

A SPLENDID SWIMMER.

Captain Blondell's Exploits as a Life Saver.

Captain L. D. Blondell, the swimmer and life saver, is now giving lessons in his art in St. Louis, and modestly claims to be, since the death of Captain Matthew Webb, the greatest swimmer in the world.

"Why," he says, "do you know that 40 per cent. of the men in the United States navy do not know enough about the art to save themselves from drowning if they should fall overboard in harbor? I have never seen any statistics on that subject, but I believe my statement to be true, for when I lived at Norfolk years ago I used frequently to go to the navy yard over at Portsmouth, and being interested in the subject I made it a point to ask every one of the sailors I could get into conversation with if he knew how to swim.

Even many of the men in the life saving service cannot swim a stroke. They would drown if they should fall out of a boat. I say nothing against them. They are sturdy, fine physical men as a rule, and they go through more hardships for fifteen dollars a month than any men in any other branch of the federal service."

He is a great admirer of Captain Webb and thinks that gentleman's venture at Niagara was legitimate and praiseworthy. The captain's great feat in swimming to Point Breeze from the middle of Chesapeake bay he regards as a lesson of immense value to Americans. Captain Blondell, by the way, is a native of Baltimore and acquired his early skill by swimming in the Chesapeake. He was captain of the life saving guard at Point Breeze and



CAPTAIN BLONDELL.

saved many lives, and the best practical conclusion to this little notice is to give its answer to the questions asked by a reporter of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

"How do you avoid being dragged under by drowning people?"

"Keep off until you see how they are going to act. If they lose their heads and try to grab you, let them get their fill of water and pull them out after they are helpless. Otherwise they will drown you as well as themselves. When you have them, don't try to hold them up out of the water. That is too hard and tiring. Get the drowning man on his back, put your hand under his head and swim with the other, going ahead of him. Then if he tries to grab let go, and you are out of his reach."

"What is the best way to swim?"

"On the right side, with the heart near the surface. Swim low in the water, because the more you protrude the greater the weight you have to carry. While on the side you cut the water more easily than going breast on, and you are in an easy breathing position. Swimming breast on the head is thrown back in an unnatural, tiresome position, straining the leaders of the neck and making breathing difficult. On the side the stroke is hand over hand, one arm never appearing above the surface."

Dickens Should Have Known Them.

Frequenters of the Temple in London well know the young blind fellow who stands under the shelter of the outer wall just beyond the foot of the steps leading from Essex street. Winter and summer he is there with matches, bootlaces and pencils for sale, and a purchaser is rewarded with the cheeriest "Thank you, sir; thank you, sir." Just beyond, on the opposite side of the road and hard by the gardens, is an old and lame crossing sweeper. He likewise is an institution and a character. Use his crossing never so often, you will never be asked for a copper, but his thanks when one is given him are as obsequious as the blind man's.

Punctually at 5 the former honours his wares and chair and footstool with a friend in the Temple, and makes his way to the curb, on which he knocks a certain number of times with his stick, and waits. The old crossing sweeper spies him, responds on the pavement with his broom to let him know that he has been seen—for the corner is a dangerous one—and then hurries away to consign his broom into friendly custody. Returning, he lobbies slowly across the road, links his arm in that of the blind man, and off they go, comparing notes on the happenings of the day and the prospects of the morrow. It is a touching sight—the tender solicitude of the old man for his younger but more heavily afflicted friend.

There are 800,000 domestic servants in London. That is to say, about six to every policeman. We really must increase the force, suggests a writer.

The intensity of the mind's emotions is often greater when the troubles are small, so curious is the mental state of those bordering on aberration.

Both Greek and Roman ladies painted their faces; for white, using white lead, for red, the juice of an unknown herb

THE DYING EDITOR.

An Unknown Contributor Tells of His Woes in Blank Verse.

The owner of a paper lay dying in his lair, and the dew of death had gathered on his brow so calm and fair, but a printer knelt beside him as his lifeblood ebbed away and asked the dying editor if he had a word to say. The doomed man murmured softly as he grabbed the printer's fist: "Well, at last the struggle's o'er, and I never will be missed."

"Take a message and taken to that city man of mine—that all his worn out chestnuts he had better put in brine. There's his joke about the weather, which he used this many years, and the gag about the fellow who is always hunting bears, and the item he's so fond of, on the man who peddles books, and the chestnut based on people who go fishing in the brooks. Just to save the paper's credit and to cast no slurs on mine, I would ask him as a favor to put such gags in brine, and the lies he's fond of telling of the street cars and the tacks, and the one about some dandy who will never pay for clothes, and the one on women cleaning house—it's weary heaven knows!"

"Oh, I know I'll slumber happy in my grave beneath the vine if the man who does the city work will put those jokes in brine. Tell the man who tends to business not to weep when I am dead, but to buy himself a club and hit the first man on the head who comes in with strings of items and requests them printed free when the regular rates are cheaper than they really ought to be. Tell the foreman when he makes up not to turn a rule for me, but to simply print an item saying that my soul is free, for I want no eulogistic taffy of that kind in mine, and I think such hoary chestnuts should be pickled well in brine."

"Have that guy and fresh reporter I engaged the other day put a stop to saying 'Selah' also 'We have come to stay!' And if he should say 'Ye local you must trample in his gore, for you know I'd never allow it in the happy days of yore. And the man who comes to tell you how to run the paper well should be greeted with a pewter chestnut bell. And you'll print the paper promptly, be the weather full of storms, and the foreman must be careful when he is making up the forms that the beauty of the paper may through all ages shine, and not be like its neighbors, only fit to put in brine.'—Yen-owine's Milwaukee News.

Jogging His Memory.

A story told recently was of a big, burly fellow who used to drive a team from the Kennebec valley into Piscataquis county selling crackers for a bakery. On one of the outlying farms on his road lived a small man who had won almost a state reputation for beating his creditors. He met the peddler, who did not know him, and bought a barrel of crackers, to be paid for when he came back on his return trip. By that time the peddler was posted on the peculiarities of his customer. He was told at the house he was out in the field, and went to seek him.

When he asked for his pay the little fellow cocked his head on one side and looked up at him with a leer. "Who are you?" he hisped. "I don't know you. I never bought any crackers of you." The peddler grabbed him by the collar and began to wish the air with him. "Don't know me do you? Ain't acquainted with me, hey? Don't know who I am? Never bought any crackers of me, hey?" "Yes, yes, yes!" the victim began to yell. "I know you now. I remember you. I'll pay; I'll pay." The peddler dropped him, accepted the proffered money and drove on as if nothing unusual had happened during his call.—Lewiston Journal.

Mr. Armour's Charities.

Philip D. Armour is a Chicago man who makes more money than the average American citizen would know what to do with. But Mr. Armour, while a man of simple tastes, with no desire to throw money into Lake Michigan for the sole purpose of seeing it sink, contrives to disburse large sums yearly for the betterment of the human race. In a public way, excepting the Armour mission, kindergarten, dispensary, etc., Mr. Armour has done little as yet to immortalize himself among the great benefactors, but his list of private charities is a long one. Many a boy has been helped through school and college, and many a poor family has been relieved from distress. His personal appearance is that of a man who is in close contact with the good things of life, and a glance at his home shows that he knows how to spend money for the comfort of his family and for the gratification of the better tastes.—New York World.

Not Superstitious.

Uncle Job McIntosh, an elderly negro who lived not many years ago on one of the Georgia sea islands with his wife Hannah, used frequently to rebuke his wife for her "slooperstishin'." "Yo's a heap too slooperstishin. Harnah," he would say. "Why ain' you done observe me, ole 'oman? Yo' ain' never seen me min no slooperstishin. Dey ain' no dog howlin wot kin skeer me; dey ain' no black cat wot kin make me belebe dat I'ze gan for to die!"

Aunt Hannah paid no attention. She was accustomed to let Job assert his superior virtues without contradiction, being quite aware that he was no better nor wiser than his fellows.

The very night after this positive assertion on Job's part of his independence of superstitions Aunt Hannah was suddenly taken very ill with cholera morbus. Job, after satisfying himself that her case was really alarming, set out just at sunrise to fetch the doctor.

He was just making his way in a depressed frame of mind through the path overgrown with wild orange and jasmine that leads from his cabin to the boat landing. His eyes were upon the ground. Suddenly he became aware that some object was confronting him on the path and he looked up with a start.

There standing facing him was a big black cat, its glossy back arched, its tail erect and swollen to what seemed an extraordinary size, and its golden eyes glittering in the light of the rising sun. It was merely some wandering tabby of large size returning from a night's foray and startled by Job's quick approach in to making a bold show of resistance, but to the negro's dazed eyes it was an astonishing and terrible object.

Job threw up both hands and screamed. "Tain't me, Marse Satan! Tain't me dat's sick, I tells ye. It's my ole 'oman Harnah dat ye come fer. Tain't me, Marse Satan!"

Jack Tolliner, on his way to the rice plantation, came up just at this moment and took in the whole situation, and while the cat turned and ran off through the jungle, Jack laughed long and loud at Job's fright.—Youth's Companion.

What's in a Name?

He was a small boy traveling with his father and mother on a train, and the way in which he warwhooped up and down the car aisle made him a terror to the other passengers.

"Sit still," said his father in a foghorn voice: "how can I hear myself think when you're making such a racket?"

"There, there, Johnny, dear, you disturb pa," said his fond mother.

But the infant terror kicked and cried and refused to keep one position a second at a time.

"I'd like to have the raisin of that boy—I just would," said a sharp featured woman who had her knitting along.

"I wouldn't mind having a hand in it myself," said a man who was regarding the youngster with murder in his eye.

"Sit still, Johnnie, dear," said his mother placidly for the 900th time.

"Why don't you call him John? He might pay more attention to you then," said his father crossly.

"What's in a name?" asked the mother. "By any other name he would be our Johnny still."

"Then for heaven's sake give him another name," retorted his pa, "for he hasn't been still a moment with the one he has."

Then he plugged his ears with cotton while the other passengers echoed his last remark.—Detroit Free Press.

Astronomy and Photography.

Modern astronomy is more deeply indebted to the science of photography than the average reader may imagine. Without the aid of the camera and the perfect views it has given us of the bodies "far out in space" our knowledge of celestial geography in the latter part of this the grandest of all the centuries, would be meager indeed. When, where or by whom the camera was first pointed skyward with the intention of photographing a planet, or even a whole section of the star spangled canopy which envelops our little world, I will not attempt to say, but the grandest of all such undertakings is that which has been inaugurated and partially carried out by the astronomers and scientific photographers of the world during the past two years. Some master mind conceived the idea of mapping the entire sky—of making a bypath chart of the heavens, as it were. This idea when fully matured was communicated to others interested in that particular branch of science, and the result was an agreement that a celestial atlas should be made.—St. Louis Republic.

A Snake in a Bag of Potatoes.

A man purchased a bag of potatoes at the Cape Town market, and when the potatoes were turned out at his home he discovered that a puff adder was included in the bargain. That viper must have been callous indeed to have expended no venom during its transit, and it is to be hoped that the potatoes were well examined after being in such company. The colonists are wonderfully expert in dealing with such quarry.—Cape Town Letter.

Liability of a Telephone Company.

A telephone company which for several weeks permits its wires to remain suspended across a public highway a few feet from the ground is liable to a traveler who comes in contact therewith during an electrical storm and is injured by a discharge of electricity.—Electrical World.

THE CHAMPION HORSE THIEF.

A Man Who Has Been a Criminal for Many Years.

John Wolf, alias Henry Miller, alias Henry Brown, alias Charles Henry Prung, alias "General" Neff, certainly is a remarkable man—not because he has had a dozen or more names and about as many wives, but because he is seventy-two years old and has been a horse thief thirty odd years.



"GENERAL" NEFF.

as well as a soldier and ordinary business man. He is, or was a few days ago, in jail at Belleville, Ill., and his criminal career is apparently run, for his life is now pretty well known, and he is too old to take a fresh start.

His history begins in 1840, when he was a respectable citizen of St. Louis. He volunteered for the Mexican war, served with honor, located in New Orleans and claims to have been worth \$20,000 when the civil war began. He lost it all, but escaped to St. Louis, and having learned tricky ways in evading the blockade found it impossible, so he says, to quit. In the last thirty years he has been in prison at least a dozen times and sentenced to long terms nearly as often, but has as often escaped, generally by feigning insanity and getting into the hospital. His capacity to change his appearance was wonderful, and on several occasions he was rearrested in the same city as before, and the officers failed to recognize him. He got the nickname of "general" because his most skillful "insanity dodge" was to act as if commanding an army in battle.

In 1882 large losses of cattle and horses in the vicinity of Carlyle, Ill., were traced to Neff, and he was captured, having in his possession when arrested thirty-two horses, one of them being worth \$1,200. Neff was sent to the penitentiary for seven years on this occasion. When he had been a year or two in the penitentiary he began to work the insane dodge again. This time he pretended to be silly and idiotic. The police system of the country was not so perfect then as now, when a criminal is as well known by his record in one city of the Union as another, and Neff's dodge again succeeded. He was sent to the insane ward and for a time made no attempt to escape. He finally was regarded by the attendants as only a harmless imbecile.

One day in 1887 he again disappeared, and shortly after horses began turning up missing in Neff's old haunts. The authorities realized that he had been duped, but although strenuous means were resorted to to capture Neff he evaded arrest until March 10 last. On the night of March 20 last Police Officer Dennis McGuire, of the Second district police station, found a white man and a negro fighting on the corner of Trueman and De Kalb streets and arrested them both. When taken to the station, Captain Huebner recognized Neff, and he was sent back to Chester to finish his seventeen year sentence. Five months ago he again escaped and was not captured until recently. Now he is in on his old sentence, his dodges are known in all the police and detective offices, and, as he sorrowfully says, his career is run. He expects to die in prison and is reconciled to it.

HE'S AN EGG EATER.

A Line in Which a Chicagoan Has Made a Success.

French Pete is the pet name of a Chicago celebrity whose baptismal title is supposed to be Peter Perche, and his specialty is thus set forth by himself:

"Some folks paints pictures. Some writes books, but I eats eggs and cuts hair and shaves. Eatin' eighty-four eggs in twenty minutes ain't no more to me than driakin' a cup of coffee."

It is too true. His first feat, however, was to eat twenty-four eggs in five minutes, but that, he said, was too easy; he wanted something to really test his pow-



FRENCH PETE.

ers, and so the barbers of Chicago have bet on his capacity, and the test is to be made at the barbers' tournament, so to speak.

The Barbers' union of Chicago have made grand arrangements for this contest to be held soon. There will be from sixteen to twenty chairs, and the contest will be for speed and efficiency. One hour will be devoted to shaving and one hour to hair cutting, among white barbers only. Women will have an opportunity to display their skill in dressing ladies' hair and will receive prizes, but will be charged no admittance fee for contesting. Prizes to the amount of \$100 in cash and about \$300 in various articles will be distributed. A gold medal goes to the champion, while medals of various kinds will be given as smaller prizes.

Persuaded to Work.

While in Cajamarca in the Cordilleras I was sitting with my hosts one evening at the door of their house. Suddenly there was a great noise in the quiet street, and a horseman rode up. It was a friend of the family, who was on his way to settle an account with a troublesome debtor. When he hinted that a creditor would hardly be ordinarily received at such an hour, he touched something hanging on the pommel of his saddle, and said that he had something there which would settle the matter.

His debtor was an Indian who lived not far away in the country, and who had promised to make for him 300 or 400 large adobe bricks in payment for some small wares which he had purchased two years before. He seemed perfectly willing to fulfill his contract, and whenever he was reminded of it would promise to be on hand the next day; but he never appeared.

The merchant was repairing his house, and according to the custom of the country had taken the law into his own hands. An hour after he left us he returned, calling out triumphantly. "Well, I have my man, you see."

His lasso was unrolled. One end was tied to his saddle; the other was fastened about the wrists of an Indian. I shall never forget the captive's impassive face. His strong features, framed in long locks of hair, expressed neither anger nor astonishment—only philosophical submission to fate. The next day at dawn I saw him cheerfully at work with the air of a man who was glad to pay his debts.

Curiously enough, when some time later another man wished to engage his services he declined the offer. He liked his employer and his work and had no desire to better his condition.—Marcel Monnier.

Death to the Horses.

It is a white and dreary plain. There is a line of struggling gum trees beside a feeble water course.

Six wild horses—brombies, as they are called—have been driven down, corralled and caught. They have fed on the leaves of the myall and stray bits of salt bush. After a time they are got within the traces.

They are all young and they look not so bad. We start. They can scarcely be held in for the first few miles. Then they begin to soak in perspiration. Another five miles and they look drawn about the flanks, and what we thought was flesh is dripping from them.

Another five, and the flesh has gone. The ribs show, the shoulders protrude. Look! A pole's heels are knocking against the whiffletree. It is twenty miles now. There is a gulp in your throat as you see a wreck stagger out of the traces and stumble over the plain, head near the ground and death upon its back. There is no water in that direction, worn out creature.

It comes upon you like a sudden blow. These horses are being driven to death. And why? Because it is cheaper to kill them on this stage of thirty miles than to feed them with chaff at \$30 a ton.

And now another way. Look at the throbbing sides, the quivering limbs. He falls.

"Driver, for heaven's sake, can't you see?"

"I do, so help me God, I do. But we've got to get there. I'll let them out at another mile."

And you are an Anglo-Saxon, and this is a Christian land.—"Round the Compass in Australia."

Effect of a Compromise.

In a certain Maine town lives a man who for many years has been engaged in the grocery business, but receiving a good offer he sold out to a younger man and retired to private life. But the ruling passion was too strong to let him long be idle, so he commenced building a store on his land, which adjoined that of the Methodist church. For a time everything went harmoniously and the new store neared a state of completion. But just at this point up came one of the trustees of the church and said, "Your store sets over our land one foot and it will have to be moved." This rather staggered the prospective grocer, and he retired to ponder over the question and study the deeds of his land and test the measurements.

In doing this he discovered that the back of the church rested over on his side of the line three feet. Armed with this new argument he said to the church owners, "If you will move your church three feet I will move my store one." This view of the case was a new one to the church authorities, but recognizing its force they made all haste to effect a compromise.—Lewiston Journal.

Strange Story About a Babe.

The latest doubtful yarn comes from Crab Orchard, Va., where it is said that an extraordinary infant was born recently. It lived only a few seconds. It was well developed, had a full and beautiful set of teeth and long, flowing hair of a dark hue. It was exceedingly pretty and seemed to be possessed of all the mental faculties of maturity. In a clear voice it said, "Time here is short," and then closed its eyes and passed away. This, together with the appearance of the comet, which is supposed to carry death and destruction in its wake, has created considerable consternation in that community, and the superstitious are expecting every moment to hear the final blast from Gabriel's bugle.

Rudd Doble, the well known jockey, who has held the reins over Nancy Hauka in her wonderful performances on the trotting track, enjoys the additional distinction of having been celebrated in verse by Dr. Holmes.