Mrs J B Graham

THE AIKEN RECORDER.

Y DRAYTON & McCRACKEN. AIKEN, S. C., TUESDAY, AUGUST 1, 1882. VOL. I. NO. 42.

Evening at the Farm.

Down from the hills where the fresh breeze is blowing,
Rich with the scent of the resinous pine;
Up from low pastures where blue flag is growing,
Where, 'mong the green grasses, brooklets entwine,
Filled with the grasses, intent on home-going
Slow-footed cows are all hasting in line,
Filling the air with their milking-time lowing,
While boldly their forms the last sun rays define.

Afar in the west the red sun lies a-dying,
Gorgeous his couch as Aurora's gay bed;
Homeward in haste the late swallows are flying,
Dark float their forms 'gainst the sky's fading red.
Deep in the wood the night birds are crying,
Wails for the day that is past and dead;
High in the east where the faint clouds are lying,
Cynthia glides on her way overhead.

THE BELLE OF THE "CHESTER BELL."

"Yes, sir, in the old hulk that lies rotting there I've sailed many a long year. She used to make splendid runs between Bremen and here. A grand clipper she was, a regular ocean beauty in them days. Her name was the Chester Bell, and she rode the waves just like a nutshell, sir. Her captain's name was Tulliver, Tim Tulliver; likely you've heard of him. I know sailors, and pretty good seamen, too, that change color at the very mention of that man's name. He was a tiger, sir, a human hyena, a bloodthirsty, bullying wretch, without having even the saving clause of a bad temper. Why, he could kill a man in cold blood the same as you'd relish a good breakfast, sir.

"Many's the crew of fine, honest fellows I've seen shipped aboard o' her, to be turned into skulking hounds the minute he'd look at 'em. He'd a pretty little girl for a wife, strange to say—them sort gen'lly gets such—and sometimes she'd go to sea with him. If anybody could keep him in order it was her; but even she couldn't prevent his cruelty to the men With first-rate seamen he was tyrannical, but, great Cæsar! if a greenhorn shipped, let him look alive! He'd as lief take a belaying-pin to him and knock him in the head as eat his dinner. I've seen him do it, too. It was a young fellow that answered him back, and he just laid his face open from crown to chin. Oh, but he was a cruel man, sir!

"He often took emigrants to the United States—squads of 'em. They gen'rally got served middling well. Pay the captain his money and he'd give you the worth of it—so much for his due. One passage he had rather an uncommon lot—five hundred, I think, young and old—a pretty decent set in all Fact is, these German passengers, even if they are in the steerage, have their pocks pretty well lined. Commend me to the German emigrant for honesty and thrift. There was families of two and five, and sometimes ten and twelve—a good many handsome young girls among them, too.

"The particular passage of which I'm going to speak, however, was in the year '50—a great year for clippers that was. I was busy tarring some ropes when a family came aboard that made us all look alive. First, there was the grandfather, in his old country dress, with hair as long as my arm and as white as the foam of the sea under the sun. He and his dame were as sweet-mannered and fine-looking as you might meet in a hundred years. Then came the sons and daughters and grandchildren. It didn't seem as if they ought to go in the steerage along o' commoner passengers; but they did, though they bore themselves like gentlefolk.

"Ten followed, sir, atween two young men—her brother and her lover, we afterward found out—a young girl not more than sixteen or seventeen. Well, that was the handsomest little craft I ever laid these two eyes on, and I've seen some fine-looking women in my day, having sailed from every port in the world. She was that pretty that we christened her on the spot the 'Belle of the Chester Bell.'

"Behind them came Captain Tim, behaving his level best, and there weren't many as could beat him for a fine eye and a gallant bearing. He seemed to be looking out for their comfort—ah, but the little beauty she was! Queens and noble ladies might well envy the red and white of her face, and even the way she walked and the turn of her head. It was a sight to see. Her brother and her lover were both right manly, handsome fellows, too, and dear enough they loved her, one could see.

"Well, we set sail, having beautiful weather for the first few days, and the pretty German girl, she would come out sometimes for an airing, generally followed by one or the other of them two chaps. I was always looking out o' the corner of my eye, and I observed that the captain was allays on hand looking at her in the most admiring manner. I wanted to tell her lover that it would be better not to show his little beauty so much if he wanted to keep her out o' harm's way, for girls is mostly that vain if that handsome!

"Came the second week out, and we had hard weather. I was taking my observations right straight along, for I noticed Captain Tim was always making much of the old gentleman and his wife. The fools! I could a-told 'em why he singled them out. It wasn't the captain's place to be in the steerage. I longed to tell him so, for I had a pretty kid of my own at home; but I might have paid for it with my life.

"There were but few passengers in the cabin, one of them a consumptive lady who had not brought her servant. How it was done I never knew, but the captain managed to get this handsome girl to wait upon the sick woman. Mighty fond of money they must a'been to let that girl go out o' their sight and into the company of a man like Captain Tim.

"After a while I took notice that the young fellow who appeared to be the girl's sweetheart grew pale and nervous. He was out on deck oftener, and his face seemed to indicate uneasy, jealous feelings. I didn't blame him. I wanted to warn him—for I could tell how it was with him, poor fellow! if he saw half that I did, I don't wonder not only that he was suspicious of the captain, but I thought if I was in his place I'd make the captain answer for it. He did get pretty well roused up one time; but I won't tell that part o' the story till I git to it.

"I knew something of languages—at any rate enough to make out even the lingo of a German. They say it's the grandest language in the world; it may be, but it's jaw breaking all the same. One day being down in the steerage I heard something that made me open my ears. Just then down came the girl. Oh, but she looked prettier than ever. She had on a fine silk apron and a pair of shining rings in her little ears. Her hair was all fluffed up and her face aglow, just like a wild rose on a soft spring morning. The whole family were up, after their spell of sickness, knitting and jabbering and laughing, all but the girl's sweetheart, who, the minute he heard her footsteps, jumped up like a shot had been fired at him and went to another part of the ship. I see that she looked after him in that sort of way girls look sometimes, when they know they can do just what they please with a man's heart, and I took notice that she seemed flustered.

"When the girl spoke, I heard the captain's name and then they all looked anxious and pleased at the same time, asking and answering questions. All at once a strange feeling come over me. I didn't know exactly what was my duty, for I was as much afraid of Captain Tim's ugly temper as any man could be, but as I listened and listened I couldn't bear it any longer, and going up to the people I said a few words in their own language. Well, I ohly gave them to understand that the captain had a wife, but, perhaps I had better have held my tongue, for they evidently did not believe me.

"Finding I could make no impression upon them, I went after the sweetheart and let him know what I suspected. I never saw a man so frightfully angry. He grew white as a sheet, and the terror and the horror made him ghastly. He clinched his hands, and the veins stood swelled out on his forehead, while his 'Mein Gott!' was enough to curdle one's blood.

"That afternoon Captain Tim came toward me, and I knew what to expect. So I braced my nerves up and determined that, please God, I wouldn't be afraid of him.

"No need to repeat his language—it was enough to shake the nerves of a man of brass. He used all the oaths I ever heard come out of a whole ship's crew's lips in ten voyages, and swore he'd have my heart's blood—that he'd send me to the bottom of the sea, and such like threats. I told him respectfully, as a petty officer should always speak to his captain, that I had done by the girl as I would by my own sister. I don't just remember exactly what I said, but I think words was given, for he looked hard at me, as if he wasn't certain whether he quite saw through my motives, and with one worse threat than the last, and a mouthful more of dirty oaths he went off.

"But I could see a change in the girl after that for I was always on the watch. She smiled more seldom and her color went and came too easy. Then her step grew slower, and she would go stand at the side of the vessel and take long sad looks at the water, as if she was in a brown study. Pretty soon after that her eyes began to look heavy, and once or twice I found her in an out-o'-the-way place crying and sobbing like a baby Well, I didn't attempt to comfort her—she wouldn't a borne it for as soon as ever she saw me she would fly off like a scared bird. My heart felt heavy for her, because I knew there must be a reason for it, besides the growing weakness of the poor woman, who was dying in the cabin day by day, and praying only to see land before she did go.

"One night, ah, sir, I shall never forget that night—the moon was at her full, and sat looking at the reflection in the water like a queen with a silver crown on, and a veil of white light floated away off on the sea, so that it looked like a bride waiting for her husband. For the first time in many days I saw the pretty German girl and her sweetheart on deck together. I could not keep my eyes from her; she looked for all the world like a sweet angel just lent out of heaven for a little. It was my watch, and my duty to bid them below; but I don't know why it was, I couldn't do it. They went forward and sat at the bows. There were barrels there and planks atop, so no one could walk back and forth easily. I couldn't hear anything they said, of course, but I saw by their gestures that they were talking very fast. Sometimes he would go close up to her, and she would put out her hand and push him away, then cry as if her heart would break. This went on for some time when at the last she seemed to grow calmer. I saw her throw herself into his arms. I saw him kiss her again and again; then she seemed to wrench herself away, and quicker than I can tell, over she went.

"I don't know how I got there, or how the whole ship seemed to swarm so suddenly with life. I remember catching at a dark body that was going over—her poor distracted brother, and his falling back into my arms dead as a log, after giving a great cry. That scream brought the captain and two mates. The captain asked, angrily, what was the row?

"'That little German girl is overboard!' I said; and if I had any sort of a weapon that was dead sure I'd have laid him at my feet. He knew how I felt, he knew, the scoundrel! the villain! His face changed, his very voice was different, as he ordered 'Bout ship.'

"One of the boats was down, and we supposed, through some mismanagement, it swamped, for we saw nothing of boat or lover or girl; and so that was the end of that. It was a changed company afterward. The shock killed the poor sick woman, and she was buried the same day, for sailors can't bide a corpse on board ship; but I declare to you, sir, that though we put weights in that coffin, it stood up on end and followed us until midnight. I never saw such a sight before; I hope never to again. There it was right after us, and the sailors watched it with pale faces no one daring to say a word to the captain, who swore if any one but looked at him.

"We all made as if the girl had fallen overboard for the sake of the poor creatures who were left. They conjectured everything, as folks will who go wild with grief. But I think her brother understood, though he was sick with brain fever all the rest of the voyage. Her mother, poor creature, came near dying herself, and I am sure her heart must have been nearly broken. It was hard to see that fine-looking old grandfather tottering round wringing his hands and shaking his gray old head, while the tears run and run—may I never see the like again!

"Next voyage we shipped a green hand. I never suspected till we'd been out three days that it was the German girl's brother. Then I knew he meant mischief. I told him I knew him, but he begged so hard I kept his secret. How often since I've wished I hadn't, though it might have been no better for him. I was sure there was going to be more trouble, and it came soon. He didn't know the ropes and I think the captain suspected who it was and kept on his guard, for he was mighty careful not to anger him. But one day his temper gave way, and if it hadn't a bin as it was I shouldn't much blamed him neither, for I like good seamanship as well as the next man, and the German lad was as contrary as a mule. The first thing we knew the captain struck the man, and the next they were struggling together on the deck. Well, sir, we saw blood. The captain had got at his knife and run the poor fellow through the heart. He never spoke after that, and none of us could say anything, because the captain killed him in self-defense. I was that horror struck that I vowed I'd never step foot in that ship again; and never again I did, although Captain Tim offered me double wages. Sir, it was a God-cursed ship after that. Misfortune went with it every voyage, and seemed to strike everybody but the captain. That always seemed strange to me. He lost men and the owners lost money, but he always came off scot free.

"Well, sir, I am coming to the queerest part of my story. I was once inspecting an insane asylum with a friend of mine from the old country. He wished to see a case of raving insanity, being about to write a book in which he wanted to describe something of the sort. We had several cases, when the keeper said, pointing to a double cell:

"'There is the worst subject in this or any other establishment. He is an old sea-captain, whose madness is so alarming at about midnight that, in spite of all our precautions, we expect every morning to find him a corpse. We are obliged to keep him in this closet, the walls of which are lined that he may not dash his brains out. He has been here nearly a year, and imagines that he is pursued by a girl, and held under water by her till his breath leaves his body.'

"Well, the door was unlocked, and there, despite the hideously-altered and haggard face, I saw my old captain—Tim Tulliver!"

"Then," said I, speaking for the first time, "at last God had smitten him."

"Well, I suppose that's not for us to say," continued the narrator, "for I haven't come quite to the end of my story."

"Some three years after the little German beauty threw herself over in the way I have told you, I was off duty in a foreign harbor, and strolling into a street I found a little shop presided over by a woman who was the living image of poor little Gretchen—I believe I haven't spoken her name before. I went in, and she stared at me, and I stared at her. I felt myself grow pale, but she flushed rosy red, which put me more in mind of Gretchen than ever. So I said to her in German, to make sure, that she reminded me of a lass I had once known.

"'Oh!' she cried. 'I was sure I couldn't be mistaken—you were so kind to me once, when I was on board that dreadful Chester Bell.'

"'Then,' I said, completely astonished, and catching my breath, 'it is really Gretchen!'

"'Yes, indeed, I am really Gretchen, and my husband is not yet at home; he has gone to look after our bit of land; but sit down, he will be back in a moment; no, no, come in here, dinner will be ready before a great while.'

"I followed, like one in a dream, and found myself in a neat, pretty little parlor, looking out on a garden crowded with flowers, and beyond that the shingly beach, and further the deep sea. In a corner at one side of the tiny fireplace stood a wicker-cradle wherein slept a lovely child.

"'That's my little Gretchen,' she said, with a happy and proud smile.

"'I've got three nice children, the eldest quite a lad.'

"'Then, please tell me, for I am nearly dying of curiosity,' I said, 'how comes it you are here and not at the bottom of the sea?'

"'Oh, that was an awful night!' she said, a shadow crossing her face. 'I threw myself over because Hans, who was cruelly jealous, wouldn't believe my word, for, you see the captain was very wicked and I had found him out, and Hans would not listen, which drove me desperate, and I did not care if I died. But the poor fellow had suffered; for, though I hated the captain, I was too easy to let him admire me. But Hans found me, though I was half dead, and then he kept the boat in the shadow of the ship till all the rush and fright was over, for he said he would rather die with me in an open boat on the sea than put me in the power of that bad captain. And so we should, perhaps, have perished, but a ship came along in the morning and picked us up; and Hans would never go to America after that. He found good friends and settled down here.'

"'But your people?'

"'Oh, they all come out here—all but my poor brother—we never knew where he went; so you see we were quite as well off as if we had gone to America, and I never thought to meet you again sir, never; are you still on that dreadful ship?'

"I told her all but the tragic fate of her brother, which I thought was better suppressed; but you see, sir, there was no real haunting, but the poor old captain was beset by his own dreadful imagination and the sting of his conscience, for, no doubt in his heart, he had willed to do murder and worse. And so there you have the story of the Belle of the Chester Bell."—*Mrs. Denison.*

E. B. D., Kansas: The yellow or orange-colored dust on the under side of blackberry leaves is a fungus growth known as rust. It is the same in every respect as the rust on wheat and oats, and some kinds of blackberries, the common wild ones especially, are very subject to it. This rust kills the plants or makes them grow very weak, and rapidly spreads from one plant to another, until all are infected. The remedy is to cut out and dig up every plant that is diseased, and grow none but those which are proof against it.

Mr. Spoopendyke's Search.

"Oh, dear!" grunted Mrs. Spoopendyke, "I'm sure I'm going to die!" and the good woman flopped over in the bed and contemplated her husband with a pale face and a look of general debility. "You'll be good to baby, won't you, dear?"

"Oh, ho!" returned Mr. Spoopendyke, pounding her tenderly on the head with his big hand. "You're all right. Bear up against it, and you'll be well in an hour or two. I've often had the cholera morbus, but you never see me give up like this. Where's the ginger?"

"I don't know," moaned Mrs. Spoopendyke. "Look on the top shelf of the closet. If it isn't there, try the bottom drawer of the wardrobe; or it may be in the pantry. Ow-w!" and Mrs. Spoopendyke doubled up and straightened out with a jerk.

"You can't remember any other Congressional district as represented by that ginger, can you?" growled Mr. Spoopendyke, prowling around the room in an aimless but energetic fashion. "You don't call to mind a couple more roosting-places in which that ginger is to be found, do you? Where'bouts on the top shelf?" and Mr. Spoopendyke rattled around among the old bottles and empty pill-boxes. "Look here! I've found that court plaster I wanted day before yesterday!" and more than gratified with his find Mr. Spoopendyke utterly forgot the original object of his search.

"You'll send baby to a good school, and see that she marries happily, dear?" groaned Mrs. Spoopendyke, adapting a woman's style of hinting that the ginger would be acceptable. "And you'll bury me by mother?"

"Certainly," replied Mr. Spoopendyke, immersed in the contemplation of the court plaster. "Where's the sheet of flesh color that was here?" he demanded. "I don't seem to detect the presence of that particular element of adhesiveness! Where's the flesh colored portion of this curative?" and Mr. Spoopendyke ran over the little squares again in a vain search for the piece he missed.

"Did you look in the wardrobe, love?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, faintly.

"It isn't here!" growled Mr. Spoopendyke, raking over the contents of the drawer and turning them over with his feet. "What—? Upon my word! you're a pretty woman! I thought you said that old razor strop of mine was lost when we moved. Here it is as big as life and twice as dirty. Glad I found that strap," mumbled Mr. Spoopendyke, rubbing it tenderly and blowing off the dust. "Got a piece of cloth?"

"Oh, do look in the pantry!" pleaded Mrs. Spoopendyke. "I'm sure it's in the pantry!"

Mr. Spoopendyke charged on the pantry like a column of horse and hustled around and bumped his head, but didn't seem to meet with much success.

"I don't see any," he muttered. "Don't you know where you keep your cloth? I suppose I might stand round here till doomsday, while moths corrode and thieves do break into this razor strop and steal the whole business without finding a piece of cloth to wipe it on. Haven't ye got an old skirt or something?" And Mr Spoopendyke drew the strap under his arm two or three times and regarded it affectionately.

"Oh, please find the ginger!" squealed Mrs. Spoopendyke, as another spasm caught her. "Never mind your old strap! Find the ginger!"

"Ain't I looking for it?" retorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "Here's a cork, and the bottle can't be far off When I find that bottle I'll have a clew to the ginger, and I'm going to follow it to the bitter end. You ought to save these corks anyway, when I go fishing What kind of a looking bottle was it?"

"It was long and narrow," replied Mrs. Spoopendyke, almost in despair.

"I ought to find it from that description," muttered Mr. Spoopendyke. "Most bottles are perfectly round Here's the arnica bottle upside down, and I told you to keep it filled. I might knock my arm into the next Presbyterian general assembly, and I'd have to wait all day before I could get a drop of arnica to soothe my anguish! What's this straw hat of mine doing in the bottle box, anyhow? What particular malady did this hat have that suggested such a disposition of it?" and Mr. Spoopendyke smoothed out the crown and squinted with one eye while he straightened the brim. "That's a good hat yet," and he put it on and regarded himself in the glass. "You wanted some ginger, didn't you? Where is it? Where'd you put it?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke arose from the bed, pale but firm, and stalking across the room seized the bottle and flounced back into the bed with a bump that showed she was mad. There is nothing on earth that will so express a woman's wrath as that one dive among the sheets.

"Getting better, ain't ye?" snorted Mr. Spoopendyke. "I told ye the cholera morbus didn't last long. Where's that razor strop? What'd ye do with that strap?"

Mrs. Spoopendyke eyed him, but made no response.

"Point out to me the present address of that strap!" howled Mr. Spoopendyke. "Take this finger and lay it tenderly on the home and country of that strap!" and Mr. Spoopendyke whirled around like a grindstone and filled the air with bottles and boxes, and powders and pills. "Come out of the jungle and face me!" yelled Mr. Spoopendyke apostrophizing the strap which he remembered having in his hand but a moment before. "Show me to the strap! Take that strap by the ear and lead it before Spoopendyke in proper person!" and the enraged gentleman thrust his foot through the crown of his hat and drew the wreck up to his hip.

"What's that sticking out of your breast pocket?" asked Mrs. Spoopendyke, scraping off external applications of an assortment of drugs.

"Umph!" grunted Mr. Spoopendyke, drawing out the strap. "Found it, didn't ye? Another time you let things alone, will ye? Made me spoil my straw hat with your nonsense! Another time you want anything you just stand back and let me search! D' understand?"

"Yes, dear," murmured Mrs. Spoopendyke, and as her husband left the room she took a consoling swig at the ginger bottle and reflected that he hadn't enjoyed the attack of cholera morbus much more than she had.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

HEALTH HINTS.

Bread made with sea water is recommended for patients suffering from dyspepsia and scrofula.

One of the most important bodily needs is food for the nerves. Build up nerve energy and you have the greatest resisting power against disease. Wheat, milk and peas are good nerve sustaining foods.

Breakfast should be eaten in the morning before leaving the house for exercise or labor of any description; those who do it will be able to perform more work and with greater alacrity than those who work an hour or two before breakfast.

Brainworkers are peculiarly liable to suffer from the distressing affliction of sleeplessness; here is a cure which in most cases acts like a charm: Wet half a towel, apply to the back of the brain, and fasten the dry half of the towel over so as to prevent too rapid evaporation. The effect is prompt and charming, cooling the brain and inducing calmer and sweeter sleep than any narcotic.

Dr. Foote says in his *Health Monthly:* In one of our city hospitals a case of obstinate malarial fever was treated with all the medicines (one after another) usually employed in such cases, without success; but a cure was effected by taking the patient to an upper floor. All houses in malarial districts should have an "upper floor" for refuge.

For Sunburn.—Bruise and then squeeze out the juice from the stalks and leaves of the common chickweed, and add to it three times as much rain water. Bathe the skin with this for a few minutes morning, noon and night and wash it off with pure water. Elder flowers can be similarly treated and applied, or they can be steeped in milk and the face and hands washed in it. Sour cream applied at night and washed off in the morning will allay smarting sunburn.

A Miner's Luck.

Mr. Richard Knowles, a prominent miner of the Gunnison country, in Colorado, said to a reporter: "While I was yet at Leadville a man came up there from Denver named Dexter—Jim Dexter they called him and he was full of life and hope, and had some money. Dexter looked about him for a while, and finally bought a claim on Carbonate Hill, which had, at that time, not been prospected very well. He paid, I think, about $15,000 for it, and set to work putting in machinery and sinking the shaft, which was already down some 100 feet or more. He worked away on the mine, people laughing at him a good deal, but he never once lost heart. The mine had not shown up a single thing in the way of mineral, and the shaft had been sunk by that time several hundred feet. Dexter did not know what to do. He had now spent nearly all the money he had, and nothing was coming in. One day in the early part of the year 1879 a party came to him and asked him what he would take for his mine. Dexter told him, and a bargain was made between them The price paid was, I think, $30,000, some $5,000 more than Dexter had spent on it altogether. He was mighty glad to get the $30,000, and thought himself well out of a bad bargain. He rushed out to Carbonate hill and ordered the miners to drop their tools and quit work. This was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon. He said: 'Boys, I have sold this hole, and I don't want you to work another minute in it for me. I will pay you off right now and you can quit.' Well, the miners had just finished a drill and were going to place a blast and uncover some rock, and they asked to be allowed to finish it before they quit work. 'No,' said Dexter, 'come out, I don't want you to work ano more; there is nothing in the old hole.' They reluctantly quitted and departed. Dexter got his money and was happy.

Well, the mine had been bought by a stock company, and in a short time they began work on it. Now, young man, what I am going to tell you is the solemn truth," said the miner. "Those fellows went up there to that mine and laid a fuse to the blast left by Dexter's men and touched it off After the smoke cleared away they went in to see how much rock had been loosened, when what do you think? There before their eyes they saw the richest body of silver ore which has ever been seen since the world began At that time hundreds of thousands of dollars met the gaze of the delighted owners of the richest kind of ore. Well, young fellow," continued Mr. Knowles, "that mine was the celebrated Robt. E. Lee, which has made everybody rich who has had anything to do with it since Jimmy Dexter sold it. Millions of dollars have been turned out of it, and it is the greatest silver mine in the world."

"Cranks" in New York.

A New York correspondent avers that "two of the prominent citizens of New York are now generally known to be insane—not hopelessly, perhaps, but positively. One is a lawyer whose services are so much in demand that he has been paid a $50,000 fee within a year for pleas in court since his reason went astray. He holds a prominent public office. The other is a bank president and a most capable financier. He has not walked a block in the street for six years, for he imagines that he is a cherry and if he is exposed the birds will eat him! In this delusion he is immovable: and accordingly he always rides to and from the bank in a close carriage, and never exposes himself out of doors. On all other matters he is perfectly sane, and his counsel is taken in the investment of millions on millions. To a visitor from the "provinces," it must seem as if a good many New Yorkers are insane. Nowhere have I ever seen so many people who indulged in that curious habit known as talking to themselves." About every tenth person you meet on the down-town sidewalks practices this self-communion. Every hour of every day you will notice men go hurrying by, looking neither to the right nor left, talking in excited tones and gesticulating violently. I have seen men in an omnibus carrying on a lively dialogue with themselves, and laughing vociferously at the "hits" made, as unconscious of the presence of others as if they were alone in the moon. The same queer phenomena are frequently seen in glimpses through carriage doors—men with faces all aglow, swinging their arms and exclaiming in loud voices—driving a sharp bargain with a wholesaler, maybe, or wildly and hopefully bidding for the stocks that are to go up ten per cent. to-morrow."

FACTS AND COMMENTS.

Edward Barr, of Missouri, was at the head of the late graduating class at West Point, with an average of 1 934.5 out of a possible 2,000. The father of young Barr, who has thus graduated with such distinguished honor, said to his son, some three years since, that if he would graduate with distinction he would make him a present of $10,000 The incentive had its effect, and young Barr starts out in life with educated brains and a plethoric pocket.

James L. Loring, a civil engineer, suggests that tornadoes be fought with cannon. He says: "It would be cheaper to put an iron cannon in every town in Iowa than it will be to pay the losses of Saturday. If one of these clouds were seen forming near a town the cannon would tell the news to the next town, and the concussion of the air from a succession of firing certainly ought to effect the same result in Iowa that it does on the equator."

A Senate resolution calling for information about pensions has brought out some interesting facts. There were close upon 270,000 pensioners on the roll last September, when the annual statistics were made up. But about twelve thousand pensions had lapsed through not being called for during three successive years, and five thousand were those of sailors whose residences were not known. The actual number paid was 252 351, the amount being $51,224,204. New York State heads the list. To her 32 024 pensioners the annual sum of $3,426,532 was given, but arrears brought the amount up to $6,510 411. Pennsylvania's 28,292 pensioners required $5 746 802, and Ohio's 24 663 had $4 941 520 More than two million dollars each went to Indiana, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts and Michigan; more than one million each to Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri and New Jersey The Third Congress district of Maine surpassed all others in the amount it received.

The importance of agriculture as a factor in our national prosperity can best be appreciated by visiting New York city and observing the steamers and ships from all quarters of the globe loading with products of American soil. In a single week, recently, upward of $6,000,000 worth of agricultural products were shipped abroad from New York alone. Among the exports of that week were 2,126 barrels apples, 1,647 pounds beeswax, 84,202 barrels wheat flour, 1,391 barrels corn meal, 481,252 bushels wheat, 2,652 bushels oats, 46 bushels barley, 2,023 bushels peas, 427 241 bushels corn, 13,537 bales cotton, 462 bales hay, 492 bales hops, 10,967 gallons lard oil, 1,082 gallons linseed oil, 3 993 barrels pork, 804 barrels beef, 1,060 tierces beef, 5,548,291 pounds cut meats, 74,414 pounds butter, 675,151 pounds cheese, 3,854 680 pounds lard, 88 barrels rice, 577,620 pounds tallow, 439 hogsheads tobacco, 1,226 packages tobacco and 49,887 pounds manufactured tobacco.

Although the sanguine De Lesseps makes frequent announcements that the Panama canal enterprise is in a most flourishing condition, unprejudiced observers who have been over the route take a very different view. Captain Belknap, of the United States navy, who crossed the Isthmus a few weeks ago, reports that $200,000 has been paid for a hotel to serve as offices, and $30,000 more in fitting it up; that another $200,000 has been expended in buying buildings and grounds for hospital use, and that houses have been built for the officials, but that the only real work yet done toward the construction of the water-way consists in the clearing away of shrubs and trees from the track. Captain Belknap found that intelligent residents of the Isthmus region believed the project feasible, but they agree in the opinion that it would take a great deal more time than the enthusiastic engineer calculates upon. The captain's conclusion that people familiar with the Isthmus, and expecting returns for capital invested, will not be likely to put money in such an enterprise will only strengthen the disinclination of Americans to take stock in the scheme as now conducted.

Professor Reese, of Philadelphia, has made an important discovery touching the effects of drowning upon the human lungs. In an autopsy of the body of a woman, found drowned, it is reported that he found no water in the lungs, nor any evidence of water having been there, nor did he find that the dead body bore no marks of abuse and violence, and there was nothing found in the œsophagus to indicate that water had crossed the woman's lips. As the body was taken from the river near the wharf it is presumed that the woman jumped overboard, which leads Dr Reese to infer that persons plunging into the water, especially from an eminence, can come to death from suffocation or shock without taking water inwardly. It is well known by bringing together the posterior arches of the palate and pressing the root of the tongue against the palate both the mouth and the nostrils are completely cut off from the air tubes, as is done in holding the breath. It is quite conceivable that the shock caused by sudden immersion in water under a temperature of sixty-five degrees might induce this movement, and also cause a muscular contraction of lungs and air tubes, precluding the passage of water into the lungs of a person while drowning. The case investigated by Professor Reese is of great interest to the medico-legal experts, and the correctness of his conclusions will be tested by other examination of the bodies of drowned persons.

It is quite generally known that Scotland and Ireland with their potatoes and Germany and Italy with their beans have been most prolific in their contributions to this country's drought-shortened supplies since last fall, but it is not so generally known that Egypt, or properly speaking the Levant, has begun to furnish us in abundance with that useful garden product, the onion. Of this valuable bulb, which is so inseparable from the dressing of a dainty canvas-back duck or the ingredients of a popular Irish stew, there have recently been imported into this country from Egypt 10,000 barrels. After the domestic crop has been consumed by winter use or exported it has long been the custom to import large quantities of onions from the sunny gardens of Bermuda, Lisbon and Oporto, but the Levant was never before called upon. The cultivation of onions on the eastern coast of the Mediterranean extending from the western part of Greece around to the western border of Egypt is reported as a great industry It has been computed that the last crop there was over 200,000 tons. It is asserted that Levant onions keep better and longer than those grown in any other part of the world. This is an important feature, for many onions are needed in ships' supplies for long voyages on account of their excellence in preventing scurvy and other diseases incident to life on shipboard In this country it is remarked that the consumpt on increases yearly. This is due not only to the enormous increase of the foreign elements, who always use vegetables freely, but also to the enlarged use in populous cities of the coarse parts of meats, in the preparation of which the onion figures prominently.

General Skobeleff's Career.

The late General Michael Skobeleff was probably the most popular man in Russia and the most picturesque soldier in Europe. In peace he excelled the swells of the kingdom in his fondness for the luxuries of dress and the daintiness of his tastes. In war he was the embodiment of bravery and the personification of reckless fury. Clad in a white uniform that glittered with gold braid, and mounted on a white horse, he led his men to victories snatched out of the very gulfs of death, and it was said of those he commanded that they idolized him, and seemed to prefer death at the heels of his horse to victory under any other commander. He was of soldierly carriage and fine physique, black-eyed brown-haired and full-bearded. He came of a race of soldiers. His grand-father, rather and himself were all generals and chevaliers of St. George, and valor got each one his title and honors. Michael was the youngest Russian general. He was graduated from the Military Academy in St. Petersburg in 1868, and, without serving in the Guards, he at once pitched into battle in Turkestan at the head of a corps of Cossacks. He was then twenty-five years old. He remained in Turkestan until 1871, and went thence to the Caucasus on the staff of the Grand Duke Michael. Later he commanded a battalion of the Seventy-fourth regiment of the line, and in 1873 he was transferred to Khiva, where the czar was fighting the khan. When the formality of military discipline hampered him in this campaign, he deliberately disobeyed orders and at the same time gave evidence of his genius as a soldier. In the same campaign, in order to finish and deliver his report to General Kaufman, he and MacGahan, the famous war correspondent, remained in the palace of the khan when it seemed madness to tarry there. For this and a reconnoissance in disguise to the Turcoman desert he was given the cross of St. George of the fourth class. When Don Carlos was fighting for the throne of Spain Skobeleff joined his staff avowedly to study war out of Russia, but probably because he could not keep away from war.

As a cavalry commander he fought in Turkestan, and here, at night, with 150 men, he dashed into the main camp of the enemy, who, imagining the Russian army upon them, fled without taking even their turbans. Not one of Skobeleff's men was killed or wounded. Temporarily left in command he stormed and took the city of Namanyab, which had revolted. For this, though he was but thirty-two years old, he was made a major-general. In the second war with Khokland he compelled the khan to surrender, and when that country was annexed was made its governor and given the third class cross of St. George His next brilliant feat was in the Russo-Turkish war. He had been on the staff of the Grand Duke Michael, been transferred to the staff of his father, a lieutenant-general, and his father's command being broken up, he found himself out of employment where the fighting was heaviest. He remained in the army as a volunteer, and sent his name ringing through Russia by crossing the Danube on horseback, sword in hand, at the head of a few men, and driving the Turks from their positions overlooking Sistowa. Again, almost in the next dispatches, he was reported at the siege of Plevna, at the head of a whirlwind of cavalrymen, actually penetrating the fortifications. But the infantry upon whom he relied failed, and Skobeleff had to retire. In the second battle of Plevna he captured two redoubts, and, after defending them for twenty four hours against the incessant hail of lead from a vastly superior force, he was forced back, still fighting like a bulldog. He lost 8,000 out of 12,000 men, had seven horses shot from under him, and when the last had gone led the way into the redoubt on foot, waving his diamond-hilted word.

His greatest military feat was, when, with 20,000 men, he stormed and took Lovtscha in Bulgaria, and won a strategical point behind Osman Pasha's army. The war was not half over when he was made lieutenant-general and commander of the Sixteenth division. When Radetzky and Prince Mersky had both been repulsed by Vessel Pasha at Shenova, Skobeleff made the Pasha surrender. At the czar's order he entered Adrianople. With his already famous command he was long before Constantinople, and finally had charge of all the Russian forces retiring from Turkey.

Since the war the world outside Russia heard but little of him, though two-thirds of his countrymen worshiped him as the foremost champion of Panslavist theories. Love for him was said to be one of the few things in which the country and the czar were wholly in accord. Last February his soldierly bluntness gave him world-wide prominence. It was at a dinner of Servian students in Paris that he declared a struggle between the Slavs and Teutons inevitable. He said it would be long and bloody, but the Slavs would conquer. He had the world for his hearers, and Europe waited anxiously for an explanation. Skobeleff disavowed any desire to make trouble, or any authority to speak as he did, and the czar reprovided him with signal mildness, and sent him to Turkestan for a time. He was thirty-nine years old.

To some men popularity is always suspicious. Enjoying none themselves they are prone to suspect the validity of those attainments which command it.

Swords.

The first weapon used by man was probably a club; and it is also likely that in time this was made of very hard wood, and somewhat sharpened on one or more sides, so as to inflict a more deadly wound. Wooden weapons of this kind are now in use by some savage races. Then it was found that more effective weapons of the sort could be made of a harder substance, and short, unwieldy swords were hewn out of stone, very much as our Indians made their arrow-heads of flint. But a sword of this kind, although a terrible weapon in the hands of a strong man, was brittle and apt to break; and so in time, when the use and value of metals came to be understood, swords were made of these substances. The early Romans, and some other nations, had strong, heavy swords made of bronze. But when iron and steel came into use it was quickly perceived that they were the metals of which offensive weapons should be made.

By a careful study of the form and use of the sword, from its first invention until the present time, we may get a good idea of the manner in which in various ages military operations were carried on. At first men fought at close quarters, like the beasts they imitated. But as the arts of warfare began to be improved, and as civilization and enlightenment progressed, men seemed anxious to get farther and farther away from one another when they fought, and so the sword gradually became longer and longer, until, in the middle ages, a man's sword was sometimes as long as himself.

But there is a limit to this sort of thing, and when the use of projectiles which would kill at a great distance became general, it was found that a soldier was seldom near enough to his enemy to reach him with his sword; and at the present day it is seldom used in actual warfare except by cavalrymen, and these frequently depend as much on the firearms they carry as upon their sabers. It is said that cavalry charges, in which the swords of the riders are depended upon to rout the enemy, do not frequently occur in the warfare of the present day; and those naval battles of which all have read, where the opposing ships are run side by side, and the sailors of one, cutlass in hand, spring upon the deck of the other and engage in a hand to hand fight, are now seldom heard of. Our iron clad ships fire at one another from a great distance, or one of them comes smashing into another with its terrible steel ram; and a sword would be a very useless thing to a modern sailor. Our armies lie a mile or two apart and pop at each other with long-range rifles and heavy cannon, and to the great body of the opposing forces swords would only be an incumbrance.—*St. Nicholas.*

Explorers Massacred.

The fate of the French expedition which was engaged in exploring the basin of the La Plata, South America, under the leadership of Dr. Crevaux is one of the most melancholy sacrifices to science. According to the latest news, which the council of the Argentine Republic in Tappa received from Tavija, the whole company of nineteen men were butchered by Indians of the Tobas tribe. The expedition had not long before left Rio de Janeiro, where they were received with the warmest sympathy by the emperor of Brazil. A dispatch from them stated that they had come across the ruins of an old Inca town, a few kilometers from Brazil. Soon after they were arrested by an over-zealous Argentine official in the village of Humahuaca; but after making an inquiry he released them and permitted them to go forward along their intended route. It is possible that the news of their arrest may have reached the native tribe and aroused a suspicion as to their purposes. They had just ascended the Pilcomayo, only a few days later, when the Tobas fell upon them and slaughtered every member of the expedition.

Corner in the Sardine Market.

There is danger of a corner in the sardine market. For two years the fish have failed to make their appearance off the coasts of Europe, thereby inflicting a loss upon Brittany alone of not less than 15,000,000 francs. The cause of their non-appearance has been made the subject of a discussion in the Academy of Sciences at Paris, and has occupied the attention of some of the leading French savans. One thinks that unusual winds have driven the diminutive fish which serve as food for the sardine out of their regular course, and that the sardine has been compelled thereby to make the same deviation. Others are of the opinion that vast ice fields coming from the north have affected the current of