A DEAD PAST

By MRS. LOVETT CAMERON

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

Later on, the little party of excursionists found a suitable spot for their picnic beneath the smooth, mossy trunk of a giant beech tree, upon the breezy slopes of the hill behind the gardens. Here the nurse unpacked the luncheon basket they had brought and Master Roland Talbot's mouth was shut by a large helping of veal pie, while the poodle lay with his nose upon his mistress's lap and was regaled with titbits from her plate. Felicia leaned her back against the tree and did the honors of the repast. The nurse having discreetly retreated out of earshot with her own portion of the viands, the ladies proceeded to discuss what they had seen and heard.

"You may depend upon it that picture is somehow connected with Brian Desmond's life," said Mrs. Talbot decidedly. "Did you notice how mysterious the old woman was about her? I wonder if she was some governess in the family, and what has become of her."

"Since Mr. Desmond has married some one else, I don't see that it matters much," said Felicia indifferently.

"I shall never forget that face, it was a peculiar type of beauty. Has Brian Desmond been wearing the willow for her ever since, I wonder?"

Felicia stifled a yawn; she was at a loss to understand the keenness with which her friend pursued the subject of Mr. Desmond's antecedents.

"Look!" she exclaimed, glad to find something to change the conversation, "did I not tell you there had been a man in that room. Behold, without a doubt, the late occupier of Mr. Desmond's study! Good gracious, he is taking off his hat and coming straight to us!"

A gentleman was in fact walking slowly up the slope among the beech trees toward them. He was young and decidedly good looking; he had pleasant grey eyes and an agreeable smile, and his manner, when he took off his hat and addressed them, was perfectly self-possessed and devoid of awkwardness.

"I must really apologize that you should have been driven out into the woods for your luncheon, ladies. I cannot think what Mrs. Succurden was about not to ask you to remain in the house."

"Oh, we are quite comfortable here, thanks," answered Gertrude smilingly; her whole face brightened at once. She did not know who was addressing her, but she saw that he was well-looking and a gentleman. He had sufficient assurance to address himself to her without knowing her and his very audacity pleased her. "We must introduce ourselves. I am Mrs. Talbot, a grass widow, if you choose to call me so. This is my son and heir, this my angel of a poodle, and this is my friend, Miss Grantley."

Felicia bowed coldly, she looked graceful and summer-like in her white dress and wide shady hat, leaning against the smooth, mossy beech trunk. The stranger looked at her curiously, but she dropped her eyes upon her plate and would take no notice of him. He did not venture to speak to her.

"We are nothing but common vulgar tourists," continued Gertrude laughingly, "come over from Smackton in an open fly for an outing, but I am a great friend of Mr. Desmond's, and now sit down here and share our lunch if you will, but please introduce yourself first; tell us who you are and where you live."

"My name is Edgar Raikes, at your service. I, too, am a great friend of Mr. Desmond's, and I live here," answered the stranger laughingly. But he did not accept Mrs. Talbot's invitation to sit down and partake of her lunch; he stood leaning upon his stick and looking down upon her, but glancing sometimes covertly at the young lady, who was eating her luncheon in cold silence.

"Do you live here at Keppington Hall?" inquired Mrs. Talbot, with some surprise.

"Yes, certainly."

"Oh, then it was his paper upon the floor," she exclaimed, turning to Felicia, "and his pen that was wet!"

"And his smell of smoke," interpolated Miss Grantley quietly. It was the first thing she had said.

"Ah, you are observant, Mrs. Talbot!" replied Mr. Raikes. "I certainly did beat a most hasty retreat out of the study when I heard the approach of ladies' skirts."

"Has Mr. Desmond lent you the house?"

"Exactly, he has given me the use of it for a time," he answered with a slight flush. He might have told her that he was paid a hundred and fifty pounds a year for doing so, but he was not minded to make such confidences to her.

"What on earth do you do here?" said Mrs. Talbot. "Are you all alone; what do you do with yourself?"

"I shoot a little, and I fish a little," said the young man. He might have added that he got himself generally into mischief, but this he also wisely refrained from saying.

"It must be very dull; you had better come over and see us at Smackton, we are at the hotel." And then she got up to go. The open fly appeared on the scene on the road below them. Roland's nurse packed up the luncheon basket, and Mr. Raikes walked down with the two ladies to the road, and assisted them most politely into their vehicle, lifting in the child and the poodle, and shutting the rickety door of the fly with as fine an air as if it had been a spring barouche. Then he stood aside and took off his hat to them, with the most delightful flourish and a bow which a duke might have envied.

"What a truly charming young man!" exclaimed Mrs. Talbot rapturously.

"I really have no patience with you, Gertrude. What do we know about this man? I cannot understand your rushing at a stranger like that, asking him to come and see us, too."

"My dear, when you are my age you will understand the advisability of leaving no stone of life unturned upon your road. We are very dull at Smackton, and a 'man's a man for a' that.' If he comes he will amuse us; if he stays away it will do us no harm."

Mr. Raikes did come once, and once only. He called upon the two ladies at the hotel the following Sunday. During the visit he flirted outrageously with Mrs. Talbot and glanced askance at Felicia's somewhat cross face as she sat by reading the paper, wishing that she would not look so coldly and indifferently at him; but she would not speak to him, so he was fain to address himself entirely to her friend.

After that Sunday they saw him no more, for Mr. Talbot, unexpectedly, came back from Scotland sooner than he intended, and the little party at Smackton was in consequence broken up; the two friends said good-by to the Yorkshire watering place, Felicia paid the last bill, and they packed up their boxes and migrated southward together.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was September when Kitten was married in Frierly village church. It is May when Mr. and Mrs. Brian Desmond take up their abode in the newly decorated town house in Lowndes square. All these months the happy pair have spent abroad. Kitten has learned and seen more than she had ever dreamed of in her whole life before. She has been taken to Paris and Vienna, and to Rome. She has been dressed by Parisian dressmakers and presented at foreign courts; she has become self-possessed and conversational; she has learned to talk glibly about the old masters, and to understand the difference between modern and antique bric-a-brac; she is quite a connoisseur in old laces, and already possesses a valuable collection of her own, of Venetian and Genoese point, and she has gained that undefinable something, that charm of manner, that grace of language, that trick of good society in which she was possibly somewhat lacking in the old childish days when she sat up aloft in the cherry tree and studied Pope's "Essay on Man" with the all-devout worship of her earnest young soul.

But all this time has she been happy? Has Brian indeed taught her that love and joy are one, and that happiness can be caught and embraced and tightly held captive between the clinging arms of answering affection?

At first she believed that it was so. To be with him daily, to share his life, to sun herself forever in his smile and in the glances of his eyes, was sufficient for her for a time. As her love grew and increased in depth and intensity, so did the blindness of her self-devotion render her at first unconscious of all save the delight of her own adoration.

But as the days and weeks went by, she began vaguely to feel a faint chill of disappointment. Sometimes the ardor of her love seemed even in her own eyes to meet with but an inadequate response. Once or twice it happened that she poured out her thoughts and her fancies, and that he hardly understood her. At times he was abstracted and thoughtful, and if she rallied him upon his gravity he would rouse himself with an effort, smile upon her, stroke her hair, kiss her pouting lips and tell her lightly that he was thinking of "business."

Then, one day, there came an awakening. It was a wet afternoon. They were at Dresden, and were slowly wandering homeward to England. They had exhausted the picture galleries and the "green vaults," had listened to the organ in the church till they were tired of it and wandered about the narrow streets and hung over the bridge across the Elbe until they knew them all by heart. It was their last afternoon, and it was raining heavily. Brian got sick of the dreary grandeur of the hotel sitting room, and clothing himself in a long waterproof coat, went off by himself for a walk.

Presently, from sheer idleness, she began touching the trifles upon her husband's table—his silver cigarette case, his writing case, the little collection of silver topped bottles and ivory toilet implements. She fingered them with loving tenderness, as things which, for their owner's sake, were dear to her. His dressing bag stood wide open upon a chair, and just inside it was a small square morocco case. Kitten felt a vague wonderment that she had never before noticed this article. She took it up and turned it about curiously. Apparently it was locked, but presently, quite accidentally, her finger touched upon a spring, and the case flew open suddenly. It was lined with faded satin. Kitten's heart began to beat with a strange and sickening sensation, for what was the meaning of these things which lay inside? —a crumpled white glove, a bunch of dead violets, a tiny lace bordered cambric handkerchief with the faint odor of perfume still lingering about it, an oval locket, which, with a wild amazement, she found to contain a soft, thick curl of dark brown hair, and then, beneath everything else, a folded letter, yellow and faded, with written words that were pale with time and blotted with tears, creased and crumpled out of all original shape and smoothness. Half mad with a something terrible which seemed to stifle and choke her, Brian's wife read the opening words in the dim, faded ink that had been dry for years. "My darling," is what she saw—then no more, for there came a heavy footstep behind her, a rough hand that snatched the paper from hers, and a hoarse, angry voice that spoke her name.

"How dare you!" said Brian, in a voice of suppressed fury. He pushed her back, snatched the case and its contents away, bundled them all back and sanpped the spring of the box, and thrust it back into the dressing bag. Then he turned around to his wife again. Never had Kitten seen that look of black rage before upon the face she loved so well. She cowered and shrank before him, with white, drawn features and horror-sticken eyes that widened into terror as they met him.

But she was brave, too, and she knew that as his wife she had a right to know.

"I am sorry," she said, "sorry to have annoyed you. It was by accident that I opened it. But since I have done so—since I have seen those things, you must explain to me the meaning of what I have seen. To whom did they belong? Who is this other woman, whose hair, whose glove and handkerchief, whose letter you keep so religiously? Who is she?"

But he gave her no answer; he had turned away from her and was locking up his bag. She watched him in silence, and with an agony which increased at every moment. When he had put away the dressing bag he went out of the room, through her bedroom and into the sitting room beyond. He leaned against the window, taking up a newspaper and making believe to read it. Kitten had followed him. She stood at a little distance from him, white as death, with her great, sad eyes fixed upon him. His face was very dark and bitter. She could not see the expression of his downcast eyes, but she saw that the hands that held the paper shook slightly, and that he bit his lip under his dark mustache, as though struggling with some strong and painful emotion within himself.

Then the wife went and laid her soft, fair head upon her husband's arm, rubbing her cheek gently against his coat sleeve, and clinging to him coaxingly with those small, frail hands he had so often kissed.

"Brian," she said softly, "I know I am only a child to you, and I have seen enough of the world lately to understand that I cannot be the first whom you have loved. But am I not your wife, and why should there be any secret between us? Tell me who this woman was, and if you loved her once, and I will speak of it no more.

"It will be better that you should speak of it no more," he answered hoarsely.

"But that is no answer to my question," she said, looking up wistfully into his face.

"There can be no answer to it," he answered shortly, and then added, with a little gesture of affection, resting his hand against her head; "I will forgive you for your indiscretion, Kitten, but do not speak of this affair again."

"Not after this once, Brian, but I am your wife. I have a right to know your past. The happiness of our whole lives depends upon this. Answer me but this one question."

"My dear little girl, men do not like to be cross-questioned."

"Does that mean that you refuse to tell me who those things belonged to?"

"Exactly, if you like to word it so. I refuse to tell you." He flung down his paper upon the table, and looked at her angrily, almost defiantly. "And now," he said lightly, "the rain is over. Put on your things and let us go out."

After that, Kitten knew that she did not possess her husband's heart. All the sweet illusions, all the dear dreams of love and happiness, withered up and dwindled away into emptiness and desolation. She understood, with that shrewdness which had always been a part of her nature, that had Brian ceased to love this other woman, of whom he treasured up those faded mementoes so tenderly and religiously, he would have spoken of her freely and openly, and would have told her something, even if not all the story of his past. But his blind anger, his overpowering emotion, and his obstinate refusal to answer her questionings taught her too surely that her husband's love for this other woman was not a dead thing of the post, but a living, breathing reality.

(To be continued.)

ALL PERVASIVE ETHER.

Holds the Universe Together and Is the Universe Itself.

Certainly, though no sane person doubts the existence of the ether, we are sorely troubled when we are almost forced to give it properties incompatible with one another. This you will see when I enumerate all the functions which this utterly mysterious entity discharges. It convers the force of gravitation. It has the power of vibrating from side to side, and these vibrations, according as they are fast or slow, have the most varied results upon us. They all travel along at the same speed, which is that of light—186,000 miles a second—but the waves may oscillate from side to side as they go, either two or three times a minute (or less), or even a million times a minute (or more). When the waves are very slow we call them electric waves. When they are a little faster we call them Hertizan waves, and telegraph across oceans with them. When a little faster we call them Blondlot rays—a new discovery which almost needs an article to itself. A little faster, they are called heat rays, or radiant heat. A little faster, they are called red light, then yellow, and so on to violet. Then they become invisible again, as they were before, and we call them ultra violet light. Then, a little faster, we call them Becquerel rays, and the fastest we know yet we call Roentgen rays.

I have missed out more than I have named, and there are many gaps yet to fill, but you will agree with me that the entity whose vibrations cause electricity, heat, light, and Roentgen rays, besides conveying the force of gravitation, must be a very remarkable substance. And, more than that, it is supposed that all ponderable matter is really made out of the ether. By ponderable matter we mean matter which is subject to gravitation and therefore has weight. The ether itself, which conveys the gravitation, is conceived of as being without weight.

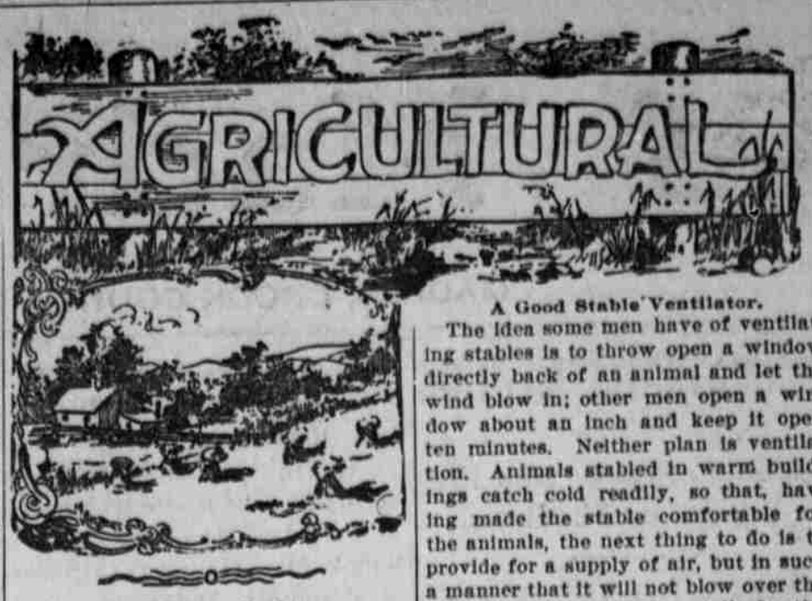
It comes to this, then, that in the ether modern science recognizes the most profound of all its problems, except that of consciousness. By gravitation it makes the universe one, by its movements it makes the universe alive, and it is the stuff of which the material universe is made.—Harper's Magazine.

Drawing Him On.

Miss Willing—What would you do if I attempted to run away and leave you here in the parlor alone

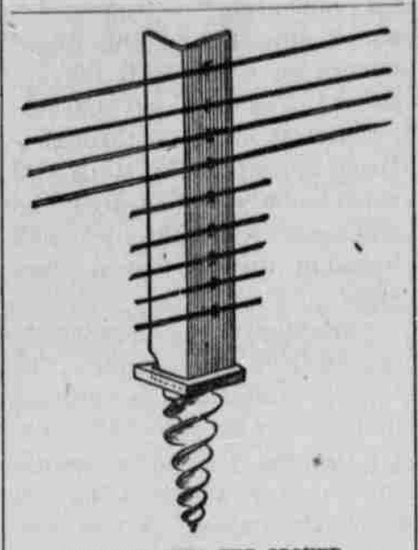
Mr. Slowboy—Why, I—er—would try to catch and hold you.

Miss Willing—Well, get ready then; I'm going to attempt it.



New Fence Post.

The old-time fence-post has served its purpose for so long that it is about time it was improved. It has always seemed natural that in erecting a fence post a hole should first be dug in the ground and the end of the post inserted in the hole, the remaining space being filled up again. A California man thinks this method antique and cumbersome and has invented an exceedingly simple plan, which entirely eliminates this procedure. By the use of his method the initial digging of the hole is entirely unnecessary. The bottom of this post is spiral in shape,



SCREWED INTO THE GROUND.

similar to an auger, being partly inserted in the ground, is turned round and round until sunk sufficiently deep. To more easily accomplish this a dummy post, with a double-handed lever, which first bores the hole in the ground, can be used. The post shown which first bores the hole in the in the illustration is made of two parts, the top being separated from the base. Along one side of the top portion is a vertical row of prongs, to which an equal number of wires can be attached by clamping the prongs.

Stacking Alfalfa.

Throughout the western half of the United States alfalfa hay is commonly stored in stacks in the field. Alfalfa stacks will not shed water as readily as stacks of grass hay. In the arid regions there is little danger from rains during the season of storage, but in humid climates it is necessary to store the hay in barns or else cover the stacks with large tarpaulins, or they may be topped with grass. Otherwise the percentage of waste is very large. In any case there is likely to be some waste, for which reason the stacks are made large, thus reducing the proportionate amount of waste. In the alfalfa regions of the West the stacks are as high as the hay can be handled easily and may be 200 feet or more in length. The size of the stacks is then limited chiefly by the convenience in bringing the hay from the surrounding field.

Cheap Potato Pit.

Select slight elevation for position. Dig pit 10 feet long, 5 feet wide and 2½ feet deep. Get three 6-inch poles, 10 feet long; put two, one above the other, at back of pit. Get sixteen 4-foot poles, 6 inches in diameter, and twenty 7-foot poles, 6 inches in diameter, for roof. Make frame for door 2 feet wide and 5 feet high; set in center of front. Put your 4-foot poles, eight on each side, nail through door frame and set two stakes each end to hold poles in position, one above another. Then put your other 10-foot pole on top, resting center on door frame. Notch all 7-foot poles so as to fit each end on front and back; then set up so as to form roof. Nail any old plank on ends. Bank up earth all around and on top. Nail old bags on door to keep frost out. Guaranteed to keep potatoes well through the coldest weather. Will hold 100 bushels.—Henry Kirk.

POTATO PIT.

What Attracts the Bees.

A study of the habits of bees indicates that flowers having bright colors possess much greater attraction for bees than dull colored flowers. Nectar does not seem to attract bees unless in the bright colored flowers, and it was found possible to attract bees quite successfully by means of artificial flowers. They do not seem to be attracted much by perfume, but bright color and perfume together exercises strong attraction.

A Good Stable Ventilator.

The idea some men have of ventilating stables is to throw open a window directly back of an animal and let the wind blow in; other men open a window about an inch and keep it open ten minutes. Neither plan is ventilation. Animals stabled in warm buildings catch cold readily, so that, having made the stable comfortable for the animals, the next thing to do is to provide for a supply of air, but in such a manner that it will not blow over the animals. If one has box stalls for the horses a window at some distance from them will supply needed ventilation. If the stalls are not so arranged then some opening should be made in the barn if necessary so that the air may enter readily yet not blow directly on the animals. If there is no other way of getting ventilation than through the windows at the rear of the animals then put an attachment to each window to shed the air; a board eight or ten inches wide nailed on a slant over the opening that is made when the window slides to one side will reflect the wind, so to speak, and it will not strike the animals directly. Surely a man of bright wits will find some way of giving his animals ventilation without injury to them if the way suggested does not suit him.

Frost Bitten Combs.

If the trouble is seen before the frost has thawed out, put the bird in a room that will warm up slowly, letting the circulation begin slowly. Avoid a place where the bird can get into the direct sunlight or a room that is much above the freezing point. Even the holding of dry snow against the comb will help remove more slowly the frost of the parts. Having restored the circulation, or noticing the bird after it has thawed out, apply twice a day an ointment of vaseline, six tablespoonfuls; glycerin, two tablespoonfuls; turpentine, one teaspoonful. This will help start into a healthy condition the blood circulation of comb and wattles and at the same time reduce the swelling.—Dr. Sanborn in Reliable Poultry Remedies.

Kind of Cows to Keep.

I have no particular choice as to the kind of cows to keep. This is a good deal like a man getting a wife—it depends largely on the kind he prefers. If you are going to keep cows exclusively for butter, the Jersey, Guernsey and Holstein are desirable breeds. If you are going to take into consideration the value of a calf, which seems quite necessary in our State, the milking strain of the Shorthorn meets the requirements as well as any. The only reliable test for a cow is the amount of butter she produces If she does not produce 225 pounds of butter fat per year she is not a desirable cow to keep. In building up a herd t is quite necessary to select sires from the best milking strain.—G. L. McKay, Iowa.

Vise for Harness, Etc.

In winter months is the time to repair harness. The cut shows a very handy tool to hold your straps while you sew. Take two hardwood staves about 2½ feet long, bore a ½-inch hole, 10 inches from top end, through both the staves, then put in a bolt ⅝-inch thick and 5 inches long, and a nut with short handle on. Old coiled spring slipped on the inside, between the two staves, make it to open itself. Lower ends could be hinged together with piece of leather.—F. B. Thor.

Feed Horses Less When Idle.

In an exchage Andrew Stenson sensibly says: The horse not only requires less feed when idle than when at work, but is actually injured if the ration is not reduced on days of idleness. Some feeders of high standing reduce the feed of their work horses on Sundays and holidays, in the belief that even one day's feeding of a working ration while the horse is at rest is injurious. It is now the belief of all who have thoroughly studied the subject that idle horses are fed too heavily as a rule. But no fixed ration can be named, since the food requirements of individual horses differ so widely. Close observation will enable the feeder to adapt the quantity to the needs of each animal.

Black Knot.

Look carefully on the cherry trees for any signs of black knot. It will be an advantage to cut away the branch or limb and burn it if any indications of the disease are found. It comes from spores, and once it gets in an orchard seems to hold its own. Trees that were treated last fall should be sprayed early, following with spraying several times thereafter.

Poultry Pickings.

The smaller the poultry quarters the cleaner they must be kept.

The best breeds will not be profitable if they are mismanaged.

Are you giving your poultry the attention you give the other stock or just allowing it to shift for itself?

1290—England banished Jews a[illegible] fiscated their property.

1483—Henry Stafford, Duke of B[illegible] ham, beheaded.

1493—Columbus discovered land [illegible] ed Dominica.

1502—Columbus entered Porto B[illegible]

1519—Spaniards under Cortez [illegible] Mexico.

1580—Sir Francis Drake arrived [illegible] from his voyage around the [illegible]

1674—John Milton, poet, died.

1694—The ship "Hannibal" of [illegible] arrived at the Barbadoes [illegible] cargo of negro slaves fr[illegible] rica.

1755—Many killed in an earthq[illegible] Lisbon, Portugal.

1762—Peace papers signed at F[illegible] bleu between England [illegible] France.

1765—Stamp act went into oper[illegible]

1771—First newspaper to be p[illegible] in Albany, N. Y., issued.

1773—Liberty flag raised on B[illegible] Grove, Boston.

1774—Declaration of rights by [illegible] can Congress.

1775—Gen. Montgomery captu[illegible] at St. Johns, Canada.

1776—British abandon Crown P[illegible]

1783—Washington issued his f[illegible] address to the army.

1788—Deborah Godfrey, said [illegible] been the mother of thi[illegible] children, died at Stepney [illegible] land.

1793—Louis Joseph Philip, Duke [illegible] leans, beheaded.

1812—French defeat Russians a[illegible] near Wiazma.

1813—Neutrality of Switzerla[illegible] claimed.

1818—First steamboat on the la[illegible] Buffalo.

1825—Albany, N. Y., celebrated [illegible] of Erie canal.

1847—Meldenssohn, the famous [illegible] cian, died.

1853—First Presbyterian Chinese [illegible] organized in San Franci[illegible] Russians defeated Turks [illegible] tenitza.

1861—Seizure of Confederate [illegible] sioners on the steamer Tr[illegible]

1867—Stars and Stripes rais[illegible] Alaska.

1884—Grover Cleveland electe[illegible] dent of the United States.

1893—Anarchists threw bomb [illegible] ter at Barcelona, killing [illegible] persons....Voorhees rep[illegible] passed by House of Rep[illegible] tives....United States [illegible] passed Chinese exclusion [illegible] Free silver men issue an[illegible] from Washington.

1894—Alexander III. of Russia [illegible] Lieut. Dreyfus of the [illegible] army arrested on charge [illegible] son.

1898—Russia mobilized fleet at P[illegible] thur.

1901—Li Hung Chang died.

1902—Fireworks explosion in [illegible] Square, New York.

1903—Panama declares its indep[illegible] of Colombia....Panama r[illegible] ed by the United States. [illegible] land act went into operati[illegible]

1904—Theodore Roosevelt elect[illegible] dent of the United States. [illegible] sian Baltic fleet left Vig[illegible]

The Comic S[illegible] of The News

Perhaps Japan will yet get [illegible] demnity out of American tour[illegible]

The broiled steak has to w[illegible] time to pay the beef trust's g[illegible]

If a battleship is out of da[illegible] she is completed, what's the use [illegible] ing 'em?

They may yet, through The [illegible] channels, make football a fi[illegible] evening parlor game.

What we didn't know about [illegible] insurance companies a few mo[illegible] would fill a cyclopaedia.

Yet the Carnegie commission [illegible] of the list of heroes the life [illegible] president who died poor.

Maybe it is only an attempt [illegible] a digest of the language that [illegible] ually upsetting the Hungarian [illegible]

John W. Gates admits that [illegible] mobile overtaken for speedi[illegible] place for holding an open-air [illegible] meeting.

And it all sprang from a Pr[illegible] ner given by James Hazen H[illegible] spring!

Senator Burton is still raisin[illegible] rers to those indictments ag[illegible] after all it is natural to demur [illegible] dictment.

The family physician of a h[illegible] ance president doesn't always [illegible] marry the daughter to take u[illegible] good thing.

As another evidence that it [illegible] to reach our high standards o[illegible] tion, Japan reports that it has a [illegible] politician.