

It is alleged that more than 5,000 cheap pianos are worked off in New York and Boston every year at sales of household goods, and each one is advertised as "belonging to a lady who is obliged to dispose of this magnificent instrument on account of financial difficulties."

A pumpkin grew to weigh 250 pounds at Newburg, N. Y., by being fed on milk. One of the roots was allowed to rest in a basin of milk, and it consumed a pint of the liquid each day. It strikes us as rather an expensive way to raise pumpkins.

The colonies of Australia and the neighboring islands have some twenty scientific societies, with a membership of between 2500 and 3000. These organizations are to meet in 1883 for the purpose of forming an Australian association for the advancement of science, similar to the important associations now existing in England, France and the United States.

For ways that are dark and tricks that are vain the old world gambler, perhaps, discounts his enterprising brethren in America. A correspondent writes that in a gambling saloon in Moscow the walls and ceiling were covered with paper on which stars were stamped. Among the stars in the ceiling holes were cut, and a man lying on the floor in the room above saw the hands of those playing cards and telegraphed them, by means of wires connected with his shoes, to his confederate.

There is lots of coal to be mined yet. According to the calculations made by a scientific writer lately, it requires a prodigious amount of vegetable matter to form a layer of coal, the estimate being that it would really take 1,000,000 years to form a coal bed 100 feet thick. The United States has an area of between 300,000 and 400,000 square miles of coal fields, 100,000,000 tons of coal being mined from these fields each year, or enough to run a ring around the earth at the equator five and a half feet wide and five and a half feet thick, the quantity being sufficient to supply the whole world for a period of 1500 to 2000 years.

The people of Oregon are looking, some day, for an eruption from Mount Hood, an extinct volcano in the Cascade range, eighty miles east of Portland. Simultaneous with the earthquake at Charleston, strange sounds were heard in the crater of Hood for several days, and parties of tourists in the neighborhood became alarmed and returned to the city for safety. Geologists are convinced that it will resume operations some time. The last eruption occurred so long ago that the Indians have no memory of it. They have a tradition, however, that Mount Hood and Saint Helens were once close together—one on the north, the other on the south bank of the Columbia river. They lived in peace for thousands of years. One day they quarrelled, throwing fire, ashes and stones at each other. These fell into the river and blocked it up, causing the great cascades of the Columbia.

W. A. Croffut, editor of the Washington Post, tells the following story of the return of the remains of the late A. T. Stewart. He says he had the story from a member of the Hilton family at a dinner party. He says: "It was a couple of years anterior to that, I think my informant said, that the bones were finally ransomed. Judge Hilton persistently refused to consent to it, and at last, when Mrs. Stewart declared herself unable any longer to carry the burden of the ghastly thought that the remains of her husband were being carted around the country by a gang of thieves, she defied her lawyer's scruples and concluded negotiations. Mrs. Stewart gave \$25,000 instead of the \$50,000 at first demanded. The bargain was made through a lawyer who seemed to have no other briefs, and who probably got a good fraction of the 'swag.' The ghouls insisted that the money should be delivered to them on a lonely hill in Westchester county at the dead of night. Thither, in accordance with their directions, a relative of Mrs. Stewart journeyed alone in a wagon, which he drove himself. At a spot in the country road which had not been designated or described the driver was suddenly halted by a masked horseman. This mysterious messenger led him through a by-lane to the hilltop, where, after certain precautions to insure their safety, they received the \$25,000, examined it, and then dragged a bag of bones from another buggy near by and surrendered it to the keeping of the solitary traveler. Before they disappeared down one side of the hill they commanded him, on peril of his life, to turn about and descend the other slope. He did as he was bidden and got to New York before morning. The next night the bones were committed to the vault under the great cathedral at Garden City, which had already been connected by a secret wire with a chime of bells sure to ring and alarm the town if it was disturbed. So now the mortal remains of the great merchant-millionaire and those of his patient, enduring, frugal and affectionate wife of sixty years rest side by side."

Woman suffrage is apt to bring about a strange state of affairs, says a Tacoma (Washington Territory) paper. An illustration of this was afforded not long since in a convention in one county, where a lady delegate in several instances voted in opposition to her father, who was a delegate from the same precinct. But a still more peculiar case is that in Lincoln county, where Mr. Frank M. Gray, editor of the Davenport Times, who is a member of the Territorial Republican convention, is a Republican candidate for the Legislature, while Mrs. Gray, his wife and associate editor, is a candidate on the Democratic ticket for school superintendent.

There has never been a time, remarks a metropolitan paper, when persons who are too fat were more anxious to get rid of their superfluous fatness. Divers theories and practices are held and employed for this purpose. Medical authorities claim that a large quantity of water will not, when the same amount of solid food is eaten, make a man thinner or stouter. Frequent experiments have demonstrated this. Scalding hot water, so much used nowadays, unquestionably injures the teeth, stomach and other organs concerned in the early stages of digestion. A fat man may easily lose much by injuring his health, as the banting and similar systems prove. The problem is to reduce weight without reducing strength. A skilful trainer will bring a man down to the best condition for violent exercise, but as soon as the training has relaxed the obesity, if natural, will return. Continuous and severe training is destructive. A good rule for physical diminution is to eat less, sleep less and walk more, if the rule be followed with moderation. Liquor, wine or beer is particularly injurious, unless sparingly taken, to stout persons desirous to be less stout.

Says the New York Commercial Advertiser: "Ex-Senator Hunter, of Virginia, is now collector of customs at the little port of Acconiac, on the Potomac, where the salary is only about \$300 a year, and the place was given him as a mark of respect by the present administration. He is now over 80 years of age, and has had more history crowded into his life than has been experienced by many men. Forty years ago he was one of the ablest statesmen of the time, and although since the close of the war he has not been an active participant in politics, he still retains much of his early vigor and ability. In 1830 he was a member of the legislature of Virginia, in 1837 a member of congress; in 1846 he was speaker of the house of representatives; in 1848 he was elected to the United States senate, and continued to hold a seat in that body until he was expelled in 1861. During the war he served in the confederate senate, and was captured after the evacuation of Richmond. Then he was sent to Fort Lafayette, and remained in prison until pardoned by President Johnson. He has since been living at the little town of Acconiac, about sixty miles from Washington, conducting a plantation. Most people who have not forgotten him suppose him to be dead, but he is still hale and healthy, and has a constitution that bids fair to outlast the century."

A Montana Dug-Out. A correspondent of the Washington Star, who has been roughing it in Montana, says: The house that we hastily put up here, until we could build our permanent cabins, was a sort of a dug-out. First we dug down into the ground about five feet, and then on the sides and back placed two logs; this gave a height of about seven feet at the eaves and nine to the ridgepole. The dimensions inside were fourteen by sixteen feet. The front was made entirely of logs, and in it we had two windows twenty-two by twenty-four inches each. For a roof we placed poles each side of the ridgepole, and then covered them with hay and dirt. When finished we had a dirt roof, dirt walls, dirt floor, and lived in and almost ate dirt. In the rear of the cabin we had a fireplace, which was our only heating apparatus, and on it we did all of our cooking, with utensils which consisted of a coffee pot, frying pan, iron pot and dutch oven. In the latter we made bread and did all our baking. Our bill of fare was not likely to induce dyspepsia. It had a surprising sameness, and was made up of bread, coffee, bacon and beans, with a little rice for a change, but plenty of deer meat helped us out amazingly.

Soldiers Who Must Fast. It has been decided that Russian soldiers in future must observe Lent in the most rigorous way. They will have to fast not only during the four "great Lent" yearly, but also Wednesday and Friday, and the six great days of prayer and repentance. This is the calculation: The great Lent (of Easter), 79 days; Petrovski Lent, 30 to 50; Ussenski Lent, 17; Filippovski Lent, 39; 6 days of prayer, and repentance, 6; 31 Wednesdays and 31 Fridays, 62; total, 170 to 200 days; on which dates neither meat nor fish (during the Easter Lent) nor eggs, nor milk, nor even sugar is allowed. The officers assert with much force, that the physical strength of the soldiers must inevitably suffer from the new regimen.—Chicago Times.

A Man I Like. Like a man who all mean things despises, A man who has a purpose firm and true; Who faces every doubt as it rises, And murmurs not at what he finds to do. Like a man who shows the noble spirit Displayed by knights of Arthur's table round; Who, face to face with life, proves his real merit; Who has a soul that dwells above the ground. And yet, one who can understand the worry Of some chance brother fallen in the road, And speak to him a kind word 'mid the hurry, Or lay an easing hand upon his load. Large-hearted, brave-souled man to-day are needed, Men ready when occasion's doors swing wide; Grand men to speak the counsel that is heeded, And men in whom a nation may confide. The world is wide, and broad its starry arches, But lagging malcontents can not hold; The way of life to him who might marches Has ending in a far-off street of gold. —Meredith Nicholson.

MAN OR PHANTOM?

A WAR CORRESPONDENT'S STORY.

During the Franco-German war I represented a leading English journal, which, by the way, exchanged its reports with an American paper of national prominence, as war correspondent. Upon my arrival in Germany soon after the declaration of war I presented my credentials to the proper authorities, and after much delay was attached to the Royal Saxon Army Corps, as brave a body of warriors as was ever gathered together for purposes of destruction and carnage. I followed the fortunes of the gallant corps through the fall campaign and was with them at the siege of Paris. It is unnecessary to pay a tribute to the bravery of the noble Saxon lads who, after repelling the savage attacks of the courageous enemy, shared their scanty allowance of pea-sausages and rye bread with the half starved French guards who had been fortunate enough to be captured.

As might be expected my constant presence at headquarters and my unvarnished reports of the doings of the corps secured me the friendship of some of the officers, while others found it hard work to conceal the pique excited by my letters. Among my dearest friends and defenders was Lieut. Baron Ludwig von L., an adjutant to one of the regiments attached to the corps. It had been my good fortune to render a slight service to the lieutenant during the opening days of the war, and with an enthusiasm which was inexplicable to me, he defended my every action and let no opportunity pass by to sound my praises. It was but natural that such disinterestedness challenged my admiration, and soon our friendship had ripened into an intimacy such as can only be established amid the surroundings in which we were placed. Nothing marred these pleasant relations until Christmas Eve, when a stray shell from one of the forts struck the tent in which the lieutenant and I were celebrating the great German holiday. In a moment I realized that he had been severely wounded, while I had escaped unharmed. An examination of the wound proved that his life was in imminent peril, and the staff surgeon concluded to send von L. to his home in Saxony. In pursuance of the doctor's directions we parted then and there, and the early morning train bore my friend to the arms of his anxious family, while I continued my exciting life among the sanguine soldiery.

The week following this incident was devoid of interest, owing to the inactivity of the French, but on the ninth day the forts opened fire, and from whispered conversations at headquarters I gleaned that the morrow would see a sanguinary conflict. In order to be prepared I left the tent of the most advanced Saxon outpost at 4 o'clock in the afternoon for the purpose of preparing topographical notes concerning the probable field of carnage. My work was soon completed. Silence and solitude, interrupted at rare intervals by the cheery "Qui vive?" of the French outposts or the gruff "Wer da?" of the German sentinels, tempted me to rest under a protecting shed, and before I realized it I had settled down for a little nap. When I awoke the darkness told me that the evening had far advanced, and looking around I saw that a terrible snow storm had covered my tracks. Escape was impossible. I knew not how to reach my friends, and to fall in the hands of the French meant disgrace and perhaps dishonor.

Making the best of an ugly situation, I drew my heavy fur overcoat closer around me, pulled my cap over my ears, and retreated once more within the shed. Scarcely had I settled into a comfortable position when I was appalled. Was it possible! Yes, there at the rickety door of the shed stood, real as life, Lieut. von L., his right arm extended, his left hand resting upon his sword-belt, and speaking in a low but distinct whisper: "Beware of the Francitireurs!" Suddenly as the apparition appeared it vanished.

Imagine my feelings; I cannot describe them. I verily believe that my

hair stood upon end. A stupor followed this fear and a trance-like slumber. How long I remained in this condition I knew not at the time, but well do I remember the awakening from the trance. My nervous system was totally deranged, my hands refused to do service; in fact I had not the strength to light a match to look at my watch. With a groan I sank back upon my bed of snow. I tried to sleep, but in vain. All I could do was to think. Had I seen Ludwig von L., or his spirit? the real man or a phantom?

At last relief came. I could not be mistaken. I heard the footsteps of a small body of men. They approached the shed. Yes, but not with the steady tread of the soldier. Heavens! could it be the Francitireurs, those bloodthirsty guerrillas and hyenas of the battlefield? I tried to fortify myself for an attack. I tried to arouse my physical self. Before I could rise or make a move the door of the shed was rudely opened. A rough face showed itself. It was that of the leader of a noted guerrilla band. The Francitireur entered. He approached, cocked his revolver, and said with mock politeness, in broken German: "Monsieur, prepare to die." Making an effort to reach my own weapon, at this moment I was startled by the words; "Not he, but you!"

Looking up I saw the pallid and frightened face of the Francitireur, and by his side—could it be possible?—Lieut. von L., pointing a pistol at the heart of the assassin. The excitement proved too much for my shattered nerves, and just as I heard the explosion of a pistol I lost consciousness.

When I revived it was 8 o'clock in the morning. By my side stood Maj. M., commander of the advanced outposts, and a detachment of Saxon infantry.

"Well done, my lad," said the Major, and with that he pointed to an object lying by my side covered with a field blanket.

"What do you mean, Major?" I inquired faintly, not understanding his remark.

"Well, I mean that you have dispatched the worst hound of a guerrilla who ever disgraced a country."

Like a flash the mysterious apparition presented itself to my mind, and hastily calling a Corporal I bade him extract the bullet from the dead Francitireur's wound. Then I produced my revolver and found that not a shot had been fired from it. I compared the bullets used by me with that extracted from the wound. They were of different weight. The mystery was unsolved. Who had shot my enemy?

The battle predicted by the staff officer was not fought on that day, and I was glad of it, for the exciting scenes of the previous night compelled me to rest for some time. On the fifth day after my adventure I received a letter from Saxony. Here it is:

"MY DEAR SIR,—Our dear son Ludwig breathed his last at four this morning. Upon his arrival here the doctors pronounced his case hopeless. Up to 8 o'clock last evening his recovery seemed assured. At that hour he suddenly grew restless, called out your name three or four times and exclaiming, 'Beware of the Francitireurs!' fell into a deep slumber or trance. He remained in this condition until 3 o'clock, when he arose up with a start, fell back upon the bed unconscious, and at 4 o'clock died in his mother's arms."

"With best wishes,
"Your obedient servant,
"GEORGE ALEXANDER VON L.—"

My story is finished. I need only add that the ball extracted from the body of the Francitireur corresponded in weight with those in the revolver of my deceased friend, and this discovery made the mystery still darker.

Up to this day I cannot explain the strange transpirings of that night before Paris. Can you?—Detroit Free Press.

Where Beer Runs in Rills. Hartman says in his new book: "What would Munich be without beer?" As a ship stranded. The capital of Bavaria floats on an ocean of foaming beer. People do not in common conversation speculate over the weather, but ask at once: "How is the beer to-day?" The Bavarian does not drink beer because he is thirsty, "but because he enjoys it, and because he enjoys it he drinks much." Every man in Munich guzzles his four quarts per diem. There are thousands who swallow their eight quarts and many who will swallow their ten and twelve quarts. I knew one man who told me he had been drinking sixteen quarts daily for years. A student will manage at one sitting from ten to sixteen quarts, which would fill about sixty of our glasses. A congress of staid scientific fellows met at a Munich festival and each one drank 3 6-10 quarts during a short sitting.

Bismarck and the Burgomaster. Prince Bismarck, delayed at a railroad station between Frazenbad and Berlin, at Reichenbach, inquired of the burgomaster of the place if the sausages and the beer were good. Having been answered in the affirmative, the burgomaster said: "There has been a fear of war, but it is not yet so near, is it your Excellency?" "God preserve us far from it," said the chancellor; "you have time enough yet to read Goethe's 'Faust.'"

ST. KILDA.

A Curious Island Off the Scottish Coast.

A Place Where Sea Birds Form the Support of the Inhabitants.

"A curious bit of land is St. Kilda," says the London News. It lies sixty miles beyond Harris, and is 140 miles distant from the mainland. Near it are the bird-infested isles of Soay and Boreray, but St. Kilda alone boasts human tenants. In 1881 the island contained nineteen families, or seventy-seven persons, thirty-three males and forty-four females. They live in a little green valley which slopes to the sea. The island itself forms part of the ancient estate of Dunvegan. Once upon a time the village of St. Kilda looked like a Hottentot kraal. The houses were huts built of loose stones and turf, and filled with an atmosphere of parenthol smoke. Now things are better ordered. The houses are built of stone with roofs of galvanized iron, an improvement due to the generosity of Macleod of Macleod, the hereditary possessor of the land. No part of the world is more famous for its bird inhabitants than this desolate oceanic patch. Here the solan geese nestle in thousands. The fulmar, the gannet guillemots, puffins, eider ducks, and other sea fowl exist in countless swarms. These birds form, in fact, the stay and support of the St. Kilda folk. The islanders say that the fulmar, or stormy petrel, gives them oil for burning, down for their beds, wholesome meat, and an ointment or salve for their infirmities. There are no hens on St. Kilda. The sea birds supply the place of the domestic fowl completely, and the housewives of the lonely isle are relieved by nature from the cares and worries of bird-tending. The women look like "feathered Mercuries, for their shoes," adds this writer, "are made of gannet's skin." The feathers are valued at 7s per stone (14 pounds) for the black puffin variety and at 5s for grays. The fulmar oil sells at 1s a pint, the o'oth made by the inhabitants at 3s per Scotch ell, while the cattle are specially rated. For eight or nine months at a time St. Kilda may have no intercourse with the outer world. Life on the island wags slowly and peacefully, if monotonously along. The storms of the outside world affect not the St. Kilda folk. The islanders are exempt from consumptive troubles—a fact held by some enthusiastic doctors to be due to the atmosphere of peat smoke amid which St. Kilda at large lives and breathes. But their babies are liable to be killed off by a mysterious ailment about the eighth day of life, and the people are said to be subject to a species of influenza, which only appears when strangers visit the isle. Nobody knows how this ailment is conveyed or what it is. No infection is presumed to be carried from the visiting steamer to the shore; but, nevertheless, the St. Kilda folk begin to snuff and to sneeze whenever the tourist season sets in.

It appears that the inhabitants are accustomed to send messages inserted in bottles, or in extemporized boats, to the mainland. They commit their wishes to the waves, and trust to favoring gales to waft their desires ashore. A stratagem of this kind was recently put in force by the Free church minister who has taken charge of the spiritual affairs on the island. He sent a sea message which, after some weeks or months of wandering, contrived to be cast ashore and to be brought under the notice of some benevolent person, who forwarded the message to its destination in Edinburgh. The reverend gentleman in this communication to the principal of the Free Church college in the Scottish metropolis spoke of the disastrous period through which his people and himself had passed in St. Kilda. They were out of everything, in fact, if the message was to be believed, and were anxiously awaiting help from the charity and benevolence of the mainland. This help was duly dispatched to them. The Jackal, a government vessel, was sent to the island, and an official of the board of supervision was deputed, along with the surgeon of the ship, to report upon the state of things in the island. The information in question has now come to hand. The reporter tells us that he found from four to six hundred fulmars salted and stored as provisions in each family. As a single fulmar affords a full meal for an adult, it follows that from eight to twelve hundred meat rations are contained in each house in the island. Then follows a record of salted mutton similarly laid by for future use. There are eighteen cows on the island; there are potatoes in plenty; and a certain Mr. Mackenzie, who is said to import and to retail the luxuries of life in the shape of tea, sugar and tobacco, is reported as doing a brisk trade. In each family circle, the reporter tells us, he found capital to the extent of £20. One recent emigrant from the island is one pathetic sentence in the naval doctor's report on St. Kilda which must not be omitted from a recital of the life of the northern islet. After recounting the liking exhibited for tobacco and

spirits, the absence of condiments—scarcely required where salted food is so common—and the want of vegetables, the doctor advocates the institution of simple and lively games for the children of the island, the cultivation of singing, and the practice of instrumental music. The worthy medical man speaks in the innocence of a kindly heart. He does not know that instrumental music, bagpipes excluded, is the horror of these northerners, that "human hymns," as the ordinary poetic compositions are called, are eschewed in the churches of the highlands, and that the very mention of games for the bairns will be regarded with grave suspicion. "At present," adds the doctor, "whistling is strictly forbidden" on St. Kilda.

No Sandpaper.

Detective John Webb was passing the Bates Street end of the vegetable market three or four days ago when a stranger accosted him with:

"Say, I came in town the other day to get my boots fixed, and I was looking around this place a little and lost a silver dollar out of a hole in my pocket."

"But you didn't come back to look for it, did you?"

"Yes, I did. I think I lost it right over there, where I dodged a wagon. Have you heard of any one picking up a dollar?"

"No, sir."

"Seen any advertisement in the paper?"

"No. You'd better save your time."

"Why?"

"Of course I am! Wasn't it mine? Didn't I lose it?"

"Well! Well! Some one ought to sandpaper your head!"

"They had, eh?" queried the man as he searched around the street. "I lost it just about here, while I was jumping out of the way of a wagon. If anybody tries to rub any sandpaper on my head I'll—!"

He made a dive into the dirt and fished up a silver dollar, and as he held it between his thumb and finger and danced around he cried:

"Here she is—this is the very one! I know it by the nick I cut on the edge! Ought to have my head sandpapered, had I! Well, you just bet I know my gait, and I'm a dollar ahead! It's lucky for me, though, that you didn't find it. You look just like a man who'd have chucked it into his pocket and let me go to ruin. Sandpaper! How would you like to bite a file!"

And the abashed detective couldn't say a word in his own defence.—Detroit Free Press.

The Farmer's Boy.

The country boy or girl is face to face with practical realities. He sees how slowly money is made on the farm; he is taught from youth up the need of economy; he has the nature of saving first explained to him every day in the week; he is not exposed to the temptation of the saloon or ball-room, and he is not so much of a lady's man before he has occasion to use a razor on his downy cheeks. He may be a trifle rude; he may not feel easy in company, but in the long, closely contested race of life it is the chap that trudges to school barefooted in summer and stogas in winter, whose mother cuts his hair with the sheep shears, who leads the chap that goes to the city school with the starched shirt front and fancy slippers, and whose head is shaved with a lawnmower at the barber shop. Such has been our observation, and we think we know what we are talking about.—Iowa Homestead.

Too Much of a Good Thing.

The story is told of a good Methodist brother, an itinerant, who sought shelter for the night at a certain farmhouse. The woman demurred, but there had been a long drought, and when the minister suggested that his prayers might move the Lord to send the rain, she consented to let him stay. During the night the floods came, and when the good woman came down in the morning and found her fences and chickencoops had sailed off for parts unknown, she was much cast down. "I might have known better," said the poor woman, as she cast a rueful glance out of the window; "I might have known better than to let a Methodist come into my house, for they always go into everything with all their might, and I don't want any of 'em to pray any more for rain for my benefit—no, never—if the land dries up till it cracks open."—Harper's Bazar.

Count and No Account.

Some of those quiet ranches contain people who disdain any claim to humanity. In the central part of Kansas lives, on a well-stocked modest ranch, a tall, soldierly, white-haired gentleman, with grave, elegant manners and a fluency with which his limited English cannot keep pace. His name, even if it could be remembered, is much too long to print in a paper where the space is valuable, but he is a Frenchman who says of himself, with a vivacious toss of his hands:

"In France I was a count; in America I no account!"—Chicago Tribune.