PRISONER OF WAR.

"No rent again this month? This is the third time it has happened within the half-year. I'll go there myself and get the money, or I'll know the reason why."

Matthew Deane was in particularly bad humor this raw December morning. Everything had gone wrong. Stocks had fallen when they ought to have risen—his clerk had tipped over the inkstand on his special and peculiar heap of paper—the fire obstinately refused to burn in the grate—in short, nothing went right, and Mr. Deane was consequently and correspondingly cross.

"Jenkins!"

"Yes, sir."

"Go to the Widow Clarkson's, and tell her I shall be there in half an hour and expect confidently—mind, Jenkins—confidently to receive that rent money. Or I shall feel myself obliged to resort to extreme measures. You understand, Jenkins?"

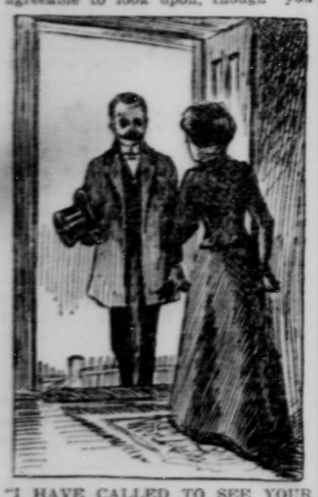
"Certainly, sir."

"Then don't stand there starin' like an idiot," snarled Mr. Deane, in a sudden burst of irritation, and Jenkins disappeared like a shot.

Just half an hour afterward Matthew Deane brushed the brown hair just sprinkled with gray from his square yet no unkindly brow. Putting on his fur-lined overcoat he walked into the chilly winter air fully determined, figuratively, to annihilate the defaulting Widow Clarkson.

It was a dwarfish little red brick house which appeared originally to have aspired to two-storyhood lot, but cramped by circumstances, had settled down into a story and a half, but the windows shone like Brazilian pebbles, and the doorsteps were worn by much scouring. Neither of these circumstances, however, did Mr. Deane remark as he pulled the glittering brass doorknob and strode into Mrs. Clarkson's neat parlor.

There was a small fire—very small, as if every lump of anthracite was hoarded in the stove, and at a table with writing implements before her sat a young lady whom Mr. Deane at once recognized as Mrs. Clarkson's niece, Miss Olive Mellen. She was not disagreeable to look upon, though you



"I HAVE CALLED TO SEE YOUR AUNT."

would never have thought of classing her among the beauties, with shining black hair, blue, long-lashed eyes, and a very pretty mouth, hiding teeth like rice kernels, so white were they.

Miss Mellen rose with a polite nod, which was grimly reciprocated by Mr. Deane.

"I have called to see your aunt, Miss Mellen."

"I know it, sir, but as I am aware of her timid temperament, I sent her away. I prefer to deal with you myself."

Mr. Deane started—the cool audacity of the damsel in gray, with scarlet ribbons in her hair, rather astonished him.

"I suppose the money is ready?"

"No, sir, it is not."

"Then, Miss Olive, pardon me, I must speak plainly. I shall send an officer here this afternoon to put a valuation on the furniture, and——"

"You will do nothing of the kind, sir."

Olive's cheek had reddened and her eyes flashed portentously. Mr. Deane turned toward the door, but ere he knew what she was doing, Olive had walked quietly across the room, locked the door, and taken out the key—then she resumed her seat.

"What does this mean?" ejaculated the astonished "prisoner of war."

"It means, sir, that you will now be obliged to consider the question," said Olive.

"Obliged?"

"Yes—you will hardly jump out of the window, and there is no other method of egress unless you choose to go up the chimney. Now, then, Mr. Deane, will you tell me if you—a Christian man in the nineteenth century—intend to sell a poor widow's furniture because she is not able to pay your rent? Listen, sir!"

Mr. Deane opened his mouth to remonstrate, but Olive enforced her words with a very emphatic little stamp of the foot, and he was, as it were, stricken dumb.

"You are what the world calls a rich man, Mr. Deane. You own rows of houses, piles of bank stock, railroad shares, bonds and mortgages—who knows what? My aunt has nothing; I support her by copying. Now, if this case be carried into a court of law, my poor ailing aunt will be a sufferer—you would emerge unscathed and profiting. You are not a bad man, Mr. Deane; you have a great many noble qualities, and I like you for them." She paused an instant and looked intently and gravely at Mr. Deane. The color rose to his cheek—it was not disagreeable to be told by a pretty young girl that she liked him, on any terms; yet she had indulged in pretty plain speaking. "I have heard," she went on, "of your doing kind actions when you were in the humor of it. You can do them, and you shall in this instance. You are cross this morning—you know you are! Hush! no excuse; you are selfish and irritable and overbearing. If I were your mother, and you a little boy, I should certainly put you in a corner until you promised to be good."

Mr. Deane smiled, although he was getting angry. Olive went on with the utmost composure.

"But as it is, I shall only keep you here a prisoner until you have behaved, and given me your word not to annoy my aunt again for rent until she is able to pay you. Then, and not until then, will you receive your money. Do you promise? Yes or no?"

"I certainly shall agree to no such terms," said Mr. Deane, tartly.

"Very well, sir; I can wait."

Miss Mellen deposited the key in the pocket of her gray dress and sat down to her copying. Had she been a man, Mr. Deane would probably have knocked her down; as it was, she wore an invisible armor of power in the very fact that she was a fragile, slight woman, and she knew it.

"Miss Olive," he said, sternly, "let us terminate this mummery. Unlock that door!"

"Mr. Deane, I will not!"

"I shall shout and alarm the neighborhood, then, or call a policeman."

"Very well, Mr. Deane; do so, if you please."

She dipped her pen in the ink and began on a fresh page. Matthew sat down, puzzled and discomfited, and watched the long-lashed eyes and faintly tinged cheek of his keeper. She was very pretty—what a pity she was so obstinate!

"Miss Olive!"

"Sir?"

"The clock has just struck 12."

"I heard it."

"I should like to go out and get some lunch."

"I am sorry that that luxury is out of your power."

"But I'm confounded hungry."

"Are you?"

"And I'm not going to stand this sort of thing any longer."

"No?"

How provokingly nonchalant she was. Mr. Deane eyed the pocket of the gray dress greedily, and walked up and down the room pettishly.

"I have an appointment at 1."

"Indeed! What a pity you will be unable to keep it!"

He took another turn across the room. Olive looked up with a smile.

"Well, are you ready to promise?"

"Hang it, yes! What else can I do?"

"You promise?"

"I do, because I can't help myself."

Olive drew the key from her pocket with softened eyes.

"You have made me very happy, Mr. Deane. I dare say you think me unwomanly and unfeminine, but indeed you do not know to what extremities we are driven by poverty. Good-morning, sir."

Mr. Deane sallied forth with a curious complication of thoughts and emotions struggling through his brain, in which gray dresses, long-lashed blue eyes and scarlet ribbons played a prominent part.

"Did you get the money, sir?" asked the clerk, when he walked into the office.

"Mind your business, sir," was the tart response.

"I pity her husband," thought Mr. Deane, as he turned the papers over on his desk. "How she will henpeck him! By the way, I wonder who her husband will be?"

The next day he called at the Widow Clarkson's to assure Miss Mellen that he had no idea of breaking his promise, and the next but one after that he came to tell the young lady she need entertain no doubt of his integrity. And the next week he dropped in on them with no particular errand to serve as an excuse!

"When shall we be married, Olive? Next month, dearest? Do not let us put it off later."

"I have no wishes but yours, Matthew."

"Really, Miss Olive Mellen, to hear that meek tone one would suppose you had never locked me up here and tyrannized over me as a jailer."

Olive burst into a merry laugh.

"You dear old Matthew; I give you warning beforehand that I mean to have my own way in everything. Do you wish to recede from your bargain? It is not too late yet."

No, Matthew Deane didn't; he had a vague idea that it would be very pleasant to be henpecked by Olive!

Very Definite.

Mrs. Sewell, who is the head of a classical school for girls in Indianapolis, could contribute a readable sequel to English as she is taught, for the pupils in a girls' classical school are not above the amusing blunders which characterize the efforts of their young sisters in the public schools. On one occasion Mrs. Sewell was instructing a class in physics. Force was the subject, and she made plain to the girls the difference between centrifugal and centripetal force. "Centrifugal," said Mrs. Sewell, "is a force whose direction is from the center and centripetal is a force whose direction is toward the center. Do you all understand that?" The class chorused assent. "Now, will some girl give me an illustration?" continued Mrs. Sewell. "The domestic virtues are centripetal," replied a small girl, "because they keep a man in the center of his home, and a centrifugal force is—is—well, a saloon is a centrifugal force."—Philadelphia Post.

Victoria Not So Wealthy.

It has been stated that Queen Victoria has accumulated a fortune of over $100,000,000. The actual amount of the queen's savings is known to a few people. One of these is Henry Labouchere, the radical, who came by his information officially as member of a special committee of the House of Commons about eight years since. Subsequently Mr. Labouchere wrote: "The impression prevails that the queen has effected large savings, but that is not the case. As the sum total of the queen's investments was given to the committee under a pledge of secrecy, I cannot violate this pledge, but I do not think I am breaking faith in saying that the amount is surprisingly small."

Heavy Calls Upon the Czar's Purse.

No sovereign is so rich as the czar, and no sovereign has such heavy calls upon his purse. The grand dukes Michael, Vladimir, Alexis, Serge and Paul Alexandrovitch, as the sons of emperors of Russia, receive from the head of the house an annual sum of 185,000 roubles (£26,200) each, which added to private means, makes them very rich. The wives and widows of Russian grand dukes receive 40,000 roubles each; their sons 150,000 roubles. It was the Czar Alexander III. who decreed that every member of the imperial family must spend a part of the year in Russia, or else lose a third of his or her allowance.

GOOD NOVEL MAKING.

The Four Things Which Are Fundamental—Character-Drawing.

Good novel making, technically viewed, rests four-square upon invention (plot), construction, characterization and description. These may be called the fundamentals of fiction. The form of literature known as the story is often spoken of carelessly or in shallow wise as if its manner—its style of diction—were the chief thing, even the only thing, says the Forum. "Have you read so and so?" queries one lady of another in the car. "The idea isn't anything, but then, you know, Brown writes so well! His style is so good!" Again, with the great class of uncritical readers, represented in the lower grade by the blue-clothed messenger boy in the car immersed in the latest number of the Fireside Companion, plot outweighs every other consideration. Possibly it does with the majority of all novel-readers.

But, if looking to the permanent successes and great names of fiction, we ask ourselves what qualities constitute the essentials of fiction, we shall be likely to settle on these fundamental four. Furthermore, if forced to pick out the quality ministering most to the successful result, we must, I fancy, reply: Character-creation. This judgment may fall strange on the ear nowadays, because other traits are emphasized—construction or style, for example. Indeed, if we examine the clever work of present day novelists, we shall find that what often gives them reputation is ability in ways aside from this central, this solar, gift of characterization. Compared with it, invention and construction are secondary; description and style, important as they may be in the abstract, are as naught. A novel without salient character-drawing, whatever its merits in other directions, can never take high rank; it is almost certainly a failure foredoomed. The truth of the proposition becomes apparent when we come to apply it and illustrate by it. The firm, steady hold upon the public of certain fictionists, who are more or less roughly handled by critics, is easily explained, if we agree to this central post of importance held by character-lining. The cold, aloof position of the late-century fictionmaker toward the people of his brain and heart may be high art, but it is precious poor humanity. And it is this perhaps more than any other one thing that is likely to keep out of our fiction the red blood of life. "But," cries the novelist, "look at my skill, my ingenuity, my technical excellences in half a dozen particulars of a difficult art." To which the public: "True, it is magnificent, but it is not war."

SHAKESPEARE AND PSALMS.

Cipher Like That Used by Bacon's Adherents Would Prove It.

Though the Bacon cipher may have proved that Shakespeare did not write the plays credited to him for three centuries, another cipher proves just as conclusively that Shakespeare wrote the Psalms. Of course, this is a joke, but there is as much evidence to support the other theory. In Shakespeare's name lies the key to this wonderful cryptogram. As Mr. Donnelly says, the spelling "Shakespeare" was the poet's nom de plume, while "Shakespere" was his name—an evident change from "Shakspear." In each of the two spellings last given are 10 letters—four vowels and six consonants. Combine these two figures and we have the number 46—the key to the mystery. Turning to the 46th Psalm in the Revised Version, it is found that the Psalm is divided into three portions, each one ending with "selah." Remember the number—46. Counting 46 words from the beginning of the psalm one reaches the word "shake," in the first portion. Then, going to the last portion and counting 46 words from the end of the psalm one reaches the word "spear." There is 'Shakespear" as plainly as letters can make it. Now, turn to the middle portion of the psalm and apply the rule of averages. To get this average one goes to the middle verse, which is the sixth, as it has five verses on each side of it. Observe the significant six, the last figure of our key number. Now six in Roman letters is "VI," and so one looks for a word in the verse that has the letters vb and i in it. There is only one—"Voice." What can be plainer than that it is Shakespear's voice speaking to us from the Psalms? —New York Herald.

Too Much for Him.

They are telling this story in Washington about Congressman Clayton of Alabama, who used to be district attorney in his state: It became his duty at one time to prosecute an old man for making illicit whisky. It was not a very serious infraction of the law, but the old backwoodsman had been reckless in his open violation, and it was necessary to make an example of him. He was brought into court and, after the government had stated its case, the old man, who had no lawyer, asked to be allowed to go upon the stand. He was told that this would render him liable to answer any questions, but he insisted. "Well, Uncle John," said Clayton, "did you really make any whisky in your still?" "Henry," replied the old man, with pathetic tone, "I know'd your pa; I voted for your pa every time he ran for jedge. And, Henry, your pa would never have axed me no question like that!" The jurors laughed, the court smiled and Clayton relented. The old man drove home that night.—New York Tribune.

Boyish Ideas.

"It is strange what queer ideas we had when we were young," said a gentleman the other day. "My father once asked me how I supposed the French managed to spell wagon wheel, when they had no 'w' in their language. I never could solve the problem." "And when I was a boy," replied another, "I thought it was an easy matter to translate from foreign languages. I had an idea that the only difference was the alphabetical characters, and if I were to learn the Greek alphabet, for instance, I would have no trouble in turning Greek into English. I found out my mistake after I went to school, though."—Harlem Life.

Wild boars still abound in some parts of Morocco, one hunting party having lately killed over 100 in one week.

ARTILLERY SHELLS AND THEIR USE

While a great deal is written about artillery in these warlike times, it is a subject not always fully understood. The artillery now being used by the British in South Africa consists of the twelve-pounder horse artillery gun and the fifteen pounder field artillery gun. They are practically to the same pattern, the lighter gun being shorter in the barrel. Horse artillery invariably co-operates with cavalry and is able to keep up with the same at its fastest pace, its gunners always being mounted. Field artillery, on the other hand, co-operates with infantry, and must be ready to be pushed into action at a moment's notice.

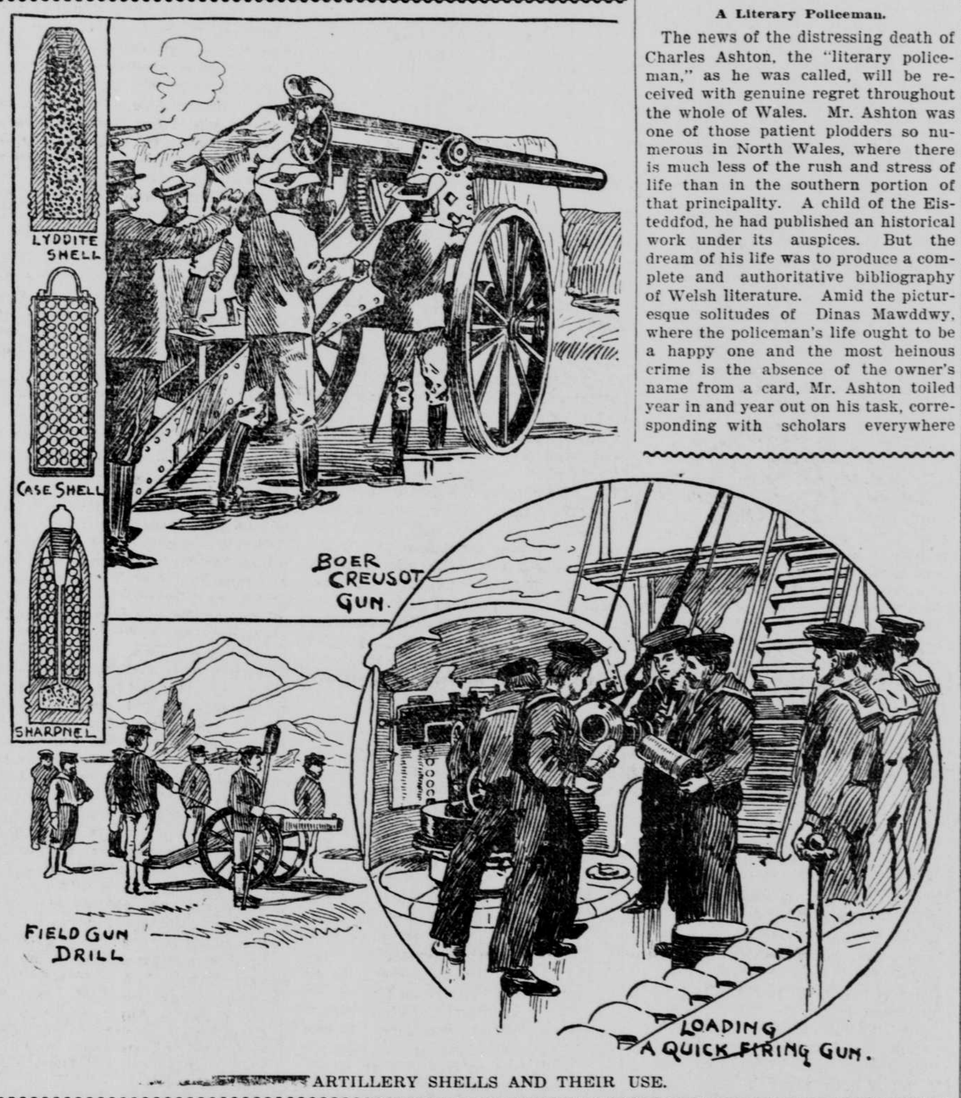
It is only in field and horse artillery that the guns are known by the weight of their charge, other guns deriving their name from the diameter of their bore—that is, their caliber. In horse and field artillery the caliber is three inches, both for case shot and shrapnel. A shrapnel is a hollow shell filled with some 200 bullets and a small bursting charge sufficient to burst it and disperse the bullets over a conical area. This charge of an ounce and a half is at the base of the shell, with the bullets packed above it and round an inner tube reaching from the tip of the shell to the exploding charge. The bullets are placed in rosin to prevent their rolling and interfering with accuracy of aim. The powder charge projecting the shell is independent and is contained in a silk bag to facilitate handling and exactly fitting the breech of the gun.

The method of exploding the shrapnel is interesting. At its upper end the projectile has a funnel shaped opening, whence a tube extends down to the bursting charge. In this opening is screwed the fuse which causes the explosion in the shell itself. This is a gem of mechanical skill and works with clockwork accuracy. It can be used either as a percussion fuse or a time fuse. If the former, it will cause the shell to burst by impact, a needle in the tip igniting the explosive and scattering a shower of bullets and broken shell in all directions. Percussion fuses are used against a solid target, such as a wall or fortified house, while the time fuse is employed against troops in the open with little or insignificant intrenchment. When this is so, a simple manipulation of the gunner ignites a ring of slow burning substance in the shell which, at a certain time after it has left the gun, will ignite the explosive and shower its leaden rain on the enemy. The pieces of shell and bullets thus set free and exploding in the air retain the same velocity the shell had at bursting. It is easy to imagine the terrible way in which such a charge will tear up the ranks of an enemy. What a wonderful piece of mechanism the time fuse is will be clear from the fact that gunners are able to determine within a yard or two just where it will explode, notwithstanding the tremendous rate at which it whistles through the air.

Case shot is less often used than shrapnel. It is looked upon as the last resort of a battery threatened by infantry or cavalry at close quarters and is not effective beyond a range of 500 yards. It is made up of 300 shot packed in a case of sheet tin, which breaks into pieces when the gun is first fired, scattering the bullets in all directions, and not carrying its bullets in a compact mass to the target like the shrapnel and then exploding.

A third kind of projectile, used in heavy guns, such as the 5-inch howitzer, big naval guns and fortress ordnances, is the common shell, similar to the shrapnel in appearance, but containing no bullets. It holds, however, a large bursting charge and is of much heavier metal. It always explodes on impact, being ignited by a percussion cap at the tip. These shells are used for the destruction of masonry, earthworks and all solid targets. They will explode after imbedding themselves in masonry, and so not only pulverize the point where they strike, but also tear up the surrounding stone layers. Their destructive power has been greatly increased by using lyddite for the bursting charge, this explosive being named after the town of Lydd in England, where the British government factories are.

The machine gun forms an independent section in the service. Maxims can fire 600 rounds per mnute. To prevent the barrel getting redhot from the friction it is surrounded by a jacket holding water. This heats and passes off in steam, one and a half pints of water being required for every 1,000 rounds fired.



ARTILLERY SHELLS AND THEIR USE.

HE CALLED HER "MY DEAR."

Somehow or Other He Didn't Succeed as He Expected.

"I don't know anything more exasperating than an inattentive clerk," said a mild-mannered little man on the street car the other night, "but unless you have a certain aplomb way about you, so to speak, you might as well endure the cross in silence. Now I have a friend," he continued, "who possesses just such a gift, and, needless to say, he is never neglected. I went into a store with him the other day, and the young woman at the counter where we stopped continued conversing calmly with another young woman in the next department. 'My dear madam,' said my friend, blandly, 'I trust you will pardon me for intruding upon that important discussion, but if you—' 'What do you wish?' said the clerk, looking startled. 'Do not be angry,' my friend replied; 'I know, of course, that the occasional interruption of customers must be very annoying, and no doubt—' By that time the poor girl was in a nervous flutter, and I really felt sorry for her. When we went out I expressed surprise at the ease with which her attention had been secured, and my friend laughed. 'O, it's no trick at all,' he said. 'All you have to do is to keep yourself cool.' Next day I was fool enough to try the system myself, after I had camped beside a counter for ten minutes waiting for a large and haughty lady to conclude a protracted conversation. 'My dear mad—' I began, trying to imitate my friend's sang-froid. 'Sir!' exclaimed the saleslady, wheeling on me suddenly and freezing my blood with a ferocious glare. 'My dear,' I stammered, 'my dear—' Really I could go no further. My tongue stuck to the roof of my mouth, and I could feel the sweat breaking out on my forehead. I know I must have looked the picture of helpless inbecility. 'What do you mean by calling me your dear and things like that?' demanded the enraged amazon. What earthly reply could I make? I did the only thing possible—I got up and sneaked out, expecting every minute to feel a policeman grab me by the collar. So, as I said before, unless you have the way about you, you might as well put up with these little annoyances. The faculty of blandly bluffing one's fellow beings is something that can't be acquired.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

Royalty's Dress Allowance.

An enterprising fashion writer tells us that before her marriage the duchess of Fife had a very small dress allowance—about $1,500 a year. Besides yachting and every-day dresses and all the usual costumes required by a girl of the upper classes, royal princesses have also to wear the costly and elaborate dresses which their rank demands at the weddings of their near relations. They are, however, fortunate in having stores of beautiful laces, priceless furs and marvelous jewels, all of which can be used again and again. On the whole, it may be asserted that a frugal princess may spend as little as $5,000 a year on her dress, while her more wealthy and extravagant sister may find her dress bills amount to ten times that sum. Age has nothing to do with the matter, for the queen of Italy spends far more than does her beautiful young daughter-in-law, the crown princess of Naples. The empress of Russia, who, more than any other European princess, is able to indulge her wildest fancies, dresses with the greatest simplicity. In the daytime she mostly wears tailor-made coats and skirts, and in the evening favors the purest white materials.—Chicago Chronicle.

Lucid.

A famous verdict rendered many years ago by a coroner's jury in a case of mysterious death ran thus: "We, the jury of twelve good men and true, duly impanelled and responsible on our consciences, do hereby return the following verdict on the demise of the deceased, namely: That said corpse came to its death through the abrupt ceasing of his heart to perform its natural office, for no reason whatever discernible by man, but solely an act of providence." If this was not altogether explicit, at least the public knew there had been no foul play; but what meaning could possibly be attached to the verdict which a legal magazine assures us was rendered, much more recently, by a Missouri court? "We, the jury impanelled, sworn and charged to inquire into the insanguinity of Hezekiah Jones, do occur in the affirmative." This leaves the matter still shrouded in mystery. Was Hezekiah, dead, an ensanguined corpse? Was he, living, accused of homicide, or merely of insanity? Insanguinity is a resonant and mysterious multisyllable that must leave the everyday juryman in a very uncertain frame of mind.

A Literary Policeman.

The news of the distressing death of Charles Ashton, the "literary policeman," as he was called, will be received with genuine regret throughout the whole of Wales. Mr. Ashton was one of those patient plodders so numerous in North Wales, where there is much less of the rush and stress of life than in the southern portion of that principality. A child of the Eisteddfod, he had published an historical work under its auspices. But the dream of his life was to produce a complete and authoritative bibliography of Welsh literature. Amid the picturesque solitudes of Dinas Mawddwy, where the policeman's life ought to be a happy one and the most heinous crime is the absence of the owner's name from a card, Mr. Ashton toiled year in and year out on his task, corresponding with scholars everywhere who were uninterested in the vast body of Welsh literature and were happy to help him with notes and suggestions.—London Mail.

Smallest Religious Sect in the World.

The smallest religious sect in the world is that of the Samaritans, who are to be found in the small city of Nablous, in North Palestine. This city, which is the Neapolis of Josephus, the Shechem of the Old Testament and the Sychar of the New Testament, is situated in the narrow valley between the Mts. Ebal and Gerizim. The population of Nablous numbers about 12,000, all of whom are Mahometans with the exception of this little religious community (now numbering between 100 and 150), which has defied the ravages of war, poverty and oppression for 3,000 years. These Samaritans have lived on through the centuries, and their unity has never been broken. They have clung to little Nablous and to their sacred Mt. Gerizim as the very cactus roots to the granite sides of the somber Ebal that confronts them across the valley. They are regarded by the Jews as heretics, as they accept only the pentateuch. They possess an ancient copy of the pentateuch, written in Phoenician characters, or, according to some, the ancient Hebrew characters in use before the Babylonish captivity.—Stray Stories.

Ground Floor Bedrooms.

There is danger in the porous character of plaster ceilings, which are often very thin, indeed. The ordinary ceiling is "only a porous diaphragm permeable by gases with considerable freedom." The vitiated air of sitting-rooms, therefore, frequently finds its way into bedrooms. The British Medical Journal asks any skeptic to "compare his bodily and mental sensations after sleeping in such a room and in one situated over a similar room well ventilated, and not occupied or illuminated by gas during the evening." The remedy, it says, is to have bedrooms on the ground floor, and living, working and cooking rooms upstairs. But how about noise?—London Chronicle.

Not Even a Name.

The Korean woman is so little esteemed that she has not even a name.

STIFLED.

Some Facts Which Indicate the Portoricans' Willingness to Learn.

The Portorican is mentally acute. The children learn with surprising ease and quickness. Boys and girls eight and ten years of age will do a sum in long division on the board without showing the process; doing the multiplying and subtracting mentally, and only setting down the figures of the quotient, with the remainder. I have talked with men and women in the poor quarters of several cities and towns, have seen the peasant in the field and in the market place, and did not find one with slow wits or dense ignorance of ordinary affairs. A workingman told me of a class of laborers he had formed in Arecibo who studied at night to prepare themselves for the educational test required for the franchise. He said they made rapid progress in learning to read, says Hon. H. K. Carroll in the Forum. The fact of illiteracy is not due to lack of intelligence, but rather to lack of opportunity and the lack, also, of a stimulus. The peasant has not been able to see how he could improve his condition by education. The mercantile and the banking business were almost exclusively in the hands of the Peninsular Spaniards. It was next to impossible for a native to get a position of any kind in one of these houses. They preferred young men from Spain, relatives of they had them. These young men would begin at the lowest round of the ladder, sleep in the store, live in the most economical fashion and trust to experience and opportunity for advancement, which seldom failed to come. When the heads of the house returned to Spain with a competency, to live the rest of their days in "Gracia," the newer part of Barcelona, the clerks succeed to the business. A Portorican who has a large and paying business in San Juan says it was with the greatest difficulty that he found a chance for himself with a Spanish firm. There was apparently no chance anywhere for the peasant. If by the greatest possible good luck he got steady work, and lived so as to save something, he was likely to be made the victim of some unprincipled, covetous neighbor, who had property and influence. When a poor man was compelled to part with his cow because he could not raise eight pesos to pay the alleged tax on her, and she became the property of a rogue at half price, peasants would say, "What is the use? Better have no belongings; we will spend as we go." They saw nothing to be gained by stinting and starving themselves to educate their children. The system was against them; and government and wealth seemed in league to prevent them from rising. The high rate of illiteracy in Porto Rico is not due to the unwillingness or inability of the people to learn, or to their indifference, but to conditions from which they could not extricate themselves.

A DISAPPOINTED REPORTER.

She Didn't Call on Miss Grace Dodge Again.

A woman newspaper reporter, who is now a well-known author, once called upon Miss Grace Dodge, the millionaire organizer and head of the New York Working Girls' Clubs, who is also the author of "A Bundle of Letters to Busy Girls," says the Philadelphia Post. The servant looked sympathetically at the reporter, invited her into the house, took away her wet rubbers and shoes and brought dry ones, an act which filled the visitor's heart with joy. Then she brought a cup of tea and some biscuit. After a long wait Miss Dodge came in. "Are you a reporter?" she asked the newsgatherer. "Yes? I am very sorry you should have come up here this rainy day to see me. You know I never talk about my plans for publication, but we can have just as nice a time talking about books and pictures. Won't you have another cup of tea? Must you be going? I am very sorry. Wait a minute and have the coachman drive you to your office or your home. Come up some day when we can have more time, and I'll tell you all about the Working Girls' Clubs, but of course you won't print any of it." The reporter rode home, but she didn't call again—at least, not on business.

Census Stories.

The opportunities which the census affords to eccentric people in the way of furnishing strange answers to plain questions are seldom neglected. In foreign countries, where the standard of education is lower than in the United States, the variety of answers affords astonishing problems to the officials whose duty it is to catalogue them. An Englishman high in the civil service in British Guiana gives some ludicrous specimens of native talent, selected from recent census returns. One citizen gives his name as "John." He is the "head of the family," and by birth "a male." Then in the column of "Profession, rank or occupation" he puts down: "Can't get nothing to do for the last six months, and can't pay house rent. Has got four children. They in Barbados now, but is coming to Demarara." Another gentleman writes: "My wife is a female. She is close washer. She is not inflicted, and is got two boy children and two is dead. They caan't read or write yet."

Sword-Pistol for the French Army.

France has devised for her army a new sword-pistol which can be discharged at every thrust of the sword. It is believed that with this weapon cavalry attacks, particularly upon cavalry, can be made more effective. The weapon is designed to penetrate armor, and therefore will be especially useful against cuirassiers. It weighs, of course, more than the ordinary cavalry sword, and when not in use as a firearm can be wielded as an ordinary sword. The pistol attachment is in the hilt, with muzzle pointing in exact alignment with the sword blade. Thrusting with the blade forces it backward against the hilt with force enough to release a hidden spring, which acts as the trigger in discharging the pistol. Thus each thrust also fires a shot, making the weapon doubly effective.

The Earmarks.

"Your son is devoted to art, isn't he?" asked Reynolds. "I suppose so," replied Easel. "He's continually drawing on me."