MAJOR PENDALLAS.

A Christmas Love Story.

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON.

CHAPTER I.

On the 24th of December, 1880, I was standing in a little country railroad station, in a state of perplexity. Near me, sitting in a chair by the stove, was a young lady, also in a state of perplexity. Facing us both stood the station master, who had been in a state of perplexity, but was getting out of it. "Just you wait here ten minutes," he said, "and I'll see what I can do for you," and putting on a fur cap and an ulster, he went out of doors.

"JUST YOU WAIT HERE TEN MINUTES."

The state of the case was this: Miss Weldon, the lady by the stove, was on her way to join a Christmas party at the house of her uncle, Mr. Dolliver, some seven miles from the station, and I, invited to the same house, had been delighted to meet her on the train. We were good friends, and had studied art together in Paris. When we left the city in a morning train, a little snow was beginning to fall, and as we journeyed northward we found the snowfall heavier and heavier, and we had arrived at this little village of Boynton at 3 o'clock in the afternoon, an hour behind time.

From Boynton to the Dolliver house we were to go by stage coach, but the driver had left more than an hour previous, hurrying away before his ordinary time for starting for fear the road would be blocked up before he could get to his home, a good twelve miles away, and assuring himself that there would be no passengers for him on such a day.

It was reasonable enough that we should be perplexed, for we could not see, nor at first could the station master see, how we were to get to our journey's end that day. If we could wait until next day, he told us, the stage driver would be back in a sleigh. He said he would be sure to come—for Christmas packages, if not for passengers. But we could not wait until next day. It would be better to return to the city in the next down train, if, happily one should come. We could not hope that the Dollivers would send for us, for if they saw the stage pass without stopping, they would be sure we had not come by the train.

The station master was a good man and did his best to get us out of our trouble. He had doubts about another train coming down that day—it was a country road with one track—and he thought it would be a great pity if the Dollivers should be deprived of the company of two of their Christmas guests; a lot of them had come up the day before. Nobody in the village made a business of hiring out vehicles or carrying passengers, but an idea had struck the station master, and he had gone out to see what he could do with it.

In about a quarter of an hour he returned.

"Well, sir," he said, "there is just one thing you can do. There isn't anybody in this village who will go to Dolliver's to-day, for there is no chance of getting back to-night, but the man who keeps the store here, Mr. Peter Chase, has got a horse and sleigh, and if you choose to hire that of him and do your own driving, I think you can get it, if you are willing to pay him something extra, for he'll have to send a man over to-morrow with the stage driver to bring it back, and besides, in rough times like these, people always charge something extra."

I put the matter before Miss Weldon, and she did not hesitate to say that rather than take the risk of being obliged to remain in the village, where there were no accommodations for strangers, she would take the risk of letting me drive her to the Dolliver's.

"It is only seven miles," she said, "and if the horse is good enough, I don't see what there is to happen."

I tramped through the snow to Peter Chase's store, and quickly arranged with him for the hire of his horse and sleigh.

"Five dollars may seem a good deal, sir," he said, "for a trip like that, but this is a pretty deep snow, and we all ought to remember that Christmas comes but once a year. I'll have the sleigh around at the station in ten minutes."

In half an hour a little sleigh, drawn by a big brown horse, came up to the station.

"I would have been here sooner," said Mr. Chase, "but it was a good while before I could find the bells, and I knowed you wouldn't want to take a Christmas sleigh ride without bells."

I did not complain of the delay, although I had been getting dreadfully impatient. The station master had had a telegram from up the line, stating that a down train with a snow plow was on its way, and I was very much afraid that Miss Weldon would conclude to wait and take this train back to the city. So, without loss of time, we bundled in. The Christmas-minded Mr. Chase had brought two heavy fur robes, our valises were packed in behind, the sleigh being of the box variety, and we were ready.

"There is no mistaking the way," said Mr. Chase. "You go straight ahead until you come to the house."

"Which I know perfectly well," added Miss Weldon, and away we jingled.

The snow was still falling, but we did not mind that, and now that we had started off, I was glad that Mr. Chase had waited to find the bells. Their merry jingle suited my spirits well. A jolly sleigh ride with Clara Weldon was more enjoyment than I had counted on for this Christmas.

A young man and a young woman, both of lively disposition, good friends, fellow-workers, and nothing more, are much more likely to have a merry time in a case like this than if they were a pair of lovers, or even if one of them were a lover. True love implies a certain seriousness, and is not infrequently conducive to demureness.

The snow was deep on the road and sometimes drifted, but the sleigh went through it well enough. The horse, however, probably not a very good traveler on the best of roads, made but slow progress. But although he was an animal of deliberate action, possessing, as Miss Weldon thought, an æsthetic turn of mind, which made him object to destroy the virgin smoothness of the snow with his great hoofs, he was strong, and that was the main point. With reason to believe that we should safely reach our journey's end, it did not trouble me that we were making that journey slowly, and my companion appeared to be of my way of thinking. The beauty of the snow-decorated forests, fields, and hills was enough to make our artist hearts satisfied, even if the horse should decline to do more than walk.

It began to grow dark, and we had not reached the hospitable mansion to which we were bound, but there was a beautiful weirdness in the snow scenes, softened by the dusky light, and our hearts and the bells were still merry. But as it grew darker and darker we both began to wish that we stood in the light and the warmth of the Dolliver house. I whipped the horse, who made a few bounds through the snow and then relapsed into his former trot. It was no use to try to hurry him.

Several times Miss Weldon had assured me that she was not in the least anxious, and that she was sure we should now reach the house in a very short time. I think she was about to say something of the kind again, when suddenly she exclaimed in a voice that had a ring of hearty cheerfulness in it, very different from her previous expressions of thoughtful encouragement:

"Here it is. Didn't I tell you? We are at the very gate."

Sure enough, there was the gate with a lamp on one of the posts, and there in the midst of its whitened grounds was the house, its windows lighted and a lamp on the piazza.

When I pulled up to the door, I attempted to bound from the sleigh, but my bound was a poor one, for I found that my legs were somewhat stiffened by the cold. As I helped Miss Weldon to alight, I could perceive that she was not nearly so active as I had generally known her. The door opened before we had time to reach it, and an elderly woman, with a Christmas look about her, which was absolutely warming, stood in the broad portals.

We stopped on the piazza before entering, stamping and shaking ourselves, for we were two figures of snow.

"Our valises are in the back of the sleigh," I said, and, to my surprise, my teeth chattered a little as I spoke. "I think the horse will stand until some one takes him."

We then went in. Suddenly Miss Weldon stopped and looked from right to left, and, turning to the good woman, she exclaimed:

"This is not Dr. Dolliver's house?"

"Of course not," said the other; "did you think it was? Major Pendallas lives here."

"Miss Weldon and I looked at each other in dismay.

"We have made a mistake," I said. "How much further on is it to the Dolliver place?"

"It isn't farther on at all," the woman replied; "it is not on this road at all."

"It is too bad," I said. "They told us at Boynton it was a straight road, and we could not miss it."

"So it is; but three miles below here there is a fork that anybody might mistake, especially at night, with the roads unbroken. But come in and get warm; you must be half frozen. I'll have a man throw a blanket over the horse," and with this she showed us into a large room with a wood fire blazing on the hearth. She pushed two chairs before the fire.

AN ANIMAL OF DELIBERATE ACTION.

"Sit down," she said, "and get a little warm. If I am not mistaken this is Miss Clara Weldon. Yes, I thought so. It's been a long time since I have seen you. I am Mrs. Bardsley. I keep house for Major Pendallas. Excuse me for a moment."

"What a grand thing this fire is," said I, "and who is Major Pendallas?"

"I never saw him in my life," said Miss Weldon, following my example and drawing up close to the fire, "but I have often heard of him. He used to be in the army, I think, and now he has a stock farm and has all sorts of fine horses and cows. I wonder if he would be willing to send us over to my uncle's? I can't bear to think of starting out again in that sleigh, and with that horse."

I was glad she did not include the driver in her objections, and said I hoped that the Major would be able to do something for us. But at the time I did not give much thought to the subject, for my whole soul was occupied in reveling in the genial heat. I had had no idea that I was so cold.

In about five minutes the door opened and a tall, broad-shouldered man, wearing a heavy pea-jacket, and an unmistakable air of being the master of the house, entered the room. He was middle-aged, had side whiskers and bright blue eyes. We both rose, and with outstretched hand he greeted Miss Weldon.

"Delighted to see you," he said in a hearty tone. "Mrs. Bardsley tells me you have lost your way, but that doesn't matter. I'll make that all right."

Then he turned toward me, and Miss Weldon introduced me.

"Ashmead?" he repeated, as he grasped my hand.

"Yes," I replied. "Henry G. Ashmead."

As I spoke he gave me a quick look, and seemed about to say something in reference to my name, but he checked himself, and urged us to sit down again.

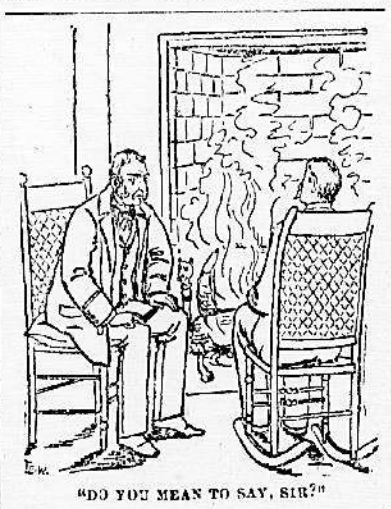
"What you must do now is to get warm," he said, and he put two great logs on the fire.

With a few questions and without sitting down he made himself acquainted with the situation. For a moment he gazed down upon us, and then he said:

"The first thing to do now that you are a little thawed, is to get off your coats and wraps."

"That is hardly worth while," I replied, "for as soon as we are well warmed we must get on, in some way or other, to the Dolliver house."

"Sir," said Major Pendallas, "there is no Dolliver house for you to-night. Here you are, and here you stay. It is three miles back to the main road, and then you would have two miles more to go, and before you reached the Dolliver house there is a long hollow, and at this present moment the snow is probably drifted five feet. If you had taken the right road you most likely would have been in that snow drift now. I have sleighs and teams enough, and no doubt I could pull you through, but it is blowing now as well as snowing, and I am not going to let a young lady go out into a storm like this, especially when she has had already as much as she is able to stand of that sort of thing. Your bags will be brought in, and your horse put in the stable. Mrs. Bardsley will take charge of Miss Weldon. I'll attend to you, sir, and supper will be ready in half an hour," and without waiting for an answer he left the room.



"DO YOU MEAN TO SAY, SIR?"

We looked at each other and laughed.

"That is just what I hoped he would do," said Miss Weldon. "I have had all the sleighing I want for this day."

"Good!" I cried, throwing off my overcoat; "I feared I might have to persuade you."

"That is really absurd," she said, "as if the storm and Major Pendallas were not quite enough."

In five minutes Miss Weldon had been carried off by the beaming Mrs. Bardsley, while Major Pendallas conducted me to a bed-room on the ground floor, in which I found a crackling wood fire. The house was a large one, and seemed to be lighted from top to bottom.

We three sat down to a big round supper table, and as might have been expected the meal was bountiful, hot and most grateful and cheery to the two storm-beaten travelers, who had eaten nothing since breakfast except an unattractive luncheon on the train.

Our host did most of the talking, and we were well content to have him do it.

"You cannot imagine," he burst out, as soon as we were seated, "how glad I am to have you two people here. I expected to spend this Christmas eve absolutely alone, and I should have felt that, for I never did anything of the kind before, and from a boy I have thought more of Christmas eve than of Christmas day. There is less of a strain in it. On Christmas day you feel as if you ought to be awful jolly, because if you don't, you won't have another chance for a year. On Christmas eve one can be jolly without thinking of it. If there are any shortcomings they can be made up next day. Last year my niece was with me and we had plenty of company, but now she's married and cleared out utterly. Gone to Europe with her husband, and intends to stay there.

"But the storm has been good to me. Let me give you a piece of this chicken, sir, and some butter. This is Christmas butter, especially made from the cream of two cows, both granddaughters of the great Cavalier George."

The Major's anticipation of a truly jolly Christmas eve was interfered with by Miss Weldon, who declared, shortly after nine o'clock, that she was so fatigued by her day's experiences that she would be obliged to bid us good-night. When she had gone the Major and I each lighted a cigar and drew up before the big fire in the parlor.

"I can't help being disappointed," said he, "for I intended to get up a lot of games, and have Mrs. Bardsley and her daughter in. They are very respectable people, and at Christmas time we always have them in at the games. But bed is the best place for Miss Weldon after what she has pulled through this day. And I am so rejoiced to have you both in the house that I sha'n't grumble. It doesn't matter in the least that when the sun set to-day I had never seen either of you, nor you me. I know who you are, and you know who I am; at least Miss Weldon knows, and that's enough."

"But you don't know me," I said.

"Indeed I do," he exclaimed, slapping one of his spread-out knees and leaning toward me. "I know you in the best kind of a way. I have one of your pictures. Now, don't go and say you are not the artist, Henry G. Ashmead."

"I am that man," I replied.

"I didn't doubt it," said the Major, leaning back in his chair, "you look like it. I am a bachelor, sir, and it takes a good deal to keep that sort of a man content and easy in his mind. Pictures and books help a lot in that way, and I make it a point every year to buy a good picture. I got one of yours last fall and am very fond of looking at it. Come with me and I'll show it to you.

The Major then proceeded to a medium-sized room in the front of the house, which he called his reading room.

"It isn't a study," said he, "for I never study, and it isn't a library, for it hasn't books enough for that, but it is as good a room to read in as I know. A fine light, and always cool in summer—there is the picture," and he held up a lamp before one of my large landscapes.

"I thought Burnet owned that!" I exclaimed.

"Yes, he did, but he's been hard up lately, and had to sell off part of his collection. I snapped up that as soon as I saw it. There are things in that picture that you seldom see in paintings. That's timothy grass in that meadow, and a cut about the end of June would make hay worth about $20 a ton. It's ready to cut now," said he, "and from the looks of the leaves on the trees, and the size of those mullein plants, I should say it was in June that you took it."

"I made my studies in June," I said.

"Good," he cried; "I knew it. There is no nonsense about that meadow, such as you would see in most pictures. No bushes and struggling briars, or patches of red clover and orchard grass. I am a straightforward and practical man, and I like a straightforward and practical picture. Of course you couldn't help the daisies, and no more can I in my own meadows.

"Now, then," said he, when we were again before the fire, "you can see for yourself how I know you, and I can tell you that it delights me to have in my house the man who painted that picture. After a while I'll brew a bowl of regent's punch. But it isn't late enough for that. We'll have a bachelor night of it. By next Christmas I suppose the young lady will put a veto on bachelor nights."

"Veto?" said I. "What do you mean?"

"You will surely be married by next Christmas," he replied.

"Married!" I exclaimed with a laugh, "we have never thought of being married."

The Major took his cigar from his mouth, put his hands upon his knees, leaned forward and looked at me.

"Do you mean to say, sir, that you and Miss Weldon are not engaged to be married?"

"Not at all," said I. "We have known each other a long time, but we are friends and nothing more."

"Well, I'll be hanged!" cried Major Pendallas, throwing away his cigar and rising abruptly from his chair. Then standing with his back to the fire he looked down upon me.

"How I am disappointed. I surely thought you two were a team, and a fine one. I had made up my mind to it, and now I am set back. I feel as if I were driving a big Percheron and a polo pony. I'm a practical, common-sense man, and I don't mind asking practical, common-sense questions. I have done that all my life, and though I have made a good many people mad, it has always been better for me in the end. Now, would you mind telling me if that young woman is engaged to somebody else, or if you are? Don't get angry. If anybody is angry I ought to be."

I was not in the least offended. There was an impetuous but kindly earnestness about the man which impressed me very agreeably. There are some people whose liberties are pleasant rather than otherwise; the Major was one of those people.

"I am not engaged," I said, with a smile, "and I have no reason to believe that she is."

Major Pendallas thrust his hands into his trousers pockets, strolled to the end of the large room, and then, turning, came back and sat down.

"I believe," said he, "that the man who lives alone does more thinking to the minute than other people. When she was pouring out the coffee to-night, and you were handing your cup to her, and both of you were laughing at the sugar, I stopped eating and said to myself, 'That is as perfect a match as I ever saw.' And in regard to human beings it is very seldom that I think that. And now you turn around and tell me that you and she go single."

I could not help laughing at the serious way in which he discussed the subject.

"I am sorry to dissapoint you," said I, "but Miss Weldon and I are not marrying people. For myself, I cannot afford matrimony."

"That's what I once thought," he said, "and for thirty-five years I have regretted that I was foolish enough to think so."

It was plain that my host was a man of nervous temperament. He could not sit still while considering the subject, evidently of deep interest to him. He now rose, folded his arms, and looked at me steadily for fully a minute. As he gazed at me his eyes seemed to grow brighter and larger.

"It was my intention to make a business proposition to you, founded on what you and Miss Weldon said about this part of the country and how much you liked it. I considered it one of the happiest thoughts I had ever had."

"What was it?" I asked, a good deal amused, but careful not to show it. "I shall be glad to hear it, whether I can accept it or not."

"All right," said the Major, seating himself with decision; "you shall have it. I will make the proposition in the common-sense, straightforward manner in which I intended to make it. For over ten months I have been kicking and fuming at being obliged to live here in this lonely house. To-night I said to myself, over and over again, 'What would I give if these two would eat all their meals with me; would come here and live in this house?' And then I said, 'Why shouldn't they? He's a landscape painter, and they would want to live somewhere in the country, and are not likely to find any place more beautiful than this. Now, perhaps that's just what they want, and what they are looking for, and the best thing you can do is to make them an offer without loss of time.' While I was thinking of this my spirits went up to about a hundred in the shade, but when you told me you were not an engaged couple down they went, I don't know how far."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

To Remove Grass Stains.

During the summer months it is a common thing to have more than one light dress stained by the grass, writes Miss Parloa in her valuable department, "Everything About the House," in the Ladies' Home Journal. Such marks are easily removed with alcohol. Put a little of the liquid in a saucer and wet the stained part with it. Rub well, and the green will disappear.

FOLKS WITH CLAWS.

QUEER COMMUNITY IN WESTERN NEW YORK.

Its Members Have Feet and Fingers Like Eagles' Talons—They Are Intelligent and Thrifty Puzzle for Scientists

ON the Cattaraugus River, near the boundary between Erie and Cattaraugus Counties, N. Y., scarce thirty miles from the busy, bustling city of Buffalo, there live a number of strangely deformed people who are known in the vicinage as the claw-fingered or claw-footed tribe. As the appellation would indicate, these peculiar folks are afflicted with the oddest malformations of the extremities, causing their hands and sometimes feet to more closely resemble the claws or talons of some huge bird of prey than the normal extremities of human beings.

There are several families of these queerly formed people living in the scattered hamlet which bears the biblical title of the Valley of Zoar. The title seems a misnomer, for there is no Sodom or Gomorrah adjacent to threathen the destruction of the contented villagers. The Valley of Zoar is located in one of the most picturesque spots in the State, nestling, as it does, in a hollow of the heavily wooded hills which form the "high banks" marking the sinuous course of the swift running waters of the Cattaraugus River.

Here, in almost absolute seclusion, the claw-fingered tribe live and work, without exciting special comment. There are in the neighborhood of fifty individuals in the community upon whom the deformity appears. Think what a feast for dime museum managers they must present! Yet they are good, honest, law abiding, industrious citizens, who calmly pursue the even tenor of their way, happy and contented in their frugal lot and simple, old fashioned homes.

The remarkable malformation is not confined to either sex, and is evidently of a hereditary nature. The unfortunates are perfectly formed men and women otherwise, of average intellect, with a tendency toward square jawed features and undersized stature. Whence they came and at what period they settled in the valley is a mystery which not even the oldest inhabitant can solve.

According to the legend, the founder of the family was named Joshua Robbins, who came from New England early in the century. In support of this statement, the aged Indian showed a well worn powder horn of ancient pattern with the above name roughly cut in its side. The Senecas at that time traveled at will through the trackless wilds of nature's playground. A band of Indians had started on a big hunt, when a snowstorm overtook them and they encamped in the forest on the north bank of the Cattaraugus, below the lower limit of what is now the reservation. Suddenly a claw-fingered, claw-footed man, mounted upon a weary, bedraggled little pony, rode into their midst, and fell exhausted at their feet. He was immediately seized and bound.

When his peculiarity was discovered the Indians quickly released him, believing that he was a magician or medicine man direct from the Great Father. He was taken to the chief of the village, Dowango, who installed him with great honors as head medicine man of the tribe. For many years he dwelt among them, and all sorts of miraculous powers were attributed to Arlactona, as they called him.

Of his antecedents the Indians learned nothing, though it was understood that he had been jilted by his sweetheart because of his deformity. Being of a sensitive nature, he had determined to hide his misshappen hands and feet in the solitude of the wilderness. Finally he disappeared from the Indian camp as suddenly as he had appeared, and they knew him no more. It is believed that he discovered a community of pioneers, with one of whom he married and settled in the valley now called Zoar.

Whatever credence may be placed in the Indian tradition, certain it is that the claw fingered people have been seen in the valley for three or four generations. While they are not ostracised socially by the rest of the community, they are looked at askance by their more fortunate neighbors, and a strong prejudice exists against them. In consequence, there is much intermarrying, and this fact may account for the perpetuation of the malformation. There are more than half a dozen families of Robbinses among the afflicted ones.

In some instances, their fingers curve in, separately, like the claws of an eagle; others have the digits grown fast together, and somewhat curved, and some have been known to have hands like stumps of arms, short, thick and square ended. Sometimes only one hand is affected, sometimes both.

Again, both hands and feet may be claw-like, or perhaps the right hand and left foot, or vice versa. Some children, born of claw-fingered parents are normal and perfectly-formed. These have, in some instances, married other members of the community who bore no relationship to the tribe. Upon the arrival of their offspring they have been shocked to find the malformations of the grandparents in baby's litttle pinks hands and feet.

The disease, if it may be so called, seems to be hereditary through either father or mother, there being apparently no rule to the contrary. One of the strongest and strangest characteristics of the deformity is the unique prominence and irregularity of the finger and toe joints. The ligatures between the bones become knotted and hardened, losing their elasticity, causing the joints to become stiffened, generally in a curved position, as though ossified. Occasionally the fingers and toes are devoid of nails and the member presents a revolting aspect.

Owing to the seclusion of their valley home but few outsiders have witnessed these strange freaks. Because of the inaccessibility of Zoar they are almost completely cut off from intercourse with strangers. Notwithstanding their deformities the claw-fingered folk manage to support themselves by cultivating the clearings made in their woodland home.

Their only visitors are the few Indians who come from the reservation to barter their wares in the form of baskets, moccasins and fancy beadwork, and now and then the passing of an unwelcome traveler through their secluded vale.—New York Herald.

Odd Ways of Procuring Water.

Water is procured in various ways in different parts of the globe. The explorer Condreau, for instance, found some time ago, while wandering among the Tumac-Humac Mountains, in the western part of Guiana, that it was not necessary for his men to descend to a creek when they wanted a drink of water. A vine, known as the water vine, is found all through that region. It yields an abundant supply of excellent drinking fluid whenever it is called upon. This vine grows to a height of from sixty to ninety feet. It is usually about as thick as the upper part of the human arm. It winds loosely about trees, clambers up to their summits, and then falls down perpendicularly to the ground, where it takes root again. The natives cut this vine off at the ground, and then at the height of about six or seven feet they cut it again, which leaves in their hands a very stout piece of wood a little longer than themselves. In order to obtain the sap they raise the lower end of the vine upon some support and apply the upper end to their mouths.

Six feet of the vine give about a pint of water, which quenches thirst as effectively as water from the most refreshing brook. The bushmen in the Kalahari Desert often live scores of miles from places where water comes to the surface. During a certain part of the year sharp storms pass over the Kalahari, covering the apparently arid region with the brightest of verdure and filling, for a few short days, the water courses with roaring torrents. The bushmen know how to find water by digging in the bottoms of these dried up river beds. They dig a hole three or four feet deep, and and then tie a sponge to the end of a hollow reed. The sponge absorbs the moisture at the bottom of the hole, and the natives draw it into their mouths through the reed, and then empty it into calabashes for future use. In that enormous waste known as the Gibi Desert, north of China, showers sometimes fall during the summer, and the torrents of a day fill the dried up water courses, through which water seldom runs. It is in these channels that the Mongols dig their wells, expecting to find a little water, when upon the surface of the plateau itself the soil has lost all traces of humidity. It is owing to the fact that a part of the moisture falling during a few rainy days is thus preserved within reach that it is possible for caravans to cross the desert.—New York Ledger.

Cocoa From Brazil.

North Brazil, which furnishes the world with most of her rubber at present, is now preparing to furnish the world with cocoa. The Para cocoa is preferred to all other kinds by the French chocolate manufacturers, to whom the entire production at present is shipped, except some small parcels consigned to Hamburg and New York, and yet Para is unable to supply half the needs of France. This cocoa is more appreciated than any other at equal price, the skin being lighter and less subject to break and the paste absorbing more readily the perfume with which it is customary to impregnate the chocolate.

The Brazilian Government, with a view to stimulating and encouraging the increase of plantations and improvements in the preparation of cocoa, has reduced the export duty from ten to four per cent. The natural conditions of Para are most favorable to the production of this commodity. Its cultivation, which can be carried on in all parts of the State, presents no difficulties, although it requires careful tending. The plant takes to yielding three years after planting, and continues to bear for from fifty to sixty years, it being necessary merely to keep it clear of weeds and other vegetation. Two crops a year are gathered, that from May to July being more abundant. The only trouble in the cultivation of cocoa is the insufficiency of labor.—New York Times.

Washington Libraries.

Since the year 1800, when Congress first assembled in Washington and passed an act appropriating the sum of $5000 "for the purchase of such books as may be necessary," some fifty different libraries, says the Washington Post, have been established, and the number of volumes has increased from 3000—all the Congressional Library contained up to the year 1814—to an aggregate of more than 1,500,000 volumes, exclusive of pamphlets, charts, etc.

Battle of the Standard.

The battle of the Standard was fought at Northallerton, in Yorkshire, in 1198, between David I. of Scotland and Stephen of England. The standard consisted of four consecrated banners, fastened to a mast surmounted by a pyx containing the host. The mast was mounted on a cart and taken into the centre of the battlefield by the English.