IN THE SUPREME COURT

EVERYTHING conspired. It would not have happened if poor little Bobbie's first discipline had not taken place early on that morning, and if Frances Wylie had not been "on the rampage" again when school opened. Bobbie was the principal's only and idolized son, and still in kilts. Frances Wylie was the mischief brewer of Miss Virginia Trapp's room, No. 7.

"It was awful!" groaned the principal, under his breath. He spread his hands out on the green baize of his table and regarded them with horror, as if there were blood on them. Could it be they had punished Bobbie—Bobbie? He had looked so bewitchingly and inky and naughty! His little crisp, sun-yellow curls had stood up round his reproachful face so becomingly!

"Awful! awful!" the principal groaned. He was in no mood to begin the day's work in his "supreme court" on the ground floor of the Maltbie high school. There would be punishing to do, of course, and to think he had punished Bobbie — little sunny-haired Bobbie!

"It's going to be a bad day. I see it in France Wylie's eyes!" groaned little Miss Trapp, inwardly. Frances from her back seat gazed about with studied, innocent wonder. She was almost as big as little Miss Trapp.

Frances was "on probation." She had been warned that one more misdemeanor would send her to the supreme court.

"I'm not afraid," she thought, serenely. "She's so little! I could put her in my pocket and run away with her."

But tiny, gentle-faced Virginia Trapp came of Puritan stock, and was endowed with courage. She might twist her small fingers nervously, but she would not draw back. Let Frances Wylie beware!

So the day began in the Maltbie high school, with a sore-hearted, self-reproachful father in the supreme court, and in room No. 7 a mischief-loving girl and a tiny, troubled teacher. So the day went forward until the Vergil class was called. Then—

"Miss Wylie!"

The voice was ringing and firm, and the little teacher took an impetuous step forward. She had seen the placard, "Rooms to Let," pinned on the collar of the Tilly Slowboy of the class, and Frances' solemn face, set among so many laughing ones, was enough to fix the culprit.

"Miss Wylie, you will accompany me to the principal's room," the little teacher said, quietly. "The class may go to the board and write out the scansion of the first six lines of the lesson while I am absent. I am sure I need not ask the young ladies to remember that it is study hour. I am ready, Miss Wylie."

There was gentle emphasis on the word ladies. Miss Trapp and the tall girl crossed the open space to the door, side by side. Frances Wylie held her fair head high. There might have been two pages in her wake, holding up trailing robes. At the door she cast a haughty backward glance into the room and suddenly dimpled with laughter at the legend she read upon the blackboard:

"Our friend—has gone—un to the su—preme court.
Alas—who en—ters there—leaves hope—behind!"

Frances' laugh sounded softly in her throat. The little teacher was already in the hall, waiting, and failed to see the words provoking her mirth.

The two walked down the long hall silently, both remembering that this was the first public disgrace of Frances Wylie's school life. For one moment, midway down the hall, the girl caught her breath in a sob of pity for the invalid mother at home—not for herself.

"We're in for it, as sure as there's avenging justice at the end of the hall!" breathed Frances to herself. She showed no signs of sorrow. Little Virginia Trapp glanced up sidewise into the cold, impassive face and sighed gently.

In the supreme court sat the principal, still thinking of Bobbie. He was measuring time until the noon hour, when he could go home again. He had not been able to decide to his entire comfort that Bobbie would be at the half-way place to-day, as usual, and the doubt was making him nervous and distressed.

There was a low knock at the door.

"Come in!" the principal called. He had left his spectacles at home in the inquisitorial chamber with Bobbie, and the two figures that entered—one tall, the other short—were unfamiliar and hazy to him. He was very dependent upon his spectacles.

"Good morning," he said, absently.

The two figures edged a little way into the room. For an instant there was embarrassing silence, while the principal from behind his desk observed vaguely the tall dignity of Frances and the curly brown head of the tiny teacher. There was no question as to identity. Even to unspectacled eyes it was plain enough which was which.

Under the stress of excitement Virginia Trapp's tongue sometimes played her false. Now, as she opened her lips to speak, she found herself incapable of uttering a syllable. Her tongue fluttered soundlessly.

"Well?"

The principal gazed dimly at Frances, waiting. He would give her time. It was a source of grief to him that he was held in such awe by his teachers. This tall, stately woman must be the new teacher in room 9.

"You have brought the young lady to me? She has been—er—transgressing, I see," he said, gravely, turning his near-sighted eyes with grave disapproval upon the tongue-tied little teacher. And before little Miss Trapp had time to gasp with astonishment he had waved her peremptorily toward the "prisoner's dock" and turned back to Frances.

"You may leave her with me. I prefer to have the story directly from her," he said, gravely.

It had all happened in the briefest possible time. While the little teacher was still flushed and speechless, Frances had realized the principal's mistake and the rich possibilities for fun in it. She had taken in all the things that conspired—the absence of the all-important spectacles from the principal's nose, the presence of the far-away, preoccupied look in his pleasant gray eyes and the ridiculous contrast between herself and the tiny, cropped-haired teacher. A reckless spirit seized the girl. The end of the world was at hand, in any event; why not make the most of this last opportunity?

Frances drew herself up and bowed with dignity.

"I will leave her here, then, with you—and her own conscience," she added, in little Miss Trapp's best manner.

Then she closed the door behind her and sped down the hall, stifling her laughter. Straight into room 7 she walked, and then she dropped into the chair behind the teacher's desk.

There was dead silence in the room, while from one girl to another traveled a look of mystification. Then Frances rose to her feet. She had recovered her breath and was quite calm and serious.

"Young ladies, our beloved teacher has unfortunately been arraigned before the supreme court, and I have been put in charge of room 7, in her place," she said, impressively. "I need not ask you to remember that it is study hour. The class in Vergil may recite."

A ripple of merriment ruffled the calm surface of the room, but Frances arrested it with a sharp tap of little Miss Trapp's ruler.

"Be quiet!" she commanded. "There aren't but 15 minutes left before the noon hour. Don't any of you dare to make a disturbance till then! I shall report every living, breathing soul that does! Now somebody recite."

Frances Wylie and little Miss Trapp will not soon forget those 15 minutes. In room No. 7 they passed with fearful slowness. Frances watched the hands of the great clock in momentary expectation of avenging doom. That it did not come filled her with amazement. Where was the scandalized principal, with Miss Trapp, white and angry, at his heels? Why didn't they come?

"Call this fun!" thought Frances, in disgust. "I never enjoyed myself so little in my life! I—I guess I'm getting scared."

In the supreme court the 15 minutes dragged their length out monotonously. The principal had turned back to his desk and resumed his writing quietly. It was his way to leave malefactors to their own thoughts for a season. The thoughts of this particular one, sitting still and flushed in the prisoner's dock, were gradually straightening out from paralyzed bewilderment and anger into steady reasoning.

Miss Trapp had not succeeded in uttering a word. As the door snapped behind Frances she had stepped forward and cleared her throat desperately. But the principal waved his hand deprecatingly.

"Not yet; we will talk later on," he had said, calmly. In his mind he had determined to wait until the beginning of the afternoon session, and then settle this trouble.

Miss Trapp consulted her watch. It was cool and still in the supreme court, and she folded her hands on the cover of her Vergil and rested, with a smile in the corners of her mouth.

"A hardened case," reflected the principal, dimly aware of the smile. "But we will practice patience—yes, yes, certainly, patience." It was what he was sorely afraid he had not practiced that morning with Bobbie, and his conscience was sensitive on the point.

"If I tell him about it now, he will dismiss her anyway. What hope would there be after an escapade like this?" the little teacher mused. "He would never let her come back—never! And that would break her mother's heart. I don't know but it would break Frances', too. She's really a dear girl, mischief and all. I can't do it! I'm going to give her a chance to take it all back." There was just the one chance—Frances should have it.

"You may go now, young lady, but you will return at the opening of the afternoon session. We will talk then."

Room 7 was emptying itself into the corridor in its usual orderly fashion. Frances stood soberly at the door. The little teacher touched her arm and beckoned her aside. There was a suspicion of a laugh in Miss Trapp's eyes, but her lips were grave.

"Judgment is suspended. I am to go back this afternoon for it," she said. "I thought I would tell you, and if you cared to go instead—it is a chance."

"Miss Trapp!" cried Frances, breathlessly, catching at both the small white hands. "Do you mean he doesn't know yet? That—that there is some chance, after all, for me? You haven't told?"

"I haven't 'told,'" the little teacher said, gently. "There was a chance to wait, and I did. I thought you might want to take my place this afternoon."

"I do! I will! I'm going to!" sobbed Frances, in a tempest of tears. "I'll tell every single thing—I'll get down on my knees! Oh, Miss Trapp, I didn't think of mother then, or you, or anything in the living, breathing world but fun!"

Bobbie, in his little blue kilt, met his father on the way home with a glad cry of welcome. It augured well for Frances.—Youth's Companion.

The Theatrical Season Is Again Upon Us

Many Things by Many People Are Being Offered the Theater-Goers of the Country.

SUMMER is over—though the fashionables say it isn't now until after October—and back to the playhouses are flitting the stars, meteors, nebulae, the whole galaxy that appear in our theatrical atmosphere.

From mountain-top and sea coast, from Swiss chalet and French convent, from idyllic farms and California ranches; from every conceivable place and sort of life man calls suitable for vacationing, they have returned. The folk that amuse, instruct, make us forget, help us to remember—as well as those that use their art, or trade, for our debasing.

And right joyfully we give them the glad hand. We missed them. The summer was long without them. And when we sought the only substitutes offered us, somehow or other the jugglers, skirt-dancers, coon-song ladies and gentlemen, failed to substitute to any considerable degree. We repeat, we are glad to see our friends back again.

Mr. Otis Skinner came back to his duties early, and though with a play chiefly fitted, the critics say, for the elect that are not in town early, found audiences appreciative and complimentary in size. Mr. Skinner gives us this year a revival of George H. Boker's tragedy of "Francesca da Rimini." It is foretold that "Francesca da Rimini" is to be not only an artistic success, but also a popular success. Mr. Aubrey Boucicault and Miss Marcia Van Dresser assist Mr. Skinner in this poetic drama. Miss Van Dresser makes a beautiful Francesca, and Mr. Boucicault a handsome Paola.

In "Francesca da Rimini" there are four chief characters: Lanciotto, Francesca, Paola and Pepe. Crippled Lanciotto, yearning for love and capable himself of loving most passionately, most constantly, is wonderfully appealing. Mr. Skinner says it was amongst the "whispering pines and hemlocks" of his summer home he studied and grew to know the heart of the deformed soldier Lonciotto. Lanciotto's wife, Francesca, is false to her husband; false for the sake of her husband's brother, a brother that from babyhood had been an object of worship to Lanciotto. The wrong and the vengeance meted out by the wronged man are old, old as the world, but the vengeance in this case brought no satisfaction. These heartbroken utterances tell the story: "Father, I killed thy son for honor's sake! O, God! I cannot cheat my heart with words. I loved him more than honor—more than life!" The words and tone ring in one's ears long after the curtain has fallen separating actor and audience. "Francesca da Rimini," as produced by Mr. Skinner, will doubtless prove to be one of the strongest plays of the year.

"Ben Hur," which appeared in its dramatized form two years ago, is with us again in full force; with its 13 scenes, its six acts and a prelude. Its stronghold on the people we have not yet analyzed to our complete satisfaction; whether it flourishes because of the old popularity of the book, or because of its spectacular features, or because of both, we are not prepared to say. Certain it is the author of the story Ben Hur is not without honor in his own locality, for delegates from Gen. Lew Wallace's home town, Crawfordsville, Ind., have possession for the night of October 8 of 500 seats in the body of the Illinois theater in Chicago, where "Ben Hur" is to have a two or three months' run.

Blanche Bates, who has climbed steadily, on the whole, since her debut a few years ago at Stockwell's theater, in San Francisco, has already appeared before this season's public in two plays; in a dramatization of Ouida's "Under Two Flags," and in Ibsen's "Hedda Gabler." "Under Two Flags," that old, old tale of Ouida's, after more than a score of years of neglected opportunities, has now fallen into the hands of the dramatizer of novels. And it seems several novel-dramatizers have let slip through their fingers a good opportunity, for "Under Two Flags" has found favor with New York in the east, San Francisco in the west, and Chicago in the middle.

But take Miss Bates' Cigarette out of "Under Two Flags," substitute somebody else's, and perhaps there would be mighty little left to attract the public. Miss Bates makes the play, puts into the character of the girl of the army more than even our old friend Ouida would quite attempt. An extravagantly romping, rollicking, rakish vivandiere is Cigarette, as portrayed by Miss Blanche Bates.

The work of that peculiar old gentleman, Mr. Henrik Ibsen, seems to have a strong fascination for some of our younger actresses, and Miss Bates, too, has fallen under the spell of the Norwegian writer. She has already appeared as Nora in his "A Doll's House," appearing in the first Ibsen performance ever given on the Pacific coast. This summer San Francisco audiences were given more Ibsen by Miss Bates, when she played the title role in "Hedda Gobler;" and now Chicago is to have for the first time an English version of the same play, and Miss Bates is to be the interpreter.

Cissie Loftus is no longer Cissie Loftus, but Miss Cecilia Loftus, Mr. E. H. Sothern's leading lady. Mr. Sothern's new play this season is "Richard Lonelace," written by Lawrence Irving, son of the famous Sir Henry Irving. Miss Loftus has for long been deservedly popular in her peculiar line, and now that she is essaying more ambitious work, good wishes of many friends and admirers go with her. The most distinguished artists on the stage predict for her an enviable future.

We put our patriotism in our pockets and welcome with warm cordiality English talent, whether it be that of playwright or player, to the American stage. But as far as England is concerned there is no reciprocity with us in theatrical commerce. Look at the way two of our plays were recently treated in England—"The Whirl of the Town," and the dramatization of "Sherlock Holmes."

Hoodlums are allowed to work their own sweet will in London theaters; their right to hoot and howl goes unchallenged, is considered one of the inalienable rights of free-born British citizens, and they exercise their right to the finish. When these two American productions lately were offered in all good faith to London theater-goers, hisses and hoots drowned the actors' voices, and they were compelled to wait patiently as might be until the mob was tired out. The next day the English press, commenting on the outrage, said it was plain to be seen that something would have to be done to keep Americans from taking possession of London theaters. Instead of offering an amende honorable, the English papers but added the suspicion that the mob was an organized protest. Rather villainous, cowardly protesting, we call it, but the motto these days seems to be "All's fair in love and competition."

THE ASTROLOGER.

Six immense freight ships are being built in Danzig, Germany.

THE OLDEST NEWSPAPER.

Peking News, Founded 710 A. D. and Published Continuously Ever Since.

The oldest newspaper in the world is the Tsing-Pao, or Peking News, founded in the year 710 A. D. Until quite lately it was generally supposed that the Kin Pan, a Chinese journal published in Peking for the last 1,000 years, was the oldest newspaper in the world. In a very able work recently published, however, Imbault Huart, the French consul at Canton, shows that this high honor belongs to the Tsing-Pao, which has been published continuously since the year 710 and is even said to have been founded some 200 years before that date, or early in the sixth century, 800 years before a newspaper was known in Europe.

The Tsing-Pao now appears as a book of 24 pages, octavo size, tied in a yellow cover by two kinds of rice paper. Each page has seven characters, or letters, which read from top to bottom. The types are made of willow wood. This is the "edition de luxe" officially recognized by the emperor, and the price of which is about 24 cents a month. There is also a popular edition, got up roughly on poor paper and printed, or rather daubed, from a plate of engraved wax. This costs 16 cents per month and is issued an hour before the other.

It is the official journal of the government—the Times of China. It gives all the details concerning the person of the emperor, his movements, his maladies, his remedies, the imperial decrees and the reports of the ministers, in the printing of which every error is punished with death.

It announces to all the provinces the date which has been fixed by the emperor for the people to change their summer hats for winter ones, which they are expected to do as one man. This journal is easy to read, for it appears in an English translation in Shanghai.

After the "Tsing-Pao" the most important paper in China is of modern date, the "Chin-Pao," or Shanghai News, founded in 1872. It has a circulation of some 15,000 copies, and at the close of the Franco-Chinese war Li Hung Chang made use of it—an innovation till then unknown—to influence the public opinion and demonstrate by history the rights of the Chinese over Anam.

Chinese newspapers are usually printed on yellow paper, which is changed to blue in case of mourning and red on gala days. One paper has three editions each day, on yellow paper in the morning, gray at noon and white at night, so that the sellers cannot distribute one edition for another in serving their customers. Another journal has a title which signifies "the reproduction of what is necessary to know," all given on a couple of pages, octavo size. The foreign words, as, for instance, the word "telephone" is made to read "to-ilfonung."

The Chinese press, like many of their other institutions, has remained stationary for 1,000 years, but it is now beginning to wake up and modernate itself.

EXPENSIVE ANGLING.

Fish That Cost Fifteen Dollars a Pound and Not Counted as an Extravagant Outlay.

There is no doubt that one of the costliest of man's amusements is fishing, and yet your devoted angler will tell you that it is cheap at any price. In fact, he doesn't count the cost which perhaps is the only feature of the sport that he never exaggerates. He buys the finest tackle, he seeks resorts that are at expensive distances, he hires guides and boats at exorbitant rates, and no matter what the outlay or what the luck he never grumbles.

The other day the fish and game commissioners of Maine were petitioned by prominent citizens of the state, and of Boston and other cities, who asked that stringent measures be adopted to protect the fishing interests of the famous Rangely lake and the adjoining waters. In the course of an endeavor to show that the number of trout in the lake was steadily decreasing, it was stated that the number taken by guests of the Rangely Lake house in 1900 was 3,210, while in 1901 it has reached only 2,310, a falling off of 30 per cent.

These fish (trout and salmon), it was further stated, averaged four pounds each, and each pound cost the sportsman $15, which would average $60 per fish, or $30,000 per ton. This may seem just a little extravagant, and yet is there a true disciple of the gentle art who will admit that the outlay was foolishly incurred?

Continuous Spectra.

Is the spectrum of a solid or liquid body veritably continuous, as is usually declared, or only apparently so? If we admit that a material molecule is made up of an assemblage of a number of particles, each one of which can emit only radiations of a single special period, the number of different radiations contained in any spectrum whatever is necessarily finite and consequently the continuity shown experimentally can only be apparent.—N. Y. Sun.

The Modern Child.

Mamma—Now, go to sleep or the Squaligobs will get you.

Tommy—Will they come right in here?

"Yes."

"All right. I'll keep awake, 'cause I want to see what kind o' things these Squaligobs are."—Philadelphia Press.

MIRROR ACTS AS A TONIC.

Found to Be Better Than Medicine for Sick Women in Hospital Wards.

A woman's vanity not infrequently acts as a health tonic and saves her from serious illness if not from premature death. A physician with long experience in some of the principal hospitals of the country declares that a mirror—one of those that flatter the user—is sometimes of more value than an entire medicine chest, reports an eastern exchange. "I began my career," he said recently, "by serving several months as an interne in a Pittsburg hospital. It was the rule there that no ward patient should be allowed to have a mirror of any description, and you might rake every ward in the hospital with a fine-tooth comb without finding a piece of looking-glass as big as a postage stamp.

"The management had formulated and enforced that law with the best interests of the patients at heart, for they figured that to study one's own pallor and sunken cheeks and eyes is conducive to depression of spirits and consequent physical deterioration. I considered their reasoning false, but I was only one against many and did not forcibly express my opinion, but discreetly watched the women patients fuming and fussing away in secret, over their appearance, of which each tried to get an idea from the description given her by her neighbors.

"One day I was passing through a certain ward and stopped beside the bed of a colored girl, whose face at that moment wore the must lugubrious expression I had ever seen on a human being. I took alarm instantly and began to study her condition.

"'Why, Elsie,' I said, 'what in the world ails you?'

"She cried then in earnest. 'Oh, doctor,' she said, 'if I could only see myself I'd get better, I know I would. I haven't looked in a glass for a month. The girls try to tell me how I look, but I know they are fooling me. I'm sure I must look a great deal worse than they make out. If I don't, why won't the matron and superintendent let me have a glass?'

"I went right down to the office then and spouted out the piece of advice I had had stored up for so many weeks. After thinking the matter over they decided to allow Elsie to cultivate the acquaintance of her own features once more, and when she found that she did not really look so deathly ill as she had imagined she began to mend and continued to improve steadily.

"So I give sick people, especially the women, a mirror when they ask for it. There may be times when a person who is very near death's door loses interest in her personal appearance and does not care for a mirror, but the average woman who is able to lift a hand wants to judge for herself how she is looking, and if she may not have the privilege of finding out her suspense will be more harmful than positive knowledge.

"There are very few hospitals now that forbid the use of looking glasses and it is to be hoped that those few will soon rescind their absurd rules and provide mirrors of their own. I urge this latter point for the reason that there is a great difference in glasses. Some lend a ghastly hue to the freshest countenance, whereas others throw pink tints on a colorless skin. A look into one of these flattering mirrors now and then would be worth more to a sick person than a dose of medicine, and they ought to be supplied abundantly."

MILES NOT ALL THE SAME.

They Differ in Length in Various Countries and by Land and Sea.

English-speaking countries have four different miles — the ordinary mile of 5,250 feet and the geographical or nautical mile of 6,085, making a difference of about one-seventh between the two; then there is the Scotch mile of 5,928 feet, and the Irish mile of 6,720 feet; four various miles, every one of which is still in use. Then almost every country has its own standard mile. The Romans have their mil passnum, 1,000 paces, which must have been about 3,000 feet in length, unless we ascribe to Caesar's legionaries great stepping capacity. The German mile of to-day is 24,318 feet in length, more than 4½ times as long as our mile. The Dutch, the Danes and the Prussians enjoy a mile that is 18,440 feet long, 3½ time the length of ours; and the Swiss get more exercise in walking their mile than we get in walking five miles, for their mile is 9,153 yards long, while ours is only 1,760 yards.

The Italian mile is only a few feet longer than ours, the Roman mile is shorter, while the Tuscan and the Turkish miles are 150 yards longer. The Swedish mile is 7,341 yards long, and the Vienna postmile is 8,796 yards in length. So here is a list of 12 different miles, and besides this there are other measures of distance, not counting the French kilometer, which is rather less than two-thirds of a mile. The Brazilians have a milia that is 1¼ times as long as our mile; the Neapolitan miglio is about the same length; the Japanese ri, or mile, is 2½ times ours; the Russian verst is five-eighths as long as our mile, while the Persian standard is a fesakh, 4½ mile long, which is said to be equal to the paransang, so familiar to the readers of Xenophon's Anabasis. The distance indicated by the league also varies in different countries.

Piqued.

Ted—What makes you think it's easier to win her now?

Ned—Her younger sister has just become engaged.—Judge.