CAPITAL CITY COURIER, SATURDAY, APRIL 5, 1890

CALLED A FISH OF APRIL. religion of the primitive Aryans. No doubt

THAT'S THE FRENCH OF IT; BUT HERE IT IS "APRIL FOOLI"

Tricks of the Village and the City-The Old Times-All Foots' Day-The "Hall" of Hindoostan-Its Possible Origin-Some Mediaval Franks.

"By George, there's a dollar !" Down goes the eager boy's hand to grasp the bright silver disk which lies so temptingly in the edge of the gutter. He grasps it and is rising, when "Ow-ouch-O Lordy!' he yells, and, flinging down the dollar, thrusts his burnt flogers in his mouth, while a roar of laughter issues from the convenient grocery, where the practical jokers are on the watch. The boy hurries away, and the jokers proceed to reheat the dollar for the next "April fool."



THE SILVER DOLLAR SELL.

This is the old standard joke of the village It has been played ever since silver dollars were coined, and probably will be for many years to come, for where is the boy, not strictly on guard, who could refrain from picking up a dollar? And it is wonderfu' how long a hot silver dollar will hold its heat. A more innocent form of the same joke is to drill a hole through the dollar and nail it firmly down; then silver over the head of the nail with some of the many cheap "plating" fluids. The finder nine times out of ten will grasp at the treasure and be-"left." The laugh is just as good, and no fingers are burnt.

The "bricked hat" has been played ten that extra stratagem is required. It is very seldom anyhow that a man will pause long enough to kick a hat off the sidewalk, but to a boy a derelict hat is a temptation indeed. It sometimes proves a cruel joke. The boy, full of vigorous life and animal spirits, swinging gayly along, comes to an innocent looking old beaver and, pausing for a good draw back, he launches a forty-pound kick at the target-alast there is a big and ragged stone in it. For an instant he feels as if every bone in his foot were splintered. The pain is aw-ful. The jokers in ambush laugh, but the victim cannot restrain his tears. Nowadays, however, the jokers often kick the empty hat around as the victim is coming in sight, and only slip the stone under it in time to catch

When the "Washingtonian movement" was sweeping the United States an ingenious dealer invented what he called a "temperance wine glass." Standing on the sideboard it looked exactly like a handsome glass well filled with ruby wine, but when the guest turned it up at his lips there was no flow and the loud

SOME CAPITAL GOSSIP. some peculiarity of the season, perhaps the general riot of the natural man's blood and of awakening nature, first suggested a day of

sport and unreason. In the course of time

many of the tricks and practical jokes of

April 1 were confounded with those of the

Feast of Fools, which must take rank as the

most extraordinary of the many fantastic fol-

lies which old paganism bequeathed to Chris-

It began with the Saturnalia. The Romans

believed that Saturn, after being dethroned

by his son Jupiter, had reigned long in Italy

and established a golden age. So they had a Saturn's festival late in December, when all

strict etiquette was laid aside and all distinc-

tions of rank abolished. Slaves ate first and

were waited on by their masters. Dainty ladies served food to beggars. No one could

claim any privilege of rank, and in some in-

stances the license extended so far that men

of wealth and distinction thought it prudent

to maintain a disguise during the entire festi-

val. The Christian fathers preached against

the custom, but it survived, and at last ob-

tained a tolerated place in church observ-

Every age the absurdity grew greater. Balaam's ass was introduced and soon became

the great central figure. Later, the ass on

which the infant Jesus was carried into

Egypt and the ass on which the mature Jesus

rode into Jerusalem were introduced with

many ceremonies, which would shock modern

Christians, Mock popes, archbishops and

other dignitaries were chosen and held local

rule through the festival, being known as

"Pope of Fools," "Archbishop of Numb-skulls," "Boy Bishop" and "Patriarch of

Sota." They took possession of the churches and went through a mummery of the priest-ly offices, even the mass and the absolution.

At length the burlesque reached a point where reason and religion alike revolted.

Rituals were issued for the mock worships, and the ass was introduced into the church.

Many songs were written in his honor. One

sung for many years at Beauvius, France, as

the ass moved towards the altar, ran as fol-

Orientis partibus-

Sarcints aptissimus

He, Sire Ane, he!

This has been somewhat freely translated :

From the regions of the east-

With our packs to pace along.

Then the mock priests, with real priestly

robes worn inside out, holding prayer bocks

upside down and wearing spectacles made of

lemon peel, went through a service, in which

they ridiculed at random the local follies.

Sometimes charcoal and flour or noxious

smelling weed seed were used for incense, and

the service went on amid a confused uproar

of imitations of pigs, cows and asses. When

the ceremony was to close the priest placed

his hands beside his head, moved them like

ears and brayed his loudest three times, to

which the people responded with a loud and

prolonged bray. In many places nuns dis-

guised themselves in men's clothes and took

When the custom reached such abuses re

form was not far off, but traces of it lin-

gered till the Fifteenth century. Remnants of these observances passed over to Christ-mas and April fool's day. On very ancient

monuments April is typified by a dancing

Bray, Sir Donkey, bray!

Advenavit asinus-Pulcher et fortissimus,

tianity.

lows:

Dart.

GEN. SCHENCK.

Lodge and His Luck-Obituary Days. The Silent Senators of Nevada,

[Special Correspondence.]

will think I am saving aught to the discredit of the late Gen. Schenck because I tell a poker story of him. Many of the best men in Washington play poker, as do some good men the world over. The judgment of the times is that it takes with whom we put up-and he was a something more than a friendly, quiet game of draw to make a man very wicked. Gen. Schenck played poker for a half century. He played it well, and always, 1 believe, for moderate stakes. The poker story I have to tell of him is the story of a moderate, gentleman's game. Moreover, it is a true story. Many of the poker stories printed about well known men are imaginary. This story is not imaginary.

About a week before Gen. Schenck's death he sat down at a round table one is a famous poker player, and his inti- through fire and not be burned. He inmate friends call him "Charley." The game was at \$2 limit, and this senator, which the senator promptly raised before the draw. The general "staid," everybody else dropping out. When he looked over his cards the senator found the ace, king, queen and jack of clubs and the six of diamonds.

As it stood, of course, his hand was a bluff. He drew one card, and Gen. million dollars-a good stomach. He has Schenck also took one. It was obvious the senator had drawn to fill either a straight or a flush. If he had a hand of sufficient value he would not have been lucky dog?" likely to let the opportunity to "open" go by, inasmuch as there was quite a large number of checks on the table. After the draw Gen. Schenck bet the limit. The senator "saw" him and went one better. Again Gen. Schenck raised, when the senator remarked:

"General, I have you beaten. I think I have a sure thing, and I don't care to for this purpose. Usually a Saturbet any more money on that kind of a day is taken, for that is the day on hand.

"But I don't think you have me beaten," retorted Schenck. "When I get enough of it I will quit."

So the senator "raised" the general, and was quickly raised back. Again and again the blue checks were tossed into house gallery and counted the number the middle of the table, until each had 'tilted" the other a dozen times or more. Then the senator renewed his proposition for a cessation of hostilities, and offered to fatten the stakes by a wager of a dinner for the five gentlemen present. This with as much patience as possible to the was accepted by Gen. Schenck, and the hands were shown down.

Schenck had started with three nines, drawn one card in order to make his an- other. An hour later only eight men and had pulled in the fourth nine. Four nines was a formidable hand, but the I did not wait another hour to see if the senator's hand was stronger. It consist- unfortunate last speaker was left absoed of the ace, king, queen, jack and ten lutely alone with the pages, the empty of clubs-a royal straight flush, the highest possible hand. The senator had won. But the little dinner for five was never eaten. Two days before the evening set for it Gen. Schenck died. "I have been playing poker for thirty or forty years," said the senator today, "and that was the first straight flush I ever held. If it is to be the forerunner of the death of one of my best friends. and of one of the most estimable gentlemen and most skillful poker players I ever knew, I do not want to hold another one. A few weeks ago I wrote a letter about the remarkable number of prominent and successful men who were once poor boys on adjoining farms in Ashland county, O. "I know of another instance of the same sort," said a gentleman to me recently, "At East Aurora, Erie county, three hours. The man who has reached N. Y., is a country school called Aurora down and explored the inside of a quesacademy. It is neither a very large nor tion always finds that it has many sides a famous institution of learning, but I was counting up the other day the number of very successful men who were educated there, most of them farmers' boys from the immediate neighborhood. "My list embraces Millard Fillmore, I never make speeches." president of the United States; Nathan K. Hull, postmaster general under Fillmore: A. M. Clapp, for many years public printer; J. M. Humphrey, member of congress; Horatio C. Burchard, director of the mint; S. Corning Judd, prominent Illinois politician and postmaster of Chicago, and Governor Boies, of Iowa. 1 am sure there are many others of equal reputation who started out in life from that old school if I could only think of their names." The house committee on elections has decided in favor of permitting Gen. Hooker, of Mississippi, to retain his seat. Gen. Hooker is a one armed Confederate hero, and one of the most popular men in congress. Republicans like him as well as the Democrats do, for he is a fine able over twenty-five years ago may take specimen of the old style gentleman, with pleasure in learning that there is an a politeness that is fairly princely and a effort to revive the "cross stitch" emgrand way of saluting even the hum- broidery. One of the prettiest of the blest of his acquaintances. He has three modern specimens of the work is a large sons, who, fortunately, are as like him square lamp mat made of canvas filled as a lot of peas in one pod. It is a very in with light blue silk cross stitch. Upon pretty thing to see the four Hookers, each corner is worked with black silk in who are all tall and of fine military bear- the same stitch a Chinese dragon. The ing, greet a friend on the street. All mat is edged with blue and gold passe have the same martial flourish of the menterie of the kind that has been used hand, and somehow all manage to salute for the past year or two for dress trimat the same instant, as if they were sol- mings. diers at drill. Gen. Hooker was talking recently of the difference between the campaign them are exceedingly pretty. By adding methods prevailing in the north and a border of crocheted lace to a plain those of the south. "When I first came square of satin or velvet a very pretty to congress," said he, "Fernando Wood mat can be made. The lace should be and other wealthy gentlemen from New from two to three inches broad and of a York were here, and we were chattering light, open design. It should be made of one day about how much it had cost unbleached Barbour's flax thread and them to be elected. "One gentleman said his campaign had ing over the edge. The corners must be cost him \$20,000. Another said his sal- laid over smoothly and the lace sewed ary for the term would just pay his elec- down at the top and bottom.

tion expenses. Finally they asked me how it was in Mississippi, and I told them they wouldn't believe me if I were A POKER STORY OF THE LATE to state to them the exact cost of my last campaign. 'I have twelve coun ties in my district,' said I, 'and before election I carefully canvassed every one Public Men from Erie County, N. Y .- Gen. of them, traveling about in a light wagon Hooker, of Mississippi - Henry Cabot with my son. The entire cost of that campaign in money was just one dollar and six bits. "The gentlemen from the north were

incredulous, as I had thought they would WASHINGTON, April 3.-1 trust no one be, but those are the exact figures. The people down there kept us over night. fed us and our horses and sent us on our way rejoicing, invariably refusing compensation for their trouble. That is southern hospitality. I remember one planter poor man-replied when we tendered payment for our lodging: 'I hain't never charged nobody nothin' fer stayin' at my house, and I don't see why I should be gin on you. An' here's a couple o' water milyuns I'll throw in yer wagon an' cover em up with a blanket-they'll taste good after the sun gits up hot." Congressman Cabot Lodge, of Massa-

chusetts, has been much talked about since he introduced his now famous bill for Federal control of elections. I heard another Massachusetts statesman say of evening in his own house with Gen. Lodge a few days ago: "There goes the Schofield, Gen. Rucker and two United luckiest man in America. He could fall States senators. One of these senators in the creek and not get wet, or go herited a good family name; a name that has always given him a certain prestige. on the occasion in question, sat next to He was heir to a large fortune, estimated the dealer. It was a jack pot, which Gen. Schenck opened at the limit, and is said to be \$90,000 a year, and steadily increasing. He keeps up three domestic establishments; one in Washington, one in Boston and one in the country. He is happily married.

"He inherited, besides a good name and a large fortune, an iron constitution and an athletic frame. He has that for which inherited, moreover, a good head, a ge nius for literature and politics, and the faculty of making friends. Is he not a

We have had several "obituary days" in congress recently. The obituary day is a well established congressional institution. Friends of the several deceased members confer together and fix upon a day for delivery of the orations. A reso lution is introduced setting apart an afternoon, or part of an afternoon, which members like to visit the departments on errands for their constituents. Obituary days never interfere with department work. On the day when the funeral addresses for the late William D. Kelley were delivered I went into the of members in their seats. There were seventeen of them.

"There the huge sirloin reeked, hard by Plum pudding stood, andChristmas ple Nor failed old Scotland to produce At such high tide, her savory goose." Surprised at the large attendance, I made some inquiries and found that the sixteen gentlemen who were listening seventeenth were all orators of the day. Thus the attendance was accounted for -the orators were listening to each



The Burlington's Flyers are provided with a library of carefully selected books for the free use of patrons, while card tables, congenial friends, and "High Five" conduce to "drive dull care away."

Quietly, and at ease, the traveller partakes of viands that tempt the epicure, and amid tasteful and elegant surroundings, the pleasures of the meal are enhanced by the charming and picturesque panorama continuously gliding by.

Great easy chairs, rattan sofas and large plate windows, render our smoking cars a prime favorite with first class passengers, for whom they are exclusively reserved.

laugh announced him an "April fool." The glass was double, the wine being between the inner and outer portions. This hint set others to work and very ingenious imitations were produced by which the victim could be made to believe that cake and wine, fruits and biscuit were before him; but it was all a Barmecidal feast-the tempting viands were delicately painted porcelain or queensware. Bonbons with cotton in them raised an innocent laugh; but practical jokers preferred those filled with red pepper. "Indian turnips" used to be the great standby in the west, and a big bite of one would make the victim feel as if his tongue were being pulled out by the roots; but the plant is now so rare that many people never saw one. A truly diabolical contrivance was a small pudding, of which the principal ingredient was mus tard.

In France the fun chiefly consists in send ing people on absurd errands, or sending them messages which begin properly enough but end in an atrocious "seil." Practical jokes are there practically unknown. The French call the victim a "poisson d'Avril"that is, a fish of April or silly fish. The Scotch call him a gowk, which means both cuckoo and simpleton, and has been Americanized into gawk. In Germany he is called a "schaafokopf," or sheep's head, while in all eastern Europe much more derisive names are applied, some of them, as well as the jokes, being very coarse and even grossly obscene.

Now, as the custom has been common to all Christian countries for over 1,000 years, scholars formerly agreed that it began in the miracle plays or mysteries of the dark ages. It was generally said to represent the sending about of Christ from Annas to Caiaphas, and from Pilate to Herod. By and by, however, traces of the custom were discovered at



THE "BRICKED" HAT.

an earlier date, and then the explanation given was that when the beginning of the year was changed from April 1 to Jan. 1 the people turned the first date from a real into a mock New Year's and burlesqued all the solemn and social observances of the main day.

This story did very well till a better was told; for when the British rule in India was of several short well established and scholars reproduced the railways in various ancient records of that land, they found traces of April Fool day there, and the Hindoos now Mrs. Haines is said practice similar tricks on the 31st of March. to be an excellent which they call the Hull festival. So the business woman, origin must be referred to some trait of the and well fitted for the position to which she old system of nature worship which was the has been elevated.



SATURNALIA

youth with a rattle in his hand-another proof that something in the season itself suggested sport and practical jokes. And as the growing and pairing season is here, this article cannot close more appropriately than with the oft quoted but still readable lines in which an old nisi prius lawyer is supposed to hall the season that reminded him of his youth:

> Whereas, on certain boughs and sprays Now divers birds are heard to sing. And sundry flowers their heads upraise-Hail to the coming on of spring !

The songs of those said birds arouse The memory of our youthful hours, As green as those said sprays and boughs, As fresh and sweet as those said flowers.

The birds aforesaid—happy pairs: Love 'mid the aforesaid boughs enshrines In freehold nests: themselves, their heirs, Administrators and assigns

O, happiest term of Cupid's court. Where tender plaintiffs actions bring-Season of frolic, mirth and sport,

Hail! as aforesaid, coming spring ! J. H. BEADLE.

At Home, After Many Years

The return to Chicago, after thirteen years' absence, of D. D. Spencer, brings again to public attention a man whose reckless finanstering wrought widespread ruin. He fled in 1877 immediately subsequent to the failure of the Cook County National bank and the State Savings institution, both of which were under his control, and became a resident of Stuttgart, Germany. He left behind a terrible aggregate of misery, for the savings of hundreds were swallowed up, but it has always been an open question whether Spencer was not rather the dupe of others than a willful wrong doer. At any rate the years have not dealt lightly with him, and those who knew the aggressive, confident business man of other days would find little to recall him by in the careworn, aged features of the returned exile,

A Female Railway President.

The first woman in America ever chose president of a steam

railroad is Mrs. Charles D. Haines,

MRS. C. D. HAINES.

were in the hall, the remaining nine having spoken their pieces and disappeared. seats and the nearly empty galleries. Senator Jones, of Nevada, is one of the

brightest men in congress. Every day of his life, probably, he tells more good stories, says more good things than any other man in the Capitol. But he never makes a speech. "If I had a son who was possessed of an ambition to become an orator," says Senator Jones, "I'd be tempted to disown him. These long winded orators of the senate make me very weary. After they have uttered a dozen sentences one usually discovers that they don't know what they are talking about, and the longer they talk the more certain are you of their ignorance. "The man who understands things doesn't make speeches. It is the man who doesn't understand a question that feels called upon to talk about it two or and phases, that few things are absolutely certain, and that men may look at the matter differently and yet all be right. This sort of a man doesn't want to make a speech. He knows too much.

Senator Stewart, of Nevada, never makes speeches, either, Whether or not his reasons are the same as those of his ingenious colleague, I am not informed; but I heard Stewart make a speech one day last week which set the senate into a most undignified snicker. A call of the senate had been ordered, and as the roll was called off by the clerk Mr. Stew art sat dozing in his chair. When his name was sung out he started up and exclaimed, "Pass!"

WALTER WELLMAN.

Berlin Work to Be Bevived.

People who are old enough to remember the "Berlin work" that was fashion-Knitted and crocheted lamp mats are

quite endless in variety, and some of sewed flatly on the material, not project-

"Come, sleep, And with thy sweet deceiving, lock me in delight awhile "

Come, friends, Let's have a social smoke.''

The acme of perfection is reached in our latest Pullman sleepers, whose seats of seal brown silk plush, oriental draperies in exquisite shades rare woods, and carpets of Royal Wilton, combine in the highest degree, the artistic with the beautiful "We sigh to think our wondrous journey done."

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