

THE VALUE OF AN OATH.

It was an unpropitious case to defend. The crime charged against my client was one of shocking atrocity—the murder of his own child. The popular verdict had already condemned him, and there was little doubt that the jury would go the same way.

Arthur Berkley, the prisoner, had married Edith Granger, a wealthy heiress, whose father had died, leaving her a handsome fortune, to the exclusion of his profligate son, whom he had disinherited and driven from home.

Mrs. Berkley died within a year after marriage, leaving an infant, a feeble little creature, requiring constant and assiduous care. Indeed, Dr. Baldwin almost took up his quarters in the house, often passing the night there, that he might be on hand in case of need.

One of these nights, the doctor, as he afterwards stated in his evidence, after retiring to bed, feeling solicitous about his charge, got up and stole softly to the nursery to see that everything was all right.

He found the door ajar and a dim light burning within. As he advanced he distinctly saw Arthur Berkley standing by the table, holding to the child's mouth a bottle from which it was accustomed to receive its food. At the sound of the doctor's footsteps he stealthily left the apartment by a side entrance.

Not a little surprised at these movements, the doctor approached and laid his hand on the child's face, which he found in violent convulsions, which were followed in a few seconds by the sudden stillness of death.

A post-mortem examination and analysis of the contents of the stomach placed it beyond doubt that prussic acid had been administered. And an examination of the bottle, found where Berkley had left it, proved that the milk in it contained a large quantity of the same deadly poison.

On this evidence Berkley was arrested and indicted for murder; and there was not a dissenting voice as to his guilt. An incentive to the crime found in the fact that, as heir to his child, he would inherit the fortune which had descended to the latter through the death of his mother. No wonder the deed so monstrous, should excite the deepest indignation.

Berkley's previous character had been good. He always appeared gentle and kind; had been a devoted husband, and during the brief period of its life had showed the tenderest attachment for his child.

In my conference with him he seemed overwhelmed with grief, but strenuously denied all imputations of guilt, asserting that he had not gone to the nursery after retiring that night till called by the alarm of his child's death.

Of course his statements, in the face of proof so damning, weighed but little. I had no confidence in them myself. Still, it was my professional duty to see that a man on trial for his life, who had entrusted me with his cause, had every right of the law accorded him. This duty performed, my conscience would be clear, whatever the result.

It would be tedious to dwell on the steps preceding the trial. I interposed no objection to its coming on speedily. My aim was not to thwart the ends of justice, but to see it fairly meted out.

Dr. Baldwin was the first and chief witness. He told his story clearly and methodically, and it was very easy to see it carried conviction to the jury. My rigid cross-examination only served to bring out his evidence with more distinctness of detail. I elicited the fact, for instance, that the child's nurse lay in the same room; that she was asleep when the doctor entered, and it was to her he first announced the child's death. I also examined fully as to the prisoner's acts at the time the alarm was given, endeavoring to show that he came from the direction of his own chamber, appearing to have been just aroused from sleep. But I made nothing of this, the witness stating that his agitation had distracted his attention from these points.

The doctor had only recently settled among us, but his conduct had been so exemplary that he had made many friends. He had especially won the confidence of the prisoner. I interrogated him as to his past career, but brought out nothing to his discredit.

The evidence of the chemist who made the analysis was next put in, and the State's attorney "rested."

"I have brought the nurse here," he said, "but as she was asleep when the prisoner entered, her evidence is unimportant. I thought it my duty to have her here, however, to afford the other side the opportunity to call her if they desire."

Nothing could render the prisoner's case more hopeless than it was already, while something might come out to his advantage.

"I will call the witness," I said.

She was a middle-aged woman, of not unimpressive appearance. Her agitation was visible; and I noticed that in taking the oath she laid her hand beside the book and not upon it.

"I asked that the witness be sworn with her hand on the book," I said, calling attention to the omission.

The Judge so ordered, and the witness' hand shook violently as she reluctantly obeyed the direction, and the oath was re-administered.

After a few preliminary questions as to the hour of her retiring, her falling asleep, etc.

"What is the next thing you remember?" I asked.

The witness hesitated.

"Answer the question," replied His Honor.

"I heard a noise as if some one was coming into the room."

"Did you see any one enter?"

Another pause.

I repeated the inquiry.

"I did," was the answer.

"What did the person do?"

The woman's face grew paler, and it was with difficulty she found utterance.

"He came to the side of the cradle," she said, "with the bottle of milk in his hand, and put it to the baby's mouth."

The Judge and State's attorney both bent forward in eager attention. The latter, it was evident, had not expected this testimony.

I felt that my question thus far had only served to draw the halter closer about my client's neck. But I had gone too far to retreat.

My voice trembled almost as much as did that of the witness as I proceeded.

"Did you recognize that person?"

"I did," was the answer scarcely an audible.

My client's life hung on the answer of the question! The silence of the courtroom was deathlike. I dreaded to break it. The sound of my voice startled me when I spoke.

"Who was it?"

Her lips moved, but no sound came. Her agitation was fearful to witness. She shook her head to foot. A deathly pallor overspread her face. Slowly raising her trembling hand and pointing to Dr. Baldwin:

"That is the man!" she almost shrieked.

Then in quick, wild accents, she went on to tell that on finding himself discovered by reason of her waking, the culprit, who was no other than George Granger, Mrs. Berkley's profligate brother, had disclosed to her that his purpose was to regain his lost inheritance by putting out of the way those who stood between him and it, promising the witness to provide for her handsomely if she kept his secret, but when, put to the test, she had found herself unable to violate her solemn oath.

George Granger, alias Dr. Baldwin, would have left the courtroom, but an officer was ordered to detain him; and when his disguise was removed, though he had been absent for years, there were many present who could testify to his identity.

My client was acquitted on the spot, and his cell in prison was, that night, occupied by his false accuser.

A Race for a Mine.

The Humboldt Times speaks of a lively race between two mining parties or companies, both parties chartered a tug and started for Crescent City, not wishing to wait for the sailing of the Humboldt. The object of each party was to get upon the supposed rich ground, post their notices, and returned to Eureka, and make the proper filing in the Humboldt land office. The rivals were the Big Flat Company, a Boston firm, and a California company. The former have erected extensive works and spent a great deal of money at Big Flat in Del Norte county, and the disputed ground is within three miles of their ground. Both tugs left this place together, but the Boston man was first to land. Horses were at once procured, and the journey to the mine, a distance of thirty miles, was commenced. The Californian started a short time after. The trail was muddy and the streams high. At the crossing of the Smith river there is a ferry which was built and owned by the Big Flat Company. The Boston man arrived at the river first, and crossed the ferry, and as the water was very high, the ferryman was instructed not to cross any one, as it was dangerous, but the Californian, like Sheridan, was five miles away. The Boston man went to the ground and posted his notice some little time in advance of his rival, and returned to Crescent City, and the Californian followed in turn. They both had disposed of the tugs, so they were well fellows passengers on the steamer which arrived next morning from Crescent City. When the Humboldt was coming up the bay, and when near Flannagan's mill, a small boat came alongside, and into it the Boston man sprang, and was pulled to the mill wharf, where a buggy was waiting for him. He jumped into the buggy, was driven rapidly to the land office, and made his application for the filing of the Big Flat Mining Company before the Humboldt touched her dock. The Californian left the steamer at the earliest moment, and came up F street at a pace that would have made O'Leary look to his laurels, but he arrived just in time to be too late. The Boston man was there first, and had done the business. The piece of land in question is reported to be very valuable, the prospects showing that the "color" exists in large quantities.

A SECRET FOR THIRTY YEARS.

Light has at last been thrown on a mystery that has been inexplicable for over thirty years. The developments are of a startling nature and concerns a man named Griffith, sexton of the First Presbyterian Church, Allegheny, who disappeared about that time. He was addicted to habits of intemperance, and it was supposed that he had run away from his family and gone to parts unknown. After these many years it has been revealed that he was murdered. The strange story, which comes from what is considered a reliable source, is as follows: Two brothers, when going to Pittsburgh for their meat in the dead hour of the night, in passing an old grave-yard on Point of Hill, in Allegheny, saw a dim light in it. They approached quietly and saw Griffith in the act of lifting a body out of a grave which he had opened. One of them took in his hand a piece of board and struck him a blow, the edge hitting him on the head, splitting the skull. He fell dead on the body he was stealing. Being alarmed at what they had done, they concluded to fill up the grave on the two, holding that the murder would never be known. In the course of time one of the butchers left for some other parts and there died. The other became dissipated, and once while under the influence of liquor stated these facts to some friends, who concluded to keep the matter secret, as the occurrence took place many years ago, and nothing but trouble could be made out of it at this late date. This man died a few years ago, the friends keeping the secret until the present time. [Pittsburg Press.]

AN AMUSING INCIDENT.

A rather amusing incident is told as having occurred recently at a church in Connecticut, not many miles from Fairfield. The clergyman, a mild man, desired to call the attention of his congregation to the fact that it being the last Sunday in the month he would administer the rite of baptism to children. Previous to his having entered the pulpit he had received from one of his elders, who by the way, was quite deaf, a notice to the effect that as the children would be present that afternoon, and he had the new Sunday school books ready for distribution, he would have them there to sell to who desired them. After the sermon the clergyman began the notice of the baptismal service thus: "All of those having children and desiring to have them baptized will bring them this afternoon." At this point the deaf elder, hearing the mention of children, supposed it was something in reference to his books, and raising, said: "And all of those having none and desiring them, will be supplied by me for the sum of twenty-five cents!"

MAJOR BOOTS.

Once upon a time a certain gentleman who lived splendidly and did not pay his debts, owed his shoemaker a large bill, and the shoemaker having been told to call again many times, and having written notes without end asking for a settlement, resolved to disgrace his customer by exposing him to his friends the very next time he gave one of those large dinner parties which so excited the creditor's ire.

Accordingly, having seen the wagons of the caterer stop before the door, and watched the waiters enter one by one, Mr. Shoemaker, attiring himself in his suit, and with his little bill elegantly written out, awaited the appearance of the carriage, and when at last fifty had arrived, set down their burdens and departed, stalked up the doorstep like a vengeful ghost, and ringing the bell most furiously, found it opened for him with startling celerity, and stood face to face with a tall, black waiter, white-gloved and stately.

"Where's Mr. Cheatem?" whispered the shoemaker.

"Gentlemen's dressing room, second floor back," responded the waiter.

Some one else had arrived, and was treading on his heels. A vision of splendor, in the most wonderful soft, white wraps, floated past him.

"Ladies, front room, second floor, gentlemen, back," repeated the waiter.

Mr. Shoemaker was hustled forward, hat in hand, and saw his delinquent debtor in all the elegance of dress-coat, button-hole flower, and white cravat, bowing to, shaking hands with, and smiling upon aristocratic personages innumerable.

The sight fanned anew the flame of the tradesman's just wrath. He marched forward, planted himself directly before the elegant Mr. Cheatem, and stared him in the face.

But Cheatem did not wait. He knew his guest well enough, and he understood his purpose; but what he did say, was:

"Beg pardon; for the moment I've forgotten your name."

"Have you? Then perhaps you'll remember me when I tell you that I made you boots."

"Now, if you'll trouble yourself to repeat these last four words rapidly, you will find that you do not say, as you believe you do: 'I made your boots,' but, 'I major boots.'"

The lucky Cheatem detected this fact on the instant.

"Major Boots!" he cried, demonstratively shaking hands. "Dear, dear; how could I forget you for a moment! Delighted to see you—delighted. Mrs. Chiffins, let me introduce you to my old friend, Major Boots."

"So glad to know you," responded the old lady thus introduced. "I'm sure I've heard Cousin Cheatem speak of you a thousand times. Sit down, do, and tell me who all these people are. I'm quite a stranger; I've isolated myself in Europe so long. Sit down, Major Boots; here is a chair."

The newly-christened shoemaker hesitated a moment, but it was not possible for him to cry out: "I am not Major Boots; I'm Clump, the shoemaker, come for my bill." He found he had not the courage. He crammed his hat under the velvet chair to which he was motioned, and subsided into angry silence while the old lady went on:

"Oh, Major, I always feel so privileged when I have the opportunity to talk to a military man. I adore courage. And were you ever wounded? Do tell me all about it."

The bootmaker, finding it necessary to reply, said "that he never had been wounded."

And the old lady went on:

"Never! How charming! Bore a charmed life, and all that sort of thing. Do tell me all about it."

The shoemaker replied "that there was nothing to tell."

On which the most gushing of old ladies queried:

"Now, Major, I won't believe that. It's like the modesty of your celebrated military men. I know you stormed redoubts and led forlorn hopes, and were the only one left of your regiment, and all that. I'm sure I read all about it at the time. Oh, here Colonel Hobbs, a celebrated English officer, did something awfully brave in India. Colonel, let me make you acquainted with Major Boots, one of our bravest military men. He's been telling me all about the wonderful things he did in the army. I mean he wouldn't tell me about them—just like all our great men—won't trouble himself to fight his battles over for an old woman."

"Ah—awfully charmed, I'm sure," responded the gallant colonel. "Awfully, ah! Must introduce you to my brother, Captain Hobbs, in the same regiment with myself."

The shoemaker had arisen and was looking down on his business suit.

"I didn't intend to—that is, I didn't expect to be at such a swell affair as this," he stammered, "or I—I should have worn my dress-suit."

"Oh, my dear fellow, we always expect you American officers to be wondrous and weedy. We'd be disappointed if you were not. The ladies, you know, adore wondrous and weedy men. It's the particular charm of Americans."

Away he led the bootmaker, who really began to feel that he must have been, at some period of his life, a military man. And after being introduced to Captain Hobbs as Major de Boots, who was "delighted," found himself *tête-à-tête* with a very lovely young French lady, who addressed him as "General de Buta," and whom, at the request of his hostess, whom he had never seen before, and who had no idea who he was he took down to supper.

Somehow this stranger, with his sulky air, had been set down as a most eccentric and distinguished military man by everybody. He was regarded with attention, listened to with reverence when he condescended to say a few words. The French lady introduced him voluminously as General de Buta; and thus was he addressed thereafter. The waiters offered him champagne frequently, and the bootmaker gradually grew exhilarated. Never had he been present at such elegant festivities. Never had he partaken of such viands—been so overwhelmed with festivities. Never had so lovely a creature leaned upon his arm. Never had he tasted such wine. At first it exhilarated him, then it mounted to his head, and suddenly it appeared to him that his host was a glorious fellow, and

that he was under infinite obligations to him.

Doubling his fist, he brought it down upon the table with a crash that made the glasses ring again.

"Better man than Cheatem don't live!" cried he.

"I agree with you," replied his neighbor, politely.

"Ah! I adore such enthusiastic friendship, such love like Diamond and Pythias in *ex play*," ejaculated the French lady.

"How original! How delightfully eccentric! A perfect military man," whispered others.

Meanwhile the bootmaker, staggering to his feet, made his way as best he might, toward his host.

"Cheatem," he cried look here! I came—here he reeled and caught at a table—"I came to give you this—before every (hic) everybody."

And he held out his folded bill, which Mr. Cheatem instantly took.

"Now I—I wouldn't (hie) do it—for—"

"Mr. Cheatem beckoned two waiters.

"My dear old friend," he said, "you're not well. Let these men put you in a carriage, and go home. I'll call on you to-morrow. So glad to have seen you. As for this—pooh! pooh!"

The waiters led the bootmaker from the room, after their host had whispered a direction to be given the driver.

And Mr. Cheatem thus addressed his friends:

"You must not think ill of my old friend for this little lapse of his. After the trials of military life it is only to be expected that his habits should not be those of quiet civilians, and 'tis his only weakness."

"One forgives everything in a soldier," remarked a lady.

"A very ordinary failing for a military man," responded a gentleman.

And to think the honest creature should have remembered so slight an indebtedness as this, and been so anxious about it," sighed Mr. Cheatem, and he put the shoemaker's receipted bill into his pocket.

Gough and the Students.

An amusing story is told of John B. Gough, when he went to address the students on temperance. A few evenings before an eminent man was to have delivered a lecture at Oxford on "The Evils of Tobacco." The boys got into the hall an hour beforehand, each with what Dr. Carroll drolly emphasized as a "college pipe" in his mouth. The time for the lecture arrived, but if the lecturer did, it was never discovered—he was not visible through the fog. The students sent word to Mr. Gough when he came that they wouldn't have any temperance, and advised him not to persist in lecturing. But he went to the hall. For twenty minutes he spoke in pantomime amid the deafening catcalls of the boys.

Finally he stepped forward, demanded British fair play and offered to whip every one of the 500 singly. This offer was loudly cheered and promptly accepted, and a big six foot athlete was sent up on the stage. Gough, who is a little man, backed off as the big fellow approached him and explained, "My friends, you evidently misunderstand me. This is to be an intellectual contest, not a prize fight." The students cheered again at this evidence of the American's shrewdness and ordered the debate to proceed. The college lad was, therefore, obliged to tackle the temperance champion. He was at a disadvantage, but he quoted Scripture, and reminded the plucky lecturer that it was one of the apostles who wrote to Timothy—a young man, too, like themselves—to take a little wine for his stomach's sake and for his other infirmities. The lad shouted vociferously at this, and wanted to know how Gough could get around this.

"Gough slowly examined the six footer from top to toe, and then said, 'My friends, look at this athlete, this fellow with muscles like steel, who can bend the club of Hercules, who can bend an English yeoman's bow, who could knock down an ox with the blow of a hammer. He is the personification of health and strength, but he thinks he needs a little wine for his stomach's sake.'"

Gough's inimitable manner of saying this had a tremendous effect. The students actually yelled with delight, and their defeated champion retreated. Another was sent up. He was the intellectual giant of his class, in contradistinction to the six-footer. He, with much self-confidence, made a finished argument for liquor drinking, based on Christ's changing the water into wine, at the wedding feast. His comrades cheered him to the echo, and thought his argument unanswerable, and Gough was chafed for his defeat.

"Young men," said he, solemnly, "I admit that your champion has forestalled me. He has said for me just what I came here charge you to do. Drink all the wine you can find that is made entirely out of water!"

Growth of Boys and Girls.

The results of a systematic measurement of the pupils of the public schools of Boston show, among other things, that the growth of children takes place in such a way that, until the age of eleven or twelve years, boys are both taller and heavier than girls of the same age; at this period of life girls begin to grow very rapidly, and for the next two or three years surpass boys of the same age, both in height and weight. Boys then acquire and retain a size superior to that of girls, who have now completed their growth. Again, the children of American born parents were found to be taller and heavier than those of foreign born—a superiority seemingly dependent partly on the greater average comfort in which such children live and grow up, and partly upon differences of race or stock. Pupils of American parentage at the public Latin schools, private Latin schools, and the Institute of Technology showed—apparently for the same reasons—superior weight and height to the generality of boys of American parentage attending the public schools; and pupils of the same selected schools were also taller and heavier than English boys of the non-laboring classes attending public schools and universities.

A native baker in India, anxious at the same time to call attention to his loaves and to demonstrate his acquaintance with the English tongue, describes himself as a "European Loaf."

Paul Jones' Flag.

Those were lively days when Paul Jones and his flying squadron of four ships were hanging off the mouth of the Humber in the autumn of 1779, and when, after one of the most terrific duels ever fought between a brace of ships at sea, the Bonhomme Richard, commanded by Captain Jones, forced her heavier English antagonist, the Serapis, to haul down her flag. Everything connected with Paul Jones, has, indeed, such a spell of romance thrown around it by American enthusiasts that it is hard to explain why among ourselves he is little more than a name. That he is still regarded in this country as a pirate may be inferred from the fact that not many years ago a race-horse called Paul Jones won the Chester cup, and that he bore this name because he was the son of a Buccaneer. At the commencement of one of his novels Sir Walter Scott alludes to the unseemly scare which took possession of Edinburgh and of Leith, its port, when, in 1778, Paul Jones and his little squadron, carrying altogether less than a thousand men, threatened Leith from the sea, with the avowed intention of levying from the little town a contribution of £300,000. At the moment there were not fewer than 20,000 soldiers, some of them regulars and the rest militia and volunteers, in Edinburgh alone; but the terror excited in the breasts of our fathers by Paul Jones proves beyond question that his fame as a man of unusually intrepid courage, of singular coolness in danger, and of ready resources, had spread far and wide, which makes it strange that more should not be known as to the chief incidents of his history than is ordinarily current in England, even among what are called well-informed men.

John Paul—for this was his real name—first saw the light at Arbrogath, in Kirkcaldyshire, upon the edge of the Solway Firth, in the year 1747. His father was a respectable gardener, who was said in England to have once been in the employ of the Earl of Selkirk—an allegation which is indignantly denied by the American biographers of Paul Jones. Be this as it may, the boy showed from the first a passionate partiality for a sailor's life. He was therefore bound apprentice by his father to a merchant engaged the American trade, and made his first voyage to Virginia when a lad of twelve. He was delighted with the country, and at once became an American rather than an Englishman in feeling. He made many other voyages, but his heart was in Virginia, and thither he returned in 1773. Great events were on the eve of happening, and, sympathizing eagerly with the American rebels, John Paul, who had by this time added Jones to his name, placed his services as a sailor of experience at the disposition of the colonists in 1775. He was 28 years old, full of bodily vigor and mental energy, and with the advantage of having before he went to sea received a Scotch education which was far better than that picked up by most of the naval officers who had joined the American rebellion. On December 22, 1775, he was appointed First Lieutenant of the Alfred, lying off Philadelphia, and it was on board this little vessel that Paul Jones hoisted with his own hand the flag of independent America for the first time that it was ever displayed. This flag consisted at first of thirteen alternate red and blue stripes upon a white ground and not until many months later were the stars added to the stripes. The Alfred, in company with the Hornet sloop and the Wasp schooner, both from Maryland, put to sea in February, 1776, and after many a brush with English vessels, in none of which was the Alfred worsted, Paul Jones returned to the land of his adoption and was put in command of the Ranger. How it came to pass that in the Ranger he swooped down upon Lord Selkirk's beautiful country seat on the coast of Galway, and, finding its owner away from home, carried off the plate, which he subsequently returned with a very chivalrous letter to the Countess of Selkirk, is well known to Scotchmen. But the action by which his fame was indelibly established was fought on a French vessel—the Bonhomme Richard—and it is in connection with this action that attention has been called anew to a strange and eventful history. Walter Stafford Northcote, son and Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has just written to a contemporary to say that there now exists a flag—being none other than the first star-spangled banner ever sent by the United States—which was preserved from capture by Lieutenant James Bayard Stafford in the action between the Serapis and the Bonhomme Richard off Scarborough in 1779. We fear, as we shall presently show, that Mr. Northcote will have some difficulty in establishing the authenticity of the flag in question, but there can be no doubt that if authentic it would be a most valuable and interesting relic. No sharper action was ever fought at sea than that in which the Serapis, carrying forty-one guns of heavier calibre, tried conclusions with the Bonhomme Richard with forty guns, of which six were only eighteen pounders and the rest little better than field artillery.

The action commenced at 7 o'clock in the evening of September 23, 1779, and raged with the greatest intensity by moonlight for three and a half hours, the two vessels being locked together for more than half that time, a device to which Paul Jones had recourse in order to negative the superior maneuvering power of his adversary. Both vessels were frequently in flames, as might be expected when the muzzles of their guns were actually touching. Mr. Northcote says that Lieutenant James Bayard Stafford, on board the Bonhomme Richard, preserved her flag from being captured by the English vessel. Now for two reasons this can hardly have happened. In the first place, the Bonhomme Richard was never boarded by the Serapis, and secondly, there is among the papers published at New York in 1851, Mr. Northcote will find the names of the Bonhomme Richard's crew, both officers and men, and in the archives of the Navy Department at Washington there is a full catalogue of the "Naval Heroes of the Revolution." Search will be made in vain for the name of Lieut. Stafford in many records which are easily accessible, and there are, moreover, inaccuracies in

the story, as related briefly by Mr. Northcote, which can hardly be supported, in view of the facts given in the exhaustive reports of the action from the pens of Captain Jones and of Captain Pearson, who commanded the Serapis. Such was the sense of the stubborn courage shown by the latter that the British Admiralty created him a knight, much to the amusement of Paul Jones, who exclaimed: "Next time I meet him I'll make him a Lord." But the tradition that an old "star spangled banner," preserved reverentially in the United States, was once carried by the Bonhomme Richard, is, we fear, shadowy and incapable of being substantiated. "What is truth?" asked jesting Pilate, and who would not stay for an answer; and few who have had any experience in human affairs will be found to deny that, like the reputed affairs of the Bonhomme Richard, facts, as represented by historians, are singularly at variance with facts as they really happened. M. Prosper Merimee used to say that he cared for nothing in history except its anecdotes, which he felt to be truer than the inferences drawn from them by historians. To a similar kind and degree of incredulity, life, with its unmasking revelations, is apt to reduce all who can endure what Cowper calls "the insupportable fatigue of thought."

Scientific Truths.

Professor Macgregor tells us that his attention was attracted to the use of girls for scientific purposes by overhearing a young lady remark that her "bang would not keep crimped in damp weather." Upon this hint he immediately began a series of experiment, stretching over a period of eleven months and involving the use of three hundred and seven girls. He began by taking the red-haired girl with a luxuriant bang, which he caused to be crimped with great care, on an evening when the atmosphere was particularly dry. The next morning the bang presented a beautifully "frazed" appearance; but as toward afternoon the air grew perceptibly foggy, the professor expected that the bang would lose its crispidity—to use a scientific term. It did nothing of the kind, and, so far as he could see, the state of the atmosphere had no effect upon it. Instead of being discouraged by this failure, Professor Macgregor persevered. It occurred to him that the color of the hair might be an important factor, and that red hair might maintain its crispidity in circumstances where other hair would lose that quality. He therefore ordered from a charity school three dozen orphaned girls, of from twelve to sixteen years of age, and of assorted colors in point of hair. Twelve of these were black-haired, twelve were brown-haired, and twelve were red-haired. All of these girls wore bangs, and were in every way well adapted for scientific investigations. By a long series of careful experiments he proved that on the approach of wet weather the bangs of the brown-haired girls, without exception, became limp and straight; that a like effect was produced upon the bangs of ten of the twelve black-haired girls, while the red-haired girls were not a particle influenced either by the humidity or the dryness of the atmosphere. Further experiments upon ladies of every age, from sixteen to forty-five, gave like results, and the conclusion that the bangs of a brown-haired girl is an infallible indicator of the approach of wet or dry weather may be unhesitatingly accepted. The professor also discovered that red-haired girls show a peculiar susceptibility to electricity. When a thunder-storm is brewing, their bangs become stiff and bristling, and in three instances, when the professor tried to smooth a bristling bang, he received a violent shock in the region of the ear. He is not at yet prepared to say that the presence of an unusual amount of electricity in the air can always be detected by the use of red-haired girls, but he is strongly inclined to think that further investigation will prove that such is the fact. In view of this important discovery, Professor Macgregor recommends that brown-haired girls shall be substituted on board all vessels, whether naval or mercantile, for the present untrustworthy barometer. He points out that in the merchant service, where a stewardess is at present carried, she should be required to be a brown-haired woman, with a bang, and that any neglect on her part to crimp her bang every night while at sea should be punished as a misdemeanor. In the navy, peculiarly sensitive brown-haired girls should be employed, and the professor suggests that they should be kept in glass cases, open, of course, at the top, so that they would run no risk of being injured. The first cost of a girl is, of course, more than that of a barometer, and it is expensive to keep her in order, but this is of no consequence compared with her value as a weather indicator.

The Old Virginia Giant.

The allusion in a recent letter of your Louisiana correspondent to the old revolutionary giant hero, Peter Francisco, revives many traditions and reminiscences of the wonderful performances and daring deeds of that extraordinary man. My father, recently deceased at the advanced age of ninety, well remembered him, having frequently seen him in his native county of Buckingham, and related many anecdotes of his stirring and perilous adventures and hairbreadth escapes as he heard the recital fall from the lips of the giant himself. He described him as six feet one inch in height, his weight 260 pounds, his complexion dark and swarthy, features bold and manly and his hands and feet uncommonly large, his thumbs being as large as an ordinary man's wrist. Such was his personal strength that he could easily shoulder a cannon that weighed 1000 pounds, and he had seen him take a man in his right hand, pass over the floor and dance his head against the ceiling with as much ease as if he had been a doll baby. The man's weight was 195 pounds! Partaking of the patriotic enthusiasm of the times, he entered the American revolutionary army at the age of sixteen. He was present at the storming of Stony Point, and was the first soldier after Major Gibson who entered the fortress, on which occasion he received a bayonet wound in the thigh. He was at Brandywine, Monmouth and other battles at the North, and was transferred to the South under General Green, where he was engaged in the actions of the Cowpens, Camden, Guilford Court House, etc. He was so brave and possessed such confidence in his prowess that he was positively fearless. He used a sword with a blade five feet long, which he could wield as a feather, and every swordman who came in reach of him paid the forfeit of his life. [Pittsburg Appeal.]