THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

CHAPTER XII.—(Continued.)

The room was filled with the scum of sea-going humanity; foul smoke from foul pipes floated in choking clouds to the dirt-begrimed ceiling. Now and again, betwixt the shouting and the singing, a young girl, whose presence in such a company turned my heart sick, played upon a harp, and there was a mahogany-faced hag whom the men addressed as "Mother Catch." She seemed to have the eye of a hawk; nor did I escape her glance. She shuffled up to me and stood glaring with her shining eyes for a moment or two, the very presentment of an old-time witch. The glass door again swung open; three men entered through it, and I recognized the three of them in a moment. The first was the Irishman, "Four-Eyes;" the second was the lantern-jawed Scotsman, who had been addressed in Paris as "Dick the Ranter;" the third was "Roaring John," into whose face Dan had emptied the contents of his duck gun three days before. The ruffian had his mouth all bound in a bloody rag, but he was in nowise depressed; and, although the gun had stopped his speech, he smacked Paolo on the back when he greeted him.

One of the men started a wild dance. It was an extraordinary exhibition, and it pleased the men about so that they roared with delight. I was watching it, but my attention was suddenly diverted by the sense that something under a near table was pulling at my leg. I looked down quickly, and saw a strange sight: it was the black face of the lad Splinters, who had been treated so brutally in Paris. He, crouching under the table, was making signs to me, earnest, meaning signs, so that without any betrayal I leaned my head down as though upon my hands, and spoke to him:

"What is it, lad?" I asked in a whisper. "What do you want to say?"

"Don't stop here, sir!" he answered in a state of great agitation. "They know you, and are going to kill you!"

He said no more, crawling away at once; but he left me hot with fear. I left my seat, and pushed amongst the men, passing nearer and nearer to the street, until at last I was at the very portal itself. Then I saw that a change had been made while I had been sitting. The doors of glass were wide open, but the way to the street without was no longer clear—an iron curtain had been drawn across the entrance.

This was a terrible discovery. It seemed to me that the iron door had been closed for an especial purpose. I knew, however, that when the dance was over some of the audience would wish to go out, and so I waited by the curtain. The men were then about to push their tables to the center again, but the hag raised her voice and cried:

"As you are, my pretty gentlemen; it's only the first party ye've been treated to. No, no; ye don't have the door drawn yet awhile. Good boys, all of ye, there's work to do; ho! ho! work to do."

Somehow, all the men immediately around me slunk away, and I found myself standing quite alone, with many staring at me. The four men whom most I feared had turned their backs, but the rest of the assembly had eyes only for the terrible woman and for myself. Presently the discordant music began again. The hag moved with a hobble and a jig to the far end of the room, and began to come straight down to the door whereby I stood. I know not what presentiment forewarned me to beware as the creature drew near. I had my revolver in my pocket, but had I shown it twenty barrels would have answered the folly. There was nothing to do but to face the screeching woman; and this I did.

At the last, the old witch, who had danced for some moments at a distance of ten paces from the spot where I stood, became as one possessed. She uttered a piercing shiek, and hurled herself almost on me. In that instant I remember seeing the three men with Paolo suddenly rise to their feet, while the other in the room called out in their excitement. But the hag herself drew from her breast something that she had concealed there; and, as she stood within a yard of me, she brought it crash upon my head, and all my senses left me.

CHAPTER XIII.

When I regained consciousness it was because rain beat upon my face, a drizzling warm rain of late summer, and there was spray from a fresh sea. For some minutes I set myself to ask where I was; but I knew that I was bound at the left hand and at my feet, and when I raised my head, I saw that I lay in an open boat, but my feet were towards the stern of it, and I could see nothing of the power which moved the boat or of the scene about us.

The boat in which I lay was painted white, and was of elegant build. She had all the fine lines of a yacht's jolly-boat; and when I raised my head I could see that her fittings had been put in only at great expense. The silence was broken at last by a shout, and the boat ceased to move.

"All hands, make sail!" cried someone; and after that I heard the "yo-heave" of the men hauling, as I judged, at a mainsail. The second order, "Sheets home!" proved to me that I was behind a sailing ship, perhaps a yacht. There came a sudden shout from the deck of the ship.

"Ho, Bill, is the young 'un gone?"

"No, my hearty."

And then I heard a voice I knew, the voice of the Irishman, "Four-Eyes."

"Is it the bal ye're mindin? Throw him a sheet, one av yer; it's mesilf that's not bringing the guvnor a dead body when he wants a live one!"

They tried to throw me a sheet as the man had ordered, and I heard it fall in the water at my head. I pondered long on the remark of the Irishman, that the "guvnor" wanted me alive. It was quite clear that my life was safe from these men until they reached their chief.

The rain ceased and the sun shone, drying my clothes upon me. I struggled and in doing so I found that the ropes binding my right arm were tied with common hitches; and my experience as a yachtsman let me get free of them with very little trouble. I did not sit up at once, but turned my head to look at the boat which towed me, and saw that she was a barque-rigged yacht after the American fashion; her name Labrador being conspicuous across her stern. My boat was towed by a double hawser, but no man watched me, and I lay down again reassured. The hope of escape was already in my head, for I judged that we could not be far out from New York. It occurred to me that if they would only let me be until night I could get my left hand free.

Finally there was a change in the monotony of the scene. I heard an order to heave the barque to. I felt all motion cease, and then someone hauling at the hawser, so that the jolly-boat was pulled against the side of the bigger ship; and, looking up, I saw half a dozen of Black's gang watching me from the quarter-deck. Then a ladder was put over the bulwark, and "Four-Eyes" came down it with a great can of steaming stuff. He stepped off the ladder to the stern seat, and then bent over me. But I saw this only, that he had a knife in his belt; and I made up my mind in a moment to get it from him.

He held to the rope with one hand while he put the can of hot stuff to my lips with the other. I drank half of it with great gulps, feeling the warmth spread through my body to my very toes as the broth went down; and a great hope consoled me, for I had his knife, having snatched it from him when first he stooped. The good luck of the theft made me quick to empty the pot of gravy. Four-Eyes went over the side again, and the yacht moved onward lazily in the softest of breezes from the west.

When I deemed that I had waited long enough I cut away the remaining ropes at my feet, and crouched unbound in the boat. I crawled to the bow, and began to cut the strands of the hawser one by one. I felt my boat go swirling away on the backwash. It was a moment of supreme excitement, and I lay quite flat, waiting to hear if I were missed; but I heard no sound, and looking around me presently, I saw the yacht away a mile, and I knew that I was a free man.

When a couple of hours had passed I took a new consolation in the thought that I must be in the track of steamers bound out from, or to, New York; and in this hope I covered myself in the tarpaulins and lay down again to shield myself from the wind which blew with much sharpness as the night grew. I did not sleep, but lay half-dazed for an hour or more, and was roused only at a curious light which flashed above me in the sky. The light was clearly focussed, being a volume of intensely bright, white rays which passed right above me with slow and guided motion, and then stopped altogether, almost fixed upon the jolly-boat. I knew then what it was, and I sat up to see the great beams of a man-of-war's searchlight, showing an arc of the water almost as clear as by the sun's power.

The light shone in all its brightness for some five minutes; then it died away suddenly, and on the spot whence it had come I could just distinguish the dark hull of a steamer. Some moments, long moments to me, passed in feverish conjecture; and then in the pathway of the light rekindled I saw in all distinctness the outline of a long-boat, fully manned, and she was coming straight to me. Its progress seemed slow; the men in it made me no manner of signal. They came in a bee-line towards me, and the radiating light never moved once whilst they rowed. In the end, I myself broke the silence, shouting lustily to them, but getting no answer until I had repeated the call thrice. The fourth cry, loud and in something desperate, brought the response so eagerly awaited; but when I recognized the voice of him who then hailed me I fell down again in my boat with a heart-stricken burst of sorrow, for the voice was the Irishman's, and Four-Eyes spoke:

"Avast hallin', young 'un," he cried; "we ain't goin' to part along o' your society no more, don't you be frettin'."

They dragged me into their boat, and, taking my own in tow, they rowed rapidly to the distant steamer, on whose deck I stood presently; but not without profound fear, for I knew that at last I was a prisoner on the nameless ship.

CHAPTER XIV.

There was light from six lanterns, held by giant negroes, to greet me when I had mounted the ladder and was at last on the deck of the great ship; but none of the men spoke a word, nor could I see their faces. One of the men silently touched me on the shoulder, and I followed him along a narrow strip of iron deck, past a great turret which reared itself above me, and again by the covered forms of quick-firing guns. We descended a short ladder to a lower deck, and so to the companion way, and to a narrow passage in which were many doors. One of these he opened, and motioned me to enter, when the door was closed noiselessly behind me, and I found myself alone.

My first feeling was one of intense surprise. I had looked to enter a prison. The cabin was not large, but one more artistic in effect was never built. Hung all around with poppy-colored silk, the same material made curtains for the bunk. It was employed also for the cushions and covering of the armchair and the couch, and to drape the dressing glass and basin which were in the left-hand corner. It seemed, indeed, that the whole room was a harmony in scarlet, with a scarlet ceiling and scarlet hangings. The feet sank above the ankles in a soft Indian rug, which was ornate with the quaint mosaic-like workings and penetrating colors of all Eastern tapestry. For light, there was an arc lamp, veiled with gauze of the faintest yellow. The room would have been perfect but for a horrid blot upon it—a blot which stared at me from the outer wall with bloodshot eyes and hideous visage. It was the picture of a man's head that had been severed from the body. The picture almost terrified me, but I thought, If no worse harm befall me, what odds? and I sat down, all wondering and dazed.

My conclusion was that the man Black could be showing me this marked consideration only for some motive of self-interest. It was evident that he had been aware of my intention to follow him from the moment when Roderick purchased our new steamyacht. He had put one of his own men craftily upon the ship to watch us, and had made a bold attempt to deal with us in mid-Atlantic. Foiled there, he had taken advantage of my folly in entering such a place as the Bowery, and had given orders that I should be carried to his own ship.

Suddenly the electric light went out. I sat quite still for some half an hour. There was no noise of movement save on the deck above, and my own cabin remained as still as the grave. It appeared that I was to be left unmolested for that night at any rate. I undressed and lay down in one of the most seductive beds I have met with at sea. I was so weary and fatigued with my sufferings in the open boat that I fell asleep at once, and must have slept for many hours. I awoke in the day. The red curtains opposite my bunk were drawn back, admitting dull light from a port hole through which I could look upon a tumbling sea, and a sky all girt with rain clouds. My armchair was occupied by a man, dressed with all the scrupulous neatness of a thorough-going yachtsman. He had a bright, open face, and there was something refined and polished in his voice.

"Good morning to you," he said; "I hope you have slept well? I didn't wake you before, because sleep is the best medicine in your case. I'm a doctor, you know."

"Oh! you're the physician-in-ordinary to the crew, I suppose; you must see a good deal of practice."

He looked rather surprised at my meaning remark, and then said quite calmly, "Yes, I write a good many death certificates. You must be hungry. I will ring for breakfast; and, if you would take a rub, your bathroom is here."

He opened the door in the passage, and led the way to a cabin furnished with marble and brass fittings, wherein was a full-sized bath. I took a bath, and found him waiting for me when I had finished. We returned to the scarlet room, and there spread upon the table was a meal worthy of Delmonico's. There was coffee served with thick cream: there were choice dishes of meat, game pies, new rolls, fruit, and the whole was finished with ices and bon-bons in the true American fashion. My new friend, the doctor, said nothing as I ate; but when the repast was removed he began to talk at once.

"I regret," he said, "that I cannot supply you with a morning newspaper; the latest journal that I can lend you is a copy of Saturday last. There is a passage in it which may interest you."

The paper was folded and marked in a certain spot. I read it with blank amazement, for it was a full account of the nameless ship's attack upon the American cruiser and the Ocean King. The matter was the subject of a profound sensation, not only in America, but throughout the world. The Chilian government had been approached at once, but had repudiated all knowledge of the mysterious ship. Meanwhile war vessels from England, America and from France had set out to scour the seas and bring such intelligence as they could. The whole account concluded with the rumor that a gentleman in New York had knowledge of the affair and would at once be interviewed.

"You see that interview was unfortunately interrupted," said the doctor. "You are the gentleman with the full particulars. I am here to ask you to write accurately for us a complete account of every step you have taken in this matter since you were fool enough to follow Martin Hall."

"And otherwise?"

"Otherwise, you would give all you possessed if I would shoot you now as you sit. If you would still have life, not altogether under unfavorable conditions, you have but to ask for pen, ink and paper—and to make yourself one of us."

"That I will never do!"

"Oh, you say that now; but we shall give you some days to think of it. Let me advise you to be a man of common sense, and not run your head against a stone wall. We are now bound on a four-days' voyage. During these four days, you need fear nothing. So don't disturb yourself unnecessarily until Captain Black puts the question to you."

(To be continued.)

FAMILIES OF OLDEN DAYS.

Often Remarkably Large According to the Authentic Records.

The north of England seems to be a fertile soil for large families, for in 1797 we read of a Cumberland man and his wife, accompanied by thirty of their children, all attending the christening of the thirty-first child, and in earlier years another north countryman, Thomas Greenhill, applied to the then duke of Norfolk, early marshal, for an augmentation to his coat of arms on the singular ground that he was "the seventh son and thirty-ninth child of one father and mother."

In Conway churchyard there was to be seen—it can scarcely be there today—a tombstone bearing the following remarkable epitaph: "Here lyeth the body of Nicholas Hocker, of Conway, gentleman, who was the forty-first child of his father, William Hocker, by Alice, his wife, and the father of twenty-seven children, 1637."

If a man's family be considered as including all his descendants that of Peter Smith, who flourished in New Jersey, in the seventeenth century, is entitled to a high place of honor, for at a recent annual gathering of Peter's progeny no fewer than 7,000 men and dined together to the ancestral homestead.

In families it is not an unknown thing for one child to be old enough to have a sister or brother young enough to be his or her great-grandchild. Thus the eldest son of Thomas Beatty, of Drumcondra, has passed his seventy-third birthday when his youngest brother qualified for the cradle. When William Frost, of Galphay, near Ripon, died in 1780 his eldest child was a sturdy boy of 88 summers and his youngest was barely 16 and the Lady Powerscourt of to-day is half a century older than her latest brother.

There are cases on record where a century or more has divided the wedding days of father and son. The first earl of Leicester was first married in 1775, and his son led his second wife to the altar in August 1875; while Captain Francis Maude, who was married on June 28, 1849, was following the example of his father, Lord Hawarden, had set him ninety-three years earlier, in 1756. But both these cases are quite eclipsed by that of General G. Stevenson, of Bristol, who was 82, and whose father was first wed in 1704, the year of Blenheim. This seeming impossibility is accounted for by the fact that the father, who was born in 1689, was married for the third time at the age of 70, and the general was the son of this late union. Thus we get the remarkable result of a man whose father was born in Charles II.'s reign wooing and wedding within the memory of many people still living.—London Tit-Bits.

Too Wide.

Kind Lady—My poor man, your coat is full of rents. Here is a needle and thread.

Gritty George—No use, mum. Dem rents are too big to be collected.

If the skin of fowls peels easily it is a sign of youth. If the spurs of chickens are more than a quarter of an inch long it indicates old age.

Annual Losses Due to Insects.

If the power of the mosquito had not been proved to us beyond a doubt, we would be inclined to regard the estimate of $700,000,000 annual loss to our farming interests caused by insects, which has been made by the Department of Agriculture as too startling to be true. The following table shows the basis of the calculation:

Products.	Annual Value.	P. C.	Amount of Loss.
Cereals	$2,000,000,000	10	$200,000,000
Hay	550,000,000	10	55,000,000
Cotton	600,000,000	10	60,000,000
Tobacco	53,000,000	10	5,300,000
Truck crops	265,000,000	20	53,000,000
Sugars	50,000,000	10	5,000,000
Fruits	135,000,000	20	27,000,000
Farm forests	110,000,000	10	11,000,000
Miscellan'us crops	58,000,000	10	5,800,000
Animal products	1,750,000,000	10	175,000,000
Total	$5,551,000,000		$595,100,000
Natural forests and forest products			100,000,000
Products in storage			100,000,000
Grand total			$795,100,000

Such an immense sum being well worth the saving, the department has in its employ a large staff of men who are studying the life history of the pernicious insects to find out where they are vulnerable.

The work has been going on for some years and much progress has already been made. The cotton worm which formerly levied an annual tax of $20,000,000 on the cotton crop, is now controlled by sprays; it has been proven that the ravages of the Russian fly which sometimes have reduced the wheat acreage in Ohio 40 per cent and in Indiana 60 per cent besides greatly impairing the yield of the remaining acreage, can be considerably checked by planting wheat at seasons when the fly is not so rapacious; the coddling moth is controlled by arsenical sprays and $20,000,000 worth of apples saved as a result.

The orange and lemon orchards of California have been relieved of the white scale which threatened to destroy them, by the importation from Australia of the ladybird, a natural enemy of the scale. Many other instances could be given of the wisdom of watching the insects.

Cider-Making.

The Apple Specialist, in answer to an inquiry, gives the following instructions how to make cider and keep it sweet:

"In order to make cider the juice must be extracted from the apples. This is done by grinding the apples into a pumice and thus pressing the juice out. The pumice is laid up in hoops and held in place by old sacking made by ripping gunny sacks. It is laid up in cheese form, one above the other, and pressure applied at the top. The cider worth out through the sacking and is caught in a tub. Hand cider mills are made that are excellent for the work, and sweet cider may be had at any time. There is no way to keep cider sweet without racking it off, drawing it from one barrel to another several times, letting it run through several thicknesses of flannel to take out the sediment. It must be allowed to run very slowly so as to keep all sediment in the bottom of the barrel. When thoroughly purified the barrel must be plugged tight and kept in a cool place. By boiling and skimming the cider it will keep sweet but has a slight cooked taste. We have made thousands of barrels of cider and have tried all kinds of schemes to keep it sweet and have found nothing equal to racking off. It is a slow progess, however, and unless well done will not prove effectual."

Four-Row Corn Marker.

The following suggestion, which seems a good one, comes from a farmer who has built and used one. He says: "This will make four marks at a time on ridges or in furrows. To turn at the

FOUR-ROW MARKER.

end of rows, pull gang pole out of hole, lay it back, fold up outside runners, and you have but two runners to turn, the same as in ordinary sled. The sketch will clearly show the construction of the marker. On stumpy ground, raise the outside runners as when turning, and go right along.

Farm Notes.

One-fourth of the dairy cows of the country do not pay for their feed, and more than half of them do not return any profit.

In nine months 4,184,181 dozen eggs, valued at $807,487, were exported from the United States, double the number sent out during the same period last year.

There is no sensible reason why half as much wheat again may not be had from an acre within less than a generation of time.

The Agricultural Department's annual report says the corn crop can be increased by one-half within a quarter of a century, and without any pretense that the limit has been reached.

Equally feasible is a 50 per cent increase in the crops per acre of oats, barley, rye, buckwheat. Potatoes, instead of growing less than 100 bushels per acre, should double their production.

Alfalfa as a Weed Killer.

Probably no other crop, without a single exception, presents so many characteristics of value. As it is studied more and more, and as new experiments are made with it in different capacities, its wonderful capacities become more and more manifest. A very eminent authority has discovered that it is a weed eradicator of unfailing power. This will seem like contradiction to readers who have been cautioned about weeds, and which will prove more destructive to alfalfa than any combatable influence. Nevertheless it is strictly true that the plant is the greatest destroyer of weeds known. This comes not so much from any quality contained in the alfalfa plant, but from the inability of the weeds to endure having their heads cut off so many times in summer close to their feet. The most strenuous weed soon will succumb to this harsh treatment, while the alfalfa plant will thrive all the better the more it is cut. If weeds can be kept back from choking the young alfalfa plants until they, the alfalfa plants, are tall enough to be mowed, the question of weeds in the particular parcel of ground is settled. Therefore, it is wise to select a weedy piece of ground for the alfalfa field, but before sowing the seed every precaution should be taken to kill as many weeds as possible. This can best be done by simply following the oft-repeated injunction to thoroughly prepare the seed bed before sowing the seed. If this be done, and the tract harrowed and rolled after plowing at a time when the tiny weeds begin to show green over the field, and again just before time to sow, there will be the cleanest field on the farm before the year is out. There are many weed-infected farms and many farmers who have despaired of ever getting rid of the weeds. Alfalfa suggests the means of riddance.—C. M. Gunther in Agricultural Epitomist.

Turkey Which Sold for $175.

Here is a fine specimen of a Bronze Tom Turkey, bred in Massachusetts. He is 3 years old, and sold for $175.

Dry Earth as a Disinfectant.

It is well known that fine, dry dirt is one of the best of absorbents and disinfectants. It is also plentiful, and costs nothing but the labor of handling. It makes excellent bedding, if covered over with a few inches of straw, and it really keeps the cows clean, even when used in the stalls without straw, as it is easily removed from the hair with a brush. A stall bedded with dry earth can be cleaned out in a much shorter time than when the earth is not used, and, as dirt absorbs the liquids and gases, quite a saving is effected in that manner. Its use goes beyond the stall. As the stable should be cleaned daily, quite a large quantity of dry earth will be used in the course of a year, and it will necessarily be added to the heap itself, yet its presence therein will double the value of the manure by preventing loss of fertilizing material. It is a better absorbent than straw or corn stalks, and is easily handled when the manure is hauled to the fields.

Testing Individual Cows.

A circular by the Illinois Station emphasizing the importance of studying the production of individual cows contains records for one year of eighteen dairy herds in Illinois, including 221 cows. The average production was 5,616.90 pounds of milk and 226.63 pounds of butter fat. The best herd averaged 350.17 pounds of butter fat and the poorest 142.65 pounds. The best ten cows averaged 388.75 pounds of butter fat and the poorest 10,109.42 pounds. It is believed that at least one-third of the cows in the ordinary herds are practically unprofitable. A marked improvement was observed in herds where grading had been practiced. It was found possible to remove five cows from a herd of ten and thereby increase the profit $7.62 per head.

Milk Fat.

Of 319 samples of whole milk analyzed by a Canadian station, forty-five were pronounced adulterated and eighty-five doubtful. This was more unfavorable than the results obtained in previous years. Twenty-nine samples of cream examined showed percentages of fat ranging from 12.63 to 33.51. The author believes that the following standard should be established in Canada: Whipping cream not less than 25 per cent fat, and table cream not less than 17.5 per cent.

When bone black is treated with sulphuric acid the insoluble phosphate which it contains is converted into soluble phosphate, says a Virginia bulletin. Dissolved bone black contains from 15 to 25 per cent of available phosphoric acid. In this form it is one of the most valuable phosphatic fertilizers. The question is often asked, is available phosphate from dissolved bone better than that from dissolved rock? It would be well, therefore, to state in this connection that available phosphoric acid has the same value regardless of its source.

HISTORY OF POTATO PLANT.

Native of South America Naturalized in Europe.

The chronicle of one of the old Spanish travelers, published in 1553, says: "The people of Peru eat a tuberous root which they call papas." The Spaniards took this root to Spain, where it was grown as "the truffle root." The Italians very quickly adopted it into their gardens and soon the Dutch were cultivating it with much the same zeal that they displayed for tulips. Of its introduction into England, all that we are sure of is that in 1586 Sir Walter Raleigh was growing potatoes in his Irish garden.

Thomas Harlot in his account of Virginia names potatoes among the roots that were found growing there, saying that some of them were as big as a walnut and others considerably larger. This Virginia potato seems to have been that which is now known as the Irish while that grown in Peru is more likely to have been a sweet potato. Another writer, describing the esculents of Virginia, says that the potato root is thick, fat and tuberous, not differing much in shape from the sweet potato, except that the roots are not so great or long, while some of them are round as a ball and others are oval, in the egg fashion.

Early in the seventeenth century Raleigh's plantation of potatoes had been repeated all over Ireland, but the farmers of England, moved by stubbord prejudice and possibly in part by jealousy, decided that they would have nothing to do with the tuber. It was as late as the time of Charles II, certainly it was after the Cromwellian episode, before the potato got any fair hold in English soil.

Gilbert White, writing in 1178, says that potatoes had prevailed in his district for about twenty years and that this had been brought about "only by means of premiums," but that potatoes were then much esteemed by the poorer people, who would scarcely have ventured to taste them in the previous reign.

Another writer speaks of them as a rather questionable product—possibly to become human food, "although rather flatulent and acid for the human stomach." He recommends boiling them with dates and thinks that such a combination would keep soul and body together for those who are too poor to get anything better.

The story of the introduction of the potato into France has been often told. The country people were so convinced of the poisonous nature of the tuber that they would not give it a trial. Its friends were actually mobbed for trying to introduce a food that would poison the people. The story goes in two ways. One of these tells us that King Louis XVI. wore potato blossoms in his buttonhole and had potatoes on his royal table until they became popular with the aristocratic classes.

Another story recounts how a celebrated physician and philanthropist planted a field of potatoes, about which he placed a guard, with instructions to allow just as much thieving as possible. The poorer people, believing a vegetable that deserved such watchful care must be of great value, stole nearly the whole of them. In this way their prejudices were overcome and a valuable esculent added to their dietary.—Independent.

High Back Wolf a Caller.

Our esteemed fellow citizen, High Back Wolf, was seen on our streets recently. Mr. Wolf was accompanied by his two wives. High is a good-natured Indian, with bow legs, hooked nose and humpish back, which latter physical peculiarity in connection with his aggravated appetite for raw dog suggested his name to his compatriots on the banks of the Washita.

Mr. Wolf was caught in the lurch when the government enacted the one-wife law for the Indians and found himself surrounded with two wives and twenty-four children. High grinned good naturedly and consulted a lawyer to devise ways and means of reducing the wife surplus, but as there were no annals among the Indians to tell which wife was first attached to High Back and neither of them was willing to jar loose from his tepee without legal process High said: "Ugh, heap much wife; heap lucky Injin," and began to hustle for extra dead wohaw and canines.

Mrs. Wolf, Jr., is some four feet across the breast, with height to match; has dreamy black eyes and a cultured way of listing her moccasins over muddy places on the Washita when wet weather comes on. We have never met the other Mrs. Wolf, but she is described as being a dark complexioned, black haired, red face, high cheekbone sister, who neither chews tobacco nor drinks. The Wolf family are well thought of by their neighbors.—Arapahoe Bee.

Royal Debt to a Spider.

On the ceiling of one of the rooms in Sans Souci, the world renowned palace of Frederick the Great, is painted a great spider with its web. The origin of this strange decoration is as follows:

This apartment was the great king's breakfast room and adjoined his bed chamber. Every morning when his majesty entered the room he was accustomed to find a cup of chocolate, but on one occasion just as he was about to drink he thought of something he had forgotten and returned to his bedroom. When he again entered the breakfast room his majesty discovered that a great spider had dropped from the ceiling into the cup and he naturally cried out for fresh chocolate to be prepared.

The next moment the king was startled by the report of a pistol. No sooner had the cook received the order than he blew out his brains. Not because the king had refused the chocolate did he do this, but because he had thought himself discovered. It was in remembrance of this narrow escape that his majesty ordered the spider with its web to be painted on the ceiling.

When a man is telling of a quarrel he has had, and says: "I said to the other fellow," he nearly always makes what he says a good deal worse than it was.

WOMAN HELPLESS IN FRANCE.

She Is at the Mercy of the Unscrupulous of the Opposite Sex.

Some of the leading women of France have organized to obtain their rights at the heads of the government and they believe they will succeed. There is great need for it. William E. Curtis, in the Chicago Record-Herald, who has been looking into the matter, has this to say:

"The legal status of woman in France is deplorable. She has no rights at all. All of her property belongs to her husband, and, although she may have contributed everything to the family estate and be nothing whatever, the moment the marriage vows are exchanged he becomes the sole owner, and she has no legal claim to anything, not even to the clothes on her back or the ring which he places on her finger as a pledge of love and loyalty. No woman in France has a right to do anything whatever without the consent of her husband. He is the autocrat of her mind, her body and her soul."

He can beat her at will and there is no redress. He can carry on innumerable intrigues with other women, but she must never allude to these lapses. It would prove fatal to her peace of mind; might result in her fickle lord leaving her. This line of action is based on the Napoleonic code that the man is always innocent; the woman is always guilty.

The husband is the sole owner of the house and the land in France. This gives him supreme command. He can sell, lease or give it away and the wife is powerless. The reformers also ask protection for mothers who have illegitimate offspring and the women who have been turned out of doors who have been living with men who have discarded them. A woman who has been betrayed has no redress, as the man is not an offender and goes free. So many men and women are keeping house who have never been married that infanticide is practiced to an extent unknown to any other country. Only for this the population would grow rapidly.

Any man can leave his wife destitute and with children clinging to her apron strings and go wherever he wants to. Even if wealthy he is not compelled to give a dollar to their support. They are completely at the mercy of a heartless world. In the upper strata divorce can be had for slight cause, but it is slow and costly. To still further the favor the inconstant man a law visits severe punishment upon blackmail and there is very little of this carried on.

THE LULLABY.

Slumber Songs of Infancy the Sweetest in the World.

The following is a contribution from the pen of a western newspaper writer:

What tender tendrils of memory reach far back through the fugacious years and cluster about the slumber songs of our infancy! If there is one thing in all the world of sordid influences that alienating vicissitudes cannot obliterate it is the lullaby that soothed us to sleep upon the mother breast. If there has come into our adult life anything of beauty, sweetness and charm; if we have been blessed by the miracle of happiness, or if in the garden of our souls there blooms one transcendent blossom, it is associated with the fairyland of an unforgotten home. In the lullaby of childhood there is love sanctified and unselfish and made pure in a sacrifice as holy as an echo from Calvary.

Perhaps you can't remember all the words of that simple hymn that crooned you to sleep in the dawn of your awakening life. The gentle tune may halt and falter when strange emotion clutches at your throat, but the memory is there in your heart, indelible and all-enduring. The mother song was low and sweet. There may be more cultivated voices, more classic phrasing, more graceful expression in the palling world of art, but not to you. That sometimes tremulous voice which you did not know was choked with the dews of sorrow will whisper upon heartstrings when all else becomes dim nothingness. God sends the white souls of children out of heaven into mother arms that the transition may not be too sudden, and he appoints motherhood his deputy to guide the wandering feet aright. Too late we understand.

"Some must watch while some must sleep," and some must press the tired little bodies of children in their arms and lull them into soft forgetfulness. What a blessed privilege it would be if world-worn men and women of today could repose once more in the sacred security of all-encompassing mother-love; if they could only take their heart hurts to the compassionate shrine where little souls are calmed, and, with the celestial lullaby of those sweet days wetting the parch of thirsty ears, dream on, and on, and on!

No Excuse for the Omission.

In recalling incidents connected with Virginia politics some years ago a prominent Virginian recently related to a Washington man an account of an investigation of election frauds in the lower section of the State. In the course of the proceedings it developed that the ballots in an important precinct had not been sealed after the final count, thereby being exposed to fraudulent practices. The chairman of the Investigating Committee closely questioned the election judge as to why the prescribed duty of carefully securing the ballots had been neglected.

"Could you not obtain any mucilage in the town?"

"No, sir."

"Could you not procure some sealing wax—some shoemaker's wax, if nothing else?"

"No, sir."

"Well, then, sir, why didn't you go out into the woods and get some resin? Do you mean to tell me that there were no pine trees around there shedding tears at your infamous rascality?"

Punishment to Fit the Crime.

It is reported that the Dutch have stolen one of the Philippine Islands from us. They should be punished severely for this outrage, and the penalty proposed by the Washington Post, that they be compelled to keep it, is none too severe.