THE BLUE RIDGE BLADE.

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THE CLOUD.

The cloud lay low in the heavens,
Such a little cloud it seemed;
Just lightly touching the sea's broad breast,
Where the rose-light lingered across the west,
Soft and gray as innocent rest,
While the gold athwart it gleamed.

It looked such a harmless cloudlet,
Seen over the sleeping wave,
Yet the keen-eyed mariner shook his head,
As slowly it crept o'er the dusky red.
"See the rocket lines are clear," he said,
And his lips set stern and grave.

And long e're the eve was midnight,
That cloud was lowering black,
Dimming the flash on the furious spray,
As the breakers crashed in the northern bay;
Winds howling on their track.

So, in life's radiant morning,
May a tiny care or cross
Just trouble the peaceful course of love,
As if the strength of its sway to prove,
As if to whisper "My surface may move,
But my roots can laugh at loss."

It may seem such a little jarring,
Only experience sighs,
For with time's sad learning to sharpen the glance,
He sees the "rift in the lute" advance,
Knows how fate may seize upon circumstance
To sever the closest ties.

Ah me, in the fiercest tempest,
The life-boat its work may do;
But what can courage or skill avail
When the heart lies wrecked by passion's gale,
When change or death have furled the sail,
When treason has bribed the crew?

Then watch, oh, hope and gladness,
Watch for the rising cloud,
Scan it away, frank warmth of youth,
Blow it away bright breeze of truth,
For oh, there is neither mercy nor truth,
Should it once your heaven enshroud.

The Willow Switch.

About forty years ago a large part of Central New York, that is now fast becoming a garden, was almost a new country, and people talked of "moving West" when they emigrated from the banks of the Hudson to those of the Genesee. Still one of the cities on the line of the Erie Canal was even then a town of some importance and boasted much of what then amounted to wealth and even aristocracy.

Of this later class had been the family of Judge Morton, but sundry unlucky speculations had made it impossible for him to retain his accustomed position among his old neighbors, and he was about to seek a new field in one of the younger settlements.

Everything had long been prepared, the wagons were laden, the adieus for the most part had been said again and again, and a part of the cavalcade was fairly under way. The heavier goods, indeed, had been started two or three days before. The ladies of the party as well as the gentlemen had decided to attempt the journey on horseback, well aware that the condition of the roads, even though spring was now well advanced, could not be depended upon.

Apart from the rest, mounted on a stout and quiet looking pony, sat a young lady of some eighteen summers, in whose rosy cheeks and bright, black eyes the excitement of the occasion seemed almost to have overcome its sober suggestions. Still, something like a shade was on her face as she leaned forward in her saddle and conversed in low tones with a gentleman whose arm was thrown carelessly over the neck of her pony.

"Never mind me, Charlie; why it isn't three days' riding at the very worst, and that won't hurt me."

"But me, Susie! I am ordered off for a long cruise, and I cannot tell when I shall see you again."

"But you will come back?"

"Yes—but when? And will you—

"Will I what, Charlie?"

"Wait a moment, Susie!"

And the young man, who was in the undress uniform of a naval officer, sprang off to the side of the road, where some willow trees were growing in untrimmed luxuriance. Catching hold of one of the gracefully bending boughs he cut therefrom a long and pliant slip, with which he returned, stripping off the leaves as he came.

"There, Susie, that will answer for a riding whip, but do not wear it out on your pony, even if the roads are bad."

"Why not, Charlie?"

"Because at the end of my cruise I shall come back to claim it. Will you keep it for me?"

A very soft light stole into the black eyes; but she said in a low voice, "Yes, Charlie, I will keep it. But are you sure you will come to claim it?"

"If I live, Susie."

"Ah! then it is good-by, sure enough, now, for father is calling me. Good-by, Charlie!"

There was a most passionate earnestness in the young officer's reply, and he stood gazing after the pony and his mistress long after they were hidden by a turn of the road. We cannot follow him, however, by land or sea, for our business is with the willow switch.

If Susie's pony suffered on the road it was not from any excessive application of Charlie's queer memento, and on the third day about noon Judge Morton rode up to the side of his daughter and announced that they were close at their journey's end.

They were nearly at a fork of the road at the foot of a gently sloping hill, and just where the two ways met a little spring bubbled up and wandered off into an adjoining meadow. There were more signs of improvement than Susie had expected, but enough of wilderness remained to add to the rural beauty of the spot.

"Our new home," said the Judge "will be on the top of this knoll when it is built, and our present quarters such as they are, will be a little further on."

A sudden thought seemed to have entered the brain of Susie.

"Father, won't willows grow from slips?"

"Yes, my dear; that's the usual way of setting them out."

"And they want water, don't they? Is this one fresh enough to grow?"

"I should say it was."

"Well, then, may be we can have something growing here to remind us of our old home.

In an instant Susie was down from her pony, and the willow switch was carefully planted, just above the little spring. It would have all the water it wanted, at all events. And then Susie and her father rode on to their new home; but there was a warm flutter at the young girls heart and a blush on her cheek, as she wondered, "Will it ever grow?"

The new settlement was a good one for the Judge, and Susie's willow prospered famously. Even the rude farmer boys had learned how it came there, and respected it religiously, while a little paling kept off other intruders. Susie's heart throbbed high with hope and faith, at times, as she noted the wonderful vitality and prosperity of her leafy favorite. It grew as if it had a duty to perform and was determined to do it well. And the little spring bubbled up more briskly from under it, and seemed to murmur softly "He will come! He will come!"

Still, one year and another and another went by and Charles did not come, and letters were terribly uncertain and far between. All around the world he had been sent, and Susie's heart at times grew sick and weary in spite of the willow.

But she had other suitors, for her beauty seemed to grow every day and her father was getting along well in the world once more. Truth to tell, Susie had something of Mother Eve in her, and was not at all adverse to admiration.

So it happened that one day in June of the fourth year of the residence of the Mortons in their new home, just as the sun was setting, Susie found herself taking a stroll along the shaded roadside accompanied by the handsomest and most favored of her numerous train of worshippers.

They did not seem to be in a talking humor, but walked slowly along until they came to the forks of the road and paused a moment by the side of the spring. Here, at last, the young man seemed to have found his tongue and he pleaded eloquently and passionately for the the half-reluctant hand which he had seized in both his own.

Still Susie was silent, and it may be that the bubbling spring and the sighing willow were talking to her; but just then they heard the sound of horses hoofs coming at a quick pace up the road, and in a moment more a rider drew his rein beside them and asked politely if he could be directed to the residence of Judge Morton. The young man had dropped Susie's hand, and, half-vexed at the interruption, was proceeding to give the desired information, but his words were not listened to.

The horseman was leaning forward in his saddle, and had fixed a gaze of earnest penetration on the face of Susie Morton, on which the blushes had given way to a deadly pallor.

"Susie, I have come! The willow—"

The light came back to Susie's eyes in an instant, and with a long sigh of relief, she pointed to the little branches which swept her shoulder, and answered, "Here it is, Charlie; it has been growing ever since you went away."

Susie's other companion was not obtuse enough to linger longer in the shade of such a tree as that, and before she returned to the house Charlie had reclaimed his gift. The song of the spring only changed enough to sound like "He has come—he has come!"

Thirty years went by, and the Morton willow kept on growing, until it became a well-known landmark, towering high in air above the little spring at the forks of the road But thirty years work changes in other things besides trees, and a slip from the willow had been dissevered to grow above a little mound in the village graveyard, for the Judge slept, like a true American, not with his fathers. Everything else had undergone changes, if not always improvement, and last came the fearful changes of the war of 1861.

It was not many days after the Gettysburg fight and a matronly lady in deep mourning, supported by a fair young girl similarly clad, walked slowly and feebly down the sloping road to the spring.

"If there is a bough within reach, dear, I would rather gather it myself, and then if I can find where they have laid him I will go and plant it with my own hands."

One long, sweeping branch of the willow tree seemed as she approached it almost to be held out to her with a sympathizing purpose, and with a pale face and quivering lips she was proceeding to sever the slip she wanted, unmindful of the rattle of coming carriage wheels. As for her girlish companion, she had sunk down upon the grass and covered her face with her hands. The good lady's trembling fingers almost refused to perform their duty and the carriage drew within a few paces of her just as she had severed the slender rod.

"Well, mother, I hope that you are not cutting that for me," said a cheery but somewhat feeble voice from the carriage. The young girl sprang to her feet, but only just in time to save her mother from falling, though she did not quite faint, and recovered quickly.

"Oh, Charlie, my boy!—my boy!"

"Here I am, mother—hurt, sure enough but in no need of a willow yet; am I.

"Not by any means," said a hale and hearty old gentleman, in a naval undress, who now sprang out of the carriage; "and they've given us both a furlough, though mine is a short one. This willow was always a good omen."

And again the spring seemed to bubble up softly, "He has come! he has come!"

And the old lady, and the young lady, too, sobbed and laughed, and kissed the returned warriors, till the good mother, with the bit of willow still in her hand, knelt down in the shade of the memorial tree, to pour out her thankfulness to Him who had made her prosperity to grow with its growth, from the day when she sprang from her weary pony to plant it.

Traveling Stones.

Many of our readers have doubtless heard of the famous travelling stones of Australia. Similar curiosities have recently been found in Nevada, which are described as almost perfectly round, the majority of them as large as a walnut, and of an irony nature. When distributed about upon the floor, table, or other level surface within two or three feet of each other, they immediately begin traveling toward a common centre, and there huddled up in a bunch like a lot of eggs in a nest. A single stone, removed to a distance of three and a half feet, upon being released at once started off, with wonderful and somewhat comical celerity, to join its fellows; taken away four or five feet, it remained motionless. They are found in a region that is comparatively level, and is nothing but bare rock. Scattered over this barren region are little basins, from a few feet to a rod or two in diameter, and it is in the bottom of these that the rolling stones are found. They are from the size of a pea to five or six inches in diameter. The cause of these stones rolling together is doubtless to be found in the material of which they are composed, which appears to be lodestone or magnetic iron ore.

Answers.

"Gerald."—You grieve that your passions are so strong, do you? All right; mix in a little of your morals, which are weak enough to thin them down.

"Little Buttercup" writes—"How can I mend a crystal goblet that has got a hole punched through its side?" You can't repair it permanently, but if you stick your thumb in the hole when you are using the goblet, it will answer for all practical purposes.

"Mary Ann" says she is "a-weary," and complains that "woman's work goes on forever." So it does, and we are glad of it. But that doesn't affect you. Bless your soul, you don't go on forever; you don't have all the work to do, not even while you live. Man's work goes on forever too, we hope, but that doesn't fret us a particle. We are not going to stay here and do it all. Bless you, no; we are not going to do our own any longer than we have to. Brace up, Mary Ann, and don't you fret about the work that "goes on forever. You're not going on with your work more than forty or fifty years longer, Mary Ann, and don't you forget it.

"Mrs. Blodsoe" wants to know "which is the quickest way to make ice cream without a freezer?" Buy it in one of those little paste-board boxes they sell at the ice cream factories.

"Gentle Annie" is in a desponding mood this week. She begins her sad plaint by asking, "Will they forget us when we are gone?" You may bet your sweet life, gentle Annie they will. They will forget us so completely they won't even be positive where we have gone.

"Marguerite" asks if "a woman should marry a man whom she respects and esteems, but does not love, for his money?" Oh, no, Marguerite, n-no; not exactly that. You should not marry him for his money, unless you can't absolutely get it any other way. But if you do really "respect" the man, you might love his money, and then you would have all the ingredients, for a happy match, anyhow. We wouldn't advise you to marry a man for his money alone, nor, on the other hand, Marguerite, would we advise you to marry a man merely for the sake of his poverty; there is neither merit nor novelty in that. But you should marry him, even though he is rich as Crœsus, because—by the way, Marguerite, you didn't say that this rich man had asked you or wanted you to marry him? How is that, by the way?

"Baby Mine" says "she is just crying her eyes out because she is not pretty, and she feels lonely and nobody loves her, and she longs for some sympathetic heart that can feel for her troubles and drop words of sympathy like healing balm into her lovely life, and——" "Baby Mine," hush it right up; not another line of it; not a whisper. You scare us to death and we haven't a line of sympathy for you. We are a married man, with a boy old enough, or at least smart enough, to go to college; we are the busy head of a pleasant, happy household, and we are not going to be do coyed off into any sympathetic streaks, not by all the lonely women in America. Dry it up, and the next time you write to this department, tell us how to make water crimps that will last all night and won't straighten out in one hot afternoon. "Lonely," are you? Then why don't you go to the sociable, where you will meet so many other lonely people that you will feel happy? "Lonely?" Great guns, and a new circus billed on the fence every week!

Old-Time Banking.

The old Farmers and Mechanics' bank was established in Detroit in 1839. In 1845, owing to some disastrous operations in Ohio, it was temporarily badly crippled, and to tide over the crisis the directors lent their best energies. The bank had a large volume of notes outstanding, all redeemable in coin on presentation, and it was apprehended that the moment the condition of the institution became known a run would ensue which would compel the closing of their doors. Now-a-days a bank officer would throw up the sponge under such circumstances, and suspend payment like a little man, but then bankers were both bold and fertile of expedient. The coin had run very low and there was no time to be lost. The services of a friend of the institution were secured, and he was privately sent to a large creditor (Lyell, the subsequently defaulting banker, by the way,) to whom the critical state of the bank was whispered, and the wisdom of some measures for self protection suggested. Lyell snapped at the bait, and, upon a hint from the officious visitor, rushed around to the nearest court and got out an injunction forbidding the bank to pay out any more coin pending the order of the court. This effectually saved the concern, for when note holders subsequently presented the bank's paper for redemption they were politely met with the reply: "We should be very happy to oblige you, sir, but unfortunately we are for a few days tied up by a process of the Wayne circuit court. We hope the injunction will soon be dissolved.

It was late in the afternoon when the injunction was served, and the stock of coin had some hours previous dwindled to $53. The cashier meantime was on nettles. If that injunction did not come quickly the concern was ruined. At every opening of the door the poor man trembled in his shoes, lest the newcomer should be a note holder in quest of coin. One more demand would close the concern forever. Slowly the clock ticked off the minutes, full thirty of which must yet elapse before the hour of closing. Would the injunction never come! At last the door opened and a nervous, bustling man hurried up to the counter. The cashier saw at a glance it was all up with him, but while there was life there was still hope he thought.

"Here, Mr. Cashier, I've got $500 of your notes I want coin for."

The cashier endeavored to preserve a placid exterior while he deliberately bethought himself how he might delay a refusal of payment for a little while, until, perchance an officer would come in with the hoped for injunction.

"So you want gold coin for your bills, do you?" suavely remarked the cashier, glancing through the open window into the all too quiet street.

"Why, yes; I live in Dexter, and I want to catch the four o'clock train; so please hurry up the specie."

"All right! What's the news in Dexter? How do the crops look? How's my old friend ——? Is he living there still? And, by the way, what in the world can you do with specie in that little country town that Farmers and Mechanics' bills won't accomplish?"

"Oh, never mind. Give me my money so that I can catch the train. The fact is, there is a little flurry out there about the safety of your bank, and I want to make sure of my money."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the cashier; "afraid of our bank, are they? Well, they must be getting pretty fastidious when the conservative old Farmers' and Mechanics' won't suit them. Why, my dear sir—"

"Never mind the pedigree of your bank but give me my money or I shall miss my train."

"Certainly, my dear sir." (Another glance through the window, but still no sheriff in sight.) Aside: "What shall I do?"

"There, I've got only ten minutes to catch my train. If you will assure me upon honor that it is all right, and that the bank is not going to stop, I will wait now; but if you are going to shut up I want my money. Come now, how is it, old fellow?"

"Really, sir," replied the polite cashier, "you place me in a very delicate position. If I tell you the bank is safe, and anything happens hereafter, you will blame me; on the other hand, if I tell you it is shaky, I shall be unfaithful to my employers, and shall very justly be discharged. I prefer not to make any statement, but simply to count out to you 1,000 half dollars." (Half dollars were the principal coinage in circulation at that time.)

Turning, screw driver in hand, to a strong wooden box, apparently tightly screwed together, such as silver coin was usually packed in in those days, but which the cashier knew very well to be absolutely empty, he wiped off his brow and set himself to work as if to an herculean task.

The man glanced at the clock, and then at the iron bound coin box, then mentally calculated the weight of a thousand half dollars, then burst out with: "Never mind; I see that you have got the coin, and I'll be d——d if I'm going to pack a thousand half dollars all the way to Dexter to-night. Never mind, Mr. Cashier, I won't trouble you," and out of the bank he darted.

The injunction was served soon after and the danger passed. But the old Farmers and Mechanics' still kept up the habit of being short of coin, and did so till the last, when nearly twenty years later what was left of it was consolidated with a private bank, and became the now prosperous American National bank of Detroit. The worthy cashier still lives in Detroit, and finds a bonanza of enjoyment in recounting the amusing incidents of old-time financiering.

We Gentlemen in Black.

Timely wit can do easily a great many very hard things. It can even disarm a haggling debtor. A Northumberland Bishop returned home after a long absence in London. A chimney-sweeper had been at work cleaning the chimneys of the large mansion and its connections, and had just completed his work as the gentleman met him in the drive-way.

"Mercy on us!" cried the Bishop, as he came face to face with the apparent imp of darkness—for the fellow had just come from the last chimney, and was a literal mass of soot from head to foot. "Who and what art thou?"

"I, your Grace, am your most humble and devoted servant and helper—the cleaner and amender of your chimneys."

"Oho! You have been sweeping the chimneys?"

"I have, your Grace and you may now build your fires with solid assurance of peace and comfort."

"I am glad of that. And now, I suppose, you would like for me to pay you?"

"From yourself, my lord, either the pay, or an order on your treasurer."

"I'll pay you. How much will it be?"

"Indeed, sir, it was a pretty job; take 'em big and little, there were six-and-twenty chimneys, and I should surely have a shilling apiece, but we'll call it four-and-twenty shillings."

"Four-and-twenty shillings!" cried the Bishop. "And how long have you been at it?"

"Yesterday and to-day, your Grace."

"Well, I declare, you manage to earn a great deal of money in a very short space of time."

"Ah, your Grace," retorted the sweep, with a comical shrug and leer, at the same time giving a sweeping indication of his finger toward the prelate's glossy habiliments of matchless broadcloth, "we that wear the black cloth must needs get good pay for our work."

The Bishop laughed heartily at the humor of the retort, and paid the four-and-twenty shillings willingly.

The Long Branch Pier.

The pier is one of the boldest bits of engineering ever attempted. It has been talked of for years and laughed at by many, who said that the first winter gale would knock it all to pieces. But laughter never kills anything, and the structure, though not yet quite completed, is an acknowledged success. True, it has not encountered winter storms, nor have any icebergs floated against it, nor wrecked vessels been blown upon it. The weather since its opening for traffic has been for the most part placid, and the boats have generally been able to land without much difficulty. Considerable trouble in regard to this was feared. The pier is now about 600 feet long, and will be, when completed, about 1,000. It extends from the bluff into the sea, directly in front of the Ocean hotel. It is supported by about 140 iron piles, each one of which is a tube, forced far down into the sand and clay which form the bottom of the ocean. These tubes are firmly braced together by iron girders, and the structure thus combines an immense amount of strength with elasticity enough to resist the force of the waves. Even when the sea is as rough as it has been at any time since the pier has been erected, no motion is perceptible to one who stands on the floor or deck. In appearance the thing is so light an airy as to suggest the possibility of its being swept away. All fear of such a calamity vanishes at once from the mind of the passenger who sets foot on deck or stairway. At the present ocean end of the pier the depth of water is about twenty-six feet. Thus the biggest boats can be accommodated.

—Judge James T. Leonard, of Clearfield, Pa., has given $19,300 to the public school fund of that borough, the amount due him on money advanced by him for the erection and furnishing of a graded school building.

The Sea Cow.

Recently there arrived at the New York Aquarium a monster manatee or sea cow from Indian river, Manatee county, Fla. This strange amphibious beast was brought by steamship from Florida, packed in a large box, fifteen or sixteen feet in length by five feet in width and three in depth. It was bedded in algæ, fucus natans and other aquatic plants, and its guardians and keepers, who had brought it from Florida, said that it had eaten nothing since it was taken from Indian river, and that the only care that it required on the passage and journey was a plentiful supply of water run through the holes of the box in which it was transported. When the box was ripped off, and the end of the same removed, the monstrous beast, thirteen feet in length, and "weighing about three thousand pounds" (Mr. Reiche said) was slowly launched in the shallow water of the great tank. There it lay, a long, black mass, neither a fish nor an animal, shaped something like a seal, but bearing as much resemblance as to a hipopotamus. It lay prone on the bottom of the tank while the water poured in and the keepers patted its black hide and threw water over it and cleared its flattened anterior, fin-like arms of seaweed, and raised up its calf-like mouth and nostrils and eyes. It has no legs or posterior limbs, only a broad flattened, horizontal caudal expansion at the posterior end of its body. Its thick, black skin is sparsely scattered over with bristly, coarse, black hairs. "What are you going to feed it with?" I asked Mr. Reiche. "The leaves of the drascena and of pond lilies," was the reply. "We will get the drascena from Florida, the pond lily roots and plants from the great northern lakes. We have already telegraphed for them."

"Will you keep it in fresh or salt water?" "That is croton running into the tank, but it likes brakish water the best." "Is its flesh fit for food?" "They say its excellent, and sells for fifty cents a pound in Cuba, and as high as a dollar a pound in some localities, as the Catholic Church permits the use of the same on some fast days, ecclesiastical dogma having declared this creature, along with whales and other cetaceans, to be fish, not flesh." "How did you get this one?" "Of native Floridans, who have had it for a pet four years." "How old is this specimen supposed to be." "About fifty years old, and it has not yet gained its full size, though it is the largest one I ever saw in captivity. It will be twenty feet long if it lives long enough to get its full size."

While we were talking about the Manatee, and watching it raise its nostrils above the water at intervals of about five minutes for air, it suddenly became active, and lashed itself around furiously for a few seconds. The keepers jumped out of the tank in double-quick time, but no one was hurt, and after that exhibition of its activity the sea cow (or sea bull this one is, as it is a male), relapsed into its dormant condition and did not stir its tail or arms again during the next thirty minutes that I stayed watching it. During that time it took in and exhaled air four times, and slowly winked its eyes about as often. It's the queerest beast I have yet seen in the aquarium.

Summer Breakfasts.

Beefsteak, or ham and eggs, short biscuit, fried potatoes, and such articles, with coffee, are not the dishes to sit lightly on a man's stomach and give him comfort through the day, and yet they are what most people fill up with constantly. Now, undoubtedly, it is not good in hot weather to overload the stomach by partaking of a heavy meal. And yet we doubt the propriety of discarding meats and living exclusively or principally on oatmeal, cracked wheat, etc. In hot weather there is a great wastage of our bodies going on; and food should be taken, although in moderation, in the highest degree nutritious and calculated to keep our bodies in their full normal condition. We regard beefsteak or a nice mutton chop, accompanied with *few* cucumbers or spring onions as a salad, and eaten with properly-cooked potatoes, as an admirable Summer breakfast. Such nutritious food serves to fortify the system against the insidious effects of the heat which comes to us during the Summer's day. There is another excellent breakfast, easily got up, which we wish was more common. We allude to Graham bread and butter and a slice of rich cheese, accompanied with a cup of good coffee. To get up such a breakfast will give the housekeeper but little trouble. This is also a good fortifying meal against the heat of the day which lies before us. Cheese forms an admirable substitute for meat, but it should be always eaten in the forepart not in the latter part of the day. So, also, to those who are entirely healthy, hard-boiled eggs with Graham bread and butter, makes an admirable substitute for meats. An important item about Summer breakfasts is *to change often*. The same writer, from whom we have quoted above, also says:—"More wholesome dishes for breakfast, however, are rapidly coming into use. Within the last five years the consumption of oatmeal and cracked wheat has increased wonderfully. Cooked as mush, or as rice, they make a diet that not only satisfies the appetite, but sustains the physical and metal energies longer than almost any other food. At first they will seem a little insipid, and one will think he ought to have something a little more substantial; but gradually he will recognize and appreciate their delicate flavor, and relish them highly. They are eaten both hot and cold."

Cotton Fiber.

The cotton fiber is a hollow, elongated cylinder, the walls of which are of the purest and thinnest cellulose, filled with a sap or protopalasm, more or less glutinous, which in the state of maturation becomes dense by the dissipation of the volatile parts, causing the filament to assume a spiral convolution. During the process of ripening the fiber collapses, presenting the appearance of a flat ribbon with thickened margins. In proportion to the abundance of twist in the fiber, so its strength and pliability, two of the chief values for manufacturing purposes.

The glutinous composition gives what is called the 'body' to the cotton, which is more copious in rich cotton that is grown on rich land, which acccounts for the superiority in strength of such cotton over that grown on poor soil. The direction of the twist in the fiber is variable; and not always complete, there being quarter, half, three-quarter, full turns.

The numbers of sinuations to an inch differs according to the nature of the cotton, but seldom exceeding 150; nor are they uniform throughout the fiber. The largest number of twists to the inch that ever came under my observation was 160, including half turns. I am inclined to the opinion that the firmness and softness of cotton are dependent greatly upon relative humidity of the atmosphere. The fineness of the fibers averages not far from 1,690 diameters to the inch.

The chemical analysis of the seed and fiber demonstrates the existence of potash, lime and magnesia as the principal constituents in various combinations. The most satisfactory analysis which I have seen is this; For the ash of the seed, sixty per cent. phosphate of lime, thirty per cent. phosphate of potash and ten per cent. of other substances. For the ash of the fiber, thirty-three and one-third per cent. phosphate of potash, sixteen and two-thirds per cent- phosphate of lime, twelve and one-half per cent. phosphoric acid, and thirty-seven and one half per cent. magnesia and other elements. A bale of lint cotton of 400 pounds, thoroughly incinerated, would yield four pounds of ash, half of which is made up of phosphates of potash and lime.

The seed from which this line is taken, some 800 pounds, reduced to an ash, would yield about fifty pounds over half of which is composed of phosphates of lime and potash, the lime preponderating. These constituents, as found in the seed, are wholly, or nearly so, from the hull, the kernel furnishing but little.

It is well known that the natural color is white, reddish or yellow; but the composition of these colors has never been satisfactorily explained, any more than that it is thought they are allied with some pectine and resinous substances which can be removed by treatment with diluted solutions.

For the most favorable results the plant requires a uniform temperature, a singular adjustment of heat and moisture, a peculiar equilibrium in the climatic relation between the mountains and the sea, abundant rain during the planting season, frequent and gentle showers while flowering and fruiting, and a rainless period at maturation and gathering. It is one of the least exhaustive of any known crop plants, that is, if the stalk and the seed are retained to the soil and nothing but the lint taken from it. It is said that an average crop of wheat (ten bushels) takes from an acre of land about thirty-two pounds of vegetable such as potash, lime, magnesia and nitrogen; while of these elements the cotton plant removes in lint only two and three-quarter pounds per acre, presuming 450 pounds of seed cotton to the acre.

The Squeaky Door.

Some thirty years ago, in a small town in Ohio, had grown up a nice congregation of Methodists, who had built themselves a nice church edifice, which had, unfortunately, a very squeaky door. The new minister that the Conference had sent them, was annoyed by the habit some of the members had of coming late, but what particularly troubled him was that, as soon as the squeaky door opened, all the congregation would twist their necks round to see who it was that had come in. He made up his mind that he would correct these bad habits; so the next Sunday morning he frankly told them that between those who came late, and those who turned round to see who had come in, he could not get on with his sermon, and that if they would only remain quiet every time the door opened, he would announce to them who it was that had come in.

Squeak went the door, "Sister Edwards," he announced, in a distinct, clear voice. Poor Sister Edwards took her seat, not knowing why her name had been called out, and fancying, not without good reason, that every one was laughing at her.

Squeak again "Brother Brooks," in the same clear voice. He, too, looked as if something was going on that he could not get the hang of. He could not imagine why his name should be called out, and everyone in the church sit motionless as statues, excepting Sister Edwards, and she gave him, as she turned, such a look of anxiety, that he suspected, although he could not for a moment believe it, that they were on trial for having been seen at the public park, conversing a few days before.

Squeak again. The minister looked hesitated—looked again, and finally said, "Small man, with white hat, crape on it; has a cane in his hand. I don't know him; so all may turn round and look at him to see if they do." Round went every head for it was a relief, as they had sat so long gazing at the minister, when nearly all exclaimed, "Why, it's Brother Brick."

It is needless to say, the bad habits were corrected from that time.

Horrors of Silver Speculation.

Mr. Ichabod resides in the wild suburbs of a part of the city where donkeys occasionally "roam and howl." Mr. Ichabod is quite a joker in his way. He has living with him a neice, lately arrived from a part of the Atlantic States where such an animal as a jackass is hardly seen twice in a lifetime. A night or two since this young lady had retired to her sleeping apartment after having duly and dutifully kissed her relatives good night, but hardly been absent three minutes before she rushed back into the parlor with ashen cheeks and widely distended eyes.

"Oh, uncle!" cried she, "did you hear him? Some one in the street uttering such fearful cries! He must be in horrible agony. There he goes again! Why, uncle, some one is surely being murdered!"

Uncle Ichabod now heard the long-drawn, wheezy bray of an old asthmatic jackass, and smiling reassuringly upon the startled and excited girl, soothingly said: "Calm yourself, my dear, it is not so bad as you think. He will soon get over it."

"Why, uncle, who is it, and what is the matter of him!"

"Why my dear child, how excited you are! It is nothing—nothing! It is only poor neighbor Jones across the way. He'll soon calm down."

"Calm down! But, uncle, why does he take on so?"

"Well, he is of a sensitive, nervous coustitution, and he has probably just heard of the $3 assessment on the Sierra Nevada."

—It is proposed to number the houses in Atlantic City, N. J.

BRIEFS.

—Over twenty families named Nichols reside near each other in the lower portion of Carolina county, Md.

—The original autograph will of George Frederic Handel was lately sold by auction in London for £53.

—Crop returns from Kentucky show an extraordinary yield of wheat, but the corn and tobacco crops are looking badly.

—It is estimated that the present year's wheat crop will put into the pockets of the farmers of Indiana at least $35,000,000.

—A United States Signal Service Station is being established on the summit of Sugar Loaf Mountain, twelve miles from Frederick, Md.

—The debt of California in four years has been reduced $356,214, and is now less than $3,500,000, while there is $1,498,450 in the Treasury.

—The total valuation of 111 Massachusetts cities and townsis $159,000,000,650. Last year it was $161,318,180. Boston is not included in this report.

—The French Comedy Company in England, while playing in an eating piece, demanded real food and drink, which cost the management $20 a night.

—The Hagerstown (Md.) *Globe* says that an employe of the Antietam paper mills while sorting a lot of old paper recently, found a copy of the laws of England published in 1662.

—Wm. R. Taylor, of New Gloucester, Maine, is 85 years old, and is said to be the oldest harness maker in the State. He has worked in one shop in New Gloucester for 57 years.

—An equestrian statue of the Prince of Wales was unveiled at Bombay, India, on the 26th of June. It is a gift to the city by Sir Albert Lassoon, and commemorates the visit of the Prince in 1875-6.

—Arthur Reese, a Clearfield (Pa.) farmer hung himself in his barn recently. On a shingle near by he had written his will, and charged his wife with being the cause of the trouble that led to the suicide.

—The sale of cigar stamps in the collection district of Schuylkill, Berks, Lebanon and Lehigh counties, Pa, during the present fiscal year, it is estimated, will amount to about $300,000, or nearly $1000 a day.

—The extent and destruction of the famine in India may be judged from the statement of the *Bombay Gazette* that the city of Serinogur, the capital of Casemere, which contained 300,000 inhabitants has now only 30,000.

—Down to the close of 1878 the United States had produced a total of 2,145,595, net ton of Bessemer Steel rails. In 1863, when the States first imported Bessemer steel rails from this country, they paid us at the rate of $150 per ton.

—The late Robert Argyle, of Gold Hill, Nev., one of the first settlers of the Comstock, has left 10,000 to the city of San Francisco to build a fountain. He has ordered the foundation to be made of refuse quartz from each of the Comstock mines.

—More than half the glass used in the United States is produced at Pittsburg, where over 5,000 hands are employed in making it; 12,110 tons of soda ash were used in the business last year, and the value of the glassware amounted to nearly $7,000,000.

—The Pacific ocean covers 80,000,000 of square miles; the Atlantic 25,000,000; the Indian ocean, 14,000,000; the Southern, to thirty degress, is 25,000,000; the Northern ocean, 5,000,000; the Black Sea, 170,000; the Baltic, 175,000; and the North Sea, 160,000.

—Asa Otis, of New London, Conn., left in his will $5000 to an old negro servant, Preston Hamilton, who has expended part of the sum in the purchase of a lot near the Otis residence, which he turned into a park and presented to the city.

—Mrs. Maria Rice, of Saucon township, Lehigh county, Pa., has attained the ripe old age of 107 years. She is quite aetive, and when in Bethlehem a few days since, the band serenaded her, which she acknowledged in a few remarks.

—A Russian physician, M. Malarevsky, struck by the prevalence of shortsightedness among literary men, proposes that books should be printed in white ink on black paper, and he has made experiments with fifty persons which tend to confirm his view.

—Mrs. Simmons, a resident of Minersville, Pa., went into the woods recently to pick berries, and not returning at night, her husband and some friends went to look for her. She was found hanging by the skirts, head downward, in a deep pit, in which she had survived six long hours.

—The Pennsylvania Railroad Company are building at Altoona several hundred box cars, which they propose to run on their fast express trains. The axles, journals, etc., are to be sufficiently heavy to make it perfectly safe to run the cars at high speed when carrying 40,000 pounds.

—Prince Albert Victor and George Frederick of Wales, on July 24th, bade farewell to the Brittania, at Dartmouth, where they have been educated during the past two years. They have both passed first-class in seamanship and conduct, thereby gaining six months' time, which will entitle them shortly to become midshipmen.

—During the past few days several large engineering firms in America have communicated to the Secretary of the Bradford Branch Amalgamated Society of Engineers, offering employment to as many men as will go to America. The wages offered are much higher than is the case in England. Between two and three hundred mechanics have signified their intention of accepting the offer.

—The following taxpayers at Newport, R. I., pay taxes on the amounts annexed to their names: Alexander Agassiz, $25,700; John Jacob Astor, $126,000; John C. Brown (estate), $822,000; Charlotte Cushman (estate), $25,400; David King (estate) $548,000; George Bancroft, $36,600; August Belmont, $107,200; Pierre Lorillard, $123,800; A. A. Low, $63,500; Edwin D. Morgan, $49,500; Levi P. Morton, $73,800; Fairman Rogers, $68,300; Charles C. Van Zandt, $26,800; George P. Wetmore, $581,400. The estate of Mr. Brown pays the largest taxes of any single estate in the city.