

A DANGEROUS FEAT.

BOY SCALED PERILOUS CLIFFS TO CATCH BIRD.

Get the Egg and Its Owner—Brought Both of Them Down in Safety—Birds Are Said to Foretell the Coming of Hurricanes.

FOUND my first tropic bird's nest in the island of Saint Eustatius, one of the volcanic Antilles, in the Caribbean sea. My assistant, without whom I should have been unable to locate the nest, was Alexander, a small brown boy, with curly hair and glossy skin. The customs officer of the sleepy little town of Orange, the old Dutch port of Saint Eustatius, took me down the shore in his boat, while Alexander ran along the beach, preferring the run to a ride.

As great cliffs thrust themselves across the sands into the sea at intervals, the boy frequently had to swim and wade, but he took off his clothes—they were not very troublesome, consisting only of a ragged shirt and trousers—tied them in a bundle on his head, and then "sprinted" along the beach, over the great rocks and under the ledges, beating the rowers out of time. When we reached the headland known as "Tumbledown-Dick," however, Alexander was glad enough to swim out to the boat and be taken in; for the cliffs here were perpendicular, even hollowed out into immense caves, and the sea raged at their feet like a thousand demons. In the bay beyond we were landed, after much difficulty, all of us getting wet feet and being roughly handled by the waves. The boat was sent out into smooth water, beyond the breakers, and we hid ourselves and waited the coming of the tropic birds.

These birds, the custom official told me, prognosticate the coming of the hurricanes, always leaving the island immediately before the arrival of these terrible storms and staying away until they are over. Where they go no one knows; and when they return the people breathe freely again, knowing that there will be no more hurricanes that season. Sometimes they do not all return, and then the islanders believe that they have been lost at sea. They make their rude nests in holes and on shelves of the cliffs, well out of reach of ordinary observers; and here each pair rears a single young one, laying but one egg in a nest. The male and female birds take turns in brooding over this solitary egg, and one is always found within the hole. After sitting there all night one of them goes out to sea at daylight to fish

long way up, clinging to the rock like a limpet, holding his old hat, containing an egg, in his teeth and a struggling, biting "trophic" of full growth in one hand.

It was no easy matter for the youngster to descend the steep and slippery precipice, keeping his grip on that fiercely fighting bird, and I trembled for his safety until he joined us at our shelter near the waves. But at last he reached us, tired and trembling, but asking no great credit to himself for what a northern boy would have thought a mighty feat and talked over a week.

It was now time for the old birds to come in from their sea trips, so I waited, gun in hand, for their appearance. Soon we saw them at a distance, looking like great swallows, with their pointed wings and shapely forms. They arrive at a point far overhead, and seem to be seeking out their respective dwelling places, spending much time in apparent wrangling and discussion.

"Dey so foolish," said Alexander, "dey don' know dey own nes", which appeared to be the case, as they made many attempts before finally settling down for good and all. It is not to be wondered at, this confusion of the birds as to the identity of their nests, when the general sameness of the cliffs is taken into account. As I have already remarked, the perfect symmetry of the bird when floating in mid-air deceives one as to its real size, and this was the cause of my many misses when I tried to shoot them, poised so far above me or swiftly shooting through the sky. It has a really robust body, when viewed near at hand, but from the tip of its sharp beak to the end of its pointed tail, with its two straw-like feathers floating gracefully behind, all of symmetry and grace. No one would think that the distance from tip to tip of outstretched wings was quite three feet, nor that the bird was bigger—seen at the great height at which it flies—than a gull or sea swallow.

In came the swiftly flying birds. Their screams would be heard when they themselves were far away, and it is this shrill cry of theirs that has given the name, applied by sailors, of the "Boatswain."

EGRETS FOR WOMEN'S HATS.

Cruelty and Slaughter That Produce These Ornaments.

Thomas Jones pushes quietly into the edge of the nesting ground, ties his boat firmly within easy range of the tall snag he saw the day before, and takes out his rifle, says Forest and Stream. There is an egret on the tall snag. Taking a steady aim, he fires, and the bird whirls down dead. One or two other birds start on their perches in the same tree, but settle back. One by one they, too, whirl out and lie in a white tangled mass at the foot of the tree. An egret raises herself above the rim of the nest on which she sits, and the tiny bullet pierces her. She whirls down, lying white and motionless. The little ones gape and cry, but no food comes. The father was killed on the tree near by. One by one out of the nests, off the limbs of the trees, here, there, anywhere—for the birds are all about, and so stupid with the breeding fever that they will not leave—the slender white birds meet their doom. That tall snag has yielded twenty victims. Jones has not moved from his boat. He has over 200 birds down. He can tell by his cartridge boxes, for he rarely misses a shot. It is easy shooting. After noon he gathers up his spoils. A cut of the knife and the clump of plume is off. Two hundred carcasses of egrets are left lying. That many more tomorrow. Many more than that the next day, for by that time the wailing of the dying young of the first day's victims will have ceased. From then on, day by day, increasing in threefold ratio, the harvest of death goes on, steadily, pitilessly, on the sowing grounds of life, out in the silent wilderness where the birds have tried to hide their homes. In less than a month it is over. The long white lines no longer cross the country going to and from the feeding grounds. The white forms no longer appear on the naked trees. Doubly naked the forest stands in silent desolation. Sudden and discolored the once white forms below the trees are sinking into the slime. From beneath the trees and from the nests up in the trees a great stench goes up. Not a bird, young or old, is left alive. The old stayed till death came, bound by the

SHAKESPEARE IN SHORTHAND.

German Rewriting the Plays in Elizabethan Tachygraphy.

Dr. Eduard Engel has written the following letter to one of the Berlin newspapers: "In a lecture I delivered some years ago to the Berlin Society of Stenographers, who use Stolze's system, I suggested that those accurately acquainted with the oldest English shorthand systems of the sixteenth century should try to ascertain whether many of the deficiencies of the text of Shakespeare might not be explained by stenographic mistakes. The idea was suggested to me by the old and well founded conjecture of Shakespearean scholars that the oldest copies of Shakespeare's plays—the so-called quartos—were printed from stenographic notes, taken in the theater, and that many of the unintelligibilities of the text are due to this. My suggestion fell on fruitful soil, and I have now the pleasure of making the excellent work of a young savant, who has thus sprung at one leap into the ranks of our best Shakespearean scholars, known to wider circles. In a series of articles on Shakespeare and the beginning of English stenography, Herr Kurt Dewitschelt has proved beyond the shadow of a doubt that the quarto editions of Shakespeare's plays were pirated editions printed from stenographic notes, that the stenographic system used was that of Timothy Bright, who was born in 1550, and that innumerable mistakes in the quartos, innumerable contradictions between them and the first authorized folio editions, can be at once and most simply explained by the defects of that stenographic system and the indexterity of the stenographers of that time. Herr Dewitschelt has confirmed my conjecture almost beyond my own expectation. He is at present the only person who possesses all the requisite qualifications for this quite new kind of text investigation, and it is to be wished that he, with his accurate knowledge of the oldest English stenography, combined with solid Shakespearean scholarship, would subject the texts of the dramas to a thorough reinvestigation. The purification of the text of Shakespeare is raised by him for the first time from arbitrary fancy to the rank of a strict science, with which, however, only Shakespearean scholars theoretically and practically trained in stenographic questions are at liberty to busy themselves. Seldom has a higher, never has a more delightful, task fallen to stenography."

Old Man's Singular Freak.

A few years ago a singular ceremony was gone through at a village in the Yonne department, France. For a year gravediggers and masons had been engaged in preparing the tomb of a rich and eccentric old gentleman of the neighborhood. When it was ready he had a handsome marble slab put up, with the date of his birth and the list of his titles and distinctions, winding up with the comforting assurance that he "had been a good father and a law-abiding citizen" inscribed thereon. On his ninety-fifth birthday all his friends and acquaintances were invited to the rehearsal of his funeral. A burial service took place at the church and his empty coffin was placed under a catafalque and surrounded with wax candles.

Dear Child.

Little Petie—"Will it make much noise, Mr. Constant?" Mr. Constant—"What, my boy?" Petie—"Sister said she thought you would pop to-night, and I was wondering if it could be heard up-stairs."—Philadelphia North American.

JUST FOR FUN.

The typewriter machine furnishes the key to many a situation.

The great fa-mine in the Klondike will soon be producing plenty of dust.

A man never lies about a girl's musical talent after he has married her.

A Chicago man who was killed shooting the chute did not realize that he was in the Killchute pass.

The esteemed Washington Star has an editorial entitled "Great Britain in India." There's geography for you.

"Papa, this paper says something about a 'street car plant.' What is a street car plant?" "A street car plant, Tommy, is the biggest thing in urba."

He—When I first met my wife I thought she was one of the most economical women in the matter of clothes I had ever known. She—You met her at the seashore, didn't you?

"Bridget, how did it happen that when we came in last night after the theater there was a policeman in the kitchen?" "Sure, mum, Oi don't know; but Oi think the theater didn't last as long as usual."

Kirk—Lots o' them Klondike prospectors is gettin' rich afore they strike the gold fief. Dirk—How d' yer make that out? Kirk—Why, most of 'em get a check on de bank of de Yucan as soon as dey start out.

"I believe it to be a fact," remarked the spindleshanked young man, "that persons become to some extent that which they habitually feed upon." "Then why don't you eat freely of veal?" asked his elder sister. "You haven't nearly as much calf about you as you ought to have."

An eminent preacher who prided himself upon his ability to discourse without the aid of notes, once got into the pulpit; but, when he found himself face to face with his congregation, his ideas vanished, his mind was a blank. He tapped his forehead, but in vain, his ideas would not come. "My friends," he said, "I pity you; you have lost a fine sermon," and he descended the pulpit steps.

NEEDS OF THE NAVY.

DOCKS ARE NEEDED MORE THAN SHIPS.

What Secretary Long Has to Offer in His Annual Report—A Suggestion That Steps Be Taken to Increase the Number of Enlisted Men—Other Needs.

Uncle Sam's Navy.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27.—The first report of Secretary of the Navy Long, has been made public. It recommends against the further enlargement of the navy proper, so far as snips are concerned. Secretary Long takes the ground that there are enough ships now in use and in building, and that what are needed more than anything else are the following:

Docks. Ammunition and munition. Better equipment of yards. Increase in enlisted men. The secretary recommends that congress authorize the construction of but one warship and a few torpedo boats and torpedo boat destroyers. But it is urged to make plans for the maintenance of the navy in good form, a cost which is bound to constantly increase and which amounted in 1896 and 1897, fiscal years, to \$17,514,231.13. Five battleships, one gunboat and seventeen torpedo boats are now building, all to be done the coming year, except the ships, which will be done the latter part of 1898. During the past year two ships, nine gunboats, a torpedo boat and one or two other vessels were added to the fleet.

The principal care of the department is in the maintenance of the service. Secretary Long has adopted the policy of placing ships in reserve in order to lessen the expense, and also on account of the lack of men. He urges that some means be provided to permit the stowage of the torpedo boats at the navy yards ready for immediate service, but in dry dock. As the navy grows, it will be proper to keep more and more of the vessels in reserve, but it is necessary to have them ready for instant use.

The secretary's special plea, however, in his report, is for adequate dockage. There are nine government docks on the Atlantic coast, and two on the Pacific. But one is accessible for modern battleships, and that is in Puget Sound, twenty miles inland, and one side of which belongs to England. Moreover, it is 900 miles from San Francisco.

Secretary Long, therefore, endorses the recommendation of a special board appointed to investigate the needs of the navy in a docking line. The board recommended the construction of steel, stone or concrete dock suitable for the largest naval vessels at the following points:

Boston, New York, Norfolk, Port Royal, Mare Island, New Orleans.

These docks are recommended to answer the requirements of the seven strategic divisions of the coast line of the United States which are, The northern, for which the dock at Puget sound will answer; the south Pacific, the gulf coast, the line from Cape Sable to Cape Henry; from Cape Henry to Sandy Hook; from Sandy Hook to Cape Cod, and from Cape Cod to the Bay of Fundy. There can easily be made a serviceable dock at Newport News, which the Newport News company will build, and the International company of New York will build the dock there while the dock at Norfolk needs but to be enlarged and only a wharf needed at Port Royal.

For the work of construction and repairs of this nature the department estimates an expenditure necessary of \$8,000,000.

The secretary recommends that the government establish its own powder factory. The cost of ammunition for the entire list of naval vessels completed and yet in hand would amount to \$6,621,985. The cost of ammunition for one battle ship is \$333,197. The department also recommends that arrangements be made for suitable magazines.

In concluding his report the secretary, discussing an enlargement of the foreign powers, the genius of our institutions and the devotion of our people to education, commerce and industry, rather than to any policy of industry, makes military entanglements, make war in the defense of our rights, and our military and naval establishments as a police force for the preservation of order and never for aggression. While all this is, therefore, an earnest of peace as the normal condition of our national life, there is no question of the necessity, the wisdom and the economy to the same end, of an effective navy, in view of the vast extent of our coast and the possibility of attack from the sea upon our great cities, where the concentration of population and property is enormous.

"The country is committed to the increase of the navy by a declaration of our people and the action of their representatives. The very fact that we are capable of manufacturing armor and guns, powder and projectiles, and to construct ships which are the equals of those built anywhere else, is in itself a source of great naval power and our present resources in this respect should not be impaired. We should preserve and maintain these resources and the ability not only to continue the work already so well advanced, but to improve upon it as the science of naval construction, as it is sure to do, develops the new models and methods which at this age of progress so rapidly replace the best of today with the better of tomorrow."

An Attraction to Klondike.

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 27.—H. S. Maxim, superintendent of construction of the Atlantic and Pacific Aerial Navigation company, announces that the company has under construction an airship in which they expect to carry a ton of provisions and passengers to Klondike. The vessel is supported by a cylindrical gas bag and driven by a saphira engine. It is expected to attain 100 miles an hour.

Lieutenant Jarvis, who is to lead the Overland expedition for the relief of the imprisoned whalers, has arrived at Seattle, Wash.

CUBA AND CURRENCY.

These Will Be the Leading Topics in the President's Message.

NEW YORK, Nov. 27.—A dispatch to the Tribune from Washington says: Cuba and the currency will be the leading topics in the president's message. It is understood that the discussion of the Cuban situation will be comprehensive. It has already been explained what the state department has prepared in reply to the Spanish note regarding filibustering. Whether the president will incorporate the substance of this in his message or leave it to go in as part of the regular diplomatic correspondence may be determined later, but the message will define the Cuban policy of the administration affirmatively. Members of congress with whom the president has talked freely on the subject have almost without exception urged that this be done, and Mr. McKinley apparently has agreed with them.

The reason given for this course is apparent. While a sincere hope is entertained that the Sagasta ministry may end the war at an early date, the possibility of its failure cannot be overlooked. In that event it is desirable for the policy of this country to be known. A strong intimation is given that in the failure of an end to the present conditions in Cuba at an early date, no hesitation will be shown in the United States making known its position of ultimate intervention. Humanity and commerce may both be the ground for this action. The belief is that the Cuban problem will be solved without danger of war between Spain and the United States, and will be solved through the good offices of this country, but the expectation is that these good offices will be exerted within a reasonable time after congress meets and after the prospects of the insurgents accepting or rejecting autonomy are known beyond question. If Cuba is actually pacified and industry and trade are resumed that condition is expected to speak for itself. The refusal of a few insurgent leaders to lay down their arms and the continuance of a sort of bandit warfare would not be interpreted by the administration as the failure of autonomy. On the other hand, the continuance of the present conditions would hardly be accepted as evidence that the island is pacified.

Some misunderstanding is said to exist in Spanish official circles regarding the position of the administration when the decree of autonomy is gazetted. The administration would not under any circumstances agree to take autonomy. This would be making itself responsible for the colonial government of Cuba to the Spanish authorities. But the president's good offices are exerted to giving the policy of autonomy a fair trial. The message is expected to make this point clear beyond the possibility of misunderstanding. It is the confident belief that the president's discussion of the Cuban situation will tend to strengthen the feeling that the administration will be able to meet every phase of it in a manner to satisfy the conservative business interests of the country and discourage radical or participate action.

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27.—It is understood that the president in his message will suggest to congress that it would be inadvisable at present to take action which would complicate the situation in Cuba. It is said that he will suggest that the passage of resolutions recognizing the belligerency or independence would be inexpedient while the measures of reform proposed by Spain and to be carried out by General Blanco are being introduced. The release of the Competitor and other American prisoners will be referred to as "settling" and as relieving the United States from the necessity of intervention upon the ground of protection of American life and property.

A Town Destroyed by Dynamite.

LOUISVILLE, Nov. 27.—A special from Anderson, Ind., to the Evening Post says: Chesterfield, Ind., was almost wiped off the map at an early hour this morning by the explosion of eighty quarts of nitro-glycerine, which had been brought overland from Montpelier and placed in an open field, a half mile from town. Marion Mansey and Sam McGuire were working at a gas well near by when the explosion occurred. Mansey was thrown fifty feet, but not fatally injured. McGuire was also thrown 100 feet in the air and badly lacerated, but will recover. James Gold's house, 300 yards distant, was torn to pieces. The explosion tore a hole in the ground down to the water line, and so far as is learned it was spontaneous.

A three-ton engine was torn to fragments and every living animal near it was killed instantly. The little town of Chesterfield is a mass of ruins, every house was moved from its foundation, windows shattered, doors smashed in, every light put out and the plastering shaken from the walls. Several people were shaken out of bed. At Daleville, two miles away, and at Yorktown, five miles distant, the damage was almost as great. Many people were injured and it is a miracle that none were killed outright.

Feed the Starving.

HAVANA, Nov. 27.—Peremptory orders were sent today to the authorities at Mantanzas and Sagua to correct abuses and feed reconcentrados. Some delay is anticipated. From Santa Clara Governor Garcia and the mayor of the city have sent word that the army food there is in a very bad condition. They request fresh rations. These, the government says, will be sent at once. The government expects to distribute the \$100,000 ordered by Blanco.

Garrigues Accepts the Task.

Judge Joseph E. Garrigues, who presided over the Haymarket anarchist trial, has definitely announced his acceptance of the task of trial judge in the retrial of Adolph Leugert for murder of his wife. The hearing will be given next Monday.

Approve the Treaty.

RIO JANEIRO, Nov. 27.—The Chamber of Deputies today approved the Franco-Brazilian arbitration treaty within the terms of which will fall the boundary disputes between France and Brazil, and particularly the settlement of the Amapa question.



ROBBING THE NEST OF THE "TROPIC BIRD."

and play on the waves, returning at about 9 o'clock to relieve the other, which immediately flies away, coming back about the middle of the afternoon. These birds cannot fly from a flat surface, but have to launch themselves at once into the air from an elevation, such as a rock or precipice. So, when caught, they can safely be left on the level sands, as they are wholly unable to fly, though they will hitch themselves along very rapidly with their beaks, and they show savage fight and cry out harshly if disturbed.

We climbed cautiously along the face of the cliffs which towered above our heads a thousand feet and more, and little Alexander, who had resumed his tattered wardrobe, clambered light above us, in pursuit of the young birds. Clinging to the almost perpendicular wall by his toes and fingers he worked his way to places I should have considered absolutely inaccessible, knowing that in those spots the "trophics" (as he called them) would be sure to build. Not only were the rocks precarious to climb, but against their sides were set clumps of the cruel prickly-pear, the spines of which inflict bad wounds, even if the hands and feet of a climber are protected by gloves and boots. How the boy escaped these I do not know, but he evaded all difficulties and at last shouted to us that he had found a nest. We waited in anxiety until at last he appeared, a

Trolley Cars on a Fast Schedule.

A new suburban electric road near Cleveland, O., known as the Cleveland and Lorain electric railroad, has a schedule of time that calls for a speed of thirty-five miles an hour, and recently during some trial trips one car averaged fifty-two miles, and even covered one portion of the road at a fifty-five mile rate. These figures are particularly interesting as an illustration of the requirements met by the modern trolley line, and also as showing how street railways are gradually merging into a line of business that cannot be distinguished from steam railroad service.

A Princess Pedigree.

In the matter of pedigree the eighteen-year-old prince who is the heir to the throne of Japan seems to hold the lead. He is the last male descendant in the order of primogeniture of a dynasty which has reigned 2,600 years, and traces its origin to a female incarnation of the sun.

A Thirteen Million Port.

Chili proposes spending \$13,000,000 in the construction of a port at Valparaiso. The work is designed to find employment for a large number of idle men.

Fools try to convince a woman but wise men persuade her.

great instinct of nature to remain with their young.

In Klondike.

First Miner—Hold, Bill! Would you commit suicide? Bill (momentarily checked)—Why not? I've only mined out \$16,000 this week, and I owe the landlady \$15,000 for last week's board. First Miner (turning his head)—Pardon me, Bill; I didn't know. Pull the trigger.—Judge.

THOUGHTGRAPHS.

Low shoes and high heels are fashionable extremes.

The newer a man's watch the often-er he has to consult it.

The golden eagle, like other good ten-ors, is a rare bird.

Ignorance of the law should excuse a lawyer from practicing it.

Wine is a mocker and the label on the bottle is usually a mockery.

One good turn always leads us to hope for a few more revolutions.

It isn't always modesty that keeps people from telling the naked truth.

It takes a smart accountant to account for the shortage in his accounts.

Many a man never gets on the popular side until he joins the silent majority.

When doctors disagree it helps to swell the population of one of the other two places.

No man is a hopeless fool until he has made a fool of himself twice in the same way.

Some men admit they are self-made, while there are others who blame it on their wives.

It is hard for a man to climb up in this world, but it hurts him much worse to climb down again.

The politicians are always willing to furnish the luncheon for the candidate to build his "barrel" around.

A great many lawyers can attribute their lack of success to the fact that most of their cases contain bottles.