

## Their Chauffeur

By F. A. MITCHEL

When the pan European war broke out two American girls were touring in Germany in a motorcar. They were at Nuremberg at the time and made a bee line for Paris. They had not gone fifty miles from the old town before they were halted by a troop of Uhlans, and their car was impressed into the service of the government.

They were standing in the road, not knowing what to do, when a man came riding on horseback. Seeing two girls looking as forlorn as a couple of chickens in a shower, he drew rein and asked them in German if there was anything he could do for them. They spoke the language tolerably well and told him what had happened. He looked about him for a place where they might be temporarily housed and said:

"The schloss is the nearest abode. I think you had better go there. The count has joined his command, but his mother, the countess, will be at home and I am sure will welcome luckless strangers."

The girls thanked the speaker and resolved to take his advice. Turning in at the gateway of the grounds, they ascended to the entrance of the schloss. No one being there, they passed through it and entered a court. An automobile was the only movable article in sight, and as they approached it a living object crawled from under it. He was clad in overalls and begrimed. He rose and, facing the girls, looked at them inquiringly.

They told their story and said they wished to go to France. He told them that he was quite sure the countess would welcome them. He was endeavoring to get the automobile in order that it might take him to Wurttemberg. He would take them there, and from Wurttemberg they might find conveyance to Paris. This suited them exactly. The man said that he was not fit to accompany them, but pointed to a door at which they might gain admittance to the schloss. They went to the door, rang a bell, and a maid appeared.

"We were told," said one of them, "by the chauffeur that if we applied at this door we might see the countess. Please tell her that two American girls whose car has been taken by the government would be grateful for shelter till they can go forward on their journey."

The maid asked them to enter and, leaving them in a reception room, went away. Presently she returned and led them to a room where a white headed old lady received them and invited them to be her guests as long as they found it convenient.

They told her that they had seen in the court a man working on an automobile who was intending to go to Wurttemberg and had offered to take them with him. At this moment a voice called from above. "Mother!" and the old lady excused herself and left the room. Presently she returned and said that the auto would go to Wurttemberg the next morning and she did not doubt that from there they would be able to make their way to Paris. They were shown to a room by the maid and when they had made a toilet returned to the drawing room.

"I have heard," said one of the girls, "that you have parted with your son, who has gone to join the army. It must be hard to send him away under such circumstances."

"Indeed it is," replied the countess.

The girls supped with the countess and ate a hearty meal, for they were hungry. In the early evening they chatted with their hostess, but were tired and went early to their rooms, where they slept as soundly as if they had not been dispossessed of their only means of conveyance.

The morning was bright, but hot. They breakfasted with the countess, and after breakfast she disappeared

for an hour, when the maid announced that the auto was ready and led them to a porte-cochere where it stood. The countess was there with a man in uniform. He turned as they approached, and they recognized him whom they had mistaken for a chauffeur.

"I regret," he said, "that I have not been able to show you any attention. My chauffeur was summoned two days ago to join his regiment, leaving me with an auto needing repairs and no one but myself to repair it. We who depend upon servants do not realize how much we are indebted to them till they are snatched away from us."

The girls looked at each other and smiled. They had mistaken a count for a chauffeur, and when they had referred to him as such to his mother he had doubtless followed them into the house by another entrance and on hearing their words had called her out and asked her to leave them in their mistake.

The ride to Wurttemberg proved an enjoyable one, and before it was finished they were all laughing at the mistake that had been made. They were in no danger of losing the car since an officer of the Bavarian army was at the wheel. On arriving at their destination he secured them a safe conduct to Paris and saw to it that they were given passage on the last train that went there.

They reached Paris in safety and succeeded in getting to England, crossing the channel with darkened ports. But they were a long time finding passage to America. When they got home they boasted that they had been carried to the French border by a chauffeur who was a count and a major in the German army.

### Why Thunder Follows Lightning.

When electricity is confined between two clouds and becomes cramped for room it "flashes" and we hear the "thunder." The heat generated by the electricity really causes violent convulsions of the air, the noise of which is thunder. As light waves move more rapidly than sound waves, we see the "flash" before we hear the reverberation. That also applies to gunfire.

## Science Notes

BY WILLIAM G. HAYNES.

### CROSSING THE LINE

It is to be expected that the people shut up in the little republic that is bounded by the iron walls of an ocean liner should seek many ways of diverting themselves. Perhaps "republic" is not altogether a happy word to use in that connection, because no czar of the Russias ever had such autocratic power over his subjects as the captain of a great liner has over the travelers on his ship. But he uses his power very sparingly, and if his temporary subjects behave decently and obey the unwritten laws of the sea he lets them do about as they please.

They exercise their ingenuity in providing all sorts of entertainments to relieve the monotony of the passing days. Shuffleboard and deck golf, ring toss and bull board and a concert usually suffice for the brief journey across the Atlantic ocean, but on the more distant voyages to India or Australia or down the long coast of South America those mild amusements pall upon the voyagers, and they plan something more elaborate. Tournaments of various kinds, races of every sort, lectures and plays are the order of the day.

But the most time honored and extravagant revelries are sure to take place when the ship crosses the imaginary line between the northern and southern hemispheres. From time immemorial that has been the day dedicated to jokes and quips and pranks of all kinds. The captain's serious face relaxes; the mates and even the quartermasters and sailors are evidently concocting some huge scheme of fun; no horseplay is outlawed; no practical jokes are too rough; no exalted personage is too dignified to be exempt from Neptune's "rough house."

The most elaborate fun of that sort that I remember witnessing was on a

trip from New York to San Francisco. The night before the ship was to cross the line we saw a spot of light off the starboard bow. It seemed to draw nearer and nearer, and pretty soon old Neptune himself, clad in oilskins and dripping water from his garments and his long white beard, climbed the black side of our ship and, standing upon the hurricane deck, surrounded by an admiring throng of passengers, announced that the next day at 2 o'clock in the afternoon we should cross the line and that he would welcome us to his domain with suitable "equator ceremonies." He spoke in thunderous and somewhat sepulchral tones. Then he disappeared over the side of the ship.

The next day at 2 o'clock Neptune was promptly on hand again. To prepare for his coming the sailors had arranged on the lower deck a great canvas tub, perhaps twenty feet square, filled with water to a depth of about three feet. The tub was surrounded by a rail, and Neptune, seated on a gorgeous throne, at first commanded that the passengers should be initiated into the mysteries of his domain. He had come aboard this second time with a great flourish of trumpets, and he was followed by a long train of fantastically arrayed subjects.

Those subjects ruthlessly seized the passengers, right and left, and Neptune commanded that the men should be shaved. They were seated on the edge of the improvised bathtub, and the barber appeared, wielding a lather brush nearly as big as a broom and a pasteboard razor also of huge dimensions.

Covering a victim's face with a liberal supply of lather, the barber raised on high his tremendous razor. But just as he was about to apply it to the face of the unresisting passenger, two of Neptune's myrmidons, standing in the great tub of water, suddenly pulled the victim over backward and immersed him completely. A moment later he emerged, spluttering and coughing, but making a desperate effort to appear good natured.

If any passenger was particularly dignified or dandified, if he had shown any overweening conceit in his own abilities, Neptune's slaves sought him out especially. The more spotless the linen, the more stylish the necktie, the more fleckless the white flannel suit, the surer was the owner to have the March literally taken out of him.

Of course not all of the 650 passengers could be initiated with these elaborate ceremonies. Most of those who were enjoying the fun to the utmost, and who were congratulating themselves that they had gone scot free, did not notice some sailors in oilskins climbing the masts directly over their heads. The sailors had a big hose in their hands. While the last victim was being submerged and the boisterous fun was at its height the heavens seemed suddenly to open, and out of a clear tropical sky a tremendous shower poured down upon the heads of all the passengers.

Few escaped a thorough sprinkling. The tables were turned on the hilarious onlookers, and the chief initiates took their turn in laughing at the others. When it was all over, Father Neptune served a bountiful collation, and to each passenger was given an elaborate and beautifully engraved certificate as evidence that he had received his sea christening and that he had the right henceforth to pass freely over the equator.—Rev. Dr. Francis E. Clark in Youth's Companion.

### Pensions.

The first pensions were granted to distinguished individuals for great services rendered the state, as to the dukes of Grafton, Richmond, Marlborough and others, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. So early as 1781 England had a fixed pension list of many names and involving an expenditure of over £100,000. In ancient times the idea of providing for those who had suffered for the state or who had contributed to its welfare was practically unknown, it being then an accepted doctrine that the individual belonged to the state, served her by right and had no claim against her for the simple thing of doing of his manifest duty.

## Lincoln Department

Joseph B. LaCour, Editor and Business Manager.  
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Mrs. Wyatt Williams Reporter.

Friday night the three-day popularity contest given by the Methodist church closed with Miss Viola Walker winner by a large majority with a total of 154 votes. Miss Virgil Gasikin of Cheyenne won second place, securing 64 votes. A neat sum was raised by the contest, which will be used in completing the church.

Mrs. James O'Donald is visiting friends in Omaha.

The following university students returned home to spend the holidays, Clarence Kerfed, Erin Shackelford,

Milton Paine of Atchison, Kans., J. LaCour and A. Rice of Omaha, Ross and Chas. May of Holton, Kans., Edward Foster of Carbondale, Kans., and Cecil Thomas of Fremont, Neb., and Miss Sarah White of Springfield, Neb.

Mr. Ernest Graves has returned from an extensive trip to St. Joe, St. Louis and Kansas City.

The Capitol City Forum will hold its first meeting of the new year the second Friday in January.

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