

RAILWAY TO EUROPE

New Interest in the Project of New York to Paris by Rail.

The Idea Is Not So Chimerical as It Would Seem at First Thought — To Tunnel Beneath Behring Straits.

When a few years ago some explorers and engineers suggested an all-rail route to Paris via a tunnel under the Behring straits, it was considered as the wildest of dreams. But that there is more to the scheme than idle speculation is evident from the fact that the projectors of the new road (French and Russian capitalists and American bankers), have just filed a petition with Secretary Hitchcock, of the interior department, for approval of the proposed route. This petition will undoubtedly be followed by an application to congress for a land grant through Alaska. Col. James Hamilton Lewis, of Chicago, Holmes Conrad, former solicitor for the department of justice, and Charles H. Aldrich, of Chicago, are the attorneys for the projectors. The petition, it is believed, is a forerunner to asking the United States to neutralize the straits as between nations, so that, in the event of war with China and Japan or Russia, no advantage will be given to the enemies of Russia.

The tunnel under the straits would be between Cape Prince of Wales, the most westerly point of Alaska, and East Cape, the most easterly point in Siberia, and will, according to a report of the engineers, prove a comparatively easy task, for beneath the water, which in no place is over 23 fathoms, the formation is not of rock, but schist or slate. No blasting would be necessary, and the Diamede islands in the straits are so placed as to offer the most convenient means of ventilation of the tunnel. The straits, commonly reported to be from 17 to 20 miles wide, are actually 40, and the first island is 15 miles from East Cape; the second is 15 miles from that, and the third five miles from Cape Prince of Wales. Harry de Windt, the explorer, journalist and engineer, who with a party of Russians visited the straits in 1898, declared after he had carefully surveyed the situation, that the difficulties to be encountered in tunneling and constructing roads in Alaska to connect with the trans-Siberian road were not one-quarter those to be encountered in the construction of the White Pass railroad, dreamed of ten years ago by J. J. Hill, for further north the mountains diminish and the valleys, thickly wooded to within 80 miles of Cape Prince of Wales, run north and south.

According to the present plans, the Trans-Alaskan Railroad company, of which Mr. J. J. Frey, of Denver, Col.,



A MAP OF BEHRING STRAITS.

is president, will construct the road of 2,600 miles to Cape Prince of Wales. The Russian government will operate the Siberian side of the road. The White Pass railroad is paying enormously, and it is certain that the proposed new road would pay equally well, for there are vast forests, tin deposits at Cape Prince of Wales, copper deposits and gold fields of a value which is not yet known or realized.

The entire cost of building the connecting lines in Alaska and Siberia, and constructing the tunnel would not be as great as that of the New York subway. It is planned to make the road single tracked for freight with sidings, and will enable a train to pull out of Paris, and three weeks later enter New York city.

Forty engineers who were sent out by the Russian government for the sole purpose of surveying the proposed road have planned no mountain climbing or tunneling. The road by tacking would avoid the mountains from Irkutsk to Yokutsk, a distance of 2,000 miles. This section is now under construction. From Yokutsk the road will extend half way to Verkhoyansk, and then strike due northeast to Verin Kolymsk; then south 100 miles, and thence to East Cape. Convict labor would be used in Siberia, and the forests would supply the ties and lumber for 1,000 miles of sheds in Siberia and Alaska.

M. Loquet Lobet, member of the Geographical society, and one of those interested in the great scheme, passed through San Francisco recently, and in talking of the plans declared that 12 years would see the road and tunnel completed and trains running.

Good Living, Too.

Farmer Corncribb—I see a feller eat tacks and broken bottles in a New York museum.

Farmer Hayrake—That's nothin' tall! I see a big, fat, healthy man in New York once that lived on gold bricks and sawdust.—Puck.

Worthy of a Trial.

Mayme—I wish I could get something that would prevent my lips from chapping.

Eydh—Why don't you eat onions? Mayme—Is that a good remedy? Eydh—Yes; it keeps the chaps away.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

ISLANDS IN DISPUTE

The Tiny Specks That Both America and England Now Claim.

Why Those on the Coast of British North Borneo Belong to Us—Where They Are and What They Are—The People.

When the sultan of Sulu (or Jolo) first saw an American, he asked: "Why did you come here to get our land?"—having heard that Americans were very rich and possessed immeasurable lands. And if he now knows, or ever happens to hear, that our government has taken the trouble to put her seal on those tiny specks of land lying off the northeast coast of Borneo, the wee isles of Bagnau, Taganac, Bak-kunau, Lihiman, Boani, Siebung, and Lankkayan, he may, indeed, doubt the tales of boundless wealth and wide domains belonging to the United States. But these wee islands have strategical value, and therefore we



THE DISPUTED ISLANDS. They Are Shown in the Circle off the Borneo Coast.

want them. And, anyway, they belong to us.

These seven islands lying so close to British North Borneo, came to us along with the sultan of Sulu. But we lay claim to them, not because this Sulu sultan has spiritual power over the Mohammedans in some islands without the Sulu group, and even over Mohammedans residing in British North Borneo, but because of two treaties; the first, a treaty between Great Britain, Germany and Spain, wherein Spain was given title to all the islands "outside a marine league's distance of the Borneo coast"; the second treaty referred to the one between the United States government and the sultan of Jolo, in which agreement was made that all the islands ceded to Spain by the treaty of 1885 should belong to the United States.

The seven islands recently visited by the United States gunboat are unquestionably out of the marine league limit of this treaty, and authorities declare the British have not a shadow of claim to them. They are uninhabited and reputed uninhabitable; all lie close together and are spread over an area of about 40 miles. The largest of the seven, Boani and Taganac, command the harbor of Sandakan, the capital of British North Borneo. Rear Admiral Evans, recognizing their value from a strategic point of view, sent one of the Philippine gunboats to the islands to survey them, hoist the American flag and erect American tablets.

The island of Borneo is the largest of the East India islands. The Dutch possessions comprise by far the major part of the territory, the British territory (31,106 square miles) occupying the extreme northern portion of the island. British North Borneo has a coast line of about 900 miles, a mountainous interior, and much jungle land; the population is 200,000; on the coast are Mohammedan settlers, some Chinese traders and artisans, and inland dwell the aboriginal tribes. Brunei and Sarawak, neighboring territories, were placed under British protection in 1888. British North Borneo is under the jurisdiction of the British North Borneo company, held under grants from the sultans of Sulu and of Brunei. The territory is administered by a governor (English) in Borneo and a court of directors in London.

Our friend, the sultan of Sulu, seems to have been considerable of a personage in the past—and may yet be, for all we know; both Great Britain and Spain treating him with consideration. Spain used to pay him an annual tribute, and the North Borneo Trading company still hands over to him a yearly tribute of 5,000 Mexican dollars. And yet in his own land the potentate has wielded but an uncertain authority; where "each man is more or less of a free lance, and his authority is measured largely by the number of rifles he possesses."

Following the word of out putting hand to the seven tiny islands off the coast of Borneo comes the report that France is going to turn over to us her insular possessions in the eastern Pacific. A cynical writer, commenting on the reported transfer, says: "The correspondent fails to tell whether we are to pay for them, or be paid for taking them." Certainly their revenues are not such as to make us eager. The local budgets of all for last year amounted to not more than \$300,000; the islands altogether have an area of about 1,520 square miles, and a population of 29,000.

A Dream of Gladness.

"What would be your first act if you were president of the United States, Mr. Henpeck?"

"I think I would start out on a good, big swing around the circle, leaving my wife at home to see that the government was kept going all right." — Chicago Record-Herald.

His Ruse.

Street Boy—Sir, have you lost your pocketbook?

Gentleman (searching through his pockets)—No, my boy.

Street Boy—Then you will be so kind to give me a nickel.—Judge.

TAN-TI, THE GREAT.

Little Dog of Patrician Ancestry That Was Brought to This Country from China.

"Yes, indeed, he belongs to the nobility and the gentry," said Miss Helen Jackson as she looked admiringly at the microscopic dog that was presented to her by Dr. Decker during her recent visit to California. This same specimen of the pocket edition variety of dog has excited the envy and admiration of every one of Miss Jackson's friends who has beheld his royal highness, reports the Denver Post.

"Just note the haughty pose of his aristocratic little black nose and the majestic flourish of what promises in time to be a caudal appendage worth mentioning," said she. "He is as much impressed with his own importance as any vicerey with the peacock feathers and yellow robe of the oriental kingdom, where a long line of his ancestors have lived for years and years." His patrician blood is evinced by numerous fine points and the blackness of his satiny coat is accentuated by the whiteness of his feet. At present he is barely visible to the naked

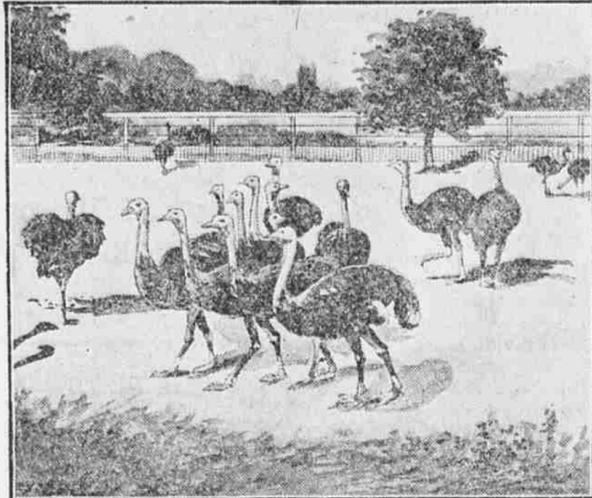
CONSUMPTION OF JEWELRY.

What Becomes of Good Watches and Other Articles of Value is Something of a Mystery.

A periodical devoted to the jewelry trade tries to account for the continued sale of certain lines of merchandise. As cheap plated stuff is thrown away as soon as the coating wears off, one can understand why such articles disappear. Rings, pins, and other objects of real value, as well as jewelry, may be lost, of course, but they don't wear out. They last a lifetime. Owing to a change in style, possibly they may be laid aside, but this does not happen often.

Perhaps the most puzzling phase of the question is the demand for watches and watch movements. This is encouraged by the fact that a really good time-keeper in a nickel case can be bought for \$5 or \$10, yet the number of watches sold increases much faster than the population. Where do all these go? So durable are the old watches that thousands which have been in service for nearly a lifetime may be seen still in use. A Pittsburgh dealer said the other day: "The railroad man is about as fair an example as you can find. While his case

SCENE ON A CALIFORNIA OSTRICH FARM.



Until a comparatively recent period all the ostrich plumes sold in the American market were imported from Africa. Some 12 years ago an enterprising citizen of California conceived the idea of importing some of the big African birds and establishing a farm for the purpose of raising the costly feathers at home. His success was almost instantaneous, and the small flock that was originally brought from the dark continent has multiplied wonderfully. While a large quantity of plumes is still imported, the domestic supply has had a tendency to reduce prices to consumers in this country.

eye, but promises to be fully eight inches long when he gets his growth. He answers to the euphonious name of Tan-Ti, which name has probably descended to him through a long line of royal dog ancestry. His mother, trembling with fright, was found in the emperor's palace during the siege of Peking, was rescued and brought to California by American sailors. Pinky-Panky-Poo was recently in Denver and had a train of admirers, but the rule of Tan-Ti the Great begins at once in Denver dogdom, and all aspirants for high places must bow to his supremacy.

Tender-Hearted Burglar.
Though taking all the money he could find, a burglar who broke into a woman's house in Paris left a note saying he could not find it in his heart to take her jewels lest they were heirlooms.

Would Be Buried at Sea.
Admiral Sir Harry Keppel, "the father of the British fleet," has begun his ninety-fifth year. The venerable officer is a sailor by instinct, and has often declared that he hopes to die and be buried at sea.

King Edward a Good Shot.
It is as a deadly pheasant shot that King Edward has won his reputation as a marksman. He is considered, after Lord Walsingham and Lord De Grey, the finest pheasant-shot in England.

Revenue from the Yukon.
The Yukon yielded the Canadian government a revenue of \$1,485,760 last year and the expenditure on the territory was \$2,557,336.

is only an ordinary one his watch movement is usually good, and in many instances his children earn their own watch before he is in a position to pass it to the heir. The majority of watches are kept the same way, and what becomes of them is more than the average dealer can tell."

Prisoner Pleases Czar.

A prisoner in Siberia lately sent a czar a gift in the shape of a large hazelnut, inside of which is a miniature chessboard, with all the pieces complete, carved out of ivory. The prisoner had worked at this little gem in his leisure hours for more than a year. The czar was so pleased that he desired to know for what the man had been sent to Siberia, and it is expected that a reprieve will be granted to him.

Monoliths for Cathedral.

Eight great monoliths are ready for erection in building the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York city. The eight columns cost \$250,000. The rough shafts measure 64 by 31 1/2 by 7 feet, and weigh 310 tons each. Only one other structure, St. Isaac's cathedral, at St. Petersburg, has columns approaching these in size.

After the Funeral.

A Japanese Buddhist dignitary was buried a few weeks ago. The police made the following terse return of the side issues of the ceremony: "Three hundred and eleven injuries, 75 fainting, 121 thefts, 374 pickpockets captured, 1,021 articles lost. Seventy-nine people fell into creeks or ditches."

CARDINAL JAMES GIBBONS.



Cardinal Gibbons, archbishop of Baltimore, Md., was born in the city of Baltimore July 24, 1824. At an early age he was taken by his parents to their former home in Ireland, where his education began. When he was 17 years old he returned to his native state and entered S. Charles' college, Maryland. He was ordained priest in 1861. In 1868 he was made vicar apostolic of North Carolina; was translated to the vacant see of Richmond, Va., in 1872; was appointed coadjutor bishop of the Baltimore archdiocese in 1877, and on the death of Archbishop Bailey, in the same year, succeeded him. He was created a cardinal in 1883.



THE MERRY-GO-ROUND.

Across the way there's a merry-go-round, I can see it where I live, I can see the hobby-horses glide across the twilight sky, And when the merry-go-round goes round, the music begins to play, And the people laugh and the children sing, and all are lithe and gay.

And the merry-go-round goes round and round, And the horses never tire; And the bright lights blaze, And the music plays, And the merry-go-round goes round and round; As the merry-go-round goes round and round; And round and round goes the merry-go-round. —Mary M. Parks, in St. Nicholas.

THE STORY OF DICK.

Faithful Sengul Which Kept Tryst for a Period of Twenty-Four Consecutive Years.

Out in the ocean, about four miles off the shore of Rhode Island and just south of Narragansett bay, is anchored Brenton's Reef lightship. Some 22 years ago the lonely watchers on the ship had their attention attracted by a seagull that so far put aside his wild nature as to swim close to the vessel in search of food. The friendliness and trustfulness of the bird



DICK LEAVING LIGHT SHIP.

Immediately won the hearts of the keepers, and soon he was supplied with all the food he wanted. Not only this, but every day, without a break, the bird, which by this time the men had named "Dick," came back, and just as regularly was he supplied. This soon grew into a habit; and the preparation of Dick's allowance became one of the cook's fixed duties.

There would have been nothing very remarkable in a wild sea fowl following an instinct that led it to repeat a search for food so regularly and so bountifully successful, were it not for its later history. One day near the first of the first April following Dick's appearance at the lightship he was missed, and was not seen again until about the first of the next October, when the same programme of daily feeding was resumed and kept up as during the previous year. Then, as the first of April drew near, Dick would again take himself off to his summer home, wherever that might be, only faithfully to return with the following October.

This repeated going and coming, with the constant round of daily feeding, was kept up for 24 consecutive years; and Capt. Edward Fogarty, in charge of the lightship, writes to us that the last seen of the old fellow was in April, 1895, when, according to his custom, he left for his summer vacation, but, for the first time in 24 years, failed to return the next October.

What became of him no one knows. His great age may have so enfeebled him that he was unequal to the long flight to and from his unknown summer home. He may have chosen to stay there, or he may have died of old age.

It was noticed by the ship's keepers that during his last visit Dick plainly showed the effects of his increasing years, and that he was no longer able to hold his own with the other gulls in maintaining his exclusive right to the bounty thrown out from the lightship.

The Smithsonian Institution knew the history of Dick's visits and was desirous of obtaining his remains when he died, but, while it is possible that in his later life he might have been captured and forced to end his days on shipboard, there was not on board the lightship so false as to make the attempt or permit it in others.

The reports of Dick's arrival and departure were faithfully recorded by the captain in his ship's records as if they were an important item of marine news, and in the neighborhood of Newport, at least, he was as well known a character as any pet elephant or monkey within the safe confines of a zoological garden is to the girls and boys in the cities. Dick's cage and playground was the whole Atlantic ocean, if he had wished, but he was faithful to the friends whom he had always found faithful to him.—St. Nicholas.

Watchful Stone Slingers.

When the wheat is growing in the fields near the banks of the Nile, Egypt, great quantities of birds of every kind pounce down upon the tender grain and would soon destroy the whole crop were it not for the watchful "stone slingers." These are men who stand all day perched on little platforms here and there throughout the fields with slings and pebbles, shooting any bird that comes within reach. The work of a stone slinger is a regular profession in Egypt, though a poorly paid one, it being thought that simply standing still all day is not very hard labor. It is only for a few weeks twice a year that the stone slinger can find employment.

STORIES ABOUT RAVENS.

Fidelity to Mates and Formation of Peculiar Friendships Characterize These Birds.

The raven always pairs for life, and the strength of affection, the fidelity, the dignity which this implies seem to me to raise him infinitely, as it does the owls, above birds which congregate in flocks, and so abjure family ties and duties through a greater part of the year.

A raven kept at the "Old Bear" inn at Hungerford struck a close friendship with a Newfoundland dog. When the dog broke his leg the raven waited on him constantly, catered for him, forgetting for the time his own greediness, and rarely, if ever, left his side. One night, when the dog was by accident shut within the stable alone, Ralph succeeded in pecking a hole through the door, all but large enough to admit his body.

Another, kept in a yard in which a big basket sparrow trap was sometimes set, watched narrowly the process from his favorite corner, and managed, when the trap fell, to lift it up, hoping to get at the sparrows within. They, of course, escaped before he could drop the trap. But, taught by experience, he opened communications with another tame raven in an adjoining yard, and the next time the trap fell, while one of them lifted it up, the other pounced upon the quarry.

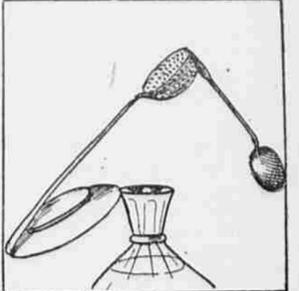
A female raven, known at that time to be 60 years of age, and who had passed much of her early and middle life with a strange companion, a blind porcupine, was given, in the year 1854, by Mr. J. H. Gurney, the well-known ornithologist, to the rector of Bluntisham, in Huntingdonshire. She seemed so disconsolate at the loss of her surroundings that her new owner, failing to get another raven, managed to secure a seagull for her as a companion. A warm friendship soon sprang up between the two birds. They followed one another about everywhere, and the raven often used to treat her companion to pieces of putrid meat which she had buried for her own consumption in the shrubberies. These were delicacies in the eyes of the raven, but they were not so good for the gull. In course of time, whether from indigestion or not, the gull fell ill and the raven became more assiduous than ever in her attentions, never leaving him and plying him with her most nauseous tit-bits. The gull grew worse, as was perhaps natural under the treatment, and less companionable, and one day, when he positively refused to touch a more unsavory morsel than usual, which the raven had denied to herself and doubtless thought to be a panacea, the raven, in a fit of fury at the ingratitude of her patient, fell upon her friend, killed it, tore it to pieces, and burying half of it for future consumption, devoured the rest.—Nineteenth Century.

TRICK IN BALANCING.

After a Few Trials It Can Be Mastered by Anyone Whose Hand Is Reasonably Steady.

If you want to amuse some young persons, get a decanter, a plate, a ladle and a skimmer, and then tell them that you intend to balance the ladle and the skimmer in the manner shown in the accompanying picture. Of course, they will be incredulous, but, if your hand is reasonably steady, you will be able to do the trick.

First, hang the skimmer by its handle from the edge of the plate and keep it in position by means of a small wedge



AN AMUSING TRICK.

made of cork. Next, take the skimmer and plate in one hand and lay the edge of the plate on the edge of the decanter, and then with the other hand connect the ladle with the skimmer and hold them until you find the exact position in which they will balance each other. The first time you try to do this trick it is quite probable that you will fail, and in that case your audience will be much amused at seeing skimmer, ladle and plate come down with a rush on the innocent decanter. After a few trials, however, you will become an adept at the trick and it will then be your turn to laugh at those who doubted your ability to perform it.—N. Y. Herald.

Cat Has Strange Family.

Mrs. Lee Kauffman, who lives near Lyndon, Kan., has a cat that is rearing a rather strange family. Some time ago, while Mrs. Kauffman was in the yard, she heard a squealing and commotion coming from a large hole in the ground which was close by. She was afraid to put her hand in the hole and investigate the cause of the sounds, and, when the men came from the fields at noon, she called their attention to the occurrence. They procured spades and dug into the hole, unearthing a mother coon in her nest with three tiny ones about a day old. The old coon escaped, and the little ones, after being admired for some time, were given to the cat to devour, which was licking its chops near by, as if hungry for the little fellows. The cat smelled them, and then began licking their little bodies, afterward hunting a bed for herself, to which she took the little coons and adopted them. One of them died, but the other two are living and will soon be larger than their foster mother.