. In some places artesian wells have been tried with limited success. Near this city lands have been profitably irrigated by means of steam-pumping machinery, and there is no doubt that, with due regard to localities and circumstances, both these processes may be profitably employed to extend the limits of Mexican agriculture.

Nevertheless, the main reliance for such extension must be on the natural water supplies of the country and climate, the preservation and distribution of the lakes, and summer rains, as practiced by the people of this and other dry countries from times immemorial, but on a more extended scale and with improvements, perhaps, in the details. The irrigating tanks of India, which have clothed whole kingdoms of arid and desert lands with a garment of wealth and beauty, are suggested as models for similar works in Mexico. The numerous deep and extensive barrancas worn by the slender water courses as they wind their ways from the elevated central plains down to the oceans on either hand would afford many convenient sites for the location of such dams, and under their influence large districts now barren and uncultivated might be covered with profitable crops.

In conclusion, and in reply to numerous letters received from the United States inquiring concerning the inducements and advantages offered to agricultural immigrants in this country, I am constrained to say that individual immigrants, with nothing more to rely on than their energy and industry, are not likely to improve their condition by coming here. On the other hand, organized capital, directed by practical science, may find in Mexican agriculture a varied and profitable field of enterprise. The total agricultural product of the republic for 1883 is approximately estimated at $161,079,500.

Buckwheat Verses Speculation.

Wall Street News.

"Thar's my son Joseph," said the old farmer as he cut off a liberal hunk of plug and dropped it into his mouth. "I brung him up same as I did Dan'l, an' I giv' 'em both a thousand dollars to start in life. Joseph went into speculation, and Dan'l went into buckwheat."

"And how did they com[illegible]"

"Waal, in the fust five [illegible] Joseph he made $30,000, and Daniel [illegible] half his capital."

"And the next five?"

"Waal, Joseph lost all he had, and Dan'l controlled all the buckwheat-itch in New England. Tell you, stranger, atween raisin' buckwheat an' speculation in sheers, buckwheat is bound to git thar in the end. You know what to depend on. The market never slops over or milts down. You sow, reap, eat, and scratch, and you're allus ahead."

ABSENT-MINDED WOMEN.

Jokes on the Gentle Creatures Who Forget Themselves Sometimes and Do Ridiculous Things.

Chicago Tribune.

"But speaking of absent-minded people," said a West Sider, "women beat the nation at that. There is my wife, one of the most careful and most levelheaded women in the world. But one night last winter we went to a large party and we both, for special reasons, were more than anxious to appear well. My wife was greatly concerned about me, as I am the absent-minded member of the family, and looked me over critically and carefully after I left the coat room and before we went down stairs. She was herself, all right, of course, and was superbly dressed. We went down in high feather and had passed through the parlors and had spent a delightful half hour on parade duty as it were, when my wife suddenly turned pale in what I thought was a fainting fit. I hurried her from the room, and was about to turn the house upside down in search of restoratives, when she clutched my sleeve and pointed to her feet. She had before leaving home drawn over her shoes a pair of my socks, and had forgotten to remove them. The thought that she had been parading before 300 people with those socks on was too much for her."

A South Sider who had listened to this said after indulging in a contented little chuckle: "My wife tells almost as good a story as that on herself. She is, as everybody knows who knows her at all, very particular about her dress, and she grieves over a spot on my coat or a lack of polish on my shoes with a grief that will not be comforted. She went down street shopping on one occasion this spring, and in trying on bonnets became a little disturbed over the fact that none of the new shapes suited her face. She therefore picked up her parasol, walked out of the store, called on a very aristocratic acquaintance, and then came home. A glance in the hall glass showed that she had no bonnet on. She had taken it off to try on the new ones, and, as she expressed it, had been parading along the streets with nothing on her head but a small veil across her forehead. She didn't scold me about the spots on my coat for a week."

"I have a better story than that," said a superintendent of one of the departments at Field's. "Not long ago a fashionably dressed lady came in early, and in the course of her bargaining put her parasol on the counter near a large feather duster which one of the clerks had been using. After making some purchases the lady caught up the duster instead of her parasol, and went out hurriedly. As soon as I discovered the mistake I sent a boy after her with the parasol, but he did not overtake her until she had made quite a journey.

"In fact, she flourished that feather duster along the street, flourished it about as she went into another store, and put it down on the counter, still under the impression that it was a parasol. When her purchases in the second store were made, she turned to pick up her parasol, and seeing the feather duster, asked for her parasol. The clerk explained that she had not brought any parasol in, but had come in carrying the duster. She was supremely indignant at such an intimation, and was delivering the clerk a sharp lecture on the subject when in came our boy with her parasol and an explanation. She was so overcome that she had to be sent home in a carriage."

JACKSON'S BIRTHPLACE.

A Historical Mistake Corrected—A Letter from "Old Hickory."

Nearly all the standard histories and encyclopedias locate Gen. Jackson's birthplace in South Carolina. James Parton, in his life of Jackson, says that he was born in Union county, North Carolina. The American Encyclopedia, and Appleton's Encyclopedia of Biography (Hawks) makes Jackson a native of North Carolina, while the British Encyclopedia says he was born at "the Waxhaw, or Warsaw settlement, whose position in relation to the later boundaries of North Carolina and South Carolina is unknown." The Charleston *Mercury* of June 28, publishes an autograph letter from Gen. Jackson which seems to settle the matter in controversy.

It is not likely that Gen. Jackson could himself be mistaken about his birthplace, and he says that he was born in Lancaster district (now Lancaster county), S. C. The letter was written in response to an invitation sent to Gen. Jackson from citizens of Lancaster to attend a Fourth of July celebration in his native district. Gen. Jackson never was much of a grammarian, and his spelling was not in accordance with any established standard. The letter is printed precisely as he wrote it.

HERMITAGE, June 2, 1828.—GENTLEMEN—I have the pleasure to receive your kind letter of the 12th ult., inviting me to celebrate with the citizens of my native district the approaching anniversary of our national independence.

For this pleasing testimonial of the esteem of the citizens of Lancaster, I pray you, gentlemen, to offer them the assurance of my heartfelt thanks. If it were in my power nothing could be more grateful to my feelings than to comply with their wish; but the distance to be travelled, and the various requisitions upon my time at home, compel me to say that this pleasure must be postponed to some other period.

Be pleased, gentlemen, to accept for yourselves individually, and convey to those you represent, my gratitude for your tender recollection of me as a citizen of Lancaster. This obligation is heightened by the consciousness, on my part that absence and time have not weakened the ardour of that sentiment which consecrates the memory of the place which gave me birth. I have the honor to be, gentlemen, your very obdt. servt,

ANDREW JACKSON.

A French Bird Charmer.

Pall Mall Gazette.

Paris has found a new sensation in a bird charmer, who has been astonishing the boulevardiers with his powers. A bet was made between him and a M. Loizey, a gentleman who was rather skeptical in such matters. The conditions were that M. Loizey should furnish a dozen birds, which were to be at the disposal of the charmer for fifteen minutes. At the end of that time M. Picard was to open the cage which contained them, and each bird was to alight on a certain arbutus, brought upon the ground by him and placed at a distance of 100 meters from the point where they were liberated. For each bird which did not obey the charm within a quarter of an hour M. Picard was to pay M. Loizey 50 francs, and for each bird which did M. Loizey was to pay M. Picard the same sum.

When the time for the test arrived so large and so curious a crowd had gathered on the Champs de Mars that it was impossible to maintain the needful space of 100 meters around the spot where the cage was placed. Forty meters was all the distance that could be secured. The results, therefore, were not accepted as determining the bet, and another trial will be made. The birds, however—released under these conditions—flew one by one to the arbutus and perched on its branches, to the great astonishment, it is said, of the spectators. M. Picard's charm consists, it is believed, in impregnating these branches with a colorless and mysterious liquid, the secret of which is as yet his own.

There are 4,326 Friends in New England, a decrease of thirty-three in the last year.

ODDS AND ENDS.

Henry Ward Beecher's library is valued at $130,000.

Arkansas has 1,200 white and 800 colored school teachers.

Virginia will this year harvest 1,100,000 bushels of peanuts.

Miss Agnes Benedict will attempt to swim the English channel in August.

It costs not less than $33,000,000 annually to support dogs in the United States.

The Emperor of China has ordered the destruction of $4,000,000 worth of opium.

Charles Metz, a Troy bartender, has fallen heir to a German baronetcy and fortune.

The Osborne flat house in New York city, which is almost completed, is fifteen stories high.

Over 40,000 copies of M. Alphonse Daudet's new novel, "Sapho," were sold within the first two days.

In Whitechapel church, London, recently, an infant was actually christened Osman Digma Smith.

London supports an eight-page penny monthly, the sole contents of which consists of selected poems.

A new diamond danger—A lady in New York cut her cheek with her cluster ring while adjusting her bonnet.

It is estimated that $10,000,000 worth of grass is annually consumed by the prairie dogs in northern Texas.

One hundred and fifteen millions of dollars is said to be invested, as real estate, in the 2,552 theaters of the United States.

Alex. Henderson, ex-husband of Lydia Thompson, is going to bring an English burlesque company to this country next season.

An Indianapolis man has invented a live poultry car. It has numberless partitions, storm curtains, cleansing apparatus, water and food troughs.

An Illinois sheriff cried for two hours after hanging a murderer. The murderer, however, never shed a tear nor lost his appetite after dispatching his victim.

Mr. and Mrs. Rolla Floyd are the only remaining members of the famous colony of 153