

A FEATHERED GIANT.

MEREDITH NUGENT IN NEW YORK LEDGER.

While in Paris a few years ago I was surprised to see in one of the museums there an egg of such gigantic proportions that I could hardly believe it to be a real egg until the descriptive card, lying at its base, cured me of my skepticism. "That," I exclaimed to my friend, "must be the egg of the roc." For so large was it that I could not think of it as belonging to any bird other than that of the fabled giant in the tales of the "Arabian Nights." There was no fable about this egg, however; its history was well known, and there it lay before us, under the protection of a strong glass case, one of the prized treasures of the most renowned museum of the world. "But what an enormous egg!" "Look at the size of it!" my friend kept on remarking. "Why, it is a very mammoth among eggs!" Perhaps some of my readers may think we were unduly elated over our find, but let me tell them that this great egg measured three feet—a yard in circumference! Realize if you can for a moment an egg so large that it measures a yard around. Not less startling was the information that it held more than two gallons! Eight quarts of egg! Is it any wonder we were surprised?

The contents of a common hen's egg fill about one-third of an ordinary teacup; compare this to an egg the contents of which are something more than eight quarts; why it would require a large-sized wash bowl to break such an egg in and not lose any of it. In capacity it equaled one hundred and fifty hens' eggs! or seventeen of those of the cassowary—a bird almost as large as an ostrich—or six eggs of the great ostrich itself! If, again, we compare it with the egg of our jeweled humming bird, for instance, it would take two thousand of these tiny eggs to equal in bulk the giant I saw in Paris. With such an egg one could give a breakfast on Easter morn to seventy-five persons and to each serve enough of the feast equalling two hens' eggs! Why, a native of Madagascar—the country in which these eggs were discovered—could have entertained a whole band of savages after such a find, nor were such finds rare, indeed; to the contrary, they were apparently quite plentiful.

It was not, however, the contents alone of those eggs which caused the

bulk that they named it Aepionis Maximus, which means "the bird as big as a mountain."

As large as these birds undoubtedly were, they were far from attaining the gigantic proportions of a bird which used to inhabit New Zealand not so very long ago, and which still exists there today, if any reliance is to be placed upon statements made by the natives. This bird was known as the Moa, and had the distinction of being the largest bird that ever existed. It was taller than the tallest elephant, and proudly carried its head as high as the towering giraffe. It measured 18 feet in height and was possessed of herculean strength. Its thigh bones were larger than those of a horse, and none of the beasts of the field could successfully cope with it. By the side of this giant the ostrich is a small bird. Like so many of the great monsters, however, that inhabited the earth in ages past, the moas were sluggish and stupid animals, and their great bulk availed them nothing against the ceaseless warfare made upon them by the small, puny, but extremely active savages. They were eagerly hunted by the Maori, in spite of the fact that the latter were exceedingly afraid of them. The natives knew only too well from the tragic ending of many of their tribe that a kick from one of these birds meant instant death to the most powerful of the braves. Before the hunt began, and in the light of the early dawn, the savages were wont to engage in their weird incantation, imploring the spirits—to whom they attributed the power of sending good or evil—to assist them in their perilous enterprises. They supplicated the morning mists rising from between the hills to bring them success. They invoked the god of silence to keep free from fright and apprehension the giant birds they wished to capture, and concluded their barbaric rites, which, for the greater part, consisted of the most unearthly shrieking, with a wild dance, indicative of approaching triumph. The real work of the day began by forming the natives into two bands, one body of men to steal cautiously along until they reached the scrub, which lined the well worn moa path, and there carefully conceal themselves, the others to make their way as best they could to the edge of a neighboring lake, from



HUNTING THE MOA.

natives to prize them so highly, but the shell itself, which was very thick, furnished them with strong vessels useful for a number of domestic purposes. They served admirably for carrying water; in fact, the first knowledge of these eggs gained by the civilized world was when some natives of Madagascar came to Mauritius to buy rum, and brought with them these huge empty shells to hold the liquor. It fortunately happened that some French officers passing by spied these strange vessels, and gladly gave the owners of them all the rum they wished and means to carry it, in exchange for their egg shell curios. The arrival of these eggs in Paris created a genuine sensation. Many people were now ready to believe that the egg of the roc had actually been found, and that the fabled bird was a fable no longer. They cited the fact that the famous Venetian traveler, Marco Polo, had located the roc upon this very island of Madagascar and insisted upon it that further investigation would lead to the finding of eggs equalling in size the imaginative ones they had read of in the flowery days of their youth. It certainly was a curious coincidence that such enormous eggs should have been found in the identical country where the giant bird of the Arabian Tales was supposed to have had its home.

After taking a long look at this museum specimen, we began to wonder what could have been the size of the bird that laid it, this proved too much for our imagination, and we eagerly sought refuge in the opinions as expressed by the French naturalists, who, at the time of the first discovery, had such an exalted idea as to the creature's

where they were to start the birds. All these movements had to be made without so much as the cracking of a twig, for the slightest noise before the proper time arrived would so alarm the game as to make all hopes of success futile, for that hunt, at least. The natives whose duty it was to drive the birds, after having spread themselves over quite a large extent of territory, would, at a prearranged signal, set up a most frightful shouting. So great was the din they made that the terrified moas would run as fast as they could straight into the ambush specially prepared for them. Notice of their approach was given to the men in hiding by the noise which the unwieldy birds made crashing through the bushes; nearer and nearer they came with the force of a whirlwind, until suddenly, amid a cloud of dust and accompanied with deafening roar, a great feathered giant loomed high up in the air, and was instantly speared by the agile but half-frightened native. As the terrorized bird madly dashed by this ambushed band it was attacked with all the fury the savages could muster, so that when the end of the gauntlet was reached the giant was bleeding from a score of wounds. Now the savages ran in hot pursuit of their prey, for the battle was not over by any means, but the tell tale blood tracks sufficed to inform them that the day would eventually be theirs. It became simply a question of keeping up the chase until they closed with the exhausted bird, when, amid the triumphant shouts of a combined attack, the giant was finally dispatched by his tiny adversaries.

Great was the joy on the monster's

death, and thanksgiving in rude splendor was offered up to the Great Spirit, who had thus enabled them to conquer. What imagination can picture the indescribable weird scenes as the dusky and tattooed savages gathered about the lurid light of their midnight fires to feast on the flesh of the moa, or to partake of the giant eggs?—New York Ledger.

MACHINES FOR BREATHING.

But few sightseers at the national capital find the patent office the most interesting point to visit, yet there is probably no public building in Washington about which have centered so many high hopes, so much ambition, keen research and hard study. The patent office, indeed, is a sort of Mecca for the inventive genius of the United States.

At the time this is written 562,458 patents are here recorded, and an examination of the models of them, preserved in the cases, would occupy the student for at least a year. Among the oddest of recent patented devices are two "breathing machines," one by a man in Buffalo, and the other by a Brooklyn physician.

A machine for breathing may at first thought appear to be superfluous, and even ridiculous, yet both of these contrivances are of benign intent. They are designed to preserve life, or to resuscitate suspended animation, as in cases of drowning, choking, or a sudden failure of the heart's action.

Physicians, as is well known, often attempt to produce artificial respiration by extending the unfortunate person on the ground or on the floor, and alternately raising or lowering the arms. At best this method is unpromising, and it is to render such artificial respiration more effectual that the two inventions above-mentioned have been sought.

The Brooklyn doctor's device consists of an air-tight chamber, or box, in which the sufferer from suspended respiration can be placed, all save his nostrils and mouth, which are open to the external air. By means of an air-pump, connected with the chamber and worked rapidly by a rotary shaft and crank, the air is by turns exhausted and admitted, thus causing, by pneumatic pressure, the lungs to be alternately dilated with air and compressed at the ordinary intervals of breathing.

The Buffalo inventor seeks to accomplish the same ends by means of a bellows and tube accurately applied over the nostrils and mouth of the person. Alternate inspiration and exhalation of air in the lungs are thus brought about. The air-tube before entering the nostrils passes through a small heating apparatus. This raises the air to the temperature which it would reach naturally in the air-passages of a healthy person.

Power of the Press.

Wendell Phillips once, when he was interrupted by an unfriendly audience, stooped down and began talking in a low voice to the men at the reporters' table. Some of the auditors became curious called "Louder!" whereupon Phillips straightened himself up and exclaimed: "Go right on, gentlemen, with your noise. Through these pencils," pointing to the reporters, "I speak to 40,000,000 people."

His Failure.

Tourist (in Oklahoma)—Did young Mr. Eastman, who came out here about a year ago to grow up with the country, ever attain his ambition? Alkali Ike—Wal, no; we planted him all right but he never sprouted.

Low Shockin.

Cholly—Yaas, old chap, death actually stared me in the face. Aigy—How verwy wude!

THE TENDER PASSION.

He—I love you better than my life. She—Considering the life you lead, I cannot say that I am surprised.—Indianapolis Journal.

Mr. Spratts—If there are microbes in kisses, what disease do they produce? Miss Killuff—Palpitation of the heart.—Philadelphia Press.

Belle—Why did you reject him last evening when he was willing to wait till to-day for his answer? Blanche—Because I saw he meant to stay until he got it.—Spare Moments.

She—Did you have any trouble in getting papa to listen to you? He—Not a bit. I began by telling him I knew of a plan whereby he could save money.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

"Cruel and unnatural!" moaned Tricky. "Her own father has broken our engagement." "Forbidden your marriage?" "No, but didn't you see by the papers that he had failed?"—Detroit Free Press.

Madge—I think Jack is going to propose to me soon, mamma. Her Mother—Why do you say that? Madge—He took me out to look at some "randem wheels last evening.—Philadelphia North American.

Amelia—Swear not by the moon, the inconstant moon. Augustus—Then what shall I swear by? Amelia—Swear by that which you hold invaluable; something that you cannot live without. Augustus—Then Amelia, I love you! I swear it by my bicycle.—Tid Bits.

He—They say that wedding rings are going out of fashion. She—Oh, I don't care. If you wish to dispense with the ring, dear, it will make no difference to me. But why didn't you give me some warning of what you were about to say? This is so sudden. Then he thought of home and mother, but it was too late.—Cleveland Leader

HOUSE IS ACCURSED.

THE BELL MANSION IN SAN FRANCISCO.

IT IS INTERWIND WITH MANY OF THE SLOPE'S TRAGEDIES.

It Was to Its Portals That Senator Sharon First Brought Sarah A. Hill—The Killings of Millionaire Bell and Judge Terry Recalled.

THE House of Mystery is opened at last. The old Bell mansion on the west-side of Octavia street, between Sutter and Bush, San Francisco, is about to give up its secrets. For a quarter of a century this old house or its tenants have been mixed up in almost every sensation that has stirred the Pacific coast. It has always been the House of Mystery.

Just now it is ruled by an old negro woman, who sometimes exercises tyrannical power over the widow of the man who owned it and his children. This woman was once a slave, the story goes. She is now on her death bed, and possibly that fact gives courage to the eldest son of the dead man to bring suit against his mother that the darkness of that household may be dissipated and the old hag forced to loosen her grip upon the devoted family and its fortune. Everybody in the west knows this negro woman, who has trailed through the courts like a black shadow in case after case involving the richest families on the Pacific coast. Mammy Pleasant is the name they all know her by. How she came to California is lost in the mazes of the tangled stories that are told of early days on the coast. It is enough to date her back to the time when Senator William Sharon was in the flush of his fortune, squandering millions in his evil pleasures. It was boom time on the coast. The Comstocks had yielded up their half a billion dollars' worth of bullion, and it was his share of this that enabled old Sharon, the most vicious probably of a circle of rich men, the like of which had not existed since the ancient regime, to defy every law and conventionality. James G. Fair was another of this ilk. Thomas Bell, who owned the House of Mystery, was another.

Sharon had started Mammy Pleasant as the housekeeper of a magnificent bachelors' boarding house. The men who frequented this place could pay fortunes for discretion, and though Mammy Pleasant has been twenty times upon the witness stand only in a single case has she betrayed what went on in this house. Had she gone in for blackmailing the old woman could have drained the richest pockets in California, but there was a strain of loyalty in her mixed blood that held her true. She could afford it. It was in this house that the saddest and most dramatic romance of the west began. Senator Sharon brought to the house a beautiful, delicate, refined young southern woman, who was then known as Sarah Althea Hill. Long afterward this girl claimed Sharon as her husband produced the contract of marriage that the California courts decided was written by him. It was in this house according to the testimony, that the contract was drawn up, and Mammy Pleasant was a witness to it.

There was consternation when Sarah Althea Hill proclaimed herself William Sharon's wife and sued him in the courts for divorce. He was a millionaire twenty times over. She had nothing with which to oppose this fortune until Mammy Pleasant threw all her wicked savings into the scale against the millionaire. That trial stands out

even among the thousands of strange and sensational cases that the California courts have had to deal with. More than once during its bitter progress were the hands of the attorneys—the leading practitioners at the bar—swung around with pistols. The air was murky with threat and bribery. Before it was done lawyers whose standing at the bar had never been questioned were driven from the courts. More than one witness found himself in the penitentiary for perjury, and many others who ought to have gone there escaped. The lawyers ceased to be mere hired fighters and the enemies among them engendered in this case endure until this day. There is a well authenticated story of a blank check which passed from hand to hand and finally came to the judge who tried the case. He could have filled it out for a million and he was a poor man. He spurred the bribe and decided the case against the millionaire. This judge was young able brilliant and ambitious. The enemy of Sharon has followed him ever since. All California applauded him, but his public career stopped right there. So the Bell mansion came into California politics. There is much



SARAH A. HILL.

more of this Sharon story, and it has to do with the palace on Octavia street. Among the woman's lawyers was ex-Supreme Judge David S. Terry, a man of strength and heart and brains; a southerner and a fighter, a duellist who had killed a United States senator on the field of honor; a violent man and a brave one. He married the plaintiff, and after that the man who spoke a word against her fame had to reckon, not with the discarded companion of a tired, rich man, but with David S. Terry. Sharon claimed a residence in Nevada, where he had not lived for years, and got the case into the United States courts, and there, before it was done, Supreme Justice of the United States Court Stephen J. Field decided flatly against the judgment of the California court and proclaimed the woman a free wife.

All the bitterness that had come out in the state trial reappeared in the national court. Terry, fierce and desperate, charged the highest officer in the land with being the bribed and perjured servant of a millionaire. There were scenes approaching a riot in this ordinarily the most sedate court in the land. Once Terry, bowie knife in hand, was overpowered by officers as he sought to save his wife from the consequences of one of her outbursts. For this, husband and wife, he an ex-Supreme Justice of California, were sent to prison. They served their terms. Some time after they were released they met Judge Field at a railroad eating station. Judge Terry slapped the face of the Supreme Justice of the United States. His hand had hardly touched Field's face when a shot rang out and Terry fell dying at his wife's feet. David Nagle, desperado and gun fighter, imported from the frontier for the purpose, secretly commissioned Deputy United States Marshal, was there as Field's body guard. His was the bullet that killed Judge Terry and the United States court took Nagle away from the state courts that would

have prosecuted him as a murderer and justified his deed.

For a while the Sharon-Terry-Field ravelling must be dropped, for it leads far from the Bell house, and incidents more immediate to it press for attention, but the thread comes back to the storied mansion before it ends in the most pathetic incident of all. One morning in October, 1892, Thomas Bell was found dying at the foot of the great staircase. Somehow he had fallen over the baluster rail at the head of the stairs. He died without telling how it happened. It seemed impossible that it should have been an accident, yet Bell was reputed to be worth twelve millions, and nobody could understand why he might have thrown himself over the railing to the marble floor. There were dark whispers of a still more terrible explanation, but nobody knew and nobody dared voice an accusation.

Mammy Pleasant had long been Bell's housekeeper. Though he had a wife and grown children they never seemed to have a voice in the government of the home. It was Mammy Pleasant, shrewd, spotlessly aproned, suspicious and watchful, who guarded the great glass doors. No visitor ever passed that portal without first coming under her inspection. Her word was law. Her ostensible master or mistress might be in plain sight at a window, but this impetuous old dame would tell the visitor nobody was at home. If the visitor was a stranger and asked for any member of the family he had first to tell Mammy Pleasant his business there before his card even went in. But if there was anything to hide nobody knew it. To this day nobody has told why this city mansion was guarded like a beleaguered castle. Mammy Pleasant will never tell. She is more than 80 years old now, and reported on her death bed, but she still holds the reins over that household. Four years had passed since the mysterious death of the millionaire, Thomas Bell. Much had happened in the interim, but this story cannot be told in natural sequence.

Four years after old Thomas Bell so strangely fell to his death, his oldest son, Fred Bell, went over the same baluster rail on the third story and fell to the hall below, where his father was killed. Fred Bell did not die, but broken limbs and bruised joints kept him a cripple for eight months. He finally recovered, but he never explained the accident.

There was a story of a midnight hunt for burglars, during which the young man stumbled over the railing. But the Bells never told any details. The fall is as much a mystery as the other one four years before, though Fred Bell is not naturally a close-mouthed young fellow. Nobody knew that there was strife in the big house until the other day, when Fred Bell filed a petition in the Superior Court praying for the removal of his mother as the guardian of the persons and estates of her children. He asked to be appointed in her stead, and charged his mother with "drunkenness and infidelity." He had much to say about

the domination of the old negro in the household. But to go back to the case of Sarah Althea Hill Terry. When her husband was shot dead, she returned to their home in Fresno, and lived alone in a pretty cottage her husband had furnished for her. Judge Terry was a man of culture and taste, and had wealth enough to give his wife almost anything she wished. But the widow began to do eccentric things, and one day she was missed from Fresno. They broke into the cottage and found a wreck. Mrs. Terry had been mad there alone for nobody knew how long. Her handsome dresses, laces and ribbons were twisted around the chandeliers, pictures were torn down and bric-a-brac and household silver hung aimlessly in grotesque places. The walls were covered with crazy writings, zigzags, spirals. The woman had disappeared. She turned up in San Francisco and wandered in the streets with a bunch of wire in her hand, through which she thought she was telephoning to her dead husband. A good many people began to get worried. Mrs. Terry had wrongs enough. Heaven knows. Suppose she should start in to square them, as crazy folks sometimes do, with pistol or knife. The police were asked to restrain her, but she had disappeared. The press took up the search. But the demented woman had vanished off the face of the earth apparently.

Two weeks passed and then a clever young reporter called at the Bell house. At first Mammy Pleasant denied all knowledge of Mrs. Terry's whereabouts, but at last she confessed. For fourteen days she had watched over the poor raving maniac. Somehow she found the Bell house, and Mammy Pleasant took her in and kept her from the law, which sought to put her in an insane asylum.

There is plenty to be said to Mammy Pleasant's discredit, but her care for this wrecked woman stands out white and clear. Mammy was true to her from first to last, and she nursed her in the Bell house as tenderly as a mother would her child, and to this day, when the once beautiful, accomplished woman is a hopeless lunatic in one of the state insane asylums, forgotten by everybody else, Mammy Pleasant still keeps track of her.

A young law partner of Judge Terry was Porter Ashe, the turfman, himself a figure in a sensational marriage and a more sensational divorce. When the widow went crazy Porter Ashe was made the guardian of her estate. Mammy Pleasant was his friend and he knew the inside of the Bell house.

After a time "Tom" Williams, a young millionaire, who had been a close friend of Judge Terry's, charged that the estate had been wasted. An investigation followed, and little enough of the estate was found. Nothing wrong could be discovered in Ashe's accounts, but he withdrew from the administration and Williams became Mrs. Terry's guardian. Ashe and Williams have been fierce enemies ever since. They were both race horse men, and in a sense rivals, and the bitterness between them has often led San Francisco to expect a tragic ending to their misery. There are other stories connected with the old place, tales of extraordinary orgies that made the big house infamous twenty years ago. Mammy Pleasant knows them all, but Mammy Pleasant does not tell.

Daniel D. Noble, who was at one time the leader of the most notable and at the same time most dangerous band of forgers and bank burglars in the world, was arrested last week in New York. Thousands upon thousands of spurious \$5 notes were made by Noble and his gang and they cut a wide swath through Germany, Belgium and Switzerland in 1880. In 1866 he was the leading spirit in the Lord bond robbery, which netted him, "Frank" Knapp, James Griffin and "Little" Pettigill almost \$1,700,000. He was im-

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The King of Forgers.

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prosecuted in the robbery of Leonard Jerome in 1867. Mr. Jerome's loss was well nigh \$100,000. Noble served sixteen years in Milbank prison and was serving a term of five years in Auburn prison when he escaped. He will probably have to finish that sentence now.

Murderer Caught in a Lumber Camp.

Scranton police were notified the other day of the capture of George Van Horn, who murdered Mrs. Josephine Westcott in Scranton last August, at a lumbering camp in Illinois, known as Wadena. Van Horn had boarded with Mrs. Westcott and was in love with her but she repulsed him and finally ordered him away. He secured entrance to the cellar by an outside door, and when she came down to get edibles for supper sprang upon her and cut her throat with a razor.

Explosion of a Powder House.

The drying house of the St. Clair powder mill at Wetherell Junction caught fire and blew up a few days ago. The fire started outside the building. No one was injured. The origin of the fire is unknown.