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It is proposed to restore the far southwest to fertility by letting the waters of the Gulf of California into the Colorado Desert.

Canada's new banking law, which recently went into effect, makes the sale of stock on margin a penal offense. It also fixes the minimum capital at \$250,000, restricts dividends to eight per cent, and provides for a redemption fund of five per cent, on circulation to pay the notes of suspended banks.

The value of bee products is being recognized more and more every year, remarks the *Farm, Field and Stockman*. Already a large amount of honey is annually consumed in the various industries of pork-packing, tobacco and other manufactures, while the commercial value of beeswax is very great. Nearly five hundred tons of beeswax are annually imported into Great Britain, while Russia alone uses nearly five thousand tons in the ceremonies of the church.

Harper's Weekly says: "The impression made by Bismarck's personality has certainly been disturbed by his course since his removal. Apparently he has somewhat mistaken his hold upon Germany. It was not that of a popular leader, but of a ruler of great resources and despotic will. Consequently when he fell from power, and it was seen that there was no interruption of the usual course of events, the situation was, in fact, unaffected, there was no strong personal feeling and loyalty upon which he could rely in opposition to the Government. It is not to be expected that Bismarck will greatly influence affairs when he reappears in the German Parliament. In the execution of Germany, undoubtedly, his days are past."

The *San Francisco Chronicle* declares: "The fact that over five million dollars has spilled out to redden the trade dollars has come out in a queer fashion. When the job was being put through it was declared that the amount of trade dollars still about was comparatively insignificant. A million dollars was represented at the outside figure. Of course there was no way of disproving the assertion at the time, but there was a shrewd suspicion that it was not true. Now we have the facts, and they show that this syndicate which managed the deal must have made about a million dollars, perhaps more. There was never a more unblinking fraud perpetrated. The trade dollars were never worth more than the bullion contained in them, and it is not true that any considerable number was in circulation."

Not every one will understand, thinks the *New York Sun*, what is meant by the beating of the site of the Temple of the Revolution at Newburgh on the Hudson. When the American army was cantoned near Newburgh in 1783, there was a deep discontent among both officers and men because they could not get their pay. On March 11, 1783, a circular was secretly distributed in order to bring about a somewhat seditious meeting at what was called the Temple, a little log building newly erected there. General Gates was thought to be at the bottom of the movement, by which it was intended that the army should arouse the fears of Congress and the people and thus get better treatment. The meeting was fully attended, and Washington made an address so patriotic and firm in behalf of patience and loyalty that the result was a series of resolutions promising all that Washington had counseled.

The Pennsylvania Deaf and Dumb Asylum, near Philadelphia, has discarded the use of sign language and will adhere hereafter to the so-called oral system of instruction. An account says: "Moses Mays, a boy of Elston, Penn., who has been in the institution since 1885, is one of the marvelous products of the oral instruction system. He was born deaf, and has never heard the sound of his own or of any other person's voice. But he can now move around among his fellows in the world outside of the institution, and no one would ever know that he was either deaf or dumb. By a laborious process he has been taught how to move his lips and vocal chords and how to frame sounds, and now he talks like one who has heard conversation on every hand since the cradle. He has been taught to understand what is said to him by watching the movements of the speaker's lips and throat, and now he can hear, or come near enough to it, for all the activities and duties of life."

FOR TIME.

Oh! for time, and life's rush,
To learn the bird's true note;
To list the evening's gentle hush;
To watch fair clouds adrift;
To mark the grace of flowers and leaves,
With a sense of all their sweet;
To heed the charms that nature weaves
In the green turf at our feet.
Oh! for time for thoughtful heed
Of the good 'e'en we might do,
Of the joy that comes of a loving deed,
Or an act that is just or true;
Of the night so dark that speeds,
Wherever may be the morn.
Oh! this dear earth, with its charms and needs,
No other day shall dawn.
Oh! for time, in the rush and the race,
To turn our feet aside,
The beauty of earth and sky to trace,
And the charm of ocean wide.
To note in the wild and jostling throng,
Some fellow crushed or driven,
And give our hand as we go along;
'Tis here we will have striven.
—J. A. Keane, in *Frank Leslie's*.

A Letter That Came at Last

BY MARY KYLE DALLAS.

Regina Ransen, having listened to the postman's whistle coming up the street, and hearing his step leave the next pavement, suddenly slipped her feet out of her pretty satin slippers and fled down the stairs between her bedroom and the lower hall in her stockings, holding her robe so that no sound of its flounces might be heard against the balustrade. "I heard him say he would write to her," she whispered, between her white teeth, a gleam of jealousy in her large, black eyes, and a frown upon her brow which spoiled her face, regular as were its features. "I heard him, and I will know what he writes—I will know."

Bending over the letter-box, she stood waiting—listening. The postman's step advanced, his whistle sounded, letters dropped into the box, and he was off again.

The next instant, whatever he had left was in Miss Ransen's hand, in her pocket, and she was running up-stairs again. Half-way up she met another girl—a young thing of seventeen, with flaxen hair, blue eyes, slender waist, lips like jacque roses, and a skin of that pure, healthy, creamy tint, more beautiful than the highest color.

"I heard the postman, Regina," she said, with a laugh. "So did I, Bessie," replied the brunette, "but there is no letter in the box."

"Oh, I am sure he whistled here," Bessie answered, and went on and peeped into the box.

She returned disappointed. "He said he would write"—she whispered to herself—"he said he would write."

Her chin quivered with disappointment, her eyes grew heavy. She would not cry, but she greatly desired to do so.

"Ah, well, there are more mails today," she said, and settled down to her sewing—work for her Cousin Regina—Regina was always having new dresses made. Poor little Bessie, the poor relation of the family, was seldom without a needle in her hand in consequence. It was very rarely that she had a new dress of her own.

Happily she was so fresh and pretty, that the simple little frocks that were now and then given her, muslins bought by her aunt at bargain counters, or cheap woollens selling off out of season, were all becoming.

Regina, with her grand air, had sometimes condescended to tell her so in the first days of her presence in the Ransen residence, but of late, to the astonishment of the stately cousin and the stout aunt, others had observed the fact.

Roy King, who was not only the most eligible match in the Ransen social circle, but a very charming fellow beside, had been altogether too attentive to poor little Bessie of late.

They had lingered on the balcony together, and Regina had heard a whisper, which had set her to watching the letter box as we have seen.

Now behind her locked door, she held in her hand the proof that she was not mistaken. A letter on the paper Roy always used, and bearing his seal, addressed to "Miss Bessie Benton."

For a moment Regina held it in her hand and hesitated. One may go to State prison for breaking the seal of a letter addressed to another. But Regina argued that no one would ever know. That all was fair in love and war.

"Who knows what the little sly-hoots may be up to," she said to herself; "he was devoted to me before mamma asked

her here. And if she is casting her nets for him, I must know it." Then she cut the edge of the letter very carefully with a tiny, pearl-handled knife, and the letter lay open before her. She read:

"DEAR BESSIE—May I call you so? I have tried to tell you how I felt to you so often, but there seems no opportunity for me on your aunt's reception evenings. "On Thursday unless you send me word not to come, I shall call on you particularly. I cannot endure this suspense much longer. "Yours Devotely,
ROY KING."

Regina read this letter twice, flashing with wrath as she did so.

Then thrusting it in her pocket again, she flew across the hall to her mother's room, and shutting the door, locked it behind her, much to that lady's astonishment.

"You startle me so," said Mrs. Ransen, who was trying on a new frizette at the mirror. "Really, you should cultivate a more dignified manner. Tall people should never fly about like whirlwinds as you do, and I am sure Roy King would be disgusted if he saw you like that."

"Oh, mamma!" said Regina, testily, "don't preach, I've come to you for advice. Somehow, no matter in what particular way, I have discovered that Roy King, who has seemed to every one to come here for my sake, who certainly did admire me, has been bewitched by that little snake, Bessie Benton. He intends to come here on Thursday to see her, to propose to her, mamma, and I—"

Here Regina threw herself on the sofa and burst into tears.

"I am so fond of him, and he is so rich, and I'm so bitterly disappointed."

"Perhaps it is all your imagination," Regina, said Mrs. Ransen. "How did you learn all that?"

"You had better not ask questions about that, mamma," Regina answered; "please accept it as a fact, and tell me how to prevent Roy King from seeing Bessie next Thursday."

"My dear Bessie shall not see him here next Thursday," said Mrs. Ransen, stepping back to get a better view of the new frizette. "I'll manage that."

That very evening she called Bessie into her room and thus addressed her:

"My dear child, you have been here for nearly six months, and I suppose you are tired of being idle."

"Idle!" Bessie thought, remembering that she had played the part of seamstress, chambermaid and errand-girl, without thanks or wages.

But she said nothing.

"And of course I've been looking out for you," Mrs. Ransen went on, "and you have quite a talent for dressmaking, and Madame Fleure wants a young lady—some intelligent person who can speak French, as you can—and she'll give board and a couple of dollars a week at first, and you'd better go to her; in fact, I've written that for you. I'll take you myself to-morrow. Of course you are only my half-sister's orphan—not a close relation—and—"

"I understand," said Bessie. "I shan't claim relationship, and I am very glad to be independent."

There was some scorn in her tone, but the haughty lady who listened did not perceive it, and meanwhile Bessie was saying to herself:

"Roy King has not written. If he was not in earnest, and was only flirting with the little poor relation of the house, I shall be glad to get away."

As she gazed he got away a few tears fell upon its slender contents. It seemed so hard to think that no one loved her, that they were glad to get rid of her, but she went away next morning cheerfully.

"I sat up nearly all night to finish your lace cape, Regina," she said, on parting from her cousin. "I hope you'll like it, and if any letters come from me please send them to Madame Fleure."

She noticed that neither of them asked her to call.

"They are ashamed of their poor relation," she sighed, never dreaming that Regina could be jealous of her—Regina, whom she thought so stylish and beautiful.

How Regina laughed to herself at the request Bessie had made about letters, and how charmingly Mrs. Ransen received Roy King on Thursday.

"Bessie had gone home," she said, "to her native village, you know. I fancy there is a romantic attraction there—some nice young farmer, I believe."

And Roy King listened and believed. He was very much in love with Bessie, but as he walked away he strove to conquer the feeling. Bessie had given him to understand that she could not like

him, he thought, and had told her aunt to let him know why.

For a few weeks he went nowhere, looked at the moon and sighed. Then he began to call at the Ransens' again.

Meanwhile, Bessie worked hard, cried a little at night, and of course received no letters.

"Who will be an angel and stay a little late to ripe this robe?" Madame Fleure asked, one evening; "it is to be made over with velvet. Ah, how I detest to make over. But Mees Ransen is a good customer, and when she get married, as I suppose to Meestare King, zee I have her work. It is politic to oblige one who will be rich. You, Miss Bessie, you will be so amiable to stay?"

"Oh, yes," replied Bessie. She sighed as she took her cousin's dress in her hands.

So she was to be married to Roy. Well, happiness was given to some people, sorrow to others. It was God's will.

How well she remembered that robe. Regina had worn it, that happy day when she—Bessie, ran to the box often, hoping to find a letter from Roy. What a dream it all seemed. She thought of it as she sat alone in the work room, snipping the stitches.

A letter never came, never would come now, and suddenly, as though fairy-tales were true, there lay a letter in her lap.

The dainty envelope she had dreamed of, her name in Roy's hand, his seal upon it.

"Am I crazy?" she cried. Then she recognized the fact that the envelope had fallen from the pocket of Regina's dress, and that it had been opened, and trembling with excitement, she read it through, kissed it, and hid it in her bosom.

"How cruel of her!" she sobbed. "She had it in her pocket when I passed her on the stairs; I know it now, but Satan has deserted her, and she has left it here for me to find. And at last I can right myself with Roy."

It was hard to sit still and rip Regina's dress after that. But she did it, and only when her task was done did she sit down to answer her letter.

She told Roy nothing of Regina's conduct, and only said that she wished to explain that by accident she had only received his note that day.

But Roy understood the situation. And so, in a few hours, he was at her side whispering words that made her very happy.

And before many weeks were over, Regina, opening a delicate envelope that had just been dropped into the post box, uttered a loud, angry cry, and tossed the cards that it contained toward her mother.

"Impossible! Roy King and Bessie Benton!" the old lady cried. "But what is this written below the names?" She put up her eye-glasses and read aloud:

"The letter that she watched for came at last."—*Familial Story Paper*.

To Keep the House Cool.

Much of the heat of our houses is supplied by the kitchen range, which Bridget keeps red-hot even in the dog days, says the *Ladies Home Journal*. Prevent this by using a gas stove or oil stove as far as possible. Then shut up tight all rooms not in use. Not only should the shutters and windows be closed, but the blinds must be lowered to exclude every ray of light, and the doors locked to prevent the running in and out of the children, who thus admit waves of heated air. Perhaps it would be neither wise nor practicable to hermetically seal all the rooms of a house, but one room, at least, can be so treated—the parlor, and also the dining room between meals; the room selected should be closed early in the morning while the air has some freshness, and before the sun strikes the windows, then it should not be opened until late in the afternoon.

Every house should have an accessible trap-door in its roof, and when this is left open a current of heated air must rise through it and make a general draught over all the house. Awnings should be at all windows and doors, except those to the north. They are great helps in keeping out glare, but they should be chosen of a kind which is readily raised or lowered. After sundown a plentiful watering of your street and pavement, and of all the garden you possess, will cool the air wonderfully.

A clever Frenchman has just been taking the statistics of the charities of Paris, which are immense in volume, and he finds that three-fourths of the colossal sum which they represent is absorbed by professional beggars.

SOFT SHELL CRABS.

PHYSICAL ECCENTRICITIES OF THIS DAUNTY CRUSTACEAN.

Two Methods of Catching Them—Dredging and Dipnetting—How He Moults—His Beautiful Coat of Mail.

It is only about fifteen years since the business of taking soft-shelled crabs and crabs about to shed, for the purpose of shipping them to the big cities in large quantities, was first begun on the Chesapeake by certain enterprising men who were much ridiculed for their actions on this subject and derisively referred to as "crab breeders." The success they made of the enterprise quickly turned scorn to imitation, and during the last season about 4,500,000 "soft shells" and "peelers" were captured by Crisfield fishermen alone, representing a value to them of nearly \$75,000.

It should be explained that a crab approaching the shedding process is variously known among the Chesapeake fishermen as a "peeler," a "shedder," a "buster," or a "comber." A "peeler," "shedder," or "buster," is one whose shell has begun to crack in the process of moulting, while a "comber," a "long comber," or a "short comber," is preparing to cast the shell, which has loosened, but is not yet split.

Upon this phenomenon of moulting the crab fishermen of the Chesapeake chiefly depend for their bread and butter. Inasmuch as Mr. Crab wears his skeleton on his outside, instead of inside, as is usual with animals, he must get out of it at intervals in order to grow bigger. When he is young and developing rapidly he casts his shell every few weeks. Later on the necessity for sacrificing his armor comes less often, and finally, when he has attained his full growth, he gets no more suits of clothes. In fact, like many elderly people who walk on two legs, he seems to consider that it is no longer worth his while to pay any attention to his apparel, being content to go around with a rusty-looking coat, on which seaweeds and various mollusca grow. But, when young, what is more beautiful than this knight in his suit of mail, full-armed and fierce for battle, with claws of a blue that rivals the sky, and tipped with blood-red at each defensive point?

For obvious reasons it is very difficult for the fishermen to secure their crabs at once upon the shedding of their shells, and so the device is adopted of gathering in those which are about to "peel" by the quantity and keeping them in "floats" until they moult. These floats are floating trays twenty feet long, five feet wide and fifteen inches deep, fenced around the edges to prevent the prisoners from getting away. One of them will hold 300 or 400 crabs, and they are visited three or four times daily for the purpose of removing those which have shed. No time is to be lost, because a soft crab grows harder every minute, and twenty-four hours in the water will transform the animal into a "paper shell," while at the end of forty-eight hours it will be unusable.

Thirty firms are engaged in buying, shedding and shipping crabs near Crisfield at present. The fishermen do not send their own crabs to market, preferring to sell them to the regular dealers on the spot, who pack the soft shells for sending off immediately, placing the "peelers" in floats until they are ready. As the fishermen bring in their crabs the dealers count them in the presence of the crabbers, separating the soft crabs, the "short combers," and the "long combers," and paying for them in cash, or, as is more usual, giving a ticket redeemable at any time. Payment, however, has usually been made at the end of each week, at what the dealers choose to say was the market rate, and it is this plan that the crabbers have struck against, demanding that they be remunerated at a fixed price for each day's catch on delivery. As a rule each crabber has a contract to supply one or more dealers with all the crabs he gets. The season for soft crabs begins in May and continues until the middle of October, when the crabbers go to oystering.

Two methods of catching crabs are practised in the vicinity of Crisfield—dredging and dipnetting. The dredge is a net framed with iron, which is hauled over the bottom, being brought to the surface at intervals and emptied of its contents. When using the dip net the boat is poled with an oar slowly around the edges of the marshes and in other shallows, scooping in such victims

as make themselves visible. The daily catch is apt to vary with the weather. When it is stormy the crabs take refuge from disturbance by the waves in deep water. It is estimated that the average fisherman can take from seventy-five to a hundred soft shells and shedders daily during the season. He receives for them from 1 1/2 to two cents each. The opinion prevails about Crisfield that the crabs are most abundant during the night in the shoal waters. Fishermen usually make their best catches before daybreak, and there is much rivalry among the crabbers in making an early start to reach the shallows and put out their dredges for the crabs that have come up during the night to feed and moult.

It is very essential that the fisherman shall be able to determine of hand whether or not the crab is about to shed its shell. The readiness with which a crabber or shipper is able to distinguish in this matter seems little short of marvellous to the uninitiated. Very curious it is to observe how the crab, under ordinary conditions the most pugnacious and aggressive of animals, becomes when bereft of its protective shell a shrinking and non assertive creature, hiding itself away under stones or anywhere that it may find concealment. A soft crab is the prey of all fishes and other living things which it is accustomed to destroy and prey upon when equipped in its accustomed armor proof. Only the grim necessity that says "swell or burst" compels this fighting creature to abandon its coat of mail and submit itself to the misery of helplessness for a time. Fortunately it is not for long, inasmuch as within three or four days the slimy secretion from the body provides Sin Cancer with a fresh and horny panoply with which to defy all wily foes. The exquisite construction of this suit of proof, with its intricacy of joinings and brilliancy of decoration in color, has many a time and oft excited the admiration of philosophers.

Unhappily, among the millions of soft and shedder crabs caught on the Chesapeake there is a very large mortality, owing to the delicate condition of the animals when captured and to the injuries they receive from being taken and handled. In this way nearly twenty per cent. of the entire catch is lost before it can be got to market. To obviate this so far as may be possible great care is exercised in handling the crabs from the net to shipment, and the crates in which they are packed for market are prepared with the utmost pains, the crabs being placed in trays between layers of crushed ice and seaweed. Soft crabs are so little disposed to move that when once packed, with their legs folded up and their bodies placed obliquely so that the water may not run out of their mouths, they remain quiescent and apparently happy, unaware of the cooling frying pan and red nets.—*New York Sun*.

Most Useful of Inventions.

The question of which is the most useful invention, has sometimes been raised and debated in school societies. There is really no question, but it is good mental exercise to think over, and talk on the theme. Printing so far extends beyond and towers above all other inventions which help the world along, that no comparison can be made with it. It stands alone as a mental luminary, and a moral beacon, and there is no work or corner of the known world into which its light has not penetrated. Whenever it shines, civilization springs as a natural growth of the enlightened mind, and produces fruit in harmony with the external conditions. The products may differ in kind and quality, but they all have the certain favor of culture. They are such as the soil is capable of producing under the best cultivation that can possibly be applied to it, and often the tillage is more honored by the product than is the soil. In this sense the art of printing is a creator of new worlds, and the proscriber and benefactor of its own evolutions. Out of the stones in the quarries, metals in the mines, and trees in the forests, men make new creations of forms, and in the same sense men make new creations of mind from types of their own invention, and upon these types a new creation of the world. This is the grand triumph of the art of printing, and in its results it immeasurably overtops all other arts and sciences which embellish and bless mankind.—*British Printer*.

Lord Ashburnham's famous "Textus of the Gospels" is valued at \$50,000 and is on view at the Bookbinders' Exposition in London with the Mazarine Bible and Mary Tudor Prayer-Book.