MP STRAW OF THE CELL.

Years Trying to Dry Enough Straw For a Bed.

He passed the first ten years of his risonment without doing anything; time to turn himself, settle down get into the ways of the place.

Then, as he still had twenty years to ve out, he said to himself one fine rning that it was shameful to lead so y a life, and that he must find some cupation worthy—not of a free man, he was a prisoner—but simply of a an.

He devoted a year to reflecting, to lighing the different ideas which sed through his head, and examin- what should be the definitive object his life.

To train a spider? That was very old, ll known! Copy Pellison, peugh! flat agiary!

To count on his fingers the wrinkles the wall? What! that was a ridicu- s and useless amusement; nothing rth while.

He said to himself: I must find some- ing which would be at once curious, ofitable and gratifying to my desire for engeance. I must invent a task which ill make the time pass, which will oduce some benefit and which will ve the value of a protest."

A fresh year was spent on this dis- very, and finally success rewarded so uch perseverance.

The prisoner lived in a veritable ungeon, where the sun entered only r half an hour a day, and then only y a thin line like a single hair of light. he wretched pallet on which the un- ortunate man rested his cramped limbs as literally nothing but a heap of damp raw.

"Now, then," he cried with energy, I shall bother my jailors and bluff the w. I will dry my straw!"

He first of all counted the stalks which rmed his bundle. There were one housand three hundred and seven. A oor bundle.

He next made an experiment to find ut how much time it needed to dry one f the straws. It needed three-quarters f an hour.

This made then, altogether, for the ,307 straws, a sum of 980 hours and ifteen minutes; or—taking it at half an hour sunlight a day—1,961 days.

Assuming that the sun shone, on an verage only one day in three, he arrived t a total of sixteen years, one month, ne week and six days.

At the end of six months this was what remained for him to do.

He set to work them.

Every time that the sun shone the prisoner held one of the straws in the ray and thus utilized all his sunlight. The rest of the time he kept warm be- neath his clothes what he had been able to dry.

Ten years passed away. The prisoner had now only a third of his damp bundle to sleep on, and had his chest stuffed with the two other thirds which had gradually been dried.

Fifteen years passed. Oh! joy, only 136 stalks of damp straw left? Four hundred and eight days more and the prisoner would be finally able to stand erect, proud of his work, victor over society and cry with the vengeful voice and satanic laughter of insurgents:

"Ha! ha! You condemned me to damp straw in your dungeon! Then weep with rage! I lie on dry straw!"

Alas! cruel fate was waiting in ambush for its prey!

One night when the prisoner was dreaming of his future happiness, in his ecstasy he made furious gestures, knocked over his pitcher and the water fell on his chest.

All the straw was wetted.

What was to be done now? Begin again the Sisyphus task? Pass another fifteen years in getting bits of sun into bits of straw.

And his discouragement! You, the lucky ones of the world, who give up a pleasure if you have to take twenty-five steps to get it, dare you throw the first stone at him!

But, you will say, he had only a year and a half to wait!

And do you reckon for nothing his wounded pride, his abortive hopes? What, this man shall have worked fifteen years in order to sleep on a bundle of dry straw, and then consent to leave his prison with bits of damp straw on his hair! Never! There is nothing between self-respect and lying down in the gutter.

Eight days and eight nights he debated in anguish, struggling with despair, trying to find a footing again in the annihilation which overwhelmed him.

He ended by surrendering and confessing himself vanquished. He had lost the battle.

One evening he fell on his knees, crushed, despairing.

"My God," he said with tears, "I ask thy forgiveness for being without courage to-day. I have suffered for thirty years, I have felt my limbs decay, my skin wither, my eyes wear away, my blood become pale, my hair and teeth fall out. I have fought against hunger, cold, solitude. I had one desire which sustained my efforts, I had one object in my life. Now my desire cannot possibly be satisfied. Now my object has fled for ever. Now I am dishonored. Pardon me for deserting my post, for leaving the battle, for running away like a coward. I can no more."

Then in a fit of indignation, he resumes:

"No," he cried, "no, a thousand times no! It shall not be said that I have lost my life for nothing. No; I am not conquered! No; I shall not desert! No; I am not a coward! No; I will not lie a minute longer on the damp straw of the dungeons. No; society shall not get the better of me!"

And the prisoner died during the night, vanquished like Brutus, grand as Cato.

He died of an heroic indigestion. He had eaten all his straw.—[By Jean Richepin.

FOREIGN NEWS AND GOSSIP.

Pay your taxes or get into the army is the law in Madagascar.

It has been finally determined to arm the London police with revolvers.

It is estimated that 1,000 women are practicing medicine in England.

A medical Englishman prescribes a strong solution of chromic acid for warts.

An enterprising Englishman is endeavoring to make illuminating gas from sawdust.

An order to vaccinate all the pupils in French public schools has aroused great opposition.

The British sportsmen revolt against the barbed wire fence, because it injures the hounds employed in the chase.

The Lord Lieutenant of Ireland has been instructed to discourage gatherings of either Orangemen or Nationalists.

The editor of *Journal de Rose* believes that Rosa polyantha will prove to be one of the best stocks for rose grafters.

Eighty thousand children in the north of England form the "Dickey Bird Society." They are pledged to protect the birds and to feed them in winter.

Advices from Rheims are to the effect that operations have been accompanied this year by almost incessant rains, and champagne is likely to be scarce and dear.

The London *World* says: "The statement that Mrs. Mackay, the wife of the Bonanza silver king, was the largest bidder for the Porter Rhodes diamond is without foundation.

In Russian literary circles a project is on foot for the celebration of the 300th anniversary of the death of the first Russian printer, Ivan Feodorof, who died December 17, 1583.

The *American Garden* is favorably impressed with the Marlboro raspberry, a new red variety. It is one-fourth larger than the Hudson River Antwerp and free from its musky aroma.

A new white grape raised in the vicinity of Washington, known as the Columbia, is attracting attention at the East. It has oval berries, three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and ripens in the middle of December in the District of Columbia.

The American Bishops held their first meeting in Rome November 13th, all the Cardinals being present. The subject of discussion was a proposition to ask the United States Government to base the relations of the Church and State upon canon law.

The amalgamation of the Gaslight and Coke Company and the South Metropolitan Gas Company of London has been consummated. This leaves two companies in the metropolis, instead of the thirteen which existed prior to 1868. The capital stock of the new company is $77,500,000.

PERSONS AND THINGS.

The inhabitants of Massachusetts are worth an average of $1,500 apiece.

In the Bombay province of India 9,483 cases of leprosy are under treatment.

A San Francisco policeman proved in court that nobody had ever seen him lie.

Overcrowded London is the great recruiting ground of the Mormon Church.

A Boston singer who has warbled for 14 years recommends raw oysters for coughs.

At a game-cock main to be held in Texas there are 100 entries and $20,000 stakes.

Ravens have been successfully used instead of carrier pigeons at Coblentz on the Rhine.

John Quincy Adams drew $425,000 out of the Government for a period of 60 years in office. John takes the belt.

Solomon Schisgal, a youth of St. Petersburg, has invented an electric watch having two wheels and no springs.

A rather under-sized, plainly-dressed, smooth-faced man with a conspicuous nose, is a correspondent's idea of Von Moltke.

William Cook, a former statesman of New York City, is now a bunko-steerer in Paris. He and Tweed were once chums.

"Fear God and take your own part," is inscribed on North Dakota's coat of arms. This entitles every citizen to a church pew and a navy six.

Some entirely new reminiscences of Charles Dickens have been written by his daughter, Miss Mamie Dickens, for the *Youth's Companion*.

W. H. Vanderbilt uses the British word "bursted." This is a great improvement over old times. The Commodore would have said "busted."

Ex-Sen. Yulee, of Florida, an ante-bellum Senator in the red-hot days, has bought a residence in Washington, near the Thomas statue.

Lynchburg, Va., had 42 incendiary fires in two months. Judge Lynch, the distinguished founder of the place, should offer his services for the occasion.

The north central portion of Spain is an elevated plateau, with an altitude of 2,500 above the sea. The only timber consists of a few poplars by the roadside.

Lewis Cohen, a Hebrew gentleman, has been exempted from serving on a coroner's jury on the ground of being the lineal descendent of Aaron, the High Priest.

Truth says that the late Dr. Begg, the leader of the Puritanical section of the Scottish people, has left his family £80,000, the fruit of successful stock gambling.

At New Orleans is a bale of raw silk grown in Louisiana, which weighs 10 pounds eight ounces, is worth $83.50, and comprises 63 skeins, making 1,260,000 yards, or over 700 miles.

The Mayor of Dallas, Tex., has proclaimed that as "everybody is drunk and getting drunker" he will close all the saloons and enable the town to reach a state of sobriety.

AN EARTHQUAKE ROMANCE.

Count Jeppi's Wife and the Discovery in the Ruins.

Count Jeppi, who possess an enormous fortune and one of the oldest titles of the Palatinate, had made a love match. His young wife was a daughter of Prince Cinella, ethereal as a Raphael and radiant and blonde as a Titian. During eight months of the year the happy couple were in the habit of living at Florence. When the grosses choleurs began they went to his coquette little villa, draped with vine branches, on the side of the mountain and near the sea at Casamicciola. One evening last July the Count left his wife after dinner to ramble, according to his custom, along the seashore. The night was superb.

A SCENE OF TERROR.

Suddenly the earth trembled as if shaken by the march of an invisible army of giants. The sky became overcast with black clouds and the ground cracked open, emitting blasts of sulphurous smoke. The Count was thrown upon his face senseless. When he became conscious his first thought was of his young wife. He retraced his steps through the village—now a mass of smouldering ruins, mangled humanity and burnt men and beasts. Cries arose on every side: "Padre Medre! Figlio! Jesu! Maria Santissima!" Each stone seemed to wail and moan. With cold sweat dropping from his temples, Count Jeppi stepped over dead bodies and climbed up walls of tottering houses, with the sole thought, "Shall I arrive in time?" At the corner of a street, a hand, still trembling, projected above a mass of ruins, and a plaintive voice was heard crying for help. Count Jeppi dared not stop. He turned his head aside and hurried past. After having missed his way, and having twenty times crossed and recrossed his steps, Count Jeppi at last arrived before what had once been his villa. A narrow end of a wall was all that remained, standing in a corner of which there remained, quietly hanging from its nail, a gilded wicker cage containing a young dove which had been the favorite pet of the Countess. The Count felt himself becoming feeble as a little child as he gazed upon the terrible debris.

"A VOICE AS FROM THE GRAVE."

Suddenly he thought he heard a voice. The voice seemed to come from a great distance. He strained every nerve. The voice was heard again. He recognized it as that of his wife. "I will save her," said the Count, and at once set to work. He fell upon his knees and began to dig into the smoking ruins with his hands. The fine hot plaster seemed to run through his fingers like water. He lifted up with his bleeding and burning hands heavy stones and blocks that fell back again, jamming and bruising him fearfully. The distant feeble voice guided him. Suddenly it ceased. He had been working for nearly an hour. With the exertion of despair he redoubled his labors. Just as he was about to faint away from exhaustion, the debris upon which he was standing caved in and revealed an empty space filled with smoke. Count Jeppi jumped into it, and stretching out his arms, felt about in every direction. His hand at last touched something soft and clammy. It was the dead body of his young wife. He passed his hand softly over the face. The mouth was opened, the eyes were closed and the hair was tangled and matted over the forehead. Caressing in the darkness the golden tresses, he exclaimed: "If you are still alive, speak or make some movement." Being convinced of his wife's death, he tried to lift her out of the terrible tomb in which he had found her.

A TERRIBLE DISCOVERY.

Seizing her by the shoulders he tried to raise her up. But she seemed to have become terribly heavy, as if an enormous weight were attached to her feet. At last, with one supreme effort, he dragged the body near the opening.

But scarcely had he done so when the bereaved husband uttered a cry like that of a maniac. His wife pressed to her heart the corpse of a man who had his right arm thrown about her fragile waist, while his left held in its rigid grasp a white rose that had not yet withered. The head was crushed and no feature was recognizable. The man wore no ring, and no clue of any kind could be discovered. The next day the bodies were exposed to the villagers. The Count stated that he believed that he had found the body of a long lost friend, and he offered 20,000 lire to any one who would make known and prove the identity of the stranger's corpse. But all in vain. The Count had the bodies buried separately in the cemetery of Casamicciola, and is still seeking to discover the man who had stolen from him his wife's heart.

We have received a life insurance circular which informs us that by paying $6 a year for five weeks we'll get back $20,000 in six months—or rather, by paying $5 a week for 6,000 years we'll get back $20 in—that is by paying $6,000 a year for five weeks, we'll get back—We've got this thing sort of mixed. We must consult the circular again.

FATTENING SWINE.—Do not forget to give charcoal liberally. When pigs are confined to a corn diet they are apt to suffer from a disordered stomach, which is apt to be relieved by charcoal. An occasional handful of wood ashes and sulphur will also be found beneficial.

FOUNDER CURED IN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS.—Boil or steam stout oat straw for half an hour, then wrap it around the horse's leg quite hot; cover up with wet woolen rags to keep in the steam; in six hours renew the application and give one quart of linseed oil. He may be worked next day.

THE TROUBLES OF A POET.

While Col. Bangs, editor of the "Argus," was sitting in his office one day, a man whose brow was clothed with thunder entered. Fiercely seizing a chair, he slammed his hat on the table, hurled his umbrella on the floor and sat down.

"Are you the editor?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Can you read writing?"

"Of course."

"Read that then," he said, thrusting at the colonel an envelope with an inscription on it.

"B——," said the colonel, trying to spell it.

"That's not a B; it's an S," said the man.

"S? Oh, yes; I see. Well, the words look a little like 'Salt for Dinner,' or 'Souls of Sinners,' said the colonel.

"No, sir," replied the man, nothing of the kind. That's my name—Sam'l H. Brunner. I knew you couldn't read. I called to see you about that poem of mine you printed the other day, on the 'Surcease or Sorrow.'"

"I don't remember it," said the colonel.

"Of course you don't, because it went into the paper under the infamous title of 'Smearcase To-Morrow.'"

"A stupid blunder of the compositor, I suppose."

"Yes, sir; and that is what I want to see you for. The way that poem was mutilated was simply scandalous. I haven't slept a night since. It exposed me to derision. People think I an ass. Let me show you."

"Go ahead," said the the colonel.

"The first line, when I wrote it, read in this manner;—

"'Lying by a weeping willow, underneath a gentle slope,'

That is beautiful, poetic, affecting. Now, how did your vile sheet present it to the public? There it is. Look at it.! Made it read this way:—

"'Lying to a weeping widow, to induce her to elope.'

Weeping widow, mind you! A widow! This is too much—it's enough to drive a man crazy!"

"I'm sorry," said the colonel; "but—"

"But look a-here at the fourth verse," said the poet; "that's worse yet. What I said was:—

"'Cast thy pearls before the swine, and lose them in the dirt,'

I wrote that out clearly and distinctly, in a plain round hand. Now, what does your compositor do? Does he catch the sense of that beautiful sentiment? Does it sink into his soul? No, sir! He sets it up in this fashion:—

"'Cart thy pills before the sunrise, and love them if they hurt.'

Now, isn't that a cold-blooded outrage on a man's feelings? I'll leave it to you if it isn't?"

"It's hard, that's a fact," said the colonel.

"And then take the fifth verse. In the original manuscript it said, plain as daylight:—

"'Take away the jingling money; it is only glittering dross.'

A man with only one eye, and a cataract over that, could have read the words correctly. But your pirate upstairs there—do you know what he did? He made it read:—

"'Take away the jeering monkey, on a sorely glandered hoss!'

By George! I felt like braining him with a shovel! I was never so cut up in my life."

"It was natural, too," said the colonel.

"There, for instance, was the sixth verse. I wrote:—

"'I am weary with the tossing of the ocean as it heaves.'

It is a lovely line, too; but imagine my horror and the anguish of my family when I opened your paper and saw the line transformed into:—

"'I am wearing out my trousers, till they're open at the knees.'

That is a little too much! That seems to me like carrying the thing an inch or two too far. I think I have a constitutional right to murder that compositor; don't you?"

"I think you have."

"Let me read you one more verse. I wrote:—

"'I swell the flying echoes as they roam among the hills,
And I feel my soul awaken to the ecstasy that thrills.'

Now what do you suppose your miserable outcast turned that into? Why, into this:—

"'I smell the frying shoes as they roast along the bulls,
And I peel my sole mistaken in the ecstacy that whirls.'

Gibberish, sir, awful gibberish! I must slay that man! Where is he?"

"He is out just now," said the colonel. "Come in to-morrow."

"I will," said the poet; and I will come armed."

Then he put on his hat, shouldered his umbrella, and drifted off downstairs.

A justice of the peace, writing to the chief justice of Arkansaw, said: "It ain't often that I ax a man's advice, but on this here occasion I thought I'd write to you, to see if you wouldn't agree with me an a rulin' that I made the other day. A feller was arrested an' fotch before me fer shootin a red steer, an' I discharged him on the grounds that a red steer oughter be shot. I never seed a red steer that didn't have the devil hid somewhere about him. He may seem to be in a good humor, an' may 'tend to his business all right, but wait till he gets the chance an' blamed if the devil don't show hisself." The chief justice replied: "Of course I am not possessed of all the facts on which you base your opinion, but as a rule I think that a man is justifiable in shooting a red steer, for the worst jolt I ever received was by one of these devilish animals."

"You didn't shoot the old straw hat yet, I see," said Jones to Brown. "No," replied Brown, with a rueful air. "I haven't got any ammunition."

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Could not move!

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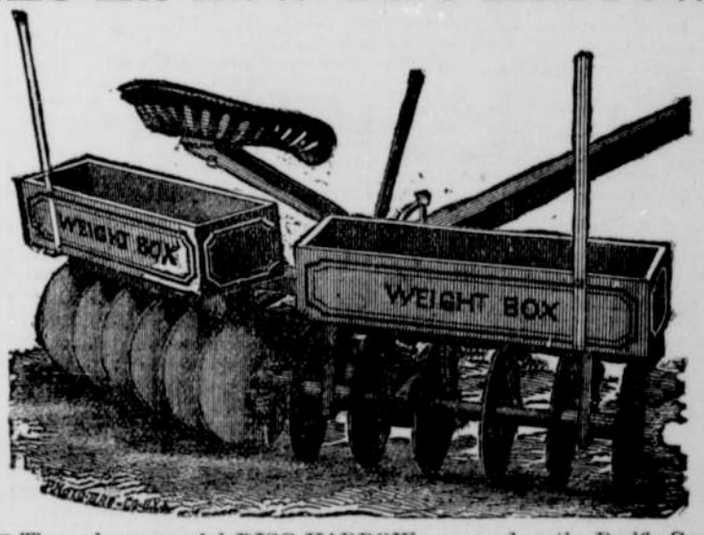

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