

ALMA RECORD

C. F. BROWN, Editor and Publisher.

ALMA. MICH.

Hugh M. Brooks, better known as Maxwell, the trunk murderer, astonished the prisoners in the St. Louis jail the other morning by making his first communion and becoming a member of the Catholic church. He was faultlessly attired in a black Prince Albert suit, and went through the ceremony with great earnestness. His case is still pending before the United States supreme court on motion for a hearing on a writ for grant of error. It is generally conceded that the supreme court can do nothing but affirm the judgment when the case is heard. If this follows, Maxwell will be executed within a month after the affirmation. He has been busy for several months writing a psychological treatise of his crime. It is based on his defence, and purports to put on paper the thoughts that teemed in his brain from the moment he met Preller until his arrest at Auckland for the awful offence of murdering his friend, robbing him and packing the body in a trunk.

Dr. George L. Miller of Utica, N. Y., has, according to a writer in "The Utica Observer," 400 acres of ground in the suburbs of Omaha, which he has turned into a park and named Seymour park, and the railroad station there is named Deerfield, after the doctor's old friend Governor Seymour. He has some 4,000 trees in the park many of which came from Governor Seymour and were planted by his suggestion. Dr. Miller is erecting a handsome stone mansion in the park, the walls of which are two feet thick and the piazzas are twelve feet wide. It will be ready for occupancy in July next. Then he will erect a life-size statue of Governor Seymour in the centre of the park. He has laid out beautiful driveways, has countless squirrels and intends having deer later on—all of which is to the memory of Governor Seymour.

It is now proposed that the victims of the Haymarket massacre shall be commemorated by the tallest obelisk in the world, to cost \$100,000. A more sensible way would be to provide for the families of the men who died or were disabled, but when the chief promoter of the scheme says that "Chicago has the largest grain elevators, the largest Board of Trade, the largest stock-yards, the largest packing establishments, had the largest fire, and having had the largest Anarchistic riot known to the world, is properly entitled to erect the largest and most beautiful monolithic obelisk to the memory of the brave men who fell in quelling that riot," it will be seen that he uses most seductive arguments.

Gov. Luce intimates that life is made a burden to him by the ceaseless flood of letters asking the release of prisoners confined in the state prison. Last year, as the result of over 200 applications, he pardoned six and commuted the sentences of two. He will grant no pardon because of the sickness of the prisoner asking it, for the effect is to have the criminals to induce sickness or else to feign it. Great pressure has been brought to bear upon the governor with a hope that he would pardon the Norris murderers Clark and Graham, but his refusal is firm and final.

The Iowa Agricultural college at its late commencement graduated a class of 43 young ladies and gentlemen. These graduates, according to the historian of the class, will reinforce the industrial and professional callings in numbers as follows: Nine farmers and horticulturists, twelve veterinarians, six civil engineers, three mechanical engineers, three lawyers, three teachers, two chemists, one pharmacist, one dentist, one physician, and one general business man. Some estimate of the practical value of the training at that college can be obtained by this statement.

During 1887 five hundred and forty-one cold wave signals were displayed. Of these one hundred and sixteen were incorrect. The number of storms announced was fifteen hundred and ten, but only four hundred and seventy-five storms materialized. The ordinary weather forecasts, however, were almost wholly correct. The science of foretelling storms, blizzards and scorches is as yet merely guess work.

The "old vets" of Michigan will appreciate Senator Palmer's munificent gift of \$10,000 toward the founding of a benefit for them. It is a big star toward the carrying out of a wisely planned project, and it is earnestly hoped that the work so auspiciously begun will be speedily carried to completion. Senator Palmer's donation should remove all doubt as to the success of the scheme.

The mother of the lost Charley Ross, who devotes a great deal of attention to charities, is organizing an effort to purchase an old Catholic abbey in the City of Mexico for a girl's orphanage.

A GOOD POKER STORY.

Why a Cuban Lost \$700 on Two Good Hands.

Last evening there entered a well known poker club uptown a large, rural-looking man of the sort ordinarily termed "pie" by expert manipulators of cards. Around the principal table sat five Cuban gamblers and one blonde Yankee. The large, rural man took a hand in and the game went smoothly on for an hour or so, when there was a jack pot. Everybody passed out until it came the turn of the stranger to speak. He opened the pot for the limit, which was \$5. Two others staid in, until it finally came the turn of the Cuban player, who sat next the rural man and who by passing intimated that he couldn't open the pot. The Cuban not only staid in but raised the stranger back to the extent of the limit. The large, rural-looking man consulted his hand and raised again. The other players went out and the Cuban again raised to the limit. The rural man returned the compliment and the pair of them kept raising each other for several rounds. Finally the time came for calling of cards. The Cuban "stood pat" and the rural stranger drew two cards. Then they began to bet. Finally the Cuban "called." He held a flush and the stranger produced four sevens. The game went for about half an hour. Then there was another jackpot. The Cuban passed. The stranger opened the pot. The other people remained in. The Cuban, who had passed, raised the opener. The rural stranger raised again. The other two people passed out. The Cuban raised back and the rural stranger "went for" him. Finally, after they had raised each other a dozen times, cards were dealt. Again the Cuban "stood pat," and once more the rural stranger drew two cards. The betting began and continued for a long time. Ultimately the Cuban "called." To his wild and incredulous astonishment, against his own full hand the rural stranger laid down the identical four sevens he had held before. The Cuban glared at his imperturbable opponent for some moments, and then, throwing down his hand, cashed in his few remaining checks and dashed out of the establishment. The rural stranger turned out to be one of the most expert poker players in the Southwest, and on these two hands he won \$708.—*New York World.*

Planting Trees on the Surface.

While the tree grows it stands in the soil, and the natural impulse in transplanting is to dig a hole like that from which the tree was taken and root it much as before. But on stony land this is impracticable, and the lesson enforced by scarcity of soil in those cases has proven of so great advantage that many now prefer to plant on the surface, whatever the character of the land. If the soil is filled with stagnant water part of the year, the surface planting gets the roots out of it. The tree at the start has also the advantage of a double depth of soil to grow in, as a mound must be made around it corresponding to the hole that would have to be dug if set the usual way. It is very possible that this mound in which the tree stands is the secret of success with this way of planting. The rain which falls on it is washed directly to the extremities of the roots, where it is most needed. We have seen many fruit trees set in holes with the point next the trunk made lowest, so that what little water got into them flowed directly to the body of the tree. This is much the same as if a man was held bolt upright, as a tree is, and given food or water by putting the water at his feet. It will be all the better in planting trees on the surface if the fine soil to cover the roots is brought some distance, instead of got from holes dug near the tree. In this way the soil around the tree will be enriched, without impoverishing that close by which the feeding roots must soon fill if the tree thrives. Years ago we knew an orchard planted in the usual way in holes, with a half-bushel mixture of phosphate and stable manure mixed with the earth at the bottom of the hole, the one place where it would be least convenient for the tree to benefit by it.—*American Cultivator.*

A Fortune-Hunter's Bad Break.

Sweet Girl—Isn't Mr. fortunehunter splendid? He's been such a traveler.

Rob Widow—Splendid, indeed! He's the most unmanly fellow I ever met.

"Unmanly?"

"He's positively insulting. I never want to speak to him again."

"Oh, I'm sure there's some mistake. What did he say?"

"He asked me if I'd ever heard Jenny Lind."

At the Telegraph Office.

"I want you to send this message to Miss Brown at Galveston. Her mother is not expected to live," said a Texas granger to an Austin telegraph operator.

Operator takes the message, sits down at his table and begins to send it over the wires.

"Hold up! Don't give it to her so fast. She's got heart disease. Go slow. Break it to her gently."—*Texas Siftings.*

Chinese Farmers and China's Progress.

There are reasons to believe that the trade of this country with China will soon grow to majestic dimensions. Of the seven million five hundred thousand dollars of exports to China in the last fiscal year, nearly five million dollars' worth was of distinctly agricultural products, and of their manufacture. Of the remainder, the largest share was mineral oil. The Chinese commission in the United States this year is charged especially with the promotion of banks, telegraph and telephone lines, behind which looms up the extension of canals, the introduction of railroads, of agricultural machinery, and of such of our products as China needs, and she has need of many. Her home products, aside from tea, are wheat, millet, garden vegetables, rice, poor apples, peaches, grapes, etc. The food of China is mostly vegetables and fish—the extensive sea coast, rivers and canals supplying the latter. Beef is almost unknown, except in the foreign settlements, and berries are rare; mutton is plentiful; pork, poultry and eggs are abundant. Domestic animals, except dogs, are not common. Horses are scarce, mules are numerous, cattle in small numbers, but ducks and birds are unknown. The national habit is opposed to change, and so the nation of three hundred million souls goes on in "the good old way." The United States broke the spell of centuries in Japan. It may yet do the same for China. We go for trade and progress, other nations for trade and conquest and colonies, and the Chinese leaders are beginning to understand this. A modernized agriculture, and the general introduction of railroad and wagon service, would rejuvenate the decaying "Flowery Land," which is a bald misnomer for a land destitute of flowers and shrubs, treeless, and with a dull herbage that contrasts strongly with the culture that has made the American continent to "blossom like the rose," and be rich in various products that its enterprise bears to all parts of the civilized world.—*American Agriculturist.*

Cost of Passes.

"I thought it was economy," said a man very mournfully the other day, "for she was bent on seeing the state, and I thought it would save railroad fares, but she has simply ruined me since she got a free pass all over the place. You see, I did some little service to the railroad people, and I happened to mention that my wife was going down south.

"Here you are," said the railroad man. "We owe you something. Here are free passes for the state for your wife."

"I took the blamed things home and gave them to her. They began to burn her pocket-book right away. Next morning she said: 'I guess I'll go to San Jose on my free passes.' 'All right,' I said, 'I won't cost me anything.' 'No,' she said, 'so it's lovely not to have to pay any fare?' 'Beautiful,' said I. 'Now, dear, I want you to give me \$25, I really must buy some clothes to go to San Jose.' 'Twenty-five dollars?' 'Yes. You wouldn't like your wife traveling without any style, would you?' 'Well,' I said, 'it's quite necessary for you to go to San Jose?' 'No; but I might as well, I don't need to pay anything on the train.' And the first break that free pass cost me \$35. Well, she started off to San Jose, and she concluded she would go on the broad-gauge road. When the conductor came around she pulled out her pass. She had to pay her fare. When she started to come back she concluded she'd take the narrow-gauge pass and bought her ticket. Yes, the free pass is a very economical thing for a woman.—*San Francisco Chronicle.*

Costly Pearls.

Single pearls have been found on this coast valued at \$7,500 and \$35,000, but the most curious pearl discovery that has been made, either here or elsewhere, was made on this coast a few years ago, when the now famous Crude Australis, or Southern Cross pearl, was reared. This is a perfectly natural cross of nine pearls, all in one piece. The finder of this unprecedented gem was, as often happens, unaware of its value, and sold it for \$100. The purchaser considered himself fortunate when he was offered \$2,000 by four gentlemen in Perth. They sent the curiosity to England and had it mounted and exhibited in the recent colonial and Indian exhibition in London, where it attracted a great deal of notice, and was offered for sale at the advanced price of \$50,000. Whether a purchaser has yet been found for it is not known. The exhibitors hoped that His Holiness the Pope might consider it his duty to become the possessor of so marvelous a reproduction of the holy tree, and perhaps some pious devotee may before now have purchased it for a jubilee offering to the pontiff.—*Ex.*

A Disbeliever.

"Mith Thimth," he asked, as he drew up his collar and adjusted his single eye-glass, "do you believe in Darwinian theory, believe that a man is descended from a monkey?" "No," she replied, surveying him from head to foot, "I believe the very reverse.—*Boston Courier.*

SCINTILLATIONS.

A great many people are troubled with dizziness of the eye.—*Puck.*

Only a little "s" divides the speculator and the peacemaker.—*Earth.*

A man's life may be like an open book; but it is bound to be closed.—*Pecayune.*

This is the season when bartenders make things hot for their customers.—*Boston Courier.*

Base ball is as old as the world, as is proven by the first line in Genesis: "In the big inning," etc.—*Texas Siftings.*

If a man really desires to discover how popular he is as a speaker let him charge fifty cents admission.—*Boston Globe.*

There is no better cure for dyspepsia than the knowledge that there is nothing to eat in the house.—*Boston Courier.*

Mr. Navergo Bore (reaching for a button-hole)—"What's going on, old man?" Mr. Busy Man (dodging)—"I am."—*Burdette.*

Kilrain and Smith are soon to fight. Sympathy should be extended to the victor. He is the fellow Sullivan intends to lick.—*Omaha Herald.*

"Were there any poets among the ante-diluvians?" a writer asks. "There must have been or there wouldn't have been any flood."—*Boston Courier.*

Josef Hofman may be a miraculous pianist for a boy ten years old, but he should go to school and learn how to spell Joseph.—*Boston Transcript.*

If the price of coal keeps going higher it will be the ultra-fashionable thing for people to move their coal bins up into the parlor.—*Somerville Journal.*

Kentucky has a rooster with three throats, and every time a Kentuckian takes his Bourbon he wishes he was that rooster.—*Fort Worth (Tex.) Gazette.*

A man who has been hanged can very properly be used to point an argument for prohibition. It is a clear case of "a drop too much."—*Boston Globe.*

A man in Manitoba has sent to New York for a copy of the "Boulevard March." He says he wants to see if he can't discourage the blizzards.—*Exchange.*

The brain of an elephant is somewhat larger than that of a man, but the trunk of an elephant is considerably smaller than that of a woman.—*Lowell Courier.*

Gerster has lost her voice, sure enough, but if it is ever found it will be easy to identify it. There is no other of the same pattern.—*Philadelphia Press.*

Crossis never was called upon to act for a season as financial manager of a national opera company. This is why he is known to history as a man of some means.—*Chicago Tribune.*

Everybody knows what a hen line is. It runs in a circle around clover patches and finally makes its way to a hollow tree in the swamp, where the honey is deposited.—*Pecayune.*

"I shouldn't care to marry a woman who knows more than I do," he remarked. "Oh, Mr. De Sappy," she replied, "I'm afraid you are a confirmed bachelor."—*Epoch.*

The Boston Transcript asks: "Have we a Spartacus among us?" No, a thousand times no! But the cannibal who had eaten his wife said he was glad he ate her!—*Columbus Journal.*

An old friend to a widow in tears—"I presume your husband had made all preparations to face his maker?" "He had, indeed. He was insured in six different companies!"—*Paris Fango.*

This conundrum comes by private conveyance from a Rutland County town: "What two rivers in New England ask and answer a question? Hoosie and Passumpsic."—*St. Albans Messenger.*

Jay Gould's advice to boys is "Keep out of bad company and go to work with a will." And if you can't keep out of bad company, my boy, do as Jay does and wipe out the company.—*Boston Transcript.*

Bridget—"Enjoy slaps, is it? How could I, I'd like yez to tell me. The more I lay down I'm asleep, and the more I'm awake I have to get up. Where's the time for enjoyin' it to come in?"—*Philadelphia Call.*

Are Stones Alive?

We generally think of minerals as dead lumps of inactive matter. But they may be said to be alive, creatures of vital pulsations, and separated into individuals as distinct as the pines of a forest or the tigers in a jungle. The disposition of crystals are as diverse as those of animals. They throbb with unseen currents of energy. They grow in size as long as they have opportunity. They can be killed, too, though not as easily as an oak or dog. A strong electric shock discharged through a crystal will decompose it, very rapidly if it is of soft structure, causing the particles to gradually disintegrate in the reverse order from its growth, until the poor thing lies a dead, shapeless ruin.

It is true the crystal's life is unlike that of higher creatures. But the difference between vegetable and animal life is no greater than that between mineral and vegetable life. Linnæus, the great Swedish naturalist, defined the three kingdoms by saying: "Stones grow, plants grow and feel, animals grow and feel and move."—*Wide Awake.*

Bells.

Of all the articles in common use, alike in our public and private life, there is none that appeals to more emotions than the bell. There is none which has figured more prominently in not a few of the great tragedies of history and in many of the cherished recollections of childhood. Its history is full of romance, from the time when the drops of water in the clepsydra, the water-clock of antiquity, were made to sound like our most d minutive bells, to the present, when the largest bell in the world, now in actual use in Moscow, weighs 128 tons. It is a story upon which a volume might be written, for the historians, the poets, the musicians and even nursery tales would furnish abundant material.

In England, for centuries, the parish bell has tolled for the death of the poorest and richest alike, and this custom has prevailed to some extent in New England. There was one singular instance in modern English history when the bells pealed mingled notes of triumph and mourning. The same ship that brought the news of the great naval victory at Trafalgar conveyed also the remains of Nelson, and when it arrived all the bells rang out merry peals, broken at intervals by the passing toll for the loss of the hero who had won it.

In earlier times two of the most dreadful tragedies in all history were ushered in by the ringing of bells. It was upon Easter-tide in 1282 that John of Procida had fixed for his attempt to free Sicily from the French and Charles of Anjou. The signal for the rising and the onslaught was to be the first sound of the vesper bells on the appointed day. In the massacre that followed more than 8,000 Frenchmen perished, and the event has since been known as the Sicilia Vespers.

The massacre of the Huguenots occurred 2 in 157, and the signal for its commencement was given by the ringing of a bell in the church of St. Germain l'Auxerrois, opposite the east facade of the Louvre.

Bells, indeed, played an important part in all the strife and turmoil of the Middle Ages. They rang in cities taken and given over to pillage, or in token of ransom by a victor who dared to be merciful, or by the joyful garrison when from their unconquered walls they saw the besiegers departing. One of the first acts of a general after capturing a stronghold was to break or pull down the bells, and if opportunity ever offered, the inhabitants never failed to melt down the cannon of the oppressors, in their turn defeated, to make good their loss.

In England, William the Conqueror made the curfew bell an instrument of oppression. After Mahomet II. had taken Constantinople, in 1453, he permitted large bodies of the Greeks to return to their homes, but he would never allow their bells to be rung, knowing how easily they might be used as a signal for insurrection.

While the bell has sounded the knell to many hopes it has pealed merrily and hopefully to many ears. It made the fortune of Whittington, when it seemed to say:

"Turn again, Whittington, Lord Mayor of London!"

Moore sang beautifully of Those Evening Bells, and Father Prout has celebrated The Bells of Shandon in verses that will live as long as that class of river flows.

The bells that poets and prose writers are turning the attention to in this happiest period of the year are Christmas Bells, and soon their chimings will be heard to ring—in fancy at least—whenever Christmas legends are known and its customs cherished.—*Texas Siftings.*

Hidden in a Tree.

Says *Chambers' Journal*: Some woodcutters in the forest of Drommic made a very strange discovery. They began to fell a venerable oak, which they soon found to be quite hollow. Being half decayed, it speedily came to the ground with a crash, disclosing a skeleton in excellent preservation; even the boots, which came above the knees, were perfect. By its side was a powder-horn, a porcelain pipe-bowl, and a silver watch. The teeth were perfect. It would seem to be the skeleton of a man between 30 and 40 years of age. It is conjectured that, while engaged in hunting, he climbed the tree for some purpose and slipped into the hollow trunk, from which there was no release, and he probably died of starvation. Another mystery was found in the heart of an oak. From a tree of this kind a large block about a green inches in diameter, that has been knocking about in various yards and woodsheds, was split up lately, and in it was found an anger-hole about three-fourths of an inch in size, containing a bunch of human hair done up in a piece of printed paper. The hair was near the center of the block and fastened in with a pine plug. It was apparently put in when the tree was quite small, as the tree had grown over the plug to the thickness of about four inches, with the grain perfectly smooth and straight.

Assurance.

Gentleman—"I don't like to pay you for the job, Uncle Rastus, till it's done. You might go back on me." Uncle Rastus (earnestly)—"Deed I won't, boss, deed I won't. Ise white if I is cullud."—*New York Sun.*

Needs of the Piedmont Region.

The section of country known as the Piedmont Region of the South Atlantic States, embracing large portions of Virginia, North and South Carolina and Georgia, has many possibilities under the new order bound to prevail in that section upon the division of the land into small farms, and the adoption of a system of mixed husbandry.

The need of this section is population. From any point of observation, the eye can sweep the country for miles, and the whole undulating surface looks one vast forest, the proportion of cleared land being so small, and that so scattered about the plantations, that at a distance they are lost to view. It is no wonder that the tendency is so general for the farmers to move into town and run their farms by tenants. Before the war they were able to keep up large establishments, entertain guests royally, and with a retinue of servants, bid defiance to neighbors or the offices of neighborhood. Now with the change, the country must either be settled up by farmers who will combine in making up neighborhoods, and establish the social bonds of society, or the plantations will become estates managed by owners or corporations with a system of tenantry as odious and demoralizing as that of Ireland.

Land that produces so generously will not be allowed to be idle, and either small farms and prosperity, or large estates and a grinding monopoly, will prevail.—*American Agriculturist.*

How to Tell Brides and Grooms.

"Yes," said an old and experienced hotel clerk yest' day. "I can tell a bride and groom at a glance. For some reason or other they all seem ashamed to have it known that they have just been married, and they all try to give the impression that they are comparatively old stagers, as it were, but it's no use with me. I smile when I see their old trunks—to come with brand-new ones, you know, would be to advertise the fact that they had just been wedded—and I laugh outright when I receive a letter from a bridegroom saying: 'Myself and wife will be at your house on Wednesday night between twelve and one o'clock. Our luggage will arrive during the afternoon, but we will not arrive ourselves until after the theater.' Then I watch and see them come in with a bundle of umbrellas and canes, a hat-box and a couple of valises, which I have no hesitancy, of course, in believing they took to the play with them. How do I tell a bride and groom? Well, there's something about the way they look at each other when they are together; and when the newly-married man is by himself I can tell by the manner in which he uses the two words, 'my wife.' He's not used to the combination, and they sound as unnatural to me as they do to himself."

Capturing Them Unawares.

Mr. Longhair—Are you the gentleman who writes reading notices which begin with something of startling interest and end with a patent-medicine advertisement?

Writer—I do work of that sort occasionally, &c.

Mr. Longhair—Well, I wish you would get me up something about a prize-fight, or a trunk murder, or a church scandal, or any thing the public are especially interested in, and then spring on them: "Are you prepared to die?" "What will you do to be saved?" "Lay not up for yourself treasures upon earth," etc. I'm a tract distributor.—*Pack.*

The Coming Great Novelist.

There is one young lady in this city, says *The Waterbury American*, who has all the makings of a good metropolitan newspaper correspondent. She is only 8 years old now and has a chance to develop. The other day she went to her school-teacher, crying bitterly, and said she must go home as her brother was dead.

"When did he die?" asked the teacher.

"Last night," stammered the child between her tears. "He was only 2 years old. Last night he started to follow papa to the barn. When papa came in at 9 o'clock we asked where the baby was, and he said he hadn't seen him." Here the sobs drowned her words for a while. Then the tot continued: "We went right out to search then, and this morning we found him in the woods with his legs almost eaten off."

Thoughts that Barnum's animals had up the valley filled the teacher's mind, and she was almost sickened as the child went on with the harrowing details. "What did you do?" she asked at length?

"Called the doctor, but it was no use; baby died."

"The teacher then called the child's older sister from a neighboring school-room; the child denied the story in toto. The teacher had previously detected a glowing imagination in the tot, whom she now ordered to her seat.

Did Not Like It That Way.

A particular old gen tleman, pulling something out of his soup that should not have been included among the other ingredients, thus addressed the cook: "Josephine, I am much obliged for your thoughtfulness, but next time kindly give it to me in a locket."—*Judge.*