

EUGENE CITY GUARD.

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EUGENE CITY, OREGON.

HUNTING ASTEROIDS.

Astronomical Sport That Is Being Bobbed of Part of Its Pleasure.

There was a time when the hunting of asteroids was the athletic sport with which the tired astronomer refreshed his mind and muscles. Weared with prolonged calculations as to the weight of a ton of coal on the surface of Jupiter or the density of iron on the surface of the sixth moon of Uranus and with his right arm and fingers cramped and numbed from the excessive use of chalk and blackboard, the astronomer would take his telescope and in the bright, crisp winter night stalk the timid asteroid through the starry jungles of the skies.

It was not often that he made a successful bag. Sometimes he would hunt night after night for weeks before capturing a single asteroid, but he was always buoyed up by the hope of game, and when he did bring down an asteroid with his breechloading reflector, his small but handy refractor, and was enabled to make a present of its elements to a favorite fellow astronomer he was indeed a proud and happy man.

But this fine old astronomical sport is at an end. The asteroid trapper with his photographic trap is abroad, and there is every reason to believe that in the course of a very few years at the furthest every existing asteroid will have been captured.

The method of the trapper is as simple as it is unscientific. He sets his camera at nightfall and goes home to his family until the following morning. A clockwork attachment gives a motion to the camera identical with the apparent motion of the fixed stars, so that the images of the latter never vary their places on the sensitive plate.

When, however, the trapper finds a faint but prolonged line of light extending over the plate, he knows that it is the trail of an asteroid, and he at once proceeds to complete its capture by giving it a name and calculating its elements.

The unsuspecting asteroids who had long ago grown shy of the telescophore have not yet discovered the existence of the camera traps, and they are captured in alarming numbers. It is quite usual for a trapper to report the capture of four or five asteroids in a single night.

It is true that he rarely makes any distinction between the traces made by an asteroid and the marks on the plate due to imperfections in the emulsion or to scratches made during development. In his greed he treats all marks as asteroids that come to his trap, and there can be no doubt that a certain proportion of the asteroids recently named and given a place in the solar system have no existence outside of the photographic plate, where the trapper fancied that he had detected their trail.

Still it is evident that the traps are nightly capturing an enormous number of asteroids, and unless something is done for their preservation this variety of celestial game will sooner or later become an extinct as the American buffalo.

To the average man it may seem to be a matter of very little consequence how asteroids are captured, but to those who are familiar with astronomers and who have their welfare and that of their wives and families at heart the prospect that legitimate asteroid hunting is about to become impossible is alarming.

If the tired astronomer can no longer keep up his health and spirits by beating the milky way for asteroids his health must inevitably suffer. Physicians are agreed that astronomy, if habitually indulged in, is particularly exacting to the nerves. Indeed the confirmed and excessive astronomer is invariably irritable and quarrelsome, even in spite of the tonic influence of asteroid hunting.

If that resource should no longer be open to him, his condition will be simply pitiable, and such a thing as an astronomical home will be utterly unknown. The astronomer's only recreation will be found in contradicting the theories and denying the discoveries of other astronomers, and the meeting of an astronomical society would be a scene of wild uproar mingled with flying slates and lumps of chalk.—Washington Star.

THE PARIS COCHER.

A Queer and Pathetic Bell of the Gibbied Days of Louis XV.

When Theophilus, you feel that you have been run over and abused by this hard, old, wicked world and would like to be an emperor for a few minutes to get even, come to Paris, my dear boy, and call to your side one of these whip snapping birds of the pavement, and for 15 francs in shabby glory you can drive around the streets of the brilliant city and run over people, like a king. It doesn't make any difference. You may have a number and a license to whip up his horse when he comes to a crowd.

Take it all in, Theophilus, and leave back on your cushions as the women and children scatter before whip and hounds and be sure to get your American money's worth of that delightful old meteum testing of being in a beautiful carriage world where pedestrians are torn with the right of being knocked down and the privilege of being fined from some spilt.

Now the cab is the last touching symbol of royalty in France. It is the plaintive remnant of the old French constitution, which consisted—wistfully stated—in running over people and then having them guillotined for being in the way. Pay your cabman with reverence. The opium, in these hare and democratic times, is the nation's redoubt ad absurdum of Louis XV—patience, with the gilt rubbed off.—Independent.

Charms of a Female Executioner.

Since the death of Sefex, the Vienna executioner, the authorities have received scores of applications for his place, of which the most curious is that of a pretty woman, who sends her photograph with the following letter:

"I am 18 years old and possess great physical strength. My sex, and, above all, my beauty. Sit me for the employment I solicit. The fact is that the last person upon whom the condemned man flings his gaze is the executioner, who thus thinks out of fear is repulsively homely. How much more compelling it would be for a criminal, before entering into eternity, to have the knot adjusted by the soft hands of a woman, whose bewitching glance would cause him to forget for an instant the terrors of a moral agony worse than death!"

HYMN TO ASTARTE.

What forward flight with myriads,
Voiced with myriad bees,
What you sequestered spirit,
What lone desolation,
Will draw thee to descend,
Creation's cradle friend?

The sun feeds at the sunrise,
The sun-moon glows there,
The dew-dew drops there,
The dew-dew drops there,
The dew-dew drops there,
—Lord de Tabley.

A SACRIFICE.

It was an evening in that fearful winter of 1854-5, memorable for the Crimean war, whose terrible stories of danger, privation and heroism the veterans delight to tell by the fire-side at home.

The cold was intense, snow lay thick upon the ground and was still falling noiselessly through the gray and dusky air upon an English camp in the Crimea. A space had been cleared around the tents, and the men were seeking such warmth as was to be obtained around the campfires. It was the eve of battle as one versed in the ways of war could tell by the anxious looks on the men's white, wan faces. There was none of that reckless bravado of which romances tell us. The men were silent or spoke only in whispers. Their thoughts were doubtless too oppressive for more loudly spoken words. It was the terrible Russian winter. Tomorrow they were to fight, and the air was heavy with propects of death.

Sergeant Easterbrook sat there, gazing into the glowing depths of the fire. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, of about 40, but gaunt and unkempt as he now was you would have taken him to be old or "Crouching close beside him was Little Charlie Hilton, a recruit—almost a boy, indeed but there was a sort of friendship between these two, for both came from the same village at home, in the garden of England, a quiet little village perched upon a hill, at the foot of which lay the fair world of Kent.

"Sergeant," the recruit whispered, "if anything should happen to me tomorrow?"

"Why, you talk just like the old hands!"

"Well, why not? There's as much chance of my getting potted as any one else."

"Are you afraid?"

"Afraid? Not at all."

"Yes," the elder man answered, with a sad, quiet smile. "I don't believe there can be a man living who does not fear death—the bravest of them it goes along with the fear of God!"

"But if anything should happen to me," Charlie persisted.

"Oh, you'll be all right, youngster."

"It is not because I am a youngster that I am any safer. Those confounded Russians don't pick out whom they'll hit. I want you to promise me, sergeant, that when all is done tomorrow, if you should find me—if you should find me among the dead—you will take this letter that is in my jacket. The other fellows might laugh if they knew, and she would not like it. But you know her. We are to be married, if I come safe out of this. If I don't, I think she would like to know that I fell with my face to the enemy!"

This time the young fellow fairly broke down.

"You say I know her. May I ask who she is?"

"Yes, I don't mind telling you. It is Mary Ashford."

"Mary? The daughter of Farmer Ashford?"

"Yes."

Then there was a dead silence between them, during which, as the flickering firelight danced upon their features, any one who had been watching him would have read a world of unspoken thoughts upon the sergeant's face—a short but pathetic history of human woe. Such an observer would have read his secret, would have deserved that Noel Easterbrook loved Mary Ashford too. That he had imagined and hoped that his love might some day be requited, until these words came to dispel his dream—words spoken in all innocence, but which pierced his heart as fatally as could have done a Cossack's lance-thrust.

It was Hilton who first broke silence.

"You have not answered me, sergeant," he said. "Won't you promise me what I asked you?"

"Yes," Easterbrook replied in a quiet, subdued tone, which betrayed no emotion. "I will do you this little service if you should require it, and if I am in a position to perform it."

"Thank you so much. And you will take the letter back to her?"

"Yes, with some hesitation. "I will take it back to her if I live."

At this moment an officer came among them, and the soldiers saluted.

"We want some men," said he, "to go and reconnoiter the enemy's outposts."

"Mary?"

"Yes, I say. Take young Hilton back to camp and leave me."

"No!"

But Sergeant Easterbrook, with a supreme effort, rose to his feet, and supporting himself by the trunk of the tree said in a stern tone of authority:

"Are you commanding this squad or am I?"

"I say I will be obeyed! Take up the lad and carry him back to camp!"

"Yes," Easterbrook replied in a quiet, subdued tone, which betrayed no emotion. "I will do you this little service if you should require it, and if I am in a position to perform it."

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