

Two Useful Winter Birds

By Julie Adams Powell

Years ago when Mr. Eugene Schiefel introduced the English starling into Central park, New York city, I do not believe that he thought that it would breed so fast as to spread over a good part of the United States, in so short a time, nor that it would become such a nuisance, that the Audubon societies are thinking of having it put on the list of game birds. This is because this new comer is driving out many of our own more beautiful song birds, such as the blue bird, the flicker, the wren, and whatever bird nests in holes in trees.

I have called this bird useful, in my headline. So he is, because in the summer time he kills thousands of grubs, spiders and insects in order to satisfy the hungry brood of youngsters, that is always clamoring for more and more. If their number could be kept down, and if they would not perch around our dwellings, we would be very glad to welcome them to our orchards during the grub and insect period.

Some sunny morning, you boys will hear a long drawn whistle outside your window, and then a sound very like a chuckle. Open the window carefully, and wrapped up warmly, you can stand there and view the songster, and you will find that between the chuckle and whistle, there are some very sweet notes which you did not hear before. And on the elm tree just outside the house you will see two, four and sometimes six birds which from that distance look as if they were all attired in black suits, which in the sun shine with a metallic purple and green color.

You will find a compactly built bird, between eight and nine inches long, with a strong brown bill and a rather short tail. Instead of being all of an iridescent black, the feathers of the upper parts and sides are tipped with deep yellow, the wings and tail are dark brownish gray, tipped with buff, and the under parts are heavily spotted with white.

The starlings do not hop. They are walkers like the crows. During the winter they can be studied more carefully than in the summer, when there are so many more attractive birds about.

They are great chatters, and often the listener will be rewarded by a series of warbles and notes of joy, which are like the laughter of little children. If this wise old bird sees you looking at him, he will shut up his mouth right in the middle of his prettiest notes, and not open it again until you walk around the corner of the house out of his sight.

A story was told me the other day of a pair of starlings which built their nest in a hole in the side of a house in our city of Stamford, right under the eaves. There must have been a beam protrusion for the roughly put together nest of sticks to be fastened to, but even so, when the birdlings grew large enough to move about, they frequently tumbled out of the nest, with great scurrilous and fluttering of wings and shrill cries of alarm.

Inside the wall of the house was the room of a little boy, and as it hap-

pened, the head of his bed was against the very spot where the feathered youngsters took their naps, and oftentimes in the middle of the night the little boy was rudely awakened by the cries of the babies who tumbled out of their bed. When the little boy learned what the noise was, he watched the parents going in and out of the hole, until one day they all flew away and a piece of tin was placed over the entrance to keep them out.

Last summer during a gale of wind an old apple tree in our orchard was blown directly in two. I found that a starling nest was laid bare, and in the nest were four youngsters almost ready to fly. The nest was securely fastened to the side of the tree which was left standing, fortunately, and so

insectivorous bird, as one will learn by watching the bird industriously searching the barks of trees for larvae and insects.

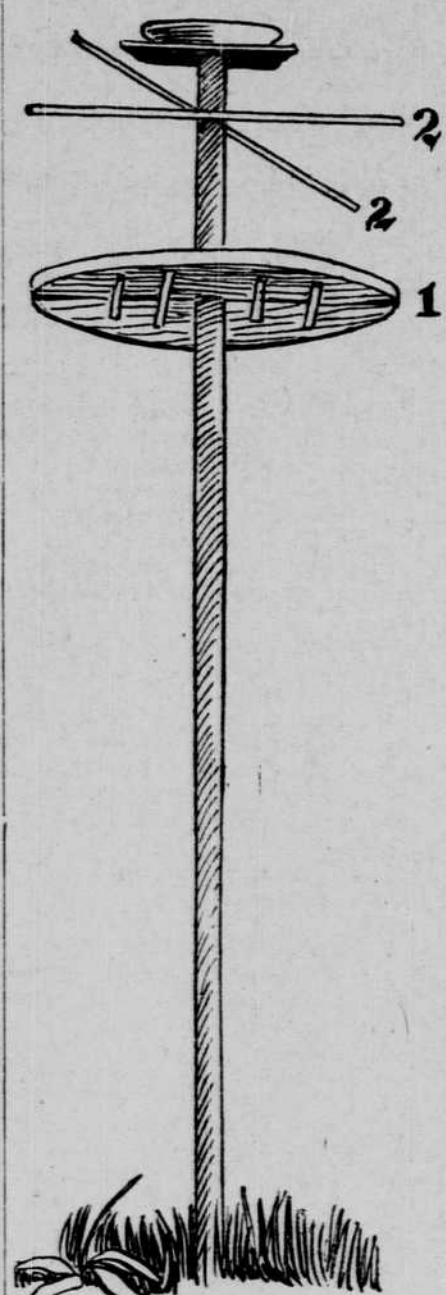
Their bill is very strong and the nuthatch will push a nut into a crevice and hammer away at it until the shell breaks.

One day in November I saw a nuthatch on the roof outside my window. He had something in his mouth and without noticing my near presence, he hunted about for a place to hide his treasure. Under a loose shingle he pushed it, and then I saw that it was a cherry stone. He cocked his head on one side and then on the other, for the place did not seem quite secure enough. He made a dive for a leaf, and poked that in after his cherry

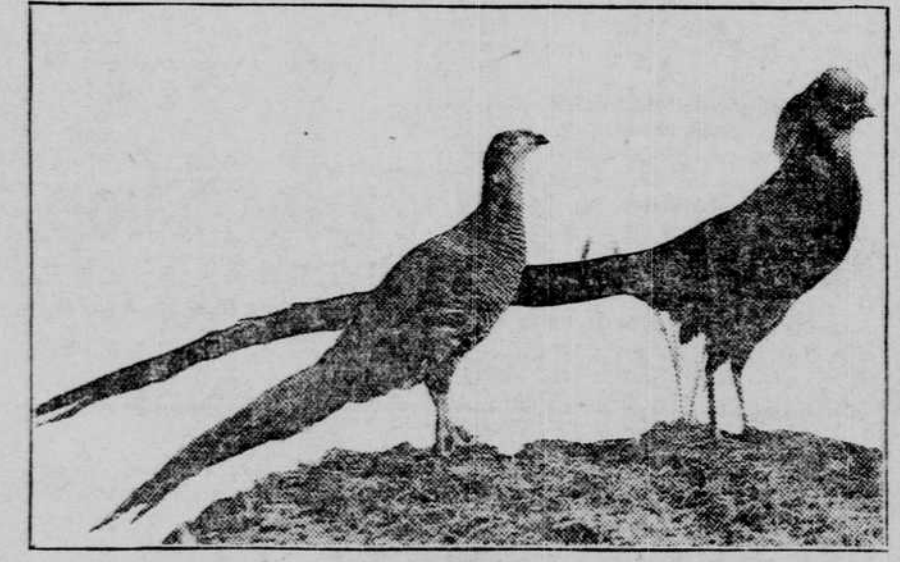
master of the vessel he sailed, evaded or conquered opposition wherever he came in contact with it and returned home with a profit which modern business minds find hard to believe.—New York Sun.

A Poker Devotee. "Dingburn says he reads everything that comes into his hands. "That oughtn't to take him long. "Why not? "It's mostly hearts, clubs, spades and diamonds."

Snakes in United States. There are 19 varieties of rattlesnakes in the United States, one copperhead, and one water-moccasin. The rattlesnake, of course, can always be told by its rattle. The timber rattlesnake is the commonest. It grows sometimes as long as five feet, but is rarely found over two or three feet in length. It haunts the woods in hilly or mountainous regions, as does the copperhead. Both live on rabbits, squirrels, and other animals which they generally catch at night



Bath Tub for Birds on an Eight-Foot Pole. 1-Cat Guard. 2-Cross Pieces for the Birds to Rest on and Dry Their Feathers After Their Bath.



Silver Pheasants—One of the Most Common Species of the Family—The Upper Part of the Body is White Delicately Marked With Black.

AS IN OLD SAILBOAT DAYS American Vessel Will Take Cargo to the West Coast of Africa to Trade. For about one hundred years American sailing vessels bartered and traded on the west coast of Africa. So again, with the Stars and Stripes flying from its masthead, the Adelia T. Carleton, an American sailing vessel, loaded with a cargo of American goods, will sail for the west coast of Africa.

Dickens and His Madmen. M. Anatole France, who has offered his services to the French minister of war, has an amusing reminiscence of Dickens—of whom he is a great admirer—in his "Vie Litteraire," the London Chronicle remarks. One wonders whether it is autobiographical. "A Frenchman who made the journey to London," he writes, "went one day to see the great Charles Dickens. He was admitted, and expressed his admiration as an excuse for, thus trespassing on the precious time of such

a being. "Your fame," he added, "and the universal sympathy you inspire, doubtless expose you to innumerable intrusions. Your door is always besieged. You must be visited, every day, by princes, statesmen, scholars, writers, artists and even madmen. "Yes, madmen, madmen," cried Dickens, carried away by the agitation which, toward the end of his life, often moved him. "Madmen! They alone amuse me." And he pushed his astonished visitor out by the shoulders.

This enterprise is due to the efforts of Arthur Muller, president of the newly organized American Tropical Trading company of New York. This company intends to take American goods on consignment—consisting of tobacco, flour, pork, salt, beef, vegetables, gin, matches, to trade for native products.

In the old times the American flag flying from Yankee ships took the place of lighthouses along this coast so regularly were they to be found. The shrewd Yankee trader, quite often

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pit. I thought that it showed wonderful intelligence.

The nuthatch is a gray and black bird, about six inches in length. The top of his head and the front of his back is a shining black, while the rest of his upper parts are of a bluish gray. There is white on his wings, and the sides of his head and under parts are white. Just under his tail will be noticed a dull rufous color.

ARE OF THE EARTH'S BEST DESERVED TRIBUTE TO THE WOMEN OF WHOM IT IS SAID THEY ARE "AGREEABLE TO LIVE WITH."

"I feel of so little use in these progressive days," said a woman of mature years. "The woman of today is full of stimulating ideas. She is identified with important movements. She makes the most of her talents, but I—I—can do nothing. It seems as if I have so much to take up my time and yet I never do accomplish anything that will ever count in the vast scheme of things."

"You have the rarest talent that the world boasts of and you make the most of it every day," replied the visitor. "You are agreeable to live with."

Agreeable to live with! Unassuming phrase, with what a powerful reach! With domestic squalls so flagrant, divorce rampant, "incompatibility" a household word, the woman who is agreeable to live with is a mighty factor in the press of progress. She brightens the atmosphere about her at a time when there seems much effort expended to make people good, but little to make them happy. Such a woman has the gift of divinity. She glorifies the commonplace. She nourishes the nation.

It is splendid to uplift, to be artistic, to head world movements, but there is little that so becomes a woman as to be agreeable to live with. It is a way in which those who tarry at home may keep step with their more conspicuously progressive sisters.—Mother's Magazine.

Australia's Mallee Hen. The builder of the biggest nest in the world is the Australian mallee hen, a bird considerably smaller than a domestic turkey. The nest is used year after year, and as many as twenty or thirty pairs of birds use the same nest at one time. It is not uncommon to find a hundred eggs in a nest, and these are very good for cooking purposes. A large mound of earth is scratched together by the birds, the center being filled with leaves, and on these the eggs are laid. They are then covered with more leaves and earth, and the cares of the parent bird are ended. They do not sit on the eggs at all, as the spontaneous combustion of the rotting leaves generates the required heat for incubation, says the Strand. The chickens are able to run about and find food for themselves from the time they are hatched. The small hen is a very shy bird, and is seldom seen near any habitation.

Peerless Geneva. The most glowing tribute to Geneva is Mr. Frederic Harrison's. "I hold Zurich, Basle and Geneva to be the model cities of our age—the fine type of what cities will one day be in a regenerated age—the true type of civic organization, having sites of rare beauty and convenient, spacious streets and avenues, noble public walks and gardens, perhaps everything short of grand antique buildings." Geneva in particular is "the finest type of a rational city that Europe possesses. . . . a true city where, as in Athens, Florence, Venice, Antwerp or Ghent, or old, men can live a wholesome civic life, not in huge, amorphous caravansaries such as London, Paris or Berlin—not in stigmatized barracks such as Manchester, or Lyons, or Glasgow—but in a beautiful, well-ordered, free, organic city."

This is Funny. An English paper says that the hat of a certain short-sighted master at Eton blew off one day, and as he started in pursuit of it a black hen dashed out of the gateway. The schoolmaster saw the hen and thought it was his hat, and so all Eton was electrified by the spectacle of a hatless and breathless learned man chasing a black hen from one end of the street to the other.

White Fruit Cake. To make an especially delicious cake of the lasting variety cream together one cupful of butter and two cupfuls of sugar and add one cupful of milk. Sift three cupfuls of flour and one teaspoonful of baking powder three times and add to the mixture and stir well. Slice very thin one pound of citron, blanch one pound of almonds and chop fine and grate one medium-sized fresh coconut and add to the mixture with one wineglassful of white wine, stirring enough to mix only. Last fold in the beaten whites of eight eggs. Bake in two loaves and cook in a moderate oven.

Dishwashing Wisdom. While spending the day with a friend on a farm last summer, I noticed a clever little arrangement of hers in washing dishes. The water was piping hot, as it should be, and in the middle of the dishpan she set a small deep pitcher full of cold water for the silver. This obviated the need of plunging her hand down to the bottom of the dishpan, as I have always done, and also kept the silver from collecting grease.—McCall's Magazine.

Apple Slump. Pare and slice your apples, sweeten to taste, add cinnamon and a little salt. Prepare a crust as follows: Two cupfuls flour, two level teaspoonfuls baking powder, one teaspoonful salt, sifted together. Mix thoroughly with this two tablespoonfuls shortening, wet with milk or water until a soft dough. Place over apples. Make three or four cuts in top, to allow steam to escape, and bake. Serve with molasses sauce or with sugar and cream.

Stuffed Celery. Thoroughly clean perfect stalks of celery and cover with ice until crisp. Mix to a cream one-quarter pound of Roquefort cheese, one-half pound of cream cheese, one tablespoonful of butter, one teaspoonful of Worcester-shire dressing, one-eighth teaspoonful of paprika and one teaspoonful of finely chopped olives. Stuff celery with this mixture and serve ice cold on lettuce leaves. After the celery is stuffed cut it into two-inch lengths.

Sausages and Tomato. Take three small pork sausages and dip in cold water for a few minutes. Now slip off the skin and form the meat into flat cakes. Fry in a small pan until nicely browned. Pour off the surplus fat and add one-half cupful of left-over tomatoes, a little chopped peppers and, if mixture is too thin, a little rolled cracker meal may be added. As soon as hot serve on a heated plate and press small toast points around edge.

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Nullu Fruits. Take one pound of mixed fresh fruits; cut into dice; soak for 15 minutes in sherry; add them to a quart of lemon ice; mix well and freeze.

TO GET BEST OUT OF COFFEE

Method of Preparation Has Much to Do With Success in This Important Matter.

There are two points necessary in getting the best out of coffee. One is, of course, to get all that is good. The other is not to get what is bad. The best preparation of coffee extracts the aromatic oils and eliminates coffee-tannin to practically nothing.

In the first place the housewife must see to it that her coffee is finely ground. But, having had it practically pulverized, she must be careful that it is quickly used or confined in air-proof, moisture-proof jars, otherwise the oil will escape into the air and will absorb moisture.

In the actual preparation of the beverage, however, the important thing is to brew the coffee. "Brewed" coffee is not "cooked" in the process of brewing the oils are extracted from the fibrous tissue, whereas when coffee is boiled or "cooked" the fiber is stewed in and the flavor and purity of the liquid is damaged. The water must be boiled; the coffee must not. Water at the boiling point should be poured on the coffee, but it should not stand too long, and it should not get chilled.

The elimination of the coffee-tannin is best brought about in the filtration or drip method of preparing coffee. When brewed in this way the coffee contains only .29 of a grain of coffee-tannin per cup, as against 2.90 grains by five minutes steeping in the percolator method.

HOUSEHOLD QUESTIONS

To clean a polished table that has been marred by having had a hot dish placed upon it rub it with camphorated oil.

To clean tinware dampen a cloth, dip it in common soda and rub the ware briskly, after which wipe dry.

To overcome the annoyance of the hands perspiring when doing fine sewing bathe them with strong alum water.

To lengthen the life of a comb wash it in soapy water before using it, and when it is dry rub it with a little olive oil.

To restore their natural color to ivory knife handles that turn yellow rub them with turpentine.

To preserve clothespins and clotheslines and keep them flexible and durable boil them a few minutes and then dry them quickly. This should be done twice a month.

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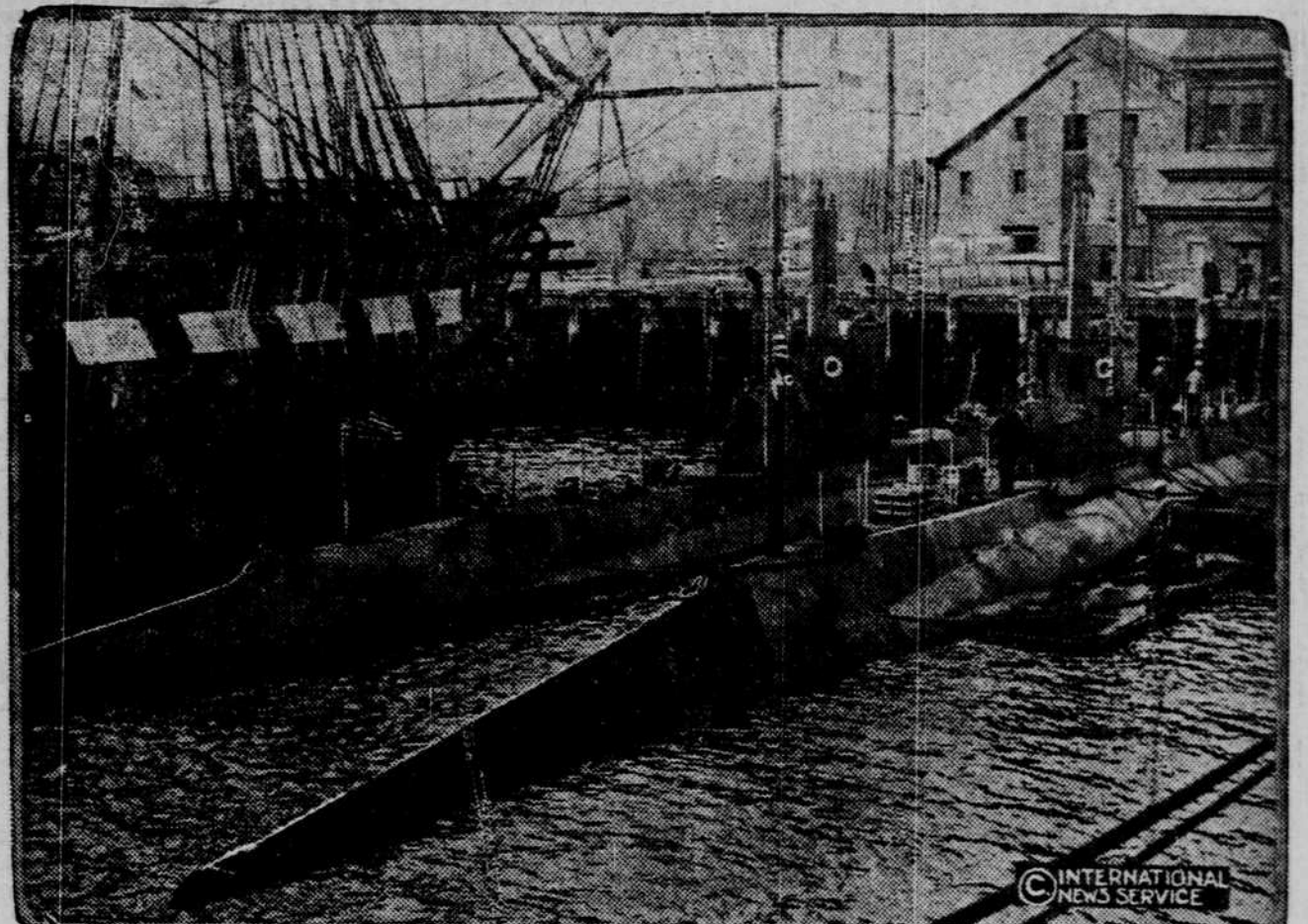
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OLD AND THE NEW IN AMERICAN NAVY



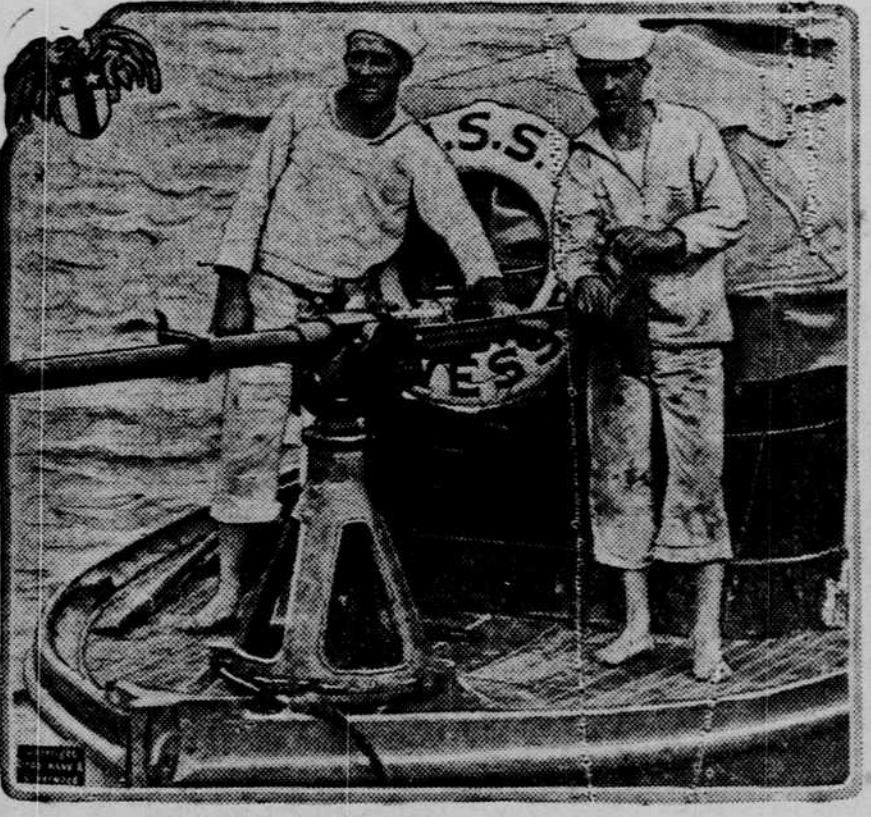
America's first battleship, the Constitution, and the navy's latest acquisitions, the submarines K-5 and K-6, lying side by side in the Charlestown navy yard.

KHAKI-CLAD TURKS MARCHING AGAINST RUSSIANS



Regiment of Turkish regular infantry, drilled by the Germans and wearing their new khaki uniforms, marching across the desert to meet the Russian troops on the Caucasus border.

TARGET FOR TURKS' "FRIENDLY" SHOT



This is the launch of the U. S. S. Tennessee at which a Turkish fort in the harbor of Smyrna fired a shot, which afterward was declared to be only a "friendly" warning that the harbor was mined and closed to alien vessels.

TERROR OF NAVIGATORS



This big steel ball is one of the deadly mines that are feared by all navigators. It was washed ashore at Sizewell, Suffolk, and its explosives were removed by a torpedo instructor. Many of these mines have been beached along the coast of England.

FRENCH SOCIETY WOMEN AS NURSES



Parisian women, well known in society, attending wounded soldiers at the Gare du Nord as they arrive from the battlefields.

WARNS KING OF ENGLAND

Astrologist Tells George to Beware of Evil Days in March of Next Year.

Boston.—That King George of England must beware of evil days next March is the prediction of Catharina H. Thompson, astrologist. Miss Thompson bases her prediction on the fact that Jupiter enters Pisces, a watery, unstable sign, next March, and afflicts the king's radical sun, and sickness and trouble should increase rather than diminish. While Jupiter was passing through Aquarius this year, she says, trouble for the king was allayed. Something extraordinary will happen, she predicts, such as the siege of London, the fall of Westminster abbey, St. Paul's cathedral or Buckingham palace.

A Thorough Soaking.

"Some of those soldiers fighting along the Aisne must lead a dog's life. "I should think that lying in a trench half full of water day after day would be more like a frog's life."

Ruse of a French Captain.

A French captain caused a number of his horses to be loaded with hay effigies and then all bunched together and covered with hay to resemble a giant haystack. As the monster emerged from the haze the Germans were bewildered, but charged, which caused the horses to separate. While the Germans were slating at the hay effigies on the horses the real French troops got a position in the rear and defeated them. The captain was highly praised for his successful ruse.

"WHITE GENERAL" DOOMS FOE

Russian Soldiers Have Legend of Mounted Man Whose Averted Looks Mean Death.

London.—The Petrograd correspondent of the Daily Mail, in announcing that Petrograd has been made a dry city for the duration of the war and that no wine, beer, or spirits will be allowed to be sold anywhere, gives a legend permeating the Russian army of a "White General," who rides through the ranks on a white horse.

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"If he looks a man full in the face" the legend runs, "that man bears a charmed life. Those whom he passes with eyes averted are marked for death. "During the last two weeks the 'White General' has not been seen in the Russian ranks. The soldiers say he is busy in the German and Austrian armies, walking with his eyes to the ground."

The girl question: "Is he married?"