THE IRON PIRATE

A Plain Tale of Strange Happenings on the Sea

By MAX PEMBERTON

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

No man has ever looked on a more awful sight. We had struck the battleship low amidships—we had crashed through the thinnest coat of her steel. She had heeled right over from the shock, so that the guns had cast free from the carriages, and the seas had filled her. Thus for one terrible minute she lay, and then, with a heavy lurch, she rolled beneath the waves; and there was left but thirty or forty struggling souls, who battled for their lives with the great rollers of the Atlantic. Of these a few reached the side of our ship and were shot there as they clung to the ladder.

For ourselves we lay, our bows split with the shock, our engine room in fearful disorder. The other warships were yet some distance away; but they opened fire upon us at hazard, and, of the first three shells which fell, two cut our decks; and sent clouds of splinters of wood and of human flesh flying in the smoke-laden air. At the fifth shot, a gigantic crash resounded from below, and the stokers rushed above with the news that the fore stoke hold had three feet of water in it. The hands received the news with a deep groan. They bellowed like bulls at Black; they refused all orders. He shot down man after man, while I crouched for safety in the tower; and they became but fiercer. Our end was evidently near. Anon they turned upon the captain and myself, and fired volleys upon the conning tower; or, in their terrible frenzy, they pitched themselves into the sea.

Through all this our one engine worked; and so slowly did the great ironclad draw upon us that the end of it all came before they could reach us. Suddenly the men rushed to the boats and cast them loose. Fighting with the dash of madmen, they crowded the launch, they swarmed the jolly-boat and the lifeboat. We watched their insane efforts as boat after boat put away and was swamped, leaving the men to drown. When 6 o'clock came, Black and Karl and myself were alone upon the great ship. Black pulled me by the arm and said:

"Boy, they've left nothing but the dinghy. The old ship's done; and it's time you left her."

"And you?" I asked.

He looked at me and at Karl. He followed me slowly, as one in a dream, to the davits aft, and freed the last of the boats. Then he went to his cabin, and to the rooms below; and I helped him to put a couple of kegs of water in the frail craft, with some biscuit, which we lashed.

When all was ready, the captain went to the engine room and brought Karl to the top of the ladder; but there the German stayed, nor did threats or entreaties move him.

"He'll die with the ship," said Black, "and I don't know that he isn't wise;" but he held out his hand to the genius of his crime, and after a great grip the two men parted.

For ourselves, we stepped on the frailest craft with which men ever faced the Atlantic, and at that moment the first of the ironclads fired another shell at the nameless ship. It was a crashing shot, but it had come too late to serve justice, or to wreck the ship of mystery; for Karl had let the hydrogen into the cylinders unchecked. And in a cascade of fire, lighting the sea for many miles, and making as day the newly fallen night, the golden citadel hissed over the water for one moment, then plunged headlong, and was no more.

A fierce fire it was, lighting sea and sky—a mighty holocaust; the roar of great condagration; the end of a monstrous dream. And I thought of another fire and another face—the face of Martin Hall, who had seen the finger of Almighty God in his mission; and I said, "His work is done!"

But Black, clinging to the dinghy, wept as a man stricken with a great grief, and he cried so that the coldest heart might have been moved—

"My ship, my ship!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

About midnight a thunderstorm got up from the south, and the sea, rising somewhat with it, wetted us to the skin. The lightning, terribly vivid and incessant, lighted up the whole sea again and again, showing each the other's face, the face of a worn and fatigue-stricken man. And the rain and the sea beat on until we shivered, cowering and were numbed. Yet Black held to silence, moaning at rare intervals as he moaned when the great ship sank. It was not until the sun rose over the long swell that we slept for an hour or more; and after the sleep we were both calmer. The captain was very quiet, and he gazed at me often with the expression I had seen on his face when he saved from his men.

"Boy," he said, "look well at the sun, lest you never look at it again."

"I am looking," I rplied; "it is life to me."

"If," he continued, very thoughtful, "you, who have years with you, should live when I go under, you'll take this belt I'm wearing off me; it'll help you ashore. If it happen that I live with you, it'll help both of us."

"We're in the track of steamers," said I; "there's no reason to look at it that way yet."

"That's your way, and the right one," he answered; "but I'm not a man like that, and my heart's gone with my ship; we shall never see her like again."

The captain pulled himself together with a great effort, and sat aft, sculling with the short oar in a mechanical and altogether absent way.

Black continued to brood, and when the sun fell low in the west, and the whole heavens were as mountains nad peaks of crimson fire, I knew by his mutterings that the frenzy of madness was upon him.

He raved with fierce threats and awful cries at the American he had buried, or made desperate appeals to some apparition that came to him in his dreadful dream. But at the last he grew almost incoherent. I was nigh dead with want of sleep and fatigue, for I had not rested during the fight with the ironclads, and I went to sleep at last.

When I awoke for the third time, the dinghy was held firmly by a boat hook, and was being drawn towards a jolly-boat full of seamen. I rose up, rubbing my eyes as a man seeing a vision; but, when the men shouted something to me in German, I had another exclamation on my lips; for I was alone in the boat, and Black had left me.

Then I looked across the sea, and I saw a long black steamer lying to a mile away, and the men dragged me into their craft, and shouted hearty words of encouragement, and fell to rowing with great joy. Yet I remembered dreaming, and it seemed to me that the voice I had heard in my sleep was the voice of Black, who cried to me as he had cast himself to his death in the Atlantic.

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Was the man dead? Had he really ended that most remarkable life of evil enterprise and of crime; or had he by some miracle found safety while I slept? Had the man gone out of my life wrapped in the mystery which had surrounded him from the first? Or had he simply cast himself from the dinghy in a fit of insanity, and died the terrible death of the suicide? I could not answer the tremendous question; but I had not reached the shelter of the steamer which had saved me before I made the discovery that the belt of linen which had been about Black's waist was now about mine. I found that it was filled with some hard and sharp stones. Instinctively I knew the truth; that in his last hour the master of the nameless ship had retained his curious affection for me; had made over to me some of that huge hoard of wealth he must have accumulated by his years of pillage; and I restrained myself with difficulty from casting the whole there and then into the waters which had witnessed his battles for it. But the belt was firmly lashed about me, and we were on the deck of the steamer before my benumbed hands could set the lashing free.

It would be idle for me to attempt to describe all I felt as the captain of the steamship Hoffnung greeted me upon his quarter-deck, and his men sent up rounds of cheers which echoed over the waters. I stood for some minutes forgetful of everything save that I had been snatched from that prison of steel; brought from the shadow of the living death to the hope of seeing friends and country and home again. And then there came a great sense of thankfulness, and tears gushed up in my eyes, and fell upon my numbed hands. With many encouraging pats on the back, they forced me down their companionway to the skipper's cabin, and so to a bunk, where I lay inanimate, and deep in sleep for many hours. But I awoke as another man, and when I had taken a great bowl of soup my strength seemed to return to me with bounds, and I sat up to find they had taken away my clothes, but that the belt which Black had bound about me lay at the foot of the bunk, and was unopened.

It was not heavy ,being all of linen finely sewed; but when at last I made up my mind to open it, I did so with my teeth, tearing the threads at the top of it, and so ripping it down. There fell upon my bed some twenty or thirty diamonds of such size and lustre that they lay sparkling with a thousand lights which dazzled the eyes, and made me utter a cry at once of surprise and of admiration. White stones they were, Brazilian diamonds of the first water; and when I undid the rest of the seam, and opened the belt fully, I found at least fifty more, with some superb black pearls, a fine emerald, and a little parcel of exquisite rubies. To the latter there was attached a paper with the words. "Take these; they are honestly come by. And let me write while I can that I have loved you. Remember this when you forget Captain Black." That was all; and I judged that the stones were worth five thousand pounds if they were worth a penny.

The Hoffnung was bound to Konigsberg, but when the skipper and I had come to understand each other by signs and writing he, with great consideration, offered to put into Southampton and leave me there. I put off in his long-boat with a deep sense of his humanity and kindness, and with hearty cheers from his crew.

I should have gone to the quay at once then, but crossing the roads I saw a yacht at anchor, and I recognized her as my own yacht Celsis, with Dan aboard. To put to her side was the work of a moment, and I do not think that I ever gave a heartier hail than that "Ahoy, Daniel!" which then fell from my lips.

"Ahoy!" cried Dan in reply. "Why, if it ain't the guv'nor!"

And the old fellow began to shout and to wave his arms and to throw ropes about as though he were smitten with lunacy.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I had sprung up the ladder before Dan had gathered his scattered wits to remember that it was there. It was worth much to watch that honest fellow as he gripped my hand in his two great paws. I asked him if Roderick and Mary were aboard.

"They're down below, as I'm alive, and the hands is ashore, but they'll come aboard for this. Shall I tell 'em as you've called in passing like? I can hardly see out of my eyes for looking at you, sir."

Poor old Dan did not quite know what he was doing. I left him in the midst of his strange talk and walked softly down the companion way to the door of the saloon, and I opened it and stood, I doubt not, before them as one come from the dead. Mary, whose childish face looked very drawn, was sitting before a book, open upon the table, her head resting upon her hands, and a strange expression of melancholy in her great dark eyes. But Roderick lay upon a sofa-bunk, and was fast asleep, with the novel which he had been reading lying crumpled upon the floor.

I had opened the door so gently that neither of them moved as I entered the room. It was to me the best moment of my life to be looking again upon them, and I waited for one minute until Mary raised her head and our eyes met. Then I bent over the cabin table and kissed her, and I felt her clinging to me, and though she never spoke, her eyes were wet with hot tears; and when she smiled through them, it was as a glimpse of bright sunlight shining through a rain-shower. In another moment there was nothing but the expression of great childish joy on her face, and the old Mary spoke.

"Mark, I can't believe it," she said, holding me close lest I might go away again, "and I always guessed you'd come."

But Roderick awoke with a yawn, and when he saw me he rubbed his eyes, and said as one in a dream:

"Oh, is that you?"

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The tea which Mary made was very fragrant. It was a long story, and I could give them but the outline of it, or, in turn, hear but a tenth part of their own anxieties and ceaseless efforts in my behalf. It appeared that when I had failed to return to the hotel on that night when I followed Paolo to the den in the Bowery, Roderick had gone at once to the yacht, and there had learned from Dan of my intention. He did not lose an instant in seeking the aid of the police, but I was even then astern of the Labrador, and the keen search which the New York detectives had made was fruitless even in gleaning tidings of me. Paolo was followed night and day for twenty-four hours; but he was shot in a drinking den before the detectives laid hands on him, and lived long enough only to send Mary a message, telling her that her pretty eyes had saved the Celsis from disaster in the Atlantic. On the next day, both the skipper and Roderick made public all they knew of Black and his crew, and a greater sensation was never made in any city. The news was cabled to Europe over half a dozen wires, was hurried to the Pacific, to Japanese seas—it shook the navies of the world with an excitement rarely known, and for some weeks it paralyzed all traffic on the Atlantic. Cruisers of many nations were sent in the course of the great ocean-going steamers; arms were carried by some of the largest of the passenger ships, and the question was asked daily before all other questions, "Is the nameless ship taken?"

Meanwhile Roderick and Mary, who suffered all the anguish of suspense, returned to London, there to hear the whole matter discussed in Parliament. Several warships and cruisers were dispatched to the Atlantic, but returned to report the ill result of their mission. Nor was my oldest friend content with this national action and the subsequent offer of a reward of £50,000 for the capture of the nameless ship or of her crew, for he put the best private detectives in the city at the work, sending two to New York and others to Paris and to Spezia. When the weeks passed and I did not come, all thought that I had died in my self-appointed mission—another of Black's victims.

It was but a few days after this sorrowful conviction that Black and I went to London, and were seen by Inspector King, who had watched night and day for the man's coming. The detective had immediately telegraphed to the Admiralty, and to Roderick, who had reached my hotel to find that I had already left. Then he had hurried back to Southampton, there to hear of the going of the warships, and to wait with Mary tidings of the last great battle, which meant life or death to me.

Long we sat discussing these things, and very bright were a pair of dark eyes that listened again to Roderick's story, and then to more of mine. But Roderick himself had awoke from his lethargy, and his enthusiasm broke through all his old restraint.

"To-morrow, why to-morrow, you'll astound London. My dear fellow, we'll go to town together to claim the £50,000 which the Admiralty offered, and the £20,000 from the Black Anchor Line, to say nothing of American money galore. You're made for life, old man; and we'll take the old yacht north to Greenland, and hunt up the place and Black's tender, which seems to have escaped the ironclads, and it'll be the finest trip we ever knew."

"What does Mary say?" I asked, as she still held my hand.

"I don't mean to leave you again," she answered, and as she spoke there was a great sound of cheering above, and a great tramp of feet upon the deck; and as we hurried up, the hands I loved to see crowded about me, and their shouting was carried far over the water, and was taken up on other ships, which threw their searchlights upon us, so that the night was as a new day to me, and the awakening from the weeks of dreaming as the coming of spring after winter's dark. Yet, as the child-face was all lighted with radiant smiles, and honest hands clasped mine, and the waters echoed the triumphant greeting, I could not but think again of Captain Black, or ask myself, Is the man really dead, or shall we yet hear of him, bringing terror upon the sea, and death and suffering; the master of the nations, and the child of ambition? Or is his grave in the great Atlantic that he ruled in the mighty moments of his power?

Ah, I wonder.

(The End.)

SOULFUL SADNESS.

It May Sometimes Be Cured by Very Material Remedies.

"No," said Miss Lydia, mournfully. "Nothing I could expect another person to understand. If I have aspirations, and my disposition is unfortunately sensitive—but I consider cheerfulness to be a duty."

"So it is," assented Miss Serena, heartily, "only people don't always see it so. Some folks seem most to consider it's a credit to be as miserable as they can. Kind of proof they're high-souled and fine-fibered and profound in their affections. Oh, I know! I used to be aspiring once, and sensitive, and a martyr, and as proud as could be of looking out on a good big sunny world through my own little private pair of blue spectacles. So I can sympathize.

"Isn't that the postman coming? Well, now, suppose he should hand you a letter with a hundred-dollar bill in it, don't you think possibly— There, there! Don't fly off the handle. Of course I know it isn't money troubles, but once when I was as blue as blue myself—and no money about it; all soul—I happened to have an unexpected ten-dollar bill drop in, and it did make a difference. Yes, truly, Lydia, it did! I bought a new hat with a wreath of pink roses, and came back stepping brisk, and holding my chin high, and feeling those roses down to the very tips of my toes.

"It wasn't till next day I remembered how miserable I'd been, and that pink roses oughtn't to heal a suffering spirit; and, Lydia, I went pinker than the roses all alone by myself to think what a goose I was! That's why I said money just now. You see, I've found that a bit of material good luck is a pretty good test of soulful sadness. It wouldn't help the real thing, of course, but——

"Why, whatever is there in that postcard you're smiling at so? I don't believe you're heard a word I've been saying! For a week? Two concerts? Why, when did her husband buy an automobile? No, I hadn't even heard they'd moved. Well, I'm sure I don't doubt you'll have a grand time, and it looks besides like 'twould be as quick a cure for your sensitive and aspiring soul as cash and pink roses was for mine. Now doesn't it, Lydia? Own up!"—Youth's Companion.

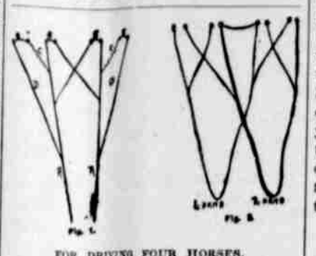
Berlin now has over 6,000 cabs with taximeters—dials indicating the distance traversed and cost to the passenger.

FARMS AND FARMERS

Driving Four Horses Abreast.

To drive four horses abreast, two full sets of lines are not absolutely necessary as an arrangement such as that shown in the accompanying illustration can be used.

B B B B are the bits. A A are ordinary driving lines on the middle horses. C C are straps from the inside ring of the outside horses' bits fastened to the hame ring of the inside horses. D D are straps or extra lines reaching across from the ordinary lines to the outside ring of the bits of the outside horses. As a matter of convenience, one may attach these to the lines at the buckle, but that plan has this objection, if the outside horses are hard-mouthed it has a tendency to pull the lines out too far and worry the inside horses' mouths. This can be entirely overcome by making D D longer and attaching it further toward the hand of the driver. If one is driving



FOR DRIVING FOUR HORSES.

unbroken or vicious horses it is a good plan to run DD out far enough that the driver can slip his hands through the loops thus made and use them as a pair of holders are used on a hard-mouthed driving horse.

In the second illustration the inside horses are shown with a tie strap fastening them together. In driving, tie the hand pieces of each off rein together, also those of the near horses, which, if of equal length, enables the driver to handle four horses with as much ease as two.

Timothy and Clover Hay.

Timothy hay is the one most commonly grown on the farm and found in the market, according to a Pennsylvania bulletin. Timothy sells for a higher price in the market than other hay, and is regarded as being particularly adapted to horses. It is deficient in protein, and for that reason should be fed with a grain ration of a nitrogenous nature. For horses no better basis for a ration can be found than timothy hay and oats. It is less valuable for cattle and sheep. Clover hay is next to timothy in common use, and the two are more often found mixed than either found alone. The nitrogenous nature of the clover aids in supplying the deficiency of protein in the timothy. Clover is more valuable than timothy for cattle and sheep, but is not considered so satisfactory for horses.

An Anti-Kicking Device.

An arrangement which will cure the worst kicking cow that I have ever seen is shown in the sketch. Take a strong strap such as a heavy harness line and buckle it around the cow's body just in front of the udder. One must be very careful in placing it first on the kicking cow and not buckle it too tight. She will probably object and jump around a little at first, but will soon become used to the arrangement and will not raise any more disturbance. A rope may be used instead of a leather strap if it is not tied too tight. Be gentle with the cow and treat her right and in a few weeks you can take off the strap and she will remain quiet. In case she begins to kick again, replace the strap and leave it on her for a while.—C. H. Parker, in Farm and Home.

STRAP IN PLACE.

Salt for Dairy Cows.

The carefully kept cows on the Detroit dairy farm receives four ounces of salt daily, mixed with their feed. They eat their food better, and the owner thinks they do better when they have this amount than when the allowance is smaller. The cows are fed three times a day ,and the salt is divided between the three feeds. Fine table salt is invariably used. The cows prefer it to coarse salt.

Spring Pastures.

When the spring opens there is a temptation to put stock on the pastures rather early in the season. This should not be done, as tramping by the animals may do harm. A heavy roller should be used over the pasture field so as to press down and smooth the surface for the mower, if the field is cut for hay. Very young grass or rye is laxative, and cows will fall off in the yield of milk if put on too early or kept on the pasture too long.

Farm Brevities.

Never pasture the alfalfa the first year.

A healthy flock of sheep is a profitable flock.

Mutton eaters are increasing faster than mutton.

Weeds and poor seed cause many of the alfalfa failures.

You can't afford to have a clock watcher for a hired man.

There is such a thing as compelling success to come your way.

Alfalfa can be raised in Maine. How about its winter killing in Iowa?

Soil that has been well cultivated and fertilized seldom needs inoculating.

For permanent pasture, sow every kind of grass that is known to do well in your section.—Field and Farm.

Apple Seedlings.

We are asked the question if the seedling used in grafting apple exerts any influence on the tree as to hardiness and if so what are the best to use. The apple seedling is the foundation for the tree, as the scion depends on this at least the first two years for establishing itself and forming the nucleus of the future tree. In the past there has not been given the attention as there should have been to hardiness and adaptability of the stocks of our different fruit trees, and it has just commenced to be agitated by horticulturists the last few years. It has been the custom of many nurseries to import from France seedlings of French crab and domestic apples for grafting on. Many of these are known to be tender and hence many of the losses from trees dying out could be traced if we knew directly to the stocks on which the tree had been grafted. If we were to save seed from such varieties as Duchess of Oldenburg, wealthy, northwestern greening, etc., we would soon see a marked difference in the hardiness of our trees. Some of our painstaking nurserymen are very careful on this account and buy their apple seeds in Vermont or northern New York, where it is washed out of the pumice of the cider mills in sections where they have had for years large seedling orchards. While the fruit was inferior, yet the trees were hardy, and this is the only requirement in a stock, as the quality of the tree will always be influenced by the scion.—Twentieth Century Farmer.

Pruning the Plum Trees.

It has been frequently noticed that old plum trees do not produce as good quality fruit as a rule as the younger trees and sometimes become very inferior and unproductive. In many cases the old trees would be benefited by severe cutting back, and besides that, it would be well to keep the plum tree in better training than has been the usual practice in the west; cutting back the long and spreading branches, and compelling them to head in short and close to the trunk. This might not be good practice for all varieties, and it would be well to undertake it with some care, selecting some few individuals and noting the effect of such pruning upon them.—Rural World.

Halter Tie.

The necessity of making a knot in the end of the halter every time the horse is tied in the stall is done away with by the invention of a North Dakota ranchman. Where a hundred or more horses are employed the time involved in tying them in the stalls each day is considerable. The halter tie, as shown in the illustration, is made of one piece of metal, through which extend two slots. These slots are wider at one end than at the other. By placing a rope through one of the slots and pulling on the same the rope is sure to become wedged in the slot tighter and tighter. The halter tie is nailed at the head of the stall in advance of the horse, so that the latter in pulling on the rope will force it more tightly into the slot. Only a few seconds are required to slip the rope into the slot and over a small hook at the inner end. While in this position there is no danger of the horse working the halter loose and roaming in the stable.

CANNOT SLIP.

Cultivating Young Trees.

The soil will dry very rapidly and to a great depth if allowed to get hard and compact. There is but a small space left for air in solid soils, and from this fact they become hot and dry to a great depth in summer, while if air is present, as it is in loose soils (being such a poor conductor of heat), it will allow only a small portion of soil to become hot, which soon cools at night and is filled with a copious dew, not only retaining the moisture already in the soil, but also adding to it at a season when moisture is especially desirable. Newly set trees are always benefited by cultivation, because all their roots are surface roots and cannot thrive in a hot, dry, compact soil, hence the necessity of summer surface cultivation of newly set trees.

Poisoning Cutworms.

Recent experiments in poisoning cutworms, which have been working on wheat and alfalfa, have shown the following mixture to be superior to spraying with paris green, as formerly recommended:

Thoroughly mix while dry 1 pound of paris green and 50 pounds of wheat bran; make moist, but not sloppy, by adding water in which a quart of cheap molasses has been dissolved. Place this mixture in spoonful piles where the worms are working. It attracts the worms from the wheat and oats. It is also good grasshopper poison.

Birds the Farmers' Friends.

Professor Cook of the national agricultural department declares that of the 300 different kinds of birds, but three are the farmers' foes, the English sparrow leading. He held that, while the robin is looked upon as a destroyer of early fruit, his diet is but 1 pound of fruit to 9 pounds of insects.

Let the farmer who wants good colts select the best grade mares and breed them annually to one good type of horse. Of course, the quality of the dam always has more or less influence upon the progeny, but no matter how good or how poor the mother, the best sire obtainable is none too good.

A Western report says that a Wyoming man has invented a machine to eradicate scab without the process of dipping. The dip is forced through hollow wires made in the form of brushes which fit over the sheep.

FINDS NEW RULE OF THREE.

Investigator Discovers that Disasters are Often Triple.

Misfortunes, they say, never come singly, and certainly there is more than a germ of truth in this old saying. Over and over again it has been noticed that when one great disaster occurs it is quickly followed by a second and then a third of similar description.

Twice in 1906 we have seen this occur. First, San Francisco was wrecked by earthquake and fire; then in the same month Vesuvius erupted and destroyed many villages and hundreds of lives; thirdly, Valparaiso was almost wiped out by a series of earth quivers.

In the matter of railway accidents there had been few of any importance for a year previous to the disaster at Salisbury, but that was followed in rapid succession by the shocking accident to the Scotch express and by the bridge disaster in Oklahoma.

When a great man dies his death is often followed by those of two others in high positions. There was a striking instance of this six years ago. In July, 1900, King Humbert of Italy fell by the bullet of an assiasin. On the 30th of the same month the Duke of Saxe-Coburg died of a disease the existence of which was unknown to any but his immediate family. The third of the sequence was Lord Russell, and as was the case with the other two his death was quite unexpected.

In 1901 a strange coincidence caused a stir in the United States. Mr. Otey, a Congressman, died suddenly. Three days later Mr. Cummings, a New York Representative, expired, and on the fourth day the life of Mr. Salmon, Congressman from New Jersey, came to a sudden end. The coincidence goes further. Mr. Salmon had been designated to attend the funeral of Mr. Cummings and Mr. Cummings to attend that of Mr. Otey. Never before in the history of the American House of Representatives had three desks been draped in mourning at one and the same time.

About the same date London was startled by three tragedies in one day and, more curious still, all on the North London railway. There was a child murdered in a waiting room at Dalston Junction, a stock broker was run over by a train at Mildmay Park station, while a young billiard marker attempted to commit suicide by exploding a canister of gunpowder in a first-class carriage near Highbury station. To add to the peculiarity of these triple tragedies the day upon which they all occurred was a Friday.

Italians are proverbially superstitious. No wonder, then, that almost every paper in that country commented upon the following strange treble coincidence. Signor Giolitti, who is popularly credited in his own country with possessing the "evil eye," first became premier in 1892. No fewer than six of his colleagues in the cabinet died during his administration, three in one session and three in the next.

Later Signor Giolitti gave up the premiership and entered the home office. Almost at once his predecessor, Signor Nicorten, was taken ill and died. In 1903 Signor Giolitti again took up the reins of government. He formed his cabinet on November 2, the date known in Italy as the Day of the Dead. A few days later his minister of finance, Signor Rosano, committed suicide.

One more case which is peculiar enough to be recorded. In October, 1902, the Vienna Jockey Club held its annual meeting on its race course. During the previous meeting, which was the first held upon the course, no fewer than five jockeys had been killed and the superstitious wondered what would happen next. They had not long to wait. On the third day of the meeting three riders, all gentlemen jockeys, were killed in three successive races.—Answers.

Machine-Fed Chickens.

To feed and fatten fowls by machinery is the purpose of an invention lately introduced into this country by an enterprising Englishman. The Technical World has an article by Franklin Horton, descriptive of it.

"Fattening poultry by machinery," he says, "is a new industry in tht United States, but already several hundred persons are engaged in it and more than $900,000 has been invested in fattening plants.

"The system is called 'cramming.' It was originated in France, where the growers of poultry still make a practice of taking small funnels with rubber mouths, filling them with semi-liquod food, and forcing the wet meal down the fowl's throat after inserting the tube in its beak. The fat capons and other poultry of France won an enviable place, and the process was transplanted to England."

Now that it is in full use in America, plain old farm-fed chickens, even incubator-hatched, special-housed varieties, will have to step backward and down before the chicken that eats by machinery. What will the mind and appetite of man next suggest?

Pencil Wood for Texas.

In the counties of Matagorda, Wharton and Brazoria, Texas, are 40,000 acres of red cedar from which is cut and shipped the wood of which pencils are made. Much of the wood is exported to Germany after being cut into strips. It is a very profitable Texas industry.

Force of Habit.

"I see the old man has been hanging the holly?"

"Yes; he used to be chairman of the lynching committee, and he's got to hang something!"—Atlanta Constitution.

At the Rink.

He saw the ladies look his way
And to himself he said:
"I'll show them some new fancy curves";
Now he's laid up in bed.
—Houston Post.

Don't blame others for taking you at your own face value if you give yourself away.

Speaking of love, some husbands and wives appear to be immune.

For The Children

The Dreamland Train.

When I would go to fairy-land,
Up-stairs the station lies.
Just after dark the good train leaves:
An early start is wise.
I take a special sleeping-car,
There is no fare to pay,
But mother dear collects a kiss
Before I start away.
And then she tucks me in my berth
And turns the light down low,
I always fall asleep before
The train begins to go.
Through all the night the train flies on,
It is a famous run,
And when the morning comes at last
I'm wakened by the sun.
And then I find I'm somehow home
And in my little bed;
Do you suppose 'twas all a dream,
As my big sister said?
—Youth's Companion.

Waking Willie.

Mother—I hate to do it, Bossy, but——

"Willie simply will not get up in the morning."

Bossy—Moo, moo! Wake up, Willie!

"Why, what's the matter? I only said good morning!"—Chicago Daily News.

Desultory.

The origin of some words is queer, almost to the point of laughable. Take the word "desultory," for example, which, as everybody knows, means disconnected, or jumping from one thing to another. Strange to say, we get it from the Roman circus, where certain performers rode two or more horses, and would leap from one to another. These were called "desultores," in Latin, and from that word came "desultor," which, in the same language, means one who goes from one thing to another, as in a rambling, disconnected speech.

Honey-Cells.

Honey bees are generally credited with instinctive skill in making the cells of the comb hexagonal in shape, but it is probable that this construction is merely the ordinary result of mechanical laws. Solitary bees always make circular cells, and the bees in a hive no doubt make them circular also, but mechanical pressure forces them into a hexagonal form. A well-known naturalist, in speaking of the matter, says that all cylinders made of soft, pliable substances become hexagonal under such circumstances.

A Pasha of Three Tails.

How many of the boys and girls know what a "Pasha of Three Tails" is? That seems a queer title to give to an officer of high rank, and yet it is the custom in Turkey. A pasha is the governor of a province, or a military commander, and his relative rank is indicated by the number of horse tails borne on his standard, one, two, or three tails, as the case may be, three tails being the highest rank.

Why a Chestnut Pops.

A boy wants the editor to tell him why a chestnut pops open when roasting, and why the popping makes a noise. The chestnut pops open because the air in it is expanded by the heat of the fire, and the pressure becomes so great that it bursts the shell. The noise is caused by the sudden rush of air to fill the partial vacuum produced by the explosion.

It is nothing but contrariness that enables a woman to cry at a wedding and laugh at a funeral.