

TWO OHIO YARNS.

Frog Alive in a Man for Three Years and Alligators.

These stories are vouched for by correspondents of the Cincinnati Enquirer:

At Dayton, O., Mr. Louis Whitcomb, a core-maker, has suffered for three years past with a stomach ailment that baffled medical treatment. Convinced finally that some animated organism was domiciled in his stomach, he detailed the symptoms to Dr. H. T. Weiss. The doctor's diagnosis satisfied him that something was hopping about in Whitcomb's stomach. Enemetic failed to elevate the unknown, when the doctor resorted to potions that kill. This was followed by a powerful physic. Whitcomb has exhibited to the doctor the web feet and other undigested remnants of a huge frog that had been making its home in the core-maker's stomach for the past three years.

At Akron, O., considerable interest has been created over the discovery of an alligator six feet long in the waters of the Little Cuyahoga river. That the reptile had lived in the water for some time was evident by the various substances found in its stomach. When cut open several small fish, pieces of river grass and a partly digested turtle were brought to light.

One Oyster for Two.

We laugh at the innocent young housewife who ordered "half a dozen halibut" for dinner. Had she lived in the South Pacific Islands she might have been equally laughed at for ordering half a dozen oysters—not to say a pint. The author of "Oysters, and All About Them" gives some examples that nearly match the giant clams and abalones of the California coast.

Pliny mentions that, according to the historians of Alexander's expedition, oysters a foot in diameter were found in the Indian Seas, and Sir James E. Tennent was unexpectedly enabled to corroborate the correctness of this statement, for at Kotkor, near Trincomalee, enormous specimens of edible oysters were brought to the rest house. One measured more than eleven inches in length by half as many in width.

But this extraordinary measurement is beaten by the oysters of Port Lincoln in South Australia, which are the largest edible ones in the world. They are as large as a dinner-plate, and of much the same shape. They are sometimes more than a foot across the shell, and the oyster fits its habitation so well that he does not leave much margin.

It is a new sensation when a friend asks you to lunch, at Adelaide, to have one oyster fried in butter, or in eggs and bread crumbs, set before you, but it is a very pleasant experience; for the flavor and delicacy of the Port Lincoln mammoth are proverbial, even in that land of luxuries.

Where Politeness Was Expensive.

The Spanish lover has a very pretty way of saying, "I throw myself at your feet, senorita." Of course he does nothing of the kind. The Spanish hostess says to her friends, "Possess yourself of my house, it is all yours," but she does not expect them to take actual possession. The words are the flower of civility.

But an occasional visitor takes these polite people at their word, and they are too polite to explain the mistake. When Gen. and Mrs. Grant were in Cuba, says the Detroit Free Press, they were invited to dine at the palace of the governor general in Havana. In the evening a ball was given, which was attended by the beauty of the city.

Among the senoritas was one lady who stood conversing with the American general's wife. She was superbly dressed, and carried a marvelous fan, which had descended to her from her great-grandmother. It was a costly affair of carving, lace and diamonds. Mrs. Grant admired it, upon which the Spanish lady at once handed it to her, with the usual remark:

"It is yours, madame, with the greatest felicity. Do me the great favor to possess yourself of it."

Mrs. Grant was delighted; she warmly thanked the lady and kept the fan, nor would the disinterested senorita, who had lost her heirloom, permit the mistake to be announced.

Where Nobody Starves.

Within a hundred miles of the east coast of Australia no native in an uncrumpled condition has ever died from lack of digestible food—a rather comprehensive term in a country where fern roots are boiled like potatoes, and snails and grasshoppers are considered tidbits. Strange to say, the martyrs of that horrid diet get old, as a proof that freedom from care is, after all, the main condition of longevity. A similar phenomenon may be observed in the villages of central Russia, where mental stagnation prevails in its ugliest forms, but where charity and parish poor laws protect every native from the risk of actual starvation.—Professor Oswald in Good Words.

A Primate's Pleasantry.

A candidate for priest's orders preaching his extempore trial sermon before the late Archbishop Taft and Dean Stanley, in his nervousness began stammering, "I will divide my congregation into two—the converted and the unconverted." This proved too much for the primate's sense of humor, and he exclaimed: "I think sir as there are only two of us, you had better say which is which."

THE SLEEPING SEA.

Far away fair ships are sailing—
Far and faint, and dim,
Gleams of white, or glints of light,
On the vague horizon's rim.

And the ocean, only varied
Where the breakers cry
From the strand of gleaming sand,
Stretches level to the sky.

Cloudless azure heavens bending
Over the sleeping sea—
Pulsing heat about our feet—
Where can peril be?

Can it be that tempests gather,
Strong winds lash the deep?
Tossed in pain the tall ships strain,
Maddened billows shoreward leap?

Trust the lion, trust the serpent,
When he sleeping lies,
Trust thy hands to flaming brands—
Trust not fickle seas and skies.

—Isaac O. Rankin, in May Overland.

A PIECE OF GOLD.

I.

When Lucien Hem saw his last 100-franc note gripped by the bank-keeper's rake, and rose from the roulette table, where he had lost the last fragments of his little fortune, collected for this supreme struggle, he set giddy and thought he was going to fall.

With dizzy head and tottering legs he went and threw himself down upon the broad leather settee surrounding the play table.

For some minutes he gazed vacantly at the clandestine gambling house in which he had squandered the best years of his youth; recognized the ravaged faces of the gamblers, crudely lit by the three large shaded lamps; listened to the light jingle of gold on the cloth-covered table; felt that he was ruined, lost; recollected that he had a home the pair of regulation pistols which his father, General Hem, then a simple captain, had used so well in the attack of Zaatcha; then, overcome by fatigue, he sank into a profound sleep.

When he awoke, with a clammy mouth, he saw by the clock that he had slept for barely half an hour, and felt an imperious need for breathing the fresh air. The clock hands marked a quarter before midnight. While rising and stretching his arms, Lucien remembered that it was Christmas eve, and, by an ironic trick of memory, he saw himself a little child, putting his shoes into the chimney before going to bed.

At that moment old Dronski—a pillar of the gaming house, the classic Pole, wearing the threadbare hooded woolen cloak, ornamented all over with greasy stains—approached Lucien, and muttered a few words in his grizzled beard: "Lend me a 5-franc piece, monsieur. It's now two days since I have stirred out of the club, and for two days the 'seventeen' has never turned up. Laugh at me, if you like, but I'll suffer my hand to be cut off if that number does not turn up on the stroke of midnight."

Lucien shrugged his shoulders. He had not even enough in his pocket to meet this tax, which the frequenters of the place called "The Pole's hundred sous." He passed into the ante-chamber, took his hat and fur coat, and descended the stairs with feverish rapidity.

Since 4 o'clock, when Lucien had shut himself up in the gaming house, snow had fallen heavily, and the street—a street in the center of Paris, very narrow, and built with high houses on either side—was completely white.

In the calm sky, blue-black, the cold stars glittered.

The ruined gambler shuddered under his furs, and walked away, his mind still teeming with thoughts of despair, and more than ever turning to the remembrance of the box of pistols which awaited him in one of his drawers; but after moving forward a few steps, he stopped suddenly before a heart-wringing sight.

On a stone bench, placed according to old custom near the monumental door of a mansion, a little girl of 6 or 7 years of age, dressed in a ragged black frock was sitting in the snow. She was sleeping, in spite of the cruel cold, in an attitude of frightful fatigue and exhaustion; her poor little head and tiny shoulder pressed as if they had sunk into an angle of the wall, and reposing on the icy stone. One of her wooden shoes had fallen from her foot, which hung helplessly and lugubriously before her.

With a mechanical gesture, Lucien put his hand to his waistcoat pocket, but a moment afterwards he recollected that he had not been able to find even a forgotten piece of 20 sous, and had been obliged to leave the club without giving the customary "tip" to the club attendant; yet moved by an instinctive feeling of pity, he approached the little girl, and might, perhaps, have taken her in his arms and given her a night's lodging, when, in the wooden shoe which had slipped from her foot, he saw something glitter.

He stooped; it was a gold coin.

II.

Some charitable person, doubtless some lady, had passed by, had seen on this Christmas night the little wooden shoe lying in front of the sleeping child, and, recalling the touching legend, had placed there, with a secret hand, a magnificent offering so that this poor abandoned one might believe in presents made for the infant Saviour, and preserve, in spite of her misfortune, some confidence and some hope in the goodness of Providence.

A gold piece! It was several days of rest and riches for the beggar, and Lucien was on the point of waking her to tell her this, when he heard near his ear, as in hallucination, a voice—the voice of the Pole, with its coarse drawing accent, almost whispering: "It's now two days since I stirred out of the club, and for two days the 'seventeen' has never turned up; I'll suffer my hand to be cut off, if that number does not turn up on the stroke of midnight."

Then this young man of three and twenty, descended from a race of honest men, who bore a proud mili-

tary name and who had never swerved from the path of honor, conceived a frightful idea: he was seized with a mad, hysterical, monstrous desire. After glancing on all sides, to make sure that he was alone in the deserted street, he bent his knee, and carefully outstretching his trembling hand, he stole the gold piece from the fallen shoe!

Hurrying then, with all speed, he returned to the gambling house, scaled the stairs two and three at a stride, and entering the accursed play-room as the first stroke of midnight was sounding, placed the piece of gold on the green cloth and cried:

"I stake on the seventeen!"

The seventeen won.

With a turn of the hand Lucien pushed the thirty-six louis on to the "red."

The "red" won.

He lifted the seventy-two louis on the same color; the "red" again won. Twice he "doubled"—three times—always with the same success. He had now before him a pile of gold and notes and began to scatter stakes all over the board; the "dozen," the "column," the "number," all the combinations succeeded with him. His luck was unheard of, supernatural. It might have been imagined that the little ivory ball dancing in the roulette was magnetized, fascinated by the eyes of this player and obedient to him. In a dozen stakes he had recovered the few wretched thousand franc notes, his last resources, which he had lost at the beginning of the evening.

Now, punting with two or three hundred louis at a time, and aided by his fantastic vein of luck, he was on the way to regaining, and more besides, the hereditary capital he had squandered in so few years, and reconstituting his fortune.

In his eagerness to return to the gaming table, he had not taken off his fur coat. Already he had crumpled the large pockets with bundles of notes and rouleaux of gold pieces; and, not knowing where to heap his winnings, he now loaded the inner and exterior pockets of his frock coat, the pockets of his waistcoat and trousers, his cigar case, his handkerchief—everything that could be made to hold his money.

And still he played, and still he won. Like a madman, like a drunken man! And he threw handfuls of louis on to the "petite," at hazard, with a gesture of certainty and disdain!

Only something like a red-hot iron was in his heart, and he thought of nothing but of the little mendicant sleeping in the snow whom he had robbed.

"Is she still at the same spot? Surely she must be still there. Presently—yes, when 1 o'clock strikes—I swear it! I will quit this place. I will take her sleeping in my arms and carry her to my home. I will put her in my warm bed; I will bring her up, give her a dowry, love her as if she were my own daughter, care for her always, always!"

III.

But the clock struck 1, and then a quarter, and then a half, and then three-quarters.

And Lucien was still seated at the infernal table.

At length, one minute before 2 o'clock, the keeper of the bank rose abruptly and said in a loud voice: "The bank is broken, gentlemen—enough for today."

With a bound Lucien was on his feet. Roughly pushing aside the gamblers who surrounded him and regarded him with envious admiration, he hurried away quickly, sprang down the stairs and ran all the way to the stone bench. In the distance, by the light of a lamp, he saw the little girl.

"God be praised!" he said, "she is still there."

He approached her, he took her hands.

"Oh! how cold she is, poor little one!"

He took her under the arms and raised her so that he might carry her; he had felt back without her awaking.

"How soundly children of her age sleep!"

He pressed her against his bosom to warm her, and, seized by a vague inquietude, and with a view to rousing her out of this heavy slumber, he kissed her eyelids.

Then it was that he perceived with terror that these eyeballs were half open, showing half the eyeballs—glassy, sightless, motionless. Upon his brain flashed a horrible suspicion. He placed his mouth close to that of the little girl; no breath came from it.

While with the gold piece which he had stolen from this mendicant Lucien had won a fortune at the gaming table, the homeless child had died—died of cold!

IV.

Seized by the throat by the most frightful of agonies, Lucien tried to utter a cry, and in the effort which he made, awoke from his nightmare on the club settee, on which he had gone to sleep a little before midnight, and the attendant who had quitted the house last had left him out of charity.

The misty dawn of a December morning was graying the window panes.

Lucien went out in the street, pledged his watch, took a bath, breakfasted, and then went to the recruiting office and signed an engagement as a volunteer in the First regiment of Chasseurs d'Afrique.

At the present time Lucien Hem is a lieutenant; he has only his pay to live upon, but he contrives to make it suffice, being a very steady officer and never touching a card. It appears even that he has found the means of saving, for the other day, at Algiers, one of his comrades who was following him at a few paces distant in one of the hilly streets of Kasha, saw him give something in charity to a little Spanish girl sleeping in a doorway, and had the indiscretion to see what it was that Lucien had given to the child.

Great was his surprise at the poor lieutenant's generosity.

Lucien Hem had put into the hand of the poor child a piece of gold—From the French of Francois Coppee, in Strand Magazine.

Cats as Clocks.

Everyone knows that cats can see in the dark, but the reason they can do so is because of the peculiar construction of their eyes. You may have noticed that in a moderate light the pupil or black part in pussy's eyes is small and oval shaped, while in the full glare of light it becomes narrow. Now, in the dark, it expands to a circle, and nearly fills the surface of the eyeball.

This peculiarity of the cat's eye is turned to account in a curious manner by the Chinese. The Abbe Hue relates that when he was travelling in China he asked his attendant what time it was. The man went over to a cat that was quietly basking in the sun, and, examining its eyes, told the Abbe that it was about two hours after-noon, and on being questioned how he knew that, he explained that the pupils of a cat's eye were largest in the morning, and that they gradually grew smaller as the light increased, till they reached their minimum at noon; that then they began to widen again, till at night they once more became large.

The good Abbe was filled with admiration for the ingenuity of a people who could use cats as clocks. But it must be admitted that this way of telling the time of day is rather a loose one, and could only be trusted in very clear and serene weather, for temporary gloom or the darkness of a storm would sadly derange your four-footed clock and put it all wrong.

Men Behind Dress-goods Counters.

If you have done much shopping you must have noticed that more men than women are employed at the dress goods counters, observes a Chicago Tribune shopper. It occurred to the writer to ask if there was any reason for this. The manager replied, just as if he had been expecting some one to ask the question. "There are several reasons for it. Women do not like to take the say-so of their own sex on dress goods men have better ideas of combination than women; men are more diplomatic in dealing with women than saleswomen are. A saleswoman can accomplish more at some other counters than men. But at the dress-goods counter men make best employees. You would naturally think that a woman could grab up a piece of goods and show it to advantage. I never saw one that could do it. Few women are good judges of combinations of colors on the counter. A modiste is, of course, but a woman cannot always have a modiste with her when she goes shopping. Men who are in this business take to a thing like combining colors as naturally as ducks take to water. They seem to know as soon as they see a woman what will become her in the way of dress goods. There are many articles in such a store as this which women prefer to buy of their own sex, but when it comes to dress goods they prefer to deal with men."

Prompt Ruling.

It is chiefly in civil courts that complaint is made of the law's delay. Courts martial are only temporary organizations, and cannot continue cases from term to term. But with all the promptness of military legal procedure, it is not often that a decision is obtained with so little hesitation as in the following case.

An old lady living in "Dixie" in the time of the Rebellion brought her complaints to the headquarters of the Confederate General Bragg, where she was met by his adjutant, and the following conversation ensued.

Old Lady—Is this where Captain Bragg lives?

Colonel Brent—Yes, madam; can I do anything for you?

Old Lady—Well, you see, mister, I live over where the fighting was, and when Captain Bragg's company skinned the Yankees, they ran me past my house—rife peccant—when up comes Captain Forrest with his cuirass company [cavalry] and makes a line of fight rife through my yard, and oversets my ash-hopper, and treads—

General Bragg (sitting near)—Colonel Brent see that the lady's claim is settled immediately.

The Danger of Wearing Red Stockings.

It has been remarked that the wearing of children of red stockings coincides with pustular eruptions on their legs and feet. The Board of Health in Paris employed M. Schutzenberger, a chemical expert, to ascertain whether the dyes coloring the stockings contained poisonous matter. He has sent in his report, in which he says that all the many specimens submitted to him derived their red color from aniline and containing a large proportion of antimony oxide. As children perspire freely, this matter enters into solution and is thus taken into the pores. The professor had no doubt that it was the cause of the pustular rash which accompanies the use of red stockings. The Board of Health has reported in favor of the interdiction for wearing apparel of dyes obtained from metallic preparations.

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SPECIFICS.

In selecting breeding birds, pick out the best and discard all of the weak, sickly ones. Generally it is best to use fowls for breeding that are at least one year old. If pullets are desired, have old hens and young cockerels; if roosters are desired reverse this. So far no rule has been discovered for determining the sex of eggs; it is all guesswork. Save all the poultry manure to use in the garden in the spring.

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