The Chatham Record.

H. A. LONDON,
EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION,
$1.50 PER YEAR
Strictly in Advance.

The Chatham Record.

VOL. XX. PITTSBORO, CHATHAM COUNTY, N. C., THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 1897 NO. 4.

ROYAL RANGER RALPH;

—OR—

The Waif of the Western Prairies.

BY WELDON J. COBB.

CHAPTER I.

THE TRAIN-WRECKERS.

"Fire!"

"Who is it?"

"A spy—one of the vigilantes. Down him, or the game is lost!"

These ejaculations, spoken rapidly and excitedly, broke the silence of a weird and tragic scene in one of the loveliest valleys of the far West.

They were directed toward a man who had suddenly appeared upon a landscape which for over an hour had held half a dozen human figures, who had been lurking in the vicinity of a lonely stretch of railroad.

The time was night, relieved by the refulgence of a September moon, its rays just beginning to illumine mountain and valley with a rare crystalline beauty.

Half a mile distant, where the river stretched a dim silver thread of radiance, a lonely station showed, from which glimmered the light of a single lantern.

At the spot where the story opens, the single railway track curved over a high trestle work and then descended on a sharp grade toward the station and the stream.

For years this section, especially the course pursued by the railroad, which was a recently constructed branch of the great Pacific system, had been known as the Lone Canyon trail. The station was called Tecopiet and the nearest settlement was twenty miles over the mountain at Miner's Gulch.

Beyond that stretched an alternation of plain and hill and valley, infested even at the time of our narrative by marauding bands of savages.

The region was one in which a rough, uncultured sort of miners and rangers resided, and outlaw bands found it a favorite field for their operations.

As has been stated, one hour previous to the utterance of the words that begin this chapter half a dozen men rode up to the scene, dismounted silently, led their horses to a thicket near by, and then became massed together near the railroad.

Here for some moments they were engaged in some mysterious movements about the rails. One of their number went down the tracks to the station, returned, muttered an ominous "All right," and, then their dusky figures moved hither and thither. Not an audible word was spoken until a tall, full-bearded man, evidently the leader of the party, startled his companions with the exclamation:

"Get to cover! Someone is coming."

Someone was coming straight down the track—a man past middle age, stalwart, rugged, and attired in the garb of a frontiersman.

His gait was a careless and leisurely one, as if he had got tired of waiting for the train at the depot and was strolling about to kill time until it arrived.

All unaware of the perilous ambuscade that lay in wait for him, he was not conscious of the presence of a foe until he turned a curve in the rails and fell back with a startled cry.

"What's this? An obstruction on the road! The work of a band! Redskins or outlaws, there's danger afoot for the night train, sure."

He turned to hasten back to the station. At that moment six dusky forms arose from the bushes that lined the side of the tracks.

"Fire!"

"Who is he?"

"A spy—one of the vigilantes! Down him, or the game is lost."

There was a blinding blaze of light, and six revolvers flashed in the moonlight.

"Missed him—after him! He must not escape and give the alarm!" cried the leader of the coterie.

The stranger had indeed been missed. He must have been magically alert, for as the bullets whistled past him he dropped to the ground and they flew over his head.

"You scoundrels! Come on, whoever you are!"

His voice, clear and stentorian, rang out like an indignant roar of defiance and courage.

He had again sprung to his feet and had drawn his own revolver.

At that moment his ensemble made a united rush for the spot where he was. He was forced to retreat a step or two. A root clung vine entangled his foot, and he fell violently backward.

"Take that!"

The words were spoken by the leader, as he reached the prostrate man.

"Despard—outlaw and renegade! I know you. Coward! villain! If I was at fair odds with you——"

The words were silenced suddenly. The leader of the band—the man he had called Despard—had raised a curved iron bar in his hand. It descended with terrific force, cutting a cruel gash in the forehead of the courageous stranger, stunning him to insensibility.

Despard's eyes wore a haunted, frightened expression, and his face was deathly pale as he surveyed his unconscious foe.

"You've settled him, Despard," spoke one of the men as he crowded to his side. "What does it mean?"

Despard spoke in an awed tone.

"What mean?"

"That man."

"You know him."

"Know him! Look again, Jim Danton. Ah! I thought you would recognize him."

Despard's companion peered close at the face of the prostrate man.

"Ranger Ralph!" he gasped out.

"Yes. Do you remember when last we saw him, and we left him to die a prisoner in a cave in the Utah hills? He had crossed our trail, determined to bring us to justice for a stage robbery. He swore then that he won'd be avenged. He escaped. What can his presence here mean but disaster to our plans? His object is the same as our own—to save the girl who stands between me and a royal fortune. It is an ill omen, Danton. I fear, I tremble."

"For a dead man," scoffed Danton, jeeringly. "For he is certainly dead this time."

"He may have friends near at hand."

"We will soon find out that. But, no, he couldn't, was—to his fate that we'd be known as were it ever suspected our plans."

Danton turned from the spot.

"Vance," he called, to one of the men.

"What is it?" asked the person addressed.

"You visited the station?"

"Yes."

"There was no one there?"

"No one but the depot agent."

"You are sure?"

"Positive."

"Go there again and reconnoiter. If there are any others arrived since we came, return and report at once."

"All right."

Danton returned to the leader's side, who had walked away from the place where Ranger Ralph lay.

"Everything is arranged for the wreck, Captain," he said to Despard. "As to yonder enemy—ranger, dective and vigilante—the blow with the iron bar has settled him. You are sure the girl will be on the train?"

"Inez? Yes."

"Of course she will. I received positive information. Remember, Danton, that she is of more value to us than the booty."

"That's all right. You and I will look out for the girl, and the others for the booty. But if she should be killed?"

"Then I benefit just so much, that's all," replied Despard, coolly. "What makes me uneasy is Ranger Ralph's appearance here."

"Why so?"

"Because he was one of her dead father's companions."

"Well?"

"Inez's father was one of his old-time friends. He probably warned him of his renegade relative."

"Yourself?"

"Exactly. If so, even if the girl were dead, my claim might be disputed, or my past record would prevent my appearing to secure the fortune. No, Danton, the only way is to get possession of the girl, and I love her just enough to want to marry her. Your men insisted on a wreck to secure what booty the train had. I take the chances of the accident killing the girl. At all events, she must be secured by us, or her death assured before the night is over."

"You are a relative of Robert Tracey, her father?"

"A distant one—but the only one after her."

"And the fortune?"

"Is a mystery, in a way, and was left by Tracey in possession of an old recluse known as Hermit Glen. The story is too complicated a one to relate now. Remember, the girl is our especial care when the disaster comes, search for her."

"All right, Despard. Let us get with the boys. The train will be due now in a short time."

The two men moved some distance away, to where an obstruction consisting of logs, rocks and brush had been piled on the track.

At that moment the man Vance, whom Danton had sent to the depot, returned.

"Well?" asked the latter.

"No one there but the depot agent."

"And the man we had to settle yonder?"

"I guess he had just arrived, for two horses were standing outside the station. I cut them loose for fear of accidents."

"Two? whispered Despard, in an intense tone to Danton. "Do you hear?"

"Yes."

"Ranger Ralph expected someone on the train."

"Evidently."

"And that one was the girl who is the object of all our plots—Inez Tracey."

CHAPTER II.

TOO LATE.

"The scoundrels! Dyke Despard, my score against you is heavy than ever for this cowardly act—and such a terrible one when your day of reckoning comes!"

The words emanated in a stunned, gasping tone of voice from the spot where a few minutes previous they had, to all seeming, laid the dead form of Ranger Ralph, the ranger scout and detective.

Ranger Ralph himself spoke, but his haggard face and partly closed eyes told that the blow Despard had dealt him was a terrible one in its effects.

Under it he had gone down like a stag. Utter insensibility had hardly given way to dawning consciousness, but so feeble and confused was the brain and scarcely raise himself in one arm.

The blood from a ghastly wound on the head defaced his face and showed a deep gash that would leave a scar to his dying day.

His head was giddy, his sight blunted, his strength seemed leaving him. He essayed to arise, and then, with a groan, fell to his resting bed.

Sad heavy every nerve seemed to thrill to quickened action, and he forgot his wound and his helplessness for the moment.

"The train!" he gasped, wildly. "I had forgotten it. Oh, those villains! They have piled an obstruction on the track. Too plainly I see Dyke Despard's plot. The girl—Inez. He knew she was coming here, and with his renegade associates seeks to prevent her appearing to claim the fortune her father left her. I must prevent this awful crime. I must save the life of the child of my old friend, who intrusted her to my care. What shall I do? Single-handed, I cannot cope with these armed ruffians. There is but one man at the depot, but he may be able to telegraph for aid or stop the train. Ah, it is useless. That blow has robbed me of my strength."

Ranger Ralph spoke these last words in a despairing tone, for a second effort to rise proved futile.

"I'll crawl to the depot, but I'll outwit these scoundrels," he muttered grimly, a moment later.

He was outside the range of the vision of the men grouped on the tracks twenty feet away, and besides they paid no further attention to the foe they believed to be dead. Slowly, painfully, Ranger Ralph began to creep through the underbrush. It was a terrible task for his lacerated frame, but he finally saw in the distance the single signal lamp of the station.

Precious moments were slipping by; he realized this, and the thought nerved him to renewed effort.

Ten minutes later the single occupant of the station, a young, handsome man of about twenty years, started from his chair at a panting, as a suspicious sound issued from the direction of the door.

His hand sought the revolver at his belt as he remembered the perils of the times, but a cry of joy broke his lips, and he uttered an exclamation as his glance fell upon the strange figure that filled the doorway a moment later.

"Great heavens, man!" he cried; "what does this mean?"

He stood staring in blank horror at the blood-besmeared form of Ranger Ralph, who staggered over the threshold.

"Give me to a chair quick!" gasped the almost exhausted scout.

"You are injured—you have fallen!"

"No! I have been the victim of a cowardly and brutal assault."

"Where—by whom?"

He had lifted the scout to a chair and was trembling with excitement as he discerned some mystery in the manner of his visitor.

The latter did not answer his question directly. Instead, his eyes, falling on a clock within a railed inclosure of the depot, he asked tumultuously:

"The train—when will it arrive?"

"It is due in ten minutes."

"Stop it!"

"Stop it?" cried the other. "Why, man! what do you mean?"

"What I say," cried Ranger Ralph, wildly. "Don't waste time with questions. A hundred lives hang on the turn of a moment of time. Telegraph ahead and have the train stopped!"

"Impossible!"

"Why?"

"Because it has already passed the last station."

Ranger Ralph uttered a groan of despair.

"Then secure aid and hasten to the curve!" he cried.

"Explain yourself. Why are you so incoherent—so excited? There is danger?"

"Terrible danger."

"From whom?"

"Train wreckers."

The young man started violently.

"It cannot be," he cried.

"Yes, there are six of them, led by Dyke Despard, a notorious outlaw. Is there no one near?"

"No one. Rouse yourself, man. Together we may be able to disperse these scoundrels."

"Impossible. I could not walk a step unaided."

The other hastened to a window and looked out toward the south.

"The depot agent will arrive shortly," he said, in hurried, anxious tones.

"Are you not the agent?" asked Ranger Ralph, in some surprise.

"No. I was waiting for the train here. He has a sick family at his home, two miles from here, and asked me to take charge while he took some medicine over to them. But he said he would return before the train arrived."

"And before then it may be too late to stop the train. Oh, cannot something be done?"

With his helplessness, delay and madness was torture to Ranger Ralph.

"A signal!" cried his companion, suddenly. "I will outwit these scoundrels. Quick, now, tell me where they are."

In brief but graphic language the scout imparted the desired information.

The other listened with the closest attention and interest, his eyes gleaming with latent excitement and courageous determination.

When the recital was concluded he sprang to the protecting window where the depot lantern was.

Ranger Ralph watched him curiously as he saw him extinguish the lantern.

"What are you going to do?" he asked.

"Signal and stop the train."

"How?"

"With this lantern."

"You cannot pass the wreckers."

"I must and will. I can beyond them. I will reclaim the lantern, and hasten on until I meet the train."

"Hasten, for heaven's sake!" cried the scout, in imploring tones. "See! the train is almost upon you."

Without one her word, the young man sprang through the doorway, the unlighted lantern in one hand, a revolver in the other.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Ones of Herrmann's Great Tricks.

People have repeatedly asked me which of my tricks have pleased me the most and which I take most delight in performing. Naturally the effect that brings the greatest success is regarded by a man his best.

I consider the trick of restoring the shattered mirror as my most famous one. This I had the honor of performing before the Czar of Russia upon an invitation to give an exhibition at his court.

It was done unexpectedly to the spectators, and was not down on the regular bill. While playing billiards with the attaches of the court after the performance, the Czar being present in the saloon, I shot a ball with all my strength against a plate-glass mirror extending from floor to ceiling.

It was shivered into fifty pieces. Consternation was depicted on every countenance; and none more plainly than my own.

While the Czar courteously waived my apology, considering the destruction of the mirror as trifling, and ordered the game to proceed, I could easily see that my awkwardness made a disagreeable impression.

With the Czar's permission I examined the mirror to estimate the damage done and the possibility of repairing it.

While so engaged one of the suite playfully challenged me to exercise my art and make the mirror whole again, never dreaming that his challenge was the very one I wanted, and not considering the acceptance of it as possible. I hesitated an instant and then ordered the mirror to be covered with a cloth, entirely concealing it from view.

On the removal of the cloth, after ten minutes, the mirror was found without a flaw, and as perfect as before the damage! I will leave it to my readers imagination to decide how this trick was done.

Rabbit-Foot Philosophy.

Some men are balloonists by profession; others by imitation.

Debt is the devil, and independence is paradise.

I would rather one woman trusted me than that I should gain many friends.

Life is a chance in the lottery of death; your chance is sure, but whether it is a blank or not depends largely on yourself.

When the snow fell he wished to mow my lawn; when the sunlight made my grass grow, he was a snow shoveler by profession; in genius, he was a tramp.

The first blue-bird is the one we notice most.

The dandelions are the spun gold of spring time.

A hundred petty virtues are not worth one genuine heart-touch.

Open defeat is better than underhanded victory.—*Arkansaw Traveler.*

JAPANESE WORKING PEOPLE'S HOME LIFE AND HABITS.

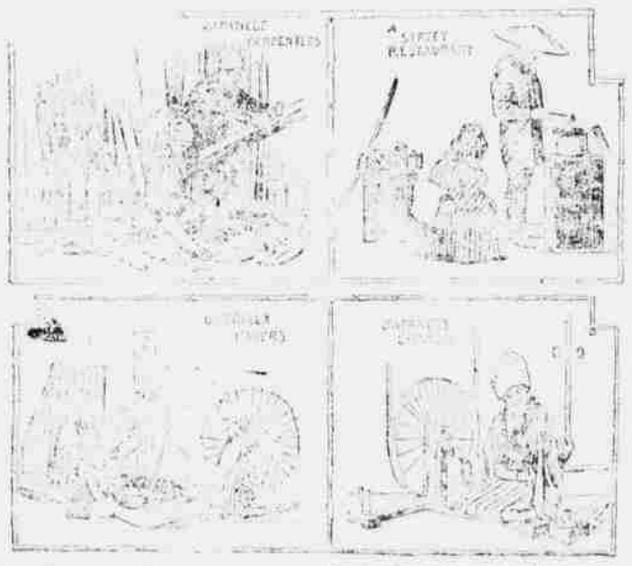
As one walks in Yokohama and Tokio through a multitude of narrow streets lined with tiny buildings, writes a correspondent of the San Francisco Chronicle, the foreign and characteristic are lent to the scenes presented comes from the fact that in each separate little open shop some single workman, like a bee in his cell, in a way so different from our Western method, is busily plying his trade.

When I had dissembled my wonder at seeing a cooper-maker holding one end of his cask with his toes; had returned the polite bow of a young samurai who was skillfully utilizing the same members in his binding of tubs with copper-like wires instead of metallic hoops, and had watched with a doubting admiration the wonderful way in which a basket-maker was helped out by his dexterous manipulation of mouth and right elbow, I confidently felt a new wish. I studied these quiet industrious workers, people at home in their homes as they actually live.

There, it was explained, that all the little [illegible] shops lining the narrow streets and roadways were the [illegible] habitations of the humanity about me. I soon saw that this was true, and was ever thereafter interested by the endless glimpses of the ways and manners of the humbler classes of Japan people.

There seemed no room or place in the small shops commonly as good as open to the street. A very small [illegible] may or may not be a part of the establishment. The entrance [illegible] is made in the middle of forenoon, and afternoon, as at noon, an interval for resting and eating, and many babies on the backs of small brothers and sisters wait about the tea-firing places that at the regular hour, they, too, may partake of refreshment.

This interval of rest is so elastic in its application that there seems hardly an hour of the day when one group or another of 'ricksha men by the roadside, of boatmen in the canal, of coolies in the go-down compounds or of craftsmen in the shops may not be seen gathered, seated on their heels, about the little charcoal fireboxes, plying their chopsticks in small lacquered bowls and square wooden boxes of cooked rice, and drinking tea from cups like good-sized thimbles. Besides the dressmaker and tailor, the cooper and the basket-maker are other artisans pursuing their avocations in quite as queer ways. The carpenter backs at his boards with a sort of rough adze or stands on them and saws them with what looks like a notched butcher's knife set in a long handle, or planes them carefully toward him. The man in the rice mill ignores belts and wheels and machinery generally, and jumps all day on the end of a plank, a cog or weight in the other end of which pounds away at the grains. The lantern-maker and the umbrella-maker sit patiently tying and pasting their frail wares, the stock in trade slowly piling up day by day, behind them. Lonely men, each in his little booth, make the thick stars mats or sections of flooring for the native houses. Boys work deftly, tossing



[illegible] leaves. Scattered here and there among them is a man of boy. Presently a song starts up and finally pulsating throughout the most building it echoes in a [illegible] or elemental wild harmony from all the jerking figures, [illegible] and fascinating labor.

All workers, at whatever trade, are [illegible] back and forth that seems or to the bamboo window blinds.

I watched an actual boy with warts on his hands, at work there in an open doorway on a good square of pale blue silk on which he was engaged in weaving a [illegible] to copy the most exquisitely shaded pink roses. Little girls sitting on the floor hemstitched silk handkerchiefs and made [illegible] beautiful drawn and embroidered [illegible] work. A couple of blue men, with back [illegible] and severe countenances, like American [illegible] in strong color, bulging [illegible] and [illegible] all to the whole visible work of a big dyeing establishment. In front of six shops, young men with simple appliances, working in the dust of the roadway, pestled by 'ricksha men and ball throwing youngsters, reel off silk into skeins or quickly twist it, in a sort of wayside rope-walk, into variegated silken cords.

Perhaps the most interesting of all are the women in small, open rooms, who sit all day at primitive frames throwing by hand the shuttles in and out that weave the web of silk or cotton. It is a pretty and poetical way of achieving the fabric we are to wear. I can but contrast the lives of these quiet workers, as their open doorways under the blue of heaven, their eyes sometimes wandering away with pleasure to the shining street panorama before them, with those of the three wretched seamstresses, factory hands and sweat-shop women in our own cities. It is small misfortune to be hard-headed, penniless, to wear cheap cotton, to eat only rice, in a land where the fashion for all, even the well-to-do, is not widely different. I have seen the weary and old countenances of little children and the hard ones of young girls, thronging out of our mills and manufactories, but these better faces of the Japanese women at their hand looms are less hopeless. And I would that the callous, hurried scrambling world had time to weave its textiles all in the old way of those early ages when so much sorrow was not.

There seems nothing grim, over severe or crushing about Japanese labor. It is essentially sociable and cheerful. Every third shop is a place of eatables, where hot sweet potatoes, rice coated with delicate seaweed, hot fish or shrimp fritters dipped in soy, rolls of fish wrapped around bean and sugar paste, buckwheat macaroni with soy, tasty morsels broiled on skewers, sugared beans and roasted nuts, parched or popped rice kettles, rice waffers and cakes browned over the fire and if still pale, painted to the right tints with brown dyes; rice paste or jelly, sweet millet paste candy, popped rice candy, cups of shaved ice and numerous other dainties and sweetmeats, are ever at hand for the delectation of the workers. But this is not enough, and men with vans and boxes of cooked food perambulate the streets still more conveniently to refresh the toiling masses. The meager coppers so scantily earned jingle all day right merrily into the pockets or pouches of the caterers.

Babies are everywhere swarming about, afoot and aback, with their share of the good things going. Nobody seems ever to startle and depress

BROOM PEDDLER.

them with "You mustn't do that," "You can't have this," "You mayn't go there." Among the common people, at least, there is no sequestering of women; they, too, are everywhere, cheek by jowl, helping and doing, apparently, as freely as the men. If it is only a wooden tub, which they have to scrub out, girls with bare feet and arms, elaborately dressed hair and clean and pretty blue and white kimonos, are apt to bring it out on the sidewalk and scrub away gregariously for the next half hour or more.

Unloading great stones from the sampans in the canals, women work as cheerfully, lustily and effectively as the men. They share, seemingly on equal terms, in the small shop keeping, and help in all the labors of the various avocations. I don't see how one of these men can have any secrets from his wife or escape her society on the plea that business will detain him at the store. If business did, he would probably find her there before him, as much at home as in the kitchen or nursery, which apartments, in truth, seem to be pretty well done away with; and if she wasn't there in person, at least all the other women on the block would be in the near vicinity, able to supervise his movements.

Living is reduced almost to its simplest elements here, where a single garment will do for a covering, and that, if necessary, for years; where a few cents' worth of rice, pickled vegetables and dried fish make an appetizing and satisfying meal, and where a single bare room for dining, for guests and for sleeping is practically all that is required by even ambitious house-holders.

In Japan the poorest people are not without their comforts and conveniences. Cooked foods, so cheaply prepared in public kitchens, have been mentioned. Milkmen and other purveyors are in almost every block, with their goods in smallest packages if desired, for the fractional copper currency. The housekeeping is the easiest, and at the same time the daintiest, in all the world. No dust and dirt ever are brought in to tarnish the fair white floors. The low ceilinged, empty rooms and narrow verandas are readily brushed and washed each day. The mats on which the poor man sleeps are as soft as those of the rich.

Bathhouses in the neighborhood, too, are frequent, where the tired mother and all her fretful progeny, wearied by the heat and the hours of work, at the close of the day enjoy their regular evening hot and cold water plunge and splash.

The most slender of these people probably is in no danger of being exaggerated in the telling. It is doubtless quite true that the impoverished 'ricksha puller or factory operator pawns his bed daily to buy his breakfast, and after earning enough to redeem the futons before night, recklessly expends in riotous living in the tensen eating houses the whole balance of his capital. He looks as if he does all that he is accused of in the way of ever patching his blue kimono instead of buying a new one, in living in one-yen-a-month houses, and of handing down to his descendants only the same pots and kettles, without a single addition thereto, which he in his day inherited from his parents. But that he is to any extent unhappy, miserable and wretched over it I very much doubt. I have watched him singing (and lingering) at his work, and going home at night in droves, still cheerfully sociable, solaced with his tiny pipe and fairly hilarious over the least morsel and drop of rice and cheap saki. I have gone with him to his matsuri, or festivals, and I know how often they recur and how light-hearted they find him. I have stood with him to laugh at the fun-makers and dancers at the frequent street celebrations and local fetes, and I don't believe there is much rancor and bitterness to his poverty. Besides, his wages are going up. Guilds he has had always, and he is learning about strikes. Dock laborers get eighty cents a day now, where formerly they received nearer to eight. Considering their labor capacity and the cheapness of their living, the former is not a bad wage. 'Ricksha charges, those for laundry work, and of various craftsmen (as all the dyers in Osaka, who have just procured themselves a twenty-five-per-cent raise), the wages of house servant and the salaries of policemen and other officials, all are slowly and steadily increasing, and the explanation is that the wants of life are on the increase, meat is beginning to be eaten, wool is coming to be liked for clothing, some simple luxuries are now understood and desired, and so the time is to come when the workingman of Japan is to have rather more of the conveniences and necessaries of life to buy, and considerably more money with which to purchase them. At least that is considered the trend of affairs at present.

German Carp Is Unpopular.

If a fish dealer depended upon the sale of German carp for a livelihood he would starve in double-quick time. That particular member of the fish family is several hundred thousands of miles away from the pinnacle of popularity, and there is nothing these days to indicate that it is going to decrease the distance. German carp are quoted, wholesale price, at a penny a pound.

"How in the world do you manage to make anything out of them?" asked the inquisitive buyer of the South Water street fish dealer the other day. "I don't see where it pays to handle them."

"It really doesn't pay to handle them, nor does the fisherman who catches them make a fortune out of his business," said the fish dealer. "Just imagine what the fisherman makes when we are supposed to sell at a profit at a penny a pound. He wouldn't do right well even if he had a good business. German carp are far from being entitled to recognition as fine fish. They are coarse in flesh, and it is an impossible matter to refine them. I handle them because there are some people who buy them from me. It is not that I sell them for a reasonable profit, but merely as an accommodation."—Chicago Record.

"Do you think you can accustom yourself to Klondike cooking?" "Why not? My wife took the first prize at Vassar for her paper weight biscuits."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

PRINCESS HELENE OF ITALY, MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN OF EUROPE

When the Crown Princess Helene visited the English court during the Jubilee festivities at London she was accorded the palm as the peerless beauty of all the handsome women of the blood royal present at the functions. She is the daughter of the Prince of Montenegro, and was reared in her father's mountainous principality, to which she owes her exquisite complexion and regal carriage. Her husband, the Crown Prince of Italy, is her opposite in personal appearance, being weak, small and bilious-looking, and rumor has it that only her father's poverty led her to accept the hand of the future ruler of Italy. Her out-of-door life has given her a "beauty truly blent, whose red and white Nature's own sweet and cunning hand laid on," and these charms, combined with her very shy, modest and even diffident ways when she is brought before the people, have made her vastly popular in Italy.