

Drought in Deccan and floods in Bengal have combined to destroy the crops of the present season, and the cable brings intelligence from Calcutta that there is consternation at the prospect of the famine now impending.

Georgia has just been provided with a local option law which leaves the matter of permitting or forbidding the sale of liquors of any kind entirely with the people of each county. An election must be held on the question whenever one-tenth of the voters petition for it; and in the event of a decision in favor of license, another election may be held two years later.

The papers print a correspondence between an Israelite and Mr. Howells the novelist. The Israelite, who professes admiration for Mr. Howells' works, objects because Mr. Howells has intimated in his last magazine story that a settlement of Israelites in a first class street tends to depreciate the value of adjoining estates. And the obliging novelist agrees to omit the passage in the book when published. The Israelite was unduly sensitive.

Senator Plumb of Kansas predicts that within the next decade "immigration, instead of coming from the East to the West, will be returning from the West to the East, and that the young men of New England, born in sight of the sea, instead of following the example of their fathers in seeking investment of ambition and capacity and skill, in the West, will find their chance upon the sea or in foreign countries, where they can better realize their ambition for fortune than upon American soil." Most people will regard this prediction as very wild.

The Pacific railroads owe the Government about \$64,600,000 as principal of the bonds issued to aid in their construction, and about as much more for accrued interest which they have not paid. They hope to get released from a portion if not all of this debt before the bonds mature, but that is hardly possible. Another scheme is to allow the government to foreclose and sell, and then bid in the property for a small percentage of the debt.

There are now living nine ex-Senators who were members of the United States Senate at the beginning of the War of the Rebellion, and who took their seats at the memorable first session of the Thirty-seventh Congress, on July 4, 1861. They are Willard Saulsbury, of Delaware; Lyman Trumbull, of Illinois; James Harlan, of Iowa; Samuel C. Pomeroy, of Kansas; Henry M. Rice and Morton S. Wilkinson, of Minnesota; Daniel Clark, of New Hampshire; John Sherman, of Ohio, and James R. Doolittle, of Wisconsin.

Bishop William Taylor's missionary band is pushing into the interior of Africa, and the enterprise seems likely to be successful. Some of them are now 400 miles from the west coast. Dr. Taylor hopes next year to push on to the Tushilange and Basongwe countries, some 700 or 800 miles from the coast, the goal he originally had in view. Only one member of the party has thus far died. He was a blindly enthusiastic young man who believed in faith cures. When he was seized with African fever no persuasion could induce him to take medical treatment until he thought he was dying, and then it was too late. Bishop Taylor writes that the natives are giving his party a very friendly reception, and are eager to have the white people settle among them. Some of the chiefs have offered to help build the mission stations, and they hold out all the inducements they can command to get the missionaries to make their homes with them.

"I write seventeen columns a week of this infernal stuff," said the editor of a society paper, who was much too good for his position, "and I write my brain numb. The most I aim to do is to keep clean from gross humbug and toadying, but what more can I do? There is no occasion for anything better—people immediately say it is too far above them. I ask myself sometimes if there can be any lower depth than this where I find myself. There is one of the persons who can read columns of such trash and enjoy it. Do the variety actors ever make faces at the audience from the wings, I wonder, or does the clown in the ring ever wish he might hit the public in the nose with his mightiest kick if he went under the sawdust the next moment?" Perhaps they may do these things and perhaps not, but readers ought to know that in the circles of bright editors and reporters society news is always designated as "rot" and "home-flush."

THE MORTGAGED FARM.

BY THEO. D. C. MILLER, M. D. We are both growing aged together, And Jennie has left the old home, To walk by the side of another. As on through life's journey they roam; While John, who was faithful and loving, Has left us without his strong arm, And now, when we need their protection, They tell us to mortgage the farm.

I thought John would be our protector— He always was kind when a boy, And Betsey, my wife, true and loving, Oft called him a fond mother's joy! But he was led off by companions, In ways that bring evil and harm, And left his old parents in sorrow, To suffer or mortgage the farm.

Last night, while in sleep, I lay dreaming That Jennie and John were both true; But when I awakened in rupture, The sweet vision passed from my view! I know, wife, we've aged and feeble, And feel that this life hath no charm, But love the dear home of our childhood, And cling to the old, cherished farm.

Now we are both loveless and childless, The wrinkles are deep on our brow— Our hair has grown aged and whitened, Our footsteps are tottering now! While we are so feeble and helpless, With none to protect us from harm, We only can suffer in silence, And tearfully mortgage the farm. —Saturday Night.

A NEWSPAPER FILE.

It was two days after Aunt Priscilla's funeral, and Sue and I were sitting together by the kitchen fire, with that hush over our spirits still which follows death and a burial. All the afternoon we had been busy in getting the house to rights, not meddling yet with the things which had been hers, and were now ours, but by dint of open windows, sunshine, and furniture dusted and rearranged, trying to restore to the rooms that familiar look which they had lost during three weeks of anxiety and trouble. A few days more and we must face a future which was full of terrors. Meanwhile, custom as well as inclination accorded a brief respite in which to think of her who was gone, and of each other, with the clinging fondness of those whose lives, never before parted, were about to separate.

Sue sat on a low stool, her head against the chimney jamb. It was the chimney of Aunt Priscilla's youth; she never would alter it—one of the wide, old fashioned kind, with pot hooks and blazing logs, and bake oven at one side. The soot blackened bricks and faint red glow made a background for my sister's head, with its great twist of fair hair and lily like slender throat. Sue is very pretty, prettier than anybody I ever saw. I recollect a picture of Cinderella sitting in just such an attitude by the chimney side. She was equally picturesque at that moment; so far as looks go, equally worthy of a prince; but, alas! no fairy godmother was likely to emerge from the apple room for her benefit. Aunt Pris, who in a small way, had enacted that part towards us, was gone, and her big rocking chair which we had no heart to sit in, swung empty in its accustomed place, type of a like emptiness which we were conscious of in other things, and would feel for a long time to come.

Neither of us spoke for a while. We were tired and spiritless, and John Slade was coming presently to talk over things, so we saved our words. Dr. Slade—John—was Sue's lover. Their poor little engagement had been formed two years ago. How many years it was likely to last nobody could guess, but they held on to it bravely, and were content to wait. Pretty soon, as we sat waiting, his step sounded without on the gravel, and with a little tap—courtous, but unnecessary, for the door was never locked—he entered, gave Sue a gentle kiss, me another, and sat down between us in aunt's rocking chair. It was a comfort to have him do that. The house seemed less forlorn at once. "Well, children, how has the day gone?" he asked.

"Pretty well," replied Sue. "We have been busy, and are tired to-night, I think. I'm glad you are come, John dear. We are getting lonely and dismal, Cree and I." "Lucretia is my name, but Sue and Aunt Priscilla always called me 'Cree.'" John adjusted a stick on the embers, and with one daring poke sent a tongue of bright flame upward before he answered. Then he took Sue's hand in his broad palm, and patting it gently, said:

"Now let's talk over matters. We ought to decide what we are to do, we three."

That "three" was very comforting to me, but John always is a comfort. He was "made so" Aunt Pris said. And he certainly carries out the purpose of his creation.

"Did your aunt leave any will?" he went on. "Only this," and I brought from between the leaves of the big Bible, where we had found it, a half sheet of note paper, on which dear aunt had stated in her own simple term, that she left all she had to be equally divided between her nieces, Susan and Lucretia Pendexter. Squire Packard's name and Sarah Brackett's, our old washwoman, were written below as witnesses.

"Very well, said John, that's good in law, I fancy; or if not, we are the nearest relatives, and its yours any way. What property did your aunt own besides this house?" "She had an annuity of \$250 a year and \$50 more from some turnpike stock. That's all, except the house and furniture, and there is a mortgage of \$300 on that. The annuity stops now, doesn't it?"

John looked as though he wanted to whistle, but refrained. "Your aunt was a clever manager," he said—"a capital manager. She made a very little go a great way, didn't she? I don't know any one else who could live on \$300 a year, with

mortgage interest taken out. You have always seemed cozy and comfortable."

"We always have been. But we had the garden you know, and the cow; that gave us two-thirds of our living. Aunt was a wonderful housekeeper, though. Isn't it a great deal cheaper to feed women than feed? She always said so."

"I suppose it is. Men are carnivorous. A diet of tea and vegetables don't suit them very well; they are apt to grumble for something more solid. Well, my dear girls, our summing up isn't very satisfactory. Even without the mortgage, you couldn't live on fifty dollars a year."

"No. And I've been thinking what we could do. So has Cree, though we haven't spoken to each other about it. I might take a district school, perhaps. And Cree—"

"I could take a place as plain cook. There isn't anything else I could do so well. Plain cooking, with dripping and soap by way of perquisites; and I gave a laugh which was meant to be merry."

"It is hard," said John, with a moody look on his face which was foreign to its usual frank brightness. "How much a little money would sometimes do for people who can't get it, and how little it is worth to other people, who fling it away without a thought of its value! A thousand dollars, now! Any rich man would consider it a mere bagatelle in his expenses; but if I could command the sum, it would make us three comfortable for life."

"How do you mean? What would you do with a thousand dollars if you had it, John?"

"I'll tell you. Langworthy is going to sell his practice."

"It is a large practice for the country, you know. It brings him in six or eight hundred a year—sometimes more. He has a chance to go into partnership with his brother, out West, somewhere, and he'll sell for a thousand."

"But, John, some people like you better than they do Dr. Langworthy."

"Yes, some people do. But the question is, will they like me better than the other man who buys Dr. Langworthy out? If I were that man I should command both practices. It is a chance, don't you see? But a new man coming in has his chance to cut me out."

"I see. What can be done?" "Nothing," with rueful glance. "That's the worst of it. I can only keep on and hope for the best. But it is hard, when with this miserable thousand dollars, I could double my chances and make a nice home for you two. Sue, darling, don't cry."

She had laid her cheek down on his arm, but she wasn't crying, only looking sadly into the fire.

"If I sold everything, all this which aunt left us—the home, everything—couldn't we get the thousand dollars?" I asked desperately.

John shook his head. "I couldn't let you do that, Cree, in any case. You'll want your share some day yourself; it mustn't go into buying a practice for me. But, apart from that, houses sell so badly now that this wouldn't realize much over the value of the mortgage at a forced sale. And the furniture, though worth a good deal to keep would go for nothing at an auction. That plan would not do at all for any of us."

"Still, there's no harm in thinking about it, and seeing what we have, and what it's worth," I urged, loth to give up any ghost of a chance. "We may do that, mayn't we, John?" "Of course. That is a thing you must do sooner or later. Look over the house, and make a list carefully, and we'll consult and fix on approximate values. Don't hurry about it, though. Next week is time enough, and I know you need rest."

"Rest is the very thing I don't need and can't take," I cried, impatiently. "Something to fill up the long days and keep us from thinking and getting blue is what we want. We'll make the list to-morrow, John."

A little more talk and he rose to go. "Did you stop at the post office, John?" "Yes. There was nothing for you."

"Not even the Intelligencer?" asked Sue, languidly. "I forgot to tell you. There has been a great fire in New York, and the Intelligencer is burned out. Abner brought the news over; it was telegraphed to the Junction. They say the building is a total loss, so I suppose there won't be any publication for awhile—some days at least."

"Poor aunt! how sorry she would be!" sighed Sue. "Aunt took the paper ever since it began—forty-five years ago. She never missed a number. There it all is upstairs—stacks and stacks of it. She was so proud of her file. It's no use at all now, I suppose, is it, John?"

"A man will give a penny a pound for it," I suggested; "that's something."

"We'll weigh the lot one of these days and see what we can realize," said John. "Good night, children."

It was a ghostly task which we set out to do next day. The past itself, the faint fragmentary past, seems to be wrapped up and enclosed in those bundles of time-worn articles with which elderly people encumber their storerooms and shelves. Some air of antiquity exhales as you open them, and mingling with our modern air, produces an impression half laughable, half sad. Aunt Priscilla had been a born collector. She loved old things because they were old, apart from use or value, and instinct and principle combined had kept her from ever throwing away anything in her life. Our list was a very short one. A few chairs and tables, a dozen tin spoons, and a small teapot in silver, the huge newspaper heap which I had appraised at a penny the pound—these seemed the only salable things; and we looked comically and grimly into each other's faces as we set them down.

"I wish it were possible to eat intelligencers," said I.

"They say newspapers make excel-

lent counterpanes," replied Sue—warmer than blankets.

"John came as usual in the ever I as 'Here's enterprise!' he called out to me."

"What's enterprise?" "The Intelligencer! Behold it, large as life, and looking just as usual, only forty-eight hours after the fire! That's what I call pluck."

"Isn't it?" cried Sue, admiringly, as she drew the paper from its wrapper and held it to the blaze that she might see the familiar page. Meanwhile I took from my pocket our melancholy little list.

"You were right John. Sue and I have searched the house over to-day, and this is all there is of any value—the furniture, a little silver, and those wretched intelligencers."

"I was interrupted by a startling cry. Sue was gazing at the newspaper in her hand with large dilated eyes. Her cheeks had flushed pink."

"What is it? What is the matter?" both of us cried in a breath.

"Just read this! Oh, John! I don't believe it! Read!" She thrust the paper into his hand, and he read:

"\$1,000. The office file of our paper having been destroyed by fire on the evening of the 13th inst., we offer the above price for a complete and perfect set of the Intelligencer from its first number, March 4, 1830, to present date. Any person able to supply a set as stated will please communicate with the publisher, P. O. Box 2,351, New York."

"A thousand dollars! Oh, Sue! Oh, John! what a good piece of good fortune! Dear aunt—think of her file turning out such a treasure! It is too wonderful to be true. I feel as though it were a dream," and I danced up and down the kitchen floor.

John and Sue were equally excited. "Only," premised the former, "we mustn't forget that some one else may have a file of the Intelligencer, and get ahead of us."

This wet blanket of a suggestion kept me awake all night. My thoughts kept flying to New York, anticipating the letter which we had written, and John posted over night for the early stage. If it should be lost in the mails! When morning came I was too weary and too fidgety to employ myself in any way. But about noon John walked in, comfort in his eyes.

"Why, John, how funny to see you look so? You haven't heard yet; you can't, for the letter is only half way there."

"But I have heard! I got ahead of the letter—drove over to the Junction, telegraphed, paid for the answer, and here it is." "Blessed John! This was the telegram: 'Send file at once. Check ready to your order.' P. HALLIFAX." How we cried and laughed and kissed each other! How much that message meant! To John and Sue, the satisfaction of their love, life spent together, the fruition of deferred hopes; to me, the lifting of a heavy weight, home security, the shelter of my sister's wing, the added riches of a brother who was brotherly in every deed. And all this for a thousand dollars! Oh, how much money can do sometimes! and at other times how little! We had grown somewhat calmer, though Sue still kept her sweet wet face hidden on John's shoulder, and shivered and sobbed now and then, when I turned emotion into a new channel by seizing a tumbler of water and proposing this toast: "To the memory of the late Samuel F. B. Morse."

WINTER IN CALIFORNIA.

How It Differs from the Winter Weather in New England.

After Thanksgiving, winter. In the Atlantic States, east of the Hudson, good sleighing is expected at this date. Here nothing more than a few white frosts indicate that winter has come. There have been frosts in the lowlands during the past week. Last night the frost crept up on the hillsides a little. The crystals lay on the plank sidewalks in the suburban towns, and sparkled as the rays of the rising sun touched them. For a moment or two here were millions of diamonds, then small drops of water, and then nothing. But the frosts make crisp mornings, and a coal or wood fire most enjoyable morning and evening—the wood fire especially. Moreover, the frosts help to color the foliage, although in this country the deciduous trees drop the greater part of their foliage before the frosts come. The soft maples, elms, white birches and locust trees, which have been naturalized here, for the most part, have cast their leaves. Yet the maple takes on a wealth of color before the leaves fall; so the frost does not do all the coloring. Even the eucalyptus, which casts its leaves at midsummer and continues dropping them until late in autumn, has a wealth of color which is hardly noticed. The coniferous trees prevail so largely in California that the high colors of deciduous trees which grow on the hillsides and mountain slopes of eastern states are rarely seen here. Yet in every dell after the first frosts have come in this latitude, one may find patches of color shading off from gold to scarlet, with a great many subdued tones, which artists, who are good colorists, do not fail to notice. The firs and the pines clothe many of the mountains in eternal green. When they are bare, they are as desolate as in Spain until the vernal season sets in.

The first rains have already come. But the winter rains have not yet appeared. There is a sort of hush between autumn and winter. If one goes to the wood, he will hardly hear any other sound than that of the harsh and obstreperous blue-jay. Here and there will be a tapping on the trunks, and an occasional squirrel descends to see what provision in the way of acorns there may yet be left on the ground. In the open, where the ground is soft, there are the tracks of the sneaking coyote. Even owls cease in a measure to hoot in the winter season, and the mournful sound of doves has altogether ceased. A great silence has fallen upon the woods. There is hardly a singing bird. The finnets in the suburban gardens, which two months ago were so active in feasting on the ripe fruit, beginning with cherries, and continuing until the last ripe pear had disappeared, have become silent also. No more songs and no more depredations, for the good reason that there is nothing to steal. The white frosts are the fitting introduction of winter. They precede the heavier rains.

The trade winds have died out. They will not prevail in this latitude before the middle of next May. Some are unkind enough to say that it is a pity that they should ever prevail. But these winds are the Lord's scavengers, sent up as so many messengers from the salt ocean to deliver the city from plagues and pestilence. San Francisco has not been a clean city from the day of its foundation. There is Oriental dirt, and Occidental dirt. It has come to be a foreign city. Merchandise fills the sidewalks, and in many places crowds the pedestrian to the street. Offal is thrown there. The six months' trade winds of summer and the six months' rain are the two sanitary agents which keep watch and ward over the city. The most dangerous weeks of the year, on the score of health, are those when neither the trade winds nor the rains prevail. The winter season being less pronounced in this latitude, there is less disposition to store up anything. All the season is open, and even now the bees are making honey, or are going to rob other hives. They get a part of their honey honestly, and, as to the rest, they do not scruple to get it dishonestly.—San Francisco Bulletin.

Guinea Hens as Songsters. "Speaking of fog-horns, steam whistles, and other unpleasant noises to hear right along regularly," said a resident of the First Ward to a visitor whose sleep had been disturbed by the tooting of the fog-horn during the thaw in December, "did you ever hear guinea fowls tune up for any considerable length of time?"

The visitor confessed he had not, and the resident continued: "Well you wouldn't think, to hear them at first, that a constant repetition of the noise would become positively unbearable and hideous, but it is. I lived in Rogers Park, near Chicago, a few years ago, and one spring a family moved into a house back of mine, an alley separating the lots. I kept hens and had a small yard in the rear of my lot to keep them confined during the summer."

"This new comer brought along a few fowls, and among them a trio of guineas. There was no hen-yard on his lot, and the very day he unloaded his goods and chattels his fowls made themselves at home in my garden, which was coming on finely. We 'shooed' them away repeatedly, until after a few days the common hens and roosters failed to visit us; but the guinea fowls wouldn't stay 'shooed' and within five or ten minutes after being driven away would return and race around my hen-yard, trying to find an entrance. They wore a path around it as smooth as the top of a deacon's head, and every few minutes lifted up their voices in songs of praise and thanksgiving."

"At first it was a novelty, and used to make us all laugh, and the children spent hours watching the restless birds; but in a few days the constant cackling, or whatever you may call it—'bukwit,' 'bokwet,' 'buckwheat,'—began to grow tiresome, and finally became intolerable. I didn't like to complain to the new neighbor so soon, but didn't hesitate to pelt the birds

(or try to pelt them) with chunks of dirt and small pebbles. My wife also threw at them several times, and came near breaking a window in the church, and dislocating her shoulder, when she quit. I should have said that my house was only about twenty feet from the village church, and in warm weather, when windows were opened, we could sit in our bedroom and hear the services very well.

"Right under the droppings of the sanctuary, so to speak," said the visitor, "I should think that it would have been unpleasant."

It was a sultry morning, and the guinea fowls were more than usually vociferous. Foreseeing that they would disturb the minister and congregation, I considered it my duty to drive them away, and did so several times before church time getting so warm, and mad that I concluded I wouldn't go to church. About a quarter past ten the torments appeared again, and an inspiration seized me. I had been practicing archery considerably—this was during the popular craze over that splendid pastime—and had a good bow and about a dozen arrows, and could shoot quite well. I got some empty rifle-cartridge shells which fitted tightly over the steel points of the arrows, and put them on, as I did not wish to kill the fowls or have any of my seventy-five-cent-apiece arrows stick in them and be carried off to my neighbor's and then have to go and explain matters.

"Just before services commenced, the guinea fowls appeared and opened up in good voice, running around the garden and even up near the church. My wife and children had already gone, and I slipped out of the back basement door just out of sight from the rear window of the church, and prepared to do the William Tell act. I waved my hat and started the nuisances, toward the hen yard, and when they were about three rods away opened fire.

"The first shot struck short, plowing up the dirt in front of one of them, causing her to jump about three feet in the air and scream louder than ever. Two other efforts were unsuccessful, but the fourth struck the bird amidships, and he sailed right up in the air like a prairie chicken, expressing in loud tones his indignation and alarm. The two other ones followed suit. You know the old couplet,

"One flew East, and one flew West, And one flew over the cuckoo's nest." Well, that was the way they went, only there was no cuckoo's nest between the church and my house, and all three kept up their peculiar calls, just as the pastor said, 'Let us pray.' Presently Bro. Kean came out of church to see what the matter was, but I had put the bow and remaining arrows back in the kitchen, and was busy at the pump."

"What's the row out here?" said he. "Something scared Mr. —'s guinea hens," replied I; 'don't believe they will come around again,' and he went back to take his regular snooze. "I felt sure they would, however, and after hunting up my arrows, 'laid' for, them again. In about twenty minutes, sure enough, they came running around the corner of my hen house, and just as the pastor had got to that part of the parable of the three granagers who sowed seed on different kinds of soil, and was saying—'brought forth an hundred fold,' one of the guinea hens chipped in the remark: 'bukwheat, bukwhent, bukwhent!'"

I was told afterwards that everybody laughed, including the minister, and the small boys and girls had a regular picnic. "Presently the birds quieted down and commenced walking around among the young potato vines. I brought out my artillery, and it was not long before I had a splendid shot at the cock standing still. The arrow went a little high, and instead of hitting him in the body, as I intended, struck square on the neck close to his head. The 'dull thud' brought the bird to the ground, and a few convulsive kicks showed apparently that he would never chase the festive potato bug again. The others seeing that something was wrong with their mate, were up to him and made a few remarks such as: 'A fit?' 'Bad hit!' 'Let's git!' 'You bet!' etc., and sorrowfully went home to hang crape on the crate they came in.

"I put the bow and arrow away, and sat down to figure out what to do in the premises. Finally I concluded that the fowl might not be missed that day, and in the evening I would 'bag' my game and leave it in the grass on the rear of my neighbor's lot, and went out to get the arrow and kick him down between the rows of potatoes where he would not be quite so prominent.

"Well, when I got there I found the arrow and some feathers, but no guinea fowl. You may doubt it, but it's a fact that that bird had come to and walked off after having hit plump on the neck by a four-ounce arrow, a fact that would almost, if not quite, knock down a man. I saw him afterwards. He carried his head in a peculiar way, as if suffering from the toothache or neuralgia, and seemed to have lost his voice and appetite."

"Did your neighbor say anything to you about it?" asked the visitor.

"No, but in a few days he killed the three himself and made a dinner of them. I don't know whether he saw me shooting at them or not, but rather think that he or some of his family saw me shoot a guinea hen; they're worse than fog-horns by a darned sight."

—Fog's Sun.

Eye-Glasses from the Mayflower. Something else has been discovered that came over in the Mayflower. This time it is a pair of spectacles that were worn by one of the pilgrims. The bows are of steel, an eighth of an inch wide, and the glass is as thick as plate glass, making the weight of the spectacles five ounces. From such ponderous appliances as these, then, have the modern eye-glasses of the typical Boston girl been derived, says the Boston Herald, and it thoughtfully adds: "This also accounts for the large noses of the pilgrims. They had to have them."

—Troy Times.