

There are now on the pension rolls of the war of 1812 only 2,945 surviving pensioners, while there are 17,212 surviving widows of pensioners. This furnishes another convincing proof that widows, like spinsters, never grow old.

Her Von Schaffle, formerly the Austrian cabinet minister, has gone in for war statistics. He says war between France and Germany would cost \$3,200,000,000. If our countries—Austria, Russia, France and Germany—fought, he says the bill would be \$6,000,000,000, and he also thinks European war would bring universal bankruptcy, which seems reasonable, considering his figures.

"The greater the truth the greater the libel" is a legal maxim frequently quoted. The English Court of Appeals has just affirmed it in a remarkable manner. A man named Batchelor died, owing about \$250,000. He was very popular in his native town, and a monument was erected to his memory. Beneath the name and age of the deceased were chiseled in marble the words: "Deeply regretted." A local solicitor wrote to the country newspaper, suggesting the addition of the words: "Especially by those to whom he died indebted to the extent of £50,000." For this he has been found guilty of libel, not on the dead debtor, but on his surviving relatives. English Judges and juries seem getting a trifle mixed.

An army officer says that small as our army is, there is an excessive percentage of desertion from it, although the men are far better fed and paid than any soldiers in the world. The reason is that a great number of men enlist for the purpose of being sent West, and then desert. This class is very large and exceedingly hard to deal with, as it is next to impossible to apprehend them, owing to the general feeling throughout the mountain regions that they have escaped from a kind of slavery. Another class liable to desert consists of young men of good family who have become dissipated and enlisted in a moment of despair. But the strangest class is that of the chronic deserters. These men enlist, desert and then enlist again. Some men enlist to escape intolerable blackmail.

The announcement was recently made that a new process for making steel had been discovered; it was to revolutionize the industry and cause an immense saving of both time and money. The news came from Louisville, where the inventor lives. It was added that the new process made it possible to change ordinary soft steel to that of the hardest quality in a very few minutes. Superior case-hardening qualities were claimed, and the President of the company owning the process visited Washington and offered the Government the sole right to make the steel. The Chicago *Age of Steel* sent a description of the new process and the superior qualities claimed for it to one of its correspondents, said to be a competent expert, and asked his opinion. In a late issue of the journal an opinion is given and proves to be decidedly unfavorable to the new process. Many of the claims made for the new discovery are stated to be baseless, from the fact that many superior qualities claimed for it are already attained by the Bessemer and open-hearth process. The claims made are examined in detail, and the opinion is given that many of the virtues stated to exist in the new discovery are beyond belief. The letter ends by congratulating the editor of the *Age of Steel* on his not having permitted his enthusiasm to carry him away. The journal quoted seems to place great faith in this correspondent, and as it does not give any opinion itself, readers are left to judge for themselves. The Louisville inventor of the new process now has the floor.

The Emperor of China insists on having bears' paws, antelopes' tails, ducks' tongues, torpedo eels' eggs, camels' hump, monkey's lips, carps' tails and marrow bones served on his table every day in the year. Then, according to the facetious Burlington *Free Press*, he drops off to sleep, and dreams that he is shooting down a 4,000-foot toboggan slide, with a fifty-pound weight on his stomach.

The four daughters of Ignatius Riggins, of Madison County, Illinois, not only make their own dresses and other clothing, but spin and weave the cloth of which they are made from raw cotton and wool. Mr. Riggins is a rich man, rated worth \$250,000, and his daughters are pretty, intelligent, and accomplished. They live luxuriously in a handsome house, expensively and tastefully furnished. Home-made clothing is the father's hobby, and the girls sensibly indulge him in it.

The pecuniary value of "a good time" would seem to be as difficult of estimation as the weight of an odor or the breadth of a smile. Yet a New York jury will be called on to perform the delicate task. The City Surveyor of Rochester was invited to be present at the unveiling of the Statue of Liberty in New York Harbor and laid himself out for a good time. The train which he took should have brought him to New York in ample time, but for some reason it arrived six hours late and the good time was irretrievably spoiled. The Surveyor has sued the railroad company and laid his damages at \$1,000, which is his estimate of what a good time would have been worth to him in the elevation of his spirits, the rejuvenescence of his system, the expansion of his ideas and, incidentally perhaps, of his head as well. Whether a jury will put it as high as that is still problematic.

Animals that Change Color.

There is a tiny crustacean, the chameleon shrimp, which can alter its hue to that of any material on which it happens to rest. On a sandy bottom it appears gray or sand-colored; when lurking among seaweed it becomes green, or red or brown, according to the nature of its momentary background. Probably the effect is quite unconscious, or at least involuntary, like blushing with ourselves—and nobody ever blushed on purpose, though they do say a distinguished poet once complained that an eminent actor did not follow his stage directions because he omitted to obey the rubrical remark, "Here Harold purples with anger." The change is produced by certain automatic muscles which force up particular pigment cells above the others, green coming to the top on a green surface, red on a ruddy one, and brown or gray where the circumstances demand them. Many kinds of fish similarly alter color to suit their background by forcing forward or backward certain special pigment-cells known as chromatophores, whose various combinations produce at will almost any required tone or shade. Almost all reptiles and amphibians possess the power of changing their hue in accordance with their environment in a very high degree; and among certain tree toads and frogs it is difficult to say what is the normal coloring, as they vary indefinitely from buff and dove-color to chocolate-brown, rose, and even lilac.—*Cornhill*.

Queen Victoria's Coach.

Messrs. Holmes, coachmakers of Derby, have just renovated a state coach belonging to the queen. It is one of the queen's six dress state coaches, and has been made nearly equal to new for use during the jubilee year. It is an exceedingly handsome vehicle. The armorial bearings are of gold, as well as the door handles and the crest and Order of St. George on the roof. The carriage is painted vermilion, picked out with gold, and the springs and all the iron work are gilt. The doors and the back and front are ornamented with the royal arms, and the smaller parts have representations upon them of the crown and garter and the Order of St. George. The coach is lined with blue silk, and 4,000 leaves of gold have been used in the decoration.—*Court Journal*.

BUDGET OF FUN.

HUMOROUS SKETCHES FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

A Case of Necessity—Times Have Changed—No Sign of Sweetness—Why a Calf is For Sale, Etc.

Minister (to boy who is digging for worms): "Little boy don't you know that it is wrong to work on Sunday, except in cases of necessity?"

Boy (going on with his digging): "This is a case of necessity. A feller can't go fishin' 'thout bait."—*Siftings*.

Times Have Changed.

Anxious Daughter—"Mother, did papa have his salary increased when he was married?"

Omaha Matron—"No, my child. 'I don't suppose he had any money saved up, did he?"

"Not a penny. He spent all he earned."

"Did you get along comfortably?"

"We were very happy."

"Well, you know, George hasn't been able to save a cent, but—"

"See here, if that poverty-stricken fellow dare to show his face here again I'll get your father to kick him out!"—*Omaha World*.

No Sign of Sweetness.

"There is a young man in the parlor wishes to see you, miss," remarked the hall door attendant at a downtown residence.

"Did he bring anything with him—any box or parcel?"

"Only a cane, miss."

"Did his coat tail rattle when he walked, as if there was a package of candy in his pocket?"

"Nothing of the sort, miss."

"Then tell him I've gone to visit a sick friend and won't be home for a week," replied the fair girl, falling back into a horizontal position, and resuming her perusal of "Truth Stranger than Fiction; or, The Liar Unmasked."—*Clinton Bugle*.

Why a Calf is For Sale.

A few days ago Mr Jones was away on business and in his absence his better half, Mrs. J., bethought herself of something that would agreeably surprise Mr. Jones and make him smile real broad when he came back. What did she do? She bought a calf. Did you ever see or know the woman who, when she allowed her fancies to roam over things of comfort, didn't dream of a cow and plenty of milk and butter and cream? She thought of the satisfaction that Jones would have when once again it would come around time to pay the milkman. She was as pleased as pleased can be when she saw the calf in his stall and tied up.

That night Jones was not apprised of the new member of the establishment. The next morning he was. Going into the barn he saw a calf's tail whisking in the frosty air. He saw also the remnants of a \$40 harness, he saw a colt, shorn of that rarest element of beauty in a horse, viz.: a flowing tail—gone the same way as the harness and a bushel of oats. Jones was mad. He says that at first he was mystified. Then he saw the calf.

The way that he sailed into that calf, with a club, he says, was a caution to evil-doers. He danced around her, forward and back, grand right and left, balance to partners, all promenade. He was getting proud of himself. He was spitting on his hands to give the animal the final coup de grace when Mrs. Jones came out, and, like Pocahontas, interceded with the man and the club and the calf's life was saved. Mr. Jones says that now, on the fence at his house, appears this sign:

"Calf for sale. Warranted to chew railroad iron. J. Jones.—*Leviston (Me.) Journal*."

He Had Been in State Prison.

A stranger entered an Austin saloon the other evening, and after scowling at the half-dozen sitters who were gathered there, he said:

"Would you gentlemen object to taking a drink with a man what's been in State prison?"

He was a big, muscular fellow, with a bad eye in his head, and he rested his left elbow sort of careless on the bar, facing the crowd, his right hand reached playfully for his hip pocket.

All jumped quickly to their feet at the invitation and advanced toward the bar, exclaiming in chorus: "Certainly not, stranger!"

"I'm proud to drink with you," said the foremost man, grasping him warmly by the hand. "I don't think any less of a man because he has been in State prison. In fact, I've served seven years in one myself."

"I have broke jail in three States," said another; "yet I ain't proud. Give you your hand."

"I have never been in State prison," remarked a third, "but I don't know how my case may turn out when they get through with it up to the Court House. It looks pretty squally."

"I believe in giving a man a chance," said a fourth. "I've got a brother in the Louisiana penitentiary, and I wouldn't like to see folks give him the cold shoulder when he comes out."

"Many an innocent man goes to prison," remarked a fifth man. "I would be there myself, I reckon, if the State's chief witness hadn't up and died just before the case came on. It was a close call, I tell you."

"Well," said the stranger, "since you seem to be such a hard lot by your own confession, I retire my invitation. I have been in State prison for several years, as a prisoner, but as prison superintendent, I will see you later, no doubt," and saying for his single drink he departed, leaving an inconsolable crowd behind.—*7th Siftings*.

Bill Nye on Etiquette.

Whenever I am invited to any large doings where fair women and brave men in their other clothes are apt to congregate, I always inquire if there is to be any etiquette there. The presence of etiquette at an otherwise happy gathering has frequently debarr'd me from attending, and compelled me to spend the evening with my family, where I could lay aside all restraint and my coat.

So, the life of a President, fraught as it is with the most virulent and malignant form of etiquette, would possess charms for me, and I am not surprised that the boys of America refuse to risk one man and be President, fearing naturally that some time at a State dinner they might get the great men mixing up and the error telegraphed and called right and left, or at some other official festival and hurrah to a plenipotentiary the wrong place might be assigned to the delegate-at-large from Farther India, or the wife of the clergyman from Sweden find herself drinking from the master's cup that properly belonged to the minister from Nova Scotia.

I am sure I am not pessimistic or anything of that kind when I say that etiquette is destined to make itself as prominent as a part of official life in Washington that a plain American citizen, with a small bag of sulphur around his neck and a conscientiousness of rectitude in his heart and smooth potato in his pocket to keep rheumatism, will be seen there no more.

Other nations have given themselves over to the false joys of etiquette, where are they to-day? Empires, powers and principalities have in former times forgotten their duty to the common people in order that they might devote themselves to the R. S. V. P. and P. P. business, or that they might wedge of custard pie under a big mustache by means of a four-tined fork, and where are they now? Other democratic nations, who drank their coffee from a saucer with great satisfaction, low, purring sound, have conquered them.—*Chicago News*.

Bread in Sweden.

At Falun, writes a *Globe-Democrat* correspondent, we found the average dish inn, with a cheerless dining room where each table was piled high with knackbrod, enough on each table to feed twenty soldiers. The knackbrod is a national institution and a sign sure to any sign post or frontier stone to tell that he is in Sweden. It is made of or barley flour, mixed with potatoes and quantities of caraway seeds; is baked in thin sheets a foot in diameter, with the middle, and through this hole market women run a string and carry around for sale. In the bread market Stockholm they fasten these string knackbrod to their shoulder yokes so that reach from the yokes nearly to ground. To an unappreciative palate tastes quite as much as it looks like biscuit and is tougher than anything the human teeth struggle with. Of the knackbrod, the Swedes offer many varieties of sweet bread full of away seeds, and with the morning give you plates of these fancy kicke but never any plain white bread, and coffee at Falun was something to one shiver with disgust.