

MADRICAL.

All the world is bright,
All my heart is merry,
Violets and roses red,
Sparkling in the dew;
Brow—the lily's white;
Lip—the crimson berry;
Hark, I hear a lightsome tread—
Ah, my love, tis you!

Wing to me, birds, and sing to me;
None so happy as I!
Only the merriest melodies bring to me
When my beloved is by.

All the air is sweet,
All my heart is quiet,
Fleecy clouds on breezes warm
Floating far above;
Eye—where soft lights meet;
Check—where roses riot;
Look, I see a gracious form—
Ah, 'tis you, my love!

Wing to her, bird, and sing to her;
None so happy as she!
Only the merriest melodies bring to her—
Only this message from me!

—FRANK DEMPSTER SHEPHERD.

A TRUE GHOST STORY.

E. J. Bidwell in the Chicago Tribune.

Sitting one evening with a young officer who had already made himself distinguished for cool courage and a love of adventure, and whom his brother soldiers considered the best pistol shot in the army, the conversation happened to turn upon the almost universal belief in the supernatural.

We discussed the geni of the tales of the east, the witches and ghosts so generally accepted a century ago, and the spiritualists of to-day. Suddenly F. turned to me and said: "Perhaps you may be surprised if I tell you a true ghost story, one I can vouch for myself?" Knowing him to be a confirmed skeptic upon all supernatural subjects, I smilingly assented.

"You need not smile," he continued, "my experience was enough to shake the nerves of the bravest man living, and to have rendered a timid one mad."

"Some six or seven years ago, shortly after graduating from the military academy at West Point, I was sent with my command, part of a company of heavy artillery, to take possession of the little fort on Bedloe's Island, in the harbor of New York; the island, you will remember, on which Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty is to be placed. The place had been long deserted, had acquired an evil name, was known to be the resort of thieves and smugglers, and, the New York police said, was the headquarters of a gang of river pirates. It was, indeed, to break up this nest of scoundrels, who had found that, being United States property, the old fort was never visited by the police, that I was to take possession of the island."

"It was a gray, raw day in November; rain had fallen in the afternoon, and, when boats containing my little command reached our destination, a cold fog hung over the harbor and the rising wind howled about the old barracks, adding to the gloom and increasing the dreary desolation of the midwintery old walls. It was already 3 o'clock and daylight beginning to fade so I made the necessary preparations for the night as rapidly as possible. Inside the tiny fort there was a house, but in so dilapidated a state that but one room—a large one, which had probably once served as a mess-room—was habitable, and this the bare floor, the broken ceiling, the walls from which the paper hung in strips made uninviting enough. In this, however, being the best, my trunk was placed, a stove put up, which was roaring in a cheerful way, lamp lighted, a bed, bedding, a table and two chairs brought in, and I started on a tour of inspection. I had told my sergeant to prepare the quarters for the men in a long, low building outside the fort, which seemed in fairly good condition. Soldiers are rapid, because systematic, workers, and before midnight all were made comfortable, and the supper served to them which did credit to the company's cooks. I visited and inspected every part of the island—a mere speck in the harbor, as you know—looked into the old casements, went through the ruinous old house from cellar to attic, examined bolts and doors, then, having given orders for the night, closed the great gate leading into the fort and retired to my quarters."

"I certainly am not either a timid or an imaginative man, but there was something to the last degree depressing in the place that night. The wind, which had driven away the fog, howled and mourned in the deserted place; the rats trooped up and within the partition walls, and there rose a strange, earthy smell which reminded me, I scarce knew why, of new-made graves. Now and then some sea-bird's scream could be heard, or the distant roar of the foghorn of some passing ship was added to the sighing and groaning of the wind. I sat down and read the one or two newspapers I chanced to have in my pocket, wrote out a few memoranda, then opened my trunk, lifted out the tray, which I placed upon the little table, put a number of articles of daily use on a little shelf, and then, although it was still early, not more than 10, I believe, I made my toilet for the night, turned out the lamp and jumped into bed. I had placed my pistol, a self-cocking Colt of the largest size, under my pillow, but no sooner was the lamp out and all was dark than the tales told by the New York police came forcibly to my mind, and I almost regretted not having posted a sentinel inside the little fort. Then I felt like laughing at myself for such absurd apprehensions.

Still I could not sleep. I was just dozing off when a rat skurrying along on the wild scream of some passing seagull would arouse me with a start to toss and fret for another quarter of an hour."

"At last sleep came; calm, peaceful, dreamless sleep. How long I slept I have no idea; perhaps for an hour, perhaps for two. Then, from within my very room, of which I had seen every window barred, every door bolted and locked, there came a long, low moaning cry, ending with a shriek so horrible, so ghastly, that I am not ashamed to say that, as I rose in my bed, my heart seemed to stop for a moment and my hair rise stiffening on my head."

"It was but for a moment. A faint light from the waning moon came in through the shutters, and, as I rose, there rose across the room a long white figure! What? I saw it start from the floor and grow to a man's size or more, and as I gazed, heard that dreadful shriek! What? No matter. It was something, and its presence returned all my combative-ness and anger; hot, fiery wrath was my only feeling."

"Some scoundrel," said I to myself; 'is playing me a trick. Some of these pirate smugglers have arranged a ghost for me, have they? Well, we'll see who can play ghost the best.'"

"As I rose I had taken my six-shooter from under my pillow, and now I called out: 'Who are you? What are you doing there, you scoundrel?' No reply. 'Who are you? Answer, or I'll shoot.' Still there was silence. My pistol was pointed a little above the centre of the figure, and again I cried: 'Answer or I'll shoot.' No answer came, and I pulled the trigger. I was sure of my aim, and yet the bullet seemed to bury itself harmlessly into the wall beyond. Lowering my aim I sent another ball somewhat lower, and then a third, almost to the ground. Still the figure neither moved or spoke. There it stood, white, ghastly and uninjured by lead. As the third shot let my pistol I leaped from the bed and rushed upon the shadow form. A box of cartridges lay upon the table and these I thrust into the breast pocket of my night dress. Cocking my revolver as I ran, I tried to seize the intruder with my left hand, flinging myself with all force upon him."

"Horrors! An instant later I was thrown down, down. I knew not how far or where. The floor seemed to have opened and swallowed me up. With a crash I came to the bottom of the pit, bruised, bleeding and in utter darkness."

"Confused; half unconscious, I struggled to my feet, and once more there came, first that moaning cry, and then the dreadful scream which had roused me from my sleep."

"You know how little superstition there is in my nature—some say, indeed, too little, for it difficult for me to believe in anything not patent to my senses; but at that moment there crept into my soul a grisly fear of something not of this world. A shudder ran through my frame. I could feel my eyes dilate and open, to their utmost and a sweat, cold as ice, mingled from my brow with the blood trickling from my wounds. All was still as death. I tried to shout; my throat, dry, parched and contracted, refused its office. No sound came to break that horrid silence. I strained my eyes into the black obscurity which encompassed them—a darkness which pressed upon me which seemed to hold me, breathless, in its infernal embrace. Nothing. A void, vast as the universe, narrow as a tomb. My shuddering feet stood upon a something dark, dark and cold, as if they rested on a nest of serpents; above, around, a silent pall of unutterable obscurity. My elbow touched the wall. I started as if stung by a scorpion or as if ghostly hands had seized me from the nameless mystery which lay around. My heart stopped and then sent the blood whirling to the brain in sickening force. Was I mad? Was this a fever-born dream?"

"Some dreadful thing, cold, slimy, as was everything in this hideous place, crawled or wiggled from under and beside my feet. Spots red and green began to dance like demons' eyes in the distance—formed probably by pressure of the blood upon the brain and nerves."

"I have twice or thrice since then faced what seemed like probable death; without much feeling about the matter, but the foe was visible, tangible; not a hideous void like that I faced that November night."

"Again I tried to call out, and this time a faint, hoarse sound, which seemed to be the voice of another, issued from my lips."

"I had struck my head violently in the rapid descent, but gradually my senses returned and drove off the nameless dread, only to replace it with a feeling of helplessness, almost of despair. The air was bitterly cold, cold with a vault-like chill which stiffened my limbs (as I was in a single linen garment) to the bone. But, with the return of thought came the better feeling of a wish to at least struggle for existence. I tried to collect my ideas, to in some manner explain how the strange thing could possibly have happened. It was all alike reasoning around a circle."

"What had been in my room? How came it there? What had it done to me? How could I possibly have gone through the floor? Where had I gone? Through what agency? So, I backed again to who had been in my room? How came it there? and so on through the round again. The more I thought the more inexplicable became the whole affair, but at least I could now think—no shiver in nameless terror."

"I knew not where I was, but I felt sure that no sound I could make would reach the men, all of whom were outside the fort. Even from the ground-floor room it was quite certain that, especially on such a night with the waves beating against the sides of the islet, no mere report of a pistol could be heard a distance."

"Where could I be? Was this some trick of the thieves who had held the deserted fort so long? It was dark as if only a windowless vault can be even at night. Not one ray to show me if the place were large or small—a cellar or a well. By what possible agency could I have been thus hurled into this pit? I had paced over the whole room and there certainly was no opening in the floor unless it had been most carefully masked. Besides this, I felt sure that my fall had been much greater than the distance from the room I had slept in to the cellar. My brain was still somewhat clouded by the blow my head had received, and which I thought had been struck just before my fall, or rather, before my being violently thrown downward."

"Fortunately my pistol was still in my hand and the box of cartridges in my pocket. I felt carefully for the wall, placed my back against it, and, determining to sell my life dearly if attacked, waited a moment in silence. All was still. Taking the box as noiselessly as possible from the pocket of my night shirt I reloaded my pistol. Still nothing. But I was freezing. The slimy stones beneath my bare feet were rapidly chilling my blood. If I fire my pistol, I thought, I may see where I am. I fired twice."

"It was the cellar which I had already visited! I had only then, fallen 10 or 12 feet. I at once remembered that to this cellar there was a door leading, by an external flight of stone steps leading to the ground in front of the room in which I had slept. Another shot showed me the door, on which, however, there was a heavy, old-fashioned lock without a key. Half a dozen shots from my revolver broke the rustic iron—and I was free!"

"Covered with blood and slime, I stood at length beneath the stars; my head ached violently, my teeth chattered with cold, but I was free! O, the delight of that moment! Free!"

"My first feeling was that it was my duty to call some of the men and search the house; but that I could not bring myself to do. No, I must not be seen by them in such a plight, nor must they come until I had solved the mystery. My own outer door was too securely bolted to force open; but making my way through another entrance, I easily blew the lock off an inner door of communication. Grasping my pistol tightly, I cautiously entered. There, directly across the room, was the figure!"

"Bang! bang! and I sent two more bullets crashing through it. Whatever it was it certainly was no living thing. If not, what then? What or who had struck me that blow? Who had opened the solid floor and cast me into the pit beneath? With eye and ear upon the alert ready for foe, human or other, I reached the table where the lamp stood and felt for a match. None. But I had some in my pocket. My clothes were upon the other side of the bed. I went slowly around, found the matches, came back to the table, and keeping my pistol in my right hand, removed the globe and chimney of the lamp, struck a light, took a hurried look about the room, put the fire to the wick, replaced the chimney, and turned again to the white mystery. There it stood; but what it was I could not even guess. One thing was certain, it had not been there when I went to bed."

"In the light it looked like a great white box some ten feet high' open on the sides, and standing against the wall opposite the foot of the bed. Taking up the lamp I walked toward it. What is that on top? By heavens, it is my trunk!"

"What do you think the ghost was? It was an old, white-painted dumb waiter leading to the former kitchen. My trunk had chanced to be placed directly on its top, which was level with and formed part of the floor. The iron and the footsteps had loosened its old weights. I had taken the tray of clothes from the trunk, and the dumb waiter, gradually loosened had shot up, as such things will at times do—a couple of hours later. It had long been disused and the shelves removed. When, therefore, I rushed at it I had simply fallen into a hole, some three feet by two in the floor between the elevator's sides; had struck the bottom board, the machine had gone down with me, and, my weight removed, had again risen. I had come down very hard on the stone paving in the former kitchen, had cut myself on some projecting edge, for there were two pretty bad places from which the blood still dripped—and that was my ghost; that mysterious agency which had 'hurled' me into that 'awful pit'!"

"Did you ever hear of a ghost doing more? I never heard of one who could do half so much."

"But just think if I had gone barefooted and bedraggled, called up my men, and led them to combat with an old white dumb-waiter!"

An Ancient Fire-Eater.

The most famous of all fire-eaters was Robert Powell, who was before the public for nearly sixty years, and was seen by many distinguished men, among others by the dukes of Cumberland and Gloucester and Sir Hans Sloane. Mainly through the instrumentality of this last named the Royal Society in 1751 presented Powell with a purse of gold and a large silver medal.

- Here is his programme:
1. He eats red-hot coals out of the fire as natural as bread.
 2. He licks with his naked tongue rather tobacco pipes, flaming with brimstone.
 3. He takes a large bunch of deal matches, lights them all together and holds them in his mouth until the flame is extinguished.
 4. He takes a red-hot heater out of the fire, licks it with his tongue several times, and carries it around the room between his teeth.
 5. He fills his mouth with red-hot charcoal and broils a slice of beef or mutton on his tongue, and any person may blow the fire at the same time with a pair of bellows.
 6. He takes a quantity of resin, pitch, beeswax, sealing wax, brimstone, alum and lead, melts them together over a chafing dish of coals and eats the same with a spoon, as it were a porridge of broth, to the great and agreeable surprise of the spectators, etc.—Notes and Queries.

HUNTING FOR SPOOKS.

Running ghosts to earth, tackling spirits, seizing apparitions by the throat, nailing hallucinations, peering into haunted houses and bearding spooks in their dens, experimenting with thought transference and mesmerism, and in general monkeying with all the unfathomable mysteries of the human soul, this is the unique occupation of a body of learned men, called the American Society for Psychical Research.

In a back room in a modest looking house in Boylston Place, Boston, is the headquarters of the society's secretary, Richard Hodgson, LL. D. Dr. Hodgson is an Englishman, about thirty-seven years old, a graduate of Cambridge University, a profoundly learned scholar and a level-headed man of much common sense.

"Our society was formed," he said, "for the purpose of making an organized and systematic attempt to investigate that dark border of human experience and to examine critically the phenomena which are not now explained by any satisfactory theory. Scientific men of eminence in all countries admit the possible existence of what the uneducated call ghosts or spirits, and further, that one mind may exert upon another a positive influence otherwise than through the recognized sensory channels."

"In accordance herewith, the research work of our society is divided among five committees, all of which are presided over by men of unquestioned ability, learning and fairness. Professor H. P. Bowditch, of Harvard, is chairman of the Committee on Thought Transference; Professor Josiah Royce, of the Committee on Apparitions and Haunted Houses; C. B. Cory, a well-known Bostonian, of the Committee on Hypnotism; Dr. W. N. Bullard, of Boston, of the Committee on Mediumistic Phenomena, and Professor C. S. Minst, of Harvard, of the Committee on Experimental Psychology."

The Society for Psychical Research guards its gathered materials with great secrecy. Its rich fund of facts is not published until they have been passed upon and thoroughly examined by the various committees; even then the names of those who contribute their experiences are in no case furnished to the public. Among the following are some of the most astonishing facts on record:

On January 1, 1886, at 10 A. M., Mrs. T—, a lady living in a western town, writes to a member of Congress, the husband of her daughter, in Washington. Dr. Hodgson has seen the original letter. This letter explains a telegram which Mrs. T— had sent only three hours before, inquiring about her daughter's health. The original of this telegram has also been seen by Dr. Hodgson. The telegram reads:

To the Hon. —, House of Representatives, Washington, D. C.: I can. Will come if Nell needs me.

The signature is the mother's name. Mrs. T's letter of explanation first says that she had been for some days anxious about her daughter Nell's health, although there had been no illness of late. Letters from Washington had been lacking for some days; the last one had reported the daughter as having just returned from making fifteen calls, "very tired and nearly frozen." "I waked," said Mrs. T., last night between 12 and 1 o'clock, deeply impressed with the feeling that Nell needed me. I wanted to get up and send a telegram. If I had consulted or followed my own inclination I would have dressed and gone down to the sitting-room." Later, however, Mrs. T. went to sleep again, but in the morning the vivid impression returned. At 7 a. m. Mrs. T. sent the telegram and wrote apparently before she received an answer, for in the margin of the letter she added the postscript: "Telegram here; thank goodness you are well." The lady in Washington whose mother had had so vivid an experience had been seriously ill the same night, although the morning had found her much better. Her attack was a very sudden one, which she described as neuralgia of the lungs, with a hard chill. "It must have been," she says, "about the hour mentioned in my mother's letter I at last exclaimed, 'Oh, don't I wish ma was here! I shall send for her to-morrow if I am not better.'" In the morning came the telegram from the West, but the patient was better, and she and her husband were puzzled at her mother's uneasiness and replied by telegraph, "We are all well; what is the matter with you?"

SHE FELT ANOTHER'S PAIN.

An old gentleman living at Albany had been ill for months. His married daughter resided at Worcester. One evening last summer, she suddenly laid down the book she was reading and said to her husband: "I believe father is dying." She was strangely overcome by the impression, as there had been nothing whatever in the conversation or in her own thoughts to lead to the subject of her father's health. All that evening and the next morning the feeling haunted her, until a despatch came saying that her father had died the evening before.

A Lowell physician was called to see a patient about 10 o'clock one night. It was extremely dark, and in alighting from his conveyance he made a misstep and sprained his ankle severely. His wife, who was at home, in bed, asleep, suddenly awoke with the vivid impression that an accident had occurred to her husband. She arose, awakened the servant and communicated her fears to her. Nothing could induce her to return to bed. At 1 o'clock the doctor returned, and it was found that the moment of his accident and of his wife's awaking were simultaneous. He was three miles away from home at the time.

Here is a narrative, vouched for by the highest authority, of experiences in a house some miles from the city of Worcester. The man who sends it in is a well-known manufacturer, and his word is as good as his bond, which would be honored anywhere for \$100,000. He writes:

"In relating what I saw on July

morning in 1883 at my house, which I had but recently purchased, I will first describe the room in which I saw it. It is a bedroom, with a window at either end, a door and a fireplace at opposite sides. The room is in the upper story of a two-story house, said to have been built before the revolution. The walls are unusually thick and the roof high, pointed and uneven. The occupants at the time I speak of were my brother Henry, myself and a servant woman. The latter slept in a room on the basement story. A hallway divided my brother's room from mine. On the night before the morning mentioned I had locked my door, and, having undressed and put out my light, I fell into a sound dreamless sleep. I awakened about 3 o'clock in the morning with my face to the front window. Opening my eyes, I saw right before me the figure of a woman, stooping down and apparently looking at me. Her head and shoulders were wrapped in a common, gray woolen shawl. Her arms were folded and wrapped in the shawl. I looked at her in horror and dared not cry out lest I might move the awful thing to speech or action. I lay and looked and felt as if I should lose my reason. Behind her head I saw the window and the growing dawn, the looking glass and the toilet table and the furniture in that part of the room.

"After what may have been only a few seconds—of the duration of this vision I can not judge—she raised herself and went backward toward the window, stood at the toilet table and vanished. I mean she grew by degrees transparent, and that through the shawl and the gray dress she wore I saw the white muslin of the table cover again, and at last saw only that in the place where she stood. For hours I lay as I had lain on first awakening, not daring even to turn my eyes, lest on the other side of the bed I might see her again. Now, there is one thing of which I could take my oath, and that is that I did not mention this circumstance either to my brother, or to my servant, or to any one else."

THE SPOOK SEEN AGAIN.

"Exactly a fortnight afterward, when sitting at breakfast, I noticed that my brother seemed out of sorts and did not eat. On my asking if anything was the matter, he replied: 'No, but I've had a horrible nightmare. Indeed,' he went on, 'it was no nightmare. I saw it early this morning, just as distinctly as I see you.' 'What?' I asked. 'A villainous-looking hag,' he answered, 'with her head and arms wrapped in a gray shawl, stooping over me and looking like this—' Hegot up folded his arms and put himself in the posture I remembered so well. He then described how the figure moved toward the door and disappeared. 'Her malevolent face and her posture struck terror to my soul,' he said."

"A year later, in the month of July, one evening about 7 o'clock, my second oldest sister and her two little children, who were visiting us, were the only folks at home. The eldest child, a boy of 5 years, wanted a drink of water, and on leaving the dining-room to fetch it my sister desired the children to remain there till her return, she leaving the door open. Coming back as quickly as possible, she met the boy, pale and trembling, on his way to her, and asked why he had left the room. 'Oh,' he said, 'who is that woman?' 'Where?' she asked. 'The old woman who went upstairs,' he answered. She tried to convince him that there was no one else in the house, but he was so agitated and so eager to prove it that she took his trembling hand in hers and brought him up-stairs, and went from one room to another, he searching behind curtains and under beds, still maintaining that a woman did go up the stairs. My sister rightly thought that the mere fact of a woman going upstairs in a house where she was a stranger would not account for the child's terror."

"A neighbor of ours started when we first told him what we had seen, and asked if we had never heard that a woman had been murdered in that house many years previous to our purchase of it. He said it had the reputation of being haunted. This was the first intimation we had of the ghost of the murdered woman, however, for two years."

"On the night of July 7, 1886, I was awakened from a sound sleep by someone speaking close to me. I turned round, saying: 'Emily, what is it?' thinking that my sister, who slept in the room next to mine, had come in. I saw plainly the figure of a woman, who deliberately and silently moved away toward the door, which remained shut, as I had left it."

"Two days after this occurrence I was awakened about 6 o'clock in the morning by a presentiment of approaching evil. I opened my eyes and distinctly saw the form of a darkly-dressed, elderly female bending over me with folded arms, and glaring at me with the most intense malignity. I tried to scream, and struggled to withdraw myself from her, when she slowly and silently receded backward and seemed to vanish through the bedroom door."—Philadelphia Press.

England's Rare Lace-makers

The lace-makers of Honiton, who number some 1,200 in the manufacturing districts, are all middle-aged and old women. The history of the lace is checked and curious. It is reported to have been first introduced into England by the Flemings flying from the persecution of the Duke of Alva. The two great fires that in 1756 and 1767 broke out in the town almost ruined the manufacturers. Queen Adelaide tried to revive the sinking industry by ordering a skirt to be made from designs of natural flowers beginning with the initials of her name, for already the designs had lost all beauty. The attempt had no great result, for when Queen Victoria ordered lace for her wedding from Honiton, it was with difficulty workers were found. Ultimately a lace dress worth £1,000 was manufactured in the small fishing village of Beer.

A Vast Catastrophe.

Chinese newspapers and private letters from Peking bring details of the overflow of the Yellow River in September of last year. This event was dismissed with the notice of a few lines by most American newspapers, so little do we know of the real condition of our brothers on the other side of the globe. Yet no catastrophe so vast has occurred in the world during this century. As it is liable to recur at future times, a brief description of its cause and effects may be of interest:

The Hoang-Ho or Yellow River, drains the great basin of North China, as the Mississippi does the Central States of the Union. It bears a singular likeness to our own great river in several particulars, chief of which is the crookedness of its course, its sudden huge serpentine bends.

It drains like the Mississippi, hill ranges of great fertility, carrying their rich alluvial soil to the delta at its mouth. This rich silt, or mud, as in the case of the Mississippi, chokes up its mouths, until the river is forced to ooze its way through innumerable bayoux to the sea.

In both rivers the spring rains and the melting of the snow on the mountains near its source produce sudden devastating floods. The water disregards its crooked channel, and rushes straight across plantation, villages and cities.

The Chinese, like the people among the Mississippi, have found it necessary to build ramparts on either side of the murderous river to protect them from its fury; but the Chinese began this work nearly three thousand years ago. As the increasing deposit of silt near its mouth closes them, the water is forced back into its bed, and rises higher than the surrounding country each year, necessitating higher "levees."

Ten times since B. C. 1200 the vast flood has broken through these barriers, and found a new way for itself to the sea. In 1852 an outbreak occurred, and the mighty flood went back to the channel through which it flowed when our Saviour was on the earth. Each outbreak is necessarily accompanied by enormous loss of life and destruction of property."

On the 20th of last September a crevasse broke the dyke, and a body of water five hundred miles long, seventy feet deep and a mile wide burst upon the plain. This plain—a territory of ten thousand square miles, occupied by over three thousand villages—was submerged. The destruction of human life is estimated at five millions. None of the water has yet reached the sea; it forms a vast lake of death where last summer was a fertile, populous plain.

The Chinese Government has given nearly three million dollars, besides the annual revenue from a great province, to rebuild the dykes, and a population equal to that of our Middle States is swarming now like ants about the banks of the huge current, trying to put a curb upon it, knowing that it is a curb which, at some future time, it will surely break through again.

Tolstoi.

In the German magazine Nord und Sud there is an account by the Russian author, Danilevski, of a visit which he made recently to the famous novelist, Count Tolstoi.

Tolstoi's home is at Jassnaia-Poliana, a place not far from Moscow, where he was born in 1828, and to which he retired some twenty-five years ago, soon after leaving the army. Here he lives very simply, occupying himself, when not engaged in literary labors, in farm-work, as chopping wood, mowing, and in winter in shoe-making.

Notwithstanding the reports to the contrary, he appeared to be in the full possession of his faculties, and had not given up writing. His great interest at present is still those theological studies which led to his well-known book "My Religion," which, though circulated in manuscript in Russia, was translated into French, English and German.

His library table was covered with foreign magazines, while on the simple book-shelves were the Rousseau, all the Russian authors, Shakespeare, Auerbach, Simondini, Emerson's Essays, and Henry George's "Progress and Poverty."

In the course of his conversation with his visitor he said, "Thirty years ago, when I began to write, out of the hundred millions of inhabitants of Russia, the readers and writers could only be numbered by the ten thousands."

"Now schools are multiplied in the towns and villages. These ten thousands have become millions, and these millions of our countrymen come before us like hungry birds with wide-open beaks, and crying, 'Messieurs authors, give us some food worthy of you and of us, write for us who are famishing for a living literature.'"

"It was this intense conviction of the needs of his uneducated countrymen that has led Tolstoi to devote so much of his time to the preparation of school-books, even primers, and the writing simple, popular tales, which, with his other works, make him more than any other Russian writer—a creator of a national literature. Referring to his habits, he said:

"Every day, according to the season, I labor on my farm. I cut down trees, I chop wood, I mow. 'Ab, and I plough! You do not know what a pleasure that is. You go along turning up the fresh earth, tracing the long furrows, and you do not notice that one hour, two, three, pass. The blood courses joyously through your veins; your head is clear, your feet scarcely touch the ground; and how hungry you get, and how you sleep afterward!'"

It is said that the price of oats has not been so low as at the present in one hundred years.