THE RED CLOUD CHIEF.

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RED CLOUD, - - NEBRASKA

THE WIFE'S CHRISTMAS.

Ah, how can you speak so cross, Charlie?
It isn't kind or right;
You wouldn't have talked a year ago
As you have done to-night.

You wonder to see me sit and cry,
Like a baby vexed, you say,
When you didn't know I wanted a gift,
Nor think about the day!

But I'm not like a baby, Charlie,
Crying for something fine;
Only a loving woman pained
Could shed such tears as mine.

For every Christmas time till now—
And that is why I grieve—
It was you that wanted to give, Charlie,
More than I to receive.

And I would not have cared to-night, Charlie,
How poor the gift, or small,
Had you only brought me something to show
That you thought of me at all.

The merest trifle of any kind,
That I could keep or wear,
A flimsy bit of lace for my neck,
Or a ribbon for my hair.

A pretty story of lovers true,
Or a book of pleasant rhyme,
A flower or a holly branch, to mark
The blessed Christmas time.

But to be forgotten, Charlie!
'Tis that that brings the tear;
And just to think that I have been
Your wife but a single year.

—*Phebe Cary.*

A WOMAN ON THE STAND.

Miss Magnesia's Evidence in a Case at Court.

An important case of assault and battery, Shank vs. James, was up for committal trial before Mr. Lytle, the Dingbury Justice of the Peace. Miss Artmesia Pipes, the principal witness, indeed the only one of any importance in the case, was preparing to give her evidence, which preparations consisted in a playful sporting with her be-ribboned turkey-tail fan and the wreathing of coquettish smiles on her crow-footed and thickly floured face.

"'Twas 'bout watermillions an' turkeys," she airily began, pleased with the interest her entrance had created and elevated by the important role she was about to act. "Watermillions an' turk—"

"One moment, if you please," interrupted Mr. Lytle, who—although he disregarded many of the usual formalities himself and took many short cuts to justice when occasion suited, as, for instance, if it was about dinner time—never lost an opportunity of impressing his hearers with the majesty of the law. "One moment, Miss Pipes; until you have been duly sworn as a witness your words fall upon this Honorable Court like ocean spray dashing against rocks."

"Oh, I forgot! You see I ain't used to swearin'. Get yer book, Jedge, if you've got airy one."

The "Jedge" held his spectacles on with one hand, while with the other he rummaged in an old boot that stood under the table, and pulled out the needed volume. The oath was administered with much ceremony, and Miss Pipes was asked if she could give the particulars of the disturbance between Mr. Shanks and Maj. James.

"You're mighty right, I kin!"

"Do you know the cause of the quarrel?"

"You better bet I do!"

"You will please omit slang, Miss Pipes; your vocabulary seems to be chuck full of it, and no slang is permitted before this Honorable Court. What was the cause of the unpleasantness?"

"Water millions an' turkeys. You see, las' year, when the caterpillars was eatin' up ev'body's cotton, Mr. Shanks he slips roun' ev'ry day unbeknownist to Maj. Jeems, an' drives the Maje's turkeys to his cotton patch to ketch the caterpillars. An' one day Maje he fines it out, an' he ups he does an'—"

"The relation of last year's proceedings will be dispensed with for the present," said Mr. Lytle sternly. "Confine your remarks to the events of last week, Miss Pipes, and state the immediate cause of the difficulty."

On being thus checked in her eloquent flight, Miss Pipes's plumage—her fan—fell. She stiffened up, snapped her eyes spitefully, and shot out the one word "liquor." Then her lips were closed as firm as if spring-locked and the key lost. But, after a good deal of persuasion and adroit questioning, Miss Pipes continued her testimony. "You see it was the Saturday before the second Sunday in December, an' me an' Jake, which is my brother Solymun's youngest, an' a pearty boy he is, considerin' he *is* a boy—"

"Miss Pipes, you will please omit all reference to your relatives, and inform this honorable body who began the fight."

"Well, that was just what I was comin' to. You see it was the Saturday before the second Sunday in December, an' me an' Jake which is my brother Solymun's youngest—an' a pearty boy he is, considerin' he *is* a boy. Jake Pipes is—was goin' over to Miss Jeemses' to help her with her sewin,' seein' as how she was behind-han' with it from havin' a run-round on her thimble finger. I mean I was goin' to sew, not Jake, he bein' only a boy, but a pearty one, considerin' he *is* a boy—he wus only goin' 'long with her comp'ny like, becus I had ter walk becus old Peter had hooks in his eyes an' couldn't be rid."

Miss Pipes here paused in her recital to catch her breath and toy girlishly with the curl that was securely tied with a shoe-string to her back hair and dangled gracefully over her shoulder. Advantage was taken of this silence, and the question was asked: "What kind of weapon was used?"

"Pine knots."

"And who struck the first blow?"

"Now, look here; pap tole me you'd all be cross-questionin' me, an' to look out and not get ketched."

"Do you know who struck the first blow?"

"You're mighty right I do! 'Twas Shanks! 'Twas Saturday before the second Sunday, an' me an' Jake, which is my brother Solymun's youngest, an' a peart lad he is, considerin' he *is* a boy, Jake Pipes is—was goin' ova to Miss Jeemeses to help her with her sewin', seein' as how she wus behine-han' with it, from havin' a run-roun' on her thimble finger. I mean I wus goin' to sew, not Jake, he bein' only a boy, put a peart one he is, considerin' he *is* a boy; an' he wus only goin' 'long for comp'ny like, becus I had ter walk becus old Peter had hooks in his eyes an' couldn't be rid. An' Jake, 'stid o' keepin' in the path, kep' dodgin' in an' out the bushes, till the fust thing I knowed Jake he called me: 'Oh, Aunt Magnesia!' sez he. My right name's Artemesia, but Jake always calls me 'Aunt Magnesia,' becus I'm so fair like. 'What?' sez I. 'I've ketched a possum, an' you orter come here an' see how he lays on this here log an' sulls,' sez he. 'Bring him out, Jake, I don't keer to see him sull,' sez I. So Jake brung him out from the bushes an' axed me if I didn't want to buy him, but I said no. You see, I can't eat possum. I like possum, but possum don't like me. So Jake said he'd take the possum an' sell him in Dingyburg, an' thout waitin' to hear my ruthers whether I wanted to go or no, off he scoots down the wire road like greased lightnin' an' leaves me aggin' on behine. And when I got near Maj. Jeemes' turnip patch, thinks I to myself somebody's fussin' mighty; it's them Bowman boys either gettin' up a row or wraslin' for fun like. An' jus' then Jake he comes a-runnin' back with the possum in his arms, all out of breath. 'Aunt Magnesia,' sez he. My right name's Artemesia, but Jake he always calls me Aunt Magnesia, becus I'm so fair like. 'What?' sez I. 'You orter run on and see 'em. They're just agoin' it!' So I hurries on, an' such a whoopin' an' a hollerin' I never did hear! Sounded like a 'nazherie turned loose! An' when I come to a turn in the road, jus' th'other side of where that big chinkypin tree had fell, I seen 'em agoin' it."

"Saw who again' what?"

At this double question of Mr. Lytle's every body in the room learned forward and listened eagerly. The disturbance had created much excitement in Dingyburg, and occasioned many miner disputes between the friends of the two contending parties. Even Mr. Lytle became so intensely interested that he laid aside the green goggles and his judicial sternness.

"Saw who agoin what?" was repeated nervously.

"Why, them Bowman boys a-wraslin'," said Miss Magnesia, artlessly and airily, as she caressingly twisted her curl that had become unfurled. She was blissfully unconscious that her last words had been an electric shock to the "august body." But the undeveloped Blackstone soon "came to" sufficiently to ask some question regarding his client and Maj. James.

"Oh, I didn't see them! They'd done fit that fight of thern, and gone home 'fore I got there."

"Then, how are you prepared to state that Shank struck the first blow?"

"Well, becus the Major told Miss Jeems an' Miss Jeems told me. That's how it come."

The "Jedge" resumed his goggles and his dignity, and dismissed the case.—*Pleasant Riderhood, in Detroit Free Press.*

It swells the manly bosom to hear Mrs. Lovewell say: "The men have such large, noble hearts! I can not but admire them!" But when she turns to Mr. L., a slab-sided, watery-eyed specimen of fourth-rate *genus homo*, and adds: "And you, darling Alfred, are the noblest, the largest-hearted of men," the manly bosom somehow shrivels up like a last year's bean pod.

It is now the fashion abroad for each lady to choose some one perfume, such as the jasmin, rose, or violet, and forsaking all others, keep that only with her, perfuming also her linen and her laces.

HOME AND FOREIGN GOSSIP.

A laboring man of North Shields, England, who was returning to his home at the close of his day's work, struck a match against his trousers, and in a moment was enveloped in flames. In a little more than a minute all the clothing he had upon him was reduced to ashes, and he was dreadfully burned. His clothes seem to have become saturated with chemicals while following his employment.

An expert in antique coins in Paris is a poodle. The money being placed upon a table the dog is introduced, and after sueing among them will knock off the table all the bad pieces with his paw. After acquiring great fame it was found the whole thing was a trick. His master took care to handle only the bogus coins, and the poodle's decisions were arrived at by faculty of scent.

In Berlin, last month, a horse ran away with a cart in which there was a little girl. A boy of 13 seeing the situation, rolled a barrel into the midst of the road, which half stopped the horse, who was about to dodge the obstacle, when the boy seized the bit and contrived, with great agility, to swing himself up and clasp his legs around the animal's neck, which very soon came to a stop. Then the brave little fellow slipped away unknown and unnoticed.

Mr. Van Duffy is a bachelor, residing at San Jose, Cal., with whom his married sister left her baby for a few hours. He had hard work amusing the child, and at length hit upon the expedient of tying it to one end of a long pole and holding it up to a tree, where it could suck the plums as they hung on the branches. The infant died from swallowing the stones and its inventive uncle is being prosecuted for malicious mischief.

The rapidity with which the bison is disappearing from the Western plains may be inferred from the following statistics, collected at Fort Macleod, near the head waters of the South Saskatchewan (lon. 114° W., lat. 30° N.), in British North America, and Fort Walsh, some four degrees further east, both places being important centers for the collection of buffalo robes: The money value of each robe to the Indian hunter may be estimated at $2. In 1877 some 30,000 robes were gathered at Fort Macleod, and a larger number at Fort Walsh. In 1878 the number was 12,797 at the former, and 16,897 at the latter place; while this year only 5,764 have come in to Fort Macleod and 8,277 to Fort Walsh.

The corps of skaters, a force peculiar to the Norwegian army, has been lately reorganized, and consists now of five companies, each of 110 men, which in time of war can be reinforced by calling in 270 skaters belonging to the landwehr. The men of this corps are armed with rifles, and can be maneuvered upon ice or over the snow-fields of the mountains with a rapidity equal to that of the best trained cavalry. The skates they use are admirably adapted for traveling over rough and broken ice or frozen snow, being six inches broad and between nine and ten inches long. In ascending steep slopes the men take a zig-zag course; tacking up the mountain side as a ship does against a head wind. As an instance of the speed at which they can go, it is mentioned that last winter a messenger dispatched from Rocrass at 3 o'clock in the morning arrived at Drontheim at 9:30 in the evening of the same day, having consequently accomplished 120 miles in eighteen and one-half hours.

In most countries it is usual to invite to public dinners persons distinguished by their virtue, their genius, or their wealth. But at a supper lately given in London a diploma in crime was necessary to secure admission. This supper was given by the Mission Chapel in St Giles's, where there is an attempt on foot to reclaim convicts. One of the employees of the establishment repairs every morning to the Coldbath Fields Prison, and invites the discharged prisoners to breakfast and conversation. At the recent yearly supper some 200 criminals sat down to an excellent repast. The invitations issued numbered only 174, but long before the doors of the *salon* were opened a large crowd of hungry, uninvited guests had assembled, and they managed to squeeze their way in. Then a weeding process ensued, and fortunate indeed was the happy man who had committed a burglary, as none but bona fide convicts could be served.

Some of Sir Boyle's Bulls.

The most notorious bull-perpetrator was Sir Boyle Roche, who was elected member for Tralee in 1775. He had a regular blundering reputation. He was known upon one occasion, after withering exposure or patriotic denunciation of Government, to say, with solemn gravity: "Mr. Speaker, it is the duty of every true lover of his country to give his last guinea to save the remainder of his fortunes!" Or, if the subject of debate was some national calamity, he would deliver himself thus: "Sir, single misfortunes never come alone, and the greatest of all national calamities is generally followed by one much greater." Sir Boyle Roche belonged to the ancient family of De La Russe of Fermoy; he was created a Baronet in 1782, and was married to the eldest daughter of Sir James Caldwell, but had no heir. He used to account for his lack of progeny by saying "that it was hereditary in his family to have no children." A letter, supposed to have been written by Sir Boyle Roche during the Irish rebellion of '98, gives an amusing collection of his various plunders. Perhaps he never put quite so many on paper at a time; but his peculiar turn for "bulls" is here shown at one view. The letter was first printed in the *Kerry Magazine*, now out of print:

Dear Sir: Having now a little peace and quiet I sit down to inform you of the bustle and confusion we are in from the blood-thirsty rebels, many of whom are now, thank God, killed and dispersed. We are in a pretty mess; can get nothing to eat, and no wine to drink except whisky. When we sit down to dinner we are obliged to keep both hands armed. While I write this letter I have my sword in one hand and my pistol in the other. I concluded from the beginning that this would be the end; and I am right, for it is not all over yet. At present there are such goings-on that every thing is at a standstill. I should have answered your letter a fortnight ago; but I only received it this morning—indeed, hardly a mail arrives safe without being robbed. No longer ago than yesterday, the mail-coach from Dublin was robbed near this town; the bags had been very judiciously left behind, for fear of accidents, and, by great good luck, there was nobody in the coach except two outside passengers, who had nothing for the thieves to take. Last Thursday an alarm was given that a gang of rebels in full retreat from Drogheda were advancing under the French standard; but they had no colors nor any drums except bagpipes. Immediately every man in the place, including women and children, ran out to meet them. We soon found our force a great deal too little, and were far too near to think of retreating. Death was in every face; and to it we went. By the time half our party were killed we began to be all alive. Fortunately the rebels had no guns except pistols, cutlasses, and pikes; and we had plenty of muskets and ammunition. We put them all to the sword; not a soul of them escaped, except some that were drowned in an adjoining bog. In fact, in a short time nothing was heard but silence. Their uniforms were all different—chiefly green. After the action was over we went to rummage their camp. All we found was a few pikes without heads, a parcel of empty bottles filled with water, and a bundle of blank French commissions filled up with Irish names. Troops are now stationed round, which exactly squares with my ideas of security. Adieu; I have only time to add that I am yours in haste. B. R.

P. S.—If you do not receive this, of course it has miscarried; therefore I beg you write and let me know.—*Chambers's Journal.*

The Colorado Shepherd.

Our shepherd must purchase his sheep; and here come in a good many honest differences of opinion as to the kind which will give the best results. Some will buy cheap "Mexicans," expecting to breed a better quality of lambs, and then dispose of the original purchase. Others affect the California stock, which, of late years, has come into favor in some quarters. The weight of opinion, however, would undoubtedly incline our enterprising young *ranchero* to buy sheep on the spot in good condition, and, what is very important, thoroughly acclimated. His "bucks" (say about three to each hundred ewes) will generally be Merinos. In the autumn, we will say, then, he begins operations under favorable auspices. His cabin is very plainly furnished, and his "corrals," or yards and sheds, properly constructed and in readiness. For feeding in stormy weather he has enough hay safely stored away; and after due care and inquiry, he has secured an experienced and competent herder—better, an American. At daylight all hands are called to breakfast, and soon after the bleating flock are moving over the range, and the herder, with his canteen slung over his shoulder, and probably a book in his pocket, has whistled to his shepherd dog and started after them. During the whole day they graze on the short grass, going once to water; and afternoon sees them brought back near to the corrals, in which, later on, they are again confined for the night. Day after day, week after week, month after month, pass in monotonous round; and then the cold weather comes, and the herder puts on a thicker coat, and reads less, and walks about rapidly, and stamps his feet for warmth. And then some day, when he is far away from the ranch, there comes on that dreaded enemy of sheep raising—a prairie snow-storm. With but little warning the clouds have gathered, and the snow is falling in thick and heavy flakes. The sheep hurriedly huddle together, and no power can make them move. The herder may have had time to get them into a gulch, or under a bank; failing in this, there is nothing for it but to stay with them, sometimes a day and a night, and trust to getting them home when the storm is over. Not far from Colorado Springs is a gulch called the Big Corral, in which more than one thousand sheep were lost a year or two ago, having followed each other up to the brink, and fallen over into the deep snow. Nor did the Mexican herder ever return to tell the tale, for he shared their fate. It is with the snow-storm, indeed, that the dark side of the Colorado shepherd's life is associated, and the great tempest of the spring of 1878 left a sorrowful record behind it. It must be mentioned that sheds are an innovation, that some ranches have none even now, and that before they were built the sheep were exposed, even in the corrals, to the fury of the elements. *Per contra*, it should be said that no such storm as that of March, 1878, has been known since there were any sheep in this part of the country. On this occasion thousands of sheep perished. The snow was eleven feet deep in the corrals, and sheep were dug out *alive* after being buried for two and even three weeks! Their vitality seems very great, and many perish, not from the pressure of the snow, but from suffocation caused by others falling or crowding upon them. It is asserted that they sometimes, while still buried, work their way down to the grass, and feed thereon. But our shepherd has taken care to have plenty of sheds, and he knows, too, that by the doctrine of chances he need not count on such a storm more than once in ten years, and he faces the winter with a stout heart. Whenever it is possible to send the sheep out, the herder takes them, despite the weather; but when that is impossible or indiscreet, they are fed at home.

In May comes "lambing," and the extra hands are busily occupied in taking care of the young lambs. With their mothers, they are separated from the rest of the flock, first in small "bunches," then in larger ones; and in October they are weaned. In June comes shearing—an easy and simple operation; and, if need be, "dipping," or immersing the stock in great troughs containing a solution of tobacco or lime, cures the "scab," and completes the year's programme. Our shepherd sells his wool, counts the increase of his flock after weaning, and if, as is to be hoped, he is a good book-keeper, he sits down and makes up his accounts for the year. It is hard to picture a greater contrast than that which exists between the sheep and the cattle business, the freedom and excitement of the latter bearing about the same relation to the humdrum routine of the former as does the appearance of the great herd of often noble-looking animals widely scattered over the plains, and roaming sometimes for months by themselves, to that of the timid flock bleating in the corral, and frightened at the waving of a piece of white paper. And then to think of the difference between the life of the "cow-puncher" (as he calls himself), riding his spirited horse in the company of his fellows, and that of the herder, on foot and in solitude, is enough to make us wonder how men can be found for the one, while there is the slightest chance of securing the other.—*Harper's.*

Taking the Chances.

At ten o'clock yesterday morning a rag-tag boy with a very short coat on stood and looked through a gate on Lewis Street at another rag-tag boy about his own age, who sat on the door-step and tried to look very meek and humble.

"Tryin'to be awful sweet, hain't ye?" sneered the first rag-tag.

No reply.

"Tryin' to make the nayburs believe yer a reg'lar little lamb!" continued the aggressor, who evidently ached for a row.

No reply; but rag-tag on the steps heaved a sigh and seemed inclined to spit on his hands.

"But every body knows ye fur a snide and a coward, and I'm goin' to lick ye fust time I catch ye outside the gate!"

"See here, Jim," softly replied number two, as he rose up, "I'm tryin' to be good so as to get a Shetland pony in my Christmas stockin'. Ma said if I didn't have another fight she'd git me one, but she's near-sighted and a little deaf and I'm goin' to pound the ground with you and risk the chances!"

Then rag-tag number one flew up the street, hat in hand, and after him came number two, holding his hat on with one hand and reaching out with back hair for the other, while a woman opened the door, looked after them, and said:

"Must be that another barrel of cider has fallen from a wagon and busted."—*Detroit Free Press.*

Mrs. Martha Washington was a plump, pretty, sprightly little woman in her youth, but settled down into a plain, domestic wife, who looked sharply after the servants. She was far from an educated woman, and, though she kept her own accounts, was a very poor speller.

Another Pacific Railroad.

The Boston *Post* of Dec. 11 has the following: On Saturday last was concluded an agreement in this city between the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe and the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad Companies, for the completion of the old Atlantic and Pacific Road, along the thirty-fifth parallel from a point in New Mexico to San Francisco, the cost to be defrayed by both the contracting parties. It is reported that work will begin immediately, the expectation being that the line will be finished within from two to three years. This would make a thorough line from St. Louis to the Pacific coast. The St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad Company is the successor of the Atlantic and Pacific Company, having been organized in 1876. The Atlantic and Pacific charter was granted by Congress on July 27, 1866, for the purpose of constructing a new railroad to the Pacific. The road was built to Vinita, in the Indian Territory, 325 miles from St. Louis, and was opened in 1871. Having defaulted its interest on the funded debt, the company was reorganized. The St. Louis and San Francisco Company has nearly competed a branch road from Pearce City, Missouri, to Wichita, Kansas, connecting at the latter place with the Wichita Branch of the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Road.

The road just named has a line already completed from Atchison and Kansas City to Santo Domingo, beyond Las Vegas, in New Mexico. At this point it strikes the charter route on the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad. By the contract just concluded, the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe acquires a half interest in the Atlantic and Pacific Company's charter, and likewise receives one-half of that company's stock. From Santo Domingo it is proposed to build the Atlantic and Pacific Road to the Pacific coast, reaching San Diego and San Francisco. Eastward the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe Line is to be used to Wichita, and the St. Louis and San Francisco Road from that point to St. Louis. From St. Louis to Wichita is 509 miles; from thence to Santo Domingo about 600 miles, and from there to the Pacific about 1,000 miles.

An officer of the company says as follows of the new project: "We do not intend to abandon the project of building the old Atlantic and Pacific Railroad from Vinita through the Indian Territory and Texas to Santo Domingo. That road will probably be completed a short time after the line west of Santo Domingo is finished. In the meantime, however, we desire to obtain an outlet to San Francisco, and the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe furnished us with 600 miles of complete road. That road ends at Atchison in the East, but at the West it ended nowhere, and as there was no feasible route, except ours, by which it could reach the Pacific, it saw the advantage to itself of combining with us. It is part of our agreement with the Boston people, however, that the Atlantic and Pacific Road through the Indian Territory shall be built jointly with the Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe. Yes, this agreement practically results in a consolidation of the two companies, but not formally. In the course of time the St. Louis and San Francisco Railroad will probably be leased to the Atlantic and Pacific Company, or its stock bought up so as to make us a continuous Southern line to San Francisco. We have the right of way for our line through the Indian Territory, and will not have to wait for the opening of that Territory to the white people. But once let us get a road built into the Territory, and the Indian question would be brought to a settlement by the necessity of events. We are promised a heavy cattle business from Texas when our line through the Territory is opened. Meanwhile, we shall go on with the construction of our Western section of road, and when it is completed we will have a line from St. Louis to the Pacific, far enough South to escape the snow blockade and far enough North to be removed from the dangers of yellow fever. The Atlantic and Pacific Company has land grants from the Government to the extent of about 40,000,000 acres. Why, our lands alone will pay for the cost of the proposed road three times over!"

Gen. Taylor's Mustard Coffee.

It is related that Gen. Scott's famous letter to Zachary Taylor, announcing the withdrawal of most of the regular troops from Taylor's command to be placed under his own in a projected movement from Vera Cruz toward the capital of Mexico, was received while Gen. Taylor was at supper with his staff near Monterey. The General asked Col. Bliss to read it to him. He had just replenished his coffee cup, and was engaged in cooling it with a spoon while the reading went on. This appeared to make no further impression upon him than that indicated by a contemptuous "sniff," but as the real import of the letter began to appear, his whole manner changed, and he abstractedly dipped his spoon in a bowl of mustard which sat on the table, and stirred it in the coffee.

This he continued until by the time the letter was finished the contents of the mustard bowl were exhausted. Without saying a word, and to Bliss's astonishment and horror, he raised the cup to his lips and gulped down the abominable compound. He then broke into an excited and profane harangue, consigning to everlasting damnation every one concerned in the depletion of his forces, and only ceasing when his speech was overtaken with a paroxysm of stuttering, which with him usually followed an outbreak of temper. Gen. Pleasonton, who commanded the General's escort in Mexico, says that when once aroused he was the maddest man he ever saw.

Gloucester's Lost Fishermen.

A carefully prepared report from Gloucester, Mass., gives a fearful record of men lost in the fisheries of that port and of vessels wrecked the last year. The statement, so far as the loss of life is concerned, is entirely unprecedented in the history of business. Scarcely a week during the year but has witnessed some destructions. Thirteen vessels went down, 143 men were drowned, 56 women widowed and 156 children made fatherless by a single gale. So overwhelming a calamity could not fail to awaken generous sympathy, and $28,216 was contributed to feed, clothe and shelter the survivors of the lost mariners. The February gale, however, furnishes but a part of the dreadful history of the Gloucester fisheries of 1879. In all 30 vessels, aggregating 1,890 tons, comprising over one-tenth part of the fishing tonnage of the port, valued at $118,789, sailed to return no more, and 240 lives were lost, making 78 widows and 264 fatherless children. There are also two vessels now absent (Dec. 10) for which grave fears are entertained of their safety—the Andrew Leighton and Harry O. Mackey. If these do not soon return it will add two more to the number, swelling the fearful aggregate to 284 lives. Since 1830, when the George's fishery first commenced, there have been lost from this port 2,118 men, and 405 vessels valued at $1,696,399.

A Maine cat, after several unsuccessful attempts to catch a pigeon, put kernels on the sidewalk before a post behind which she hid, and soon had material enough for supper.

Rev. Dr. John Hall is said to have received over $10,000 in wedding fees during the present year.

Improvement in "Sweets."

Twenty-five years ago a little girl who was very good and minded her mother occasionally had a cent to spend for candy, and Fourth of July and Christmas brought her a quarter or a half pound of confectionery, and, with the help of occasional raids on the sugar-bowl and a bit of frosted cake now and then, she considered that her wants were all supplied; but the small girl of to-day expects pound boxes of all kinds of choice dainties at short intervals, and thinks that the person who gives her a cent means to insult her. It must be said in defense of the modern little girl that the candies are a great deal nicer and more tempting than they used to be in the days when peppermint stick, and lemon braid, cream, lobster, and rock candy were the staple sweeties, and all the fair possibilities of chocolate were unknown. Even peppermints, which used to be about the size of a dime, and not strong enough to keep one awake through a whole sermon, even when one's grandmother permitted one to steal all that one wanted from her pocket, have now developed into great disks that make more than one mouthful, and are strong enough to keep a Congressman awake through an all-night session.

Children who like candies that will "last" buy the imperials, little colored pebbles almost as hard as adamant and fiery flavor, whether it be cinnamon or cloves. Girls with old-fashioned mothers, who think that molasses is healthier than sugar, have their choice between candy precisely like that which confectioners used to sell fifty years ago, and Boston chips, and molasses cream candy, which is brittle and very light-colored.

These are the candies that content little girls until they begin to go to school and to feel social cares pressing upon them, and the necessity of outshining some one else weighs down their young spirits. Then they come home and demand gum drops, and condemn the mammon-worshiper who substitutes gelatine for gum-arabic, and tries to deceive them. They are clamorous for taffy; not only the plain squares, but the vanilla cream taffy, and Everton taffy, and the little pink square drops containing walnut meats, and the almond taffy; and they soon manifest a nice appreciation of the comparative merits of peanut, almond and English walnut candies, and look with pitying sorrow upon the uncle who asks them if one kind of nut candy be not as good as another. Still, after acquiring all this knowledge, they realize that there are loftier heights for them to scale, and they envy the grown-up sister who now and then gives them dainties of which they do not know the names, and who seems, to their childish eyes, to live in a rain of confections.

The most delicious and most expensive of the things to be found on the confectioners' counters are the crystallized apricots, figs, amber and green limes, pears and green gages, and most of the persons who buy them select them almost piece by piece, making up their boxes to suit themselves. The fashion of doing this has come up within a few years, and the confectioners who first allowed it made large profits and greatly increased a demand for the better class of candies. A customer flits from jar to jar and case to case saying, "Give me this, and this, and this," until she can see nothing else that she wants, smiles a little when she is told how much the whole weighs, and pays for a pound and a half of candy instead of the pound that she meant to buy. Sherbet candy, made up of three thin, lozenge-shaped layers of sugar, differing in color and flavor, is a favorite with high school girls, and so are the cream walnuts and and crystallized walnuts. Dyspeptics piously avoid the last two things, which are rather less digestible than melted butter, but they look so nice with their brown skins peeping through their coats of white sugar, and they are so tempting in the long thick bars into which they are sometimes made, that they please every body. Two other kinds of bar candy, the grated and sliced cocoanut, are much liked and are much sold for children's parties, at which it is desirable to have pretty dishes of confectionery, as well as broken into bits and mixed with other things for boxes.

It would be possible to have a varied stock and candies of many prices without going beyond the class of chocolates, which grows larger and larger every year. There are several kinds of plain chocolate lozenges, and next to them in cheapness come the nonpareil chocolates, which are lozenges studded with drops of sugar looking like homeopathic pills for fairies. Cream chocolates may be filled either with vanilla or orange, as one pleases, and some confectioners use raspberry and other fruit flavors. Vanilla cream chocolates have little cherries inside them, making a delightful mingling of sour, sweet and bitter, and the almond caramel, which comes in little cubes cased in paper, ranks next in excellence. This paper wrapping is an improvement added the last few years for convenience in packing, chocolate being any thing but a beautifier to pink or white candies that lie next to it for any length of time. Almonds are cased both in plain chocolate and in mixture of chocolate and sugar that crystallizes upon them, in plain sugar poured upon them in the form of a thin sirup and making the variety known to the trade as rough, and in smooth almonds which are polished by constantly moving the pan in which they are dried. In the last variety the nut is not burned; in the others it is. The name of jelly chocolates sounds impossing, but the things themselves are rather disappointing and seem rather tame after chocolate creams, but they are liked by the admirers of soft candies.—*Boston Transcript.*

An African Empire.

The Paris *Figaro* has just published a further installment of Count de Semelle's report on his travels in Central Africa. He was highly delighted with the Sultan Amrou, who resides in a fortified city, and who can place in the field 50,000 horsemen and 100,000 foot soldiers. The greater portion of this force, however, is only armed with bows and arrows, the rest only having flint muskets. The Sultan, says the Count, exercises absolute power, and treats travelers with the greatest hospitality. He found his Majesty aware that there was another country as powerful and as rich as England—France—and adds: "Besides, Amrou is tired of that English policy which tends to restrict his power, and he is very willing to welcome the French and to facilitate their commercial relations with his people. Before my departure he gave me a letter for the President of the Republic (the great warrior who had almost finished the conquest of North Africa), and which on my return I handed to M. Grevy." The Sultan, "possesses to a high degree the sentiment of equity, and his Empire is admirably administered." Theft, we are told, is almost unknown in Nuppe—probably owing to the manner in which it is punished. The accused are brought before the Sultan, in presence of the people, and the prisoner found guilty of a first offense has his hand cut off and is paraded through the Empire; a second offense is followed by the gouging of the left eye, and a third conviction entails the pain of death without sepulture. The following anecdote respecting this well administered country makes heavy demands on the reader's faith. All the Sultan's police come from a place called Haoussa, and these Haoussas parade the Empire in small detachments, "arresting evil-doers and inquiring after people afflicted with contagious maladies. When any such are discovered, they are seized, put to death, roasted, and devoured. Such is the example reserved for lepers, which are numerous in this part of Africa." In connection with the police, the Count tells another anecdote, more easily accepted than the last. The market, he says, is close to the Sultan's palace, and forms an immense square, the center of which is occupied by the police and the barbers. The reason is, that the barbers of Bidda are as talkative as those of Paris; and that the Haoussas, by keeping their ears open while shaving is going on, acquire plenty of useful information. There is a wonderful chapter on the horses of the country, some of which reach the price of £6,000. Sultan Amrou made the Count a present of such an animal, and he rode him one day 110 kilometres; he galloped four hours at a stretch, was contented with very sober fare, and only drank once a day, at sunset.

A Terrible Fight with Wildcats.

Over in Sullivan County, along the Neversink, says the Middletown (N. Y.) *Mail*, is a little settlement known as Eden—so named, probably, as a kind of compensation for being as unlike the primitive Eden as one could readily imagine. One of the celebrities of the neighborhood is Jonas Brooks—a thoroughgoing backwoodsman, a terror to all sorts of wild "varmint" that prowl about that part of the country, and particularly to wildcats, which are his especial aversion. The number of wildcats which he has killed is immense—so many that he is known everywhere about that region by the sobriquet of "Jonas Brooks, the Wildcat Killer of Eden." His various exploits and adventures in that line, if properly written up, would make a book of thrilling interest—a worthy companion to "Tom Quick, the Indian Slayer."

Some few weeks ago Jonas espied one of these hated felines, while going through a piece of woods, and, true to his instinct, he made after the animal, without stopping to consider that he was unarmed—not even having a jack-knife about him. He followed it until it retreated to a sort of cavern in the rocks, where Jonas made up his mind to "go in" and capture the "varmint." So, picking up a tough hickory club, he proceeded to enter the cave. After passing the entrance, to his surprise he found quite a lofty cavern, extending back some thirty feet, and in the furthest extremity glowed not only one, but half-dozen pairs of ferocious eyes, which betokened warm work for any intruder. Jonas was undoubtly "somethin' took back," as he expressed it, at the sight of so many glistening eyes fixed upon him, but as it was not in his nature to retreat under any circumstances, he cautiously advanced into the cave.

He soon discovered that he had walked into a real litter of wildcats—two old ones and four young ones—and about the time he had got through counting them the biggest one of the six "went for him." Throwing himself back in an angle of the cavern, the herculean backwoodsman met the ferocious monster with a well swung blow of his cudgel, which rather "wilted" the animal for a moment; but before Jonas had time fairly to recover himself from the first onslaught, the other old cat made a dive at him, catching on his right arm and shoulder and almost rendering him powerless, so terrible was the gripe of the monster's claws. With his left hand, however, Jonas grasped the throat of the animal, and after a desperase struggle succeeded in shaking him off. Jonas now thought that discretion in such a case might be the "better part of valor," and accordingly began to consider the chances of retreat. He revolved all the chances in his mind "in about the millionth part of a second," he said, and came to the conclusion that it wouldn't do for him to leave the little angle in which he was so well posted.

Both of the wildcats, meanwhile, were lashed into a state of the most intense ferocity, their eyes glaring like coals of fire, and their hair literally standing on end. And to add to Jonas's discomfiture, the four young ones—which, although only "kittens," were not exactly of the kind which a lady would like to hold in her lap—began to exhibit symptoms of joining in the fight, just to "get their hands in," as Jonas naively told our informant. This was a situation. Jonas began to think this would be his last fight with wildcats, and that the wildcats would probably have the extreme felicity of eating Jonas Brooks for their supper. All these thoughts of course passed through Jonas's mind, while the animals were for a moment kept at bay by the lively motions of his hickory cudgel. Only for a moment, however, as his first antagonist again took the lead in an attack, and although she met with a sharp blow of the cudgel, the whole litter followed in such quick succession that Jonas was unable to keep them off. And now ensued a struggle which it is useless to attempt to portray.

The ferocious animals clawed into Jonas in every quarter, while he made almost superhuman efforts to tear them off—knocking about right and left with his club, as well he was able, and clutching them by the throats with his left hand when he got a chance. Luckily Jonas was arrayed in a good suit of homespun, instead of "shoddy," or he would have been stripped to the skin in no time. The fight was a fierce and lively one for a time, as can be readily imagined. Jonas was fighting for his life, however, and soon succeeded in putting the young cats *hors de combat*, by cracking them judiciously over the heads. His blows upon the old ones also began to tell, and after a last desperate struggle, in which one of them got a finishing blow, the other retreated to the back of the cave, where Jonas proceeded to do for him also, leaving Jonas "master of the situation." An inventory of our hero's wardrobe, taken after the fight, exhibited one suspender, about half a vest, one leg of a pantaloon, no shirt to speak of, and a pair of boots that wouldn't "shed a heavy dew," as Jonas expressed it. His whole body and limbs were frightfully lacerated, and the blood fairly ran from his wounds. Notwithstanding which, Jonas tied the tails of the six wildcats together, and swinging them around his neck, he walked home with his trophies.

Doughnuts Without Eggs.—Two quarts of flour, one pint of milk, one full cup sugar, and a piece of butter fully as large as an egg. Scald the milk, and when tepid add the sugar, the butter, half a cup of yeast, and half a teaspoon of soda. Pour this all into the center of the flour, using enough flour to make a sponge. Let it rise all night in a comfortably warm room. If light in the morning sprinkle in whatever spice is preferred, knead in the remainder of the flour, then knead fifteen or twenty minutes, and let it rise till light. Then knead again for the same length of time. Roll thin; cut out with a small biscuit or cake cutter. Let them stand five or ten minutes, then fry in boiling lard.

Some people are puzzled how a sheet of paper can be made unbroken seven miles long. But what can exceed the ingenuity that constructs a machine that with the push of a lever takes the snowy paper into its ponderous jaws, and, with the speed of an express train, imprints upon it even the faintest hair-line of the smallest type, divides it uniformly and accurately into pages, places it in book form, glueing the backs, cuts the edges, and then folds those edges as evenly and smoothly as a girl would fold her first love letter, delivers the perfect newspaper, six, seven, eight in one second?

SEASONABLE RECIPES.

Hickory-nut Cakes.—One cup of white sugar, one beaten egg, half a cup of sifted flour and a cup of minced nuts. Drop on buttered tins.

Stuffed Onions.—Parboil some good-sized onions; take out the middles and fill with force meat; put them side by side in a casserole, with butter; sprinkle a little salt and a little sugar on them; cover the onions with thin slices of bacon; cook thoroughly and serve with their own sauce.

Spice Cake.—To a pound and a half of raised dough add a half pound of butter, and the same of brown sugar, and the same of raisins, after they have been stoned and cut in half. Half an ounce of cloves and cinnamon powdered and mixed will supply sufficient flavoring. Beat the cake thoroughly, and bake in a slow oven one hour.

Baked Plum Pudding.—The basis of all