THE ILLUSTRATED BEE.

Published Weekly by The Bee Publishing Company, Bee Building, Omaha, Neb.

Price, 5c Per Copy—Per Year, $2.00.

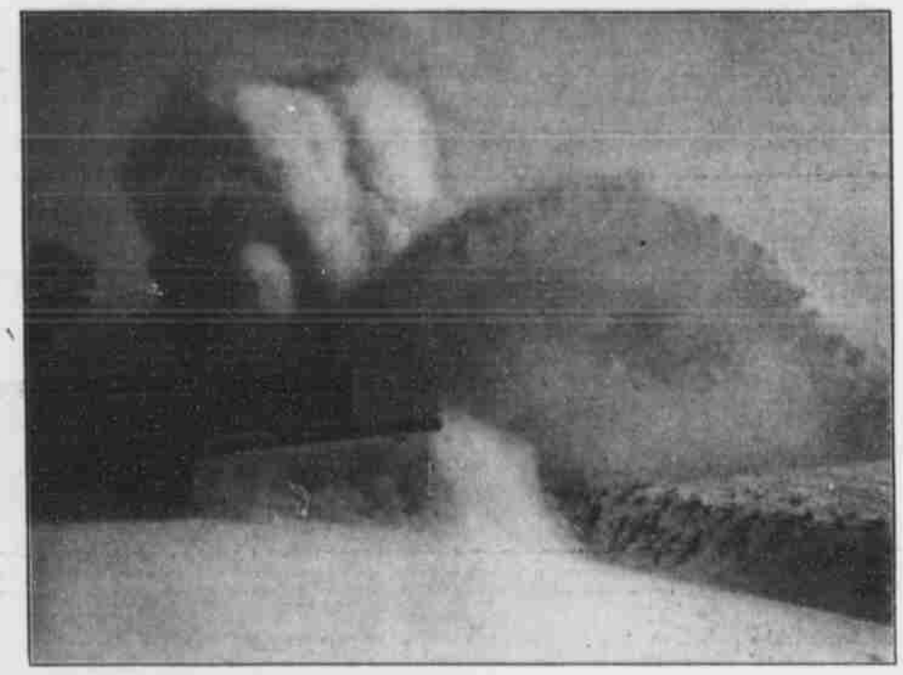
Entered at the Omaha Postoffice as Second Class Mail Matter.

For Advertising Rates Address Publisher.

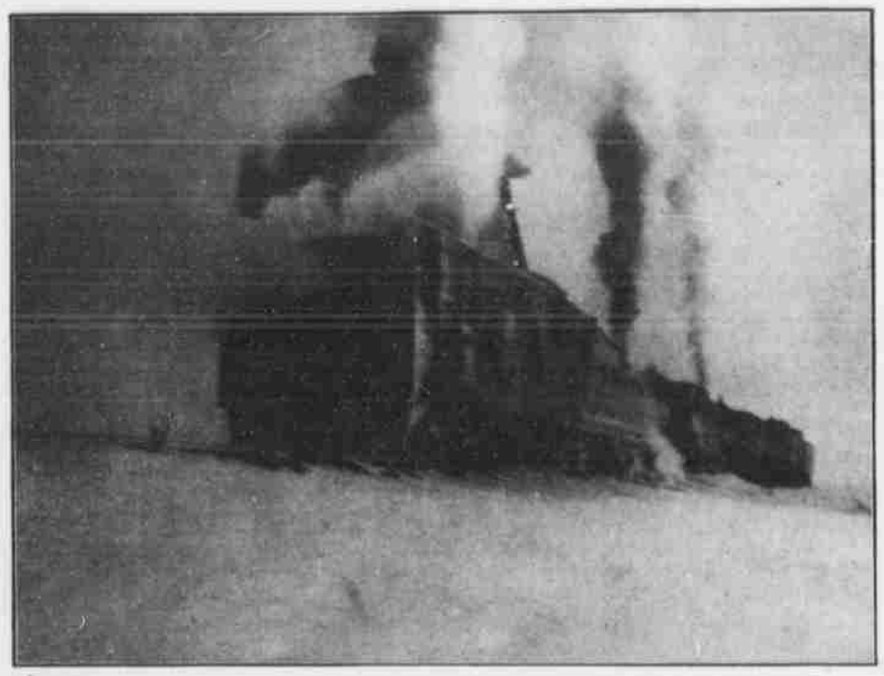
Communications relating to photographs or articles for publication should be addressed, "Editor The Illustrated Bee, Omaha."

Pen and Picture Pointers

SNOW still has its terror for the railroad man; but it is not what it used to be. Twenty years ago a snowstorm was a serious thing for the operating department of any road, and usually meant delayed trains, if not actual blockades. In those good old days every engine carried a little dinkey snowplow of its own, so that it could make its way through the light drifts unaided, but when the storm king got down to business and piled up snow banks that looked like mountains, the genuine article in the way of snowplows was called into use. It was simply a huge share with a single coulter and a double mouldboard, so that it could turn a furrow in the snow to both sides of the track at once. Behind this affair were coupled from two to ten locomotives, and the removal of the snowdrift was accomplished by bucking in fact as well as in name. No railroad man who was ever out on one of those expeditions need be told what it was like. Ingenuity has come to the rescue with the rotary snowplow, which is not a plow at all, but a huge cutting disc, driven by powerful engines and discharging the sliced up snow bank by centrifugal force through a spout, the stream flying as far as 200 feet from the track at times. This big machine is handled by two or three engines, which merely have to push it forward as it eats its way through the drifts, at times drifts of ten and fifteen feet in thickness being disposed of at the rate of eight to ten miles an hour. Sometimes, especially in the mountains, the same rotary will not make that many miles in a week. Such blockades call for sappers and miners and the use of dynamite and shovels. Two fine illustrations made from photographs taken in northwestern Nebraska during the days following the big snowstorm in the early part of December give an idea of how a rotary snowplow works.



ROTARY SNOW PLOW WORKING IN A MODERATE DRIFT.



EXTERNAL APPEARANCE OF THE ROTARY AFTER PIERCING A SNOW BANK.

THE LATE CHARLES CHILDS OF OMAHA AND HIS FAVORITE GRANDCHILD.

Thousands of people all over the country will have little trouble in recalling Topsy, the baby elephant imported by Adam Forepaugh, the great showman, and made a feature of his exhibition nearly a generation ago. Topsy had the usual vicissitudes that come to an elephant in the circus business and at last fell into the hands of E. S. Dundy of Omaha, who is now operating at Cony Island, N. Y. Unfortunately for both Topsy and her owner, she developed ugly traits as she advanced in age and finally the name of "mankiller" was inseparably attached to her and at last it became necessary to end her life in order to protect the showmen. Arrangements were carefully made, Topsy being attached to electrodes and every precaution being taken to secure a sure and swift ending for her. Just before the current was turned on a heavy dose of cyanide of potassium was given her, but in all probability the animal never tasted the poison, for immediately after she had swallowed the ball of dough in which it was concealed a current of 6,000 volts of electricity was turned on and in twenty-two seconds she was dead. Quite a large crowd witnessed the execution. Much trouble was experienced in securing permission to kill the big brute owing to the activity of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, but the agents of the society who witnessed the execution saw nothing to complain of. Topsy weighed six tons and was valued at $6,000. She had killed three keepers and a circus follower.

Charles Childs, who recently died in Omaha, was one of the pioneers of Nebraska, having come to this state in the early '50s. He engaged in several lines of activity, but was chiefly known for his connection with the mill business, having turned many thousands of feet of logs into lumber and great quantities of wheat and corn into flour and meal for the pioneers. "He was called 'Old Honesty' in the early days," said a man who worked for him seven years as he took his last look on the peaceful face. "He was the best man I ever knew, and always made me give full measure, and would often add more." Mr. Childs came of a notable ancestry. Both his grandfathers were in the colonial army during the revolutionary war. His grandfather Childs of Conway, Mass., was at the battle of Bunker Hill and was wounded during that engagement. His grandfather Asaph King rode on the snow crust over the plains from Wilbraham to Springfield during Shay's rebellion to give the warning that Shay was on his way to capture the arsenal. Mr. Childs was born at Springfield, Mass., on March 25, 1815, and died in Omaha on January 4, 1903.

Scenes and incidents attendant on the opening of a session of the state legislature are always of interest. Those witnessed at the beginning of the present session of the Nebraska general assembly were quiet in comparison with some of the past, but were none the less dignified and impressive for that reason. All the solemn forms of law and custom were observed, and the newly elected lawmakers were given at the very outset a distinct notion of the importance of the position to which they have been called by their fellow citizens.

Episodes and Incidents in the Lives of Noted People

SENATOR VEST has begun to arrange his affairs preliminary to retirement from public life. The senator has decided to make his residence in St. Louis after he leaves the senate, so that he and Mrs. Vest may be with their son and daughter. He tells his friends that his health is fairly good and that his eyesight has been improved by the treatment he has received from the specialists who took charge of his case last fall. He will make arrangements to continue the treatment when he goes to St. Louis.

A visiting Englishman is quoted by the New York Sun as saying that the pursuit of letters in this country seems to have effect of marked difference upon the men and the women. "Your successful man writer," says the foreigner, "is so phenomenally well groomed that he violates tradition, but literature certainly does play havoc with your feminine writers' clothes." "Even literature can't make the average English woman's clothes worse than they are naturally," commented the American woman of letters to which the remark was repeated.

W. S. Gilbert, who wrote the sardonically humorous librettos for Arthur Sullivan's operas, abominates interviews. One of these venturesome gentlemen visited him at his country place, but could not get him to talk. Finally the newspaper man, hoping to decoy the crusty Scot into saying something that might be worked into an article, said to the librettist: "You have a lovely view here, Mr. Gilbert." "Yes, I know," was the answer. "I built the house here because of the view, but the view's getting on my nerves now, for the first thing every fool who comes down here says is, 'What a lovely view you've got, Mr. Gilbert!' I'm tired of the view. I'm sick of the view. Confound the view. Good day to you, sir."

When Mark Twain called on Senator Chauncey Depew at his office recently he found him with his fingers very much soiled from writing. As the senator stepped to the bowl and began washing his hands Mr. Clemens observed laughingly:

"It might be a good thing if you would use a little of that soap on your conscience, senator."

"Possibly," agreed the senator. "Soap would do in my case, but if 'twas yours, you'd have to use pumice stone at least."

What is believed to be a new story of the late Senator Evarts has been dug up. In the early days of the Hayes administration, when Mr. Evarts was secretary of state, the members of the cabinet were discussing matters in an informal way one morning, when the president mentioned that he had made a few appointments without consulting his official family, the appointees being personal friends. All the places filled happened to fall within the State department. Secretary Evarts turned to John Sherman and said, with a twinkle in his eye: "I have often heard and read about the Western Reserve of Ohio, but I must confess that I have never seen any of it."

When speaking before the house of representatives "Tom" Reed avoided the customary tricks of the spread-eagle stump orator and contented himself with saying what he had to say in his own characteristic drawl, without any oratorical flourishes. Colonel W. C. P. Breckinridge came to congress with the reputation of a "silver-tongued orator" and used in his speeches in the house all the expedients that Reed avoided. He could not speak for five minutes, even on ordinary subjects, without falling into a funeral tone that grated exceedingly on Reed's sensibilities. One day, when Breckinridge was holding forth in his usual mournful cadences, Reed's attention was caught by the colonel's melancholy tones. Turning to a friend, Reed asked in a drawling but solemn voice: "Judge, were you acquainted with the deceased?"

When John W. Yerkes, commissioner of internal revenue, was stumping Kentucky once in a gubernatorial campaign he had in his party a stump speaker who sought to make a good impression in that famous distillery town Owensboro by upholding whisky drinking.

"Whisky," said the stumper, "is a good thing. It hurts nobody when drunk with moderation. I have noticed in my study of history and biography that all great men drank whisky. It is true, and I challenge you to deny it. Whisky, ladies and gentlemen, makes men smart, it makes them great."

"What's that?" asked an old farmer down in the audience who was noted locally as a teetotaler.

"Whisky," repeated the speaker, "makes men smart. It makes them great."

"Well," said the farmer, "you'd better get ten barrels and begin on it at once."

H. T. Eastman the inventor of the locomotive pilot that succeeded what was known as the "cow bumper," is living at Altos Pass, Ill., and is 83 years old. He helped to build the first railroad in Ohio, which was known as the Mad River and Lake Erie and connected Sandusky with Dayton. It is now a part of the Big Four system. The first locomotives on that road were fitted with "cow catchers," consisting of two long curved iron rods that picked up a cow or other large object and carried it along. The first improvement on the "cow catcher" was the "cow bumper," which resembled the pilot now in use, but it proved unsatisfactory, and one day while Mr. Eastman was at work in the shops at Sandusky an engineer entered and told the master mechanic that unless an improvement over the "cow bumper" could be had he would resign.

"Something is needed that will throw an object to one side," said the engineer. The master mechanic turned to Eastman and asked him if he could make something that would answer the purpose. Eastman replied in the affirmative, went to work and the locomotive pilot practically as it is now was given to the world.

Until failing health somewhat cooled his temper and took the edge off his tongue, George G. Vest was considered one of the wittiest and most sarcastic speakers in the United States. He was especially quick and sharp at repartee, a gift that made him much feared by most of the members on the republican side of the chamber. On one occasion, twenty-six years ago, the doughty little senator used this gift with crushing effect on a man who interrupted him while he was making a speech in the Johnson county court house, at Warrensburg, the home of his colleague, Senator Cockrell. The room was packed. Vest was speaking in a particularly happy vein, when a Warrensburg editor who did not like him arose and asked him a question. It was courteously answered and the editor followed it up with another and another. To the surprise of most of his hearers, Senator Vest kept his temper and continued to reply courteously. Finally, the editor asked a long and very involved question. The senator listened to it with the same attention as he had given to those that preceded it, but just as he seemed ready to reply, "and while," says Frank Frayne, who tells the story, "the audience was perfectly quiet awaiting Vest's answer, a little yellow, bench-legged fice came jumping up the aisle immediately in front of the judge's stand, in which Vest was standing, barking furiously at him. As quick as a flash Vest turned and, pointing his finger at the dog, said: 'One at a time, sir. You are out of your turn. Wait till I get through with the other one, then I'll reply to you.'"

A social observer of humorous sympathies relates in the Boston Transcript a trait of a Chinese servant employed in a suburban family, which reveals a certain capability for ready assimilation with American methods of dealing with the tramp problem. A hungry tramp called one Monday afternoon at the kitchen door and was promptly challenged by John. To John the tramp told his tale of woe, ending with a humble petition for something to eat.

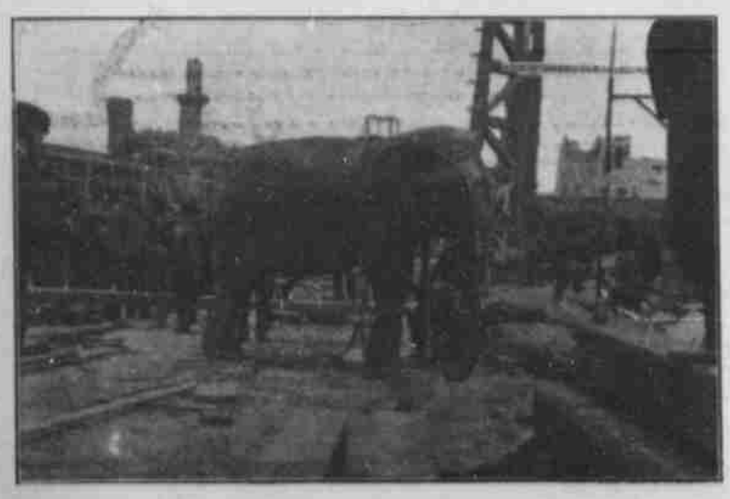
"Like flish?" asked John, in insinuating tones.

"Yes, I like fish," the tramp answered.

"Call Fliday," said John, as he shut the door, with a smile imperturbable.

A well known lawyer and writer, a resident of New York state, who has long since passed away, used to tell a joke on himself. His story was to the effect that he called for a bootjack at a country hotel at which he stopped. Now, this lawyer and writer had very large feet, and the hostler to whom he made the request, after casting a glance at the big boots, exclaimed: "Why, man, it isn't a bootjack you want for those! You need the fork of the road."

Execution by Electricity of Topsy, the Man-Killer, Which Took Place Recently at Luna Park, Coney Island, N. Y.



PREPARING TOPSY FOR THE SHOCK.

TOPSY RECEIVING 6,000 VOLTS OF ELECTRICITY.

TOPSY AFTER THE SHOCK.