THE STORY OF MY WEDDING RING.

The inn at Loudre was very disagreeable. The odor of garlic and cabbage and the dampness and dirt were insupportable, and so I decided to push on to Danvers. The only vehicle I could procure was a rattling two-seated gig, drawn by a bony white horse of doubtful ability; but as my destination was only three hours away, and I was not liable to meet any one on the lonely road, I started off cheerfully enough, resolved to enjoy my solitary drive to the utmost.

The moonlight, as it glinted on the soft green of the hedges, and streaked the gray of the dusty road, was very beautiful, and before half a league had been passed over I heartily congratulated myself upon my good fortune in escaping the horrible inn at Loudre.

After an hour's dreamy and delightful ride I came to a cross roads where with difficulty I deciphered the battered signpost and learned I must turn to the left to reach Danvers. So, clucking up my deliberate steed, which proceeded in a half dignified, half protesting fashion, I turned into a grassy lane between two tall hedges and drove through a lonely district until the dreamy influence of night overcame me, and I drifted into a somnolent state midway between sleep and waking.

I was aroused by the sudden halting of my horse, that gave a frightened snort and planted both front feet firmly before him.

A subdued sobbing, as of a woman in distress, fell upon my ears, and leaning forward I peered into the moonlight to discover whence it came.

A high brick wall ran close to the roadway, covered with ivy and lichens, and leaning against an angle of this, a few steps before me, was a slight girlish form, draped in a dark mantle.

I sprang to the ground and softly approached her. Her face was buried in her hands and she sobbed bitterly.

"Mademoiselle," I said, speaking in French, "you are in trouble. Can I assist you in any way?"

She lifted her head, and the moonlight fell upon the most beautiful face I have ever seen. Absolutely faultless in feature, it was surmounted by a crown of yellow hair that shone like gold in the glare of the moonbeams, while a pair of deep violet eyes that even tears could not dim looked earnestly into mine.

"Who are you?" I asked gently, "and why are you here?"

"I am Amelie de Boursons, monsieur, and I reside at the chateau just within these gates."

The soft, musical notes of her voice added to the powerful impression her exquisite beauty had already produced upon my heart.

"But it is late," I continued; "surely some great misfortune must have befallen you to bring you here at this hour."

"It is true, Monsieur," she replied, struggling with a new paroxysm of grief; "to-morrow is my wedding day."

The tone of despair in which these words were uttered startled me.

"But is that so terrible an event?" I asked.

"If you but knew, monsieur," she said, "how vile and brutal is the man they are forcing me to marry, you would willingly save me from my horrible fate!"

She accompanied these words with an appealing look into my face, and then she dropped her head and sobbed anew.

I did not stop to reason upon the strangeness of all this. I was a young, generous-hearted man in those days, and could not resist this appeal from beauty in distress.

"But, tell me," I said, "how can I save you from this distasteful marriage? Do you wish to fly? I have a conveyance close by, and will gladly escort you to a place of safety."

"To fly would avail me nothing," she answered with a sweet sadness; "they would follow us and force me to return."

"But how else can I save you?" I asked, helplessly.

"I do not know," she replied, with a sudden calmness that suggested despair. "But unless you can find some way to succor me I shall take my own life."

There was no doubt, from the expression of her low, earnest voice, that she meant this, and, filled with consternation at the thought, I racked my brain for some way to preserve both her life and happiness.

At last an idea came to me, but I trembled at my own presumption as I suggested it.

"Mademoiselle," I said, haltingly, "I see but one alternative. You must marry me."

The violet eyes opened wide in surprise. "Marry you, monsieur?"

"Then pursuit would be useless. Being my wife, you would escape this villain who insists upon wedding you. I am free and able to give you all that would add to your happiness, and I shall learn to love you very dearly. It is true that I am a stranger to you, but I assure you that I am in all ways worthy to seek both your heart and your hand."

She gazed with earnestness into my face for a moment, and then replied slowly:

"I think I shall trust you, monsieur. Indeed, I cannot help myself. I will be your wife."

There was no coyness in her answer, no blush tinted the pale, beautiful face; simple dignity that commanded my respect and admiration.

"Then come," I said, eagerly; "we must lose no time. It will be midnight before we can hope to reach Danvers."

"Not Danvers," she replied, shrinking back as I sought to take her hand; "let us go to Tregonne; there is a notary there who will marry us, and we are far safer from pursuit."

"Very well," I answered, "let us be off."

Refusing my proffered assistance, Mlle. de Boursons walked to the carriage and sprang lightly to the back seat. Rather awkwardly I took my place in front, gathered up the reins and drove off as swiftly as I could induce the ancient steed to move.

Mademoiselle drew her mantle closely over her head and shoulders, and but once during the long drive did she speak. Then it was to direct me to the Tregonne road.

With ample time for reflection, my adventure now began to seem rather queer and uncanny, and by the time we discovered the lights of Tregonne twinkling before us I had come to doubt the perfect wisdom of my present course.

But it was too late to draw back now—and the girl was very beautiful.

"This is the notary's," said my companion, in her low, sweet voice, indicating by a gesture a rambling structure from whose windows gleamed a single light.

I leaped out, found the door at the end of a long pathway, and knocked upon it loudly.

A tall, thin man, beyond the middle age, holding a tallow candle high above his head, answered my call.

"You are the notary?" I asked, briefly. He nodded assent.

"I wish to be married."

"Married!" he echoed in surprise, "but when, monsieur?"

"Now; at once."

"But the bride, monsieur?"

"I will fetch the bride. She is waiting without."

I thought he intended to protest, so I left him abruptly and returned for the lady. She was already coming toward the house, and as I met her she motioned me to go before, while she followed silently up the pathway.

The notary admitted us without any ceremony, and we entered a small, dimly-lighted room that appeared to be a study.

My companion at once seated herself in an arm chair, but without removing the mufflings from her face.

The notary snuffed the candle, arranged his books, and, turning to me with a penetrating look, said:

"I must know your name, monsieur."

"Richard Harrington."

"Your residence?"

"I am an American."

He wrote the answers in his book. Then, glancing toward the arm chair, he continued:

"The lady's name?"

I waited for her to reply, but as she remained silent, I answered:

"Amelie de Boursons."

"Who?" cried the notary in a loud voice, springing to his feet, while a look of fear and consternation spread over his wrinkled face.

"Amelie de Boursons," I repeated, slowly, infected by the man's agitation in spite of myself.

The notary stared wildly at the muffled form of the lady. Then he drew out his handkerchief and wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead.

"What does this mean, monsieur?" I demanded, angrily.

The man heeded me not the slightest, but clutching the edge of the table to steady himself, and extending his long, bony finger toward the girl, he exclaimed:

"Are you Amelie de Boursons?"

Slowly, with admirable grace and dignity, the lady drew back her mantle, and her marvelous beauty was again revealed.

The notary, with distended eyes fixed upon the vision, sank back in his chair with a low moan.

"This must be explained, monsieur," I cried, striding to his side and grasping his shoulder. "Is there any reason why I should not marry Mlle. de Boursons?"

"Mlle. de Boursons," returned the notary, still regarding her with horror, "has been dead these forty years!"

"Dead!" I echoed, staring first at the notary and then at the girl, while a sense of bewilderment overcame me.

Mlle. de Boursons arose with a charming smile and came to my side.

"See, monsieur," she exclaimed, mockingly, and giving me her hand, "do you also think me dead?"

The hand was as cold as ice, but its touch sent a strange thrill through my body.

"Come, monsieur," I said to the notary, who watched the scene in amazement, "read the ceremony at once. We are in haste."

Slowly and with trembling voice the notary obeyed, the girl at my side returning the answers in a sweet, collected voice that disarmed my fears and calmed to some extent the notary himself.

I drew a seal ring from my finger and placed it upon her icy hand, and in its place slipped a large ruby from her own hand upon mine.

The ceremony concluded, I paid the notary, thanking him briefly for his services, and followed by my bride walked down the path to my carriage. The notary stood in the doorway, lighting us with the candle.

At the carriage I turned to hand my wife to her seat, but she had disappeared. I ran back to the doorway.

"Where is my wife?" I asked.

"She followed you down the path," said the man.

"But she is not there!"

Without a word the notary accompanied me back to the carriage. No trace of the girl was to be seen.

Right and left among the shrubbery I searched; I called aloud her name, entreating her to come to me, but no sight of the beautiful face rewarded my efforts.

I returned to the notary's study filled with vague misgivings.

"Where can she be?" I asked, dismally.

"In her grave," was the hoarse answer.

"Monsieur!"

"I told you before that she was dead. It is true. You have wedded a ghost!"

* * * * * * * *

The next morning, in company with the notary, I drove down the road till we came to the brick wall where I first saw Amelie de Boursons.

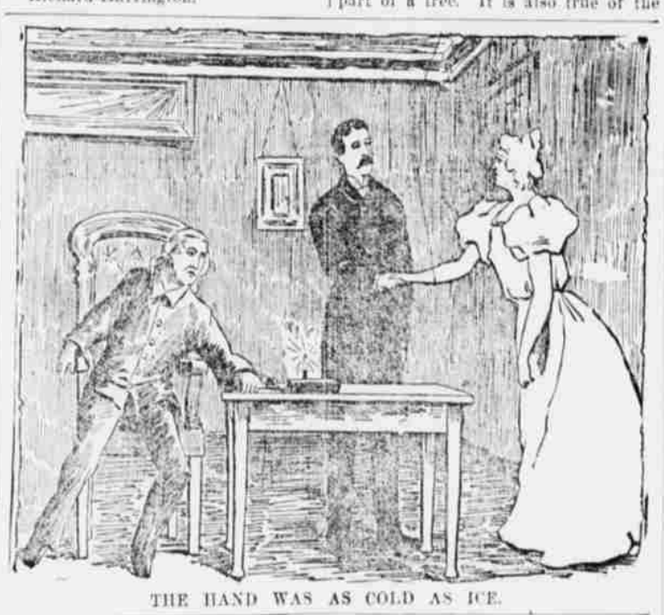
We entered the gates and walked to the chateau that stood in the neglected grounds. An old woman admitted us, the care taker, and at the notary's request allowed us to visit the gallery.

The notary threw back the shutters and the sun came in and flooded the portrait of a beautiful girl whose violet eyes regarded me with the same sweet expression I had noted in my bride of the previous evening.

"It is Amelie de Boursons," said the notary, in a gentle voice. "I have seen this picture often, and heard the girl's pitiful story, and that is why I knew her last night to be a mere phantom. Her father was a stern, hard man, who insisted upon her marrying a person utterly distasteful to the young girl. She tried to escape, but was captured and brought home to confront her fate. On the wedding morning they found her dead. She had taken her own life. That was forty years ago, monsieur!"

As we left the room I glanced curiously at the ruby that sparkled on my finger.

It is the only evidence I have ever possessed of my phantom bride.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.



THE HAND WAS AS COLD AS ICE.

VARIATIONS IN ACORNS.

No Two Seeds Nor Even Two Leaves Exactly Alike.

It is said that in individual trees scarcely two leaves can be found exactly alike. What is true of leaves is true of seeds, and, indeed, of every part of a tree. It is also true of the behavior of trees during their life career. In acorns especially one may note a remarkable difference in their behavior. Some species of acorn will preserve their vital power without much difficulty for a couple of years, while others can rarely be found with life after a few months. Some when put into the earth will remain months before sprouting, while others will sprout before they are fairly out of their cups on the trees.

The acorns of the live oak of the South often sprout before they fall. The process of germinating is among the most remarkable of all American trees. The root pushes out from the acorn to a distance of many inches before it enters the ground, the root then goes into the earth while the bud or plumule ascends to form the incipient tree trunk. The young tree of the live oak will frequently be distance of six inches from the acorn. In this respect the behavior of this species of oak corresponds nearly with what is almost universal in monocotyledonous seeds.

Another early sprouter is the common white oak. These have not been known to sprout on the tree, but they scarcely reach the ground before the little radicle prepares to enter the earth. It does not wait to get to the surface of the earth before doing this. On shelves or boxes where there is some number of them together the whole will be a mass of roots before a few weeks after gathering. On the other hand the nut of the burr oak will remain a long time before showing any disposition to sprout. It is these varying characteristics which make rules for the transportation of seeds difficult, each kind has to have a method of its own. So far as the two oaks are concerned, it has been found better to send young plants long distances than the acorns themselves. — Meehan's Monthly.

Confidence the Keynote to Success.

"Doubt and unbelief mean destruction to any business, and a man who loses confidence in his own affairs finds failure awaiting him in a short time," writes Evangelist Moody to his Bible Class in the Ladies' Home Journal. "Uncertainty disqualifies for work and usefulness and doubt that caused the recent state of depression in our business interests. Financiers and economists differed in their views regarding the political causes of this feeling of insecurity, but they generally agreed in directly attributing the reverses to the lack of assurance in business circles. Confidence is essential to success in every pursuit of life. And this self same truth is no less evident in Spiritual things than it is in temporal affairs. The only Christian life that is useful to the church of God and to fellowmen is the one which is assured of its own salvation. Distrust and unbelief mean sadness and care to any soul; but joy and rest come with the certain knowledge of forgiveness and favor with God."

TENNESSEE HORSE TRADERS.

Their Devious Ways of Making Poor Horses Sell Well.

The first Monday of every month is horse-swapping day in Tennessee. There are thousands of men who gain their livelihood by their wits in this business. The tricks of the Tennessee horse traders are legion, and unless a man is accustomed to horses it is folly for him to depend upon his own knowledge in dealing with the tricksters in the horse markets of the State.

When a Tennessee horse trader wants to make a true-pulling horse balk, so he can purchase him at a low price, he mixes cantharides and corrosive sublimate, and bribes the stable boy to bathe the horse's shoulder with the mixture. One of the greatest frauds is to make a good horse appear lame. The professional trader takes a single hair from the tail, puts it through the eye of a needle, lifts the front leg, and presses the skin between the outer and middle tendons. Then he shoves the needle through, cuts off the hair at each end and lets the foot down. The horse goes lame within twenty minutes. When he desires to make a horse stand by his food and not eat it, he greases the front teeth and the roof of the mouth with beef tallow, and the horse will not eat until its mouth is washed out.

A horse is made to appear badly foundered by the fastening of a fine wire tightly around its fetlock, between the foot and heel. The wire is never left on over nine hours, or the horse would become permanently lame. Many men buy nice-looking animals, but by the time they get the horses home find these to be badly afflicted with the heaves. The trader has simply to force half a pound of small shot into a horse's stomach to disguise the heaves. A small quantity of melted butter poured into the ear of a horse will make the owner think the horse has the glanders.

When a horse goes dead lame in one shoulder the defect is always disguised by a similar lameness in the other shoulder. This is done by taking off the shoe and inserting a beau between it and the foot.

A lame horse is nerved to appear at its best by a small incision about half way from the knee to the joint on the outside of the leg. At the back part of the shinbone is a small white tendon which is cut off and the external wound is closed with a stitch. The horse will then walk on the hardest pavement and not limp. White horses are beautified with black spots often by the application of powdered lime and litharge boiled together. When a professional trainer finds a man who wants a handsome horse he often produces a star in its forehead by spreading warm pitch on a piece of coarse towel of just the size of the star and applying it to the part shaved. The pitch is left on for three days, and then is washed away with elixir of vitroil until the wound is well. The hair that grows out is white.

An old horse is made to appear young by filing down the teeth and removing the dark markings with a hot iron. The depressions over its eyes are removed by puncturing the skin over the cavities and filling them with air from the mouth, forced in through a tube.—New York Sun.

What His Good Intentions Cost.

There was just one vacant seat in the Wabash avenue cable-car when a woman carrying a large basket and leading a small boy by the hand came in and took the seat. She placed the basket carefully in her lap and let the boy stand leaning against her—an arrangement that suited everybody except the boy.

"I 'ant to sit there," he bawled, trying to push his mother aside.

"Look out, Johnny! you'll break them eggs," remonstrated the woman.

"Don't care if I do!" sobbed Master Johnny.

"I'll make you care!" answered his mother, sharply. "Five dozen eggs, an' every last one of 'em fresh!"

His answer was a kick aimed at the basket. A man sitting opposite here interposed.

"Come, my little man, and sit on my knee."

"Ain't a-goin' to sit on your knee," and the youngster kicked the eggs again.

"I just wish I had you home. Wouldn't I lay it on!" said his mother. "I'd trounce you right here if I knew what to do with this 'ere basket."

"I'll hold the basket, ma'am," said the man opposite.

He reached over and took it. Everybody hoped to see Johnny get his deserts, and a hush of expectancy fell on that car. But what that scheming woman did was to pick up the boy, cuddle him in her arms, and give him a comfortable seat in her lap. And the little wretch smiled at the general discomfiture, while the man opposite let the basket of eggs bounce as they would, and glared with murderous ferocity at Johnny and his mother.—Chicago Tribune.

Marking Linen.

The marking of linen is quite a business in these days of sumptuous trousseaus. In stores which make a specialty of fine napery orders are taken for the working of letters when the linen is selected, so that it can be sent home in boxes ready for use. One fiancee will choose two unpretentious initials placed side by side and worked in plain raised satin stitch. Another chooses larger letters, to be intricately interlaced and elaborately worked with both solid and open laced stitches. Huge ornamental monograms are also conspicuous in napery and bed linen, as well as on tea cloths. Three letters are a good rule in case of house linen, one for the respective initials of the Christian name of the bride and groom and the third for the family name.

The Strings.

Smart Girl—Mr. Nicefellow, this is my little sister, Miss Ella. What do you wish, pet? Why are you regarding the gentleman so intently?

Little Sister—I was looking for the strings, that's all.

"Strings? What strings?"

"Why, mamma said you had two strings to your beau."—Foster.

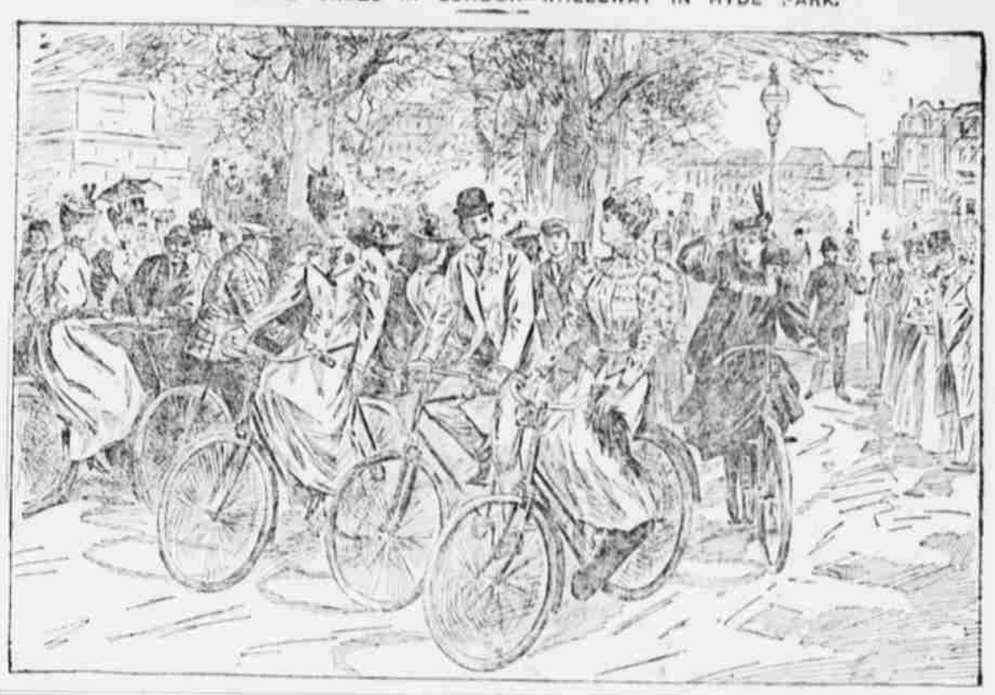
The Last Stage.

"Is Miss Oldly out of the matrimonial market yet?"

"No, but she's on the remnant counter."—Detroit Free Press.

"I am as lonesome as Canton, Ohio," says a man at the depot this morning, after seeing his best girl off on a train.

THE CYCLING CRAZE IN LONDON—WHEELWAY IN HYDE PARK.



GROWING IN POPULARITY.

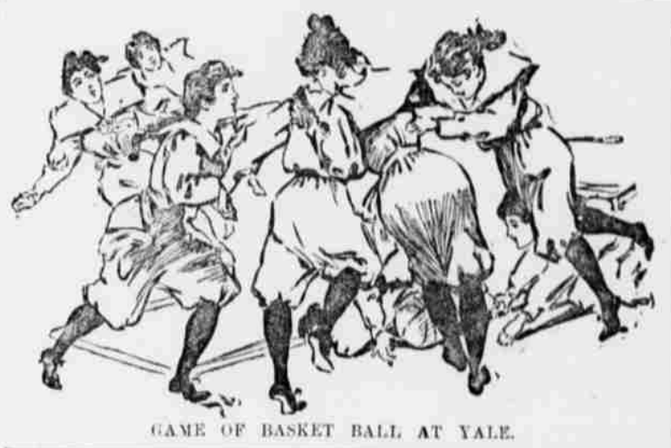
The Game of Basket-Ball Is Rapidly Gaining Ground.

The rapidity with which basket-ball has grown in popularity since its inception only a few years ago has been most remarkable. It did not grow, like other games, base-ball for instance, from simpler ones, but was invented in a library by James Naismith, an instructor of physiology in Springfield, Mass., in 1890. It is played to-day under practically the same rules as left Mr. Naismith's desk. He invented it for the Young Men's Christian Association of Springfield. Now there are at least 1,000 basket-ball teams playing in this country, and a considerable number in Canada. In Montreal one of the social affairs of the season is the annual basket-ball game between the ministers and doctors of the city. The game is popular in colleges for men, and the "college girl" takes most kindly to it. The sport has many disciplinary features besides its value as an athletic exercise. It teaches the player to subordinate his own individual play to team work, to keep his head in the most exciting moments and to cultivate accuracy, self-control and strict observance of the rules.

The feminine temper cannot at all times stand the strain of basket-ball. An expert who has refereed many games says that the "maddest woman he ever saw" was a public school teacher, a member of a basket-ball team, who questioned one of his decisions.

The Amateur Athletic Union has recognized the game, adopted rules for its government and assumed jurisdiction over its conduct. The game can be played on any floor or ground free of obstruction where there is less than 3,500 square feet of actual playing space. More space than that would be impractical. It is a sort of foot-ball, but if played according to the rules it lacks the roughness of that game. A hall or gymnasium is the best place to play basket-ball. The players line up five on a side. Back of each line is hung on the wall a network basket. The object of the game is to get the ball into your opponent's basket. On each side are five players—a center, two forwards and two guards.

The ball is put in play by the referee throwing it up in the center of the open space between the teams. After the play begins there are no rules as to the player's positions, but the theory is that the center and forwards are the aggressive players and the guards shall keep near the basket to defend the goals.



GAME OF BASKET BALL AT YALE.

Snobbery of Education.

Editorially, in the Ladies' Home Journal, Edward W. Bok expresses himself vigorously in deprecation of the tendency to introduce a dangerous element of snobbery into education. He notes the pervading "I know so much" air that is encountered on all sides, and the feeling that a line is being drawn on a so-called educational basis. Mr. Bok contends that "an educational process which sharpens and polishes only a girl's intellect, and either deadens or neglects her heart or soul, is a sorry imitation of what an education really stands for and is. * * * The practice followed by some girls who have been at college of holding their heads above those who have not is a foolish proceeding, and smacks of the most repulsive kind of snobbery. It is never safe for us to assume that we know more than the people around us, whether we are college-trained or not. The longer we live in this world the more we become convinced how little we know. The people most humble in their opinions are generally the best educated. It is an art which only a few of us learn; to be reticent of our own opinion when every one around us is expressing his. Yet this is one of the attributes of the well educated. Silence often speaks louder than speech. But the girl fresh from her books and college does not always perceive this. She is apt to assume, for example, that people are uneducated if now and again they speak ungrammatically. But she does not know that the most vital truths ever spoken or written, the truths which have done mankind the greatest good, have not always been those which would have borne grammatical dissection. Their good lay in what was said, rather than in the way in which the sentences were constructed. It is when we are young that we believe that all that is worth knowing is printed in books. When he are older we find that the deepest truths are never written. It is well enough for a girl to hold up for herself a standard in grammar or anything else. But she is unwise when she believes that her standard is the one by which she must judge and measure others. She has no right to do so in the first place. And in the second, she is far more apt to be wrong in her deductions than she is to be correct."

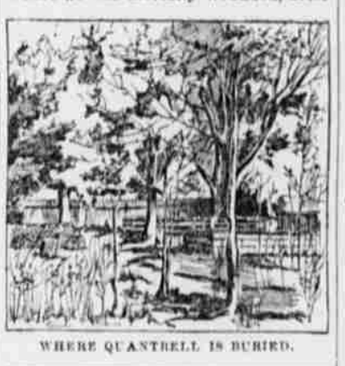
QUANTRELL'S RENDEZVOUS.

Where the Noted Guerrilla Was Wont to Retire with His Men.

Nelson County, Kentucky, was the favorite resort of Quantrell and some of his associates during and immediately after the civil war. The man who stood closer to Quantrell than any other man in this part of Kentucky was the late Captain A. D. Pence, for many years sheriff of Nelson County. He possessed many relics and mementos of his old commander, the most notable among which was the sash worn during the war by the famous guerrilla chief. Quantrell captured the sash from the Federal general, Blount, near Lexington, Mo., in 1862. He prized it highly and wore it until he was fatally shot in 1865. It was a custom with the guerrillas, when one of their number was killed, to divide his possessions, each of the guerrillas receiving something as a memento. When Quantrell was shot his effects were divided, and his sash fell to the lot of Frank James, who afterward gave it to Captain Pence. It was made of fine, heavy silk, and the ends were richly ornamented with beautiful tassels. Quantrell was wearing the sash when mortally wounded, and the silk was stained in several places with his life blood.

Another interesting memento of Quantrell was long in the possession of a lady living near Bloomfield, only a short distance from Lawrenceburg. It was a poem written in an autograph album by the noted outlaw shortly before he received his death wounds.

The closing chapter of Quantrell's life was full of interest. He was still in his prime when he was taken unawares and attacked by Terrell's men while quartered on the Wakefield farm, where he was mortally wounded, after



WHERE QUANTRELL IS BURIED.

which he was conveyed to the house of James Wakefield, near the line of Spencer and Mercer Counties. From there he was removed to a military hospital in Louisville, where he died after a month of intense suffering. His remains now lie in an unmarked and weed-grown grave, in a little cemetery in the suburbs of Louisville. It is said that while Quantrell lay dying of his wounds in the hospital he purchased the plot of ground where his remains now rest.

MRS. J. ADDISON PORTER.

The Wife of the Secretary to the President and Her Official Duties.

The wife of the recently appointed official whose card reads "J. Addison Porter, Secretary to the President," naturally takes a central place in the life of the most interesting of American families. The delicate health of Mrs. McKinley will not prevent her from undertaking the social duties devolving upon the mistress of the White House, yet every possible additional social duty will be performed by those nearest to the wife of the President, and much, therefore, will devolve upon Mrs. Porter, who is well fitted to meet these requirements.

The first social function at which Mrs. Porter appeared was the reception at the White House given by Mrs. McKinley in honor of the ladies of the Diplomatic Corps, and the manner in which the wife of the President's secretary assisted in the pleasant task of according a gracious and cordial welcome to callers won for her the regard of all present. Mrs. Porter is the daughter of Col. Betts, of New York, who is a son of Judge Betts, the famous lawyer. She was sent at an early age to Miss Porter's school at Farmington, Conn., where she remained until she went to France to attend a finishing school. After her marriage in 1884 to J. Addison Porter her home was for some time in Washington. She speaks French fluently and is fond of the study of languages. Mr. and Mrs. Porter have two children. Their names are Agnes and Josephine and they are just about to enter kindergarten. The Porters reside in a pretty, attractive house, formerly occupied by ex-Secretary of the Interior Hoke Smith and his family.

MRS. J. ADDISON PORTER.

The Water Bicycle.

Ball bearings and scientific gear are creating a revolution in motors of all sorts. A new and promising invention is the hydrocycle, which is built on the catamaran principle, with cylinders of galvanized steel filled with air. A slight framework connects these two cylinders, and a bicycle gear is attached which drives light paddle-wheels of eight blades. The sprocket-wheel is set between the pedals in the same way as the sprocket-wheel and chain of the bicycle. The steering gear consists of two small steel rudders, operated by rudder-chains connected with the steering gear, somewhat after the fashion of the ordinary bicycle.

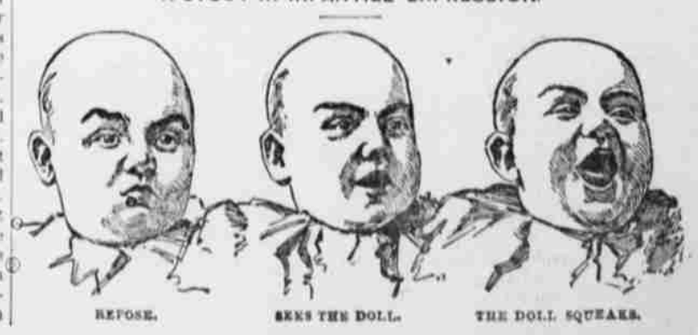
The hydrocycle is capable of a speed of ten miles an hour without hard work, and as the craft is so built that it can neither sink nor upset, the pleasure and safety of it are at once apparent. The cylinders are made with compartments so arranged that the fracture of one will not affect the others. The machine sits lightly on the water, can be turned in almost its own length, and, like the ordinary catamaran, will live in a sea which would upset a boat of a much larger size. It draws but a few inches of water, is light, manageable and novel, a combination of qualities that makes it extremely attractive to those who are fond of water sports. Those already built will carry five or six hundred pounds, and are about ten feet in length of cylinder. Only a few have been built, but the experiments already made are sufficient to satisfy experts that the hydrocycle is one of the coming fads, and promises to furnish a great deal of pleasurable amusement.

Realistic Teeth.

"Hasn't she lovely teeth?"

"Almost too lovely. I can't make up my mind whether they are real or realistic."—Indianapolis Journal.

A STUDY IN INFANTILE EXPRESSION.



REPOSE. SEES THE DOLL. THE DOLL SQUEAKS.