His Heart's Desire

By SIR WALTER BESANT

CHAPTER XI.—(Continued.)

David sat doggedly. He had always been dogged and obstinate. His uncle looked at him curiously, as if studying his character.

"David," he said presently, "you were a bad boy at school, where they ought to have flogged it out of you. You were a bad son to your father, who ought to have cut you off with a shilling. You were a bad farmer when you got your farm. If I hadn't taken your land, a stranger would have had it. Now it's kept in the family. Years ago I thought to give you a lesson, and if you reformed, to give it back to you in my will. I now perceive that you are one of those who never reform. I have left it—elsewhere."

"Go on," said David, "I like to hear you talk."

"The old house at Berry—your old house—is turned into two cottages. One of those cottages is empty. If you mean to stay in the parish, you can live in it if you like, rent free, for a time—that is, until you get into work again or I find a tenant. If you choose to earn money, you can; there are always jobs to be done by a handy man. If you will not work, you must starve. Now that is all I will do for you. When you are tired of Challacombe, you can go away again. That is my last word, nephew." He turned away, and began to busy himself again among his papers.

"After the accident and the loss of those papers you were senseless for three days. And after that you got paralysis. Why, what was all that, but a judgment on you for your conduct to your own flesh and blood?"

"Rubbish!"

David said no more. Those best acquainted with him would have understood from the expression of his face that his mind was laboriously grappling with a subject not yet clear to him. He was, in fact, just beginning to be aware of a very foxy game which he might play with his uncle, though as yet he only dimly saw the rules of that game. It was a new game, too, quite one of his own invention, and one which would at the same time greatly please and stimulate his uncle, whom he meant to be his adversary. He said nothing more, but he sat doggedly and tried to work out the rules of that game.

Presently Mary came home from church, and with her George Sidcote and Will. They found David sitting with his uncle, but the old man was reading the paper, and David was silent, thinking slowly.

"Mary," said David, "you don't remember me, I suppose?"

"You are my cousin David. Of course I remember you, David, though you are altered a good deal." She gave him her hand. "All the people are talking about your return."

Then George and William shook hands with him cheerfully and brotherly.

"Why, David," said George, "we must rig you out a little better than this. Come home with Will and me."

David turned sullenly to his uncle.

"I've one more thing to say. All of you may hear what that is. He offers me a laborer's cottage to live in, and a laborer's work to do, and a laborer's wage to pay, on my own lands—my own that he stole, this old man here, sitting struck by a judgment in his chair. The next time I come here—you may all take notice and bear witness—the question may not be how little I may be offered, but how much I shall take."

So far had he got in his understanding of the game that was to be played.

"How much," he repeated, with a chuckle—"how much shall I take."

"Dear me!" said his uncle. "This is Will? When did you come down? And how is your writing business? Take David away, George; I am afraid you'll find him very tedious—very tedious indeed."

CHAPTER XII.

We took David away with us; but the old man was right; he was insufferably tedious. To begin with, his mind seemed absorbed; he answered our questions shortly, and showed no curiosity or interest in us, and pretended no pleasure at seeing us again; he was lumpish and moody.

"Mother," said George, "I've brought David Leighan to dinner. He came home last night."

The old lady gave him her hand, without the least appearance of surprise that David had returned in so tattered a condition.

"You are welcome, David," she said. "You will tell us after dinner some of your adventures. I hope you are come to settle again among your own people."

"My own people," he said, "have been so kind that I am likely to settle again among them."

"I will take David upstairs, mother," said George, "for a few minutes; then we shall be ready."

When they came downstairs David presented a little more of his old appearance. There remained a certain slouching manner which suggested the tramp, and the sidelong look, half of suspicion, half of design, which is also common to the tramp; but as yet we knew nothing of his past life and adventures.

When he was dressed he sat down to dinner. Then it was that we made a very painful discovery. Our friend, we found, had entirely forgotten the simplest rules of manners, the very simplest. It was clear that he must have gone down very low indeed in the social scale in order to get at those habits which he now exhibited. Were they acquired in the Pacific, or in Australia, or in America, where, as we afterward learned, David had spent his years of exile? I think in none of these places. He lost his manners because he had lost his self-respect, which is a very different thing from losing your money. During the operation of taking his food he said nothing, nor did he reply if he was addressed; and he ate enough for six men.

After dinner George and I took chairs with us, and sat in the old-fashioned garden of Sidcote, under a gnarled and ancient apple tree.

"Our David," I said, "was always inclined to be loutish. He has been developing and cultivating that gift for six years—with a pleasing result."

"There is something on his mind," said George. "Perhaps he will tell us what it is; perhaps not. David was never particularly open about himself. Strange that he should begin by looking for his uncle's grave! Why did he think that he was dead?"

"He believed what he hoped, no doubt."

"In the evening, Harry Rabjahns tells me, he had a kind of fit—a hysterical fit of laughing and crying—in the inn."

"That was perhaps because he had learned that his uncle was still alive." This was indeed the case, though not in the sense I intended.

"And this morning, the first day of his return, he begins with a row with his uncle. Well, there is going to be mischief at Gratnor."

"Why, what mischief can there be?"

"I don't know. David went away cursing his uncle. After six years he comes back cursing him again. When a man broods over a wrong for six years, mischief does generally follow. First of all, the old man will do nothing for him. Do you understand that? There was a solid obstinacy in his eyes while he listened to David. Nothing is to be got out of him. What will David do?"

"He will go away again, I suppose, unless he takes farm work."

"David is as obstinate as his uncle. And he is not altogether a fool. There will be mischief."

"George, old man, I return to my old thought. If you and Mary marry without old Dan's consent, her fortune goes to David. Does David know?"

"I should think not."

"To which of the two would the old man prefer to hand over that money?"

"To Mary, certainly."

"So I think. Then don't you see that some good may come out of the business after all?"

"It may come, but too late to save Sidcote. He means to have Sidcote. My days here are numbered. Well, it is a pity after five hundred years"—he looked around at the inheritance about to pass away from him—only a farm of three hundred acres, but his father's and his great-grandfather's—and he was silent for a moment. "As for work, what would I grudge if I could keep the old place! But I know that over at Gratnor there sits, watching and waiting his chance, the man who means to have my land, and will have it before the end of the year."

"Patience, George. Anything may happen."

"He is a crafty and a dangerous man, Will. We can say here what we cannot say in Mary's presence. He is more crafty and more dangerous now that he is paralyzed and cannot get about among his fields than he was in the old days. He cannot get at me by the same arts as he employed for David. He cannot persuade me to drink, and to sign agreements and borrow money. But the bad times have done for me what drink did for David."

So we talked away the afternoon in a rather gloomy spirit. Life is no more free from sharks in the country than in the town; there are in Arcadia, as well as in London, vultures, beasts, and birds of prey, who sit and watch their chance to rend the helpless.

"And so," he said, summing up, "I shall have to part with the old family place, and begin in the world again; go out as David went out, and return, perhaps, as he returned."

"No, George; some things are possible, but not probable. That you should come back as David has come back is not possible."

At that moment the man of whom we spoke came slowly out of the house, rubbing his eyes.

"When you are among the 'blacks," he said, "you never get enough to eat."

"What are you going to do now you are come home, David?"

"I will tell you, George, in a day or two. The old man says he will do nothing for me—we'll see to that presently. He's turned the old farm house at Berry into two cottages, and the buildings are falling to pieces. Says I can take up my quarters in one of the cottages, if I like; that is liberal, isn't it? And I am to earn my living how I can; that's generous, isn't it?"

"Try conciliation, David."

"No, Will; I think I know a better plan than conciliation."

CHAPTER XIII.

This was all that David told us. We saw, indeed, very little of him after this day. He took what we gave him without a word of thanks, and he did not pretend the least interest in either of us or our doings or our welfare. Yet he had known both of us all his life, and he was but five or six years older. A strange return! Knowing now all that I know, I am certain that he was dazed and confounded, first at finding his uncle alive, and next at the reception he met with. He was thinking of these things and of that new plan of his, yet imperfect, by which he could wreak revenge upon his uncle. This made him appear duller and more stupid than was his nature.

We sat waiting for more experiences, but none came. How, for instance, one would have been pleased to inquire, came an honest Devonshire man to consort with a gang of fellows who had all "done something," and were roving and tramping about the country ready to do something else. Before David lost his head he used to drink, but not with rogues and tramps. Yet now he confessed without any shame to having been their companion—a tramp and vagabond himself, and the associate of rogues. By what process does a man descend so low in the short space of two or three weeks as to join such a company? I looked curiously at his face; it was weather-beaten and bronzed, but there was no further revelation in the lowering and moody look.

"I dare say," he once said, "that you were surprised when I came to look for his grave?"

"It is not usual," I said, "to ask for the graves of living men."

"I was so certain that he was dead," he explained, "that I never thought to ask. Quite certain I was; why"—here he stopped abruptly—"I was so certain that I was going to ask what it was he died of. Yes; I wanted to know how he was killed."

"You said some one told you that he was dead. Who was that?"

"I will tell you now—not that you will believe me; but it is true. He told me himself that he was dead."

"I do not say, David, that this is impossible, because men may do anything. Permit me to remark, however, that you were in America, and your uncle was in England. That must have made it difficult for your uncle to talk with you."

"That is so," he replied. "What I mean is, that every night—it began after I'd been in New York and got through my money—every night, after I went to sleep, his ghost used to come and sit on my bed. 'David,' he said, 'I'm dead.' A lot more he said that you don't want to hear. 'David,' come home quick,' he said. 'David, I'll never leave you in peace until you do come home,' he said. Every night, mind you. Not once now and again, but every night. That's the reason why I came home. The ghost has left off coming now."

"This is truly wonderful."

"What did hed o it for?" asked David, angrily. "He'd got my land. Well, as for—as for—what happened, my score wasn't paid off by that."

"What did happen?"

"Never mind. He'd got my land still; and I was a tramp. What did he want to get by it?"

"You don't mean, David, that your uncle deliberately haunted you every night? No one ever heard of a living man's ghost haunting another living man. A dead man's ghost may haunt a living man, perhaps, though I am not prepared to back that statement with any experiences of my own. Perhaps, too, a living man's ghost may haunt a dead man; that would be only fair. Turn and turn about, you see. But for a live uncle to haunt a live nephew—no, David, no."

"He is crafty enough for anything. I don't care who done it," said David, "it was done. Every night it was done. And that's why I came home again. And since he's fetched me home on a fool's errand, he's got to keep me."

"But it wasn't his fault that the ghost came. Man alive! he wanted his own ghost for himself. Consider, he couldn't get on without it!"

"He brought me home, and he's got to keep me," said David, doggedly. Then he slowly slouched away.

"He is going to the inn," said George. "Will, there is something uncanny about the man. Why should he have this horrible haunting dream every night?"

"Remorse for a crime which he wished he had committed, perhaps. An odd combination, but possible. If he had murdered his uncle he might have been haunted in this way. Wishes he had murdered him, you see. Imagination supplies the rest."

(To be continued.)

WALKED 5,000 MILES IN YEAR.

Businessman Who Performed the Feat Easily.

On Jan. 1, 1903, I conceived the idea of walking 5,000 miles before the expiration of the year, says a writer in Outing. The object was not to achieve any unusual feat nor to accomplish any conspicious performance. The underlying motive was, rather, to insure a plan by which regular and systematic exercise could be obtained.

To travel this distance it was necessary to cover an average of 14 miles a day. Now, 14 miles for a day's walk is well within the compass of the ordinary man. But an occasional walk of this length is one thing, the sustained effort, day after day through the year, is another.

Let me answer the question by saying that at the end of the year I had completed a distance on foot of 5,205 miles, a daily average of 14¼ miles. The stipulated 5,000 miles were finished on Dec. 16, but an additional 200 miles were covered in order that each of the 52 weeks of the year might claim an average distance traversed of 100 miles.

I set out upon my enterprise with the knowledge that it was incumbent upon me to maintain a daily average of 14 miles, and I made it a rule, when practicable, of keeping about the average, so as to have something in hand to meet the emergencies which were almost certain to arise. That they did arise was shown by the fact that for 15 days in the year, owing to sickness, lameness and railway traveling, no walking whatever could be indulged in. The inability to utilize these 15 days was equal to a loss of over 200 miles. It will, therefore, be seen that, under the circumstances named, it was imperative on many occasions, to exceed the distance of 14 miles a day in order to preserve the average.

At the beginning of my walk my weight was 192 pounds in street clothes, while at the end of it my weight was 178 pounds. This loss of 14 pounds was in every way acceptable. The avoirdupois lost was only redundant weight, and I felt, as a result, more active, stronger and harder. In the matter of health, I felt decidedly better than I had done for several years.

Her Sweet Way.

Church—I suppose you let your wife have her own sweet way?

Gotham—Oh, yes; I like but one lump of sugar in my coffee, but she insists on putting in two.—Yonkers Statesman.

Not a Capitalist.

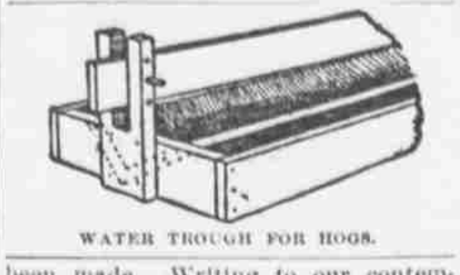
Lady—What? You've just come out of prison? I wonder you are not ashamed to own it.

Ne'er-do-Well—Well, I don't own it, lady—I only wish I did. I was merely a lodger.—Chicago Journal.

FARMERS' CORNER

Clean Water for Hogs.

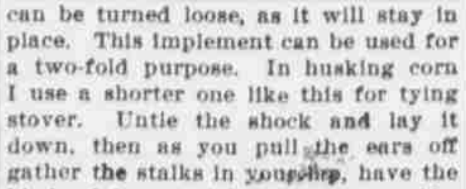
How to provide clean water for the hog is one of the problems. It is difficult to devise any means by which water can be kept before the swine at all times and yet be so arranged that the hogs will not wallow in it. It appears, however, as though a valuable suggestion looking to the solution of this point has been made in a late issue of the Iowa Homestead by a Kansas farmer who suggests a plan from which the accompanying cut has been made. Writing to our contemporary this man says:


WATER TROUGH FOR HOGS.

"It is my opinion that many of the maladies and much of the fatalities among hogs is due to carelessness on the part of the owner by which the hog is compelled to take into his system large quantities of filth in his drinking water. I know where there are wallowing places it is indeed a problem to prevent this, because if there is one thing which a hog delights in more than another it is to bathe himself in mud and then try to dry it off in the drinking trough, and he generally succeeds quite well. And a bunch of them can usually put three or four inches of mud in the bottom of a trough in a single week. I enclose you a drawing illustrating the plan that I have used for some time in trying to keep my troughs clean. The trough in this case is made out of two planks, one 2x8 and the other 2x6, a piece of eight-inch plank 15 inches long nailed on each end. To this in turn two other planks are nailed, thus furnishing an agency for scraping off considerable mud from the hogs while they are drinking. I then nail on an upright, as is indicated in the illustration, mortised out so that a plank may be raised or lowered directly above the center of the trough, the height depending upon the size of the hogs that have access to the trough. I acknowledge that it takes a little labor to make troughs of this kind, but where one has a big bunch of hogs I believe that he can save the price of his material and labor almost every day."

Corn Shock Binder.

I have seen two articles of late telling how to tie corn in the shock. Will give my way, which I believe to be more rapid than either the former articles teach. The accompanying cuts will give the idea at a glance. I take a curved stick (the end of a buggy shaft is best) about 30 inches long. Bore a half-inch hole 3 inches from the larger end and put through it a piece of rope 12 inches long and tie the ends together, forming a ring or loop. Into this loop tie a piece of rope 3½ feet long, or longer if very large shocks are to be tied. To the other end of this rope tie a 4-inch ring made of ½-inch rod (I use an old breeching ring). This makes the compressor complete as shown at Fig. 1. In tying the shock take the stick in your right hand and throw the rope and ring around the shock. Catch ring in left hand and slip stick through it as far as you can, then bring stick to the right until other end passes through the ring, as shown at Fig. 2, when the shock is ready for tying and the compressor can be turned loose, as it will stay in place. This implement can be used for a two-fold purpose. In husking corn I use a shorter one like this for tying stover. Untie the shock and lay it down, then as you pull the ears off gather the stalks in your lap, have the binder lying straight out at your side, and when you get an armful lay the stover across the rope, pick up the ring in one hand and the stick in the other, slip ring over end of stick and slip down until entire stick has passed through the ring the same as in tying shocks. Tie twine around the bundle, which can then be reshocked if not ready to haul. This way takes a little more time at first, but saves time and trouble when you come to haul, and the stover will take less room in the shed.—J. H. Freeman.


CORN SHOCK BINDER.

Sod-Bound Fruit Trees.

Sod-bound trees are not very common, but they are to be met with. When a tree has made a good growth and has spread out its top to cover its feet there is little danger of its becoming sod-bound, for the branches of the tree catch most of the sunshine and the grass growth below is meager.

The sod-bound condition comes when the tree is either very young or so old that the leaves are thin and few. The young tree that is set in grass ground and has never obtained a very good hold of the ground is the one most likely to become sod-bound, which means that the roots of the grass have possession of the soil and are taking most of the plant food and moisture. Such a tree can be relieved only by digging out the grass and giving its roots the entire use of the ground.

Goats or Sheep.

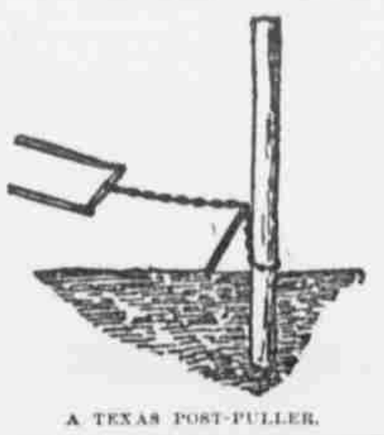
The Angora goat certainly has not yet become very popular in New England. There are a few small flocks, but those who have them seem less enthusiastic than they were two or three years ago, and their neighbors do not seem anxious to invest in them. In Texas and some other States of the South and Northwest they appear to give better satisfaction. Reports from many sections in the Eastern States show an increased interest in sheep and many fine flocks can be found, especially of the larger English mutton breeds. Vermont seems to stand by her Merinos, as she properly should, for they have attained a high reputation and have sold at high prices, but even in that State may be found good flocks of Oxford, Shropshire and Hampshire, and these seem to be the favorites with those who are starting new flocks or those who have flocks of mixed breeds that they wish to improve by crossing with a pure-bred ram of a larger breed. Let the good work go on, until New England has as many sheep in proportion to population as were here a century ago.

Doesn't Pay to Coddle Alfalfa.

If an alfalfa field is in bad condition it is usually best to plow up and re-seed. It scarcely ever pays, at least where irrigation is practiced, to coddle a poor stand of alfalfa. Many growers recommend disking every spring, even when the stand is good, and some have even found it a paying practice to disk after each cutting. Such disking will often prevent the encroachment of weeds. In the Eastern States alfalfa fields sometimes suffer a check in their growth, tend to turn yellow and otherwise show a sickly condition. Oftentimes this condition is accompanied by an attack of alfalfa rust or spot disease. The best remedy for such a condition is to mow the field. The vigorous growth thus induced may overcome the diseased condition.

Way to Pull Posts.

S. W. Leonard says in Farm and Ranch: "I will give a plan for pulling up old fence posts. Take a chain and put it around post close to the ground. Take a piece of plank, say 2 feet long, 2 inches thick and 8 inches wide; set bottom end about 1 foot from post; let chain come up over plank and lean plank toward post. Fasten single-tree to end of chain and when horses pull the post will come straight up."


A TEXAS POST-PULLER.

The Squab Fad.

The inflated boom for squab raising has nearly passed off, and yet the legitimate squab plants continue in business. It is with this branch of the poultry industry just exactly as it is with other branches, the egg business, the duck industry, the Belgian hare, etc. Every little while there is a big stir made about one of these enterprises, creating quite a fever for a time. This gradually subsides, and that particular business settles down to its proper basis, and many who keep on in their usual way, raising squabs, pullets for laying, ducks, etc., continue to secure, not untold wealth, but fair profits from their operations.

Smut Attacks Late Sown Grain.

Early sowing of cereals when the soil temperature is low gave in experiments with barley, oats and spring wheat less smut than late sowings. In a similar manner, less smut will be found on those cereals grown on a cold clay soil than on a loamy soil, and, as a rule, the greatest amount of disease will be found in cereals grown on sandy humus soils. A high temperature of the soil during the first week after sowing favors the germination of the smut pores, and consequently the infection of the cereals. Cereals will germinate and begin their growth at a temperature below that at which the fungus can develop.—New England Homestead.

Why Strawberry Plants Die.

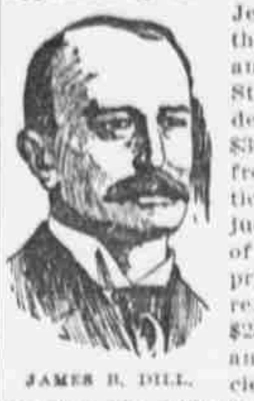
Many strawberry plants die because they are kept too long after being dug before transplanting. Some die because set too deep and the crown or center of the plant is covered. But in a dry time more plants die from a lack of pressure on the soil about the roots than from all other causes. In a wet season they will live if left on top of the soil with no earth to cover the roots. Plants out of the ground are like fish out of water. Therefore the sooner they are in their natural element the lower the death rate.

Keeping the Soil Fertile.

Prof. Hopkins suggests: If the soil is acid or sour, apply lime to it to make it sweet. If the soil is poor in nitrogen only, grow clover or some other legume which has the power to secure nitrogen from the air. If the soil is poor in phosphorus only, apply bone-meal or some other form of phosphorus. If the soil is poor in potassium only, apply potassium chloride or some other form of potassium.

IN THE PUBLIC EYE

James B. Dill, one of the foremost corporation lawyers of America, was appointed by Governor Stokes of New Jersey a judge of the Court of Errors and Appeals of the State. He surrenders an income of $300,000 a year from his law practice to become a judge with a salary of $3,000. His last private act was to refuse a retainer of $25,000 offered by an insurance financier. Within twenty days Mr. Dill placed on file in Albany his resignation as director in ninety-one companies of the State of New York. In New Jersey he has withdrawn from many more corporations. He has notified clients that he can no longer serve them. Henceforth his duty is to the State. On this account the Standard Oil Company, the steel trust and the Public Service Corporation filed written protests with the Governor and opposed the appointment. Mr. Dill's fees have been enormous. The career of this famous corporation lawyer in the judge's chair will be subjected to the closest scrutiny.


JAMES B. DILL.

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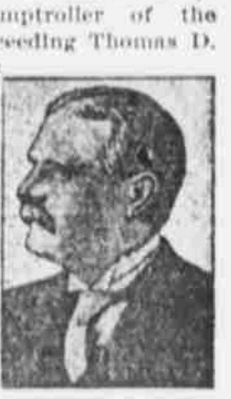
William A. Day, who has been appointed acting comptroller of the Equitable Life, succeeding Thomas D. Jordan, who was ousted, has been special assistant to the Attorney General of the United States several years, and since 1903 has been in charge of the prosecution of trust cases. For a time he also was an auditor in the treasury department. Mr. Day formerly lived at Danville, Ill. He was a delegate to the Democratic National Convention of 1884, and is credited with having discovered at that time the plot between Tammany and General Benjamin F. Butler to stampede the convention for Hendricks. Mr. Day gave timely warning of the scheme to William C. Whitney and Daniel Manning, and he was rewarded with a government office.


WILLIAM A. DAY.

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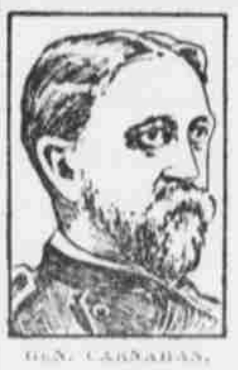
General James R. Carnahan, major general of the Uniform Rank, Knights of Pythias, died recently at his home in Indianapolis. James R. Carnahan was born at Rayton, Ind., Nov. 18, 1841. When the Civil War broke out he joined the late General Lew Wallace's zouaves as a private. Later he joined the Eighty-sixth Indiana Regiment. After the war he studied law and practiced a number of years at Lafayette. He joined the Knights of Pythias in 1874 at Lafayette and was elected grand chancellor of Indiana in 1880. He was regarded as the founder of the uniform rank, and was elected its first major general in 1884, which position he held at the time of his death. He was past department commander of the G. A. R. General Carnahan was appointed a member of the visiting committee to West Point military academy last year by President Roosevelt and delivered an address there.


GEN. CARNAHAN.

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James Van Alen, the expatriated American, is said to have exhibited his love for lavish expenditure of money by buying forty hats for some of his women friends at the recent opening of Countess -abricotti's millinery shop in London.

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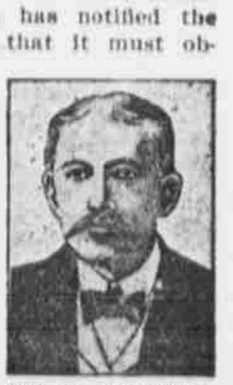
William Woodville Rockhill, minister to China, who has notified the Pekin government that it must observe treaty stipulations and frown on the boycott on American goods, is a diplomat of wide experience. He has served as secretary of legation at Pekin, was charge d'affaires in Korea, has been minister to Greece, Roumania and Servia, also first assistant Secretary of State. At the congress at Pekin, following the Boxer uprising, he was United States plenipotentiary and signed the final protocol. Mr. Rockhill has traveled extensively in the far East. Among other official positions that he has held was that of director of the bureau of American republics.


WM. W. ROCKHILL.

-:—:-

Camille Flammarion's new perpetual calendar starts the year at the vernal equinox, March 21. Every quarter should contain two months of thirty days and one month of thirty-one days. This would make 354 days. The same dates would occur on the same days of the week and one calendar would last a lifetime.

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Prof. A. G. Wilkinson is dean of the patent office examining corps at Washington, having been in charge since 1868. He was graduated in 1856 from Yale.