

ROMANCE OF A RIFLE.

It Lined a Soldier With Two Wars Twenty-two Years Apart. While Mr. Frederic Martyn was serving in Africa with the French Foreign Legion there came under his notice an incident that he records in "Life in the Legion." The legion had advanced against the Dahoman army and was in pursuit of the black warriors.

A Dahoman warrior was killed in the act of leveling his gun at Captain Battreau of the legion from behind a cotton tree on the side of a nearby hill. As he fell his rifle clattered down at the officer's very feet. Captain Battreau saw that it was an old chassepot and picked it up out of curiosity. Suddenly he became very much interested. He examined it carefully and at last exclaimed with a gasp of astonishment:

"Well, this is a miracle! Here is the very rifle I used in 1870 during the war with Germany! See that hole in the butt? That was made by a Prussian bullet at Saint-Privat. I could tell the gun from among a million by that mark alone, but here's my number stamped on it as well, which is evidence enough for anybody. Who would have thought it possible that I should pick up in Africa, as a captain, a rifle that I used in France as a sergeant twenty-two years ago? It is incredible!"

Captain Battreau was able to prove that the rifle had indeed been his, and he received permission to keep it.

THE COAL SACK IN THE SKY.

It Is Visible Only Because It Contains Nothing That Is Visible.

Immediately below the lower stars of the group which forms the Southern Cross there is a black patch in the sky, dark, sack shaped and mysterious. Scientifically accurate astronomers explain that it is not a patch, but rather something which becomes visible by reason of the anomaly that it contains nothing that is visible.

The lay mind, preferring bald reality to abstract truth, is somewhat startled to learn that an object is seen because there is nothing in it to see, but no one can dispute the fact. The coal sack is visible because it contains nothing that is visible.

In other words, it is a vast hole in the stellar system in which there is not even a pinch of stellar dust to shed a flicker of luminosity. It is typically and absolutely the quintessence of blackness.

Because it is so and in contradiction of all preconceived notions the human eye can see it without the aid of a telescope or other instrument.

Between the stars of the Milky way there are many little holes in the stellar system—little by comparison, that is to say—but one must have telescopes and patience to find them. One need only cross the line to the southern hemisphere and locate the Southern Cross in order to see the coal sack.

Annotated Music.

The unmusical man if he takes a curious interest in music very often favors "program" music. And the reason is not far to seek. If the music says nothing to him the "program" does. He thinks of the "program," therefore, as making music more human, connecting it with life, giving it a definite message to men. As a matter of fact, however, the "program" is never the essential thing (I mean by "program," of course, the official literary explanation). The "program" does not interpret the music. It is the music that lends something of itself to color and emotionalize the "program." Music is the universal native. It is never the foreigner with the literary person for interpreter.—Glasgow Herald.

Couldn't Fool Him.

A witness from the country had been sworn and had taken the witness stand, and the prosecuting attorney, settling down for the examination, asked as a starter:

"What is your name, sir?"

"The old man instantly became angry. Leaving far forward, he exclaimed: "Now, see here; you can't run any of this monkey business in on me! I heard you tell the clerk to call my name, and so I know you know it all right, blame you anyhow!"—Chicago News.

Looking Forward.

"And, darling," says the bridegroom, "you are going to put your bridegroom away in a trunk in the attic, I suppose?"

"Yes, indeed," the bride says. "Mamma always said if you saved anything for seven years you would have use for it again."—Chicago Post.

Getting Used to It.

"How are you getting on in society?" "Pretty well," replied Mr. Cumrox. "I am much more at home in my own house than I used to be. When we have a reception now people very seldom drag me up and try to introduce me to my wife and daughters."—Washington Star.

An Invitation.

"I suppose," he ventured, "that you would never speak to me again if I were to kiss you?"

"Oh, George!" she exclaimed. "Why don't you get over the habit of always looking at the worst side of things?"—London Tit-Bits.

Rather Ambiguous.

Mother (admonishing)—Don't let the men come too near you when courtin'. Daughter—Charles and I have a chair between us.—Judge.

CHARGED THE ENEMY.

It Wasn't Because He Was Brave and Defied Death, Though.

General Basil Duke of Louisville, commander of Morgan's cavalry following the death of his brother-in-law, General John Morgan, told this story at a reunion of the survivors of the battle of Shiloh.

He said that during one of the Tennessee campaigns Morgan's men surprised and drove back a regiment of Federal troopers. In the midst of the retreat one of the enemy, who was mounted upon a big bay horse, suddenly turned and charged the victorious Confederates full tilt, waving his arm and shrieking like mad as he bore down upon them alone. Respecting such marvelous courage, the Confederates forbore shooting the approaching foe, but when he was right upon them they saw there was a different reason for his foolhardiness.

He was a green recruit. His horse had run away with him. The bit had broken, and, white as a sheet and scared stiff, the luckless youth was being propelled straight at the whooping Kentuckians, begging for mercy as he came.

Jeff Sterritt, a noted wit of the command, stopped the horse and made a willing prisoner of the rider. Sterritt, who had not washed or shaved for days and was a ferocious looking person, pulled out a big pistol. "I don't know whether to kill you right now," he said, "or wait until the fight is over."

"Mister," begged the quivering captive, "don't do it at all. I'm a dissipated character, and I ain't prepared to die."—Philadelphia Saturday Evening Post.

REAL ROOF GARDENS.

The Kind They Plant on Log Cabins in Rural Norway.

The log cabins of rural Norway are built of heavy pine logs hewed square and of equal size from end to end. They are usually stained or oiled, and their rich yellowish or brownish color is in harmony with almost any surroundings. Their roofs are sodded, a circumstance that adds picturesqueness to the general effect.

"I have come across roofs that were a riot of wild pansies," says a writer in the Craftsman, "and I have seen wonderful roofs where wild roses hung over the eaves or a daisy roof, the effect of whose white, starlike flowers, topping the dark brown structure, was exquisitely picturesque."

"Some roofs produce only pasture grass, and the story runs in Norwegian folklore that a lazy man led his cow on the roof—the cabin was built against a hill—instead of taking her to the pasture. I have no doubt that the story is true, for I have often seen a couple of white kidlets gamboling on the soft green housetops while the mother goat, grave and ruminative, was tethered to the chimney."

"Sod roofs are just as water tight as others if they are laid correctly. A board roof is first laid upon a house, and this is covered with a layer of birch bark. On top of this comes a layer of sod with the grass turned down to the roof, then a rather thick layer of earth and finally another layer of sod, this time with the grass up. The result is a most exquisite and poetical covering for the house."

Work of the Doctor.

Dr. Stephen Paget has some interesting observations on the doctor and his rewards in his "Confessio Medici." "If medicine is a trade why should the doctor so often work for nothing?" he asks. "If it is an art what works of art does he produce? None, says Claude Bernard. 'Le medecin artiste ne cree rien.' But surely he is wrong. The doctor, so far from creating nothing, creates life, for he saves or prolongs life, creates more life. If Miss X. is seventy, and the doctor by an operation enables her to live till she is seventy-five he has not prolonged the seventy years, for they were ended before he came, but he has created five brand new years. If he had not been there they would not be here. That is creation."—London Chronicle.

Velocity of Light.

The velocity of light as determined by Simon Newcomb is 299,800 kilometers, or 186,327 miles, per second reduced to a vacuum or space specific speed. Time required for light to come here from moon, 1.3 seconds; from sun, 8 minutes 19 seconds; from nearest star, 4.35 years; from Sirius, 8.7 years; from Arcturus, not less than 40 years, and from others vastly more remote, from 1,000 to 5,000 years.

Schoolroom Humor.

The following schoolboy "howlers" come from New Zealand:

"Gross darkness is 144 times darker than ordinary darkness."

"Marconi is the stuff you use to make delicious puddings."

"Charon was a man who fried soles over the sticks."

A Mere Bagatelle.

Gabe—I see where a waiter in St. Louis has purchased a hotel out of the tips he received in five years. Steve—What did he do with the rest of the money?—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Necessary Knowledge.

"Why are you learning French?" "Why? Because I've just got a dog from France, and the silly beast can't understand a word of English."—London Tit-Bits.

What men want is not talent, it is purpose; not the power to achieve, but the will to labor.—Bulwer Lytton.

BURNED BY COLD.

Liquid Air Will Produce a Worse Wound Than Intense Heat.

Whoever has applied a moistened finger to a piece of frosty metal in winter well remembers the painful experience thereby gained of the fact that cold as well as heat can blister the skin.

During some experiments in the production of excessively low temperatures Pictet, the French investigator, burned himself with cold several times, and the effects were so remarkable that he deemed them worthy of description to a body of scientific men.

It appears that there are two kinds or degrees of cold burn. In the case of the less severe "burns" the skin at first turns red, but becomes blue the next day. The inflamed spot swells, and a period varying from a month to six weeks elapses before the wound heals.

When the contact with the cold substance is longer and more complete a burn of the second degree is produced. A malignant and stubborn wound is formed, and the process of healing is very slow.

A drop of liquid air falling on Pictet's hand produced a cold burn which did not completely heal in six months, while a scorch from heat accidentally inflicted on the same hand and nearly at the same time was healed in ten or twelve days.—Harper's Weekly.

A DAINY TABLE FEAT.

Victor Hugo's Wonderful Orange and Sugar Combination.

In "My Autobiography" Mme. Judith, the great French actress, tells a story of Victor Hugo.

At a dinner which Judith attended with Alexandre Dumas somebody quoted Alfred de Musset, and Hugo was led to express his opinion on his illustrious fellow author.

"Yes," he said, "he has immense talents. He even boasts that there are some who consider him as good a poet as I am."

Dumas jogged Judith's elbow, and it was all she could do to keep from laughing.

"At the end of the meal," our author relates, "Hugo treated us to a very strange exhibition. He put a whole orange, rind and all, into his mouth and then managed to thrust as many pieces of sugar as possible into his cheeks. This achieved, he began to crunch it all up with his lips tightly closed. In the midst of this operation he swallowed two liqueur glasses of kirsch and a few minutes later opened his mouth wide. It was empty! No one made any attempt to imitate him, possibly because no one else had teeth good enough for such a feat."

One Way to Cook a Snipe.

"American cooking," said a foreign chef who visited this country, "pleases me very much. Your southern dishes I particularly like. The French chef, whom we find in the large hotel all over the world, would do well to adopt some of your dishes. He would do well, for example, to substitute 'chicken Maryland style' for such a dish as poached ortolan brains."

"Poached ortolan brains—no exaggeration," he said, "are of the sort of dishes a certain type of French chef loves to serve. Such a chef—the gourmet's chef—cooks fish that are not cleaned and birds so rare they seem not to be cooked at all. Indeed, these fellows have an axiom that the way to cook a snipe is:

"Let it fly once through a hot kitchen."

English Literary Consuls.

If America is famous for its ambassadors who have been men of letters, England can boast of her literary consuls. G. P. R. James, probably the most prolific English novelist (except, perhaps, Miss Braddon), wrote three novels a year for about forty years and died in 1800 as consul general at Venice. Sir Richard Burton likewise wrote most of his travel books and translations of eastern works when consul in various parts of the world. At his last consulship at Trieste, which he held from 1872 to 1880, he succeeded Charles Lever, the Irish novelist, who had occupied the position for fifteen years. But is there a famous English literary consul at the present time?—Exchange.

At the Minstrels.

"Mr. Interlocutor, if a baby swallowed a key what would you call it?"

"I don't know, Mr. Bones. What would you call it?"

"A key in a minor."

"Mr. Baker will now oblige with a recitation entitled 'Ragtime.'"

Rags make paper. Paper makes money. Money makes banks. Banks make loans. Loans make poverty. Poverty makes rags.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

A Matter of Measure.

Flecher (who has a cow to sell)—Of course she hasn't any of those A. R. O.'s attached to her name, but she's got her good points, all right. Milcher—Yeah, but I want one with a record and some good daughters. You can judge them by their quarts and gals.—Exchange.

Overconfidence.

Probably the best thing about overconfidence is that if a girl didn't have it she wouldn't ever marry.—Galveston News.

No Insult Offered to a Man can Ever

degrade him. The only real degradation is when he degrades himself.—Dinah Maria Mulock Craig.

GOT DRUNK ON A BEEFSTEAK

And Also on Overstrong Tea and Even on Cold Water.

According to a house surgeon in a London hospital, it is not necessary to take strong drink at all in order to be drunk. Cases have been known in which patients have got drunk on a beefsteak after having been for many weeks on a very light diet. The intoxication in these cases showed itself in a slight dizziness and drowsiness and indistinctness of speech.

Similar cases have been known in which the only intoxicant has been strong tea. In fact, there are instances in medical books of exceptional people in whom the constant use of overstrong, overdrawn tea has brought about distinct symptoms of delirium tremens.

Perhaps the most curious sort of intoxication on record is that in which the only intoxicant is cold water dripping from a water tap into the ear. In Germany a few years ago quite a number of morbid people had a craving for this curious way of inducing drunkenness, but it seems to have been stamped out.

The drip of the water is said to cause a painful boiling sensation at first and then to cause a pleasant drowsiness, ending in deep sleep. When the victim is roused he is dull and stupid in manner, like a heavy drinker. This craze makes its victim a nervous wreck in a very short time.—Pearson's Weekly.

RIDING THE SURF.

Riotous Sport in the Breakers That Lash the Coast of Hawaii.

"One of the novel pleasures in which most travelers indulge while in Honolulu is surf riding at Waikiki, near Diamond head," writes John Burroughs in the Century. "The sea, with a floor of lava and coral, is here shallow for a long distance out, and the surf comes in at intervals like a line of steeds cantering over a plain. We went out in our bathing suits in a long, heavy dugout, with a native oarsman in each end."

"When several hundred yards from shore we saw on looking seaward the long, shining billows coming, whereupon our oarsmen headed the canoe toward shore and plied their paddles with the utmost vigor, uttering simultaneously a curious, excited cry. In a moment the breaker caught us and, in some way holding us on its crest, shot us toward the shore like an arrow."

"The sensation is novel and thrilling. The foam flies; the waters leap about you. You are coasting on the sea, and you shout with delight and pray for the sensation to continue. But it is quickly over. The hurrying breaker slips from under you and leaves you in the trough, while it goes foaming on the shore. Then you turn about and row out from shore again and wait for another chance to be shot toward the land on the foaming crest of a great Pacific wave."

Turn to the Earth.

You to whom the universe has become a blast furnace, a coke oven, a cinder strewn freight yard, to whom the history of all ages is a tragedy with the climax now to whom our democracy and our flag are but playthings of the hypocrite, turn to the soil, turn to the earth, your mother, and she will comfort you. Rest, be it ever so little, from your black broodings. Think with the farmer once more, as your fathers did. Reverse with the farmer our centuries old rural civilization, however little it meets the city's trouble. Reverse the rural customs that have their roots in the immemorial benefits of nature. There is perpetual balm in Gilead, and many city workmen shall turn to it and be healed. This by faith and a study of the signs, we proclaim!—Nicholas Vachel Lindsay in Farm and Fireside.

Practical Piety.

The goodly minister saw one of his parishioners running rapidly down the road, trying to keep in sight of a retreating form ahead.

"Ah," called the minister, "whither away, my brother?"

Seeing the race was lost anyway, the chaser stopped and pantingly replied: "That confounded thief stole my coat!"

"Ah, and you were following the Scriptural admonition to give him your cloak also, were you?"

"No," said the parishioner frankly, "but I intended, if I caught him, to give him a belt!"—Judge.

Italy's Marriage Brokers.

In Italy marriage brokers are a regular institution. They have pocketbooks filled with the names of marriageable maidens in various ranks of life and go about trying to arrange matches. When they are successful they receive a commission, and very likely some thing extra as a voluntary gift from their customer.

Hood's Bit of Fun.

An English beer vender wrote over his shop door:

"Beer sold here."

Tom Hood, who saw it, said it was spelled right.

"The fluid the man sells," Hood explained, "is his own brain."

Spoils It All.

"Speaking of the theater, I like plays with a happy ending."

"So do I. But my wife almost always loses a handkerchief or a glove."—Washington Herald.

The enlargement of man's possessions

is very often the contracting of his heart.—Robertson.

SAVED HIS CABLE TOLLS.

A Clever Ruse at Home Gave Him the Information He Wanted.

A wealthy merchant in Paris who does an extensive business with Japan was informed that a prominent firm in Yokohama had failed, but the name of the firm he could not learn. He could have learned the truth by cabling; but, to save expense, instead he went to a well known banker who had received the news and requested him to reveal the name of the firm.

"That's a very delicate thing to do," replied the banker, "for the news is not official, and if I gave you the name I might incur some responsibility."

The merchant argued, but in vain, and finally he made this proposition: "I will give you," he said, "a list of ten firms in Yokohama, and I will ask you to look through it and then tell me, without mentioning any name, whether or not the name of the firm which has failed appears in it. Surely you will do that for me."

"Yes," said the banker, "for if I do not mention any name I cannot be held responsible in any way."

The list was made. The banker looked through it and as he handed it back to the merchant said, "The name of the merchant who has failed is there."

"Then I've lost heavily," replied the merchant, "for that is the firm with which I did business," showing him a name on the list.

"But how do you know that is the firm which has failed?" asked the banker in surprise.

"Very easily," replied the merchant. "Of the ten names on the list only one is genuine, that of the firm with which I did business. All the others are fictitious."

THE HUMAN FACTORY.

Its Machinery Develops With the Intellect That Directs It.

A human being is a kind of factory. The engine and the works and all the various machines are kept in the basement, and he sends down orders to them from time to time, and they do the work which has been conceived up in headquarters. He expects the works down below to keep on doing these things without his taking any particular notice of them, while he occupies his mind, as the competent head of a factory should, with the things that are new and different and special and that his mind alone can do; the things which, at least in their present initial formative or creative stage, no machines as yet have been developed to do and which can only be worked out by the man up in the headquarters himself, personally, by the handiwork of his own thought.

The more a human being develops the more delicate, sensitive, strong and efficient, the more spirit informed, once for all, the machines in the basement are. As he grows the various subconscious arrangements for discriminating, assimilating, classifying material, for pumping up power, light and heat to headquarters, all of which can be turned on at will, grow more masterful every year. They are found all slaving away for him, dimly, down in the dark while he sleeps. They hand him up in his very dreams new and strange powers to live and to know with.—Gerald Stanley Lee in Atlantic Magazine.

The German Empire.

The German empire was constituted as at present Jan. 1, 1871. After preliminary negotiations during the course of the Franco-Prussian war the parliament of the north German confederation (with which Baden, Hesse-Darmstadt, Bavaria and Wurttemberg had recently allied themselves) in an address dated Dec. 10, 1870, requested King William of Prussia to become German emperor. All the sovereign princes of German states, and the three free and Hanseatic towns having joined in offering the imperial crowns, the proclamation of William I, as emperor was made at Versailles Jan. 18, 1871. The first reichstag was opened at Berlin March 25, and the imperial constitution was adopted April 14, 1871.—Philadelphia Press.

Not So Serious.

A doctor who had been summoned hastily alighted from his carriage to find a woman awaiting him on the doorstep, but without the anxious look he expected in the circumstances. "I understand," he said, "that your boy has swallowed a sovereign. Where is he?"

"Oh, sir," was the reply, "I'm glad to tell you we made a mistake! It wasn't a sovereign; it was only a half-penny!"—London Mail.

A Good Excuse.

"Now, then," demanded Luschman's wife the next morning, "what's your excuse for coming home in that condition last night?"

"Well, to tell you the truth, m' dear," he replied, "none of the hotels would take me in."—Philadelphia Press.

A Big Difference.

"How rejoiced the knights of old were when they got their lady's glove?"

"And how mean they look now when their girl gives them the mitten?"—Baltimore American.

Never a Near Relative.

"Pa, who is Mrs. Grundy?"

"She is an old lady who is always supposed to belong to some other man's family."—Chicago Record-Herald.

His Mistake.

Fogg—I understand Dobson married a rich widow. Fenner—So he understood, too, but it proves to be a misunderstanding.—Boston Transcript.

CORK TREE BARK.

If Carefully Removed a New Supply Grows in a Few Years.

As most people know, cork is the outer bark of an oak. This tree, known to the botanists as Quercus suber, is an evergreen, native to the Mediterranean region, and is cultivated in France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Morocco, Tunis and Algiers. If carefully done removing the bark does not injure the tree, and a new supply may be obtained from the same specimen after a few years.

We are so familiar with the use of cork for the stoppers of bottles that we seldom realize its manifold other uses, though its connection with bottles dates back only about 500 years. We so commonly speak of the stopper of a bottle as a cork that we see no incongruity in the expression "a rubber cork."

Just as our word for stopper has been derived from the word cork, so cork itself has probably been derived from the Spanish corcho, which in turn is derived from the Latin cortex, meaning rind. Some authors, however, would derive cork from quercus, the generic name of all oaks.

Cork is present in the bark of all trees, though in quantities too small to make it useful in the many ways in which cork from the cork oak is employed. The cork barked elm, the sweet gum and a few others have strongly developed cork.

BURIED ALIVE FORTY DAYS.

Queer Test a Hindu Fakir is Said to Have Survived.

Dr. Konigberger, a physician in the Punjab, doubting the frequently repeated stories of the Hindu fakirs who claimed to be able to sustain life for a considerable time after burial in the earth by the process known as "swallowing the tongue," determined to make the most rigid tests and exclude all possible fraud.

One of these Brahman fakirs allowed himself to be buried by the doctor and his suspicious colleagues in a well fastened and sealed vault. The burial lasted such a long time—for forty days—that some cork planted upon the soil above the vault sprouted before the unhappy fellow was released. Then the Hindu was freed, subjected by the doctor to restoratives and lived happily ever afterward.

Sir Henry Lawrence, an English scientist who assisted the German savant, substantiated the account. The chest in which the fakir was buried was firmly sealed, and when the fellow was brought out he was cold and apparently lifeless.

Readers of Stevenson will recall the Master of Ballantrae's fatal attempt to escape from his murderers by this trick.—London Family Herald.

Burglars and the Law.

Remarking that many members of the public feel some doubt as to the precise extent to which the law will uphold them in using violence to defend or capture a burglar, the Law Journal of London says: "A peaceful trespasser must be requested to depart in peace, and only on his refusal can force be used to remove him, but a violent or an armed trespasser can be removed without such a request. As a general rule, however, it is not lawful to kill even a person assaulting one or stealing one's goods. Unless one's life is in danger such an act is at best manslaughter. Possibly in the defense of one's home the use of firearms is justifiable, even if no violence to the person is threatened, but this is very doubtful."

A Lost Chance.

Years ago a man named Saltzmann owned an estate in Griqualand, South Africa, and adjoining his property was an old, rundown farm that had not been worked on account of its poor soil and lack of necessary water. The owner of the farm met Herr Saltzmann one day and offered to trade the farm for an old waistcoat he had seen him wearing. As Saltzmann did not wish to burden himself with a piece of worthless land, he kindly refused the offer. A few years later big, clear diamonds were found on this waste stretch, and now thousands of pounds could not purchase it.—London Mail.

Not Very Reassuring.

He—Your father called me a timber wolf. What did he mean by that? She—Oh, that's just one of pa's political expressions. He used to live out west, you know, and nothing ever pleased him so much as to shoot a timber wolf before breakfast. Of course, he didn't mean anything by it.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Papa's Fault.

Father—I have just heard that that incorrigible son of mine has just married a well known actress. Daughter—Well, you have yourself to blame, father. Father—How do you make that out? Daughter—Haven't you often told him to hitch his wagon to a star?

All Over.

"Well, dear, I guess the honeymoon is over."

"Why do you say that?" pouted the bride.

"I have been taking stock, and I find that I am down to \$2.65."—Washington Herald.

Wasted Advice.

Father—My son, remember this—no man ever accomplished much who talked at his work. Son—How about a lecturer, dad?—Boston Transcript.

The dread of ridicule extinguishes