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Flash.

THE FIREMAN'S STORY.

Flash was a white-foot sorrel, an' run on
No. 8:
Not much stable manners—an average horse
to see:
Notional in his methods—strong in loves an'
hates;
Not very much respected or popular 'mongst
his mates.

Dull an' moody an' sleepy on "off" an'
quiet days;
Full of turb'lent sour looks, an' small sar-
castic ways;
Scowled an' bit at his partner, an' banged
the stable floor—
With other tricks intended to designate life a
bore.

But when, be't day or night time, he heard
the alarm-bell ring,
He'd rush for his place in the harness with a
regular tiger spring;
An' watch with nervous shivers the clasp of
buckle an' band,
Until it was plainly ev'dent he'd like to lend
a hand.

An' when the word was given, away he
would rush an' tear,
As if a thousan' witches was rumplin' up his
hair,
An' wake his mate up crazy with his mag-
netic charm;
For every hoof-beat sounded a regular fire
alarm!

Never a horse a jockey would worship an'
admire
Like Flash in front of his engine, a-racin'
with a fire;
Never a horse so lazy, so dawdlin' an' so
slack
As Flash upon his return trip, a-drawin' the
engine back.

Now when the different horses gets tender-
footed an' old,
They ain't no use in our business; so Flash
was finally sold
To quite a respectable milkman, who found
it not so fine
A-bossin' of God's creatures outside o' their
reg'lar line.

Seems as if I could see Flash a-mopin' along
here now,
A-feelin' that he was simply assistant to a
cow;
But sometimes he'd imagine he heard the
alarm-bell's din,
An' jump an' rear for a minute before they
could hold him in.

An' once, in spite o' his master, he strolled
in 'mongst us chaps,
To talk with the other horses, of former fires,
perhaps:
Whereat the milkman kicked him; wherefor,
us boys to please,
He begged that horse's pardon upon his
bended knees.

But one day, for a big fire as we was makin'
a dash,
Both o' the horses we had on somewhat re-
semblin' Flash,
Yellin' an' ringin' an' rushin', with excellent
voice an' heart,
We passed the poor old fellow, a-tuggin'
away at his cart.

If ever I see an old horse grow upwards into
a new,
If ever I see a driver whose traps behind him
flew,
'Twas that old horse, a-rompin' an' rushin'
down the track,
An' that respectable milkman a-tryin' to
hold him back.

Away he dashed like a cyclone for the head
of No. 8,
Gained the lead, an' kept it, an' steered his
journey free:
Dodgin' the wheels an' horses, an' still on
the keenest "silk,"
An' furnishin' all that district with good
respectable milk.

Crowds a-yellin' an' runnin', and vainly
hollerin', "Whoa!"
Milkman bracin' an' sawin', with never a
bit o' show;
Firemen laughin' an' chucklin', and hollerin',
"Good! go in!"
Hoss a-gettin' down to it, an' sweepin' along
like sin.

Finally come where the fire was, halted with
a "thud,"
Sent the respectable milkman neels over
head in mud;
Watched till he see the engine properly
workin' there—
After which he relinquished all interest in
the affair.

Moped an' wilted an' dawdled—faded away
once more;
Took up his old occ'pation of votin' life a
bore;
Laid down in his harness, and—sorry I am
to say—
The milkman he had drawn there drew his
dead body away.

That's the whole o' my story: I've seen,
more'n once or twice,
That poor dumb animals' actions are full of
human advice:
An' if you ask what Flash taught, I simply
answer you, then,
That poor old horse was a symbol of some
intelligent men.

—*Will W. Carleton, in Harper.*

A COUNTRY DOCTOR'S ADVENTURE.

"And now we'll have a cozy, comfortable evening together," said my wife. "And— But what's that, Irving?"

My wife started nervously as a sharp peal at the bell interrupted our brief interval of domestic quiet.

"Only the surgery-bell, my dear; somebody wanting me, I suppose."

And I went downstairs, secretly wondering to myself if, after all, there was such a very wide difference between a galley-slave and a country doctor!

The surgery-door stood wide open, but nobody was there; and through the blinding darkness without I could just discern the black outline of a close carriage and a man standing at the horse's head.

"Who's there?—what's wanting?" I asked, coming to the threshold and instinctively buttoning up the overcoat I had hurriedly thrown on.

"You're wanted, doctor," said the man, speaking indistinctly behind the muffling that surrounded his face.

"Yes; but what for? Who wants me?"

"I am not at liberty to tell."

I had already entered the carriage, but this suspicious answer inspired me with distrust. I made a step to descend, but I was too late; the vehicle was already in motion.

"It is quite unnecessary to alarm yourself, doctor," said a quiet, measured voice at my side. "Believe me, you are quite safe; and I trust you will not feel any uneasiness when I tell you that you must be blindfolded."

And at the same time a folded bandage was deftly slipped over my eyes.

"Hold!" I ejaculated. "It strikes me that is rather superfluous. The night it dark as Erebus and you have no lamp."

"Possibly," returned the dry voice; "but it is best to run no risks."

And then ensued a silence of some ten or fifteen minutes, while the carriage rolled swiftly along, and the low, measured breathing of my unknown companion kept time to my own uncomfortable thoughts.

At length my companion spoke, again in the same soft, modulated tones.

"Doctor! One more little precaution is necessary; your promise never to divulge to human soul a word of this night's visit."

I hesitated.

"I cannot bind myself by any such covenant. The relations between physician and patient are of course confidential; but—"

The carriage paused abruptly here and the door was swung open. At the same instant something cold touched my temples—it was the muzzle of a pistol. I recoiled in horror.

"You surely would not murder me?"

"Your promise, doctor."

"I promise!" I gasped, recoiling once more from the chilling touch of the cold steel at my temples.

"Very well. Come!"

I was led up a narrow walk, through a doorway, into a room, where the bandage was removed suddenly from my eyes.

The spot was very familiar to me—a ruinous cottage, long since abandoned to decay, in the very heart of dense, swampy woods. How the carriage had ever reached it I was at a loss to know. Upon a pile of straw, hurriedly thrown into the corner of the moldering floor, lay a prostrate figure, moaning at every breath. His face was concealed by a handkerchief, and the blood was slowly dripping from a gunshot wound just above the ankle—a wound that had been clumsily bandaged by some unskillful hand. Moreover, there was a dark red stain upon the straw where his head lay, and his light-brown hair was matted with coagulated drops. Two or three men stood around with rude masks of black cloth drawn over their faces, in which three slits were cut for the eyes and mouth, and a female figure knelt beside the heap of straw, veiled very closely.

The men silently made way for me as I advanced into the apartment, and held their lanterns so that the lurid light should fall full upon my strange patient. As silently I stooped and examined both wounds.

"Well?" asked my carriage companion.

"I can do nothing. The man must die."

"Nonsense! A mere bullet through the leg—what does that amount to?" hurriedly gasped the man.

"In itself, not much; but that blow upon the skull must prove fatal."

A low, suppressed cry broke from the woman opposite; she tore the veil from her face, as if she could not breathe through its heavy folds, revealing features as white and beautiful in their marble agony as so much sculptured stone. She did not seem more than thirty, but I afterward knew that she was indeed ten years older. But in spite of her present anguish, how grandly beautiful she was! Large dark eyes—hair like coiled gold, catching strange gleams from the shifting lanterns—and a broad, smooth brow—it was a face you see but once in a whole lifetime.

And yet, in the midst of her distress, she never spoke.

"At least you can do 'something' for him, doctor," said my interlocutor, impatiently. "Don't let us waste time here."

As I proceeded in my ministrations the morning grew fainter and fainter, the convulsive movements became scarcely perceptible. A faint gleam of hope lighted up the face of the woman who knelt with clasped hands opposite; she looked appealingly at me.

"He is better—he is surely better?"

"He will be better soon," I answered, moved to pity in spite of myself. "He cannot live half an hour longer."

The horror of that sepulchral silence that fell upon us as my accents died away—shall I ever forget it? And five minutes afterward the breathing, spasmodic and painful to hear, died into eternal stillness.

The woman lifted the corner of the handkerchief and gazed into the ghastly face. It was that of a young man of about two-and-twenty, and good-looking.

"Oh, heavens! he is dead!"

Her clear agonized voice was ringing in my ears as they led me back into the darkness of the night. I felt a bank note pressed into my hand as I entered the carriage once more.

"Doctor, you have done your best; it is not your fault that your efforts have not been more successful. Remember, you are pledged to secrecy!"

The next moment I was whirling swiftly through the November midnight, with the strange, unquiet feeling of one wakened suddenly from a startling dream. Yet it was no dream—alas! it was a startling reality.

The carriage stopped at a cross-road near the village.

"Please to alight here, sir," said the driver. "You are not far from home."

I obeyed and stood listening in the middle of the road, while the noise of the carriage wheels died away, losing its distinctness in the shriek of the restless winds. And the clock in the village church tolled out the hour of one.

Late as it was, however, my surgery was still open and lighted up; the servant from Haddenleigh hall had just ridden up to the door.

"If you please, doctor, you are wanted immediately at the hall. The colonel said you were to ride my horse if yours was not already saddled, and I can walk, so there will be no time lost."

I mechanically mounted the noble animal that stood waiting for me and rode off, rather glad of an opportunity to revolve in my mind the singular adventure that had that evening befallen me.

Haddenleigh stood a little back from the road, on a magnificent knoll crowned with century-old chestnuts and beeches; and I reached the broad stone steps in about half an hour, by dint of rapid riding.

As I entered the vestibule Colonel Hadden, who had been pacing up and down the hall in a perfect agony of impatience, came to meet me.

"Is that you, Doctor Meller? I thought you never would come. We're in a pretty state of confusion here! Burglars in the house—my wife's set of diamonds gone—nobody knows what else—but old Hopkins left his sign manual on one of the fellows. They must be caught; they cannot escape far. For, you see—"

"Yes; but Colonel Hadden—"

"Oh, ay—I understand you—you wan't to see your patient? It's Hopkins, the butler; he got an ugly blow on the left arm—and afterward my wife went herself for Doctor Maynard—no offense, Meller, but he lives nearer than you—but he was out. She has only just returned. I couldn't very well leave Hopkins—and Mrs. Hadden is such a kind, good soul, she insisted on going herself to fetch Maynard—"

"But, my dear sir—"

"Ah, true! Come along to Hopkins' room."

Hopkins, the butler, was as voluble as his master, and ten times as circumstantial; and by the time I had set his broken fore arm I was pretty well in possession of all the particulars of the attempted burglary at Haddenleigh.

And thinking of my midnight patient, whose life had ebbed out upon the pile of straw, I felt a strange guiltiness as I listened to Colonel Hadden's eager conjectures as to the whereabouts of the desperadoes who had fled.

"And now, doctor, you'll take a glass of wine," said the hospitable old gentleman, ushering me into his library.

It was brilliantly lighted and warm with the crimson glow of a genial fire, before which, in a singularly graceful attitude, sat a lady, wrapped in the gorgeous folds of an Indian shawl.

"My wife, doctor. Isabel, my love, this is Doctor Meller."

We stood before one another in silence. I could not speak, for I knew that I was looking into the startled, agonized eyes of the woman who had knelt scarcely an hour ago by the dying couch in the desolate cottage—Colonel Hadden's new wife, of whose beauty I had heard so much.

The colonel talked on, but I heard not a word that he said. I could not but marvel at the wonderful self-possession of the woman, who smiled and looked grave, and said, "Yes" and "No" just in the right places.

"To be sure," the colonel was saying, as I woke into a sort of consciousness of his voice, "the loss of Isabel's diamonds is something serious, but of course we shall recover them again. Only, my love, it was rather careless of you to leave them on the drawing-room table."

"It was careless," replied Mrs. Hadden, calmly. "Doctor, you are not going? Colonel, you have forgotten that curious old book you were wanting to show Dr. Meller."

"I had entirely forgotten it," ejaculated the colonel. "I'll get it in half a minute, and you can take it home with you, Meller."

As the door closed behind the honest old gentleman, Mrs. Hadden glided up to me and placed her cold hand on mine—it was like the touch of an icicle.

"Doctor, you have my secret—you surely will not betray it?"

"I am pledged to silence, madame," I returned, coldly; "but the deceit—"

"It is my fate, doctor," wailed the woman, "it is my fate. How I endure it I scarcely know; were I to pause and think, I should go mad. The man who died to-night was my son! Colonel Hadden knows nothing of my first marriage nor of this dreadful secret of my son's criminal life, that has weighed me down for years. Over and over again I have thought to escape from it, but it has followed upon my footsteps like a doom. To-night closes that chapter of my life—oh, heaven! how dreadfully! But my secret is safe—the diamonds provided for that."

"But your husband, Mrs. Hadden?"

She covered her pallid, beautiful face with her hands.

"I know what you would say, Dr. Meller. I love him and honor him beyond all men; but what can I do? Believe me, I have never willingly wronged or deceived him. I never dreamed of—of—"

She paused abruptly. Colonel Hadden was entering the room, and the smiling, casual remark she addressed to him filled my heart with amazement—almost admiration.

I rode home to my blue-eyed little Eleanor, feeling, as I entered the snug sitting-room, as if I were returning to the homely, happy atmosphere of every-day life. But I never forgot the terrible excitement, the feverish suspense of that November night.

The desperadoes who had attempted to rifle Haddenleigh hall were never detected or taken; all trace of them seemed to have vanished utterly out of the earth.

And were it not for the bank note which had most liberally recompensed my services, and the everlasting witness borne by Mrs. Hadden's lovely, startled face, I should almost have doubted the events of that marvelous November midnight were the fragments of a dream.

This was my adventure—the first and last that ever crossed the pathway of my life.

The Rag Trade of New York.

The amount paid for rags in New York city is said to reach $30,000,000 per annum, and a local commercial paper, commenting on the figures, declares that the trade is still in its infancy. It is expected that within the next decade it will have doubled. The rags are divided into two classes, woolen and cotton. The former are employed in making "shoddy" goods, and are worth from three to thirty-five cents a pound. They are gathered principally in the Eastern and Western States, as the tariff prevents the importation of woolen cuttings from abroad. Cotton rags, on the other hand, are duty free, and come from all divisions of the globe. They are worth from one and a quarter to six cents per pound. The business in this class reaches $22,000,000 per annum, the material being utilized in the manufacture of paper.

A prominent dealer estimates the number of rag dealers in the city at 800, about a fifth of whom are extensive dealers. The general trade, however, is under the control of a few big dealers. The Italian pickers who go about with a bag on their back and a poker in their hand gather $750,000 worth of rags per annum. They have a monopoly of the "street pickings," having driven out the Irish and Germans, who years ago engaged in this scavenger-like industry. There are about 2,000 of these rag-pickers at work. The hand-cart dealers do a business that reaches the neat sum of $3,000,000 per annum. Last year the cotton-rag importations reached $10,000,000 in value. The industry is a progressive one and gives employment to many people in sorting and packing. The sorters are women, getting $5 a week; the packers, men, getting from $12 to $14 per week. The best cotton rags are obtained in this country, although the demands of trade are such that supplies have to be obtained from abroad. From the cotton rags are manufactured every grade of paper, from the finest writing to the commonest wrapping paper. The bulk of the trade in this style of rags is confined to the city, which absorbs all the traffic in woolen rags. It has required only twenty-five years to develop the rag trade from a mere nothing to its present dimensions, and fortunes are being made by dealers.

Cotton Crop of the United States.

The annual statement of the National Cotton exchange of the United States for the season ending August 31, 1882, shows that the cotton crop of the United States was 5,456,048 bales, a falling off from the previous season of 1,149,792 bales. The receipts at the outports were 4,688,137 bales, against 5,878,106 bales last year. The exports were 3,551,075 bales, against 4,565,316 bales. The total quantity shipped overland by rail direct to Northern mills amounted to 1,086,217 bales. Of this 510,902 bales went direct to Eastern delivery ports, 489,170 to mills and 86,145 from Southern outports to Eastern mills. Canada took overland 31,547 bales, or thirty-one per cent. more than last year. The exports to foreign ports aggregated 3,557,075, showing a falling off of 1,014,241 bales. Northern spinners have taken of this crop 677,581 bales, against 1,713,626 last year. The remarkable feature of the statement is the large increase in Southern consumption, these mills having taken from outposts and plantations 286,945 bales, against 225,311 bales last year. The stock carried from this year's crop amounts to 155,582 bales, against 217,031 bales last year.

Farms and Farming in England.

A correspondent of the New York *World*, writing about English farm lands, says: Outside of the market gardens of the Chinese in California, I never saw such perfect tilth. In some of the fields into which I strolled there were little heaps of stones gathered together, evidently for removal. This is a common enough sight in the United States, but I venture to say that no such stones as those have ever been gathered up by any farmer in America. I examined several heaps and there was not one pebble as large as a man's clenched fist to be seen. They were all small, from the size of a hickory nut to that of a small apple. The kind of cultivation of large fields which will embrace the picking up and removing of stones the size of those is a kind of cultivation of which nothing is known in America. It argues at once an amount of labor bestowed upon the land and a cheapness of wage such as we have no experience of, and it may be taken as an indication of cultivation of a very high order. The plowing, too—for the summer plowing was going on then—was as regular as though it was done by the aid of parallel rulers. The plots of black earth were as even as lines of squares upon a chess-board, and the deep shares and colters laid open the ground to the sunlight and air in a way that I never saw equaled. The double and triple sulky-plows used in California, with the twelve or sixteen mules harnessed to them, cut deep furrows in the black soil, but when that soil is turned over it is as stiff as so much clay. In those English fields the soil from the bottom of the furrow was as friable and light as that from the top, and it looked more like garden mold than what is ordinarily known as wheat land. Hundreds of years of cultivation have done their work, and the English soil, or at least such of it as I saw, has been by continued work turned into that of a garden.

During my trip I had to stop for about two hours at a little wayside country junction. I spent the time talking to a farmer whose farm came close down to the railroad. From what he said I found that the land in England is manured to the highest point known. That so far from being content with simply putting back into the land as much as is taken out, the aim of every farmer is to improve the land, to make it better year by year. And as a matter of fact, in the majority of farms, so I was told, this end is actually accomplished. Farms were known in which the yield within the memory of man had been increased fifty, sixty and even seventy-five per cent. This result is obtained not alone by manuring, but by the system of rotation of crops under which the land, as far as producing any one kind of crop is concerned, is always given from two to three years' rest. The result of this system, together with the constant and plentiful manuring, is, as I have said, to make the land better as the years go on. While there is, of course, a limit to this kind of thing, what is worth pointing out is that the land of England has been of late years steadily getting better rather than worse, able crops, and theoretically giving a larger and better return for the money invested. It would be reasonable to suppose, then, that the cultivators of that land would be better off than ever before, better able to pay their rents even were those rents, in view of the increased yield of the land, somewhat raised.

But I saw another thing while looking out of the window of the car when the train stopped at a little wayside station. Eight men and a boy were building a stack of wheat, or, as they call it in England, a rick. The rick was round and four of the men were pitching the wheat up while the four on top were arranging it in place. The boy had a rake and was gathering the scattered wheat into piles so that the men could get it on their forks. From the fact that there was not room on top of the rick for all four men to work at once, two would work while the other two stood idle. But two men idle on top of the rick made two men on the ground idle also. Here, then, were four men idle alternately, eight men doing the work of four. Yet those four idle men were earning wages, such as those wages may have been, and those wages were coming out of that land because there was no other place for them to come from. The population of the country or the proportion of agricultural laborers to the acreage was such that custom had made it imperative to employ eight men to do the work of four. It seems to me that this is taxing the land beyond what it will bear; that competition between a place where eight men are required to build a wheat rick and such wheat fields as those seen in Western America, where three men, two pitching and one on the stack, is an impossibility.

Insuring an Apple Crop.

Singular modes are still taken to improve the apple crop in different parts of Great Britain. It is the custom to offer prayers in some countries; in others drinking and poetry are used; and in one district instrumental music is added. In the "Manuale in Hymn Larum," now in the vicarage library of Marlborough, England, there were two beautiful Latin prayers to be said on St. James' and St. Christopher's day (February 28) in the orchards, when the trees were to be sprinkled with holy water. In Devonshire a bowl of toast and cider is taken out into the orchard on Christmas eve and a piece of toast put in the principal tree and verses repeated as follows:

Apple tree
We wassail thee
To bear and to blow
Apples enow.
Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!

In Somersetshire a similar custom prevails, but the poetry is extended to fourteen lines; and in Sussex is a custom called "blowing the trees," or "wassailing," which is performed by a number of young men blowing cow's horns under the apple trees, and each taking hold of a tree and repeating verses a little different, but evidently of the same origin as those repeated in the other countries. The custom also prevails in Normandy.

A Curious Operation.

Dr. H. L. Little, at Philadelphia, recently performed a delicate operation on a young man, one of whose eyes had been injured by sulphuric acid. It consisted in transplanting a piece of membrane from a rabbit's eye into the patient's eye. Dr. Little removed the eyelid from its firm adhesion to the ball and made it ready for the new piece of membrane, which Dr. L. W. Fox, assisted by Dr. Hewson, had carefully dissected from the left eye of the unconscious rabbit, and the part was rapidly transferred to the under surface of the man's eyelid and neatly stitched to its place. Another operation will be performed that will, it is thought, restore sight to the injured eye.

National Food of the Mexicans.

An article in the *Century Magazine* depicting scenes in a street in the city of Mexico contains the following: As you approach the interior of the city at various places you find "tortillerias" occupying basements on a level with the street. This national combination of the grist-mill and the bakery holds such an important place in the Mexican domestic economy that we may well afford time to examine a typical establishment with care. The tortilla is eaten by all classes throughout the nation, and it is almost the exclusive food of large numbers of the poorer people. I have met with it at the banquets of cabinet ministers and literary men, and the implements for its manufacture are invariably found in the humblest native hut. Visitors to the Centennial will remember in the government building a large drawing of the interior of a Pueblo Indian house; this drawing, with a very few variations, would represent the interior of a hundred thousand Indian homes, existing from the borders of Colorado to the State of Yucatan. Maize is everywhere; two-thirds of the cultivated ground in Mexico is devoted to raising it. There is a saying that there are but two prerequisites for a household outfit by an Indian couple contemplating matrimony: a *petate*, or mat of reeds, which serves for a carpet and a bed, and a *metate*, a flat inclined stone placed upon the earthen floor, on which to pulverize the corn before forming it into cakes for baking. I concur in the estimate of well informed natives, that so general and exclusive is the use of Indian corn, that, were this crop to fail, one-third to one-half the aboriginal population would perish of starvation. A single frost that, on the 29th of August, 1784, injured the young plant, it is calculated, resulted in the death of over 30,000 persons. A population of millions is dependent upon the success of the crop. Ireland is not so dependent upon the potato, and millions in India scarcely so dependent upon rice, as the Mexican people are upon maize—now the foremost of our cereals, the monarch of our prairie lands and the arbiter of stock exchanges; it conceals from all who will trace its ancestry, from even the most persistent botanist, every clew to its native valley and to the form of its tropic progenitor.

The tortilla-shop opens with wide doors upon the street; the citizen may stand upon the flags of the sidewalk, buy his cakes and not only obey the injunction of the elder Weller regarding veal-pie, but, while making the acquaintance of the chief cook, may see, examine, comment upon, and, if needs be, direct the whole process of manufacture.

Imagine a blacksmith's shop from which the Amazons have driven Vulcan, leaving only the grimy walls, the glowing, unchimneyed hearth and a store of charcoal piled in a corner. The Amazons have rolled back their sleeves to the shoulder (if they possess such incumbrances) and have placed themselves on their knees upon the stone floor, with the inclined rough surface of the lava *metate* before them. Upon this stone they place, from a wooden tray, handful after handful of corn, which has been soaked in a solution. This alkaline substance has softened and loosened the exterior coating of the grain that in ordinary mills produces the bran. With a long, round stone, held like a rolling-pin, this corn is rubbed to a coarse paste, which is pushed, as fast as it is deemed sufficiently crushed, upon a pine board placed below to receive it. This paste now goes to the cake-maker, who stands near the fire. She takes a small piece, and, holding her hands vertically, pats it rapidly into a thin disk. This is thrown at once upon a hot earthen plate, where it is soon thoroughly baked or roasted. The tortillas thus made are collected hot into closely covered baskets, and are sold at three cents per dozen to the people who flock around, ready to carry them off in their hands or beneath pieces of protecting cloth. Enormous as is the aggregate of this manufacture, each shop is eminently a retail affair. I once asked the proprietress of such an establishment how many tortillas she would sell for a dollar; she threw up her hands and eyes at the visionary immensity of the transaction, exclaiming: "Good Heaven! I could not count—a very great many!"

The northern palate finds the tortilla, while fresh and hot, and if accompanied by a little butter or salt, a pleasant food, suggestive of cakes made of parched corn; but when cold it is flabby, tough and tasteless. There are many ways of serving it, but the Indian is usually content with a pinch of salt, or a little pungent *chile*—the native dried red pepper.

The Care of Canaries.

The following directions are given in *Holden's Bird Magazine* for the care of canaries at this season:

"To prevent diseases in birds use the best quality of seeds, clean, fresh water for drinking or bathing, coarse, flinty gravel, cuttle-bone and fresh green stuff. If these are supplemented by light, airy rooms, where the bird may have one or two hours of sunlight each day, and regular attention, your bird, if fairly well bred, will be subject to few diseases.

"Long-breed canaries, either Manchesters or those from Antwerp, should have such care as to be kept in prime order during the fall and early winter months. This is more essential in regard to the birds named since they breed very early in the year, commencing six to eight weeks earlier than the short breeds. Their food should always include a small quantity of hemp-seed daily, and from the middle of October to January birds should have a quarter part of the yolk and white of a hard-boiled egg mixed with a little cracker-dust two or three times a week. After the first of January the quantity of egg may be increased and given daily, and a thimbleful of hemp or more, if the bird seems to require it, should be offered in addition to the regular allowance of rape, canary and millet seeds. Of course it is understood a bird should have some green stuff at least as frequently as every other day.

"The cage in which a bird is confined should be adapted to the habits and disposition of its occupant. A canary will appear very restless sometimes in a round cage, flying to the top and stretching his head backward until he drops to the bottom. This trick soon becomes a habit, the bird soon ceases to sing, and the time is occupied in nervous, aimless flutterings that render the bird nearly worthless and drive his owner to distraction. Usually if such a bird is put into a cage of different pattern before the trick becomes a confirmed habit he will be cured and sing as well as ever."

To the above may be added that an excellent supply of green food may be procured during the winter by sowing a little lettuce, cress and mustard seed in a shallow box kept in the kitchen window or in a light cellar and watering it frequently with warm water.

COMETS.

Some Facts of Interest Concerning These Erratic Heavenly Visitors.

A great comet visible to all the world is one of the most striking and startling of celestial apparitions; a new star is in reality a much rarer and a much more surprising object. But those who can recognize a new star outside the circle of practical astronomers are few indeed. Moreover, as new stars are but rarely of the first magnitude and appear at intervals of centuries, no superstition, even in the flourishing days of astrology, has ever attached to them. That a sun once invisible or rarely visible to terrestrial eyes should suddenly become a striking astronomical object is the most strange and amazing of all scientific facts to those few who understand its meaning. The stars, of course, are suns, and in all probability each of them has its own circle of planets. For all we know each of them may have dependent upon it worlds peopled by creatures equal to or superior to them, creatures whose fate, even if we could understand to know it, would excite our keenest sympathies. Now the change implied by the appearance of a so-called star to the worlds dependent upon it, and to all their inhabitants, must be in the last degree terrible. It is as if our sun had suddenly to blaze out ten or a hundred times as large, and as bright and hot as now. It is scarcely necessary to say that such an occurrence would neither be remembered nor recorded, for no life organized under the existing conditions of life in any one of the planets of which the amount of solar light and heat is the most important element could survive such a change for twenty-four hours. Even supposing that the increase of heat and light is much more gradual than it seems to telescopic observers on such occasions, an addition even of one-fourth to the total heat emitted by the sun would probably destroy all the higher forms of animal nature. The total heat received from the sun must not, of course, be measured by the nominal scale of the thermometer. Zero represents an amount of warmth practically derived in its entirety from the sun, compared with which the difference between zero and tropical sun heat is trivial. It is supposed that if the heat of the sun were absolutely withdrawn the temperature of our atmosphere would fall to more than 200 degrees below Fahrenheit, a cold which, it is needless to say, no life could endure for many hours. Similarly, an increase of the total heat received from the sun, though merely in the proportion of four to three, would produce a temperature of which no earthly life has had any experience. It would raise a summer temperature of sixty degrees Fahrenheit to at least 150 degrees Fahrenheit. Were the sun's heat doubled to-morrow we should be exposed to a heat of over 500 degrees—that is to say, a heat sufficient to melt lead and to convert all the waters on the earth's surface into steam. The revolution implied by the appearance of a new or the sudden brilliancy of a faint star is infinitely greater than this, and means nothing less than the total destruction of life on all the dependant ination even of astronomers, and are now regarded by the public with utter indifference.—*London Post.*

Training Shepherd Dogs.

Darwin thus describes the training of shepherd dogs: When walking it is a common thing to meet a flock of sheep at a distance guarded by one or two dogs, at a distance of some miles from any house or man. I often wonder how so firm a friendship had been established. The method of education consists in separating the puppy while very young from its mother and in accustoming it to its future companions. A ewe is held three or four times a day for the little thing to suck, and a nest of wool is made for it in the sheep pen. At no time is it allowed to associate with other dogs, or with the children of the family. From this education it has no wish to leave the flock, and just as another dog will defend his master man, so will this dog defend sheep. It is amusing to observe, when approaching a flock, how the dog immediately advances barking and the sheep all close in his rear, as if around the oldest ram. These dogs are also easily taught to bring home the sheep at a certain hour in the evening. Their most troublesome thought when young is their desire to play with the sheep, for in their sport they sometimes gallop the poor things unmercifully.

The shepherd dog comes to the house every day for his meat, and as soon as it is given him skulks away as if ashamed of himself. On these occasions the house dogs are very tyrannical, and the least of them will attack and pursue the stranger. The minute, however, the latter has reached the flock he turns round and begins to bark, then all the house dogs take quickly to their heels. In a similar manner a whole pack of hungry wild dogs will scarcely ever venture to attack a flock guarded by one of these faithful shepherds. In this case the shepherd dog seems to regard the sheep as his fellow brethren, and thus gains confidence; and the wild dogs, though knowing that the sheep are not dogs, but are good to eat, yet when seeing them in a flock with a shepherd dog at their head, partly consent to regard them as he does.

When They Die.

There are two popular notions about death that, though they contradict one another, have adherents throughout Christendom. One is that what is called a natural death takes place with the ebb of the tide; the other that it occurs after midnight, in what are called the small hours before dawn. The records show, as might have been expected, that the Black Rider, who respects neither age nor worldly condition, is indifferent in timing his visits. In this city last week the greatest number of deaths took place at 11 o'clock in the day, when there were seven; but there were five deaths in each of the hours of 3, 4, 7 and 10 o'clock in the morning, and 3, 4 and 7 o'clock in the evening. Four persons died at 5 o'clock, 6 o'clock and at 9 o'clock in the morning and at 1 o'clock and 6 o'clock in the evening, and three persons died at each of the hours of 1 and 2 A. M., and at 8, 10 and 11 P. M. There happened to be no deaths at 5 o'clock in the evening. There were ten more deaths before noon than after it.

More than half of those who died were children under five. Hotels were the scenes of ten deaths; institutions, 120; tenements, 409. Only one death on the sixth floor of a house is recorded, though there were 179 on the second floors. The death rate is put at 29.71 in 1,000, but the board of health estimates the population at 1,284,524, which is, according to popular belief, a quarter of a million less than the actual number of people in the city.—*New York Sun.*

CALDRONS OF SIN.

The Rev Dr. Talmage on the Poisonous Influences in Life—Four Ways of Acquiring Money.

Long lines of street cars wait on Sunday morning in the neighborhood of the Brooklyn Tabernacle to take home those who have "been to hear Talmage," and seldom does it happen that there are seats enough in the great Tabernacle to accommodate all who go there. Yesterday the preacher invited those standing to sit on the steps in the aisles, making themselves as comfortable as circumstances would permit. After the singing of "Hold the Fort," in which the voices of the vast congregation were led by organ and cornet, Dr. Talmage announced his text, II. Kings, iv., 40. Elisha had gone to lecture, said he, to some students at Gilgal. But it happened that the students were hungry—students often are—and Elisha knew that there was no use lecturing to or trying to argue with hungry men. Christ, in the wilderness, knew that. He gave the people a sermon and some loaves, but which did he give them first? The loaves—the bread of this life first and that of another life afterward. It so happened that in gathering the herbs for the dinner that Elisha gave to the students some poisonous weeds were included, and when one of the hungry students who began to eat recognized the presence of poison, he exclaimed: "O, man of God, there is death in the pot!" They could not eat of it.

There are caldrons of sin in the world wherein the poison is boiling. A few men eat from them, reject the poisonous part and manage to live; other men eat and die. The world is filled with the poison of sin, but blessed be God who has given us Jesus Christ for an antitode. I persuaded you last Sabbath to be more charitable in your judgments of the fallen; but I said then and I repeat it now, that while we may pity the sinner we must not forget to condemn the sin. Sin is a jagged thing and must be roughly handled. You can't catch buffalo with a silken lasso. There is a new settlement in a wild country, and one day a beast comes down from the mountains and carries off a child. The next day another beast comes down and carries off another child, and then all the men in that settlement get together and with torches in one hand and guns in the other they find those beasts in their caverns and kill them. So we should follow sin right to its caverns, with the torch of Christ in one hand and the sword of the Eternal Spirit in the other, and we should destroy it. Oh, how much the influences of home have to do with a man's ability to contend with temptation! There are parents who even make religion disgusting to their children. They have an exasperating way of doing their duty. Boys go forth from such homes to die. Father and mothers, which way are you leading your children? A man's house took fire and he managed to get out his furniture and his paintings and his papers, but he forgot his children until it was too late. When the earth shall be on fire, when the mountains and the seas shall burn, will your children be saved? It is a very excep-

said to a clerical uncle: "Do you believe in the saying, Bring up a child in the way he should go and when he grows old he will not depart from it?" "Certainly I do." "Well, how do you reconcile that with the rascally conduct of your boy, Bill?" "You put the accent on the wrong word," replied the doctor. "When he grows old—but Bill is not old yet." And I want to say to all of you who have wandering children—they are not old yet.

An indolent life is another caldron of sin. Boys come to the city to begin life and they see men hang around the fashionable hotels, dress well, have plenty and do no work. "Why should we work?" say the beginners. These indolent men hang around the City hall with toothpicks in their mouths waiting for crumbs to fall from the table of an office-holder. Where do they get their money? There are only four ways of getting money—by inheriting it, by earning it, by begging it and by stealing it. These men do not inherit it, nor earn it, nor beg it. (Laughter.) I don't like to take the responsibility of saying how they get it. The army of people who are trying to live by their wits is all the time increasing. Horatius was given all the land that he could plow around in a day. And let me tell you that you will have just so much wealth, just so much honor and just so much happiness as you can plow around in your lifetime—no more.—*New York Herald.*

In the Early Days.

The following were some of the judicial sentences in the early days of the colony: Josiah Plaistowe, for stealing four baskets of corn from the Indians, was ordered to return eight baskets to them, to be fined five pounds, and hereafter to be called by the name of Josiah, and not Mr., as he formerly used to be. Captain Stone, for abusing Mr. Ludlow, and calling him "Justass," was fined a hundred pounds, and forbidden to come within the patent without the governor's permission upon pain of death. Sergeant Perkins, for being drunk, was ordered to carry forty turfs to the fort. Captain Lovel was admonished to take heed of light carriage. Thomas Petit, for being suspected of slander, idleness and stubbornness was sentenced to be severely whipped and kept in hold. Daniel Clark was found to be an immoderate drinker, and was fined forty shillings. John Wedgewood was set in the stocks for having been in the company of drunkards. Robert Shorthose, for swearing by the blood of God, was sentenced to have his tongue put into a cleft stick, and to stand thus for the space of half an hour.

Home of the First Piano.

Milton is a picturesque little village, less than a score of miles from Boston. Here is the old house where the first American piano was made by Benjamin Crehore, about A. D. 1800. Half-hidden by the dense shrubbery and branching trees I found it, and as I wandered through the quaint little rooms I tried to picture to my mind the scene when the first American piano was completed. I thought of the solitary workman, piece by piece, building the instrument which should within half a century live again in the most elaborate handiwork of man.

I thought of the solid stuff in that piano; of the honesty of its construction; of the pride of its maker as he completed each step in its progress. And I let my mind run back for a moment to the great city, where hundreds of pianos are finished daily; where thousands of men are polishing pine for rosewood; where imitation passes for ivory; where stencils tell their standing lies in a thousand gilded lines; where gaudy trash, made in all sorts of ways, does duty for real merit—and I am free to confess, I like the old!—*New York Musical People.*

AMID SNOW DRIFTS OF ALASKA.

An American Signal Officer's Experience—Life in Arctic Regions Not so Terrible as Generally Pictured.

In a private letter to his brother, Mr Charles Ray, of Milwaukee, Mr. P. W. Ray, in charge of the United States signal station at Oogloannie, Alaska, writes that he has his flag, as a signal officer, flying farther north than it has ever been borne on the American continent, a locality where the inhabitants dress in deerskins eight months of the year, and the official distinction of an officer is marked by a wolverine's tail worn on the back of his "Ahlega," or fur coat. "The year has passed very quickly with us," continues Mr. Ray. "My party has had all they could attend to in making the required observations, and I have been kept busy picking up the threads of my new life, and taking up the practical use of scientific instruments and in conducting an expedition like this to comply with the requirements laid down by the Vienna congress.

"We had a rough time in establishing ourselves here, for beside a late start from San Francisco, we met with bad weather both in the Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and were fifty-two days on the voyage. Winter had already set in when we arrived, thin ice had formed on the inlets and along the shore, which warned us that we had no time to lose if we would save the ship, for ordinarily the sea is closed at the date on which we landed, so I discharged the vessel the day the last of our cargo was ashore. As I watched her sails fade away in the distance and turned to my work, I must confess that it did look just a little gloomy. My stores were scattered along the beach for 500 yards, just out of the surf, where they had been landed from the native canoes and our whaleboats. The natives swarmed around, whose reputations were none too good, two lone tents on a low, bleak point of land, and over it all a drifting snow-storm completed the picture of des