THE CHARITY GIRL

By EFFIE A. ROWLANDS

CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

He immediately sent the girl to a Parisian school, and then he set about trying to force his way into the ranks of the upper ten. His money, his political views, and his power, as determined by the fact of his being a large employer of labor, and, therefore, of controlling a large percentage of votes, brought about an acquaintance, and then a friendship, with Sir Edwin Gascoigne, an impecunious but most aristocratic baronet. By Sir Edwin's aid, Mr. Fraser was returned in the Conservative cause, and his step planted on the first rung of the ladder. He was a decidedly clever man, and although too mean and niggardly to be altogether popular, he was not long in finding some friends. Among these, however, could not be classed Constance Gascoigne, Sir Edward's second and only surviving daughter. Miss Gascoigne was a very beautiful girl, but she had won the reputation of having a bitter and unkind tongue. Every one knew that Constance Gascoigne did not share in her father's infatuation for Mr. Fraser, and yet she electrified the whole social world by suddenly becoming his wife. There was the nine days' gossip, and then the Fraser marriage became a thing of the past, although there were some of Constance's women friends who still discussed the subject.

"There has been something mysterious about the girl for the last two years!" cried Mrs. Fanfare, the biggest scandal-monger of the time, "and I for one always thought that young Frank Anstruther's sudden death had a great deal to do with it. Constance was madly in love with him, poor girl! Well, she has done very well in one sense. This Fraser man is rolling in money—positively rolling, my dear!"

In a vague, yet uncertain, way Sheila felt that it was only through her stepmother's popularity and undoubted social position that she was received and welcomed as the friend of the county families around the neighborhood, and possessed the entree of the best houses in London when they stayed there for the season; and, bearing this in mind, it was only natural she should be very careful to keep on good terms with one who was so very indispensable to her. Deep down in the girl's shallow pretense of a heart there lurked a rankling jealousy for the delicate, aristocratic, still beautiful woman who had been her father's wife. Sheila had never quite understood Constance Fraser, and she was just a little bit afraid of her; she knew how bitter the sweet, refined voice could ring sometimes, and how contemptuously the pale lips could curve when occasion merited it. She felt vaguely that Mrs. Fraser knew her at her exact worth; and yet the young stepmother had never, by word or sign, been anything but kind and affectionately considerate to the girl whose guardian she was.

Sheila turned away from the mirror with a frown, and throwing herself on her lace-trimmed pillow, again took up her letters. The frown vanished as she read the warm and pressing invitations from two or three of the best houses around to luncheon, dinner, tea, and the like.

"Bah! I am a fool!" she said to herself, and she laughed shortly. "I was only half awake just now, and what if this girl is pretty, how does that affect me? I am Miss Fraser, of Dinglewood, and heiress to a good hundred thousand pounds. I don't think I need trouble my head about a servant maid's face!" She read through the rest of her letters, and then rang her bell sharply. "Why doesn't the girl come back? I must get up, or Jack will be off before I have half dressed!"

The bell rang sharply in the corridor outside, but Audrey neither understood nor heeded its purpose. She was very frightened, and very full of pity at that particular moment.

She had gone direct, as Miss Fraser had commanded her, to Mrs. Fraser's room; she knew it, because Bircham had pointed it out to her the evening before; she had knocked gently, and on receiving an answer, she had gone timidly in. The room was large, airy and pretty; it was hung with dainty chintz, and was, compared to Sheila's magnificent apartment, simple beyond description; yet Audrey felt, in a sudden and indescribable way, that she liked it much better; it was so fresh and dainty looking, and there was plenty of room to move about. A fire was burning brightly, and a large bowl of daffodils and tulips made a spot of color in the window. A woman, in a white mob cap and large apron, was just placing a tray by the bedside, and Audrey, raising her eyes very nervously, saw a delicate, lovely face lying on the pillow.

"Who is it, Marshall?" inquired Mrs. Fraser in a low, but singularly sweet voice.

"If you please, I—I am come from Miss Fraser."

Audrey stammered out the message as easily as she could. She was not exactly frightened, and yet her heart was fluttering, for she felt rather than saw that Mrs. Fraser's eyes were fixed upon her. Marshall was replying in a brisk yet respectful way when her mistress stopped her. She stretched out a fragile hand, white as snow, toward the girl.

"Who are you?" she asked in eager, hurried tones. "Where do you come from? Come nearer! Come close! I want to see your face. I——"

"If you please, ma'am, this is Miss Fraser's new maid as Mrs. Thorngate 'as got for her," said Marshall.

Mrs. Fraser had pushed herself up in bed; her deep blue eyes were shining like stars, and a rush of color had come into her white cheeks. Involuntarily Audrey had drawn nearer, and had put her small, work-stained fingers into those other delicate ones. Mrs. Fraser pushed the girl round with her face to the light, paused for an instant, and then gave one broken, sobbing cry:

"Merciful heavens! It is—it is——"

She struggled with her breath, stretched out her two hands as though to some unseen yet precious protector, and then gave an inarticulate moan and dropped back on her pillow insensible. Audrey, trembling in every limb, hastened to obey Marshall, as she directed her to bring some eau-de-cologne and salts from the large chintz-hung dressing table; she did not know why, but the sight of Mrs. Fraser's death-like face pained her beyond description. Marshall evidently was not unused to this sign of weakness in her mistress.

"She'd one of her bad nights," Audrey heard her mutter; "poor lamb! I knew it when I first saw her this morning. Poor Miss Constance! Poor, pretty Miss Constance!"

She whisked away a tear while she rubbed some of the scent across the pale brow, and held the salts to the delicate nostrils.

"I've been with her ever since she were a child," she said, huskily, to Audrey, who stood with her hands tightly clasped together; "and she'll never be nothing to me but Miss Constance, poor dear!"

"Is—is she always ill?" Why was it that Audrey could not control her voice?

Marshall nodded her head, and just then the bell pealed through the corridor again, and Mrs. Fraser opened her thickly fringed eyes with a start and looked blankly around her. Marshall motioned Audrey away. Audrey reluctantly withdrew her gaze from that sweet, suffering face, and with the memory of those deep blue eyes clinging to her, she returned to her mistress' room.

"Another fainting fit?" observed Sheila, impatiently. "Dear me, how tiresome! I suppose she won't be able to go to the Glaston hunt ball to-night. Maxse, you seem to me inclined to dawdle. I can't have lazy people about me. Bircham, my white serge tea gown. I suppose the breakfast gong has sounded?"

"Yes, miss, ten minutes ago; and I met his lordship a-goin' down as I come up. You'll just have time to run into Mrs. Fraser's room and——"

"I shall have nothing of the kind," retorted Sheila stamping her foot impatiently, as Audrey's cold fingers moved slowly in their task of buttoning her dainty shoe straps. "You must go in and tell Mrs. Fraser I will see her after breakfast. Bircham, this girl is simply a clumsy fool! If you can't teach her to manage better than this she must go!"

Audrey's eyes were blinded with hot tears. She was doing her very best, but Sheila had no pity for her awkwardness, and could willingly have kicked her for looking so beautiful.

CHAPTER V.

"What time do we start?" Sheila Fraser asked Lord John, as breakfast drew to an end.

She was not alone with the young man; an elderly lady, a poor relative of her mother's, was present. Had Sheila been left to her own inclinations, this quiet, grim, and undoubtedly middle-class Mrs. Watson would never have been given a place in her home; but Constance Fraser had spoken so direct and to the point on this subject that her stepdaughter had given in, and offered in as gracious a manner as she could the post of housekeeper to this impoverished connection.

"Do you seriously think of going to-day?" he laughed, turning to the girl, who looked very fresh and pretty in her picturesquely draped white serge gown.

"Why not?" demanded Sheila.

"Remember the ball."

"Oh, the ball!" with an airy laugh. "My dear Lord John, I could follow the hounds for a week at a time, and then dance through two balls."

"Sheila has excellent health," Mrs. Watson remarked, monotonously.

Sheila rose abruptly. How slow their friendship advanced. He was perfectly aware that it was his mother's most earnest desire to see Sheila Fraser his wife, but he was equally well aware that he had no such desire himself. He was in no hurry to be married, and he certainly would never marry for money.

All this, however, he kept to himself, and although he was so intimate with the heiress of Dinglewood, he had never by word or deed given either Sheila or any one else reason to suppose that he held any deper feeling for the girl than that of an ordinary friend.

Later Sheila had some dinner in her room, having ascertained that Mrs. Fraser would be well enough to accompany her to the ball; and when the time came she arrayed herself in her magnificent diamonds, and even gave "the charity girl" a smile, as Audrey, overcome with the brilliant spectacle, put her hands together, and exclaimed aloud with delighted admiration.

"Let Maxse sit up for me, Bircham," she ordered, and then she swept away and joined Mrs. Fraser's tall, elegant figure in the hall below.

"My mistress ought not to have gone out to-night! It is enough to kill her!" exclaimed Marshall in indignation. "If I had my way, I'd have told Miss Fraser pretty plain what I think of her, dragging a poor, sick, suffering creature out a cold night like this, and all for her selfishness! It's heartless, that's what I call it!"

Bircham made no reply, although she overheard this speech; but Audrey felt her heart beating with sympathy, too. How fragile and ill Mrs. Fraser looked! Surely Miss Fraser could not have known how weak she was!

"Now, keep up the fire, and you may go to sleep, if you like," Bircham said. "See that Miss Sheila's slippers are warm, and everything out that she wants. They'll ring the bell when they come, but I don't expect they'll be home till quite morning."

Aurrey glanced at the clock and sighed wearily; she sat down timidly on one of the richly covered chairs, and dictated to herself that she must not and should not go to sleep. Needless to say, before half an hour had gone, soothed by the warmth, the luxurious cushions at her back, and lulled by the silvery ticking of the clock, she was fast asleep, dreaming of Jean. All at once she was awakened, a bell went pealing through the silent house. She started from her cozy nook and rubbed her eyes. Nearly half past twelve! They were home early. She stood at attention, and went to open the door for Miss Fraser. There seemed to be some little confusion, and then Audrey heard a frank, determined voice.

"I tell you I'm going to carry you upstairs. I will not leave you till I see you safe in your room."

There was some murmured protest, and then Audrey perceived Jack Glendurwood, coming along as easily as possible, carrying Mrs. Fraser's slight form in his arms. He saw the girl in an instant.

"Which is the room?" he asked, quick to read and appreciate the sympathy in her great blue eyes.

She led the way and opened the door. Marshall was dozing by the fire.

"What is it?" she cried, starting up hurriedly; then, as she grasped the situation, "Ah, Miss Constance, I knew how it would be; you weren't fit for it, my lamb! Bring her here, my lord. I'm right thankful to you for carrying her up; she's as weak as an infant, that's what she is."

"Don't believe her, Jack," said Constance Fraser in her sweet, feeble voice.

She was lying back in a great wide chair, looking inexpressibly beautiful, though as white as a ghost, in her long, black velvet dress, with the rich Valenciennes lace about the neck.

Jack Glendurwood folded his arms and looked down at her gravely.

"Promise to go to bed at once," he said. "I shall not leave until I hear you are at rest."

"At rest?" A faint, bitter smile flickered across the pale lips, and then Mrs. Fraser stretched out her hand. "Good-night, my friend. Heaven bless you and thank you for your loving care of me. I—I am not worth it, Jack, dear; I am not worth it."

For answer he bent down and kissed the white hand, and then Mrs. Fraser caught sight of Audrey standing behind.

"It was no dream! It was no myth! Come to me, child! Ah, do not be frightened; I will not harm you. I will only kiss you, and gaze into your face."

Jack Glendurwood had turned with a start, and made way for Audrey to pass him. She move slowly across to that black-robed form and knelt down. She was not frightened, only awed and strangely stirred.

"Lift up your eyes. Ah!" as Audrey obeyed her. "Child! Child! Who are you? What are you, with your face that comes up from the past?" She bent forward and touched the girl's brow with her lips; she clung to the girl's hands and a moan escaped her. Suddenly she released her hold, and her head dropped on her breast.

"Take her away, my lord!" cried Marshall, bending over her mistress. "She has got something on her mind! She has done nothing but talk of this child's face all day. It's only weakness, I fear. Poor Miss Constance!"

"Come," said Jack to Audrey, very gently.

As one in a dream she rose to her feet and followed him out of the room, and then, when she was outside, she burst into a flood of irrepressible, nervous tears, leaning against the wall, heedless of any one or anything but the strange, wild tumult and pain in her breast. Jack stood by in silence, but as her sobs died away he put his hand gently on her shoulder.

"Poor child! Poor little child!" Then, as she lifted her tear-stained, eloquent loveliness to his face, he drew both her hands in his. "Don't cry, child!" he said, quickly, "I—I hate to see you cry. You seem very lonely; you are strange here. Come; shall we strike a bargain? You let me help you yesterday, you must let me help you again. Shall we be friends?"

"Friends, my lord?" she faltered. "You and I! Oh, it cannot be! I am only a servant, a charity girl, and you——"

"Are henceforth the friend of that charity girl," was his answer, and with that he bent and kissed her hands as he had just kissed Constance Fraser's and, with a tender smile and gentle "good-night" went slowly down the stairs and out of the house.

(To be continued.)

NATION OF SALT EATERS.

A Barrel a Year Is Consumed for Every Three Persons.

The United States consumes 26,872,700 barrels of salt annually, or a barrel for every three persons in the land. Last year it went abroad for only 1,151,133 barrels. In 1880 63.5 per cent of the salt used in our country was of home production. Last year 95.7 per cent of the product consumed was produced within the borders of this country. In 1880 the consumption in this country was only 9,384,263 barrels. Thus we see that the people of the United States are using annually three times as much salt as they used twenty-six years ago.

Only 5,961,060 barrels were produced in this country in 1880, and the consumers were forced to go abroad for 3,427,639 barrels. Last year the total production at home was 25,966,122 barrels.

The chief salt-producing States are Michigan and New York. Statistics recently gathered by the government show that the combined output of these two States amounts to more than two-thirds of the total production of the United States.

No attempt has ever been made to ascertain what per cent of the salt consumed in the United States is used for culinary purposes. The annual output is consumed in the industries of meat-packing, fish curing, dairying and the like. The chlorination of gold ores demands a large quantity, and great quantities of salt in the form of brine are used in the manufacture of soda ash, caustic soda and other salts. Salt is cheap. The average price for 1905 was a little over 23 cents a barrel, which is lower than that reported in any previous year. Dry salt, of course, brings a higher price than brine. The average price for dry salt last year was 31.51 cents a barrel.

Strenuous Job.

"Has young Dudeleigh any occupation?" asked the dear girl's mother.

"Indeed he has," replied the dear girl. "He's raising a mustache."

The American Cow.

There are nearly 25,000,000 dairy cows in the United States, and enough other cattle to make a total of over 90,000,000 head, including bulls, oxen, young stock and "flocks and herds which range to the valley free," and all condemned to slaughter. There are less than a million thoroughbred cattle in the country and more than 45,000,000 scrubs. The rest are half or higher grades. About 20,000,000 calves are born annually. The average value of a cow is $22. In Rhode Island, a dairying State, the average is $39.

The cows of the United States yield about 9,000,000,000 gallons of milk a year (watered and unwatered); the butter product is nearly 2,000,000,000 pounds (all grades), and the product of cheese over 300,000,000 pounds. Our cheese industry is making enormous strides. In a short time the output will be 1,000,000,000 pounds. There is one item, a by-product, which is never alluded to when Mistress Cow or Sis Cow is considered. Our gold production is about $81,000,000 a year at present. That is a vast sum of money. Yet the rakings of our cow yards and stalls for the fertilization of crops are estimated to be worth in cold cash eight times as much, or $648,000,000. Such figures are bewildering. They stagger humanity.—New York Press.

Feeding Stock.

Giving the cows coarse food, in order to dispose of such foods, will not add to the quality of the milk, nor the quantity, but it puts the cows to service in converting such materials into manure. A good farmer, however, can not afford to keep a cow simply to make manure. The manure should be considered only as a by-product. To make an animal profitable, not only should the coarse and bulky materials be used, but they should be re-enforced by the best feeding stuffs that can be produced, so as not only to increase the yield, but also render the manure more valuable.

The Farm Garden.

For a farmer to begin gardening with several kinds of each vegetable is to fail with some, as farmers do not, as a rule, give attention to gardening. About one-half of the varieties in many of the seed catalogues could be eliminated with advantage. If the garden is to be a specialty next year, mow off the grass and weeds, burn the ground over to destroy the weed seeds and plow the land whenever favorable for so doing, applying manure liberally and then harrowing it in. Next spring plow the garden again and use only a few varieties of each vegetable, selecting such as may be supposed to be the best.

Charcoal for Pigs and Fowls.

Charcoal is often recommended for pigs and fowls, but it is not generally understood that it is a good feed for any kind of stock, fed with corn or other heating materials. There is an effect from charcoal which corrects the acidity of the stomach, and it rapidly absorbs gases. It is excellent for mixing with the food of animals that are being fattened, experiments showing that the increase of fat is greatest when a proportion of charcoal is allowed.

Shrinkage of Grain.

The shrinkage of corn varies according to the condition of the grain when put into the crib. Cases have been known in which corn lost 20 per cent from shrinkage, the corn being damp. From 8 to 12 per cent is the average, the shrinkage depending upon so many circumstances as to make an exact estimate very difficult, but the rule is to allow 10 per cent.

Developing a New Potato.

During the past season remarkable progress has been made in the cultivation of a new species of potato in the department of Vienne, in France. It originated in Uruguay, and is called the Solanum Commersoni. Amid its new environment in France, and by dint of careful cultivation and selection, it has developed several forms which promise to become fixed, and to possess much value as additions to the food resources of Europe. Among these forms, all springing from one parent species, there are a yellow variety, a white variety, a red variety and a variety not specially characterized by color, all of which possess distinctive shapes and qualities. A fact that particularly interests botanists and cultivators is that these varieties have evidently not yet reached their final settled forms, and the experiments of M. Labergerie in Vienne are closely watched because it is thought that they will throw light upon the unsettled question of the general origin of the potato.

Blackberries and Raspberries.

Considering the neglect given blackberry and raspberry canes in late summer, they pay well in comparison with other crops. If fruit growers will cultivate the canes, clean the ground well of weeds and grass as soon as the berry harvest is over, and apply fertilizer on the land, the effect of the good treatment will be apparent the following year. Weeds and grass rob the canes, and when it is considered that with the canes producing crops for several years in succession, and weeds and grass taking possession between the rows, the land becomes exhausted, the crops fall off and the canes die out.

Don't Neglect to Spray.

All fruit trees should be sprayed without regard to whether they have been attacked by insects or disease or escaped, as it is less labor to prevent attacks than to remedy the evil after it appears. It costs more to repair damage than to ward off danger. In some states, such as California, spraying the trees and vines is enforced by law. If the grower neglects his duty he is considered as one maintaining a public nuisance, and some official is ordered to spray the orchard and add the cost to the tax bill of the negligent owner.

Burning Off the Strawberry Bed.

If the ground is cold the strawberry bed may be burned over, which will clean the surface. This need not be done until later, if preferred, or just before the winter mulch is removed. After the plants have made their growth a mulch of clean straw or salt hay will not only assist to promote their growth, but will protect against drought and also aid in keeping the fruit clean. It is not necessary to cultivate strawberries in early spring, as cultivation disturbs the surface roots, but the bed should be cleaned, however, by fire or raking.

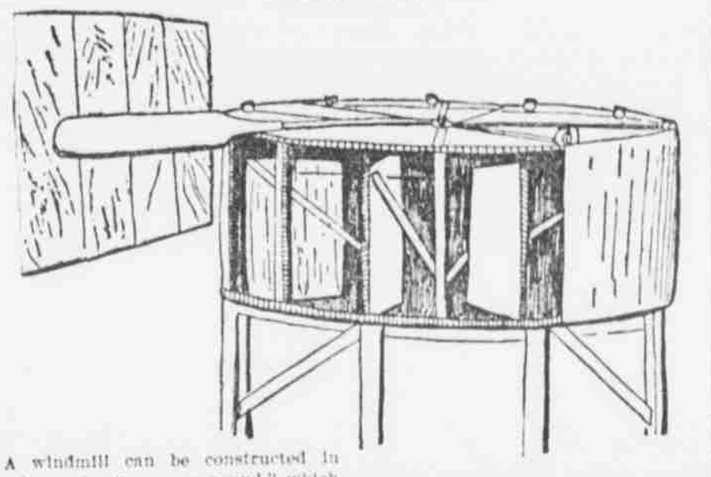
Farm Work in Winter.

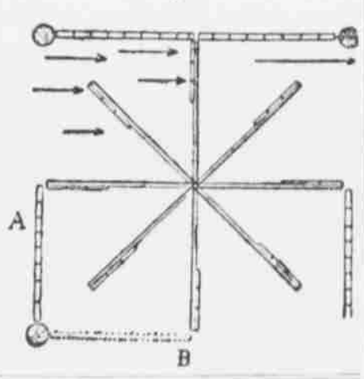
There are many duties on the farm that are performed only during certain seasons, but an amount of preliminary work can be done in winter which will save time in the spring. Not a seed should be planted that has not been examined, and an overhauling of the tools should not be overlooked. Get ready for spring in advance, so as to prepare for hurry during the planting season. The manure heap should also receive attention, as the condition of the manure will largely influence the start of the plants in the spring.

A Good Whitewash.

A good wash for roofs and buildings is as follows: Slake lime in a close box, to prevent the escape of steam, and when slaked pass it through a sieve. To every six quarts of this lime add one quart of rock salt and one gallon of water. After this, boil and skim clean. To every five gallons of this add, by slow degrees, three-quarters of a pound of potash and four quarts of fine sand. Coloring matter may be added if desired. Apply with a paint or whitewash brush.

MERRY GO-ROUND WINDMILL.





A windmill can be constructed in the form of a "merry-go-round," which has the fans revolving about a central axis. On the same axis a semi-circular hood is fixed so that it will expose half the fans and shield the other half. This revolving hood is easily guided by a large vane. Small and medium sized mills can be constructed in this way. The smaller diagram shows the ground plan of a "merry-go-round" on a slightly different principle. The diameter is 20 to 25 feet. Each of the four posts carries a gate, which may be opened or closed to admit or shut out the wind. The arrows indicate the course of the wind through one side, while the gate A shuts it off on the other side.

1555—Bishop Hooper and Dr. Taylor burnt at the stake.

1587—Mary Queen of Scots beheaded.

1592—James Stuart, Earl of Moray, assassinated.

1763—France ceded Canada to Great Britain.

1814—George W. Campbell of Tennessee became Secretary of the United States Treasury.

1832—Great fast on account of the cholera in England.

1841—Sir George Arthur, last lieutenant governor of upper Canada, retired from office.

1849—Pope Pius IX. deposed as temporal sovereign.

1856—Oude annexed to the British territories in India.

1863—Ship Orpheus wrecked off New Zealand coast; 190 lives lost.

1864—Jacksonville, Florida, taken by the Federals.

1865—Gen. Lee made commander-in-chief of the Confederate forces.

1867—Nebraska admitted to statehood.

1872—Lord Mayo, governor general of India, assassinated at Port Blair.

1873—King Amedeus of Spain abdicated.

1875—Edinburgh Theater Royal destroyed by fire.

1880—"Lohengrin" first performed in England....Two hundred lives lost in Llanerch colliery explosion in Wales....Duke of Orleans visited Paris, arrested and imprisoned.

1892—Hotel Royal, New York, burned, with great loss of life....John A. McCall elected president of the New York Life Insurance Company.

1893—United States Senate confirmed the Russian extradition treaty....New York and Boston connected by long-distance telephone....Count de Lesseps and others found guilty of swindling in the Panama scandal trials.

1895—President Cleveland decided boundary dispute between Argentine and Brazil in favor of Brazil.

1897—Union of Greece and Crete proclaimed.

1898—Roman Catholic cathedral at Savannah, Ga., destroyed by fire....President Barrios of Guatemala assassinated.

1900—Gen. Roberts reached the Modder river.

1901—Queen Wilhelmina of Holland wedded Prince Henry of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

1902—Eight million dollar fire in Paterson, N. J.

1904—Main Japanese fleet engaged the Russian ships and batteries at Port Arthur....Japan severed diplomatic relations with Russia.

1905—Soisalon Soinineau, procurator general of Finland, assassinated....Machen and the Groffs convicted of postal frauds in Washington.

Opinions of the Press.

One enjoyable thing about not having any money is the way you can abuse those who have.—New York Press.

Fortunately for the country, its population is increasing more rapidly than the railroads can kill it off.—New York World.

Andrew Carnegie says he would give $200,000,000 for a 10-year lease on life, but the Old Man with the Scythe has no pockets.—New York American.

Crimson snow has been observed in the Canadian Rockies. Hunting parties out that way have a habit of painting things red.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Every Congressman will sit up nights now watching his private seismograph to see whether that $7,500 salary shakes up the home district.—New York Mail.

The assassinations which are reported in Russia with painful frequency are an evil preparation for the parliamentary elections.—New York Tribune.

As yet no patriot has risen in San Francisco to claim that he is responsible for the dismasting of the Japanese training ship bound for Honolulu.—New York World.

We must set our faces rigidly against the proposal to substitute alcohol for gasoline in automobiles. Hard enough to dodge them when they are sober.—New York Herald.

A cable dispatch referring to Mr. Bryce as a mountain climber says he first made the ascent of Mount Ararat. But Noah got there first by an easier route.—New York Globe.

In one of the current magazines Clara S. Ludlow, B. Sc., M. Sc., has an article on "A New American Mosquito." And just when we were trying so hard to become a trifle more optimistic.—Washington Post.

Because of the shortage in the American peanut crop it is proposed to import that national necessity of circus life from foreign shores. Talk about carrying coals to Newcastle, when goobers are carried to Virginia!—New York Tribune.