THE JOURNAL.

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[For the JOURNAL.]

The Laws Should be Enforced.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—With your permission, the undersigned desires to submit a few remarks for the candid consideration of your readers, relating to the administration of criminal justice in Platte county. I might preface these statements by stating here that it is my humble opinion that I have a right so to do, for at least two very cogent reasons; first, because it was my fortune to reside within her borders for a number of years. Therefore I take more or less pride in the good name of my old home, particularly when I hear that good name drawn in question so frequently on account of recent occurrences therein. Secondly, because I am a tax-payer therein, and am directly interested in her material prosperity, both as respects the matter of increasing the valuation of her property, and lessening the burdens of the tax-payers. Thus, I take it for granted, that no good citizen who wishes to see crime committed in Columbus and vicinity punished, will take exception to these observations. It is expected, however, that your crooks and their sympathizers may, for in times past they have stood in public places and insulted respectable citizens whom they had injured and despoiled; thus investigations have been stifled, prosecutions made hideous mockeries, in spite of the efforts of courts and District Attorneys. The evils that ensue from such neglect and apathy are many. Bad examples are set before the young, which will more than counteract the beneficent influences of the home and school. Promises of immunity are held out to criminals, if they will come into your borders to operate. The vicious classes, who will bilk and rob the honest citizens, will increase. The tax-payers burdens will multiply. Men of means, especially if they have families, will hesitate to reside and invest in property where such acts are tolerated with indifference. Some may answer if a man don't want to come and live with us he needn't. Did it ever occur to such persons that if a man with money who comes among you and invests it, and trades with your citizens, pays his debts, he is building up our interests, lessening our taxes, and is a better factor in the community than a bilk or crock, who dead-heads on and injures you at home and prejudices you abroad? How can it be otherwise expected than that boys who are naturally good and have kind parents, would yield to temptation, when such evil examples are put before them, and commit crime. The laws should be enforced and justice ought to have an inning, just once. Whenever the above matters have been broached in my hearing, I have invariably said that the citizens of Columbus are not vicious, that they are, generally speaking, good at heart; but are too backward in taking an interest in those affairs which most affect the body politic, thinking perhaps that the officers of the law will bring things about all right sometime. Did it ever occur to you that officers can do very little towards enforcing the laws, if they do not have a healthy moral sentiment to support them in their good work? Courts and sheriffs cannot create good jurors. If men, who ought to serve, will shirk their share of the responsibility which they ought to assume, on some dry legal technicality justice will suffer, and crime flourish. Shall the court be a place where justice is judicially administered, or shall it become the city of refuge for the malefactor, a circus where the crook is the star and the judge the clown? Methinks I hear a voice coming from the inmost soul of every good citizen within your portals saying that the felons must go; that they have debauched our morals long enough; you culprits we have suffered with us too long; in the goodness of our hearts we have tolerated you hoping that you might turn from your iniquity, and become respectable: but how can the leopard change his spots? Henceforth our officials shall have our active moral support. Trusting that these lines will be received by the well disposed in the spirit of kindness in which they are traced, having waited for others to take the initiatory, the remembrance of warm friends, and the kindly regard I still have for my old home, have induced this action. Believing that right will ultimately and powerfully prevail, I remain.

Yours respectfully,
BYRON MILLETT.

December 6th, 1884.

The long expected completion of the Washington monument obelisk was accomplished on the afternoon of the 6th by the setting in place of the marble cap stone weighing 3,300 pounds. The ceremonies were few and simple, the celebration of the event being reserved for Washington's birthday. The flag over the monument now floats from the flagstaff top, which is exactly six hundred feet from the ground, thus displaying the American colors at the greatest constructed height ever yet known in the world. The monument itself with its total height of 550 feet, far overtops every structure of human hands. The corner stone of this monument was laid more than thirty-six years ago.

Young wife: I am determined to learn at what hour my husband comes home at nights; yet, do what I will, I cannot keep awake, and he is always careful not to make a particle of noise. Is there any drug that produces wakefulness? Old wife: No need to buy drugs. Sprinkle the floor with tacks.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Germany has 200,000 tramps.

There are 234 stove foundries in America.

American oysters are being planted in the Baltic.

There are 450 signal service stations in the country.

There are 352 miles of street railway in Philadelphia.

Ten thousand women voted in Washington territory.

A ton of starch can be made from 250 bushels of potatoes.

Bob. Burdette has, it is said, left the Burlington *Hawkeye*.

The payment of pensions so far this month amounts to $8,300,000.

The son of Boston's mayor has been fined $125 for pounding his tailor.

The issue of silver dollars for the week ending Dec. 6th was $526,990.

Mrs. Southworth is sixty-five years old and has written sixty-five books.

Seventy years ago on the 29th ult, the first newspaper was printed by steam.

It is said that there is much smuggling from Mexico into the United States.

In Paris there are 150 tradesmen who deal in nothing but old postage stamps.

Cushions are prohibited in the New York horse cars by the Board of Health.

A rainbow about twenty-five minutes after sunset was recently witnessed in Ireland.

If you want to spend a cool summer go to the table lands of Thibet. It freezes there in July.

An oyster "measuring two feet in diameter" (local papers say) was recently sold in Paris for $1.50.

It is reported that Lapland and Northern Sweden are soon to be opened up by a line of railway.

A report from Kansas City says that the Burlington has withdrawn its cut on passenger rates to St. Louis.

The London *Economist* says that the loss of British farmers in selling wheat at the present prices is $10 an acre.

It costs more to maintain the city of Boston, in proportion to population, than any other city in the United States.

More than 6,000 people were turned out of doors in Ireland for non-payment of rent during the quarter ending Sept. 30.

Hundreds of people are said to be actually starving in the North of England, with many thousand more hungry and destitute.

The property committee of the city of Philadelphia has decided that the Independence bell may be taken to the New Orleans exposition.

A society belle in New York is said to have recently paid $500 for a pair of shoes. They were of white satin and embroidered with pearls.

Jenny Lind is a teacher in the college of music at Albert Hall, London, and said to be one of the most zealous and hard working of them all.

Recently a steamer supposed to be the Alliance, of Cardiff, floundered off Boscastle, and all hands were lost. Boscastle is a small seaport of the county Cornwall, England.

Walter Young, a Scotchman, and totally blind, works daily digging coal in a mine near Pittsburg. He fought in the battle of Balakava, and witnessed the charge of the "Six Hundred."

Dr. Hirschmann, of Norway, a Michigan man, has devised a stovepipe with a patent jointing process, which will probably do away with the venerable stovepipe joke and a great deal of ill-temper and many bad words.

The old Independence bell will be sent to the New Orleans Exposition, as the request has been made by the city council of New Orleans, to give citizens from all parts of the Union an opportunity to hear the sound of that memorable and sacred old bell of freedom.

Sad reports of the epidemic in West Virginia, especially in Wise, Lee, Dickinson and Buchanan counties are described as heartrending. On Quest's river, within a radius of four miles, there are thirty cases of the disease. In one instance the father, mother and six children died. Many persons die for want of attention.

Some of the wise politicians of the north can doubtless explain why the solid democratic south is anxious to circulate the news and keep up the impression that the south is moving ahead on the temperance question, by publishing items like the following: "Local prohibition of the sale of intoxicants makes steady progress in the south."

Joseph C. Mackin, secretary of the Cook county democratic central committee, was arrested on the evening of the 8th inst. on complaint of A. M. Day, secretary of the citizens committee, charged with fraud in the Brand-Leman case. Mackin was taken before U. S. Commissioner Hoyne and held in $10,000 bail for a preliminary. This is the first arrest. It will be remembered that Mackin was before the grand jury and refused to answer questions under his privileged right that he could not be made to criminate himself.

Julius Robble, a farmer living near Somerset, Pulaski county, Ky., was instantly killed by a fiery stone out of a clear sky. He was struck by the meteor on the head and his head crushed in, and his clothing torn and burned and his body was streaked with burning streams of molten iron or detached stones of white heat. This killing of a man by the fall of a meteor is the first authenticated case of the kind in American history. Scientists intend making a thorough investigation of this aerolite now buried in Somerset.

Short Hand Writing.

It is best to acknowedge that nothing is known for certain as to the early history of stenography. It is probable that from the earliest times when men wrote they indulged in abbreviations to a more or less extent in order to waste as little time as possible in copying, and it is very probable also that ingenious scholars of different nations may often have devised terse and concise systems of caligraphy for their own private use. But this does not establish the existence of any widespread and generally recognized method of shorthand writing, and we find nothing of the kind until the discovery of semeiography—that is, the art of writing in signs—at Athens. It is not very clear who was the inventor of this art. Diogenes Laertius seems to attribute the merit of it to Xenophon, for he affirms that the famous historian was the first Athenian to practice it. But however that may be, we can be certain of this, that Xenophon was a very adroit semeiographer, and that it is to him we owe such few of the speeches of Socrates as have been handed down to our times. Semeiography must have been a rather complicated art, for we are repeatedly told by Greek and Latin authors that it was very hard to acquire it. But this fact only adds to the credit of those who were patient and studious enough to surmount the difficulties of the arduous task, and it may be judged how great is the debt that we owe to those courageous toilers when one remembers that had it not been for them well nigh all the models of Grecian eloquence that has survived to this day, and among them the matchless orations of Demosthenes, would have been lost to us. There are at present but two specimens extant of Greek semeiography, one in the library of the Vatican and the other in the Bibliotheque Imperiale at Paris. The first contains the works of Dennis the Areopagite, and the second the speeches of Hermogenes, together with a few extracts of an unknown work.

From Athens shorthand writing was imported into Rome, where, thanks to the influence of Cicero, it became not only a fashionable art, but also a most lucrative and honorable profession. Tiro, the freedman of Cicero and afterward his confidant and intimate friend, was the most renowned of Latin *notarii*. It would seem, however, that stenography was very far from having attained then the degree of perfection which it has reached during the last sixty years. What corroborates this opinion is that on the day when Cato was to speak against the measures proposed by Cæsar to thwart the Cataline conspiracy, Cicero was afraid to rely upon only one or two shorthand writers for a report of the intended speech; he caused as many as twelve to be placed in different parts of the Senate hall, and it is thus that we have become possessed of this celebrated harrangue of Cato, the only one that remains of him. So great was the importance which Cicero attached to stenography that, although a shorthand writer himself, he found it utterly impossible to get on for a single day without Tiro, who was constantly at his elbow ready to take down his improvisations, or to copy out his letters. In one of his epistles he says to this valued amanuensis: "I should not have thought, my dear Tiro, that it would have been so hard to have dispensed with your help. Take care of your health and be persuaded of this, that the best service you can render me is to keep from being ill." If we had need of other testimony to prove the esteem in which stenography was held at Rome, we might cite Ovid and Prudentius, the first of whom tells us that Julius Cæsar habitually wrote in shorthand, and gave his manuscripts over to copyists to transcribe, and the second, that St. Cassian, who lived under the reigns of Decius and Valerius, was one of the most celebrated professors of stenography. Having been condemned to death for refusing to sacrifice to idols, he was delivered over to the tender mercies of his pupils, who killed him with their stylets. The historian Vano was another practiced *notarius*—the 490 volumes he left were all written in shorthand.

However, the "Tironian notes," as they were called (from the fact of Tiro having first adopted them from the Greek), were originally of a very imperfect character. Two principal causes conduced to this imperfection: Firstly, the letters of Tiro's shorthand alphabet had too much analogy with the letters of the ordinary alphabet, which, consisting as it did then, entirely of the letters we now call capitals, did not admit of rapid tracing; and secondly, the stenographic vocabulary of Tiro comprised only 1,100 words, which rendered it quite impossible for anything but a rough outline to be taken of most public speeches. Nevertheless, the system, such as it was, worked very well, and being improved shortly after its introduction into Italy, by Parsianus and Aquila, who simplified the signs and enlarged the vocabulary, it soon spread among scholars and became very popular. Augustus resolved to learn the art, and after a few months of study acquired great proficiency in it. Hereupon Macænas, who had been a little skeptical at first, extended his powerful patronage to shorthand writers, and the consequence was that within a few years there were no less than seventy-five schools at Rome and 300 in the provinces where the Tironian notes were taught. From that time every Italian of education was as much bound to know stenography as a modern gentleman is to know how to spell. Young Romans and old corresponded with each other by means of shorthand, and the *Acta Diurna*, those budgets of news that were dispatched every day or week from the Forum of Rome to the more important cities of the empire, were all drawn up in the abbreviated form, and only transcribed upon reaching their destination. Among the *notarii* who modified the Tironian notes, two, deserve special mention, viz.: Seneca, the Rhetorician, and Saint Cyprian. The former added two thousand and the latter eight thousand to the number of signs in the vocabulary. Subsequently the number of these signs attained a total of thirteen thousand, and the art of stenography then reached the acme of its perfection. Instead of drawing up mere summaries of the speeches they heard and filling up the gaps afterward, either from memory or under dictation of the orators themselves, as had been done in Tiro's time, the later shorthand writers of Rome were as smart at reporting a public harangue verbatim as any of the gentlemen in the Chamber of Deputies' gallery nowaday. Many manuals of explanatory rules to regulate the use of the thirteen thousand signs were also written during the Second and Third centuries, and the difficulties which had at first been inherent to the study of the art were thus gradually combatted or simplified.—*Brooklyn Eagle.*

—A foreign gentleman at a musical evening a few weeks since expressed a great wish to hear "Home, Sweet Home," which he had been told was a striking example of musical pathos and expression. A well-known professor of music, having been asked to play it, sat down to the piano and dashed into Thalberg's variations to the air, to which the foreign gentleman listened with deep attention, becoming, however, a little bewildered at the complicated passage to the finale. At the conclusion he rose and gravely shook hands with the professor, saying: "I tank you, sare. I think we understand now your 'Home, Sweet Home'—so nice and quiet to begin with, but, at the end, oh, what a row in the house."

Anthracite Coal.

Few of the consumers of anthracite coal have any idea of what it is more than a utility, where it comes from, or how it is obtained. Again, some who are conversant with the mining of bituminous coal suppose that it is all the same, and so pass the subject by. May I not then call attention to some of the more pleasing features of its composition with rock and hill to form the mountains of Eastern Pennsylvania and of its production in its familiar forms? "Lackawanna" coal is known all over the United States, and the word is the same kind of a trade mark to coal that "No. 1 hard" is to the Northwestern wheat. On leaving the Erie Railway at Susquehanna for the coal region, one notices first the sandstone of the hills through which the road lies. Railway cuts disclose a varying rock, sometimes solid but often scaly and broken. This being the kind of rock lying next the coal we naturally look for outcroppings of it, but the dip of the strata is about 30° or 35° toward the south. A harder rock is seen in the next layer above that seems to be almost granite. The soil is good, producing maple and beech timber, hemlock only growing in the scant soil of the sandstone hills. This passed, the rock on which the great coal deposits of Pennsylvania rest, with about the same dip, slowly hides itself in the hills toward the south. At Carbondale but little till has to be removed to reach the coal. At Forest, three miles north, the vein "starts" or crops out, and is lightly worked. At Archibald, the little town lies within a great horseshoe, the open part being toward the north, the deposit lying all around but not under it. One of the most remarkable "potholes" in the world was recently opened here. It is very like those near Luzerne, Switzerland, but is larger. The upper stratum of coal is about ten feet in depth, beneath which is thirty feet of sand rock which lies upon the vein we first notice at Forest. This "pot" has its run in the surface rock, and is more than twenty feet in diameter. Being forty-five feet deep, it extends nearly to the second vein of coal. It is hardly funnel shaped, the sides are too nearly perpendicular, but it is rather smaller toward the bottom. When found it is full of fine sand, water-worn stones, some of which were of a flinty character, but round and highly polished. Many of these are now on exhibition at at the company's office. The "pot" is soon to be opened for an air shaft. Further down this road to Scranton and we are in the Lackawanna Valley. Pittston, Wilkesbarre, and down the river to Mauch Chunk, and we have passed through the heart of the anthracite region.

There are a large number of private mines, but most of the coal is produced by the large corporations and railroad companies. Comparatively few of the mines employ the "shaft" except for ventilation, bringing the product of the mine out on a "slope" or inclined plane. At the outer terminus is the hoisting machinery together with the "breaker." This is the part of the mining work that any one may visit and not incur the danger or inconvenience of a descent into the dampness of the "pit." The breaker is a large frame building covering an area varying from five hundred to fifteen hundred square feet, and is usually about sixty feet high. As the coal comes from the mouth of the slope it is hoisted to the top of the building and thrown into the breaking or crushing machinery. This is a series of immense rollers having short, strong teeth which work freely between each other as the machinery moves. The rollers may be adjusted so as to break the coal to a very small size or leave it in lumps of ten or twelve pounds each. This larger size is consumed by the gas companies. After passing the crushers the coal is dropped upon the screens, which are immense sieves standing at an angle of forty or forty-five degrees, so placed one below another—the finest beneath and the coarsest at the top—that as it fails to go through the first it readily rattles off into the "dump," which is true of all the others as well. It is still a considerable distance from the ground, and this facilitates loading the cars, which are run under the dumps to receive the different grades as they have been separated above. A car can be loaded in from six to nine minutes. Trains of from one hundred and thirty to one hundred and fifty cars follow one another out of this region with their thousands of tons of the shining coals. More than two thousand car loads are mined and shipped daily from the Wilkesbarre region. The Scranton region sends out as much more, and this does not include near all of the mining interests in the anthracite region. Now, since these cars carry from five to twelve tons each, putting the estimated number of cars at six thousand, and we have approximated very nearly to the amount mined per day—500,000 tons. Some people fear that the supply may be exhausted and cry "hold!" There are many tons wasted every day, but it is like a few heads of grain left in the harvest field, too small an amount to consider. Then, I am told, the greatest deposits remain untouched, wholly below the veins now worked, and of an equally good quality. The veins now worked are probably but a per cent. of what lies untouched below. The mining proper is let in contracts, and the men who drill and blast and get the coal loose, so that it may be loaded, rarely work more than half a day. They hire common laborers to load their cars—a certain number of cars being allowed to each contractor. What is called "top coal" is often the best in the mine, but is not removed until the "chamber" is "worked." It lies next to the rock overhead and is safer than the bare rock as a roof, since the latter often comes down without warning the miners, and the former never does, always cracking and settling slowly. The chambers are "run" from the main artery or excavation through the vein at distances of about fifteen feet apart and are from twenty-five to thirty-five feet broad. For the better circulation of air these chamber walls are cut through at regular distances, so that the whole is a mighty labyrinth. When the chamber is worked, the top coal and the "pillars"—i. e., what is left between the chambers—is removed as far as possible, but it often results in loss of life or limb. Miners make fair wages, but are no more careful of their earnings than their laborers, who earn far less. There is much more of interest to be told, but perhaps a later letter would tell it better. The geology of the mines would be subject matter of the greatest interest and value and receive much attention if written.—*Cor. Cleveland Leader.*

—A matrimonial association has been started in Harlem. Young men pay monthly dues of five dollars and agree to remain single one year. At the end of that time any one, by giving three months' notice, will receive on his wedding $2,000. Many are joining.—*N. Y. Express.*

—Maggie Lee, a "magnetic girl," gave a performance in Frankfort, Ky., the other night, in presence of Proctor Knott and a large audience. A man weighing 225 pounds sat in a chair, and she easily lifted him and the chair by touching the chair with the tip of her finger.—*Louisville Courier Journal.*

—Edward Simms, organist of St. Michael's, Coventry, England, has held his position seventy-four years, and still continues to officiate.

—Yaller Dog and Raw Dog are the names of two little towns south of Heppner, Oregon.

Our Song Birds.

Now is the time when the bad boy of the country is especially active in ranging the woods and climbing the trees, at the imminent risk of his mischievous head, to rob the birds' nests of their eggs or young, and even to carry off the nest whole. This vicious habit is not by any means confined to the children of the poor and ignorant: on the contrary the boys who are most destructive of bird-life seem to be the sons of wealthy people, who have abundant leisure and no useful way to occupy their time, and pocket money enough to provide themselves with the climbing irons of the telegraph repairers, so that scarce a bird of the forest is coy enough in hiding his nest to escape danger from these young rogues.

The law against this sort of reckless destruction is a dead letter, as long as it is not put in execution by the public sentiment of the people. The bad boy knows perfectly well that there is such a law, and he knows just as well that his father takes some pride in his collection of eggs and nests, and will defend him if any complaint is made. It is a fact that between the adverse influences of the vicious boys, the crows, hawks and squirrels, who are also nest robbers, and the crowding of our villages with the worthless English sparrow, our native songsters, such as the blue bird, the song sparrow, and the oriole, are not as plenty as they used to be, and it is a great pity and a shame that this is so. The true lover of the beauties of nature takes most delight in their natural ways. To the writer, a caged song bird is an object of pity, unless, indeed, it be a Canary born in a cage, which knows not the joy of the open air, and can not endure our climate unprotected by man.

The sight of one of our wild song birds, such as the bobolink, the mocking bird, or the oriole, confined behind wires, is a sorry sight: the poor thing doesn't feel like singing, and even after he has given up beating his feathers to pieces in hopeless attempts to escape, and philosophically makes the best of his imprisonment, he never sings with half the life and joy that inspires him at break of dawn in his native woods or meadows.

When people learn to love these wild things for their very wildness, and to admire their wonderful ways of nest building and caring for their young, the reckless boy will find his tracks watched by the police, and his trade in birds' eggs gone for want of customers. The crow, the hawks, cats, and the red squirrel, are mischievous nest robbers, and deserve to be destroyed, as does also the English sparrow, which by sheer force of numbers, is crowding out better native birds. Our oriole or golden robin is, of all our birds, the most charming in color of his plumage and richness of his song: he comes with the bobolink about the 10th of May, and well deserves to be encouraged for his constant war upon the insects, as well as for his great beauty, matchless song, and wonderful way of hanging his bag-like nest from the crotch of some drooping elm bough. But who would rob his nest, or cage him? O, fie, boys, let him fly! and try to coax him to build near the house by hanging out on the bushes plenty of old strings early in May: he will carry them off and use them to good purpose.

The blue bird is another harmless and useful bird, and well worth encouraging. He likes to build his nest in hollow trees, and will kindly accept an old tin can or other shelter placed among the trees for his nest.

There are many other birds which deserve to be encouraged to build near our farm houses, which should receive the attention of young people, who will find far more pleasure in encouraging them than in destroying them. Use your hunting propensities against the common enemies of man—the woodchuck, skunk, hawk, mink and cat—but in the name of good sense let alone the harmless and useful birds.—*W. D. Philbrick, in New England Farmer.*

Coffee and Bananas.

A gentleman who lived for many years in Mexico has explained to a reporter why bananas are so abundant on our streets, and, indeed, all over the country, in the following way: In certain parts of Mexico and Central America, particularly on the lowlands, a large amount of coffee is now being planted. The young coffee tree is quite tender and without protection in the way of shade would certainly be burned out by the fierce sun of the Southern country before it had reached its bearing season about three or four years after planting. Therefore when the young coffee tree is set out as it is in regular rows, alternate rows of bananas are set out at the same time. The coffee plants are sprouted and set out on the plantation much the same as our cabbage or tomato plants. The banana is a particularly luxuriant plant in moist, low soil and grows with the utmost rapidity. It at once becomes a guardian angel to the tender coffee tree, shielding it with its outspread verdant wings from the tropic sun, and so continues until the precious berry plant is able to fight its own way through life. The banana throws out shoots and spreads almost as rapidly as a strawberry plant. It bears fruit all the year round, commencing with the first season, and thereafter at any time one may see this prolific bearer in all stages of advancement toward fruition. One stalk will be just peeping from the ground, when another is a foot high; another is half grown; another is in full bloom; another bears green fruit and another bears ripe fruit. The progress of these shoots keeps on without interruption at all seasons of the year, so that one may procure continuous food from one plant at all times. The coffee planter, when the bunch of bananas has attained its full size but is still green, cuts off this one particular stalk, which ends its individual career. It is a mistake to suppose that bananas even in the tropics can be allowed to ripen on the plant for food purposes. They become so rich, being thirty-three per cent. sugar or saccharine matter, that they are almost like jelly and are unfit for food. This explains why the fruit are all green when they arrive in this market, and not, as is generally supposed, because they would spoil in transit if plucked when ripened. The gentleman referred to says: "During the summer time I eat nothing else for my noonday meal but this luscious fruit. It is meat, vegetables, bread and drink to me. It is a food designed by an all-wise Providence for the inhabitants of the hot climates to live on and still retain their health."

When the coffee plant reaches maturity, the banana trees having fulfilled their mission are cut down for two successive seasons, which exterminates them. The steady and remarkable increase in coffee growing owing to the enormous demands of all countries, has brought with it the increased banana planting, and as a consequence has flooded the civilized world with this low-priced and delicious fruit which formerly was a high-priced luxury, the planter naturally endeavoring to take advantage of the two crops. Some idea of the number of banana trees on a large plantation may be obtained from the remark of the planter: "I have so many banana trees on my place that if you gave me me five cents apiece for them I would throw in all the rest of my plantation, mills, coffee fields buildings, and everything I had on it."—*Pittsburgh Chronicle Telegraph.*

—It is noted as an interesting fact that the wages of sin have not been cut down to any perceptible extent.

Negro Minstrels.

"I have a reasonable good ear to music," remarks that typical amateur actor, Bottom the Weaver; "let's have the tongs and the bones." The tongs, though not obsolete, are now something archaic, but masters of the noisy art and mystery of bone playing are still to be found disguised in black and set over against masters of the more dulcet tambourine, at the opposite ends of the semicircle of sable performers known to the world at large as negro minstrels. It is, perhaps, more accurate to confess at once that the negro minstrel is practically known and loved only in those parts of the world where the English language is spoken. The burnt-cork opera of the Christy Minstrel is appreciated only in Great Britain, in Greater Britain, and in the United States of America—where, in fact, it had its rise some two score years ago. Where the English language is not spoken, the grotesque verbal dislocations of Brudder Bones somehow fail of their reward. Indeed, nothing can be more humorously pathetic than the dignified and reserved attitude of the audience in a Parisian *cafe chantant*—the Alcazar or the Ambassadeurs in summer or the Eldorado in winter—when a pair of blacked-up and hopelessly *h*-less Cockneys are attempting an exact imitation of the sayings and doings of the American plantation negro, studied by them at second hand from some Irish-American performer who had probably never in his life seen a cotton-field or a sugar-house. And the estate of the Germans is yet less gracious than that of the Frenchman; there is even a legend in circulation setting forth the absolute failure of an enterprising American manager's attempt to invade Germany with a resolute band of negro minstrels, in consequence of the perspicacity of the German critics in detecting the fraud of trying to pass off as negroes white men artificially blackened! Obviously, the imitation darkey of the negro minstrel stage did not coincide with the genuine darkey as evolved from the Teutonic inner consciousness. Probably the German critics would have objected even to the conscientious display of misplaced zeal which it was our good fortune once to behold in America. At the huge summer hotels which make Saratoga one of the brightest and gayest of American watering-places, attendants in the dining-rooms are generally negroes, varying in hue from the ebony of the full-blooded black to the tawny ivory of the octoroon. The waiters of one of these hotels sometimes obtain permission to give a "minstrel show" in the dining-room, to which the "amused" guests of the hotel are admitted for a price. It was one of these minstrel shows given at a Saratoga hotel three summers ago by genuine darkeys, that we were privileged to attend; and when the curtains were drawn aside, discovering the row of sable performers, it was perceived to the great and abiding joy of the spectators, that the musicians were all of a uniform darkness of hue, and that they, genuine negroes as they were, had "blacked up," the more closely to resemble the professional negro minstrels.—*Saturday Review.*

Given to Lying.

What is the matter with the human race? What obliquity is it that induces people to tell lies out of which they can get no possible benefit? Are the majority of people consciously unveracious, or are they really dupes of their senses? "I said in my wrath all men are liars." Perhaps he might have said it coolly and with scientific precision. Perhaps it is question of physiology rather than of morals. The human frame is acknowledged to be a wonderful piece of mechanism. The Psalmist admired it, but it puzzled him. If he had been a scientist he would have been able to give physiological reasons for the opinion that there is not one perfect man—no, not one. Scarcely a perfect woman. It is known that two people do not see the same thing alike, and consequently they describe it differently. They do not hear the same statement alike, and they always repeat it with variations. Of all witnesses the eye is the least trustworthy. It appears to be the most subject to delusions. There is a reason for this. No two persons have eyes alike. The two eyes in one head are seldom alike; if they match in color they are different in form, different in focus. Not one eye in ten millions is in a normal perfect condition. The focus is either behind the retina or in front of it, and the eye is either near-sighted or far-sighted. What can be expected of such an imperfect organ in the way of correct observation? It appears to be still worse with the ear. It is at best a crooked organ, and nearly everything that passes through it gets a twist. And these two defective machines are allied with probably the most deceitful little member that ever was—the tongue. The effort of the tongue to put into sound and speech the so-called impressions obtained through the complicated mechanism of the eye and the ear is a ludicrous failure. Any one who is familiar with a court of justice or neighborhood talk knows that. And owing to the sympathy of one part of the body with another, the thumb and the fore and middle fingers (which hold the pen) become infected. The substitution of the inflexible stylographic pen for the flowing quill and flexible steel it was thought would tend to remedy this defect. But this obstacle in the way of writing does not check the tendency to prevaricate any more than stuttering does in the case of the tongue; and it is as difficult for a stutterer to speak the truth as for a glib-tongued person. The consequence of this infection of the pen-fingers is that what is not strictly true now and then creeps into print. People are beginning to find out this physical defect, and many persons now will not believe what they read in a newspaper any more than if it were told them by an intimate friend. But they read it and repeat it; and, owing to the defects before spoken of, they scarcely ever repeat it as printed. So we all become involved in a congeries of misrepresentation.—*Charles Dudley Warner, in Harper's Magazine.*

Tom Ochiltree's Hard Luck.

Tom Ochiltree, the red-headed Texas member who shares the honor of being the biggest liar of the South with Joe Mulhatton, came into the House the other day with all the indications of a bad spree on his countenance. His associates greeted him and inquired, "What the dickens have you been doing, Tom? You look as though you had been on a lark." Tom answered that he had been up all night playing poker.

"What luck?"

"Never had such luck in my life—curse it. Why, I lost $6,000."

"Six thousand dollars!" echoed his friends in amazement.

"Yes," said Tom, turning to his seat, "and the worse of it is that ten dollars of it was in cash."—*Detroit Times.*

—The London *Standard* says: "The doctors have made life almost not worth living with their precautions against being prematurely cut short. The air is laden with germs, the earth exudes poison, the sixpences we handle contain the seeds of zymotic plagues, the very cat that we may stroke may have passed from a typhus patient's bedroom to bear on its fur the messenger of death next door. And now we are told that we smell a Gloire de Dijon at our peril, and that the azalea in our buttonhole may in the course of half an hour impart hay fever to a carriage full of railway travelers."

MISCELLANEOUS.

—A San Francisco newspaper reporter is to marry a lady worth $4,000,000. Newspaper men do not seem to care for money.—*Boston Post.*

—*Le Dimenche*, an Amiens paper, has discovered that next year is the 1,900th anniversary of the Virgin Mary's birth, and advocates a celebration.

—San Francisco has organized a "Girls' Union" for the benefit of young women who are strangers in the city and who may need sympathy and assistance.—*San Francisco Call.*

—Concerning the dampness and unhealthful condition of new brick houses, it is an old saying that the owner of a new brick house should let it be occupied during the first year by his enemy, during the second by his friend, and during the third by himself.—*Troy Times.*

—At Naples the other day a steel torpedo boat was launched, which had been built there for the Italian Government. In her trial trip she not only accomplished the stipulated speed (twenty miles per hour), but did twenty one and a half miles, which is a long way the best time on record.

—A bachelor's society with matrimonial tendencies and provisions has been formed in Harlem, N. J. Only young men are eligible. They pay a monthly due of five dollars and agree to remain single one year. At the end of that time any one, by giving three months' notice, may receive $2,000 on his wedding-day, contributed out of the fund of the society.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

—The wealth of the United States is estimated at $50,000,000,000; that of Great Britain at $10,000,000,000. The wealth per inhabitant in the United States is $900, and in Great Britain it is $1,000. In the United States seventy-two parts of the wealth go to labor, twenty-three to capital and five to government. In Great Britain forty-one parts go to labor, thirty-six to capital, and twenty-three to government.—*Chicago Journal.*

—George Wilson, of Cleveland, O., has sued a firm of white lead manufacturers, his late employers, for $10,000 damages, alleging that he and two others were directed to clean out what was called the cog-wheel room, beneath the main floor of the factory, and that he did not know the dangerous character of the work, and was made ill for a year, by the poisonous fumes of the lead, and eventually totally blind. His two fellow-workmen, he says, are dead.—*Cleveland Leader.*

—Dr. Sturge, a medical missionary to Siam, relates how a native doctor administered an emetic to a love-sick lady who had swallowed a quantity of opium with suicidal intent. The scientist of Siam took a live eel, clipped off a part of his tail to make him squirm in a lively manner, and then pushed him, tail first, down the romantic damsel's throat. When the eel returned to the stream of running water near which the girl was made to recline the opium quickly followed him.

—"What's the matter with the bank?" demand an excited tourist. "Closed," replied the calm citizen. "What," exclaimed the excited one, "not closed?" "Shut up tighter than wax," asserted the calm one. "Well, that's queer," said the tourist. "Not ten steps away from where we now stand a citizen told me she was 'busted wide open,' and now you say she is shut up tight as wax. What liars some men are." And he made an entry in his note-book.—*Burlington Hawkeye.*

—Recent defalcations and deficiencies bring to mind the case of a colored bank janitor who lived in Philadelphia in 1857. He had been in the service of the Pennsylvania Bank, the total wreck of which was one of the incidents of the panic of that year. As usual in such wrecks, there was a large deficiency. The books of the bank had been kept in such a mixed-up way that its affairs were in a great tangle. One day it was announced that the directors had found out how much the deficiency was. The old darkey thereupon put on all his dignity and remarked, "We don't care so much about knowing how much de deficiency is; but de question dat agitates my mind, and dat agitates de mind ob de public, is, whar's de deficiency gone to." They never found out exactly where the deficiency betook itself.—*Philadelphia Record.*

Bismarck's Wife.

The giant spirit who raised the German people from their long abasement, and gave them their place among the nations, in due time, by his choice of a wife, established for himself a happy home, in which his domestic nature has received a manifold and fruitful development, and that he is, after all, not by any means the man of blood and iron which many people suppose him to be. His wife is nine years younger than her husband, and was married to him in 1847. Her maiden name was Johanna von Puttkamer, and she was the daughter of a quiet, godly Pomeranian home, the atmosphere of which was pervaded by the spirit of the Moravian fraternity. That "the mad Squire [*Junker*] of Kneipnof," as Bismarck was then called in the gossip of the neighborhood, the future "Iron Chancellor," should have been attracted by, and at the same time should have awakened a warm and lively interest in, a lady whose first impressions of men and things were received amid such surroundings, need not, after all, create any surprise. Even in those days the period of unrest, storm and stress had been succeeded by one of calm, and his wildness and love of mischief had given place to self-examination and a longing after higher things. The Princess was strictly and piously brought up, but is of a cheerful and lively disposition, endowed with a considerable amount of mother-wit, keenly sensitive, and possessed of excellent taste. Very musical, and an excellent performer on the piano, she is at the same time a careful and thrifty housewife, and like the noble ladies of former times, possesses some knowledge of the healing art. During all these years she has shared intelligently her husband's hopes and cares, sometimes even the political ones, as witness the letters published by Hesekiel, written to her when official duties or holiday travels chanced to separate them for a while. In these he addresses her as "My darling" (*mein Herz*), "My best beloved;" he sends her jasmine from Peterhof; he promises her Edelweiss from Gastein. From the royal castle at Ofen he bids her "good-night from far away," and adds, "Where can I have heard the song which has been running through my head all day:

'Over the blue mountains, over the white sea foam,
Come thou, beloved one, come to thy lovely home?'

I wonder who can have sung that to me some time or other in 'auld lang syne?'" Elsewhere he recalls on the sixteenth anniversary of his marriage how it "had brought sunshine into his bachelor life." Over and over again he gives expression to a feeling of homesickness, of longing for her and the children. And in a letter written from Smaland he wishes he had a little castle peopled with those he loved on one of the wood-and-heather-bound lakes of that Swedish province. Many other parts of this correspondence show how dear his wife is to him, and how often he thinks of her. On the other hand, we can infer from several of the letters that the good lady has become deeply imbued with her husband's energetic modes of feeling and of thought.—*Moritz Busch, in Harper's Magazine.*

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