



### AN AMBIGUOUS ANSWER

**LADY LESTER** was at her wit's end. That was the way she put it in her colloquial dialect. Also, she did not know which way to turn, but this was owing to the lack of routes rather than any indecision in her mind.

The fact was that she had adopted the popular proverbial method of rick-ing all on a single throw of the die, and it had turned up ace. Reduced to prose, this meant that she had strained (and indeed overstrained) every nerve in order to prevent a thoroughly smart appearance and give her daughter a complete London season, in hope that that famed would make a good catch, settle herself comfortably in life, and be off her mother's hands for the future. Alice Lester had insisted on this till her mother, with much misgiving, consented. In consequence, Lady Lester had spent the greater part of her yearly income in two months, and run into debt as well. The end of the season was approaching, and the catch had not been secured. It seemed that the effort had been fruitless, and the consequences would have to be faced.

Lady Lester knew as well as possible that the only way to pay her debts was to sell capital. This would reduce her already slender income. Besides, how she and Alice were going to live and preserve a decent appearance on the small amount of income left for the remaining five months or so of the year was a question which made her incline to scream whenever she thought of it.

She was a handsome woman, tall, stately, fortunate in the possession of a figure that did not age, clever and discreet in replying the ravages of time. She usually wore black, partly because it was intensely becoming to her, partly for economy's sake. She presented a marked contrast to her daughter, who was petite, pliant, dainty, with rousseau features. Taking the pair together, they were as attractive a mother and daughter as one could hope to see, if it had not been for the formal discontent written on their features.

Her troubles had not improved Lady Lester's temper.

"If you had only," she said peevishly to her daughter, "given half the encouragement to Lord Wimberley that you have to that wretched Anderson, you might be Lady Wimberley, off my hands, and able to help me a little out of this scrape."

"It's no fault of mine," said Alice, sullenly. "I did all I could to encourage the stick, wasted no end of dances on him, wore myself out with endeavoring to talk to him and make him talk, next to asked him for his box seat at the meet of the Coaching Club."

"Well, you got it," interposed her mother.

"Yes, and everybody, of course, thought that it meant something, but I knew better. I am quite sure that he never intended to offer it to me, and that my offering myself was not agreeable."

"Then why didn't he say that he had given it away lately?"

"That's a mystery to me. But I know perfectly well that he did not give it to me for love of me, and also that he obviously thought before taking my very plain hint."

"I am sure that he was most nice."

"Nice?" cried the girl shrilly. "He always is nice—in a kind, aggravating, brotherly way. 'Hope you are enjoying yourself like a good little girl.' 'Can I help?' 'Don't mind me if you don't want me.' That's what he always says to me. Could any one make anything out of that?"

"But he comes here a good deal."

"Yes, and is just as plumped to talk to any of your old friends as to me. Why, I believe he is just as pleased to talk to you as to me."

"Then why does he come?" said Lady Lester, who was too much accustomed to her daughter's rudeness to notice it.

"Oh, I don't know. Why does anyone do anything? One must do something. He is not a man of deep reasons. He finds us pleasant; he meets pleasant people here; we are kinder to him than many. But there is one thing that is quite certain—that I have tried to give him every kind of opportunity, and he has never taken advantage of one of them. On the contrary, his one desire has always seemed to get away."

"Your foolish encouragement of Anderson."

"It's no good going on like that, mamma," said the girl, blushing suddenly red. "I stuck to Wimberley as long as there was a ghost of a chance, and when I saw there was none, and no other man came forward—well, I suppose I love George Anderson as much as a girl like me can—I know we can't marry—but what's the good of going to dances and dancing with useless sticks after useless sticks all the time?"

"Lord Wimberley is not a useless stick," said Lady Lester, with sudden warmth, which brought a tinge of color to her cheeks and made her look much younger and unusually handsome. "It is you who are such a foolish and frivolous girl that you are incapable of appreciating his talents. His speeches in the House of Lords have been much admired—"

"Oh, why don't you have a go-in for him yourself, if you admire him so much? I will make you a present of my chance, for it isn't worth a straw."

"Alice, how dare you speak to me like that? Remember that I am your mother."

Alice had not seen her mother angry for years. She was amazed and a trifle alarmed at the unexpected ebullition of the wrath of the dove.

"Of course I was only joking," she said, sulkily. "You gave it to me, and I thought I might have a little one back. Of course he is not likely to think of you. He is a great deal too wise to make such a deal—um—well, you know what I mean."

"You are an exceedingly insolent girl," was the mother's reply to this polite apology, "and I terribly regret crippling myself in this way in order to give you a chance that you have wasted."

"I never asked you to."

"Yes, you did. You were always say-

ing, I told him it was sudden and I would give him an answer to-morrow I have thought it over, and I shall say 'Yes.' He swears that he loves me and has never loved anyone else."

"And you must love him, too, mother, dear," observed Alice, with calm softness, "or you wouldn't marry him."

"Of course I love him—detestably—reason from the first. There is no other reason why I should marry him, is there?"

But, reviewing the circumstances of the case, Alice felt that this answer might mean anything.—London World.

### NEW THING IN HYPNOTISM.

**Counter-Suggestion Offered as a Preventive to Certain Crimes.**

To check the spread of crime through hypnotic suggestion a means has been discovered by Jules Legouis, a French psychologist, who declares that "Nancy school," who declares that in "counter-suggestion" the most perfect protection is found. Legouis has carried on experiments for many years in company with other scientists at the clinic, where are treated all forms of nervous disease. He discovered in the course of his investigations that even the best sort of hypnotic subject could be prevented from taking criminal suggestions by forbidding it while the person was in a hypnotic state. In spite of every effort, persons ordinarily hypnotized with the greatest ease could not be hypnotized at all while under the first influence, and nothing could be done with them until they had been released from the first hypnotic state by the same person who put them into it.

This discovery is of great importance. Many crimes and offenses have been traced to hypnotic influences. It has been known for years that weak and nervous persons who are easily affected by the magnetic power of others will do whatever they are told to do while in a hypnotic sleep, even though they do not seem to be hypnotized, but in several cases of which he knew personally. One subject, a woman, was compelled to poison her husband and then commit suicide. Four other persons killed themselves and a woman was driven into an unhappy marriage by the hypnotic command of wicked persons. Legouis says that all persons should know exactly to what extent they are subject to hypnotism, and that if they are easily influenced by this dangerous power they should withhold hesitation to put in safety by a counter-suggestion so that nobody can hypnotize them or compel them to obey any hypnotic suggestions. This treatment should be gone through with at least once or twice a year, in order that the effect may not wear off.

Of course there is danger here that the nervous system of the person living in this state of hypnotism might be seriously affected by the restraint under which they would be held. The magnetic nerve force of hypnotism is too tremendous to be lightly used, even to prevent the evil power of the will over weak nerves.

Diseases of the will, greatly weakening the power of resistance in the afflicted, make them easy victims of all sorts of scoundrels, and if these sufferers can be strengthened, as Legouis says is possible, by hypnotic suggestion, a discovery of incalculable benefit has been made. Crime, disease, suffering and death are largely the result of defective nerve force, and will power that any light on the treatment of nerve weakness is a great blessing. Prevention through hypnotic suggestion might lead to actual lengthening of life and renewal of youth.

**Australia the Poor-Man's Paradise.**

The cheapness of living in Australia is proverbial, it is a veritable poor man's paradise. In the butchers' shops you see twopenny and fourpenny tickets on the meat, and provisions of local production are equally inexpensive. In the eating houses or coffee houses—a great feature of town life there—you can get a square meal, consisting of a steak or chop, bread and beer and tea, for sixpence. There are no tips for waiters in the Antipodes. The Colonists are enormous tea drinkers, and on an average partake of the cheering herb seven times a day. Boarding houses—another prominent feature—are rendered almost essential in a land where the domestic servants command a wage of a pound a week, with an evening out and leave to practice the piano and keep a bicycle.

**Instructing Mrs. Custer.**

"I was dining out one evening among a notable company of people, most of whom I knew only by reputation," says George Inness, Jr., in the Home Journal. "I was assigned a seat next to a very charming and intellectual woman and did my best to entertain her. Said I: 'What can I talk about that will interest you? I have had some little experience as a cavalryman; possibly you may care to hear something about horses in the field.'"

"Why, yes; certainly," answered my fair companion. "I know a little concerning army life, and I once wrote a book called 'Boots and Saddles.' And then it dawned on my poor, dull brain that I was talking to the widow of the great cavalry leader, Gen. Custer; so I said no more about horses or army life."

**Hand Magnets in Machine Shops.**

One of the chief troubles in machine shops is the frequency with which workmen are wounded more or less painfully, and even dangerously, by flying splinters striking the eye. A hand magnet is always kept handy for the purpose of drawing these splinters out of the eye, and one of the latest productions is an electro-magnet designed expressly for this work.

**Censorship in China.**

The censorship is a very real thing in China. There are any who write an immoral book is punished with 100 years of hard labor and banishment for life. Any one reads it is also punished.

**Old Massachusetts Family.**

The Rev. James de Normandie told the other day that he had just attended at the wedding in the eighth generation from the first white settler in Roxbury, and that the family still lives on the land of the old homestead.

**Elastic Substances.**

Rubber, sponge, steel, and ivory are the most elastic substances. It is a fact that this seems to have forgotten the human conscience.—Boston Transcript.

Every time a woman wipes her face on a new towel, she is reminded of the discomforts of her early married days, when everything around the house was new.

When a man first begins to feel the need of a cane, he carries an umbrella with him which he never opens, and thinks he is fooling people.

### BASE-BURNER THE THING.

The Old Man Says It Beats Other Heaters and that Steam and Hot Air Won't Do for the Family Use

"Well you can talk about your steam heat and your hot water pipes and your furnace and your radiator, gas all you want to, but as for me give me the good old-fashioned base-burner," said the old man as he stretched out his hands toward a glowing pattern of his favorite heater of the style of about 1885.

"There's something kind of artificial about these other things, even natural gas," he continued. "Some way or another you don't get to the spot—not with me. They make me feel just like I had on a new pair of boots, and might as well fit them on at that. They go against the grain and don't make me feel at home. And, besides, they don't always deliver the goods. Now, just look at this one. You bet it delivers the goods all the time."

The old gentleman was right, at the moment, at least, for in the lamplight you could fairly see the heat shooting away from the base-burner. The thermometer registered 87 degrees and the furniture near by was beginning to smell "secrecy" and little warts in the paint had raised up on the side next the stove.

"Yes, sir," went on the base-burner advocate, "you can't find anything that'll touch the base-burner." (Certainly his proposition would not have been disputed just then.) "There's a lot of poetry to be found working into a base-burner that is in good working order. Now, where are you going to find any poetry in looking down into a register that is spouting out nothing but a big stream of hot air, and how are



AROUND THE OLD BASE-BURNER.

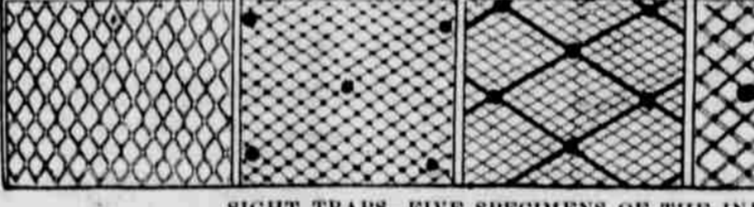
you going to find it putting your feet up against a steam radiator? Shucks! There's nothing in the world like a base-burner for the family to gather around. I tell you the base-burner is the heart of the home. Here the children and the old folks can get together in the right kind of style. Imagine a family gathering around a steam coil or snuggling up to the hot air shooting up from the furnace. That would promote a family feeling in fine style, wouldn't it?"

"You see, the old base-burner, with its ruddy glow and radiating heat, just sends out good feeling that can't be resisted. When the winter blasts are howling outside, fairly shaking the chimney, and shrieking around the corners and banking up the snow against the side of the house, there's the heart of the home, here the children and the old folks can get together in the right kind of style. Imagine a family gathering around a steam coil or snuggling up to the hot air shooting up from the furnace. That would promote a family feeling in fine style, wouldn't it?"

The very best is also as fine as gas, and which can be as well as becoming, too. It has no spots at all upon it, and so does not worry the poor tortured eyes that have to dodge spots or vainly shut their eyes, as is so much the case with the most modern face covering in existence.

The wrong poet.

An amusing story is told concerning a connection of the famous poet, Algernon Charles Swinburne. This young man owns the same initials as his illustrious relative, and some time ago he went out to Melbourne, giving his name, of course, in the passengers' list of the vessel by which he traveled as A. C. Swinburne. When the Melbourne and Sydney newspapers received this list, they immediately jump-



SIGHT TRAPS—FIVE SPECIMENS OF THE INJURIOUS VEIL.

good old family talk. Me and the boys yank off our boots so to get real comfortable and the women folks foot the stove with their feet, and the old folks an' drink older you have all the dreddest good time you ever did see."

"Then if any of the boys has got bruises on their ankles where their boots rubbed while they were tryin' to skate, this is the time that mother gets out her home-made salve and fixes 'em up. You can't do tricks like that in front of a hot water radiator. I s'pose if the boys broke through the ice and come in with their feet wet they could, maybe, dry 'em with a furnace or steam heat, but they couldn't do it quick and do it good and right, like they could with the old base-burner."

"An' you say all you please about these new-fangled heaters, but you can't make me believe that you er me could look at 'em hard enough er long enough to see things in 'em. They wouldn't help you none to solve yer problems er lighten yer burdens. But you can get all that kind of help out of the base-burner. You can see figures and things in the red-hot coils you couldn't find in no radiators er registers. I've looked into them coals many and many a time and found out how to do just the right thing. All I had to do was to keep looking in 'em long enough and the way was made clear. Why, I want to tell you a good base burner just beats a crack furnace in every way, and it's the only thing that will do it."

**Reasons for Differences in Tint of Coins of French Mintage.**

Some time ago a Frenchman placed together a number of gold coins of French mintage of the beginning, middle and end of the last century. He was much surprised to see that they differed in color. He set about finding out the reasons for this difference, and the results of his investigations have been published in La Nature.

There is a paleness about the yellow of the ten and twenty-franc pieces which bear the effigies of Napoleon I. and Louis XVIII. that is not observed in the gold of later mintage. One admirer of these coins speaks of their color as a "beautiful paleness" and expresses regret that it is lacking in later coins. The explanation of it is very simple. The alloy that entered into the French gold coins of those days contained as much silver as copper, and it was the silver that gave the coins their interesting paleness.

The coins of the era of Napoleon III. were more golden in hue. The silver had been taken out of the alloy.

The gold coins of today have a still warmer and deeper tinge of yellow. This is because the Paris mint, as well as that in London, melts the gold and

the copper alloy in hermetically sealed boxes, which prevents the copper from being somewhat bleached, as it always is when it is attacked by hot air; so the present coins have the full warmness of tint that a copper alloy can give.

If the coins of to-day are not so handsome as the opinion of amateur collectors is those issued by the first Napoleon, they are superior to those of either of the Napoleons in the fact that it costs less to make them. The double operation of the oxidation of the copper and cleaning it off the surface of the coin with acids is no longer employed; and the large elimination of copper from the surface of the coins, formerly practiced, made them less resistant under wear and tear than are the coins now in circulation.

### PARIS IS BEST FORTIFIED.

**Twenty-one Miles of Trenches Now Guard the French Capital.**

The best fortified city in the world is Paris. It is defended by seven great forts about the city, eight miles away from the walls; sixteen smaller forts four miles out, each containing three acres and mounting two ninety-five-ton guns. Great stacks of 100-pound mellite shells are ready for these guns to hurl. There are twenty-one miles of continuous fortifications on the town—earth-work walls 150 feet thick at the base and fronted by forty-five-foot mounds. So cleverly are the forts masked by long sprays of green turf and the walls by trees and bushes that one can pass in and out of Paris a dozen times and see scarcely a trace of its fortifications.

The range of the ninety-five-ton guns is fourteen miles. To work these guns Paris has 50,000 trained artillerymen among her reserves. She could man every gun twice over, garrison all her forts with infantry reservists and put a dozen cavalry regiments into the field for scouting purposes. Such a performance no other city on earth could rival.

At every 1,000 yards along the inner fortifications is a three-story guardhouse. Some 20,000 troops could thus be sheltered within call of all attackable points. Every horse over 4 years old is registered. The general staff could choose from some 120,000 horses. There are in Paris 1,000 cabs, with three horses to a cab—45,000 mules and 60,000 pack animals. Add 200,000 train and bus horses and 50,000 draught horses—the balance may be taken as in private hands. The military stores of Paris are boundless. In a day she could arm and clothe 450,000 fighting men with 70,000,000 rounds of mellite cartridges, and at the army bakeries she reserves large stores of grain.

**Only One Jones.**

He had never seen a telephone, and his friend was showing him how it worked. It was in his office. He called up his house, and the wife came to the telephone.

"My dear, Mr. Jones is here, and I have asked him to come up to dinner."

Then he turned to Mr. Jones and said:

"Put your ear to that and you'll hear her answer."

He did, and this was the answer:

"Now, John, I told you I would never have that disagreeable wretch in my house again."

"What was that," spoke out Mr. Jones. Women are quick. A man would have simply backed away from the telephone and said no more. She took in the situation in a second when she heard the strange voice, and quick as a flash came back the sweetest kind of a voice:

"Why, Mr. Jones, how do you do? I thought my husband meant another Mr. Jones. Do come up to dinner. I shall be so glad to see you."—New York World.

**The Wrong Poet.**

An amusing story is told concerning a connection of the famous poet, Algernon Charles Swinburne. This young man owns the same initials as his illustrious relative, and some time ago he went out to Melbourne, giving his name, of course, in the passengers' list of the vessel by which he traveled as A. C. Swinburne. When the Melbourne and Sydney newspapers received this list, they immediately jump-

### THE LADY AND HER PASTOR.

**She Like It Him, but She Got Very Tired of Hearing One Sermon.**

She is a woman much interested in her church and she enjoys hearing and judging for herself, the different ministers of her denomination. The first Sunday after her arrival in early June at one of several New England towns she proposed to visit before setting down at the seashore for the summer she went to church, of course. Who should occupy the pulpit but her own clergyman, whom she had supposed was within a hundred miles of her, and what should he do but preach the identical sermon that she had heard him give the Sunday previous in New York, his subject being, "What Shall the Harvest Be?" Both the clergyman and the woman as they laughed politely after the service agreed that the coincidence was curious.

The next Sunday found the woman in another New England town. She went to church, of course, when Sunday came, and who should arise in the pulpit but her New York clergyman. "What Shall the Harvest Be?" he announced as his subject, and, sure enough, it was the same sermon. It was with a rather sickly smile when he greeted the woman after service that the clergyman remarked that the coincidental plot seemed to be thickening.

The woman stayed a fortnight in this place, but two Sundays later she went to church in another town. She almost rose from her seat when into the pulpit marched her New York clergyman. It was the same old "What Shall the Harvest Be?" sermon, too, and appropriate for the summer as it was, the woman felt a certain familiarity with it. She spared the minister's feelings this time and slunk away after service without speaking to him. So she did the next Sunday at the seashore town, where she was to stop for several weeks, when with mingled emotions she saw her minister in the pulpit and heard him deliver his "What Shall the Harvest Be?" sermon.

For the rest of the summer the woman refused to go to church. She well knew that the minister, with his one sermon, that so evidently was all he had with him, couldn't remain more than one Sunday in one place, but after those previous experiences discretion seemed the better part of valor. On her way home to New York last week the woman stayed over Sunday in Boston. When the constable brought visiting suggested church she accepted with alacrity. It had been so long, she said, since she had darkened a church door—and the joke was why go to keep—she told them that in the pulpit of the Boston church was a familiar form; to paraphrase, the ministerial villain still pursued her. It was the last straw when he announced his subject as "What Shall the Harvest Be?"

"I shall see you in town at the oven."

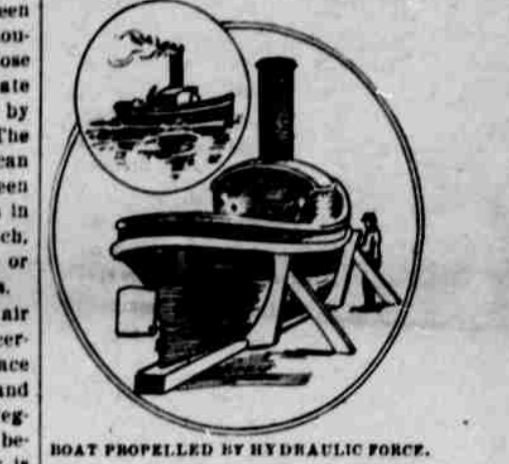
church next Sunday. Mrs. Blank observed the clergyman after service as the two commented rather grandly, it must be confessed, upon the strange fate that had led them to follow each other around all summer. "Yes," said the woman; then—the temptation was too great—"upon one condition—that you promise not to preach your 'What Shall the Harvest Be?' sermon."—New York Evening Sun.

### STEAMSHIPS OUT OF DATE.

**California Will Use a Hydraulic Power for Sea-going Vessels.**

A California some time ago conceived the idea of supplanting steam power on ocean craft and for several years has been experimenting with a view to substituting hydraulic pressure for the steam engine. At a shed at Oakland he has built a small vessel, which he will revolutionize the carrying trade of the world.

This vessel, now almost completed, and already named the John S. Morton, after the owner and inventor, is expected to demonstrate the superiority of hydraulic pressure as a motive force. If a trial develops the necessary speed and sea-going qualities the United



BOAT PROPULSED BY HYDRAULIC FORCE.

States government will look into the invention with a view of dispensing with ordinary screw propellers on all its torpedo boats and gunboats and substituting the machinery for water propulsion.

Morton has spent many thousands of dollars in experiments and patents. He began work on his hydraulic pressure idea thirty-one years ago. After witnessing the speed with which a rocket is shot into the air he conceived the idea of propelling a ship by means of a powerful stream of water. The vessel which he has invented will be propelled by forcing sea water, taken in amidships, out through a jet in the stern. The principle is much the same as that by which the cuttlefish travels through the water.

Captain Miles San Francisco is associated with Morton in the enterprise. The steamer is thirty-five feet in length, six feet beam, has a four-horse power engine and a rotary pump and is expected to attain a speed of from twenty-five to twenty-eight knots an hour with ease.

### VORACIOUS CANNIBAL TREE.

**A Very Remarkable Specimen of the Flora of Australia.**

In certain parts of Australia cannibal trees flourish, trees which can hold a man in their center, and devour it as readily as our insectivorous wild flowers trap the insects on which they partly subsist.

In appearance they are like gigantic pineapples, many of them being eleven feet in height. What foliage there is consists of broad, boardlike leaves, which grow on a trunk, like those of a tree. These leaves do not stand erect, however, but droop over and hang to the ground. They are very big, for in some of the largest specimens they measure from fifteen to twenty feet, each leaf being quite strong enough to bear the weight of a man.

There is more in these leaves than meets the eye, for hidden under them is a peculiar growth of sporelike formation, arranged in a circle. This performs the same function for the plants as pistils do for flowers. Moreover, they are most sensitive to the touch of a stick or other hard substance.

The natives formerly worshiped this "devil's tree," for they dreaded its wrath. If its green leaves rose restlessly up and down, the worshippers imagined that it was necessary to make a sacrifice to appease its anger.

One of their number was immediately chosen and driven by his howling tribesmen upon one of its leaves to the apex.

The instant the unhappy victim stepped into the middle of the plant the boardlike leaves would fly together, clenching and literally squeezing the life out of him.

Early travelers in Australia have told us that the cannibal tree would thus hold its prey until every particle of its flesh had fallen from its bones, after which the leaves would slowly rise across one of these treacherous skeletons to fall heedlessly to the ground.—London Express.

### Surface Indications.

From "A Book on Dartmoor," written by the Rev. S. Baring-Gould, comes a story which might have come from a less trustworthy source:

"The Dartmoor country of Dartmoor consists of a tableland with rugged peaks or tors, and all but impassable marshes. After a dry summer it is easy to pick one's way across parts of which at other times are full of pitfalls. At one of the latter periods a man was cautiously threading his way across one of these treacherous marshes when he saw a bat lying brim downward on the sedge. He gave it a gentle, good-humored kick passing, and almost jumped out of his skin when a choked voice called out from beneath:

"'What be you a doing to my 'at'?"

"'He there now a chap under?' exclaimed the traveler.

"'Ees, I reckon, and a boss under me likewise."

### His Motive.

"I will ask you now," the attorney for the prosecution said to the witness, "if the defendant in this case confessed to you his motive in shooting the deceased?"

"Hold on!" interposed the attorney for the defense. "I object."

"I only want to find out whether—"

"I object!" (Legal wrangle of half an hour.)

"The witness may answer," ruled the judge.

"Now, then, sir, I will ask you again. Did or did not the prisoner confess to you his motive in shooting the deceased?"

"He did."

"What was it?"

"'E was wanted to kill him.'"—London King.

Good servant girls are as scarce as if servant girls had enlisted in the late war, and hadn't been mustered out yet.

People are all struggling for health, and struggling in the wrong way.