MORNING SONG.

Sweetheart, the night is over, the mists have
shrunk away:
The morning beams are gathering dew drops
from the spray,
And every leaf
With a rapture like to grief
Is a quiver with the kisses of the summer winds
at play.
Forth let us stray, dear, while 'tis summer time;
All the world is gay, dear, fit for love and rhyme.

Sweetheart, come, let us wander; the paths are
blossom strewn;
There are daisies for your tresses, there are pop-
pies for your shoon.
Let their beauty and their glee
Make a tender thought for me
Ere the summer day has floated to the golden
gates of noon.
Why should we part, love? when true lovers wed
Summer's in the heart, love, when their bloom
is dead.

—Samuel Minturn Peck in Home Journal.

THE BIMLEYS.

I found myself, one September morning, standing by the shore of a beautiful little sheet of water among the Sussex hills, in the northern part of New Jersey, in a sort of Rip Van Winkle study. The metamorphosis had been sudden and complete in my surroundings. An hour or two ago I had been in the whirl and bustle of active city life. Now I was in the midst of peace and quiet, among rural scenery that was restful to the eye, heart and brain.

The sheet of water at whose edge I was standing was dignified by the name of Lake Wanayanda—an Indian appellation, as I afterward learned—and was a diminutive piece to bear the name of lake.

But it was very beautiful, as I recall it, on that bright September morning, nestled among the towering hills and framed by the foliage of the trees, and with a margin of green formed by the low growing bushes and grasses. It was early in the day, and the first rays of the sun had begun to look over the ragged tops of the uneven ridge to the eastward, and with a blaze of glory they presently flooded the bosom of the crystal lake lying in peace before me.

Rocks cropped out from the surface of the ground everywhere, and loose bowlders lay on the side of the precipitous hill whose feet were laved by the clear waters of the little lake. These bowlders, by their precarious tenure of the ground, suggested to me the idea that Sisyphus of old had been engaged here, and that the huge stones, seemingly ready to topple down into the lake, were evidences of his herculean and incompleted task.

These verdure clothed foothills, immediately surrounding the sheet of water, were but Lilliputian pickets, thrown out in advance of the towering mountain ridge, and contributed pleasingly toward the pretty and imposing landscape.

As I returned to the little red farm house, about 100 yards from the lake, I saw for the first time Kate Bimley, the pretty blonde daughter of my host. She seemed a girl of about 18, with a rather sad expression upon her attractive face. As I raised my hat to salute her she gave me a nod and a smile, but that smile was a forced one, and there was no spontaneity in her greeting. It was not diffidence that checked her attempt at a courteous and friendly return of my civility. There was evidently a cloud over her young life which she was trying to illumine by a forced ray of pleasantry that it might not be noticed by a stranger.

She was a pleasing contrast in her plain, neatly fitting gown to the maidens I had been accustomed to see at the fashionable resorts. It was beauty unadorned; purity and simplicity combined; a picture of innocence that would have been so very bright but for the sadness that tinged her face.

After breakfast I went out in quest of amusement of some kind to while away the hours that would prove tedious without some sort of activity. Strolling over toward the huge barn, I noticed two figures sitting on the immense flat rock in front of the great doors. One was John Bimley, my host, and the other was his brother-in-law, Tom Elkins.

Bimley sat moodily watching the other man, who seemed engaged in chiseling some initials in the hard traprock. This rock was flat and smooth, and was on a level with the ground surrounding it. It was, perhaps, a square of about ten feet, and formed a natural pavement in front of the huge barn. The two men were conversing as I sauntered up, and, after acknowledging my presence with a nod, they seemed no way loth to continue their conversation.

"Tom, you've got your initials cut on that corner, now cut my name in full in the center of this stone," said Bimley.

Tom looked at him for a moment sharply, and seemed to discover something in the man's tones or looks.

"Pshaw! what do you want to advertise yourself in that way for?"

"All right; if you don't do it I'll get some one else to cut them for me," replied Bimley, in an unsteady voice.

Just then Kate passed the barn on her way to the spring, casting an anxious look at her father as she passed.

"God pity that poor motherless girl when I'm gone!"

Bimley uttered these words in a low tone, half to himself; but I caught them, though I think Tom did not, as he was busily pounding away in the finishing touches to his engraving a little farther off.

But Tom had evidently been thinking of Bimley's request and the probable motive. He ceased his work, and, facing his brother-in-law, said:

"See here, John, I'll cut your name for you on one condition, and that is that you will stop moping and brooding."

"Agreed," said the elder man, but I detected a cynical smile on his face that contracted his assenting mood.

Having nothing else to busy himself with, Tom proceeded to mark out the design for this memorial tablet at once, and his skill surprised me when I examined his lesser work in the corner, now completed.

Bimley, apparently satisfied that he had gained his point, went off toward the lake in a listless, moody sort of way.

Kate suddenly appeared around an angle of the barn and said:

"Uncle Tom, don't put the name on the rock! Don't please!"

There was real terror in her tones that startled Tom into examining her face. It was blanched, and her lip quivered as she stood there with one deprecating hand raised.

"Why not?" demanded Tom, surprised.

"Oh! I can't tell you. But please don't cut the name there!"

"But I've promised I would, and Joan will be furious if I refuse now."

"Well," said the girl, sadly turning away, "perhaps you're right."

From Tom I now learned the cause of Bimley's depression. It seems he was soon to leave his farm—driven out by the inexorable mortgage. Failure to meet his payments of interest, short crops and a combination of misfortunes had culminated in the loss of the property.

My heart ached as I looked after this motherless girl, left not only destitute by the withdrawal of a mother's loving care, but left also with the fearful burden of a father's living, double sorrow pressing very heavily upon her young shoulders, and veiling her youthful face with premature sadness.

High up on one of the verdure clad foothills I saw the bowed figure of John Bimley moving slowly toward the summit. He paused at the top, and, looking back with one searching glance, he disappeared down the further side. I was about turning my attention to the carver's work near me, when I saw the form of Kate pass swiftly and noiselessly out of the undergrowth at the top of the hill and also pass out of sight down the other side.

"John's guardian angel," said Tom Elkins, without stopping the thuds of his mallet, in reply, apparently, to my questioning look, turned upon him.

"John's terribly down in the mouth since Mary died," he continued, aiming some heavy blows at the bright steel chisel for a deeper cut. "I think he takes on more about Mary than he does about the farm."

It was clear enough now. The girl's repugnance to having her father's name cut in the rock; her constant solicitude about him; her stealthy pursuit of him over the hill. She read more in his eye and his silence than Tom Elkins did in his short sentences. Life was a burden to him, and not even the strong cord of Kate's love would be able to bind him to earth for long.

That same afternoon John Bimley viewed Tom's nearly completed work in the center of the flat rock. He smiled sadly as he said:

"Tom, put the date underneath it." It seemed to dawn on Tom's mind that his brother-in-law meant this work to be a posthumous tablet—a gravestone.

"See here, John," he said, jumping up and laying a hand on his arm, "you have no call to be brooding about your grave yet. I'd chip out the whole business if I thought"——

"No, no, I don't do that!" said Bimley, forcing a laugh. "I was joking. Say, Tom," said he, suddenly changing in tone and looks, "if anything ever should happen to me—you know what I mean—I want you to take care of my girl." His voice was broken and scarcely audible, and his hand trembled violently as he grasped the one extended to him by Tom Elkins. "Now promise me that," he added, with his whole soul in the words.

"So help me heaven, I swear it!" said Tom, wringing the hand he held. "Don't you worry about that, John."

At the near angle of the great barn, toward which the men's backs were turned, I caught but one glimpse of a fair white face, and I thought I heard a stifled sob as Kate quickly drew back into concealment.

This sort of thing was getting too painful and somber for me, and yet I was held to the place irresistibly. I could not bear to leave the girl with no other comforter and protector than this good natured but unobservant Tom Elkins, with the sword of Damocles suspended over her young life.

I wished to get away from the gloom that Bimley was creating in this quiet, rural retreat, and yet I longed to be near, and, if possible, avert the blow from Kate's head; or, failing in that, I, perhaps selfishly, thought I might find a place in one corner of that gentle heart, and cheer and comfort her in her great misery.

Notwithstanding her solicitude and such constant watchfulness, I had several times induced this girl to accompany me on short fishing excursions out on the lake. We rowed out nearly to the bank farthest from Bimley's farm, where the pickerel were always abundant and hungry. Kate, before leaving her father, would insist that Tom Elkins should remain close by him, and, in a vicarious way, take her place as guardian angel.

One day, however, as her father was asleep, exhausted and tired from having sat up all the night before, she consented to permit Tom to accompany us, somewhat against her wishes, and very much against mine. I had, on our excursions together, made no little progress, I flattered myself, in the task of dispossessing her troubled mind of the idea that her father meditated any harm to himself. I had succeeded, I admit, in this work by adopting methods that seemed best and pleasantest to myself; methods that were immensely self satisfying to the comforter. Hence I was averse to the presence of a third party; but I could not help myself, so I yielded gracefully.

We were having an exceptionally good catch this day, and Kate's face wore a flush of excitement, and her eyes were brighter than usual. I sat watching her animated and pretty face while Tom was unhooking a fine pickerel from her line. It was a very pretty picture, and I was revolving in my mind some expedient for getting off with her next time, unknown to Tom Elkins, that I might have an opportunity of speaking about something closer in my heart than shiny, scaly fish.

"Bang! bang!" came two sharp reports of a pistol, which the tall, rocky mountain's face replicated with so distinct intervals that they seemed like four shots.

"Merciful God!" screamed the girl, attempting to leap from the boat in the direction of the Bimley home.

I seized her as Tom seized the oars, and as we flew over the still water Kate clung to me in a terror that made her unconscious of her actions. She did not faint. Her eyes were riveted to mine as the boat skimmed toward the shore. I saw then what made me happy even in that tragic hour. I read in her gaze a look of love. Not that floating, airy bliss of happiness that comes to lovers under more auspicious circumstances, but a deep, appealing, clinging love; a helpless love that beseeches an echo to its sadness, a partaker of its pain. I pressed her more closely. Tom would suppose, if he supposed anything about it, that I was trying to keep her from flinging herself into the lake.

We were soon flying up the slope toward the house. We rushed in together. Not a soul was there. Out we went and toward the barn. A wild cry of pain from Kate, who had outstripped us in her great haste, told the story of the rash deed.

Two forms were lying prone upon the flat rock in front of the great barn doors. One was Bimley's, the other was that of his guardian angel. His guardian angel had relaxed her vigilance just long enough to permit the consummation of this deadly deed.

Two ghastly holes in Bimley's body revealed the outlet of his tired life.

Poor Kate, orphaned, shocked, senseless, clasped the nerveless hand of her father.

We took her up tenderly and carried her into the house, where she soon recovered. A low moan was the only reply she made to my comforting words.

On the flat rock I read these words graven there. John Bimley had scratched the date with an old knife: "John Bimley, September 17, 1886."

The sun was going down behind the ragged ridge of the mountains, just tinging the lake with its departing glories. We three stood by the edge of the lake talking over the plans for the future.

"You will go with me, Kate, and you shall have a home as long as I have one," said Tom Elkins, heartily.

Kate glanced from Tom to me, and back.

"I don't know, Uncle Tom," she answered almost in a whisper.

Kate and I had a short conference, unknown to Elkins.

"What!" said the latter, fixing his eyes intently on her. "Don't know?"

"I don't think she will accept your kind offices, Mr. Elkins," I interposed. "Kate has given me the right to put in a much better claim than yours, if you are her uncle, to take care of John Bimley's girl now."

Kate corroborated this statement by putting her hand in mine.

THE COTTON PLANT.

ITS NATURAL HOME IN ASIATIC TROPICAL REGIONS.

India Said to be the Most Ancient Cotton Growing Country—Cotton Found on the Western Continent—The First Sea Island Cotton.

The cotton plant is a child of the sun. Its natural habitation is in the tropical regions of Asia, Africa and America, but it has been acclimated and successfully cultivated as far north as the thirty-sixth degree of north latitude. Its cultivation covers a very large portion of our globe. In the eastern hemisphere the range of its cultivation extends from southern Europe on the north to the Cape of Good Hope on the south; in the western hemisphere from Virginia to southern Brazil. It has been most successfully cultivated, however, between the thirtieth and thirty-fifth degrees north latitude. Humboldt found it growing in the Andes at an elevation of 9,000 feet, and in Mexico at 5,500 feet. Boyle reports it cultivated at an elevation of 4,000 feet in the Himalaya. Such elevations, however, are not favorable to its best development. Botanically, cotton belongs to the natural order malvaceæ, genus gossypium. Botanists differ as to its proper classification into species; some enumerating as many as ten species, others seven, and others only three, as necessary to a clear discrimination between the distinctive characteristics recognizable, after making due allowance for differences resulting from soil and climatic influences.

ANCIENT COTTON GROWING COUNTRY.

The history of the cotton plant antedates in its beginnings the commercial annals of the human family. India seems to have been the most ancient cotton growing country. For five centuries before the Christian era her inhabitants were clothed in cotton goods of domestic manufacture from the fiber grown upon [illegible] soil by her own crude methods.

Notwithstanding the proximity of China to India, it was not until the Eleventh century that the cotton plant became an object of common culture in China. The first mention made of cotton in the records was 200 years before the Christian era. From that time down to the Seventh century it is mentioned not as an object of industry, but one of interest and curiosity; an occupant of the flower garden, the beauty of its flowers being celebrated in poetry. In the Eleventh century field culture of cotton commenced in China, but owing to the opposition of the people, especially those engaged in growing and manufacturing wool and flax, it was not until 1368 that the cultivation and manufacture of cotton were well established.

Central and South America and the West Indies grew and manufactured cotton long before their discovery by Columbus, who found the plant under cultivation, and the people using fabrics made from the staple. At the conquest of Mexico by Cortes, in 1519, he found that the clothing of the Mexicans consisted principally of cotton goods; the natives of Yucatan presented him with cotton garments and cloths for coverings for his huts, while Montezuma presented him with "curtains, coverlets and robes of cotton, fine as silk, of rich and various dyes, interwoven with feather work, that rivaled the delicacy of painting."

FLAX INSTEAD OF COTTON.

Egypt seems not to have either cultivated cotton or used its fabrics at a very early date, since the cloths in which the mummies were enveloped were of flax instead of cotton. Indeed, it appears that those nations which were early celebrated for their manufacture of fine linen were slow to substitute the cotton for the flax.

Spain was first of the European states to grow cotton. It was introduced here by the Moors in the Tenth century. The first cotton was planted in the United States in 1621. "Carroll's Historical Collections of South Carolina" mentions the growth of the cotton plant in that province in 1666. In 1736 it was planted in gardens in Talbot county, Md., latitude 39 north. At the commencement of the revolutionary war Gen. Delagall was said to have had thirty acres planted in cotton near Savannah, Ga. Is is stated that in 1748, among the exports of Charleston, S. C., were seven bags of cotton wool, valued at £3 11s. 5d. a bag. Another small shipment was made in 1754, and in 1770 three more, amounting to ten bales. In 1784 eight bales shipped to England were seized on the ground that so much cotton could not be produced in the United States.

The first Sea Island cotton was grown on the coast of Georgia in 1786, and its exportation commenced in 1788, by Alexander Bissel, of St. Simons Island. In 1791 the cotton crop of the United States was 2,000,000 pounds, of which three-fourths was grown in South Carolina and one-fourth in Georgia. Ten years later, 1801, 48,000,000 pounds were produced—20,000,000 pounds of which was exported.—Professor J. S. Newman in American Agriculturist.

The Lives of Longshoremen.

But, however much of adventurous interest there may be among these more weird forms and expressions of New York harbor life, the truer interest centers in the thousands of toilers whose lives are passed on the docks and in the holds of vessels where the countless products of labor and art leave us for the old world, or are first set down for the new. These are the longshoremen; and there are 18,000 to 20,000 of them necessary to handle the outgoing and incoming freight of the harbor. That is a large number of men. Dependent upon these alone are nearly enough human beings to populate a large city. Their yearly earnings are from $10,000,000 to $12,000,000. They are rough, hard and uncouth, but are marked by such a geniality of nature that the key to it is difficult to discover when the severity of their labor is considered. Their vocation is not a trade; but you will seldom find any class of men requiring any more actual animal strength, constant dexterity and downright skill.

As a rule they are uneducated men, the Irish race largely predominating, but if you will for one day watch the loading or unloading of any great steamer, the marvelous endurance, alertness and brightness you will discover them possessed of will give you a better judgment of the importance they hold to the intricate and large affairs of any great seaboard city, while you will be filled with a genuine respect for the sturdy accomplishment in their unregarded calling. Nor would it be an unpoetic experience. For every flag of every nation is above these vessels as they are taking and giving. Every race may be studied in swarthy seamen. Every object that the mind can recall or understand is taking its place for the hither or farther destination. And the fancy easily courses all seas and lands with the going and coming, the gainings that are involved, and the pleasures of the human lives that are risked in these mighty outreachings of the purposes of men.—New York Cor. Globe-Democrat.

The die was destroyed after 3,000 of the jubilee £5 gold pieces had been coined, and they are now selling at a premium. One of them brought $40 in London recently.

All Right, De Soto.

One day last week an old man with a bald head, and obviously with a drink or two stowed away in the place where a drink does an old man the most good, boarded a Van Buren street car and looked around for a seat. Of course he found none, and, on appealing to the conductor, was told that he would be able to find him one by the time the car reached Western avenue.

"All right, De Soto," replied the aged passenger.

The conductor finished his fare taking and resumed his perch on the rear brake, but the old man's words kept ringing in his ears, "'All right, De Soto! All right, De Soto!' What the thunder did he mean by that?" the conductor asked himself, and he finally became so worked up about it that he went in and asked the old man what it was he had been giving him.

"Oh," said the delighted old party, with a chuckle, "in 1858, when the first Atlantic cable was laid, they got a few words across, you remember. One of the messages which came from Valencia, Ireland, in response to an inquiry how the wire was working, was: 'All right, De Soto.' De Soto was the operator's name, you know, and, by gosh, that was the last word they did get through that old cable before she went back on 'm completely. For months that was all you could hear in this country. It was in every man's mouth. Whenever we wanted to say that a thing was all right, when in fact it was all wrong, we'd say, 'All right, De Soto,' see? That was what I meant when you told me I'd get a seat at Western avenue. I know that this car doesn't run any further, and so do you, you young scoundrel!"—Chicago Herald.

"Ring Out" all the Growlers.

A miller sat in a chestnut tree,
And cracked some ancient nuts for me.
He said that flour was as cheap as dirt,
That his bank account was badly hurt
By the profitless trade of the dying year;
That flour was low and wheat was dear.
Ring out, my merry chestnut bell,
Ring sharp and clear, and to him tell
That this same tale he told before,
And bid him tell it nevermore.

The builder of mills, in his easy chair,
To me doth often sadly swear
That business to the dogs must go,
If prices keep so very low;
That things look darkly blue and drear,
And says, "Oh, shoot the glad New Year!"
Ring out, oh, trusty chestnut bell,
Ring sharp and clear, and to him tell
That this same tale he's told before,
And bid him tell it—nevermore.

Now let me sit in mine office chair,
With my good big pen and my frowsy hair,
And let me write that "in eighty-seven
Both millers and furnishers find their heaven;
For prices will rise and profits will grow,"
And then I can say, "I told you so."

But hark! do I hear a chestnut bell?
No, 'tis only a card, with words that tell,
As I lay it away on my dusty shelf,
"Somewhat of a liar I am myself."
—Northwestern Miller.

Gamesters.

I watched the smile on her rosy lips
As I bunched the cards and she stacked the chips:
"Give me the pack, my deal."
A flourish, a flash, the shuffling done,
She dealt me a hand, and I said in fun:
"This time the 'pot' I'll steal."

An ace, two treys, a queen, a jack,
But the card I wanted was in the pack—
A "bob tailed flush" I saw.
"One card," I said, when the bets were made;
I split the treys and drew a spade—
'Twas a club I held before.

With her card she tapped her snowy chin,
And laughingly said: "I always win,
Come, I'll bet you all I've got."
"I'll take you," said I—and I saw her start—
"I'll 'raise' you one and bet my heart"—
She "called" me and lost the "pot."

Tid Bits.

A Byronic Joke.

John Taylor, in his reminiscences, tells us that he was much in the habit of visiting the green room of Drury Lane theatre in order to cultivate an acquaintanceship with Lord Byron.

"He always," says Taylor, "received me with great kindness, and particularly one night when I had returned from a public dinner and met him in the green room. I had by no means drunk much wine, yet as I seemed to him to be somewhat heated and appeared to be thirsty, he handed me a tumbler of water, as he said, to 'dilute' me."—Detroit Free Press.

He Knew Where They Had Been.

De Hang—Have you seen anything of my slippers, Johnny?

Johnny—No, sir.

Mrs. De Hang—John Henry, mind what you say.

Johnny—I ain't seen 'm pop, honest. Mamma kep' my head down so low I couldn't see a blamed thing. I ain't sayin' nothin' about feelin' 'm, though.—Tid Bits.

A Dismal Failure.

Sweet Girl—And so you have been on the plains for ten years?

Handsome Cowboy—Yes, this is the first time I've been back into real civilization.

"Now please tell me, in that lonely life, so far removed from the refining influences of—civilization, you know, what did you miss most?"

"Oysters."—Omaha World.

Short Smiles.

"I will now quit fooling," said the physician as he wrote out a prescription, "and proceed to business." Then he made out his bill.—Philadelphia Call.

Colored Hunter—Hold on dar, Abe! You'll strain dat gun fus' thing you knows, tryin ter shoot dat duck so fur off, an' de weepon nebber will be no mo' 'count.—Texas Siftings.

When a man becomes firmly convinced that he is a genius, it is then that the fringe slowly begins to form on the bottom of his trousers leg.—Life.

"There is always sunshine somewhere," says an exchange. If it were not for such little bits of information as this how stale, flat and unprofitable this world would be!—Boston Courier.

Lawyer—Now, you say you've known this couple for years. Witness—Yes, sir. Ever seen them quarrel? Never. They've always lived together in unity, eh? No, sir; in Swampsville; that's about four miles from Unity.—Judge.

A clergyman relates that on one occasion, after marrying a couple, an envelope was handed to him, which he supposed, of course, contained the marriage fee. On opening it he found a slip of paper on which was written, "We desire your prayers."—New York Daily News.

Tommy was taken very sick. His mother discovered that he had been eating too much preserved stuff, and while awaiting the doctor's visit, implored him to tell her the cause of it. "Mother," he said, finally. "Mother, Mame Duffy rejected my suit, and," hoarsely, "it drove me to jam."—Tid Bits.

Pittsburgh Tramp—Madam, if you'll fill me up with a good dinner I'll saw some wood. I'm willin' to work. Woman (shortly)—You know very well we burn nothing but natural gas. Pittsburgh Tramp—Well, gimme suthin' to eat, an' I'll turn on the gas for you.—Harper's Bazar.

AN ALLIGATOR MARKET.

A DESCRIPTION OF A NEW ORLEANS SAURIAN EMPORIUM.

Prices Range from Fifty Cents to $200. How They Are Hunted—Fed Twice a Week—Sent to Europe as Curiosities. An Old Fellow.

"How do you sell the beast, madam?" asked the inquisitive reporter of a quiet looking woman, who was the one peaceful object in the screaming, noisy world about her. "Well, I hardly know how to answer that question," she responded, her voice pitched high enough to penetrate the chirping, squeaking, cawing and crowing of the congregation of feathered folk fluttering about. "You see, they come at most any price, and when I tell you we get all the way from fifty cents to $200 apiece, you can understand how prices vary." As is well known, sugar, oranges and alligators form three staples in Louisiana exports and internal revenue, and it was to discover the exact condition of the crocodile market, and whether the spring catch had been good, that a visit was paid yesterday to the big tanks on Chartres street.

There is a lavish liberality and a free, unstinted prodigality in the way one of these reptiles lays eggs that would discourage anything short of a patent incubator. Why, without half putting her mind to it, and in a poor season at that, she will fill her nest with seventy-five eggs and crawl away, comfortably assured every last one will produce a healthy little yellow and black wriggler. Just here it is that the expert hunter comes in for a soft thing. He knows the favorite laying grounds of the alligator hens as thoroughly as Johnny does his bantam's nest in the barn, and when the time comes for the exhausted mother to come from her labors, he simply paddles out, fills his canoe with the thick skinned, pearly globes, and feels sure of a fine return later on.

Alligators are brought into town in every stage, from an embryo state in the egg to great, angry monsters a dozen feet long, tipping the scales hundreds of pounds. Men hunt their hideous game after dark, stalking the swamps, dragging lagoons and wading through low, oozy marshes, where vast numbers of alligators abide. Several methods of capturing them are resorted to. Those caught with hooks are only fit for immediate killing, as they sicken and die in short order. The big ones are lassoed and smaller fry snared in a heavy seine made for this purpose. The hunter realizes he is after dangerous game, with lots of vicious habits, and so besides blinding their stupid eyes by a lamp worn in his cap, he is prepared to send a soothing bullet whenever necessary.

After bringing in his find of eggs, the crocodile farmer heaps them in boxes and simply depends on time to do its perfect work. In the course of weeks the infant gnaws and claws at the hard shell until he finally squirms his way into the world. There is as much difference in the skin of the young and old ones as in a baby's complexion as compared with a grown person's. Their hide is as brilliant as if polished, a bright black and yellow, which grows dingier and rustier every year they live.

Passing through the big bird store the alligator region is reached. It is a pretty, garden like place, with tender, lacy vines trained in delicate festoons up the lattice against the dark brick wall. Great red pots hold rich foliage plants that lend a tropical air to the spot, fitting the inhabitants of the long cemented tanks. These troughs are built six in a row, the occupants being carefully graded according to size. There is very little family affection among them, parents rarely hesitating to sacrifice their offspring on the altar of a healthy appetite. Survival of the biggest is an unanswerable law to which all must succumb; consequently they are classified into two and three year olds. Twice a week the water must be changed for the salubrity of the atmosphere. There is a notorious untamable odor about an alligator that must be regarded. It is the perfume he brought from his wild, free life in the forest, and hangs about him with unvarying steadfastness. Twice a week refreshments are handed round, beef lights as a rule, a delicacy for which alligators have a very pronounced penchant. The half grown variety eat from five to six at a meal, distending their uncomely, shapeless stomachs until the receptacles refuse to hold another particle. They feed only at intervals, but have voracious appetites then.

They are very ugly creatures, with wretched dispositions, as the reporter had a fair opportunity of discovering. Hanging over the side of the tank in playful, almost intimate, relations with the beast, his sheltering umbrella gave a tip too far and touched the extreme point of the thing's snout. It was enough; with a terrifying bellow and blowing off of steam the infuriated being rose two inches out of the water and sent his observer exactly three feet in the air. It was a severe shock, and has generated respect, if not admiration, for the alligator's sensitiveness. Lying in the sunshine, every grizzly feature is accentuated. Their great shovel heads float on the water with stupid, evil eyes that blink like yellow excrescences on a mud colored surface. A tiny, minute slit in the snout admits enough air to enable them to make a sound frightful enough to scare the stoutest hearted.

The keeper of the tanks said hundreds were sold yearly to traveling showmen, numbers being sent to Europe as curiosities, besides many that were bought by northern visitors. Saloon owners buy them constantly to keep on their counters as an attraction to possess. Chicago and St. Louis being noticable among the number. An artist here in town sets them up with all sorts of comical devices. He stuffs them up with cotton, and fashions preachers, lawyers, gamblers, organ grinders, cotton handlers and duelists out of the ridiculous little figures. One, a burlesque scene in court, was very particularly amusing. These are sold very cheaply and a pretty fair trade is driven.

The saurian merchant has a perfect treasure that he keeps in close quarters and guards as the fairest jewel of his entire collection of beauties. It is a huge, evil smelling, sluggish reptile, measuring twelve feet, whose age is calculated at 150 years. He lies sprawled out on the floor of his trough in a state of torpid stupidity. The creature looks bored to death, and with enough impotent malignity in his depraved yellow eyes to devour every visitor who studied his unhandsome proportions. The tropical beast is entirely out of place surrounded with fresh air and the perfume of flowers. One fancies him crawling slowly from the heat and slime of some low lagoon, lying in wait for prey that has no chance between those weighty jaws. Little niggers and crocodiles are indissolubly connected in the ordinary imagination, and one instinctively looks round for the black juicy morsel to gratify his hungry, homesick heart.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Origin of the Bustle.

Women will be interested to know that the bustle is of Persian origin. Nott, in his notes on the "Odes of Hafiz," defines the "refaight" as a kind of bolster which the ladies fix to the under garment to produce a certain roundness, thought by them to be becoming.—Chicago Tribune.

OUR OWN.

The little child that sits beside our feet
May rob us of our strength and rest so sweet,
And cause our way with cares to be thick strewn;
And yet we love our own.

There may be fairer lands and brighter skies,
There may be friends more faithful or more wise,
Than any we have ever seen or known;
But each will love his own.

—Mrs. Clara B. Heath.

RICE THROWING AT WEDDINGS.

Origin of the Custom as Given by the Chinese—The Wise Sorceress.

In the days of the Shang dynasty, some 1,500 years before Christ, there lived in the province of Shansi a most famous sorcerer called Chao. It happened one day that a Mr. P'ang came to consult to oracle, and Chao, having divined by means of the tortoise diagram, informed the trembling P'ang that he had but six days to live. Now, however much we may trust the sagacity and skill of our family physician, we may be excused if, in a matter of life and death, we call in a second doctor for a consultation, and in such a strait it is not to be wondered at that P'ang should repair to another source to make sure there was no mistake. To the fair Peachblossom he went, a young lady who had acquired some reputation as a sorceress, and to the tender feminine heart unfolded the story of his woe. Her divination yielded the same as Chao's; in six days P'ang should die, unless, by the exercise of her magical powers, she could avert the catastrophe. Her efforts were successful, and on the seventh day great was Chao's astonishment, and still greater his mortification and rage, when he met P'ang taking his evening stroll and learned that there lived a greater magician than he. The story would soon get about and unless he could quickly put an end to his fair rival's existence his reputation would be ruined. And this was how Chao plotted against the life of Peachblossom. He sent a go-between to Peachblossom's parents to inquire if their daughter was still unmarried, and receiving a reply in the affirmative, he befooled the simple parents into believing that he had a son who was seeking a wife, and ultimately he induced them to engage Peachblossom to him in marriage. The marriage cards were duly interchanged; but the crafty Chao had chosen the most unlucky day he could select for the wedding, the day when the "Golden Pheasant" was in the ascendant. Surely as the bride entered the red chair the spirit bird would destroy her with his powerful beak. But the wise Peachblossom knew all these things, and feared not. "I will go," she said; "I will fight and defeat him." When the wedding morning came, she gave directions to have rice thrown out at the door, which the spirit bird seeing made haste to devour, and while his attention was thus occupied, Peachblossom stepped into the bridal chair and passed on her way unharmed. And now the ingenious reader knows why he throws rice after the bride. If any interest has been engendered in his breast by this tale of the fair Peachblossom, let him listen to what befell her at the house of the magician. Arrived at Chao's house, no bridegroom was there, but an attendant was given her, and the two girls prepared to pass the night in the room assigned to them. Peachblossom was wakeful, for she knew that, when the night passed, the "Golden Pheasant" would be succeeded by the evil star of the "White Tiger," whose power and ferocity who can tell! "Go you to bed first," she said to the maid. The girl was soon asleep, and still her mistress slept not, but continued to pace the room, and at midnight the tiger spirit came, and the morning light showed Peachblossom still pacing the room, while on the bed lay the lifeless body of the little maid. Thus were the magic battles of Peachblossom and Chao, and many more were there, until they took their flight to heaven, where now they reign as gods. And on earth the actors have not idols more prized than those of Peachblossom and Chao Kung.—Chinese Times.

The Prince of Wales' Hair.

In everything except the indispensable tawny beard that falls like a roll of dead gold silk to the extremity of a massive chest, Prince Albert Victor, the eldest son of the Prince of Wales, models himself on Ouida's heroes. He is as fond of knicknacks as a lady. His private apartments are the nearest approach to the talented but vulgar authoress' ideal of a young guardsman's rooms. He would not brush his hair otherwise than with an ivorybacked brush to save his life. Eau de Cologne and other perfumes have their place in his bath. To write a note on paper that was not the triumph of the perfumer's art would in his own imagination be unworthy of his tastes and position. He has started in life in fact as an exquisite of the George IV type; but luckily for himself and for the nation he is preserved from some of the most objectionable traits of the "First Gentleman's" character by the sensitive shyness of his disposition.

He differs again from most exquisites in having a praiseworthy desire to pay promptly for the luxuries in which he indulges. Indeed he worries his attendants to worry his tradespeople to send in their bills sharp, and frets and fumes if the astute shopkeepers—alive to the value of having the future king of England upon their books within decent limits—delay in delivering their accounts. Like his father he gets his clothes—and plenty of them—from Poole. Prince Albert Victor's idea of dignified mufti is a frock coat and lavender or gray trousers. He seldom wears a cutaway coat, and even when traveling hardly ever appears in a suit of dittoes. On the whole he may be described as a very stately and solemn young man.—London Letter.

The Life of a Grasshopper.

As every one knows, it is a rule of nature every winged insect shall die within the year (the occasional individuals that survive the twelvemonth only proving the rule), for the stage of wings is the last third of the creature's life. After all, it would be very absurd if we did not recognize among ourselves the stages of childhood, youth, middle age and old age, which together cover the span of our "threescore years and ten." An insect's stages proceed in a far smaller compass, and the winged one is the last. It is really the old age of the caterpillar or grub.

Thus a grasshopper may be two or three years a grub, for another six months a hobbledehoy—that is, a wingless thing, half grub, half grasshopper—and then for a further space a winged grasshopper. In the last stage it marries, and there is an end of its purpose. Nature has no further need for it and does not care whether it dies or not. The slender fragility of the insect's appearance may have suggested a feeble hold of life; some grasshoppers look like the mere specters of insects. About others, too, there is a vegetable, perishable look, as of thin grass blades that a frost would kill or heat shrivel up; a suspicion about their sere and faded edges that they are already beginning to wither. But the grasshopper has nothing to complain of as to its length of life. It sings the summer in and the autumn out, and goes to sleep with the year.—Gentleman's Magazine.

The oldest general of the United States army is William Selby Harney. He was born near Nashville, Tenn., in 1800, and entered the army in 1818. He was brevetted major general on March 13, 1865.