THE ARGUS.

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BY THE J. W. POTTER CO.

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All communications of political or argumentative character, political or religious, must have real name attached for publication. No such articles will be printed over fictitious signatures.

Correspondence solicited from every township in Rock Island county.

Thursday, February 12.

We are now ready to listen to the man who has heard the first robin sing.

Anyway we manage to struggle along pretty well without a chief of police at all.

There is many a man in Rock Island who still feels uneasy when he sees a bailiff from the court house.

The year 1903 is starting out with the evident determination of breaking the record of its predecessor for railway disasters.

The chances seem good for a rebellion soon in China that will make the late Boxer movement look like the far-famed thirty cents.

The crown prince and the crown princess of Saxony might have saved a deal of time by referring their dispute to The Hague peace tribunal.

The position of Secretary Root regarding labor unions is much like that of the man who said he was "in favor of prohibition, but against its enforcement."

It is now said that the new movement to change the location of the Missouri capital is because the Jefferson City hotels all serve rabbit three times a day.

The British and German allies apparently do not wish to submit their claims to any one for arbitration. There is a growing feeling that their claims will not bear investigation.

First of all, let's have a good, clean cut, business administration of municipal affairs, and then a general revival of the old "hustle for Rock Island" spirit that characterized its citizenship a few years back.

A Kansas insurance case has been tried five times and the supreme court of the United States has sent it back for a sixth trial. The courts sometimes seem determined that justice shall be done if it takes two or three generations to accomplish it.

The latest is a blockade of flour on western lines, creating a famine in Chicago and shoving the price up. So far nobody has undertaken to corner the Grace of God, and hold it on a siding just outside the city limits. That is about the only thing the trusts have not preempted.—Bloomington Bulletin.

Physicians, after long years of investigation of cases tending to longevity, find that most aged people have been married yet are not baldheaded, and nearly all drink intoxicating liquors and use tobacco in some form. These conditions apply particularly to Saxony. The investigation has not been carried on in America or England. Perhaps it is well enough that it should not be.

There is a bill before the legislature providing for the appointment of a board of five musical examiners who are to pass upon the capabilities of all instructors in music. No one would be allowed to teach without having a certificate from this board. This is a fine example of the extent to which freak legislation might extend if suffered to ramble unchecked. What would be better, asks the Quincy Herald, than a state board composed of plumbers, a veterinary surgeon, a stock raiser and a nerve specialist to examine members of the legislature to see that they are sound of limb and free from blemishes behind the ears?

Another Postal Reform.

There was incorporated in the house postoffice appropriation bill recently passed, a provision that will reduce the cost of postoffice operation considerably, and at the same time accommodate a great many business men. It is provided that hereafter postoffices shall accept for transmission in the mails quantities of not less than two thousand identical pieces of third and fourth-class matter without postage stamps being affixed, provided that the postage is fully prepaid.

It does not take any extended explanation to show the value of this reform. The number of circulars passing through the mails daily is enormous and in a great many cases they are identical pieces of mail running up into the thousands and tens of thousands. As matters now stand, postage stamps in sufficient denominations to fulfill the requirements of the law, must be attached to each identical piece. This requires considerable labor, both in the office of the firm where the matter originates and again in the postoffices to which they are transmitted, and the cancellation of these stamps must be done by hand. Under the new arrangement this class of mail matter, when the number of pieces exceed two thousand, will simply be wrapped up and directed by the firm transmitting the same, brought to the postoffice and weighed as newspapers are weighed. The amount due will be paid to the postmaster, and in all probability receipted for, and the matter will at once be ready for distribution and transmission. In the larger offices of the country, this will decrease the number of clerks necessary. Much time will be saved and in addition to this, the government will not be put to the expense of printing the stamps.

This reform was brought out and pushed forward by the third assistant postmaster general, Mr. Madden, an official who has been working hard and successfully to improve his department since the day of his acceptance of the position.

England and the Boers.

The Boers do not exhibit much love for England, and are not likely to do so for some time to come. A number of English colonies are not replete with affection for the old country and this is what keeps England so busy and makes her disinclined to get into trouble on the American side. England is in the condition of the old mother in the nursery rhyme, who had so many children she didn't know what to do. She is in farmer parlance what is known as land poor. Mere extent does not make a nation strong. It has often been a source of weakness. To maintain supremacy over an extensive area is a costly business. If the Boers keep on being ugly, England will find South Africa a sorry venture. She has an elephant on her hands in Ireland. The experiences of Ireland promise to be repeated in South Africa with the same legacy of hatred. England just now wants to exercise that just liberality and magnanimity that characterized the north in its treatment of the south after the rebellion. There is need of the greatest tact in the management of English affairs in its many hued colonies.

Possibilities of the Automobile.

The automobile stands revealed as a new and permanent factor in the world's progress. The automobile means myriad of miles of new and good roads stretching throughout the land, spanning rivers and valleys, crossing the vast mountains and binding all parts of our country more closely together. The automobile means a new era of inter-communication, of closer relationship between communities; it means that the solitudes of the country will be opened up, that the farmer will be saved from his dullness, and that the individual may travel quickly, cheaply and safely wherever he lists without being dependent on the railway train or the plodding team of horses. It seems that the rich will grow closer into touch with other classes, and those of moderate means may ride in comfort without the expense of keeping horses, that enlightenment and education and culture will be the passengers on those cushioned seats and will go into the remote corners of the land.

DAILY SHORT STORY

The Little Lace Smuggler.

[Original.]

Little Gretchen Lahmer of Brussels, Belgium, was coming to America. She was advised by a business acquaintance to put several hundred dollars which she had saved beyond her passage money into the beautiful lace made in her city and carry it with her to New York. If she could get it through the custom house free of duty, she would add considerably to her little capital. She was informed that nothing one wears is dutiable. Therefore after purchasing some white and black lace she set about decorating her clothing with it in such fashion that it would not likely be noticed by the custom house officials. With the black lace she trimmed her mantle, putting on, of course, a profusion, while the white was made into flounces on her dress beneath.

Gretchen crossed the ocean in the sweet summer time, when it was delightful to sit on deck and watch the green waves, the gulls and the blue heavens far ashore by day and the starry dome by night. Besides, the moon was at the full and, beginning with the twilight, rose later every evening. Gretchen was alone, but a young man, an invalid, on the first day out sat in his steamer chair near her and formed her acquaintance. Though the weather was warm, he was invariably wrapped in an ulster. He told Gretchen that he had dropsy.

Gretchen, lonely herself, understood more perfectly the feelings of this young man, who was not only unattended, but ill. She therefore devoted herself to him. Every morning at 10 o'clock when the weather was fine—and it was fine throughout the voyage—she would place the young man's chair for him in a sheltered nook, cover him with rugs, talk to him, read to him and in every way in her power contribute to his comfort. The invalid seemed profoundly grateful for these attentions. When she put a pillow under his head, he would look into her eyes what was more than gratitude. He regretted that he could make no return for her attention except help to improve her English, which was very imperfect. It is but natural that with the language of love passing between, for Gretchen was becoming attached to her charge, they should get on rapidly with mere commonplace expressions. The young man had had a good education in the public schools and seemed quite ambitious to succeed in life. This made Gretchen's heart bleed for him. She would wrap his ulster more closely about him, and he would look up with that grateful, languid smile so touching in an invalid.

When they approached New York, Gretchen began to be worried about her lace. She craved sympathy and confided her secret to her friend. He reassured her by telling her that if she would go ashore with him he would look out for some of the officials whom he knew and each try to distract their attention from her or, if they noticed her superfluous finery, persuade them to let her go unmolested. She gladly accepted his offer and when the ship was docked supported him, still wrapped in his ulster, down the gangplank.

"Wait here a moment," he said, "and I will see if I can find a friend among these customs officers."

The invalid approached an inspector and said to him:

"What is there in it for me if I put you on to a woman who is smuggling lace?"

The officer arranged that he should receive the value of such information, and the two approached Gretchen.

"There she is," said the invalid, and the officer forthwith turned poor Gretchen over to a woman who searched her thoroughly and confiscated every yard of her precious lace. This was nothing to Gretchen compared with the shock the man's treachery caused her. She left the dock weeping. But it was not for her little savings. It was for the image she had set up in her heart, which had been so roughly broken.

The next day Gretchen received a card at her boarding house with the name upon it of "Charles Turner Whitman." She had never heard of such a person and thought there must be some mistake. However, she went down into the parlor, and who, should be there but the invalid, but an invalid no longer. His chalky complexion had become ruddy, his step was quick and strong, his whole appearance cheery. As soon as Gretchen saw him she turned to leave the room, but he caught her and brought her back.

"Wait, little sweetheart, till I explain. When we went ashore yesterday I had on me a small fortune in lace. My legs, body and arms were wrapped with it. If I succeeded in getting it in without confiscation, it would be the last of several such efforts and complete the amount I determined to make before discontinuing a practice which I cordially detest. No surer way of passing the officials unsuspected could be devised than directing their attention to some one else. Your few yards were nothing to the hundreds I had on me. You were kind to me on the trip, and you have been the means of my completing my work undiscovered. Share my snug fortune with me. Be my wife, and together we will enter upon a career less risky and discreditable than smuggling."

It was some time before Gretchen could recover from the shock she had received. Then she smilingly agreed to take the matter into consideration. Evidence was forthcoming that there was nothing against her lover but the several smuggling trips referred to, and she at last consented to marry him. With the proceeds of his trips abroad they set up a small shop and lived happily. GLADYS HARRINGTON.

Special Announcement.

Tuesday, Feb. 17, a notable revival of T. W. Robertson's sparkling comedy, "Caste," will be given at the Illinois theatre by a distinguished company, headed by Mary Scott, the beautiful California star; America's foremost character comedian, Robert V. Ferguson; Countess de Castelvochio, the famous grandniece of Napoleon Bonaparte, who won her dramatic spurs in Sir Henry Irving's company, and William Hazeltine, who occupied a leading position in the late Augustin Daly's company.

This promises to be the most important theatrical event of the season. Sale of seats will commence Monday, Feb. 16, punctually at 9 o'clock.

Prices 25 cents to $1.00. On account of the interest already manifested in this engagement, and the large number of inquiries at the box office, it has been decided that the applications for seats sent in before the opening of the sale will be filled in order of their receipt. Free list positively and entirely suspended.