"Are You Married Yet?"

"I SAY! Are you married yet?"

Ivan Carlyon turns abruptly as a delicate pearl-colored glove is laid on his sleeve, and looks down into the beautiful laughing face upturned to his gaze.

As his eyes meet Cora Marricott's she flushes a hot vivid crimson and withdraws her hand. Instinctively he raises his hat, but with a muttered "I—I—beg your pardon!" the girl flits on, and her butterfly robes are soon lost in the brilliant throng.

Smiling and still puzzled at the recent encounter, he passes on to exchange a greeting with Lady Loraine and her pretty daughters.

"How do you do, Mr. Carlyon? Delighted to see you back again—just in time for our ball. I hope you will come."

"I shall be delighted. I only returned to town last night, and am going up to Scotland next week with the Huntley's."

"Are you? So are my girls."

"What a sad thing about the Lesters. I suppose the property goes to a distant cousin?"

"Yes. Miss Marricott—a wild Yorkshire girl—a most 'larky' person, I hear. A girl who has never been in society, or stayed in a country house in her life; whose chief diversion has been raking round hydropathics with an old maid governess. But there—money covers a multitude of sins!" • • •

Lady Loraine's spacious rooms are filled with dancers; the sound of a dreamy waltz falls on the ear, while the perfume of lovely flowers lulls the senses to dreamy languor. Ivan Carlyon has put down his name for dances with his hostess' daughters, when his friend Jack Stanforth comes up.

"Got any dances left, Carlyon? Come on, I'll introduce you to the jolliest little girl in London; the best dancer, by Jove, in the two hemispheres!" And Carlyon finds himself standing before a brilliant little figure that reminds him more of a bird of paradise than anything else.

"Mr. Ivan Carlyon—Miss Marricott."

"May I have a dance?"

The blonde head is raised, two blue eyes meet Ivan's own, then a wave of color floods the girl's face.

"Jove! Then you've met before? Ivan, old fellow, you're in luck!" And Jack Stanforth takes himself off.

For a moment the other two are silent, then Ivan takes the white and gold card from the girl's slim hand and sees her fingers trembling.

"I may have a waltz?"

"If you care to—yes."

"Thanks."

"Of course, you remember I can give you no explanation."

"Don't think of it," Ivan breaks in. "You took me for some old friend—some——"

"More than that," she says, hurriedly. "I mistook you for someone I know, but my words were a quotation—an old joke."

Ivan sees she is really distressed; he hands back her card, saying with grave courtesy:

"Your remark was meant for another gentleman, Miss Marricott, and I—well, I have forgotten it."

Cora flashes him a grateful glance as she turns to other men who are besieging her for dances, but when it comes to his dance Ivan searches high and low for his partner, corridor, conservatory, supper-room, all in vain. Miss Marricott is nowhere to be found.

II.

"If I'd known he was to be here I'd never have come! I hate even being in the same house!"

"But, Cora, dear, what has he done? Ivan is such a favorite generally."

"It's not anything he has done, it's what I did. Before you can understand, Milli, you must hear the whole story. Last summer, before I came into my money, old Grundy and I were staying at a hydro——"

"First tell me, who in the world is old Grundy?"

"My old governess; she always plays propriety, you know. Well, the doctor there was a bachelor and very amusing. There was one girl who came to stay there every year who couldn't understand how it was he didn't become a slave to her charms. He told me a story; conceited of him, Milli, but very amusing—when she arrived there one day she greeted him with 'I say, are you married yet?'

"'Not yet,' he responded. 'I'm waiting for you!'

"'Humph!' with a toss of her head. 'You'll have to wait a long time!'

"'Well, I hope so!' he returned blandly, and I must say brutally, and 'Beauty,' as we called her, sulked and refused to speak to him for several days!"

"But what has this to do with Mr. Carlyon?" says Milli, much dignified.

"This, dear. A fortnight ago at the rose show I saw a man I was positive was Dr. Clarke; he was close by me; so putting my hand on his sleeve, I remarked in imitation of 'Beauty's' coquettish tone, 'I say, are you married yet?' Imagine my horror when he turned, and I saw it was a stranger—Mr. Carlyon!"

"Cora! What did you do?"

"Do? Turned and fled! I saw the wretch again at your ball. He was introduced and asked for a dance; I gave him one, then went and hid from very shame and mortification when it came off."

"I hate to have your visit spoiled, Cora; perhaps he won't stay long."

"If he does I shan't!" And Cora relapsed into silence.

The annual ball at Glengolf Castle is in full swing. Crowds of gay figures throng the fine old mansion. Cora has danced with all the best-looking men in the room—save one!

And he? Well, a little pucker wrinkles the girl's brow as she stands by the heavy plush curtain. He has only put down his name for one dance, and his turn has come; shall she dance with him, or shall she run away—as she did once before? She must decide quickly. Voices fall upon her ear.

"And his answer was, 'No; I am waiting for you.'"

"So that was the story!" It is Ivan who speaks.

"And now," goes on Milli, her clear voice reaching Cora where she stands, "now she simply hates you, and I believe if she knew I had explained the riddle to you she would never speak to me again. Come, the music is beginning."

Cora has been rooted to the spot. Now a movement of the curtain wakes her to life, and with scarlet cheeks and trembling limbs she turns to fly. How could Milli betray her! Dance with him now? Never! Sit it out? Impossible! There is nothing for it but instant ignominious flight. Down the corridor she goes and seeks refuge in the cloakroom; here she is safe, though every step passing the door makes her shiver.

She avoids the usual gossip in Milli's room that night, and goes straight to bed. Next morning, when Milli's maid takes up her breakfast, a little note lies on the tray:

"Dear Milli: Don't be angry; I am so anxious about Grundy, and have gone to join her. We shall wander about for a few weeks, and revisit our favorite hydro haunts. I will write soon. Be sure and forgive. Your ever loving "CORA."

III.

The sea is dotted with small boats, and the spa at Scarborough is alive with spectators. The gardens are alight with fireworks, whirring wheels and many-colored showers of sparks fill the air.

There is a terrified scream. A large rocket has fallen short. It drops into one of the little boats and explodes with a crash. An old lady in the stern of the boat starts to her feet. The little cockleshell quivers, lurches, and in a moment her occupants are struggling in the chilly water.

The boatman has grasped the old lady firmly by the arm and has her safe in tow, but the other—Cora—is gasping in the dark silent water, while the sparks of the rocket have caught and set fire to her filmy summer gown.

"Through fire and water!" she thinks with a little shiver. "Is this what it means?" Then a strong arm is thrown around her; she is for a moment submerged to quench the flames, then she rises to the surface and remembers no more.

When she wakes to consciousness she is on the sofa in their own rooms. A doctor is bandaging her arm and hurting her horribly all the time. Her dress is burned and torn, and wrapped around her shoulders is a light tweed coat.

Two days pass by, and Cora is recovering from her accident. The rocket had burst close to her arm, inflicting an ugly wound, but in spite of the doctor's orders for "quiet and bed" she is lying by the open window of the drawing-room looking out over the sea. It is many months now since that ball at Glengolf Castle, and, though she and Milli have met often since then, the subject of her flight has never been mentioned between them.

A firm step crosses the room and the girl raises her eyes.

"You!" she exclaimed concisely, while the hot color floods her brow.

"Who else should it be?" says Ivan Carlyon, calmly seating himself by her side.

"But was it you who—saved me?" she says in an awestruck whisper.

"Cora," he says, taking her hand, "why did you run away?"

She makes no answer, but her fingers tremble in his grasp.

"What a tiny little hand! I remember when you first laid it on my sleeve, I thought it the prettiest I had ever seen. Cora, ask me that question again, 'I say, are you——"

"Don't!" she breaks in. "How can you?"

"Because I want to show you how well I know the answer," he says. "'No, I'm waiting for you.' Shall I have to wait long, Cora?"

She raised two shy eyes.

"My darling!" And in a moment she is in his arms, and he is kissing again and again her sweet, trembling lips!

Shrinkage of the Dead Sea.

The level of the Dead Sea is steadily falling on account of the large volume of water tributary to it which is now absorbed by irrigation enterprises. The sea was formerly much larger than at present, as is shown by the old beaches stretching at various altitudes around the whole basin. Since the middle of the century its level has been very slowly rising till quite recently, but now it is falling again.

The phenomenon is not due to natural causes, but to the steadily increasing quantity of water that is taken from the Jordan River for irrigation purposes. There are other smaller streams flowing into the sea and they, too, are being utilized by the increasing number of farmers, who are diverting all the water they can to the lands and are relieving the monotonous aspect of the former arid and lifeless region with many verdant fields.

The latest travelers say that some of the salt deposits covering the bottom of the lake may now be seen above the water in the shallower places and near the shores. This is a new aspect in addition to the deposits of salt crystals that have always been observed on the shores. But even though this desiccation go steadily on, it will take a long time to dry up the waters, for it requires a sounding line over 1,300 feet long to touch the bottom in the deep northern part of the basin.

His Bluff Was Seen.

He reviled the town in which he lived and did business, and now Edward Webb, a young boot and shoe dealer of Hopkins, Mo., has become a wanderer upon the face of the earth for a year. It came about by Webb ridiculing Hopkins as a place of business, saying he would leave the town and stay away for $5. The sum was quickly raised, and rather than show the white feather Webb accepted the money, signed a contract and bid farewell to his relatives, his business and the town. He cannot return within a year without forfeiting a large sum of money, death or sickness in his family being no excuse for the breaking of the contract.

Studying the American Twang.

Our American twang is a subject which has recently been occupying the attention of the Laryngological Society. After considerable research it has been established that the cause of the twang is not climatic, nor is it the result of the nasal catarrh and affection of the larynx, which are so common in America, though these may be caused by the twang. The most probable theory is that the twang is the result of carelessness on the part of Americans in adopting the nasal sounds of the French settlers and the gutturals of the Dutch and Germans. At any rate, it is possible to cure it.

There is one advantage in being old: the old are never as hungry as the young.

As a usual thing, the parties to a love affair say Farewell Forever six times in three weeks.

ACUTE SENSES OF THE SAVAGE

Scientific View of Their Alleged Superiority to Civilized Men.

In his last lecture on the "Senses of Primitive Man," W. H. R. Rivers discussed the acuteness of hearing in savages. In this respect none of the Torres Straits natives were superior to one of the Europeans composing the expedition, while the majority were inferior. No great weight, however, could be attached to the observations, because all the people were divers—an occupation that certainly damaged the ears to some extent. To investigate their range of hearing a Galton's whistle was used, and it was shown that they could hear very high notes. Their sense of smell was tested by means of a series of tubes containing solutions, of varying strength, of odorous substances like valerian and camphor, and the results, while not altogether satisfactory, tended to show they had no marked superiority in this respect over the members of the expedition. With regard to taste it was very difficult to get information, as the natives, naturally enough, did not like strange objects being put into their mouths. One fact, however, was noticed, which was interesting when it was remembered that sweet and bitter were probably our most definite taste sensations, and that was the complete absence of any word for bitter. For the sense of temperature the data were very scanty, but it was found that the natives had points on their skin specially sensitive to cold, exactly as was the case with Europeans.

As to touch, when tested to see how close the points of a pair of compasses must be put on the skin before they ceased to be felt as two, their sensitiveness was in general better than Europeans, but there was always the doubt whether they were really able to bear pain with more fortitude. However, the conclusion that the Murray Islanders were distinctly less sensitive than the Europeans in the expedition was supported not only by their subjective statements, but also by object tests depending on the condition of the blood pressure. In the discrimination of weight it was curious that these natives, who had no abstract idea of weight and no word to express it, and who, moreover, could have had no practice, were more accurate than a practiced European. Finally Dr. Rivers, while commenting on the defective knowledge of some of the senses he had treated and on the absence of comparative data, concluded that in general the sense organs of the savage were not markedly superior to those of the normal of average European, and that the recorded instances of apparent extraordinary acuteness were to be explained by his habits of observation and specialized knowledge.

FISH SCALES AS ORNAMENTS.

Are Made Into Imitation Pearls by a French Chemist.

Who but a Frenchman would have conceived the idea of utilizing fish scales for purposes of ornament? These scales hitherto have been of little use, except to collectors of marine curios. Of course, the demand in this direction is limited, only certain exceptionally fine or rare scales being sought after. Now, owing to the discovery of a French chemist in Lyons, there is likely to be a growing market for fish scales. The Frenchman has discovered how the scales may be used in the manufacture of artificial pearls and other ornaments. In fact, the demand has been so great for them in Lyons that the supply is absolutely inadequate. Mr. Covert, United States consul at Lyons, has interested himself in the matter, and finds out that there is an actual demand for large quantities of sacels in his consulate, where good prices are paid for them. He has even deemed the innovation of sufficient importance to form the subject of a report to his government, in which he gives directions as to how the scales should be transported. He says:

"The scales should be sprinkled with salt as soon as they are removed from the fish and packed in cans. Any specimens sent to this consulate will receive careful examination, and the results, with any suggestions that may be made and particulars of prices offered, will be duly reported. It is believed in Lyons that the sale of these scales may result in establishing an important business in an article that now has no commercial value."

Owing to the fact that the American sturgeon has the most beautiful and largest scales of almost any fish in the world this item may have considerable interest to fishermen where the largest quantities of this huge fish are now captured.

Took Him at His Word.

The telegraph operator, who always means to tell the truth, even if he sometimes does fail, tells me this:

Feller was walking along the street hanging onto his head and feeling his brains "sloppin' up against the rafters," as Bill Nye once so soulfully remarked. Feller groaned and finally remarked to himself:

"Oh, Lord, I wish I were dead."

He was passing a four-story brick building that was in process of construction. A mason 'way up aloft dropped a brick accidentally. It swooshed down through the air and struck Feller on the top of the koko. It didn't kill him—but near it, very near it.

To say the least, the feller was real provoked.

He looked up at the sky—not at the mason. "Can't ye take a joke?" says he.

What if heaven always took us at our word?—Lewiston Journal.

Making Cigars Out of Paper.

Americans are producing paper cigars as an article of commerce, and, what is more, are being backed up by connoisseurs of the fragrant weed. The cigars are prepared from sheets of paper which have been soaked in tobacco juice and then pressed and cut into the requisite shape by means of specially constructed machinery.

The Responsibility.

Mr. Grumps—The Ladies' Journal says a woman should make herself as attractive to her husband after marriage as she did before.

Mrs. Grumps—Huh! My father always gave me plenty of money to make myself atttractive with. You don't.—New York Weekly.

A Varying Population.

New Jersey has a sliding population. Of the 2,000,000 (estimated) souls there are that many within the borders at night; at noon there are 1,800,000. The other 200,000 are at work or are engaged in shopping in New York and Philadelphia.

Will Speak No English.

Since the visit of Sir Henry Loch to Pretoria, in 1893, the Transvaal President has positively refused to utter one word of English.

The bigger the man, the more charity there will be for you if you hit him.

LAZY MAN'S HEAVEN.

HE CAN LIVE COMFORTABLY AND DO NOTHING.

Impossible to Starve—No Beggars, No Paupers, No Crime on the Beautiful Island of Ruatan—Great Sharks of Those Waters.

"On our island," said Lemuel Cooper of Ruatan to a New Orleans Times man, "a man may live very comfortably all his life and without doing a single lick of work. To starve there would be simply impossible; it would be like trying to drown a fish. We have no beggars and no pauper class to maintain. There has never been a murder, theft is unknown and locks are unnecessary. Some go so far as to claim that people don't die there, but that is an exaggeration. They occasionally expire of extreme old age. Last year our actual mortality was one-fourth of 1 per cent."

The lazy man's paradise thus sketchily described is a corner of the world about which curiously little is known. Ruatan is the largest of the five "Bay islands," a little chain or key lying some thirty miles off the coast of Spanish Honduras, southeast of Port Cortez, and only four days' travel from New Orleans. Their one industry is the raising of cocoanuts, and altogether they form a domain that is absolutely unique in the western hemisphere. Mr. Cooper is the most important citizen of Ruatan. He was born there, and with his brothers he now conducts a very considerable business. In conversation with a reporter he told an interesting story of his island home.

"Ruatan, where I live," said Cooper, "is some forty miles long and three miles wide. It has a population of about 3,000 people, mostly Carib Indians, and I doubt whether there is in all the world a more beautiful and prolific spot. The people are lazy simply because they don't have to work. Cocoanuts form their mainstay, and there is nothing easier to grow. To start a grove one merely burns off a piece of land and plants the nuts in rows twenty feet apart. In from four to five years' time the trees are a dozen feet high and are beginning to bear, and after that the planter is fixed for life. He may bid adieu to care. The nuts are never picked, but as they mature they drop off, and this shower of fruit goes on steadily month after month all the year around. How long a tree will bear nobody can say, but there are some on the island that are known to be over a half century old and are still dropping their harvest of nuts.

"When the native needs something at the store," continued Mr. Cooper, "all he has to do is to gather together some nuts and trade them for what he wishes. He hulls them by striking them on a stake driven in the ground, and a man can easily hull 3,000 a day in that manner. Roses and flowers of almost every imaginable variety run wild from one end of Ruatan to the other. I should add, too, that other fruits grow just as easily as the cocoanut, and the only reason why that especially is grown is because it furnishes an easy crop, for which there is always a ready market. We have plenty of bananas, oranges, mangoes, plums and pineapples, and they are all delicious. They grow wild, without the slightest cultivation, and all one has to do is to pick them. Vegetables are equally prolific, and our native yams easily average forty or fifty pounds in weight. A piece of cane stuck in the ground takes root and renews itself perennially for years. A stranger who comes to the islands is invariably amazed at the prodigality of nature and the apathy of the natives—that is, before the lazy feeling gets into his blood. 'Why don't you grow this?' and 'Why don't you cultivate that?' he asks. The native simply smiles. 'Why not take things easy and be happy?' they say.

"Any description of Bay islands would be incomplete," said Mr. Cooper, in conclusion, "without reference to our enormous tiger sharks. They are found three or four miles out from the coast and frequently grow to be fifty feet long. I know that sounds like a pretty fishy story, but it is the plain, unvarnished truth. They are referred to in the coast survey reports of the United States government, and are said to be the largest sharks in the world. As far as I know, they are not found in any other waters."

TRUE TALE OF MANY PENNIES.

How a Woman Got Even with an Impudent Street Car Conductor.

The Southern woman who had an interesting financial dispute with a street car conductor is a martyr to a painstaking attention to details of whom her sex may well feel proud. She started out in the morning with a $20 bill, all the money she happened to have in her immediate possession. She went to the butcher's and the baker's, and neither could change the twenty. She was anxious to go downtown, and so she boarded a car, hoping that the conductor would accept her excuses and her money. He at first refused point blank. Then he hesitated.

That's where he made a mistake. If he had simply requested her to leave the car on the ground that the rules of the road were indirectly violated by the denomination of her legal tender, all would have been well and good. But he hesitated. A dangerous glitter came into his eyes. He took the bill and at the first opportunity halted the car and rushed into a bank, whence he emerged with $10 in pennies. Another stop at another bank realized $10 more in the smallest of Uncle Sam's coins, and then the conductor handed the 1,995 pennies to the unfortunate patron.

She did not flinch. "I'll have to count them," was all she said, and set to work. When the car reached the end of the line she was still counting. When they turned and started back she hadn't finished. Then the conductor came forward. "I'll have to trouble you for another fare," he said. Her lips moved as she counted, and she only shook her head. When she got to a good breaking-off place she looked up. "I am not on this car as an ordinary passenger," she said: "I am simply verifying the amount of change you gave me when I was a passenger. When I am through with the verification I will leave the car and not before. Sixteen hundred and two, three." But the conductor broke in. He lost his temper. She must pay her fare or get off.

"Sixteen hundred and four, five, six," was all the answer he received. And so he put her off, pennies and all. And now she's suing the road for a handsome sum and seems to stand an excellent show for getting it.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

KIPLING MET HIS MATCH.

London Publishers Became Sarcastic Over a Bill for Three Pence.

An amusing correspondence on a small matter recently passed between Rudyard Kipling and a London firm of publishers. There arrived, care of this firm, which deals extensively in American books, a letter addressed from America to Mr. Kipling. It was reposted direct to him at Rottingdean, with a formal note in these words:

The inclosed letter has just reached us from America, and you will see we had to pay a letter fine of 3d on it. Your obedient servants, GAY & BIRD.

The following acknowledgment reached Messrs. Gay & Bird a few days later, dated, of course, from Mr. Kipling's house, the Elms, Rottingdean:

Dear Sirs—Rudyard Kipling desires me to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of Nov. 30. The letter you inclose was from a firm of pirate publishers on the Pacific slope and Mr. Kipling is glad to learn that you are only 3d out of pocket by it. Faithfully yours, S. ANDERSON.

To this, it seems, Messrs. Gay & Bird replied in these terms:

In forwarding you the letter from America addressed to our care we thought we were doing a courteous act. We did not know from whom it came, but because it was "from a firm of pirate publishers on the Pacific slope" your secretary reports that you are glad to learn that we are only 3d out of pocket by it. This strikes us as the action of an "Absent-Minded Beggar." Yours faithfully, GAY & BIRD.

—London M. A. P.

Science and Invention

From north to south Alaska stretches 1,200 miles, or 300 miles further than from the great lakes to the Gulf of Mexico. Its width is greater than from Chicago to London.

To run an eighty-car freight train at twenty miles an hour requires over 100,000,000-foot pounds of energy. At thirty miles it requires 222,000,000-foot pounds, which is equal to the energy manifested by a sixteen-inch gun, whose projectile weighs 2,320 pounds, and fired at 2,000 feet velocity.

The possibility of the ostrich being used for a kind of two-legged saddle-horse, as the natives of Abyssinia are said to have employed it, was demonstrated at Pasadena, Cal., recently by a correspondent of the Scientific American. He not only mounted a full-sized male ostrich and rode 100 yards on its back, but also had a photographer make a picture of him on his feathered steed.

In Germany the granulated slag from blast furnaces is being utilized for the manufacture of brick. The making of slag brick is not a new thing, but heretofore fluid slag has bee nemployed for the purpose, and the brick thus produced has been found unsuitable for building purposes because it is impermeable to air and steam. But the slag bricks made in Germany are, it is said, not open to this objection. On the contrary, while exceeding the strength of ordinary bricks, and possessing an extraordinary resistance to heat, they are more permeable to air, and consequently are well suited for the building of houses. They do not absorb water as rapidly as ordinary bricks.

Recent examination by Prof. T. G. Bonney of bowlders containing diamonds from the famous "blue ground" rock of South Africa leads to new views of the origin of the gems. Prof. Bonney considers that the diamond is not produced in the blue ground, as some have heretofore thought that it was, but is present in it as a derivative from older rocks. The bowlders examined were evidently water-worn, and consisted of garnetiferous rock. The diamond and the garnet, Prof. Bonney remarks, are brought into very close relations by the discovery of two specimens showing the diamond apparently embedded in the garnet. The blue ground, in which the diamond and garnet bearing rocks are found, is a volcanic product.

In Central America are many strange birds with stranger habits, but probably none are more interesting than a little brown wren who may be seen along the roadsides or on fences. This little bird, about the size of a canary, builds a nest out of all proportion to his apparent needs. He selects a small tree with horizontal branches growing close together. Across two of the branches he lays sticks fastened together with tough fiber, until a platform about six feet long by two feet wide is constructed. On the end of this platform nearest the tree trunk he then builds a huge, dome-shaped nest a foot or so high, with thick sides of interwoven thorns. A covered passageway is then made from the nest to the end of the platform in as crooked a manner as possible. Across the outer end, as well as at short intervals along the inside of this tunnel, are placed cunning little fences of thorns with just space enough for the owners to pass through. On going out, this opening is closed by the owner by placing thorns across the gateway, and thus the safety of eggs or young is assured.

Bills Payable in Russia.

The year 1900 not being a leap year in the Gregorian calendar, while it is so in the Julian mode of reckoning, the old style in Russia will, as from March 1 next, be thirteen days behind the new style. This is a point of the utmost importance in regard to bills payable in Russia. Indeed, it happens very often that bills drawn upon Russia bear both dates, and the slightest error is sufficient to render void a protest of such bills, as the courts are very strict about these matters. It is, therefore, inadvisable to mention the old style in any such documents. The latter date is quite unnecessary, as Russian commercial law provides that bills from abroad shall be payable according to the new style, which is followed by nearly all the countries of Europe.—London Financial News.

New Use for a Wife.

Queer things occasionally happen down in Maine. The papers there now are telling how a well-known woman in Sabattis, while skating on the pond, fell through the ice and when her husband pulled her out she found a trout caught in the wire meshes of her bustle, which had served as a kind of life preserver. Her husband, greatly pleased, requested her to go back into the water and be "set over again," as he said, but she declined the proposition.—Boston Globe.

More Efficacious than Oil.

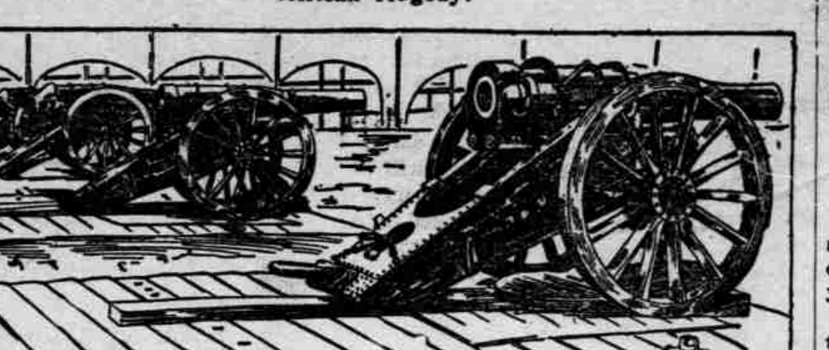
Nets are now to be tried as a means of lessening the motion and force of sea waves. They are floated on the surface of the water by an invention of Baron D'Alesandro and are said to be more efficacious than oil when used for the same purpose.

When a man gets $50 a month, the girls figure that after paying $25 for board, he ought to have $25 left to spend on the girls.

No man should give up smoking his two cigars a day; it gives his wife such an excuse for extravagance.

BRITISH HOWITZERS AND BOER CREUSOTES.

Something About the Guns that Will Play the Final Act in the South African Tragedy.



GUNS OF THE BRITISH SIEGE TRAIN SENT TO SOUTH AFRICA.

ONE of the revelations of the South African war has been the extent and the excellence of the Boer armaments. That the Transvaal Government were preparing for the inevitable was whispered from time to time after the Jameson raid. Guns and ammunition were brought into the country by the obliging Netherlands Railway Company, who, notwithstanding the fact that the cases were labeled "Pianos, with care," and "Mining machinery," must have known that the goods transmitted along their line for the Transvaal Government were less innocent than external appearances indicated. At any rate, the ordinary residents of the Transvaal knew it, and the knowledge was a matter of general comment both in Pretoria and Johannesburg. One thing, however, was not generally known, that the Transvaal Government gave an order to the firm of Schneider-Canet of Creusot, in France, for two of the largest guns ever constructed for any Government. These huge pieces of ordnance were of 12-inch and 9½-inch caliber respectively.

The London Daily Mail gives some interesting facts in connection with these big guns in the possession of the Boers. The power of a 12-inch gun such as that now in the possession of the Boers will be better appreciated when it is explained that it fires a projectile weighing half a ton, which can penetrate a target of solid steel four inches thick. The gun weighs sixty-six tons. The 9½-inch gun is lighter, and fires a shell weighing three cwt. These guns, whose shells can wreck solid stone buildings as completely as if their objective were so much cardboard, are believed to be at Pretoria, mounted on substantial bastions in the fort, and intended to resist the British when the march on the Transvaal capital takes place.

The same paper also gives some account of the British siege train sent to the Cape and which, in the final struggle, will be pitted against the Boers' smuggled cannon. A siege train put simply and devoid of professional technicalities, amounts to an artillery force specially equipped for the purpose of reducing a strongly fortified place. Hence, it is a combination of guns and men that is only employed when it is considered by competent military authority that the final stages in a war are being approached.

The material of the siege train which recently arrived at the Cape is composed chiefly of howitzers. Altogether about thirty of these pieces of ordnance are being employed, supplemented by a number of 4.7-inch and 4-inch ordinary breech-loading guns. Owing to the extremely solid manner in which they are constructed, the guns forming the armament of a siege train are extremely heavy. Thus, when limbered up, the 6-inch howitzer alone weighs nearly four and a half tons in draught. Then, in addition to the pieces themselves, a train must be provided with a vast quantity of artillery stores of all descriptions, as well as with ammunition to the extent of 500 rounds per gun. It will, therefore, readily be understood that the task of moving a siege train up country is in no sense of the term a light one.

A curious point in connection with a howitzer weapon is that it is fired at a remarkably high elevation. This, in great measure, is owing to the fact that its comparatively low muzzle velocity makes its shell follow a curved path as it travels through the air. The circumstance, however, is rather an advantage than otherwise, for it insures a particularly steep angle of descent, thus materially contributing to increased effectiveness at the moment of impact. Another and even greater benefit arising from this well-marked trajectory of a howitzer projectile consists in the fact that it enables the gun to be worked altogether under cover of ground. Indeed, thanks to a most ingenious range-finding instrument that is used with these pieces, it is practically unnecessary that the object aimed at should be in view when a round is being fired.

In connection with the employment of a siege train, it is rather curious to note that, despite the vast amount of warfare in which Britain has been engaged of recent years, this is the first occasion on which such an "article of war" has been used since the days of the Crimean campaign.

THE BOER 9½-INCH RIFLE. 12-INCH GUN OF THE BOERS.

The gun on the right is the larger of two very powerful guns made to the order of the Boers by the French firm of Schneider-Canet. The Transvaal Government have endeavored to preserve as a secret the part they intend these guns to play in the war; but it is now believed that they have been mounted in Pretoria Fort, and will assist in defending the capital against attack by the British forces.

RUSKIN'S LAST HOURS.

The End Came Suddenly—Ill Only a Short Time.

The following statement as to Mr. Ruskin's last hours has been sent to us for publication, says the London Times:

"The end came with startling suddenness. On the morning of Thursday, the 18th, Mr. Ruskin was remarkably well, but when Mrs. Arthur Severn went to him as usual after tea in order to read him the war news and 'In the Golden Days,' by Edna Lyall, his throat seemed irritable. His cousin was alarmed, for several of her servants were ill with influenza, but the professor was inclined to laugh it off, although he said he did not feel well, and admitted, when questioned, that he felt pain 'all over.' Helped by his faithful body servant, Baxter, he was put to bed, and he listened while Mrs. Severn sang a much-liked song, 'Summer Slumber.' It was now 6:30, and Mr. Ruskin declared that he felt quite comfortable. Nevertheless, Dr. Parsons was immediately summoned. He found the temperature to be 102, and pronounced the illness to be influenza, which might be very grave if the patient's strength were not kept up.

"That evening the professor enjoyed a dinner, consisting of sole and pheasant and champagne, and on Friday he seemed to be much better. On Saturday morning there was a change so marked that the doctor was alarmed, and from that time Mr. Ruskin sank into an unconscious state, and the breathing lessened in strength, until, at 3:30, it faded away in a peaceful sleep. He was holding the hands of Mrs. Severn, and Dr. Parsons and Baxter stood by, now and then feathering the lips with brandy and spraying the head with eau de cologne.

"And so he passed away, amid silence and desolation. Then, a little later, when the first shock was over, Mrs. Severn's daughter prevailed upon her to look from his little turret window at the sunset, as Mr. Ruskin was wont to look for it from day to day. The brilliant, gorgeous light illumined the hills with splendor, and the spectators felt as if heaven's gate itself had been flung open to receive the teacher into everlasting peace."

A QUEEN OF SOCIETY.

Plain, Poor Woman, Who Was Very Influential in Paris.

In the life of Madame Mohl, a woman who, without rank, fortune or beauty, held a controlling position in French society for the greater part of a century, there are useful hints for American women who wish to gain influence in the world.

Her dinners were famous. The most learned, wise and witty men of every country were her guests, and she gave much anxious thought to assorting them, to placing them at table, and to the suggestion of subjects which would draw from each the best he could give. The food was plentiful, but plain and simply cooked, and only a white-capped maid served it. There was no display of any kind.

Queen Sophia of Holland, when visiting Napoleon II., expressed a wish to dine with Madame Mohl, who asked a brilliant company to meet her.

"And what will be your menu?" asked an anxious friend.

"Oh, Marie must cook us a lobster," said the old lady. "She cooks lobster very nicely."

The usual simple dinner was served, with its sauce of rare wit and wisdom, and the queen was enchanted.

The next day, with her suite, she came to call upon her hostess. Madame Mohl, her gray hair in curl-papers, attired in a short jacket and skirt, was busy dusting the chairs, while the linen from the laundry was spread upon the table. When the royal party suddenly entered, the old lady laid down her brush, and after welcoming the queen, chatted away as gaily as usual.

"Were you not mortified at being caught in such a dress?" a friend asked the next day.

"Not a bit, my dear. I didn't mind it. Neither did her majesty. I suppose it was important to her maid and the flunkey who waited behind her, and they were mortified."

Once, as one of her favorites left the room, a fashionable woman asked, superciliously, "Who was Madame X. before her marriage?"

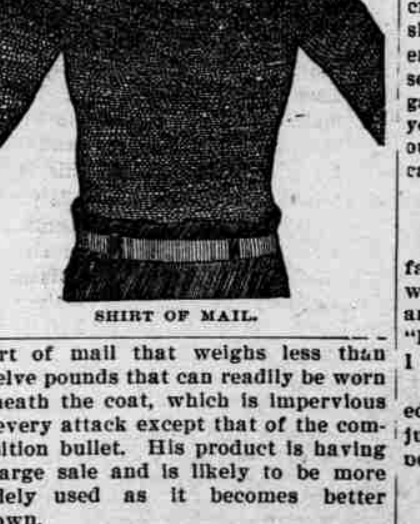
Madame Mohl turned. "She is my friend. What do I care for her was-es?"

She once said, "It is des ames biennees (well-born souls), not bodies, that we need in our friends," a maxim as profoundly true in America as in France.

MAKES CHAIN ARMOR SHIRTS.

An Old Industry Revived by an English Manufacturer.

Owing to the cleverness of a Sheffield manufacturer the ancient custom of wearing chain and mail is likely to be revived. The abandonment of the coat-of-mail was due to the superior piercing ability of the modern missile, which rendered the coat useless for ordinary purposes of protection. Moreover, its unwieldiness made it worthless as a protection against the attack of steel. Now, however, the cleverness of a Sheffield manufacturer has produced a shirt of mail that weighs less than twelve pounds that can readily be worn beneath the coat, which is impervious to every attack except that of the composition bullet. His product is having a large sale and is likely to be more widely used as it becomes better known.



SHIRT OF MAIL.

It is composed of small steel rings linked together so finely that even the point of a pin cannot penetrate through them. At the same time they are so flexible that they can be worn without the slightest discomfort.

They cover the entire breast and back from the neck to the thighs and extend down the arm to the elbow. Thus it will protect anyone from an attack of dagger or sword in every vulnerable place. Its value as a protection against assassination is evident.

When a man takes the privilege of looking around his home, his women folks say that it is to find something to grumble about.

SHEAR NONSENSE

"Do you think doctors ought to help an incurable patient to die?" "If he can't die without medical assistance, yes."—Detroit Journal.

Appreciation.—Dr. Fox—What sensation arises from the contemplation of self? Bushong—The sense of the beautiful.—Roanoke Collegian.

Mrs. Grill—Oh, dear! I've sung to this baby for an hour, and she hasn't stopped crying yet. Mr. Grill—Probably she has been waiting for you to stop.—Tit-Bits.

Not to Be Caught.—"There's a boy wants to see you, sir." "Has he got a bill in his hand?" "No, sir." "Then he's got it in his pocket; send him away!"—Punch.

Foozle—We don't call them "bunkers" over on our links now. Tee—No, what then? Foozle—They're so hard to get over we call 'em "kopjes."—Baltimore American.

Frayed Feeter—Bill says he kin remember de time dat he swam in luxury. Torne Tatters—Yes; he fell into a beer vat once while applyin' fer a job in a brewery.—Judge.

Clara—They say Nell is going to marry a man old enough to be her grandfather. Maude—Is it possible? I didn't suppose there was a man living that old.—Chicago News.

Liveried menial—Me lud, the carriage waits without. Lord Fitz Josher—Without what? Liveried menial—Without horses, me lud; 'tis an automobile.—Chicago Record.

The Deacon—Oh, Lord, ef dis yere chicken be stolen, we hope you will oberlook de fact, fo' it's almighty small, almighty tough, an' almighty inadequate to go 'round.—Life.

She—A married couple should pull together like a team of horses. He—Yes, and they probably would if, like a team of horses, they had but one tongue between them.—Chicago News.

Miss Palisade—I caught Miss Panhandle listening to the music at the opera the other night. Miss Summit—Well, you know she has never had many social advantages.—Life.

Sure They Are Beautiful.—She—Men are more conceited about their looks than women. He—Prove it. She—Men always put their hats on without looking in the glass.—Chicago Record.

The Vexed Question.—Trainboy—Scribner's, Harper's the new Century—— Old Gentleman (waking up)—Nonsense! It won't be the new century till next year!—Harvard Lampoon.

Practice Makes Perfect.—Clerk—You can't get these boots on. You should try a size larger. O'Rafferty—Niver do yez moind. Oi'll be able to git thim on afther Oi wear thim a toim or two.—Chicago News.

"What is the difference between the State of Massachusetts and Kentucky?" "Give it up, Colonel." "Massachusetts produces boots and shoes, and Kentucky produces shoots and booze."—Washington Star.

Kipling's model: The tramp—Will yer gimme something ter eat, lady? The lady—You forget to say "please." The tramp—'Scuse me, ma'am; yer see, I'm the original "Absent-Minded Beggar!"—Town Topics.

Mrs. Qui-Vive—Dear Mr. Surplice, I can't make up my mind what Lenten sacrifice will be the most acceptable. Mr. Surplice — Ah! — oh! — well — dear madam—suppose you give up trying to run the church.—Life.

Jones—Curry is an awful unfortunate fellow. Jackson—That so? Jones—Yes; he snores so loud that he always wakes the baby, then the baby cries so loud he wakes Curry, so they have to walk together.—Tit-Bits.

A modern test: "He's a very great man," said the awe-stricken young woman. "Oh, I don't know," answered Miss Cayenne; "I haven't seen any magazine articles written by him about himself."—Washington Star.

Hard on George: Weary—W'y ain't youse got no use fer Washington? Leary—I don't like de front part uv his name; an', anyway, anybody w'ot displayed a fondness fer choppin' wood at sich an early age hez my profound contempt.—Judge.

"What is your waist measure?" asked her dearest friend. "Really, I've forgotten," replied the demure little maiden. For a moment she was buried in thought. Then, turning to her escort, she asked: "Harold, how long is a man's arm, anyway?"—Chicago Post.

Mrs. Smyth (looking up from her paper)—What does it mean in the Washington news when it speaks of "the lower house?" Mr. Smyth—That means the House of Representatives. The Senate is higher. Mrs. Smyth—How is it higher? Do you mean that it costs more to get there?—Philadelphia Record.

No cause to worry: "I suppose," he said, as they undulated around the hall, "that my mother would be awfully worried if she knew I was here. She thinks it is a terrible sin to dance." "Oh, never mind," the girl said; "she wouldn't know you were dancing, even if she saw you."—Chicago Times-Herald.

They heard a noise in the kitchen and crept down. He carried a pistol and she a curtain-pole. Then they discovered the cause of the noise. "Did you see that rat jump out of the oven?" she gasped, hloding her skirts; "why didn't you shoot him?" "Because he was just out of my range," he chuckled.—Chicago News.

As She Remembered.

Little Bessie's mother sent her to her father's office one afternoon to find out when he would set out for home. In answer to her query the father replied: "I shall start, my dear, just as soon as I have filed these papers."

"Mamma," said Bessie, as she entered the house, "papa will leave for home just as soon as he has 'sawed' his papers."—Baltimore Herald.

Boarding a Horse at Sea.

A horse on board ship eats ten pounds of hay, five pounds of oats, five pounds of bran and one-half ounce of nitre. His drinking allowance is half a gill of vinegar and eight gallons of water.

Age No Bar on Diplomats.

There is a movement on foot among foreign powers to do away with the limitation of age of ambassadors, making the tenure of office depend solely upon a man's capabilities.

A woman is glad afterward when she refrained from saying something mean, but a man is sorry that he didn't say it.

The individual who repeats a slander stamps it with his approval.