

Umbrellas.

Rain brings out the umbrellas. This may not be a very profound observation, but it compares favorably with the proverb that night brings out the stars, both in profundity and originality. Yesterday being a rainy day in this city and its suburbs, umbrellas swarmed in the streets and dripped all over people in the street cars. Most of these umbrellas were comparatively new, and the fact suggests the question: What becomes of old umbrellas?

There are at present in this country at least twenty-four millions of private umbrellas, exclusive of those remaining unsold in manufactories and shops. Each umbrella-owner buys at least one new umbrella every year, his previous one having been stolen, lost or worn out. We thus see that there is an annual apparent disappearance of twenty-four millions of umbrellas, and the moment we fully comprehend this fact we perceive the importance of the question: What becomes of these umbrellas?

We may admit that many of them are stolen. Men who would not steal a one-cent postage stamp will, nevertheless, feel no hesitation in seizing upon any umbrella that is temporarily separated from its owner and in carrying it off with triumph. About one-sixth of the title to all umbrellas now in active use is probably of this semi-felonious nature. There is said to be a rich umbrella-seller in this city whose stock costs him absolutely nothing, since it is collected by playing upon the consciences of his fellow-men. He walks along Broadway, and when he sees a desirable umbrella he stops the man who is carrying it and remarks: "Excuse me, my friend, but you have my umbrella." At least every fourth man thus stopped knows that his title to the umbrella in his possession will not endure investigation, and so he hastily surrenders the umbrella, remarking as he does so: "I was looking for an owner for it, and intended to send it to Police headquarters this afternoon." On every overcast and threatening day this ingenious collector—who is always followed by a boy with a hand-cart—gathers in from seventy-five to one hundred umbrellas, which he afterward sells at the usual retail price.

But, conceding that one-sixth of our active umbrellas are stolen or sold for the second time, there still remain eighteen millions of umbrellas whose annual disappearance is to be accounted for. Let us assume that of this number two millions are furnished with new covers and a fresh coat of varnish, and so re-enter into circulation as new umbrellas. Still there are sixteen millions more which vanish utterly from the face of the earth.

In the case of the disappearance of pins—a familiar subject which has occupied, for many years, the attention of our statisticians and other scientific persons—it is easy to say that their small size enables them to successfully conceal themselves. Old umbrellas have not this advantage. Next to a hoop-skirt, an old umbrella is the most obtrusive thing in nature. Not only does it refuse to conceal itself, but it attacks every one who comes within its reach, and clings desperately to his legs and garments. Its ribs protrude in all directions, like the tentacles of the octopus, and no amount of force or ingenuity can compress it into a small space. To get rid of an old umbrella will be seen, on reflection, to be apparently one of the most abstruse and difficult of problems.

It is well established that old umbrellas are not kept in houses. The housewife when questioned as to what has become of any given old umbrella will always reply vaguely: "Oh, it has been thrown away." Of course, this cannot be understood literally. If sixteen millions of old umbrellas were thrown into the street every year they would be blown about in clouds much thicker than the ordinary city dust cloud, and there would not be a horse or pedestrian in existence who had not sustained injuries from old umbrella ribs. When the housewife "throws away" an umbrella it unquestionably vanishes, but what she calls "throwing away" is obviously a peculiar and mysterious act.

Hasty thinkers may assume that old umbrellas are cast out into vacant lots, where they are promptly devoured by goats. This may seem a plausible theory to any one but a zoologist. The latter knows, however, that while the goat may be roughly described as an omnivorous animal he is not unambivalent. Undoubtedly goats do eat hoop-skirts, and in the days when hoop-skirts were fashionable, thousands of goats were fattened upon them exclusively. The umbrella has so many of the characteristics of the hoop-skirt that one would naturally suppose that it would tempt the appetite of goats, but it is a well-ascertained fact that for some unexplained reason no goat will touch an umbrella, except when suffering from starvation. Prof. Tyndall kept a goat for seven days without food, and offered him an old umbrella every day, but the goat would not touch it until the seventh day, when, being overcome with hunger, he ate three ribs and part of the handle, and died two hours later with symptoms closely resembling those produced by strychnine. This experiment may be regarded as conclusive, and we must acquit the goat of all share in causing the disappearance of umbrellas.

To some extent it is possible that old umbrellas are used in cheap restaurants, the ribs being served up under the name of asparagus, but only a very small proportion of sixteen millions of umbrellas can be annually used in this way. Neither does the occasional use of an umbrella as a club by a vigorous female reformer have any real bearing upon the subject. There is positively no theory which satisfactorily accounts for the disappearance of old umbrellas, and it is the imperative duty of scientific

persons to invent a theory without further delay.

Truly, we live in a world of mystery, and no thinking man can look at his umbrella and ask himself where it will go when it is worn out without feeling that he stands on the shore of an ocean of unexplored truths.—N. Y. Times.

A Court Defied.

A hearing before Judge Finletter yesterday on the petition of Henry Ristine, of No. 2,221 Frankford avenue, to obtain the custody of his child, ended in an extraordinary scene, in which a mother's love defied and defeated a decree of court. An order had been made upon Ristine seven years ago for the support of his wife and little one. He had fallen \$160 behind in his payments. The present action, the solicitor for the guardians of the poor suggested, was possibly only a shift to escape the payment of that indebtedness. Ristine, however, charged that his wife was not a proper person to have control of the child. Testimony was produced to show that Caspar Shaw, a man who had abandoned a wife and six children, lived in Mrs. Ristine's house, at No. 2,257 Memphis street. She had gone out riding with him, sometimes alone and sometimes with the child. She had accompanied him to Atlantic City one time, and once went with him to a beer saloon.

Mrs. Ristine on her part admitted the carriage-riding and the visit to Atlantic City. She strenuously denied, however, that she had been guilty of any greater violation of the properties. She had accepted Shaw as a boarder, she said, because the sum he paid her eked out the little her husband was forced to give her and the pittance she earned by sewing.

Mrs. Ristine's brother testified that he had occupied the room with Shaw up to four months ago, when he left his sister's house to get married. A large number of witnesses, chiefly women of respectable appearance, testified that Mrs. Ristine was quiet, inoffensive and industrious and treated her child with proper consideration. A letter from a teacher said that the child was a constant and apparently happy attendant at school.

Further testimony tended to show that Ristine was given to drink. His counsel said that he would not ask that the child be given to him direct, but that it be awarded to its grandmother. Mrs. Ristine's counsel pleaded warmly against the child being taken away from its mother at all, and contended that a case to warrant such a proceeding had not been made out.

Judge Finletter replied that the circumstances were not assuring, and severely commented on Caspar Shaw's absence. The people who put on the appearance of evil, he said, abide by the consequences. "Happily, there is one here who can take proper care of the child, and I therefore remand her to the custody of the grandmother."

The child—a bright-eyed little girl, prettily dressed—who had been crying bitterly during nearly the whole of the hearing, now threw her arms around her mother's neck, and burst into a paroxysm of tears. The mother, who had all along maintained a courageous and half-defiant aspect, broke down completely. "No, no," she cried, "they shall not take my child." Court Officer Ott was at her side in a moment, trying to tear the little one away by main force. An ominous hum ran through the room. The crowd were on their feet, swaying backward and forward, excitement in every face. The tipstaves pounded in vain for order. Mrs. Ristine's brother, with white face, went to her defense. "You shall not take the child," he cried hotly to the officer, "unless you shed my blood." He raised his arm; Officer Ott seized him by the shoulder and hauled him up before the bench. The Judge dismissed him with a reprimand.

The mother—a thin little woman, excited to the verge of hysteria—reached the bar with the child in her outstretched arms and implored mercy. Her counsel at the same time was begging for time. "Only till next week," he cried. "We will have the man Shaw here; we will show there was nothing wrong; I will take the child myself. I will rear her as my own until she closes her eyes in death." The Judge would make no change.

The desperate mother turned away. The throng opened before her and as quickly closed behind her when she had passed. No court officer could have passed in safety through that crowd. In a moment the mother and child were out in the open air with the human barricade behind them. The mother's hat had fallen back, her hair was flying in the wind. The child in her arms had ceased to cry. She hastened as fast as her strength would permit straight down Sixth street. Only one man, a friend, followed her. Nearly at Walnut street the driver of a light wagon standing there met her. He was dressed much like her brother. He took the child and swung it into the vehicle. He helped the mother in after, and jumping in himself he whipped up the horse and they drove away.—Philadelphia Times.

—Among the immigrants that reached New York recently were twenty comely Swedish servant girls. They were neatly dressed, intelligent, and had some knowledge of English. In Sweden they had been receiving \$40 a year. Their terms for America were \$16 a month.

—The city of Newark, N. J., contains 1,299 factories, with 29,232 workmen. The capital invested is \$23,919,115, and the sales foot up \$66,234,523. As a manufacturing city Newark ranks tenth in its factories, working people and sales, and eleventh in capital.

FACTS AND FIGURES.

—It has been estimated that there are 600,000 miles of barbed-wire fences in use.

—The Philadelphia Medical College graduated 709 students in 1881. The number for 1880 was 731.

—The aggregate value of the property of colored people throughout Tennessee is set down at \$6,478,951, being an increase of \$671,179 over the preceding year.

—From statistics recently published, it appears that 358 railway accidents occurred in Belgium in 1880. Of these 131 were due to collisions and 112 from trains running off the rails at or near stations.

—They make something besides office-holders in Washington, the manufacturing establishments of the city having a capital of \$5,381,226, employing 7,116 persons, while their products are valued at \$11,641,185.

—By a recent bulletin of the Census Office the statistics of live stock in each of the States and Territories show that there were on the farms in the United States, June 1, 1880, 10,357,981 horses, 1,812,932 mules, 993,970 oxen, 12,443,593 milch cows, 22,488,590 other cattle, 35,191,156 sheep and 47,683,951 swine.

—Boston has exported during the past season 65,093 bushels of apples, against 510,300 the previous season. The exports from New York were 75,889 barrels, against 79,200 barrels the previous season. The total exports from New York, Boston and Portland this season amounted to 147,379 barrels, against 1,159,280 a year ago.

—Evidently the poultry interest in this country is to be promoted, at least as far as the protection of eggs is concerned. During the last three months we imported 3,396,246 dozen eggs, valued at \$465,554. It would seem as though hens enough ought to be kept, and well kept, to supply all the eggs we want, at all seasons.—N. Y. Examiner.

—According to an official return lately published, 4,044 persons were drowned within the limits of Great Britain during 1878. This large number does not include deaths from shipwreck. There were 3,292 deaths from shipwreck, and 1,019 of persons who were children under 16. There were suicides, 423 bathing accidents, and 1 were murders.—Chicago News.

—The census office has issued a bulletin showing that by the census of 1880 the number of persons in the United States was 50,155,763; the area in square miles, 2,900,137; the number of families, 9,945,916; the number of dwellings, 8,955,812; the number of persons to a square mile, 17.29; the number of families to a square mile, 3.43; the number of dwellings to a square mile, 3.02; the number of persons to a family, 15.62; persons to a dwelling, 5.60; and persons to a family, 5.04. The area in land is surface only, and exclusive of the Indian Territory and tracts of unorganized territory, aggregating 69,830 square miles.—Chicago Tribune.

WIT AND WISDOM.

—Josh Billings says that a good doctor is a gentleman to whom we pay three dollars a visit for advising us to eat less and exercise more.

—He had lost his knife, and they asked him the usual question: "Do you know where you lost it?" "Yes, yes," he replied, "of course I do. I'm merely hunting in these other places for it to kill time."

—A visitor, on calling at a friend's house during the session of the Legislature, was questioned thus by a little boy. "Where is your ax?" "What do you mean, little boy?" asked the visitor. "I heard pa say the reason you came to town was, you had an ax to grind."

—Your Honor and gentlemen of the jury, I acknowledge the reference of counsel of the other side to my gray hair. My hair is gray and it will continue to be gray as long as I live. The hair of that gentleman is black and will continue to be black as long as he dies."—N. Y. Independent.

—A lady of uncertain age looks unutterable on Chestnut street at a gentleman, who thereupon ventures to offer her his umbrella. "How dare you speak to me, sir?" she demands, in apparent anger. "I beg you not to be offended. I could not resist offering a simple courtesy," he replies, adding, as her anger simmers away: "You look so exactly like my mother." Somehow she scuds along alone, with a look that would have taken the glazing off a stone-jar.—Indianapolis Journal.

—How innocent and sweet children are, to be sure. "Johnnie, you must have your face washed before you go to bed, as the angels won't stay and watch such a dirty boy," said his mother, as she played peek-a-boo while slipping his night-dress over his head. "Don't care. What's angels watching me for?" "So as to keep Johnnie safe till morning," was the assuring reply. "Guess I'm big 'nuff to take care of my own self, now. See them pants." He had worn them just one day, and the confidence they had begat in his soul was truly marvelous.—New Haven Register.

—The crescent shape of the first quarter of the moon hung like an electric lamp in the western sky, casting a subdued, cool light upon the path they had chosen. They walked with a slow and measured step, and said little. The scene was rapture-inspiring. At last she, looking up into his face with a sort of a scared-to-death-like-a-young-fawn look, said: "Albert, how many walks like this we've taken—" "Yes, Rosalind, we have taken a great many walks like this, and—and—and—" "O Albert, now don't—" "Well, I won't, seeing it's you." Another case of snapping at the bait too soon.—Chicago Tribune.

How a Servant Got a Recommendation.

There has lately been a good deal of discussion upon the subject of the false characters so frequently given of domestic servants, who not unfrequently, after taking service on the strength of the most glowing references as to honesty, sobriety and all the other virtues, suddenly levant with their masters' silver spoons or their mistresses' jewels. Apropos of this, I heard rather a good story the other day of a butler who applied for a situation in a first-rate family at the West End. The man gave as reference his late employer, a certain Mr. A., then staying at the Grand Hotel, Charing Cross, who was to be seen there any day between twelve and three o'clock, and would be pleased to testify to the trustworthiness of his late servant. The gentleman in need of a butler did not believe in written testimonials, and according to his custom, when engaging servants, went to make his inquiries in person. Arriving at the Grand Hotel, he sent his card up to Mr. A., and was duly ushered into the handsome suite of rooms he occupied. In a few minutes Mr. A. put in an appearance. He was a most eminently respectable-looking old gentleman, with a bald head, and flowing, silvery beard. He received his visitor with great urbanity, and answered all his inquiries in a very satisfactory manner. He explained that the butler had been for many years in his service, and was a most valuable servant from whom he was most loath to part, but that his (Mr. A.'s) ill-health had compelled him to break up his establishment and travel about for change of air.

On the strength of this recommendation the butler was engaged, and for nearly three months discharged his duties in so satisfactory a manner that his new master never ceased to congratulate himself upon the acquisition of such a treasure. One day a friend, who was a Stipendiary Magistrate, came to dinner, and, after looking very hard at the butler, informed his host that just nine months previously he had sentenced the man to six months' imprisonment for theft. Next day the master called the servant up and told him what he had learned. The butler at once admitted the soft impeachment and acknowledged that he had just completed his term of imprisonment when he took service with his present employers, but added that he had sincerely repented his misdeeds, and trusted that no cause for complaint had arisen since he had been in his new situation. "But how on earth," inquired his master, "did you manage to get such a good character from Mr. A., whom I saw at the Grand Hotel, who said he had known you all your life, and had found you perfect in every respect, and said he could confidently recommend you as a butler?" "Please, sir," said the repentant domestic, "A was myself." Under these circumstances it is almost superfluous to add that master and man soon parted company.—London Cor. Philadelphia Telegraph.

The Gray Head by the Hearth.

A private letter from a lady who is spending the year among the peasants of the Tyrol, says: "The morning after our arrival we were awakened by the sound of a violin and flutes under the window, and, hurrying down, found the little house adorned as for a feast; garlands over the door and wreathing a high chair which was set in state.

"The table was already covered with gifts, brought by the young people whose music we had heard. The whole neighborhood were kinsfolk, and these gifts came from uncles and cousins in every far-off degree; they were simple, for the donors were poor: knitted gloves, a shawl, baskets of flowers, jars of fruit, loaves of bread; but upon all some little message of love was pinned.

"Is there a bride in the house?" I asked of my landlord.

"Ach, nein!" he said. "We do not make such a bother about our young people. It is the grandmother's birthday."

"The grandmother, in her spectacles, white apron and high velvet cap, was a heroine all day, sitting in state to receive visits and dealing out slices from a sweet loaf to all who came. I could not but remember certain grandmothers at home, just as much loved as she, probably, but whose dull, sad lives were never brightened by any such gust of pleasure as this; and I thought we could learn much from these poor mountaineers."

We remember a certain American house of the higher class, in which the venerable mother of the owner had her own boudoir filled with everything which could recall her long checkered life pleasantly to her in its tranquil old age. That room was the center of the great mansion; no guest entered the house without desiring to pay his respects to her, although only the most favored were admitted. The effect upon the young people who came to the house of this marked genuine reverence for age was incalculable for good. The new generation is always apt to be intolerant of those who are leaving the stage; apt, too, to slight their experience and opinions. If they do not find their parents honoring age, where will they learn to honor them?

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