

STARTING A WAR.

Tiny Sparks Have Often Kindled Monster Conflagrations.

CONFLICTS BORN OF TRIFLES

A Broken Teapot and a Stolen Bucket Cost Years of Carnage and Hundreds of Thousands of Lives—Paul Kruger and the Great Boer Uprising.

The history of warfare contains numerous examples of conflicts that have originated through trifling causes, says the London Globe. For instance, Turkey in the past suffered greatly in a war with Venice. When the Venetian ambassador was asked by the Turkish grand vizier to ratify a treaty by swearing in the Moslem fashion upon his beard and the beard of the prophet he declined because, as he said, "the Venetians wear no beards."

This remark was too much for the Turk who retorted angrily, "Nor do monkeys!" an exclamation which caused the other to tear up the treaty and retire from the conference. The sequel was a sanguinary conflict in which fell 30,000 Christians and four times that number of Turks.

But the Turks were not the only ones to use blows instead of arguments on the slightest provocation. The emperors of China have ever been famous in this direction, the record instance being a war 250 years ago which began through the smashing of a teapot. This indispensable household article was looked upon by its owner, a high dignitary of the court, as a priceless treasure, and consequently it accompanied the great man on his journeys.

It so happened that when he was traveling through the lawless provinces in the northwest of China some of his retinue were intercepted by a band of robbers, who found the teapot among the baggage and indignantly flung it to the ground and broke it. The matter was reported to the emperor, who was so indignant at his favorite's loss that he sent out a punitive force, and a long war began which resulted in the death of 500,000 men.

A conflict over a teapot, even a valuable one, seems almost out of the range of possibility until one recalls that a bucket was once the innocent cause of a terrible war. Nine hundred years ago a party of soldiers of Modena stole a bucket, apparently as a practical joke, from a public well in Bologna and refused to restore it. Fights thereupon took place between the soldiers of the rival states and started a war which devastated a large part of Europe.

The cash value of that bucket was only a few shillings, but wars have often been waged concerning things that represented little from a monetary point of view. An excellent illustration is afforded by Algeria, which came into the possession of France through a disagreement over a petty debt. The bey of Algiers demanded immediate payment through the French consul, who asked for time to pay and in reply was beaten and thrown into prison.

A couple of days later a conflict was begun that continued for twenty years, during which time more than 500,000 lives were sacrificed. Such a calamity was surely unnecessary for so paltry a cause, and the same remark is equally applicable to other wars.

In 1870 the Transvaal was declared a crown colony, and the salaries of officials, both Dutch and British, were cut down. Among the number so treated was a certain Paul Kruger, whose salary was reduced by £50 per annum. The loss of the money annoyed the Dutchman, who raised the standard of revolt. As a consequence there followed the Majuba Hill fight, years of agitation, the Jameson raid and finally the great war which cost Britain £220,000,000 and the lives of 25,000 of her sons.

But the most curious war ever waged over a little matter occurred in the sixteenth century. It was carried on single handed for about six years between a bankrupt grocer of Berlin and the elector of Saxony. The immediate cause of the quarrel was the arresting of two of the tradesmen's horses in the elector's territory, he being a subject of the elector of Brandenburg.

Failing to get redress, he adopted what was then a perfectly legal expedient and declared formal war on the realm of Saxony. The declaration was accepted in due form, and the war began. The grocer burned farms and even villages, employed mercenaries after the fashion of the times and made himself the terror of the district.

He finally was influenced to stop hostilities by Luther, but was betrayed by treachery and, being captured, suffered death on the wheel.

Not Much of a Game.
"I can't for the life of me understand why anybody should wish to play chess."

"It's a great game, perhaps the greatest intellectual game there is."

"Yes, but it affords no opportunity whatever for breaking speed records."

—Chicago Record-Herald.

He Meant It.
"Paw, what is the brightest star in the sky?"
"Sirius, my son."
"But I am, paw. I want to know."
—Chicago Tribune.

Have a heart that never hardens, a temper that never tires and a touch that never hurts.—Charles Dickens.

YEGGMEN SERVE "SOUP."

Its Queer Recipe Is in Possession of the Secret Service.

Here is a recipe for soup served only after nightfall, preferably in the early morning hours.

"First take about ten or a dozen impwri lz xug, crumble it up fine and put it in a pan or washbowl, then pour over it enough uswhos (either chlx or laky) to cover it well. Stir it up with your hands, being careful to break all the lumps; leave it set a few minutes; then get a few yards of cheesecloth and tear it in pieces and strain the mixture through the cloth into another vessel, wring the sawdust dry and throw it away. The remains will be the that ugx uswhos mixed. Next take the same amount of water as you used of uswhos and pour it in; leave the whole set for a few minutes."

This is the "soup" employed by yeggmen, and a single portion of it is guaranteed to open the door of the stoutest safe, provided an aperture can be made sufficiently large to pour in the stuff. The names of the ingredients are written in a crude sort of cipher commonly used for preserving such secrets. This and dozens more of the same transparency of meaning are in the possession of the United States secret service men, the police, detective agencies and others who deal with the cooks of such dishes. By a substitution of letter for letter—the first six for the last six of the alphabet, the second six for the third six, with G and N taken out of turn and made interchangeable—the cipher is easily read. "Impwri lz xug," translated, is "sticks of dynamite" (short for dynamite). "Uswhos, either chlx or laky"—alcohol, either wood or pure—may be used.

The directions for serving this soup require considerable attention and the best of trained service. After the "gay cat," or advance agent of the band, has learned all that can be found out about the bank, store or post-office, its lighting, protection and the means of escape by freight train, vehicle or on foot, his companion or companions come on, avoiding notice as far as possible. "Stickups," or look outs, guard the place while the "inside men" break into the safe. Sealing the cracks about the safe or vault door with soap, the yeggmen pour in the soup through a small hole left open at the top. The liquid flows down by locks, hinges and bolts and is set off by fuse or detonator. Blankets and covers of any kind are used to muffle the sound of the explosion and the fall of the door. Perhaps the "stickups" are forced to create a diversion outside and to frighten the citizens or mislead them while the "inside men" pick out the valuable papers escape. Who pays the check for the soup then depends upon the ingenuity of detectives.—New York Post.

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THE MARINE BAND

History of Uncle Sam's Famous Musical Organization.

STARTED BY A KIDNAPING.

Tradition Says That the Original Band Was Spirited Away From Sunny Sicily by Captain McNeil of the American Frigate Boston.

One of the best known and most popular musical organizations in this country is the United States Marine Band. It is always selected to furnish the music at important government functions, such as inaugural balls and receptions at the White House, and is always assigned the post of honor in notable parades. Indeed, it is the ablest and most famous military band in the country.

There is an interesting tradition that the original Marine band was kidnaped from the sunny slopes of Sicily. The story goes that one Captain McNeil of the American frigate Boston was cruising in the Mediterranean, when his soul yearned for the sound of real music, an art that had been little developed in this young republic. When ashore he heard a regimental band play so tunefully that the bluff old seadog became inspired. The inspiration was promptly put into execution. In his suavest manner he invited the Sicilians aboard his ship to play "a ball." The invitation was accepted with alacrity, induced no doubt by the prospect of American gold.

A few nights afterward the entire organization was on board the frigate with its instruments when the captain suddenly found it expedient to return to the United States. So it was up anchor and away before the astonished Sicilians could protest. There is no authentic record of what became of this band of Italian musicians, as many of the marine corps archives were destroyed in 1814.

The official records do show, however, that shortly after the marine corps was organized, probably in 1801, Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Henderson brought from Naples a group of thirteen Italian musicians, which was the inception of the organization as an instrumental band.

An act to establish a marine corps was approved by President John Adams on July 11, 1798. This law provided for a drum and fife corps consisting of sixteen drummers and sixteen fifers, one of whom should act as fife major. This constituted the Marine band until the arrival of the Neapolitans, about three years later.

For several years the band had no special leader. First one member and then another acted as fife major. This practice continued until Aug. 14, 1815, when J. L. Clubb, of the sloop Lexington, was regularly appointed and served until 1824. He was succeeded by Eufine Friquet, who served until Oct. 29, 1820, when Francis Schenig was appointed, serving until Sept. 22, 1843. Schenig was relieved by Francis Scala, who served until 1848 and again from 1854 until Dec. 13, 1871.

It was under Scala's leadership that the band first became famous. He inaugurated the open air concerts at the White House and the capitol grounds, for which congress allowed extra compensation in 1856. These concerts grew in such favor that steps were undertaken to improve the organization, which was still officially known as a fife and drum corps. Legislation was obtained to reorganize it as a band, with a principal musician and thirty members. On July 25, 1861, President Lincoln affixed his signature to a law that recognized the first band as part of the military service of the United States.

Scala retired in 1871 after having served in the band nearly thirty years, twenty-two of which he was its leader. He was succeeded by Henry Fries, who served until Aug. 22, 1873. Louis Schneider was appointed Sept. 2, 1873, serving until Oct. 29, 1880. On Oct. 30, 1880, John Philip Sousa was chosen leader. Sousa had formerly been a member of the band, as had his father. The elder Sousa enlisted in 1861 under the name of Suacca, but upon re-enlistment he gave the name of Sousa, which he continued to use thereafter.

Sousa left the service July 30, 1892, to organize a band of his own, and Francesco Fancullini was appointed. He served until Oct. 3, 1897. When his term expired he was not reappointed, and the band was without a leader until the following March, when William H. Santelmann was appointed.

In 1898 the band was again reorganized. In order to bring it up to the standing to which it was entitled as the leading military band of this country a law was passed, which President McKinley signed March 3, 1898, increasing the band to seventy-three members, consisting of a leader with the pay and allowance of a first lieutenant of the marine corps, a second leader at \$75 a month and allowances, thirty first class musicians at \$50, thirty second class musicians at \$50, ten privates and a drum major. The members are enlisted for four years.—John B. Cox in Washington Star.

For the Wheels.
Mr. Wickwire—I have had such a queer humming noise in my head all day. Mrs. Wickwire—Why don't you try a little machine oil?—Indianapolis Journal.

This work of helping the world forward happily does not wait to be done by perfect men.—George Eliot.

MYSTERIOUS MEKRAN.

A Desolate Land, Desolated by Nature and Shunned by Man.

"A mysterious veil has always hung over the land of Mekran," says the London Times. "Mekran is the name given to the long coastal region stretching almost from the Indus to the entrance to the Persian gulf. Sailors have coasted along its white shores from time immemorial, but few in modern days have ever penetrated the ranges of hills which lie beyond. The greater part of Mekran is desolate and forsaken, a land desolated by nature and shunned by man. The few tribes which linger there are the Jotam of history, stray wreckage which has drifted into this obscure corner of the world in the backwash of great events. It is even believed that the Dravidians passed through Mekran on their way to southern India and left stragglers, whose descendants have dwelt there ever since. There are patches of Mongols from the days of Jenghiz Khan; colonels of half breed Arabs from the time when an Arab dynasty held Sind; unmistakable Rajputs, who were there before Alexander; African negroes, the offshoots of medieval slavery, and traces of still older peoples whose origins are lost in the mists of time."

Yet Mekran cannot always have been either so dry or so deserted. Many of its hills are closely covered with little stone houses, mostly square at the base, narrowing upward like truncated pyramids, and with dome shaped interiors. They are tombs, and among the rubbish found within them are fragments of light green pottery of fine quality, which no one seems able to identify. Then there are vast masonry dams, obviously built to catch the water in the hills, just as engineers are making dams in the Indian ghats to-day.

Sometimes the hills are terraced for cultivation, after the fashion of hills in southern Japan and elsewhere. Only in Mekran the terraces are dry and bare, and not even a blade of grass remains. The crumbling ruins of whole cities, the very names of which are forgotten, lie concealed between the serrated ridges."

FEATHERED POLICE.

Birds Do a Wonderful Amount of Work For the Farmer.

Birds work more in conjunction with man to help him than does any other form of outdoor life, according to an article in Success Magazine. They police the earth and air, and without their services the farmer would be helpless. Larks, wrens and thrushes search the ground for grubs and insects. The food of the meadow lark consists of 75 per cent of injurious insects and 12 per cent of weed seed, showing it to be a bird of great economic value. Sparrows, finches and quail eat a large amount of weed seed.

Practically all the food of the tree sparrow consists of seed. Examinations by Professor F. E. L. Beal of the biological survey of the department of agriculture show that a single tree sparrow will eat a quarter of an ounce of weed seed daily. In a state the size of Iowa tree sparrows alone will consume more than 800 tons of weed seed annually. This, with the work of other seed eating birds, saves the farmer an immense amount of work.

Nuthatches and chickadees scan every part of the trunks and limbs of trees for insect eggs. In a day's time a chickadee has been known to eat hundreds of insect eggs and worms that are very harmful to our trees and vegetables. Warblers and vireos hunt the leaves and buds for moths and millers. Flycatchers, swallows and night hawks are busy day and night catching flies that bother man and beast. Hawks and owls are working silently in daylight and darkness to catch moles, mice, gophers and squirrels.

Insulted.
A traveler relates a story illustrative of life in Spain. Alighting at the door of an inn, a man extended his hand, and, naturally supposing him to be a porter, the traveler offered him his valise.

The man stepped back, tossed his head and frowned scornfully.

"Do you take me for a porter?" he demanded. "I would have you understand that I am no porter."

"Indeed!" said the traveler apologetically. "Then may I ask, senor, what you are?"

"I am a beggar, sir, and asked you for alms!"

Making Sure.
An electric wire had fallen under its heavy weight of snow. The firemen found a crowd around the grounded copper and an inquisitive Irishman lifting one end from the ground.

"Man, alive, don't you know what a risk you're taking? That might be a live wire!" he ejaculated.

"Sure an' Oi thought of that meself, an' Oi flit of the wire good before Oi picked it up at all."—Everybody's.

Making Him Happy.
Marks—I know your wife didn't like it because you took me home unexpectedly to dinner last night. Parks—Nonsense! Why, you hadn't been gone two minutes before she remarked that she was glad it was no one else but you.—Boston Transcript.

A Gifted Barber.
"The barber told me a very interesting story as he shaved me."
"Indeed?"
"Yes, and also illustrated it with cuts."—Washington Herald.

The usual fortune of complaint is to excite contempt more than pity.—Johnson.

CRAZY KING LOUIS

His Part in the Pitiful Tragedy at Lake Stranberg.

SLEW HIS FRIEND AND DIED.

The Mad Bavarian Monarch Beat Faithful Dr. von Gudden to Death Before Heart Disease Stopped His Own Dash For Liberty.

For months preceding the tragedy on June 13, 1886, that ended his life King Louis II. of Bavaria had revealed many unmistakable signs of mental derangement. He heard mysterious voices in the air around him and believed that he was constantly pursued by dangerous enemies. He withdrew entirely from the world, his cabinet ministers were unable to obtain access to him, and his domestic servants were forbidden to look at his face, being compelled to approach him with averted eyes. The old valet Meier was obliged to don a mask to cover his features whenever he went near the king, and many other strange things happened at the magnificent palace which Louis had built for himself with reckless extravagance.

Wearing his crown and purple royal mantle, with the scepter of sovereignty in his hand, King Louis would wander through the rooms of his castles at night, conversing with imaginary guests, for the most part with the ghosts of King Louis XIV. of France and Queen Marie Antoinette. Frequently places were laid at his table for their disembodied spirits.

The king's debts brought matters to a crisis and necessitated the intervention of the Bavarian government. Most of the royal liabilities had been contracted through the construction and decoration of the famous three castles, and several creditors threatened to initiate proceedings to recover their money. King Louis requested the government to introduce a bill in the Bavarian legislature granting his property immunity from seizure for debts, and when his ministers refused this unreasonable demand he tried to borrow money from all sorts and conditions of people.

In April, 1886, the Bavarian chamber refused to sanction the payment of the king's debts from the public treasury, and a few days later the cabinet addressed a respectful petition to Louis to curtail his expenditures. King Louis responded by dismissing the whole cabinet and nominating a new ministry, at the head of which he placed his own barber.

This irresponsible act brought matters to a head. A commission of medical experts, under the presidency of Dr. von Gudden, pronounced the king to be incurably insane and incapable of ruling, and a deputation under Baron von Crailsheim was dispatched from Munich to the castle where Louis was in residence to inform his majesty of his dethronement. The king had Baron von Crailsheim and all the members of the deputation arrested.

Then Dr. von Gudden proceeded to Neuschwanstein castle, where to all outward appearances he succeeded in persuading the king to submit to his dethronement and to retire to Berg castle, near the shores of Lake Stranberg, where the final tragedy was enacted. The king was escorted to Berg castle by Dr. von Gudden, another medical man, Dr. Mueller, and several trained attendants, and he seemed to acquiesce in the arrangement that he should remain there for a year under close supervision.

Dr. von Gudden, misled by appearances, telegraphed to Munich that his royal patient was "as obedient as a child," and at dinner that evening he promised to take the king for a walk in the park. His assistant, Dr. Mueller, warned him that it would be dangerous to go alone with the king and urged him to allow an attendant to accompany them, or at least to follow them at a discreet distance, but Dr. von Gudden disregarded the younger man's advice and paid the penalty with his life. It was a Sunday evening, and a general feeling of uneasiness prevailed among those who had remained at the castle when the king and Dr. von Gudden failed to reappear after an hour had elapsed. Search parties were organized, and during the night one of the royal footmen found the king's hat, coat and overcoat close to the bank of the lake and Dr. von Gudden's umbrella close by on the ground. The bodies of the king and his physician were found not far from the shore of the lake, in shallow water, both heads projecting above the surface. Dr. von Gudden's face and head bore the marks of heavy blows which the king, a man of immensely powerful build, had showered upon him.

The position of the bodies and the articles of clothing found near them made it possible to surmise, with probable accuracy, the details of the tragedy. It is likely that the king intended to escape from his prison—for as such he regarded the castle in which he was kept as a madman—and that he dived himself of overcoat and coat to swim across the lake. Dr. von Gudden, it appears, closed with him at the water's edge and tried to prevent his flight, but the king killed him and died from heart disease at the moment when he was on the point of beginning his swim for liberty. The post-mortem examination revealed that neither had died from drowning, but the king from heart failure and Dr. von Gudden from the injuries inflicted on him in the struggle.—Berlin Cor. St. James' Gazette.

BUDDHIST CREMATION.

The Funeral Pyre and the Disposition of the Ashes.

A Buddhist cremation is a strange and uncanny event, and it is not often that a foreigner is given to witness one. I saw some of the preliminary ceremonies at a temple in south China, but found myself apparently becoming persona non grata as the time for the cremation proper approached and did not care enough about seeing it to intrude. I have since heard and read several descriptions of the gruesome ceremony.

The priests are dressed in white sackcloth, similar to that worn by the mourners at the funerals of the laymen, and their brows are bound with white bandages. The corpse, dressed in a cowl and with the hands fixed in an attitude of prayer, is placed in a sitting position in a bamboo chair and carried to the funeral pyre by some of his fellow monks, all the other monks of the monastery following in a double line. As the procession advances the walls of the monastery echo with the chanting of prayers and the tinkling of cymbals.

When the pyre is reached the bearers place the corpse upon it, and the fagots are kindled by the head priest, and while the flames are mounting the others prostrate themselves in obeisance to the ashes of their departed brother. When the fire is burned out the attendants collect the charred bones and place them in a cinerary urn, which is often deposited in a small shrine within the precincts of the monastery, to remain there until the ninth day of the ninth month, when the ashes are sewed up in a bag of red cloth and thrown into a sort of ossuary or monastery mausoleum.—Lewis R. Freeman in Los Angeles Times.

THE FIRST SOAP.

According to Pliny, It Was in Use Among the Gauls.

Who invented soap? According to Pliny, soap was an invention of the Gauls, who used it for giving a bright hue to the hair. He also states that it was employed by the Germans both as a medicinal and as a cleansing agent, two kinds being used—hard and soft. There is reason to believe that it was introduced into Germany by the Romans, though on this point there is some difference of opinion.

Homer tells us in the "Odyssey" that Nausicaa, daughter of Alcinoos, king of the Phaeacians, and her attendants washed clothes by treading upon them with their feet in pits of water, so that apparently she and her servants were unacquainted with the use of soap.

The fact that soap was obtainable by boiling together oily or fatty substances and alkalis was known at an early period of history, but it must be borne in mind that the substance referred to in the Old Testament and translated "soap" (Jeremiah II, 22, "For though thou wash thee with niter—properly, natron—soda—and take thee much soap," and Malachi IV, 2, "For he is like a refiner's fire and like fuller's soap") refer to the alkali itself and not to the substances prepared from oily bodies and these alkaline matters.

The French word for soap (savon) is supposed to have been derived from the fact of its having been manufactured at Savona, near Genoa.

The manufacture of soap began in London in 1524, before which time it was supplied by Bristol at a penny per pound. A duty was imposed on soap in 1711, but after several reductions was totally repealed in 1853.—London Journal.

Washington Monument Bent by Heat.

The towering Washington monument, solid as it is, cannot resist the heat of the sun poured on its southern side on a midsummer's day without a slight bending of the gigantic shaft, which is rendered perceptible by means of a copper wire 174 feet long hanging in the center of the structure and carrying a plummet suspended in a vessel of water. At noon in summer the apex of the monument, 550 feet above the ground, is shifted by expansion of the stone a few hundredths of an inch toward the north. High winds cause perceptible motions of the plummet, and in still weather delicate vibrations of the crust of the earth otherwise unperceived are registered by it.

Blood Thicker Than Some Water.

"Blood is thicker than water"—though not much thicker—and not so thick as sea water. The water of the ocean contains thirty-five parts of saline material a thousand, while the vital fluid of the human body contains but seven parts a thousand or one-fifth as much. In the human body each of its myriads of cells is bathed with this seven-tenths per cent saline fluid.—Dietetic and Hygienic Gazette.

The Comeback.

"You used to say," she complained, "that you counted that day lost when you did not hear the sound of my voice."

"Yes, I know," he replied, "and I shall never cease to long for those dear lost days."—London Answers.

Identification.

"I shall try to leave footprints on the sands of time," said the man who is earnest, but not original.

"Very good," replied the absentminded criminologist, "but thumb prints are now considered more reliable."—Exchange.

The beautiful is beauty seen with the eye of the soul.—Joubert.