

By a decree of the Czar, the metric system of weights and measures has been adopted for use throughout the Russian empire, and a commission has also been organized to consider the reform of the Russian calendar so as to harmonize with that prevailing in the other civilized countries.

Emperor William has just made a present to the Sultan of Turkey of a remarkable war-dog. This animal was educated in the Chasseur Regiment of Potsdam Guards, and was taken to Constantinople personally by Lieutenant Count Perponcher-Sellnitzki and the first Chasseur Voigt. It is said that this dog of war will not be let loose for the present.

Nearly every year there is a strike among the women who cultivate the ricefields in Italy. They have to work ten hours a day, up to their knees in the malarial swamps, and receive only twenty cents a day. Even this was reduced lately to fourteen cents, whereupon a general strike followed. New laborers were at once forthcoming; this led to acts of violence that landed 420 women in the jails of Bologna and other cities. Under the pressure of public opinion, the owners of the swamp-lands have been compelled to restore the wages to twenty cents and reduce the hours from ten to eight.

Why is it that some years are so much more fruitful than others in the contribution of genius which they make to the world's onward march? This question suggests itself in connection with the death of Mr. Gladstone, which has entailed its heritage of sorrow upon both hemispheres. Mr. Gladstone first saw the light of day in 1809. Strangely enough in that same year the spirits of several other illustrious men were quickened into life, notably Alfred Tennyson, Charles Darwin, Thomas Carlyle, Abraham Lincoln, Oliver Wendell Holmes and Edgar Allan Poe. Can another year of the world's history be cited so prolific in its contributions of genius? asks the Atlanta Constitution.

An effort is again being strenuously made in London to found a rational dress league. Viscountess Haberton, who has been connected with the several previous similar attempts, took the chair at the inaugural meeting at St. Martin's Town Hall recently. The object, as stated in the first resolution passed, is "to encourage reform in the dress of both sexes, but more particularly to promote the wearing by women of some form of bifurcated garments, especially for active recreation and business purposes." The league proposes also to prosecute men and boys who jeer at the wearers of "rationals." Both efforts are apt to meet with great difficulties, and they are both as absurd as they are impracticable.

Probably few people appreciate the magnitude of the emigration from this country to Liberia. During the past five years it is estimated that not less than 1500 American colored people have gone to Liberia. They have all been befooled, generally by selfish emigration companies, the New York Independent announces. Not one can expect to succeed there who does not go with plenty of money, so that he can support himself for a while and go into business on something of a large scale. For the ordinary laborer it is little less than death. The emigrants escape as fast as possible to Sierra Leone, begging for money to come back to this country. These facts should be known among the colored element of our population.

It is significant of the friendly attitude of the Japanese toward the United States that the commerce of this country with Japan has grown more rapidly during the last year than that of any other nation. The annual returns of the foreign trade of the empire just received by the Bureau of Statistics show that the Japanese bought sixty-five per cent. more goods of us in 1897 than they did in 1896, while their total imports from all over the world show an increase of only twenty-eight per cent. The total imports from the United States for 1897 were valued at about \$27,030,537 against \$16,373,419 in 1896. Japan's exports to the United States increased from \$31,532,341 in 1896 to \$52,436,404 in 1897. The only countries which made as large sales to Japan in 1897 as did the United States are Great Britain, China and British India, but in no case was the increase in imports as large as that from this country.

The locomotives for the Manchurian Railway, as well as most of the rails, have been contracted for in this country instead of Europe.

The Mormons are becoming very active in New Zealand, and it is stated that eight more missionaries are on their way from Salt Lake City to this colony. They intend to work principally among the Maoris, of whom there are already four thousand members of the Mormon Church.

After a long period of suspension the ironworks of a Western city resumed operations and the black chimneys poured out dense clouds of soot over the town. Ruskin would have anaesthetized it for its hideousness, and daintily clad women looked upon it with horror, but a little girl, hungry and cold, whose father had been for months without work, clapped her hands and exclaimed: "Was there ever anything so beautiful as to see the smoke in the chimneys again! That big piece is a shawl for mother, and those cunning little bits tumbling down are shoes for baby, and oh, there comes such a lot of the smoke maybe it is a really hat for me; anyway, I know it's shoe-strings."

Lieutenant Colonel Maus, U. S. A., who has had charge of the physical examination of the twelve thousand New York militiamen mustered into the service of the United States, has made a very interesting report upon the subject of this inquiry. He finds that it was necessary to examine seventeen thousand soldiers in order to obtain twelve thousand up to the required physical standard, which was placed very high; some think too high. Of this number the three up-country regiments were far superior to the city troops in physical development, a logical result of the tonic of pure air and out of door employment and recreation. Of the city soldiers Colonel Maus found the cavalry superior to the infantry—clearly a tribute to the value of exercise on horseback. Among the infantry the chief causes of rejection were a tendency to hollow chests and impaired vision, unmistakable evidence of long days at desk work and poring over ledgers. Poor feet was another frequent defect, and deafness was not uncommon.

One of the London papers sees a "romance of commerce" in the recent death of one Henry Greenwood, an inmate of the workhouse infirmary at Hampstead. It seems that Greenwood was once a rich man, and belonged to a firm of jewelers so eminent that it supplied the pearls worn by Queen Victoria at her coronation. At that time, indeed, he and his partners were the leading dealers in pearls, not only as regards England, but in the whole world. Greenwood, after his most famous transaction, led a rather adventurous life, a part of it in Australia, where he was Mayor of Ballarat. He accumulated a fairly considerable fortune, which, however he lost in various reverses, until toward the close of his life he was in a state of abject poverty. His death took place in the workhouse from cancer when he was about eighty years of age. Curiously enough two of the members of the Hampstead Board of Guardians when Mr. Greenwood entered the workhouse were old schoolmates of his, and one of them met the expenses of the funeral in order that he should not lie in a pauper's grave, and was himself the only mourner following the coffin.

The growing cities of Europe—increasing as they are, constantly and enormously in the density of their population—present an area unfavorable to human life; and it has been estimated that unless such a city as Paris were supplied with human life from outside, everybody in it would die out in about four generations, reflects the New York Sun. The conditions of city life are unfavorable to human longevity and health; but when we come to examine in a city who they are that will survive the longest and are the best able to combat these unfavorable elements and who, therefore, must become the leaders in that city and found the most prominent families and will gain the most control and get up into the highest society by living there long and getting as much as they can from their fellow citizens it is discovered that they all have skulls of a somewhat similar type—long-skulled—somewhat below, in that respect, the medium skulls averaging throughout Europe. A man must, in other words, have a long head to get along in a great city and found a family there and continue it for a number of generations. Our word "long-headed" is, in a certain sense, a provision of scientific discovery; it is literally and absolutely true to the craniologist.

IN A HAMMOCK SHROUD.

When my turn comes, dear shipmates all,
I'll do not weep for me:
Wrap me in my hammock tight,
And put me into the sea:
For it's no good weeping
When a shipmate's sleeping,
And the long watch keeping,
At the bottom of the sea.

But think of me sometimes and say:
"He did his duty right,
And strove the best he knew to please
His Captain in the light;"
But it's no good weeping
When a shipmate's sleeping,
And the long watch keeping,
Through the long, long night.

And let my epitaph be these words:
"Cleaved from this port, alone,
A craft that was stanch, and sound and true—
Destination, unknown."
And it's no good weeping
When a shipmate's sleeping,
And the long watch keeping
All alone, all alone.

And mark this well, my shipmates dear,
Along the long night through,
Up there in the darkness behind the stars
I'll look out sharp for you;
So it's no good weeping
When a shipmate's sleeping,
And the long watch keeping
All the long night through.
—Barrett Eastman in Chap Book.

THE CAPTURED MAIL.

A War Romance.

BY MARY CAIN.



ELL me, Dorothy, where have you been for the last two hours? Your face is flushed and you look so untidy," said Colonel Norlan, as his daughter entered the library in a somewhat undignified manner. "Oh, I have been up in the garret turning things upside down looking for the old brass candlestick that Aunt Mary told us about at tea last evening. I couldn't find it; I think some collector must have it by this time. But you can't guess what I found. In overhauling your old papers I came across a letter written by a Confederate soldier in July, 1864, while Sherman was making his march to the sea. The letter is so touching, so manly, just a letter of a homesick boy to his mother. It is most interesting. I wonder you never told me about it. On the envelope is written: 'Captured at Roding, Mississippi, July 21, 1864, with a large Confederate mail.' It is directed to Mrs. Henry Darling, Shirley, Georgia. Oh, it is a long letter. He was a brave, good fellow, but he was not fond of war."

The speaker was a young girl of seventeen, bright, graceful and even beautiful. Her features were nearly perfect, her hair blonde and wavy and the expression of her strong, intellectual face showed that she was in complete sympathy with the tone of the soldier's letter. Her sweet, womanly manner and the corresponding gentle graces gave one at first acquaintance with her a lasting and most favorable impression.

The father had laid aside his paper to listen to the low music of his daughter's voice as she enthusiastically told the story of the letter, thinking more of the beautiful picture she unknowingly presented and of the great comfort she was to him in his old age.

"Tell me about the capture of the letter, father," she said. "My dear, it is so long a time ago, I don't remember the circumstances clearly. We captured a large Confederate mail and the letters were scattered among the soldiers as souvenirs. This one came in my way and I sent it home as a curiosity. I had forgotten all about it."

She had found out all her father knew of the matter, and so Miss Norlan went to her room to re-read the letter which had touched her heart. And she wove a pretty romance about the writer of this manly letter.

"I wonder what was the fate of this noble fellow?—he may still be living," she said. Then she murmured aloud, half startled at the thought, "I'll write to him. No, that would be unmaidenly. But surely I can send the letter to his poor old mother. Let me see. Oh, I know what I'll do, I'll write to the postmaster at Shirley; he'll tell me if such a person lives there. It's not impossible."

She hastened down to the library and wrote the note, saying she wished to communicate with the person concerning an incident of the late war. It was not long before she received a reply—very briefly—from the soldier's brother, saying: "My brother George was killed at Atlanta, July 23, 1864."

On comparing dates she found that the brother was killed two days after the Confederate mail had been captured, and this letter was the last loving message of the soldier to his mother.

If my readers will trust this kind, beautiful woman to do all in her power to make persons happy, leave her for a little and let her see the Southern home at Shirley.

"Well, Fred this is strange," said Mr. Darling, as he sat down in an easy chair.

"What is it, father?" "Thirty-three years have passed since my brother George was killed at Atlanta, and here is a note that the postmaster gave to me."

"Let me see it, father. I'm interested. Are you going to answer it?"

"I have already written and told her that he was killed at Atlanta."

"I'm glad you answered the note," said Fred. "Who can tell what may come of it?"

The father and son talked about the

dead man, who had been a victim of the conflict, and Fred asked his father many questions concerning the late war. Mr. Darling was a widower and Fred was his only son. He had been very prosperous in business. Yet he had never enjoyed the ease and luxury that was all about him. For many years past he had been so taken up with his mad race for wealth that he had neglected his church and all his Christian duties and had even lost all faith. This had grieved Fred very much, for the young fellow had a devoted heart.

Although the note which Mr. Darling had written was short and chilly, Miss Norlan wrote to tell the brother about the captured letter, which she had in her possession, and she asked if the mother was yet alive. She wrote: "I will gladly give up the letter that I have. I am sure that it will be a great comfort to friends of his, for it is beautiful in its sincerity and simplicity."

Mr. Darling when he had received the first note of the girl became suspicious that someone wished to extort money from him. But the tone of Miss Norlan's reply moved him somewhat, and to Fred it was a sweet, tender letter, and he began to have a strong desire to know the girl with such a heart as the writer of the letter must have. As Fred read the letter it dawned upon his father what a manly, whole-souled fellow his son had become. After Fred had read the pages he looked up and said: "Say, father, let me answer this, will you?" Then added, not without showing his pleasure, "I think the author of such a letter must be more than ordinary, and I'm completely interested."

"Yes, Fred, I think you are right—answer it." Fred wrote Miss Norlan a long letter and told her much of the life and character of his Uncle George, and that his father said that he was an image of his uncle. It was a gracious letter and one that made Miss Norlan feel that she was well paid for her trouble. Fred had not long to wait before he received his uncle's letter and a brief note from Miss Norlan.

Summer had nearly passed since the incidents above related had taken place when one evening, as Fred was reading "The Reveries of a Bachelor," his father came into his study and said: "Well, my boy, how would you like the idea of taking a trip up North? I have some business there that must be done, and it will be fine fun for you."

"Just the thing! I'm tired of doing nothing, and you know how I like to travel," Fred replied.

"Well, then, be ready and go next week."

Fred was delighted at the thought of visiting the North, and was especially interested since he found that his business would take him to the State in which Miss Norlan lived.

Fred made the journey, and after he had finished his father's affairs he made a special trip to Ashley, for he had determined to know Miss Norlan. Fred wrote a note telling her that he had come North on business, and had stopped at Ashley purposely to call on her if she would grant him the pleasure.

Miss Norlan had often thought of Fred and was no less pleased to meet him than was Fred to meet her, and having her father's permission, she invited Fred to call. The following evening when Fred was ushered into the drawing room Miss Norlan received him kindly, saying in her quiet manner, "Mr. Darling, you don't look a bit as I imagined you would."

"Then you are disappointed in me?" said Fred, laughing. They shook hands as old friends might have done, and they were not long in getting acquainted.

Fred told Miss Norlan all about his home and they found many subjects of common interest to talk about. The evening was spent most pleasantly and passed all too quickly.

"How long are you going to remain in town, Mr. Darling?" said Dorothy, as Fred arose to say good-night.

"I think I shall leave to-morrow. I am through with my business. I shall probably spend a few days in Washington. I suppose I'll not have seen the North unless I see Washington."

"Oh! don't think of going so soon. Why, the idea of such a thing! Stay and see our metropolis. It's far ahead of any other city of the North."

Before Fred went back to his room that evening he had promised to stay, nor did he need much coaxing to help him make up his mind to do so. Colonel Norlan and his daughter had greeted Fred so heartily that he felt he was quite welcome. Fred and Dorothy were together much of the time, and Fred never spent so happy a week in all his life; the truth was, that before the end of the week he loved Dorothy beyond measure. When he left he promised to visit his friends again at Christmas time.

On Fred's return to his home he had much to tell his father of the Norlan family. Nor did it escape the notice of Mr. Darling that very often there came in the mails neat, well-filled envelopes addressed to Mr. Fred Darling.

At Christmas time Fred made his promised visit to Ashley, and when he returned to his home he told his father of his engagement to Dorothy. They were married quietly on the Monday before Ash Wednesday, in the parish chapel, and Dorothy, anxious to see her Southern home, said good-bye to her friends, and they were soon on their journey.

Fred's father was delighted with his son's choice, and it was not long before he thought there was no one in the world quite so charming and beautiful. By her kind, loving manners and true devotion for her church, Mr. Darling, Sr., was influenced, to the joy of all, back to his old faith, and at

Easter he knelt at the altar rail with Fred and Dorothy.

THE MARVELOUS DRAGON FLY.

Extraordinary is the Machinery That Governs Its Flight.

There is no winged creature, unless it may be the humming bird, writes a naturalist, that has the extraordinary machinery governing its flight that the dragon fly possesses. Its speed is marvelous, and yet its wings never seem to move. A dragon fly may be going forward with the velocity of the wind, and yet can stop instantly in the air, and immediately start backward just as rapidly as it had been going forward. Or it can fly sideways with the same facility that it can fly forward or backward, as any one may see a hundred times a day if he will watch one of these insects winging its erratic course after prey. It can see a victim behind it, in front of it, and on both sides of it, all at the same time, and doesn't have to waste time in turning to get at all four, and it will have all four in its marvelous maw while a watch is ticking twice.

Wonderful as the arrangement of the dragon fly's wings are its optical powers are still more wonderful. The insect has five eyes. Two of them are enormous, brilliant protuberances on each side of the top of its head, the two most striking features of this big fly, and the ones that give it that fierce appearance which causes it to be so much dreaded by foolish men, women, and children. Then right in the front of its head, on its forehead, so to speak, it has three ordinary eyes, all in a row. Each one of the two big, blazing eyes is made up of no fewer than 28,000 highly polished facets, each with high-lens power, which not only accounts for the intense brilliancy of the eyes, but gives to them a microscopic and all-seeing power beyond human ken. Any prey that escapes the eye of a dragon fly is welcome to its freedom from pursuit and capture.

There is another peculiarity in the make-up of the dragon fly that has been a source of much regret to naturalists from the time naturalists first appeared. In life the long, segmented body of the insect is marked with most brilliant and beautiful bands of colors. The instant death ensues these colors fade and disappear, leaving only an ugly grayish trunk. Science has failed to find a way to prevent this fading of the dragon fly's hues, consequently all representations of dragon-fly colors in collections are artificial. They are reproduced by carefully dissecting the insect and painting the hues on the inside of the body, the transparent skin or shell permitting the artificial coloring to show through. Alive the dragon fly, in spite of its terrific front, is one of the most royally beautiful of all insects. Dead, it is the ugliest.

Any one who has watched a dragon fly flitting above the surface of small, reedy ponds or near the shores of large ones, late in the summer or early in the fall, has noticed its frequent dipping of the extremity of its long body lightly in the water as it skims along. The dragon fly that does that is always the female, and every time she dips her body in the water she deposits an egg. The specific gravity of the egg is such that it sinks to the bottom among the weeds, and in due time hatches out the formidable-looking creature whose development into the perfect dragon fly I have described. It takes three years for an egg to become the perfect fly.

State Insurance For German Workmen

Some astonishing figures have just been issued by the imperial home office respecting the State insurance of workmen. At the end of the year 1897 there were 442,000 industrial establishments, with 5,750,000 insured persons, and 4,645,000 agricultural settlements, with 11,000,000 insured persons. This insurance has reference only to accidents. In addition to the numbers given above the workmen in the building trades have to be reckoned. The total number of workmen insured against accidents amounted roundly to eighteen millions. The number of accidents in 1897 was 381,000, and the money compensation paid in lump sums or annually to 515,000 persons was sixteen million dollars.

There exists, moreover, in Germany, a system of insurance for all workmen or employees against disablement and old age. Disablement pay was granted in 1897 to 231,000 working men and women; old age pensions were awarded to 222,000 persons. The amount together made up one hundred and thirty-five million dollars in one year. The contributions in the same year—in the proportion of one-third from the employers, one-third from the workmen and one-third from the State—amounted to two hundred and forty-five million dollars. The contributions are high because it is intended to create a reserve fund of one hundred and twenty-five million dollars, the interest on which will eventually permit of a reduction in the amounts contributed. —Berlin Tageblatt.

The Rubber Tree.

The rubber tree is usually tapped four times during the first year of its maturity, and the intervals of rest gradually diminished until it can be tapped monthly. The rubber tree is the milch cow of the vegetable kingdom; its yield continues to increase with frequent and skilful milking until it reaches its maximum. Properly cared for a tree will yield steadily up to its fortieth year; in some instances, as long as fifty or sixty years. The yield of gum, as well as the market price, is variable; but a healthy tree should yield a revenue of \$15 to \$20 per annum.

Hog Bristles From China.

A large proportion of the hog bristles that are made into brushes of all sorts are obtained from China.

OUR BUDGET OF HUMOR.

LAUGHTER-PROVOKING STORIES FOR LOVERS OF FUN.

A War-Time Romance—A Sure Cure—An Honest Confession—Unequal to the Task—Unconscious Cerebration—Photographers' Rates—Glad to Go, Etc.

With courtesy grace he knelt and thus The dimpled maid addressed: "I love you! Oh, I pray you put My love to any test!"

"Oh, Tom!" she cried, her voice as sweet As music of a lute; "If this is all, just let us war And be Jack's substitute!" —New York Journal.

A Sure Cure. "How did your husband get cured of the habit of walking in his sleep?" "We moved into a flat." —Chicago News.

Unequal to the Task. "Can you split wood?" "Madame, I'm from Boston. I couldn't even split an infinitive." —Cleveland Plain Dealer.

An Honest Confession. "And what do you think of the engagement ring I sent you?" "It's splendid! It's the most beautiful one that I ever received!"

Unconscious Cerebration. "Here, how's this? In this article on poets you speak of the 'stepladder of fame.'" "I wrote that one day when my wife was cleaning house." —Chicago Record.

Photographers' Rates. "Woman—"How much for children's pictures?" "Two dollars a dozen, madam."

Woman—"Why—er—I've only got nine." —Judge.

Glad to Go.

"Look here, George," said Mrs. Pepper, "I've been aggravated enough, so don't you put me out." "Certainly not, my love," returned George suavely, "I'll go out myself. Don't sit up for me." —Pick Me Up.

Irreparable Damage.

"What can do more damage than a bull in a china shop?" asked Mr. Birmingham of Mr. Manchester. "Well, the 'shorts' in grain think that the bulls in the wheat field have been doing terrible damage lately." —Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

Love's Labor Lost.

"What's the matter with Bumps? He looks as though he had no friends left."

"Went out the other night and serenaded an empty house for three hours. Didn't know that her folks had moved." —Detroit Free Press.

A Feminine Mania.

"They tell me that Blako-ogs not rich, and yet there is not a day but what the wagon from the jewellers and the merchants stops there."

"That's so. She's one of these women that has things sent home on disapproval." —Detroit Free Press.

Why They Do It.

"Why is it that prima donnas always sing 'Home, Sweet Home,' for an encore?"

"That's to show their gratitude. In return for the applause they naturally want to give the people something they can understand." —Chicago News.

How Are the Mighty Fallen!

"Bridget, who is that at the door?" "It's a poor man, mum. He wants something to ate."

"If he's another refugee driven out of Spain by the war, tell him there's nothing for him. We've already fed eleven ex-Consuls this morning." —Chicago Tribune.

A Crisis Averted.

"What is your line of business?" whispered the editor to a man he was about to introduce to capitalists.

"I hauls furniture," huskily came the reply.

"Here, gentlemen," continued the editor, "is Mr. Jones, one of the moving spirits of our city."

Painfully True.

She—"So this is your picture? It is a true representation of the dining room of the ocean steamer; but why didn't you introduce some characters?"

He—"Because that picture is entitled 'The Dinner Hour During a Rough Passage.'" —Stray Stories.

Called Him Down.

Callio, outhe—"Now that you are mi, Lobelia, I have a painful confession to make—"

Miss Bunker (wearily)—"Oh, I suppose so, Septimus; all the others had. But I did hope you would be original, and deny yourself the pleasure of telling me the sad story of your past." —Brooklyn Life.

Just the Man.

Timid Guest—"I have a delicate wife, and if I stop at your place I want to be sure there is a good doctor near by."

Aspiring Clerk (briskly)—"You needn't be alarmed, sir. We've got a fine man within call. Why, he has just pulled through six of the toughest cases of smallpox I ever heard of." —Harlem Life.

Innocence.

Alice—"I heard a very pretty compliment for you to-day."

George—"What was it?"

Alice—"Mr. Thurston, the jeweler, said you were one of the best judges of diamonds in this city."

George—"May I buy a nice solitaire for the third finger of your left hand?"

Alice—"Oh, George, what made you think of such a thing? Well, you—want to." —Cleveland Leader.