For The American:

THE NUN.

An Episode of Convent Life.

(Translated from the French by Rev. M. J. P. Tiling, A. M.)

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTION—Continued.

At this recital a slight color passed over her face as though she had revealed the existence of a sinful thought in her house. But recovering herself quickly she said to me with a sigh:

"Ah well, my child, do you approve my plan? Does the prospect of your approaching nuptials frighten you? Would you like to have more time to prepare yourself for them?"

She then made use of various terms that I dare not repeat since I consider them as so many blasphemies in respect to our Saviour, whatever may have been the custom at the convent. Thus, the young girls who took the white veil called Him the Spouse—and our glorious Saviour was designated without ceremony by the name of spouse and not husband; for example, the domestics say without fear: "This ought not to be done, since my spouse will be displeased with it," etc. It is true that in the Scripture the union of Christ with the church is represented under the symbol of marriage. But what an abuse of terms it is to apply this symbol to individuals! Alas; that I did not comprehend then; on the contrary I esteemed myself honored to be called the spouse of Christ.

Our conference with the abbess was long; it was decided that on the following day I should enter the establishment as a boarder but with the condition that I should take the white veil as soon as possible. The abbess in addition declared that would not hinder my return to the world; she would take care meantime to add that a similar departure should not cover me with shame. For if the world only for a little time makes a religious profession, it is none the less implacable towards those who fail to persevere in such a life. I did not know how to reply to the abbess, and with her to all those who have made regulations for the monastic orders, in saying that they are well fitted to set their traps for the spirits of those whom they wish to entrap. They stoop to artifices that would be difficult for persons not acquainted with their practices to imagine,—especially those not acquainted with their principles: The end justifies the means. So they judge.

My friend having expressed a desire to see some of my future companions, the abbess rising, opened a little door, said a few words to someone, and then resumed her seat. About ten minutes after three young sisters entered the room but remained behind the screen. They were of charming persons and accomplished manners; for one of the principal occupations of the life of a *religieuse* is to be trained for the *role* to be played in such scenes. This is why manners the most gracious, sighs and tones of voice the sweetest, are the exterior characteristics of a convent community. These three young girls in question, whom I will name Catherine, Marguerite, and Honorine, were particularly remarkable in this respect; so they entered quickly into their *role*. They blushed under our gaze, then they approached the abbess, then became voluble in the details of their happiness, to the great pleasure of the superior who was delighted with our surprise.

"They are three of my daughters," said she; "have they a sad appearance? Who among the pale slaves of the pleasures of the world can compare with my beautiful children?"

While she spoke in this way to my friend, my future companions talked with me and with each other. At the proper opportunity, Sister Marguerite, the oldest and best versed in her *role*, having regarded me some moments exclaimed:

"Oh! how beautiful she is! And how the habit of the order will become her!"

I knew that it was meant to be personal, yet the remark flattered me, and as I placed my hand upon the grate, Marguerite took it and said to me with a sigh:

"Would that we could keep you with us now, we would never let you go!"

We returned home, but I delayed the renewing of the acquaintance with my three charming future companions. It was the morning of the third day after this visit that I found myself at the door of the convent. This time the portress opened the grated door, conducted me through the opening and closed the door behind us. We were at the east of the church, in a magnificent gothic hall, decorated with beautiful windows and furnished with old oaken furniture. In a corner was a confessional, communicating with a niche behind the altar, and where the priest was able to hear confession without entering the choir. We continued our steps and I saw again the court in the midst of which was a large cross. I made the remark that this court instead of being paved was covered with grass.

"My sister," said the portress, "that is our cemetery. When we pass from the refectory to the chapel we always have before our eyes the edifying view of this blessed place. Each one of us chooses her place and some even have their coffins in their cells. You will admit that such a preparation for death is an excellent thing and worthy of praise, besides that it renders us agreeable to the Lord."

She used the word "Spouse" instead of that of Lord—a blasphemy that I refuse to repeat. I confess also at that time that I was little disposed to share the sentiments of this old woman respecting death, although I did not dare to question the wisdom of the ideas.

From the cemetery we passed into a sort of ante-chamber which by many gratings, concealed by curtains, communicated with the reception room of the abbess. I was left here alone until her arrival. She soon appeared and embracing me exclaimed with an enthusiasm that I believed to be sincere:

"Permit me, my dear child, to welcome you into this asylum of peace, into this enclosure barred to the passions of the world. I hope, my child, that you have come here with a firm resolution of consecrating yourself entirely to God in a life of poverty, of piety and renunciation of the world. Happy are those in the flower of their age who throw themselves into the arms of the celestial Spouse to consecrate to Him their penitence and prayer, and showing him thus their tender love! Is it not thus that the spouse of the Divine Husband should show how she loves?"

I told her that I was fully decided to become a religieuse, and I asked her when she would permit me to take the white veil. She mentioned two weeks as the shortest time of preparation, saying that she did not doubt that her dear child would prepare herself for this celestial marriage by holy meditations and all sorts of meritorious works.

"Ah, my child," she exclaimed, "how little the world comprehends such favor and these transports of joy they experience who unite themselves thus to the well beloved! How can *ennui* approach us in hours so swiftly flying and so sweet? Who is able to express the joy of a soul that passes from youth to old age, and from old age to the tomb, wholly occupied with Him whom she loves above everything? Even the pains and the fatigues, for our flesh is weak, increase our spiritual grace in rendering us more loveable to our Spouse!"

I was ignorant of what was the source of her thought, but this discourse made such an impression upon me that I became impatient to commence and fulfil my sacred duties. But I experienced a disappointment in learning that I would only be with the sisters at certain moments in the choir service.

"I would like very much, my sweet child," said the abbess, "to remit for you this rule; but I am compelled to submit, you know it, and the Master of the house exacts obedience. But you will not be alone all the time. I will introduce you to the assistant mother and one of my dear daughters who, though still young, is wholly devoted to the church; I do not doubt but that she will have a better influence over you. But before leaving you, permit me to ask what name you received at your baptism?"

"That of Cecile, madame," I responded.

"Cecile," she exclaimed, "ah! that is a blessed name! But you need a better. The first of my daughters, when she made her profession, took the name of Angelique; but a long time ago she went to join the angels. My Cecile, would you like to take her place by adopting her name? But I do not wish to press you; you can think of it at your leisure. You can act with entire freedom."

With these words she embraced me again, then taking me by the hand she led me into a long gallery which was made back of the choir. It was there I noticed for the first time a young nun, who apparently awaited the orders of the abbess. Nothing is able to describe the charm of this person. Of Italian origin her face was remarkable for its beauty. The general expression of her physiognomy was calm, but this calm seemed to be pervaded by a supreme indifference for earthly things. If some sudden light illuminated her eyes, her countenance changed, both one could not know whether joy or passion made her eyes glow. Never, in all my sojourn in this house did I hear Annunciate even sigh. The noisiest gayety of her associates scarcely brought any color to her marble cheeks, though a movement of her right hand betrayed her contempt; but though she never sighed, she knew very well how to take on, when she wished to please, an expression of irresistible sweetness.

The abbess asked this young girl, or rather desired her, to conduct me to my chamber; she murmured at the same time some words that I was unable to understand, for nothing, however small, can be done in a convent without an appearance of secrecy.

The nun conducted me to the extremity of the gallery; we ascended a superb stairway which led to a corridor into which opened many doors; these were the cells of the sisters. She opened one of these doors and ushered me into a little square chamber whose furnishings were simple but appropriate. Here I found my valise. The bed was in a corner; next to it was a little grated window towards which she directed my attention. I saw to my great delight, that it gave a view to the garden and the surrounding hills covered with herds whose shepherds were reclining on the grass. I was about to express my admiration, when a feeling I was unable to define restrained me.

(To be Continued.)

INDIA'S MUSICAL GRASS.

Wonderful Effects by Cunning Fakirs For Fooling the Superstitious.

There yet remain certain corners of the earth where natural wonders of the exceptional sort await the inspection of the more adventurous and curiously inclined. One of these as yet generally unexplored corners lies not far from the old temple caves of Bagh, in India. Here there is a lake, in which is a small islet. Around the shores of the lake, and of the islet especially, is a dense growth of reed grass. The forest surrounding both swarms with the deadly serpent tribes and other dangerous beasts of prey peculiar to the jungle.

The islet itself is but a tiny one, and when viewed at a distance looks like a pyramidal basket of verdure, so overgrown is it with the tall reeds. The only inhabitants of this isolated spot are the ubiquitous monkeys, who rendezvous among a few mango trees that grow in the midst. This reed grass is seven or eight feet high and plumed at the top, the color effect of which is as of "a waving sea of black, yellow, blue and especially of rose and green."

But the wonder does not become apparent until the evening wind begins to blow. Then the gigantic reeds awake and begin to toss uneasily, and suddenly in the general silence of the forest around there is somewhere let loose a whole river of musical sound, first like that of an orchestra "tuning up," and then a flood of harmony follows, and the whole island resounds as with the strains of hundreds of Æolian harps. It swells and deepens, filling the air with indescribable melody, now sad and solemn, as of some funeral march, now rising and trilling upon the air like the song of the nightingale, to die away into silence with a long drawn sigh.

Then again the sounds rise, clashing like hundreds of silver bells, then suddenly changing to the heartrending howl of a wolf deprived of her young. A gay tarantelle follows; then comes the articulate sound of the human voice to the vague, majestic accords of a violoncello—and all this re-presented in every direction by hundreds of responsive echoes. Let the wind but rise, the sounds pour and roll in unrestrainable, overwhelming energy—comparable to nothing but a storm in the open sea. You hear the wind tearing through the rigging, the swish and turmoil and thundering shock of the maddened waves. A lull, and the scene is changed to the dim lit vault of a cathedral, throbbing to the long drawn roll of organ notes, ending perhaps in the clangor of an alarm bell. And so it goes until your ears ache and your head reels under the strain.

On the opposite side of the lake you will see the fires of the superstitious natives, who congregate to bring offerings to the Indian god Pan and his hosts, who are held responsible for the sounds evoked. The cunning fakirs alone know better, but because of certain benefits that accrue to themselves from these reverential offerings do not care to enlighten these bronze faced devotees. The explanation is a very simple one. This reed grass is hollow. It shelters a species of tiny beetle, and these tiny insects obligingly bore the holes in these innumerable pipes of the great god Pan.

Then comes your fakir, and he, with his knowledge of acoustics—for the superior class of Hindoo ascetics are deeply versed in natural laws—enlarges and shapes and finishes until each reed is a perfect lute, answering to a certain keynote in the musical scale. The wind is the musician and blows the pipes thus prepared with results as described. Why the fakir should go to the trouble of attuning the reeds is probably due to the habitual fostering of native superstition by the Brahmans in control.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Fate of a Boom Town.

"I was one of a party that went down to Tennessee in the halcyon days of the iron boom towns," says a talkative Maine business man. "There is not a living soul today at a spot where I saw men crazy with the excitement of a wild speculation, it being the supposed site of a future iron metropolis and business center. On paper it was immense. Streets were plotted, great manufactories seemed as certain to be established there as the sun to continue in its course, and land buyers elbowed and jostled each other in their bustle to 'get in on the ground floor.' You never saw more excitement at a sensational camp meeting, of men in haste to save their souls. I saw there at an auction sale of lots on a business street. I saw a Fairfield man pay $2,500 cash down for a lot having 25 feet frontage, and 10 minutes later he called himself a fool for his folly. His cash is salted there today, doubtless, and his 'lot' could probably be bought for 25 cents. Its actual value is certainly not more than that. The great scheme petered out a few weeks after we were there. The manufactories did not materialize, and today the sparrow builds her nest undisturbed in the very heart of the proposed great mart of the south."—Lewiston Journal.

She Got the Worst of It.

There was but one vacant seat in the car on the elevated road, and it was next to a woman not handsome, but highly dressed. A middled aged man entered and on seeing him approach the seat she put her muff in it. Observing her little game, he sauntered aimlessly along and sat on the muff in surprise. She gave a great cry of surprise, he sat on with perfect nonchalance. Her indignation and surprise knew no bounds, and she looked around the car for sympathy, but everybody seemed to be on the side of the man, who never cracked a smile, nor showed by any sign that he knew what he had done. A salts bottle in the muff got the worst of the incident, and the car was filled with a highly ammoniated odor for the next hour. Somehow or other people like to see an impolite and shrewish woman get the worst of it. In this case there was a great deal of quiet laughter among the passengers who witnessed the affair and more than one man there thought that it served her right.—New York Herald.

Part of the Government.

As the train stopped at a small town in Virginia the mailbag was thrown to a negro boy of perhaps 15 years, who started off at a brisk run to the postoffice. But a larger boy, turning a corner, suddenly ran into the mail carrier and overturned him. As soon as he recovered himself he turned upon the aggressor. "Look heah!" he exclaimed, "you wants to be keerful of dis chile. When you knock me down, you jes knock down de whole United States. I carries de mail!"—San Francisco Argonaut.

MYSTERY OF DREAMS.

THEORIES AS TO THE ACTION OF THE MIND DURING SLEEP.

Scientific Men Who Believe That They Afford Proof of the Soul's Independent Activity—Colquhoun's Claim That Dreams Always Accompany Sleep.

"Dreams," says Homer, "descend from Jove." There are thousands of intelligent people who still entertain that belief. The opinion commonly held by physicists is that, if the whole brain is locked up in sleep, there is no dream. If a portion of it is emancipated, thoughts peculiar to that portion arise, and those thoughts are dreams. According to Dr. David Hartley, they are nothing but the imaginations, fancies or reveries of a sleeping person, and are due to some peculiar state of the stomach or brain, to impressions received while awake, or to the effect of association.

In the same vein Andrew Baxter declares that most of the representations offered to the soul in sleep are not only not produced by it, but there is no consciousness of any action of the will to introduce them. They are involuntarily obtruded upon it. He cannot conceive of anything more absurd than to suppose that the soul, as in a nightmare, would lay a plot to frighten itself. In reply to the argument of those who contend that dreams indicate the activity of the soul separate from and independent of the body, Dr. Priestly asked: Why does not this independent entity contemplate the state of the body and brain during sleep, which might well afford it matter enough for reason and reflection?

So, too, Dr. Cromwell, in his work on "The Soul and the Future Life," asserts that dreams take place only when the sleep is unsound and arise from partial returns of activity of the brain itself. These views fairly reflect the consensus of opinion regarding the origin and character of the phenomena.

On the other hand, there is authority as eminent for the belief that all dreams cannot be satisfactorily explained on the grounds above stated—that there is a something left out which it is of the highest consequence to understand before a positive judgment can be pronounced. The student of Xenophon will recall the remarkable passage which the historian puts into the mouth of the dying Cyrus the Elder: "Nor do I feel convinced that the soul will be devoid of sense when it is separated from the senseless body, but it is probable that when the mind is separated, unmixed and pure, it is then also most intelligent. When the frame of man is dissolved, every part of him is seen returning to that which is of the same nature as itself, except the soul, which alone is seen neither present nor departing. Reflect, too, that nothing more closely resembles the death of man than sleep, but it is in sleep that the soul of man appears most divine, and it is then that it foresees something of the future, for then, as it seems, it is most at liberty."

The letters of the great Euler to a German princess contain the following statement: "Sleep furnishes something like an example of the state of the soul after death, as the union of the soul and body in then, in a great measure, interrupted, and the soul ceases not from activity, being employed in the production of dreams. These are usually disturbed by the remaining influence which the senses exercise, and we know by experience that the more this influence is suspended, which is the case in profound sleep, the more regular and connected are our dreams."

Blakewell affirms that to be able to see without the eye, to hear with the ear and to feel without touching objects, as we do in dreams, are facts which afford direct proof that the percipient principle is independent of the organs of sense and lead to the inference that the material organization of the brain, by which the impressions of external objects are originally conveyed to the mind, must be distinct from the power that receives and retains these impressions; otherwise it would be impossible to account for the activity of the perceptive power during the time when the brain ceases to hold any direct communication with the material world. Lord Brougham cites the immense rapidity of the mind's operations as a proof of its independence of matter and capacity to exist without it, and after adducing a multitude of facts chiefly connected with the phenomena of dreams says that "nothing can be conceived better calculated than these facts to demonstrate the extreme agility of the mental powers, their total diversity from any material substance or action. Nothing better adapted to satisfy us that the nature of the mind is consistent with its existence apart from the body."

There is no denial by the advocates of the latter view that dreams can ordinarily be accounted for on the hypothesis generally accepted by medical men. Impaired digestion, a feverish condition of the body, intense nervous strain, and other physical causes, it is admitted, may be reasonably adduced to explain the phenomena. But there are well authenticated cases of dreams of a character so remarkable as to render the theory of physical causes wholly inapplicable to them. They seem to demonstrate the power of the soul, during sleep, to evolve clear ideas and new developments of thought which are not the result of automatic or unconscious reflex action.

Coleridge tells us that "Kubla Khan" was composed entirely while he slept, "the images rising up before him as things with a parallel production of the corresponding expressions, without any sensation or consciousness of effort." For a man of his peculiar temperament that does not seem so strange an experience, but that the famous mathematician and philosopher, Condorcet, saw in his dreams the final stage of a difficult calculation which had puzzled him during the day is a most extraordinary fact and one that is scarcely to be explained by a reference to any abnormal bodily conditions. But if we admit the soundness of Colquhoun's doctrine, we shall have an adequate means of explanation. He maintained that dreaming is the exercise of an original spiritual energy; that it is an effort of the soul to manifest itself free from material trammels; that all sleep is accompanied with dreaming, and that, in the case of the soundest sleep, dreams are not remembered because the soul has no further need of the sensorium of them. Therefore we only catch glimpses of the soul's activity in sleep when the sensibility of the corporeal organs is not altogether suspended, and these glimpses are called dreams.—New York Times.

Thomas Taylor, M. D., in his report to the department of agriculture, says that mushrooms that change color when cut are not always poisonous, while, on the contrary, the writer knows of several of the nonedible amonitas that do not change color when they are cut.

IN TOW OF AN ICEBERG.

A Bark Pulled Through an Icefield by a Frozen Mountain.

When the captain of the Norwegian bark Wave King sailed for the port of New York on one of his trips, he expected as a matter of course to meet some icebergs on the way. He also expected to engage a tugboat to tow him into the harbor if he found the weather at Sandy Hook boisterous or the wind too strong against him to sail in alone, but as for having a present of a tow in the middle of the Atlantic and free of charge, that was a piece of good fortune of which he never dreamed in his most economical moments. Yet, improbable as it seems, that was the treat he unexpectedly received.

Everything went very well with the bark until half through her voyage, when one day the mate—who was an arctic weather prophet—reported that icefields and icebergs were near. He knew it, he said, because of the light loom along the ocean's rim—also from the look and coldness of the sea water. A bright lookout was therefore kept, and, sure enough, about noon a great icefield or floe became visible in the haze, dead ahead. There it lay right in their track and extended as far on each side as their best telescope was able to make it out.

For several miles on both sides the bark now sailed back and forth, the lookouts searching for an opening in the beautiful, trembling, glistening white fields, but none could be found, although the fair blue water lay temptingly beyond in full sight.

Presently the captain noticed that the icefield, under the pressure of the fresh breeze, was advancing toward them, and he gave orders to "bout ship."

As the vessel went about, a large iceberg was noticed right astern in the light haze, and, strange to relate, it also appeared to be coming toward them. At first this caused the sailors much uneasiness, for they feared to be caught between it and the field of ice.

A little careful steering, however, placed them safely to one side of the berg, and the men gathered along the ship's side to watch the monster as it went majestically by.

The captain knew that some strong lower current was pushing against the underwater portion of this berg and urging it along against the winds and surface currents. He wondered what would result when the berg and icefield met. Which would gain the mastery? Why, the heavy berg, of course.

Then a bright idea flashed through his mind, which he instantly began to put in execution by ordering the steersman to turn the bark and run her right in behind the berg.

Going as close as he dared to the great ice mountain, he ordered the crew to lower a boat and take a rope and hitch on to it. This they did, making fast to a low pinnacle, or foothill. Then sail was shortened to flying jib and spanker, just enough to keep her steady and take some strain off the rope, and, lo! the ship was towing kindly in the wake of the berg, while all hands awaited developments.

They had not long to wait. Steadily and surely the ice mountain bore down on the icefield. There came a great crash, and a little sliver of the berg that could be felt on the towline. With bang and smash and roar the mighty contest went on. But the berg proceeded serenely, leaving a broad open lane in which the bark rode safely until clear water was once more reached. Then, as quickly as possible, the rope was cast off, all sail set and a respectful distance put between the bark and the berg.—J. O. Davidson in St. Nicholas.

Where the Sun Gets Its Heat.

Why the sun continues to give forth light and heat in undiminished quantities and unvarying intensity after having been in a state of combustion for untold ages has long been a puzzle to the astronomers as well as to the thoughtful observer in the lower rank of the star gazers. Those learned in sun lore tell us that for every second of time the sun emits as much heat as would result from the instant combustion of 11,000,000,000,000 tons of coal! Calculating from these figures, it is easily shown that if the sun's entire mass consisted of first quality of coal in a state of combustion, and that it could burn until the time when the very last ton was consumed—maintaining until then the rate of heat emission now kept up—the supply could not possibly last over 5,000 years. But it is believed that the sun has been in existence for hundreds of thousands and probably millions of years, and that since the "ages of man" dawned the quantity of heat emitted has not perceptibly diminished. This being the case, there is but one conclusion as to how its heat supply is kept up—viz, that it has an outside source to draw upon. The latest theory is that the immense regions of space are occupied by untold myriads of miniature bodies known as meteors, meteorites and acrolites, which are being constantly drawn to the sun, and that these, constantly plowing its atmosphere, evolve numerous quantities of both heat and light.—St. Louis Republic.

Rich American Bondholders.

The millionaire is commonly represented as engaged in clipping coupons from bonds. This is an egregious error. Rich men, as a rule, do not hold coupon bonds. The reason is quite obvious. Such bonds are not safe property. They are always payable to bearer like treasury notes. If lost, the government will not replace them.

Accordingly, for the sake of security, people are constantly exchanging them for registered bonds. Thus the sum total of coupon bonds outstanding, which is now about $70,000,000, is all the time diminishing. They are mostly in the hands of small holders. With the registered bonds it is quite different. They are rich men's property par excellence. At present about $200,000,000 worth of them are held by private individuals. Of this great sum $87,000,000, or not far from one-half, are owned by 1,000 persons, roughly speaking, whose holdings average $80,000. The names of these fortunate individuals are kept secret by the treasury. Some of the fortunes possessed in this shape are enormous. Some of the greatest belong to the Vanderbilts. Old William H. Vanderbilt had $45,000,000 in registered bonds at one time.—Washington Star.

Had to Do It.

A humorous excuse was that given by the defendant in a case of breach of promise. The defendant was allowed to say a word in his own behalf. "Yes," he said, "I kissed her almost continually every evening I called at her house."

Lawyer For Plaintiff—Then you confess it?

Defendant—Yes, I do confess it, but I had to do it!

Lawyer—You had to do it! What do you mean?

Defendant—That was the only way I could keep her from singing.—Detroit News.

MORE SIMIAN THAN HUMAN.

The Pygmy Veddahs of Ceylon Believed to Supply the Missing Link.

The discovery of the missing link, says a German magazine, has been made known by two Swiss scientists, brothers, who declare that the Veddahs of Ceylon fill the void between man and ape. The brothers have spent several years in Ceylon in order to study this little known but interesting race of pygmies, and, quite apart from the theory which they put forward, the facts which they publish concerning the Veddahs are of sufficient interest to command general attention.

The Veddahs are quite a distinct race and are more like apes than any other human beings. The skeletons and the general organization of their bodies are greatly similar to those of the chimpanzees. The Veddah is the best preserved specimen of the curly haired race. These black pygmies lived in India many centuries before Buddha or Jesus Christ. Historians of the early centuries of the Christian era speak of the Veddahs and describe their mode of living, which is almost in every respect the same as at the present time. We find in the Mahavanso, the most important of the Cingalese chronicles, details concerning the Yakas, people who are exactly like those whom we call Veddahs, and the Sanscrit poem, "Ramayana," the Iliad of India, uses the word ape when speaking of the Yakas.

The number of the Veddahs does not now exceed 2,200, yet they occupy an immense tract of land, situated between 7 degrees and 9 degrees latitude and 81 degrees and 82 degrees longitude. If you wish to see the Veddahs in their pure state, free from any mixture with the other races of Ceylon, you must go to the east of the island. They live in small groups, or in families, apart from each other, each family having its own part of the forest to hunt in. When the rainy season—October-December—comes around they are thus thrown more together and become sociable; they arrange marriages and talk about things in general. They recognize no chiefs, know no laws and are quite devoid of any ideas.

It has been said above that the Veddahs resemble chimpanzees in certain respects. It remains to be added that they are about 4 feet in height, their hair is thick and black, and when in trouble or grieved they hang their heads down upon their breasts in a way which gives them a peculiar appearance. Among themselves they go about naked, but when strangers are about they adopt a covering of leaves or cloth. They do not know what beds are, but pass the night naked upon the moist ground without the slightest covering. Their only weapons are their wooden bows and arrows and their axes, which they always have near them. Alcohol and salt are both unknown to them.

Their communication with the Cingalese is reduced to this: During the night they will place in front of the door of a Cingalese blacksmith some money and dried meat, with a rough model, made of leaves and twigs, of the ax which they require. A few nights afterward they will go to the door and take away the ax, which the blacksmith has placed outside for them. This shows what a dislike they have to mixing with other people.

Their language is very simple and consists of Cingalese words so altered that the natives of Ceylon cannot understand them and partly of words which are apparently the remains of some primitive language. Of course there are no family names. They say "the great man," "the little man," "the young woman," "the old man," etc.

They know nothing of numbers. When they are talking of many persons or things, they repeat several times a word which indicates a single thing. They therefore cannot say how old they are. Divisions of time cannot be expressed, and the dimensions of objects are indicated by actions. When they first see a looking glass or a firearm, they act just as monkeys do under similar circumstances. Religion, belief in good or evil spirits, a few ideas of a God, are all unknown to them. When a Veddah dies, the others leave him where he has died and shun the place for a long time, during which the body disappears.

Yet, with all this lack of intelligence, they are honest and trustworthy. They live peaceably and have no internal feuds, which is probably due to the fact that they live apart, except in the rainy season. The English government has on several occasions tried to establish schools for their children and endeavored to Christianize the Veddahs, but without success.

Drank "on the Minister."

Some years ago, in Rochester, an Episcopal clergyman received a call in the evening from a couple who desired to be married. He married them and received for his fee what seemed to him a very peculiar one. It consisted of a 50 cent piece, a 25 cent piece, a dime, a nickel and 4 cents. He thought it strange, but wondered a great deal.

The whole matter was explained when, two months afterward, the bride called upon him and desired him, much to his surprise, to unmarry her. He told her that this was beyond his power and asked her why she wished to be unmarried.

She said her husband was a lazy, worthless, drinking man, and that when they got married he had to borrow $1 with which to pay the clergyman his fee, and that on the way with her to the minister's house he stopped at a saloon to get a drink, for which he paid 6 cents, leaving the dollar minus 6 cents with which to pay the minister. Thus taking a drink at the expense of the minister explained to him the peculiarity of the fee.—Boston Herald.

Gambetta's Table.

There is a curious story told of the table at which Gambetta wrote. A previous owner, General Lahitte, minister for foreign affairs in 1849, dismissed his confidential servant because he believed that he had stolen a large sum of money in 1,000 franc notes. Some years afterward, when the table had to be repaired, the joiner employed for the work found the missing bundle of bank notes between the mahogany board of the table and the drawers below. They had lain there unnoticed for 17 years. Unfortunately the story does not go on to say that the poor servant and his mistaken master were alive at the time of the discovery, and that the one's character was cleared and the other's confidence restored.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Short Names.

A correspondent, who asks whether "Ira May, Avon, Mass.," is not probably the shortest address in this country, may be surprised to learn that there are dozens of postoffices with names of three letters, like Ayr, Bly, Dot, Elk, Ute, etc., several with two, like Ai, and there is at least one, not a mere station, but a postoffice, with a single letter, "B, Ind.," and the shortest of all, plainly, is that of Jo Ax.—Philadelphia Ledger.