THE RED CLOUD CHIEF

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RED CLOUD, - - NEBRASKA.

A STORY OF SCIENCE.

A PHILOSOPHER sat in his easy chair,
Looking as grave as Milton;
He wore a solemn, mysterious air,
As he Canada Balsam split on
A strip of glass, as a slide, to prepare
For a mite taken out of his Stilton.

He took his microscope out of its case,
And settled the focus rightly;
The light, thrown back from the mirror's face,
Came glimmering upward brightly;
He put the slide with the mite in place,
And fixed on the cover tightly.

He turned the instrument up and down,
Till, getting a proper sight, he
Exclaimed—as he gazed with a puzzled frown—
"Good gracious!" and "Highty-tighty!
The sight is enough to alarm the town,
A mite is a monster mighty!"

From t'other end of the tube, the mite
Regarded our scientific;
To his naked eye, as you'll guess, the sight
Of a man, was most terrific;
But reversing the microscope made him quite
The opposite of magnific.

"One sees the truth through this tube so tall,"
Said the mite, as he squinted through it;
"Man is not so wondrously big after all,
If the mite would only know it!"

MORAL.

Mem.—Whether a thing is large or small
Depends on the way you view it!
—*London Fun.*

THE HAIR:

Its Growth, Strength and Color—Peculiar Characteristics of People with Different Colored Hair, Etc.

THE Detroit *Free Press* publishes the following extract from a book on "The Hair, its Growth, Care and treatment," recently published by a medical man in that city:

The people of Paris and London alone use twenty car loads of other people's hair. Convents usually furnish large amounts for the French, Spanish and Italian markets, and it is known to the trade as "church hair." The prices of hair range from five dollars to twenty cents a head, though the finest of golden hair will bring two dollars an ounce, white hair five dollars an ounce. In such cases a head of hair is worth from twenty-five to fifty dollars. Some nationalities have a peculiar odor in their hair; the Chinese hair has a musky smell, and the odor of violets has been detected in one or two instances. The dealers detect the quality mainly by the touch, can tell whether its color is dyed or bleached, and whether it comes from the living or the dead. As a rule hair-growers are a degraded race whose riches consist not in their flocks, but in their own fleeces, which they never pin up or comb, but wear in closely-fitting caps.

The enormous strength of the hair is hardly appreciable. A healthy single hair will support four ounces. A single head of hair in an audience of 200 people will support the entire audience; and the hair of all the people in Detroit would support a load which would require 5,000 locomotives to draw, and the hairs of the people of the globe would support a planet against the gravity of the earth. Samson's hair was evidently a fitting emblem of his strength.

The shape of the hair, looked at as one would look at the end of a stick of candy, is an oval in the European and light-haired races, and in the Semitic races more or less angular. The hair of the negro is elliptical or kidney-shaped; it has no central canal, and will "felt." The European's will not; but, although the negro's hair, as a whole, seems coarse, perhaps on account of its curliness, a competent observer avers that the individual hairs of his race are finer than the hairs of the European. The curl in the negro's hair is caused by effect, during thousands of years, of a hot sun, which has acted upon it like a perpetual crimping-iron.

Notwithstanding the smallness of a single hair, the hair on the heads of the people of Detroit would make a footpath 12 inches wide and 600 miles in length. In spite of the contrary opinion, the hair of men is finer than that of women, whether the coarsest female hair is compared with the coarsest male hair, or the finest male hair with the finest female hair; the finest hair being found among civilized Nations. The young woman with long, flowing golden locks runs her comb through 70 miles of hair in the morning, and some even have 90 and 100 miles of it. It is literally true that the hairs of the head are numbered and, on the average, amount of 120,000 to each person having a full and luxuriant growth, black-haired persons having the fewest, flaxen-haired the most. Whilst our 'blondes' are so rich in the wealth of golden tresses, their sister-haired sisters are compelled to be satisfied with fifty, forty—yes, and even red-haired sisters with but thirty-five miles of this covering, which St. Paul says is a glory to her. While the latter has the *more* from which to tie true lovers' knots, Nature has allowed the other-haired ones to tie theirs the *tighter*." But the filaments on animals are much more numerous than on man. On the Merino sheep there is a combined length of filament equal to the distance a railroad car, at the rate of a mile a minute, would traverse, night and day, in 18,000 years.

Hairs do not, as a rule, penetrate the scalp perpendicularly, but at an angle. When the angle of the different hairs is the same, it is possible to give to it the easy sweeps and curves which we generally see it take; but if they are by some freak of nature misplaced, "we have the rebellious 'frizzle-tops' that are not susceptible to the influence of the brush and comb." Many a poor mother has half-worried her life out trying to train her Johnny's rebellious locks into better ways, believing it was Johnny's perverseness of manners that induced such dilapidated-looking head-gear, when it was really none of Johnny's fault at all, but simply a freak of nature in misplacing the radiating centers of his "hirsute covering." Sometimes fowls suffer from a contrariwise placing of the feathers—they run the wrong way. The author's father had a hen whose leg-feathers ran up toward the body, those on the body and neck toward the head. This gave her a perpetual "out of sorts" look, and she could never fly. The erection of the hair of animals during anger or of human beings in fright, is caused by a change in the skin and the angle at which the hair enters the head or body.

There are three reasons why women's hair is longer than men's: First, she has no hair growth on her face, and so has a larger supply of hair-forming material for the scalp; second, the diameter of her hair being larger, it is less liable to break; third, being usually less engaged in mental labor or business worry, she has a more constant and even supply of blood to the scalp. In nations where the hair of the men is usually worn short, the fashion of long hair in the male is regarded as a protest against church and State and against general customs, taste and thought; in Austria it is made a political offense to be so attired.

The growth of the hair is the most rapid in the young and middle-aged, and in those living an outdoor, active life. At the age of eighty, if a man live so long, and if his hair and beard have been close-trimmed, he has cut six and a half inches of hair annually, about thirty feet in all.

The least destructible part of the hair of the ancient ling, but some of the wigs of human hair, exposed to the mold and moisture of their entombed apartments, are less decayed than the monuments themselves.

There are three coloring pigments to the hair—yellow, red and black, and all the shades are produced by the mixture of these three colors. In pure golden yellow hair there is only the yellow pigment; in red, the red mixed with yellow; in dark, the black mixed with red and yellow; in the hair of the negro there is as much red pigment as in the reddest hair, and had not the black been most developed—perhaps by the action of the sun—the hair of all negroes would be as fiery a red as the reddest hair of an Englishman.

There are fewer yellow or light-haired people than dark-haired—even among the Caucasian race. The blondes are disappearing. A greater proportion of light-haired women live unmarried and die childless than the dark. Dark-haired women have three chances of marriage to two of the light-haired. "Just what sort of philosophy induces the sterner sex to talk so much to and of blondes," says the author, "and when it comes to the actual business phase of life, to propose to the brunettes, is entirely beyond my comprehension." The blonde-haired are most prone to consumption, cancer and cataract, brown-haired least so; brown-haired people are subject to acute rheumatism, heart disease, salt-rheum; red-haired to pleurisy, pneumonia, ague and neuralgias; blonde or light color haired to skin diseases. The blonde or auburn haired are tender-hearted and easily imposed upon, and usually delicate and refined; red-haired people are firm in their convictions, great lovers of their country, people and church, like the Scotch, but when their hair is coarse and harsh they are brutal and sensual; the black-haired are positive and powerful, very good or very bad; the brown-haired, as a rule, furnish the philanthropists, the painters, musicians, authors—Homer, Virgil, Raphael, Titian, Handel, Mozart, Tasso, Chaucer, Burns, Keats, Longfellow, Lowell, Whittier, and hosts of others. Several cases of banded green, blue and white and woolly hair are reported; the hair of the Cape male is iridescent.

The Unreasonable Ant.

NOW AND then, while we rested, we watched the laborious ant at his work. I found nothing new in him—certainly nothing to change my opinion of him. It seems to me that in the matter of intellect the ant must be a strangely overrated bird. During many summers now I have watched him, when I ought to have been in better business, and I have not yet come across a living ant that seemed to have any more sense than a dead one. I refer to the ordinary ant, of course; I have had no experience of those wonderful Swiss and African ones which vote, keep drilled armies, hold slaves and dispute about religion. Those particular ants may be all that the naturalist paints them, but I am persuaded that the average ant is a sham. I admit his industry, of course; he is the hardest-working creature in the world—when anybody is looking—but his leather-headedness is the point I make against him. He goes out foraging, he makes a capture, and then what does he do? Go home? No; he goes anywhere but home. He doesn't know where home is. His home may be only three feet away; no matter, he can't find it.

He makes his capture, as I have said; it is generally something which can be of no sort of use to himself or anybody else; it is usually seven times bigger than it ought to be; he hunts out the awkwardest place to take hold of it; he lifts it bodily up in the air by main force, and starts—not toward home, but in the opposite direction; not calmly and wisely, but with a frantic haste which is wasteful of his strength; he fetches up against a pebble, and instead of going around it, he climbs over it backwards, dragging his booty after him, tumbles down the other side, jumps up in a passion, kicks the dust off his clothes, moistens his hands, grabs his property viciously, yanks it this way, then that, shoves it ahead of him a moment, turns tail and lugs it after him another moment, gets madder and madder, then presently hoists it into the air and goes tearing away in an entirely new direction; comes to a weed; it never occurs to him to go around it. No; he must climb it, and he does climb it, dragging his worthless property to the top—which is as bright a thing to do as it would be for me to carry a sack of flour from Heidelberg to Paris by way of Strasburg steeple; when he gets up there he finds that that is not the place; take a cursory glance at the scenery, and either climbs down again or tumbles down, and starts off once more—as usual, in a new direction.

At the end of half an hour he fetches up within six inches of the place he started from, and lays his burden down. Meantime he has been over all the ground for two yards around, and climbed all the weeds and pebbles he came across. Now he wipes the sweat from his brow, strokes his limbs, and then marches aimlessly off, in as violent a hurry as ever. He traverses a good deal of zig-zag country, and by-and-by stumbles on his same booty again. He does not remember to have ever seen it before; he looks around to see which is not the way home, grabs his bundle and starts. He goes through the same adventures he had before, finally stops to rest, and a friend comes along. Evidently the friend remarks that a last year's grasshopper leg is a very noble acquisition, and inquires where he got it. Evidently the proprietor does not remember exactly where he did get it, but thinks he got it "around here somewhere." Evidently the friend contracts to help him freight it home. Then, with a judgment peculiarly antic (pun not intentional), they take hold of opposite ends of that grasshopper leg and begin to tug with all their might in opposite directions. Presently they take a rest, and confer together. They decide that something is wrong, they can't make out what. Then they go at it again, just as before. Same result. Mutual recriminations follow. Evidently each accuses the other of being an obstructionist. They warm up, and the dispute ends in a fight. They lock themselves together and chew each other's jaws for a while; then they roll and tumble on the ground till one loses a horn or a leg and has to haul off for repairs. They make up and go to work again in the same old insane way, but the crippled ant is at a disadvantage; tug as he may, the other one drags off the booty and him at the end of it. Instead of giving up, he hangs on and gets his shins bruised against every obstruction that comes in the way. By-and-by, when that grasshopper leg has been dragged all over the same old ground once more, it is finally dumped at about the spot where it originally lay. The two perspiring ants inspect it thoughtfully and decide that dried grasshopper legs are poor sort of property after all, and then each starts off in a different direction to see if he can't find an old nail or something else that is heavy enough to afford entertainment and at the same time valueless enough to make an ant want to own it.—*Mark Twain's "A Tramp Abroad."*

FLIRTING fans is the new name given to fans shaped like a flower petal, and decorated with a group of flowers, or in the form of a heart with a blossom painted on them. A Spanish girl with a plain black fan will do more execu-

PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

MR. HENRY JAMES, JR., is engaged on a new novel, which will appear in a serial form on both sides of the Atlantic simultaneously.

ABOUT one hundred and fifty students of Cornell University have signed a paper asking Colonel Robert G. Ingersoll to lecture before them.

MR. GEORGE W. CHILDS, with his accustomed liberality, has made a large subscription to the fund for erecting a monument to General Robert E. Lee at Lexington, Va.

SENATOR BLAINE says that, though he studied law for two years in the office of one of the most eminent practitioners in the United States, he has never been in court as an attorney, plaintiff, defendant, witness or juror.

MISS EMILY FAITHFULL, who visited this country some years ago, proposes returning to the United States in September to deliver a lecture on "Modern Extravagance—Its Cause and Cure," which has been received with favor all over England, and, it is said, has not been without good results.

MR. H. J. BYRON, the dramatic writer, is of the family to which the poet Byron belonged. His father, Henry Byron, was a grandson of William, fourth Lord Byron, who was the poet's great-grandfather. Mr. H. J. Byron's great-uncle, the Admiral John Byron, whose books of voyages are still popular, was the poet's grandfather.

MR. ERASTUS BROOKS, in a speech before the Committee of Ways and Means of the House of Representatives, a few days since, on the necessity of taking off the twenty per cent. duty on wood pulp, remarked, in reference to the press, that he had had forty-one years' experience in journalism in New York City, and during that time had seen the birth and death of one hundred and twenty-five daily papers in that city, and that there are to-day but three papers in existence there that were being published in 1837.

IT is now definitely settled that the Rev. Dr. William M. Baker, of Boston, is the author of "His Majesty, Myself." This is the third in the second series of the "No-Name" novels. The other two are by writers already known—"The Colonel's Opera Cloak," by Mrs. Brush, the daughter of the Rev. Dr. T. J. Conant, and "Signor Monaldini's Neice," by Miss Mary Agnes Tincker. The authorship of the novels in the first series is not so well known, though the names of several have already been correctly guessed.

LORD BEACONSFIELD'S humor is very keenly appreciated in England both by friends and foes. Going into his breakfast-room one morning, he found one of his guests looking for a newspaper. "What are you looking for?" he asked. "Well, I was trying to find a paper." "A paper? Oh, I don't take in any papers. Mrs. Disraeli, I believe, takes the *Court Journal*. But do you want to see anything in particular?" "Yes; I rather wished to—" "Well, there's my butler takes in the *Daily Telegraph;* he's a tremendous radical, and I dare say he likes to see his master thoroughly well abused."

MISS LOUISA M. ALCOTT when nearly sixteen years of age went to Boston to teach. She was successful, and much liked by her scholars. Some of these she now meets frequently in the streets of Boston—staid professional men with families, who always greet her with, "Hallo, Miss Ollie!" just as they did when they were rosy-cheeked urchins. But she gave up teaching and took to story-writing, in which she has been equally successful. At one time she came very near going on the stage, and had secretly made the arrangements for her first appearance, intending to surprise her friends, but an untimely discovery frustrated her purpose.

HUMOROUS.

"TALK is cheap." Is it? Just hire a lawyer once.—*Syracuse Herald.*

THE weigh of the transgressor is light as well as hard.—*Boston Transcript.*

NOTHING is wholly bad. Even a dark lantern has its bright side.—*Salem Sunbeam.*

THERE is a tendency to palm off oleo-cabbinage cigars for genuine Havanas.—*New Haven Register.*

THE young doctor must be a patient angler when he is fishing for sick customers.—*N. O. Picayune.*

A MAN will work harder to counterfeit a dollar than he will to earn two—such is human natur.—*Josh Billings.*

THE rains fall on the just and the unjust. But not on the man who has just stolen an umbrella.—*Boston Transcript.*

IT is said that women live on love. Small-salaried young men will be interested to learn the love referred to is for baked beans, beef soup, onions and new spring hats.—*Oswego Record.*

A LITTLE girl in one of our public schools the other day had occasion to parse the word "angel." Coming to the gender, she stopped dismayed, and asked her teacher if "there are any men angels."—*Meriden Recorder.*

WHEN spelling is "reformed" she'll write:

"I'm sailing on the oshun,
The se is hi; no sale in site,
It filz me with emoshun,"
But one "spell" will not change its name,
For she'll be se-sic jest the salm!
—*Andrew's Queen.*

NOW TAKE your hoe and take your rake and dig your garden ground, sunburn your nose and tear your clothes and gayly fly around; but when your neighbor's chickens scratch the seeds you plant with care, just wait a week before you speak, and do not, do not swear.—*Colorado Springs Gazette.*

"OH, yes, yes," the old gentleman said, rather dubiously, while Laura was telling him about Tom's ability and prospects; "oh, yes; good enough prospects, I reckon, but he lacks energy. There is no 'get up' about him. It takes him till one o'clock in the morning to get started." But she only murmured that it showed he was a "laster," with great staying qualities, and then the committee rose.—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

IF Mrs. Bakewell was proud of anything, that thing was her cooking, especially her cake. Therefore you can in a measure fancy her feelings when Mrs. Homespun, who had been helped to a slice of Mrs. Bakewell's richest loaf cake, remarked, "There, that's just the kind o' cake that suits me. I've told Mrs. Talkwell time and time agin that them that wants rich cake can have it for all o' me. Just give me a piece of common, cheap stuff; it's good enough for anybody, I say!"—*Boston Transcript.*

MISS LEVENIA VICTORIA SMITH, a young lady residing on King street, has just completed a panel for a door. She took the panel out of the door and painted a long-legged crane standing upon it. During the progress of the work the draught coming through the hole where the panel should have been caused her three sisters to catch the pneumonia. One is already dead, and the others hope to be. On putting the panel back she discovered that it was painted on the wrong side. The picture is much admired by people who pass the house.—*Carson City Appeal.*

"THE children of the poor," observes the London *Times*, "always out of doors except when at school, and dining on hard dumpling or simple lumps of bread, are often healthier and stronger, and even more happy, than the more favored child whom parents, nurses and cooks are tempting with

About Bed-Room Carpets.

I NEED hardly insist on the fact that the old-fashioned plan of covering every part of the bed-room with carpet-stuff, so as to make the carpet hug the wall, is as bad a plan as can possibly be followed. In these days everybody is beginning to recognize this truth, and the change which has taken place within the last ten years, in the matter of carpets for bed-rooms, is quite remarkable. In some instances I notice that an extreme change, which is neither wanted nor warranted, has been instituted; that is to say, instead of the carpet that at one time covered all the surface of the floor with the greatest nicety of adaptation, there is no carpet at all. This extreme change is not at all desirable. It is good to have carpets in every part of the room where the feet must regularly be placed. It is bad to have carpets in any part of the room where the feet are not regularly placed. These two rules govern the whole position, and the most inexperienced housewife can easily remember them. By these rules there should be carpet all around the bed, carpet opposite to the wardrobe or chests of drawers, carpet opposite the washing-stand, carpet opposite the dressing-table, but none under the beds, and none for a space of two or three feet around the room—that is to say, two or three feet from the walls of the room. The carpets that are laid down should be loose from each other, each one should be complete in itself, so that it can be taken up to be shaken with the least trouble, and each one should be arranged to lie close to the floor, so that dust may not easily get underneath.

Carpet-stuff for bed rooms should be made of fine material closely woven, and not fluffy on the surface. There was a form of Brussels carpet called "tapestry," which some years ago was very largely used. It was as warm as the thickest blanket, and it was almost like wire in fiber; in fact, it was tough enough to last half a lifetime, and it was the best carpeting for bed-rooms I ever remember.

The advantages of small carpets in the bed-room are many. They cause the footsteps to be noiseless, or comparatively noiseless, they prevent the feet from becoming cold while dressing and undressing, they make the room look pleasant, and when used in the limited manner above suggested they save trouble in cleansing, by preventing dust and dirt from being trodden into the floor.—*Dr. Richardson, in Good Words.*

Keeping Up With the Fashions.

NOW, IT is very important that people should know just how to comport themselves at table. Of course fashion changes as much in table etiquette as in anything else, and it would be very humiliating for a person to find that he or she was eating dinner in last year's style; and in order that this may be avoided, *Harper's Bazar* has kindly given a code that will enable even the most ignorant to eat according to the very latest fashion. Of course the old idea that people go to the table to satisfy their hunger, has long since been exploded. "When liquors are handed with the ices," says the *Bazar*, "young ladies are not expected to take them." Young ladies are at a manifest disadvantage as far as wines are concerned. "A young lady," continues the busy *B*, "should not drink more than half a glass of sherry with soup or fish, one glass of champagne during dinner, and half a glass of sherry at dessert." If a young lady desires to indulge more freely in wine she must get married. "A married lady may drink a glass and a half of champagne during dinner, a glass of sherry at soup and half a glass of sherry at dessert." She ought to say, "Only half a glass, please," when the wine is offered to her. The *Bazar* neglects to state a fact well known in higher circles, that if the person really wants more than half a glass a wink must be tipped to the waiter at the moment the glass is asked for. It is to be hoped that persons outside the pale of fashionable society will not imagine that knives and forks and fingers are to be used indiscriminately. Far otherwise. "Use a gold ice spoon with ices, a knife and fork with pears and apples; a spoon with a melon; strawberries and cream with spoon and fork; strawberries alone are taken by the stem and dipped in powdered sugar; served with cream they are eaten with a spoon; dessert cake is broken by the hands and eaten piecemeal, and grapes, gooseberries, etc., are taken in the fingers." At free-lunch stands or penny restaurants these rules may be ignored.—*Detroit Free Press.*

Feats of Engineering.

NEW YORK must have quicker communication with its suburbs. The thousands of business men and women who work all day in its stores and offices must be able to reach their homes in Harlem, Brooklyn, or Jersey City in thirty minutes from Broadway. To meet the wants of the upper part of New York the elevated roads were constructed. They are the perfection of railway traveling—for the passenger—smooth, free from noise and dust, besides their wonderful rapidity of transit. Within a year it is expected the East River bridge will be open to the passage of the great army of people who spend their days in New York and their nights in Brooklyn. The latter city has been fitly called "a lodging-house for New York." Four hundred men are at work on the approaches to this bridge. They are massive granite arches, supporting the road-bed, rising gradually, till it crosses at a dizzy height the river below; the bridge is so high that most ships may pass under it with top-gallant masts standing. It would not do that the finest harbor in the world should be obstructed by a bridge at the water level. Governor Cornell has signed a bill appropriating two million five hundred thousand dollars to finish the most wonderful suspension bridge the world has yet seen.

The third means of communication now being pushed rapidly forward is a tunnel for trains under the Hudson River to Jersey City. There are two tunnels for that part which lies under the river's bed, and they unite in one at each end. This double tunnel is lined with iron plates, and faced with brick three feet thick. The clay excavated from the tunnel is used to make the bricks to line it, of which more than two thousand are required for each running foot of wall. The interior will be painted white, and lighted with gas. The estimated expense of this work is ten million of dollars. The work goes on day and night; three gangs of men being employed eight hours each, thus accomplishing three days work every twenty-four hours. All the work is done by the electric light, and thus one great invention helps another. The total length of the work will be two and a half miles, including the approaches, though only about a mile of this distance is under the bed of the river. When it is done four hundred trains per day can pass safely, delivering passengers and freight in the very heart of New York.—*Youth's Companion.*

A VERY ancient custom was observed on Good Friday at St. Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, London, where at the conclusion of the service an old tomb in the churchyard was visited, and the Rev. J. Morgan laid twenty-one sixpences on the tomb, which were picked up by twenty-one elderly females of the parish. It is said that an old lady left

The Great Star Distances.

THE method of finding the distance of the stars, or stellar parallax, is one of the interesting problems of modern astronomy. In the days of old the stars were supposed to hold the same position in regard to each other from age to age, and were, therefore, called fixed stars, to distinguish them from the planets. Nothing can be further from the truth. The telescope shows that the stars are in constant motion, but that the rate of motion is so slow that thousands of years must elapse before the eye can perceive the change. Some stars are coming toward us, and some are receding from us. The sun, which is only a star, is moving with all the planets in his train. Our earth, which is but an atom among atoms, is whirling, no one knows whither, through illimitable space. Even the serene heaven above us is this same space pervaded by an infinitely subtle ether, whose particles are seething and surging like the waves of the stormy sea. The motion of the stars once established, it must follow that some of them are nearer to us than others, and very persistent and painstaking have been the efforts to find out which of the shining suns of space are our nearest neighbors.

Success has, however, crowned patient labor. Among the fifty million stars that glimmer in the firmament, there are about a dozen stars visible in our latitude that have a parallax ranging from a tenth to half a second. It would be natural to suppose that the brightest stars are the nearest, but this is far from being the case. The nearest star in the northern heavens is a double star of the fifth magnitude in the Swan, known as 61 Cygni. The brilliant Sirius is nearly twice as far away. The nearest star in the whole heavens is Alpha Centauri, a bright star near the south pole. This has a parallax of nine-tenths of a second, and is twice as near as any other star. Its distance is computed as more than two hundred thousand times our distance from the sun, or twenty millions of millions of miles. If such be the inconceivable distance separating us from the nearest star, what idea can the finite mind form of the immensity of space intervening between us and the more remote?

Vigorous work is now being done in stellar parallax by what is called Bessel's method. A star with proper motion, or one that has been found to approach or recede from the sun, is selected, and its position is compared night after night by means of the micrometer with other small stars in the vicinity having no proper motion, and therefore presumed to be farther away. The star with proper motion will change its position in regard to the more remote ones when observed from different parts of the earth's orbit. Some interesting and intricate work of this kind has been successfully completed at Mr. Seagrave's private observatory by Mr. Waldo and Mr. Seagrave. The problem was to determine the parallax of a star called Theta Cassiopeæ. This, by measuring its position and distance from two small stars in the vicinity; was found to be less than one-tenth of a second. These enthusiastic astronomers worked upon the problem from the first of September, 1878, to the first of November, 1879. During that time they made measurements of each star on one hundred and twenty nights. A trained eye, keen perception and mathematical precision, as well as patience and persistence, were involved in the solution of this delicate and intricate problem. These are the means by which astronomy has won its most brilliant triumphs, and those who would become practical astronomers must give their nights to observation and their days to study.—*Providence (R. I.) Journal.*

Pulque—The Mexican National Drink.

IN a letter from Mexico to the New York *Sun*, the writer says: This liquid is distilled from the maguey plant. It has a disagreeable smell and taste, but no description can possibly convey an adequate idea of its hurtful effects upon the prosperity of the country. In the first place, the most fertile and productive lands of the upper plain of Mexico are altogether given up to the production of the maguey plant. When it is remembered that a maguey takes often ten years to come to perfection, and that very little attention is required in the mean time, it will be evident that the employment this species of agriculture gives to the laboring class is far below that required for the cultivation of any kind of grain. Yet it is by this very class of persons that pulque is most drunk, and consequently the reals of the working man find their way into the pockets of the rich owners of *haciendas* who spend their profits in Paris or Brussels, while the working people receive almost no substantial benefit from the principal agricultural pursuit of the country. Besides, the effect of pulque drinking is horribly enervating and demoralizing. Taken in moderation, it is an excellent tonic to the stomach, and Queen Victoria is said to be in the habit of drinking it for this reason; but taken in excess the effect is fearful, as it produces the very worst kind of intoxication. I have never seen so many drunken people as in the city of Mexico, where the *pulquerias* are more frequent than gin palaces in London or gin mills in the Bowery. A pulque "drunk" lasts for about twenty-four hours, and as one plant produces every day about four quarts, just enough to intoxicate a pulque drinker, and this plant lasts for about six months, the owner of a small plot of ground can remain half drunk, as indeed many of them do, for many years. The enormous amount of this liquor that is consumed yearly can be estimated from the fact that in the City of Mexico alone the consumption is at the rate of a pint a day for every inhabitant, and that a special train, *tren de pulque*, runs twice a day between Apam, a village in the heart of the maguey district, and Mexico City, the freight from pulque on each train amounting to between seven hundred and eight hundred dollars! The maguey yields another liquor, which is not so deleterious in its effects either as a drink or as an object of labor as is pulque. This is the vino mezcal, which is a species of brandy, distilled from the juice of the maguey; but it can only be drunk as a *liquera*, and is not unlike Jamaica rum. It is manufactured in large quantities at Apam, where the dry and cold temperature of the great dusty Mexican plain produces the maguey in its highest perfection. At Tequila, a little town in the State of Jalisco, to the north of Guadalajara, a very superior kind of mezcal is manufactured, which takes its name from the town, and is really a very palatable beverage. But I am convinced, in spite of the wonderful usefulness of the maguey, supplying as it does fruit, drink, yam, hemp, paper, needles and brushes, that it is one of the banes of this favored land.

A Dreamer's Senses.

IF a strong light be held before the sleeper's eyes he is almost sure to awake, but at the very moment he may have a dream of some tremendous fire, perhaps that his house is in flames. The ear of the dreamer is generally on the alert, and proves a gong to the mysterious spirit to make its airy rounds. To some sleepers the sound of a flute fills the air with music, or they dream of a delightful concert. A loud noise will produce terrific thunder and crashings unutterable, and at that he heard a signal-gun, saw the proceedings for displaying the signals, heard the bustle of the streets, the assembling of troops, etc. Just then he was roused by his wife who had dreamed precisely the same dream, with this addition, that she saw the enemy land, and a friend of her husband killed; and she awoke in a fright. This occurred at Edinburgh at the time when a French invasion was feared, and it had been decided to fire a signal-gun at the first approach of the foe. This dream was caused, it appears, by the fall of a pair of tongs in the room above, and the excited state of the public mind was quite sufficient to account for both dreams turning on the same subject. An old lady, a friend of the writer, relates a similar dream which occurred to her just before the battle of Waterloo, when the fear of an invasion by Napoleon was at its height. She heard the march of troops in the streets, and the screams of the populace. They broke into her own house, ransacked it, and pursued her with bayonet. She fell on the floor and pretended to be dead. After sundry thrusts, which seemed to her "roving spirit" to be quite innocuous, the soldiers remarked that she was "done for." They departed, and she escaped to consciousness. This dream was no doubt caused in the first instance by a noise in the house or street, and the painless bayonet thrusts by some slight irritation, such as a hair-pin or other adjunct to dress. Whispering in a sleeper's ear will often produce a dream; and there are cases on record in which people who sleep with their ears open have been led through dreadful agonies at the will of their wakeful tormentors. The vivid description given of a young officer so treated by his comrades is both interesting and suggestive. In changing our position, as we constantly do in sleep, we touch the bedclothes, etc., perhaps the nose gets tickled or the sole of the foot, and dreams painful or pleasant are the consequence. These may seem trivial causes, but it must be remembered that the mind is ready to fly into the realms of fancy at the slightest intimation. People have often dreamed of spending the severest winters in Siberia, and of joining the expeditions to the North Pole, simply because the bedclothes have been thrown off during sleep. It is said that a moderate heat applied to the soles of the feet will generate dreams of volcanoes, burning coals, etc. Dr. Gregory dreamed of walking up the crater of Mount Etna, and that he felt the earth warm under his feet. He had placed a hot-water bottle at his feet on going to bed. The memory of a visit he had once paid to Mount Vesuvius supplied the mental picture. Persons suffering from toothache imagine that the operator is tugging at the faulty tooth, and somehow cannot extract it; or, as in Dr. Gregory's case, he draws out the wrong one, and leaves the aching tooth in statu quo. A blister applied to the head is highly suggestive of being scalped by Indians, especially if Mayne Reid's ghastly details are at all fresh in the memory.—*Temple Bar.*

Stories From the Mines.

MANY stories are told of the manner in which the first discoveries of gold in California were turned to account by ingenious speculators, and among them are the following: In one district the gold-dust was mixed with large quantities of fine black sand, which the miners—most of whom were raw hands—blew off from the gold in their anxiety to arrive at the ore itself. A keen old man turned their impatience to account by shamming lameness, and pretending that in his weakly state he was not equal to the toil of mining, and was thus compelled to resort to the poor and profitless branch of gathering the black sand, which he sold as a substitute for emery. He used to go about on an evening with a large bag and a tin tray, requesting the miners to blow their black sand upon it, and returning with it to his hut. By the aid of quicksilver he was able to extract the gold, double in quantity to that which was obtained by the hardest-working miner at the washings.

Tricks of every kind were played upon new-comers in search of the golden treasures. One story is told of some American associates who had been working at an unprofitable spot, putting up a notice that their "valuable site" was for sale, as they were going elsewhere. A few Germans who had just arrived offered themselves as purchasers. The price asked was exorbitant, as the proprietors stated that the "diggings" returned a large amount of gold, and the following day was appointed for the Germans to come and see what could be produced in the course of a few hours' working. The sellers went during the night and secreted the gold-dust in the banks, so that it would come to light, as a natural deposit, when the earth was turned up. The following morning the poor Germans were so delighted with the apparent richness of the place that they gave a large sum of money and two valuable gold watches for the property. The Germans were laughed at; but they went to work, and actually succeeded in raising a large amount of gold beneath the spot where the others had left off. The Americans were thus outwitted in turn, and endeavored to get repossession of the place by force; but another company of Germans arriving, they were obliged to decamp.

An old miner relates this story: "While working on Rock Creek, the weather being very hot, we always had near us a can of water, and close to it we put a teacup to hold the particles of gold as we collected them. One morning as we were at work a thirsty digger came by, who asked permission to take a draught of water, which being granted, he filled up the cup, and quaffed off the costly drink, without either drinking our healths or leaving the least sediment at the bottom. I suspected at first that some trick had been played upon us, and he had secreted the gold; but from the evident distress of the man, and the earnest manner in which he promised to repay us when he got work, I firmly believe that he had swallowed the gold, not having noticed it in the cup."

Scarcely twenty-three years have elapsed since the gold yield in California became an undoubted fact, and within that period many millions of dollars' worth of gold-dust has been added to the wealth of the world. But even these results have been eclipsed by the wonderful discoveries of gold in Australia. So extensively are the gold deposits distributed throughout that great country, that Melbourne, the capital, has been said to be paved with the rich metal, the broken quartz rocks which have been used to make the streets being found to contain gold.—*Harper's Young People.*

FLORIDA is not too young to have an utterly obliterated city. St. Joseph was once a thriving seaport, the terminus of a railroad, a shipping point for hundreds of thousands of cotton bales annually, and the supply depot for the western section of the State. It lost its commerce, dwindled rapidly in population, was swept by yellow fever, and finally a tornado leveled the last of the houses. The place is now a wilderness.

THE angler's theory that a fish does not suffer much physical pain from a hook in his gills, or mental agony either, for that matter, is supported by the recent experience of a Stratford, Conn., fisherman. A large trout took

Our Young Readers.

LUCY'S SOLILOQUY.

"I wish I could scratch the freckles
All off my cheeks and nose,
I wish I could make dirt pancakes
Without mussing my sash and clothes.

"I wish I could find the chickens
That laid those 'speckle' eggs
We recovered on Easter morning
In a nest by the sofa's legs.

"I'd like to see Mother Hubbard
Going to buy a bone,
And her dog that stood up 'headwards'
When he thought he was all alone.

"I wish I could ride with pops
Way to the 'beautifer sky,
To the 'beautifer clouds and sunshine,
Where the smoke and the song-birds fly.

"I wish I could be a flower,
A posy in a jar,
And then I'd be picked by mamma,
And put in the vase with the star.

"My legs would hang in the water—
But oh! at last I'd be
A dry little seed. I'd rather,
I guess, be only me."

So chatted my little Lucy
To her doll Jemima Lee;
"And I guess," she said, "my mamma
Had rather I'd just be me."
—*Youth's Companion.*

A VOYAGE ON AN ICE-BLOCK.

THE breaking up of the ice in Russia is always a fine sight to look at, even upon a small stream like the Neva at St. Petersburg, which is a mere brook compared with the great rivers of the South. As soon as the spring thaw sets in, all the wooden bridges are removed, and nothing checks the descending ice but the stone piers of the Nikolaievski Bridge, named after its founder, the Czar Nicholas. Every morning, while the show lasts, the balustrades of this bridge are lined with a crowd of eager spectators, looking as intently at the wonderful sight as if they had never seen it before.

And a wonderful sight it is indeed. Far as the eye can reach, the smooth, dark surface of the river is one great procession of floating masses of ice, of all shapes and sizes, moving slowly and steadily downward.

But the place to see this famous sight at its best is the Volga, which, with its two thousand miles of length, brings down ice enough to overwhelm a whole city. At times the force of the current piles it up, sheet over sheet, into huge mounds, the crashing and grinding of which, as they dash against each other, make the very air shake. When the river is "moving," as the Russians call it, he would be a bold man who would attempt to take a boat across it; for, once caught between two of these moving islands, the strongest boat on the Volga would be crushed like an egg-shell.

So, doubtless, think the group of peasants who are standing upon the river bank one bright March morning, a mile or two below the great manufacturing town of Saratov, watching the endless procession of ice-blocks sweep past. Strange-looking fellows they are, with their flat, sallow faces and thick yellow beards, their high boots smeared with tar instead of blacking, their rough caps pulled down over their eyes, and their heavy sheepskin frocks with the wool inside. But, queer as they look, they are a merry set, laughing and joking unceasingly, and enjoying the spectacle like a party of youths at a circus.

"Come, now, Meesha [Michael], here's an open course; let us have a race across!"

"All right, Stepka [Stephen]; and as you're a friend of mine, I'll give you a half-minute start."

And then follows a loud laugh, for a little fun goes a long way in Russia.

But a sudden shout from one of the men draws everybody's attention, and he is seen pointing to a huge sheet of ice some distance up the stream. On its smooth white surface lies a dark, shapeless lump, perfectly still; and guesses begin to fly from mouth to mouth as to what this can be.

"A block of wood, I think."

"A dog, more likely."

"Too big—must be a bundle of hay."

A handsome young fellow, lately arrived in that district from the North, presses to the front, and fixing his keen eyes for a moment upon the mysterious object, says, emphatically, "Tchelovek" (a man).

"A man?" echo two or three of his companions. "He must be frozen, then, for he don't seem to move a bit."

"Feodor [Theodore], has the best eyes among us, though," puts in another. "If he says a man, why, a man it must be."

"And so it is," shouts one who has run a little way up the bank; "and he's alive, too, for I saw him move his head just now."

By this time the ice-block had come near enough to let the strange object upon it be plainly seen. It was the figure of a man in a sheep-skin frock, doubled up in a crouching posture.

"We must help him, lads," cries Feodor; "it won't do to let a man perish before our eyes."

"Ah, my boy," answers an old man beside him, shaking his gray head, "it's easy to say 'help him,' but how are we to do it? Crossing the Volga when it's moving is not like dipping a spoon in a bowl of milk."

"I'll try it, anyhow," says Feodor, resolutely. "God cares for those who care for each other. I'll just run and get out my boat."

But as he was starting off to do so, a shout from the rest made him turn his head, and he saw something that stopped him short.

Just abreast of the spot where they stood three or four small islets, or rather sand-banks, lay close together in the center