

THE ARGUS.

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WEDNESDAY, MAY 27, 1891.

The world's indebtedness amounts to \$150,000,000,000.

According to Senator Peffer there are 9,000,000 mortgaged homes in America.

KEOKUK Constitution Democrat: J. Ellen Foster is dead certain that prohibition prohibits, but the prohibition mayor of Des Moines can testify from actual experience that it does not.

At a wedding in Arcadia, Fla., the other day, the bride was married to her ninth husband, and four of the former husbands were present at the ceremony. They probably attended to offer their sympathy to No. 9.

At Cincinnati last week Master Workman Powderly, of the K. of L. L., told a reporter that in Pennsylvania on election days the employing corporations take newly naturalized citizens to the polls and vote them by numbers. Unable to read or speak the English language and having no conception of the importance of the elective franchise, the men vote just as they are told.

Prof. Wiggins is on deck again, and this time he says we are to have a dry summer, attributing it to the increased use of electricity in towns, and the use of wire fences in the country, thus keeping away the storms. If it should happen to be a "wet" summer the professor will have to put a wire fence around himself to keep off the storm of indignation from hotel-keepers who are counting on this prediction for a profitable summer.

The judicial elections throughout the state occur next Monday. No interest is attached to the election in this district, there being no opposition to Judges Pleasants, Glenn and Smith. It would have been more satisfactory and in keeping with the spirit, if not the letter of the constitution, however, had they been placed in nomination by a non-partisan convention. Besides the political ticket the voters of Warren county will ballot for a circuit clerk, a vacancy having been created by the appointment of the present incumbent as postmaster.

The rumor that P. O'Sullivan, the ice man, is about to make full confession of the details of the Cronin murder is renewed. It is said that he is now only awaiting the final decision of the supreme court, when he will tell all he knows about the tragedy. Rumor also has it that Dan Coughlin will make a clean breast of the affair, anticipating O'Sullivan. It would not be strange if these men should implicate some others who were participants in the conspiracy to murder Cronin.

The practice of putting manacles upon prisoners and sending them out to work upon the streets is in vogue in Des Moines. Though this practice is regarded as a relic of barbarism by many, still those who are aware of the habits of many of the old timers in Rock Island county who spend half of the year living off the county and enjoy all the ease of life without its elegance, would not object to seeing them subjected to some such mortification. It might have a good effect.

Propulsion by Electricity.

The history of electricity as a motive power for street cars is so short, having been in general use only about six years, that it is difficult to form any correct estimate of the relative cost of operation as compared to cable and horse power. A recent census bulletin, however, treats of the question to a great extent, upon statistics gathered from 50 miles of railway, 10 operated by cable, 10 by electricity and 30 by horse power. The length of each line is given, cost of road and equipment, grades, number of passengers carried, and cost of operation per mile and per passenger carried. The maximum cost of operation was as follows:

	Per car mile	Per passenger
Cable	31.91 cents	4.28 cents
Electric	39.04 cents	11.82 cents
Horse	37.02 cents	4.99 cents

The average operating expenses were:

	Per car mile	Per passenger
Cable	14.12 cents	3.32 cents
Electric	13.21 cents	8.82 cents
Horse	18.16 cents	3.67 cents

From these figures it would be seen that the electric roads lead with the car mile expenses, but are far behind in economy for passengers carried. It would be difficult to form any full idea of the relative costs and economy of the three systems without a close study of the complete tables given in the bulletin, so many local conditions being considered, but the above showing is very encouraging for the future of electricity as a street car power, it is safe to say that with constant improvements will come a corresponding reduction in cost of maintenance and operation.

FOUR INSCRIPTIONS.

Marlowe, the fallen of the sons of song
Whose praise is England's crowning praise,
above
All glories else that crown her, sweet and strong
As England, clothed with light and fire of love.
And with might of passion, thought and trust,
Stands here in spirit; sleeps not here in dust.
Marlowe, a star too sovereign, too superb
To fade when heaven took fire from Shakespeare's light.
A soul that knew but song's triumphant curb
And love's triumphant bondage, holds of right.
His pride of place, who first in place and time
Made England's voice as England's heart sublime.

Marlowe bade England live in living song:
The life he lifted up lit Shakespeare's way;
He spoke, and life sprang forth in music, strong
As fire or lightning, sweet as dawn of day.
Song was a dream where day took night to wife:
"Let there be life," he said, and there was life.

Marlowe of all our fathers first beheld
Beyond the tidal ebb and flow of things,
The timeless depth and height of souls, unrelieved.

By thought or passion, borne on waves or wings,
Beyond all flight or sight but songs; and he
First gave our song a sound that matched our sea.

—Algernon Charles Swinburne.

MIGNONNE.

I was struck by his appearance. His was
one of those intrepid heads, stamped with
the seal of war, upon whose brows are
etched the battles of Napoleon. About
this old soldier was a certain air of frank-
ness and of gaiety which always wins my
favor.

He was doubtless one of those old troopers
whom nothing can surprise; who find
food for laughter in the dying spasms of a
comrade; who gayly bury and despoil him;
who challenge bullets with indifference—
though their arguments are short enough—
and who would hob-nob with the devil.

In a few moments we had struck up an
acquaintance, and went to dine at the first
restaurant at hand. At dessert a bottle of
champagne completely cleared the memory
of this strange old soldier. He told his
story.

During the expedition undertaken in
Upper Egypt by General Desaix, a Provencal
soldier, who had fallen into the hands
of the Arabs into the desert beyond the ca-
ractars of the Nile. In order to put be-
tween them and the French army a distance
to assure their safety, the Manguins made
a forced march and did not halt till night.

They then camped by the side of a well,
surrounded by a clump of palm trees,
where they had before buried some provisions.
Never dreaming that their prisoners
would think of flight, they merely
bound their hands, and all of them, after
eating a few dates and giving barley to
their horses, went to sleep.

When the bold Provencal saw his ene-
mies incapable of watching him, he picked
up a scimitar with his teeth, and then,
with the blade fixed between his knees,
cut the cords that lashed his wrists, and
found himself at liberty.

He at once seized a carbine and a dagger,
provided himself with some dry dates
and a small bag of barley, powder and
balls, girded on the scimitar, sprang on a
horse and pressed forward in the direction
where he fancied the French army must
be found. Impatient to gain the bivouac,
he so urged the weary horse that the poor
beast fell dead, its sides torn with the
spurs, leaving the Frenchman alone in the
midst of the desert.

After wandering for some time amid
the sand with the desperate courage of an
escaping convict the soldier was forced to
stop. Night was closing in. Despite the
beauty of the eastern night he had not
strength sufficient to go on. Fortunately
he had reached a height on the top of
which were palm trees, whose leaves, for
some time visible far off, had awakened in
his heart a hope of safety. He was so
weary that he lay down on a granite stone,
oddly shaped like a camp bed, and went to
sleep, without taking the precaution to
protect himself in his slumber.

He was awakened by the sun, whose pitiless
rays falling vertically upon the granite
made it intolerably hot.

Far away the horizon was marked off, as
on a summer day at sea, by a line of light
as bright and narrow as a sabre's edge.

The Provencal was twenty-two years old.
He went down in the direction opposite
to that which he had taken when he had
climbed the hill the night before. Great
was his joy on discovering a kind of grotto,
naturally cut out of the enormous frag-
ments of granite that formed the bottom of
the hill. The remnants of a mat showed
that this retreat had once been inhabited.
Then, a few steps farther, he saw palm trees
with a load of dates.

At length, wearied by the heat, he fell
asleep beneath the red roof of his murky
grotto.

In the middle of the night he was dis-
turbed by a strange noise. He sat up. In
the profound silence he could hear a
creature breathing—a savage respiration
which resembled nothing human. Terror,
intensified by darkness, silence and the
fancies of one suddenly awakened, froze his
blood.

He felt the sharp contraction of his
scalp when, as the pupils of his eyes di-
lated, he saw in the shadow two faint and
yellow lights. At first he thought these
lights were some reflection of his eyeballs,
but soon, the clear brightness of the night
helping him to distinguish objects in the
grotto, he saw lying at two paces from
him an enormous beast.

Was it a lion, a tiger, a crocodile? The
Provencal was not sufficiently educated to
know the species of his enemy, but his ter-
ror was all the greater, since his ignorance
assisted his imagination. He bore the
cruel torture of listening, of marking the
capricious of this awful breathing, without
losing a sound of it or venturing to make
the slightest movement.

Presently the moon, now sinking, lighted
up the den, and in the moon rays gradu-
ally shone out a panther's spotted skin.

The lion of Egypt was sleeping, curled
up like a great dog who is the peacable
possessor of a sumptuous kennel at a man-
sion door; its eyes, which had been opened
for one moment, were now closed again.
Its face was turned toward the Frenchman.

A thousand troubled thoughts passed
through the mind of the panther's prison-
er. At first he thought of shooting it, but
there was not enough room between them
to adjust his gun; the barrel would have
reached beyond the animal. And what if
he awoke it! This supposition made him
motionless. Listening in the silence to
the beating of his heart, he cursed the loud
pulsations, fearing to disturb the sleep
that gave him time to seek some means of
escape. Twice he placed his hand upon
his scimitar with the intention of cutting
off the head of his enemy, but the difficulty
of cutting through the short, strong fur
compelled him to abandon the idea. To

that was certain death. He preferred the
odds of conflict and determined to await
the daybreak. And daylight was not long
in coming. The Frenchman was able to
examine the panther. Its muzzle was
stained with blood.

"It has eaten plenty," he reflected, with-
out conjecturing that the feast might have
been composed of human flesh; "it will
not be hungry when it wakes."

It was a female. The fur upon her breast
and thighs shone with whiteness. A num-
ber of little spots like velvet looked like
charming bracelets around her paws. The
muscular tail was also white, but tipped
with black rings. The upper part of her
coat, yellow as old gold, but very soft and
smooth, bore those characteristic marks,
shaded into the form of roses, which serve
to distinguish the panther from the other
species of the genus Felis.

This fearful visitor was snoring tranqui-
lly in an attitude as graceful as that of
a kitten lying on the cushions of an otto-
man. Her sinewy, blood stained paws,
with powerful claws, were spread beyond
her head, which rested on them, and from
which stood out the thin, straight whisk-
ers with a gleam like silver wire.

Acting as men do who, driven to ex-
tremities, at last defy their fate, and nerve
themselves to meet their doom, he saw a
tragedy in this adventure, and resolved to
play his part in it with honor to the last.

Considering himself as good as dead he
waited bravely, yet with restless curiosity,
for the awakening of his enemy.
When the sun shone out the panther
opened her eyes suddenly; then she spread
out her paws forcibly, as if to stretch them
and get rid of cramp. Then she yawned,
showing an alarming set of teeth and an
indented, rasplike tongue.

"She is like a dainty lady," thought the
Frenchman, as he saw her rolling over with a
gentle and coquettish movement.

She licked off the blood that stained her
paws and mouth, and rubbed her head with
movement full of charm.
"That's it! Just beautify yourself a lit-
tle!" the Frenchman said, his gaiety re-
turning with his courage. "Then wait until
say good morning!"

And he took up the short dagger of which
he had relieved the Manguins.

At this moment the panther turned her
head toward the Frenchman and looked at
him fixedly, without advancing. The
rigidity of those metallic eyes and their in-
superable brightness made the Provencal
shudder.

The beast began to move toward him.

He looked at her caressingly, and, fixing
her eyes as if to magnetize her, he let her
come close up to him; then, with a soft
and gentle gesture, he passed his hand
along her body from head to tail, scratch-
ing with his nails the flexible vertebrae
that divide a panther's yellow back.

The beast put up her tail with pleasure,
her eyes grew softer, and when for the
third time the Frenchman accomplished this
self interested piece of flattery she
broke into a purring like a cat.

But this purr proceeded from a throat so
deep and powerful that it reached through
the grotto like the peals of a cathedral or-
gan.

The Provencal, realizing the success of
his caresses, redoubled them, until the im-
perious beauty was completely soothed and
lulled.

When he felt sure that he had perfectly
seduced the ferocity of his capricious
companion, whose hunger had been satisfied so
cruelly the night before, he got up to leave
the grotto. The panther let him go, but
when he had climbed the hill she came
bounding after him with the lightness of a
sparrow hopping from branch to branch,
and rubbed herself against the soldier's leg,
arching her back after the fashion of a cat.
Then looking at her guest with eyes whose
brightness had grown less inflexible, she
uttered that savage cry which naturalists
have compared to the sound of a saw.

"What an exacting beauty!" cried the
Frenchman, smiling. He set himself to
play with her ears, to caress her body and
to scratch her head hard with his nails.
Then, growing bolder with success, he
tickled her skull with the point of his dagger,
watching for the spot to strike her.
But the hardness of the bones made him
afraid of failing.

The sultana of the desert approved the
action of her slave by raising her head,
stretching her neck and showing her de-
light by the quietness of her attitude. The
Frenchman suddenly reflected that in order
to assassinate this fierce princess with one
blow he need only stab her in the neck.
He had just raised his knife for the attempt
when the panther, with a graceful action,
threw herself upon the ground before his
feet, casting on him from time to time a
look in which, in spite of its ferocity of
nature, there was a gleam of tenderness.

The poor Provencal, with his back
against a palm tree, ate his dates, while
he cast inquiring glances, now toward the
desert for deliverers, now upon his terrible
companion, to keep an eye upon her du-
bious clemency. Every time he threw
away a date stone the panther fixed her
eyes upon the spot with inconceivable mis-
trust. She scrutinized the Frenchman
with a businesslike attention, but the ex-
amination seemed favorable, for he
finished his poor meal she licked his boots,
and with her rough, strong tongue re-
moved the dust incrusts in their creases.

"But when she becomes hungry!"
thought the Provencal.

Despite the shudder this idea caused him,
the soldier began examining with curiosity
the proportions of the panther, certainly
one of the most beautiful specimens of her
kind. She was three feet high and four
feet long, without the tail. This powerful
weapon, as round as a club, was nearly
three feet long. The head—as large as that
of a lioness—was distinguished by an ex-
pression of rare delicacy; true, the cold
cruelty of the tiger dominated, but there
was also a resemblance to the features of a
villain woman. In a word, the countenance
of the solitary queen wore at this moment
an expression of fierce gaiety, like that of
Nero flushed with wine; she had quenched
her thirst in blood and now desired to play.

The soldier tried to come and go, and the
panther let him, content to follow him
with her eyes, but less after the manner of
a faithful dog than of a great Angora cat,
suspicious even of the movements of its
master. When he turned round he saw
beside the fountain the carcass of his

horse; the panther had dragged the body
all that distance. About two-thirds had
been devoured. This sight reassured the
Frenchman. He was thus easily able to
explain the absence of the panther, and the
respect which she had shown for him
while he was sleeping.

The first piece of luck emboldened him
about the future. He conceived the mad
idea of setting up a pleasant household
life together with the panther, neglecting
no means of pacifying her and of conciliat-
ing her good graces. He returned to her,
and saw to his delight that she moved her
tail with an almost imperceptible motion.

Then he sat down beside her without
fear and began to play with her. He
grasped her paws, her muzzle, pulled her
ears, threw her over on her back and vigor-
ously scratched her warm and silky sides.
She let him have his way, and when the
soldier tried to smooth the fur upon her
paws she carefully drew in her claws, which
had the curve of a Damascus blade.

The Frenchman, who kept one hand upon
his dagger, was still thinking of plunging
it into the body of the too confiding pan-
ther, but he feared less she should strangle
him in her last convulsions. And, besides,
within his heart there was a movement of
remorse that warned him to respect an in-
offensive creature. It seemed to him that
he had found a friend in this vast desert.
Involuntarily he called to mind a woman
whom he once had loved, whom he sarca-
stically had nicknamed "Mignonne," from
her jealousy, which was so fierce that dur-
ing the whole time of their acquaintance
he went in fear that she would stab him.
This memory of his youth suggested the
idea of calling the young panther by this
name, whose little agility and grace he now
admired with less terror.

Toward evening he had become so far
accustomed to his perilous position that
he almost liked the hazard of it. At last
his companion had got into the habit of
looking at him when he called in a falsetto
voice, "Mignonne!"
At sundown Mignonne uttered several
times a deep and melancholy cry.
"She has been properly brought up,"
thought the light hearted soldier; "she
says her prayers!" But it was no doubt
her peaceful attitude which brought the
jest into his mind.

"All right, my little pet; I will let you
get to sleep first," he said, relying on his
legs to get away as soon as she was sleep-
ing, and to seek some other shelter for the
night.

The soldier waited with patience for the
hour of flight, and when it came set out
full speed in the direction of the Nile. But
he had only gone a quarter of a league
across the sand when he heard the panther
bounding after him, uttering at intervals
that savage cry, more terrible even than
the thudding of her leaps.

"Well!" he said to himself, "she must
have taken a fancy to me. Perhaps she
has never yet met any one. It is flattering
to be her first love!"

At this moment the Frenchman fell into
a shifting quicksand, so dangerous to the
traveler in the desert, escape from which is
hopeless. He felt that he was sinking; he
gave a cry of terror. The panther seized
him by the collar with her teeth, and
springing backward with stupendous vigor,
drew him from the gulf as if by magic.

"Ah, Mignonne!" cried the soldier, en-
thusiastically caressing her, "we are friends
now for life and death; but no tricks, eh?"
and he retraced his steps.

Henceforth the desert was as though it
had been peopled. It contained a being
with whom he could converse, and whose
ferocity had been softened for him, with-
out his being able to explain so strange a
friendship.

However great was his desire to keep
awake and on his guard he fell asleep. On
awakening Mignonne was no longer to be
seen. He climbed the hill, and then per-
ceived her afar off, coming along by leaps
and bounds, according to the nature of
these creatures, the extreme flexibility of
whose vertebrae prevents their running.

Mignonne came up, her jaws besmeared
with blood. She received the caresses of
her companion with deep purrs of satis-
faction. Her eyes, now full of softness,
were turned, with even greater tenderness
than the night before, to the Provencal,
who spoke to her as to a pet.

"Ah, Beauty! you are a respectable
young woman, are you not? You like
petting, don't you? Are you not ashamed
of yourself? You have been eating a Man-
grabin! Well, they're animals, as you are;
but don't you go and gobble up a French-
man. If you do I shall not love you."

She played as a young pup plays with its
master, letting him roll her over, beat and
pet her, and sometimes she would coax
him to caress her with a movement of en-
treaty.

A few days passed thus. The compani-
onship revealed to the Provencal the sublime
beauties of the desert. From the moment
when he found within it hours of fear and
yet of calm, a sufficiency of food, and a liv-
ing creature who absorbed his thoughts,
his soul was stirred by new emotions. It
was a life of contrasts.

Solitude revealed to him her secrets and
involved him in her charm. He discovered
in the rising and the setting of the sun a
splendor hidden from the world of men.
His frame quivered when he heard above
his head the soft whirr of a bird's wings—
rare wayfarer; or when he saw the clouds
—those changeable, many colored voyagers—
mingled in the depth of heaven.

In the dead of night he studied the effects
of the moon upon the sea of sand which the
simoon drove in ever changing undulations.
He lived with the oriental day; he mar-
veled at its pomp and glory; and often,
after having watched the grandeur of a
tempest in the plain, in which the sands
were whirled in dry red mists of deadly
vapor, he beheld, with ecstasy, the coming
of night, for then there fell upon him the
benignant coolness of the stars.

He heard imaginary music in the sky.
Solitude taught him all the bliss of reverie.
He spent whole hours in calling trifles to
remembrance, in comparing his past life
with his strange present. To his panther
he grew passionately attached, for he re-
quired an object of affection. Whether by
a strong effort of his will he had really
changed the character of his companion,
or whether, thanks to the constant warfare
of the desert, she found sufficient food, she
showed no disposition to attack him, and

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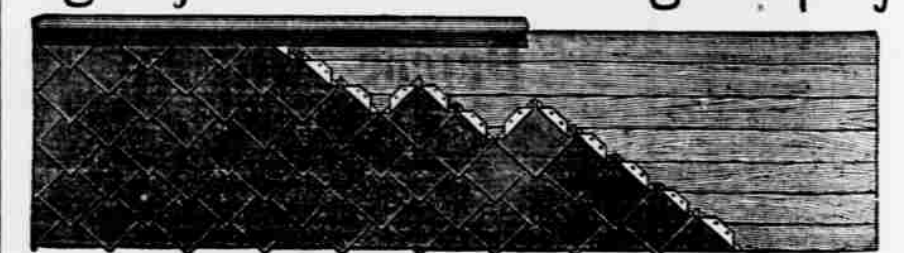
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