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In the Interests of the Colored People of the Country.

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The coal beds of China are five times as large as those of Europe, while gold, silver, lead, tin, copper, iron, marble, and petroleum are all found in the greatest abundance. Owing to the prejudice of the people the mines have never been worked to any extent, it being the popular belief in China that if these mines are opened thousands of demons and spirits imprisoned in the earth would come forth and fill the country with war and suffering.

It will not be long before preparations for taking the eleventh census will be in order, and yet there are four volumes of the tenth census that have not been published yet. This is due in part to the failure of Congress to make necessary appropriation, but the reason why Congress has refused to do this is because of the great delay of the statistician in preparing the volumes for the press, which, it is held, has destroyed their usefulness and made it not worth while to publish them.

The mortality of the globe has recently been completed as follows: Per minute, sixty-seven; per day, 97,790; per year, 35,639,835. The number of births per year is about 38,792,000; and per day about 100,000. This makes about three births more per minute than deaths. If the population of the globe goes on increasing at this rate of about a million and a quarter per year, mankind will be obliged to soon hang out the sign of "Standing Room Only!"

It is a curious fact that persons far from robust often outlive those of extraordinary strength and hardihood. Upon this subject the *Canada Health Journal* says that the vital parts of the system must be well balanced in order to attain long life, and that excessive strength in one part is a source of danger. Hence an over-developed muscular system invites dissolution, because it is a continuous strain on the less powerful organs, and finally wears them out.

There are some facts connected with the world's wheat production, as set forth by the Department of Agriculture, which are equally interesting and instructive. The total product is 2,031,323,285 bushels; the supply is for a population of a thousand millions, or two bushels per capita. But India, with her two hundred million of inhabitants, is a prominent wheat-exporting country, while raising only 258,000,000 bushels. The United States are the largest growers of wheat of any country. In 1866 we raised 457,000,000 bushels. The average yield per acre in 1886 was, say twelve bushels. In Great Britain it was a trifle under twenty-seven bushels. This is a matter for consideration. Our farmers might grow on the same area as much again wheat with greater profit. France came next to us in production. Russia raises rye as the staple bread food of her people. The wheat fields of this country have followed the "breaking up" of the new territory. The cost has been slight, but the land has in many cases been badly impoverished. An exchange believes there will eventually be a return to the cultivation of this cereal in the Middle and Northern States, but under a higher method. In the meantime, the agriculture of the West, North and Southwest will become more diversified, while on the Pacific slope irrigation will make fertile the now barren soil.

## WHO CAN TELL?

Who can tell when the winter is coming?  
Who can tell when the summer is going?  
We go to sleep when the asters are blooming,  
We wake, and we find it snowing.

Who can tell when the winter is going?  
Who can tell when the summer is coming?  
We go to sleep when the tempests are blowing,  
We wake, and the bees are humming.

—Ernest Whitney, in the Century.

## BY TELEPHONE.

I was the happiest man in the city as I folded and laid away in my pocket-book a letter from the dearest girl in the world, and jumped on the horse-car, en route for my office!

Some months had passed since I saw my Agnes, for the first time, at a dinner at the Peytons'. I had frequently met Miss Georgie Peyton in society, and had been several times invited to her receptions, so I was not surprised to receive one day an invitation to dine with her "informally," to meet a young lady from Aiken, S. C. Of course I presented myself at this informal dinner in full evening dress, where I met some other gentlemen in similar attire—Clarkson was one of them—and a few young ladies, and was introduced to my Agnes. If I could only make you see her as she appeared to me that night—so fresh and blooming: the blue of her clear, peaceful eyes; the delicious curve of her delicate lips! But enough that then and there I yielded, and became her ardent adorer.

From the first she distinguished me with her favor. I was her escort to concert and opera. I was allowed to claim the best dances; they were always my flowers she carried, and, finally, before she returned to Aiken, I was her accepted lover!

The year had flown swiftly, and now a brilliant prospect seemed to open before me. My firm was about to establish a branch department in another part of the city, and proposed to make one of their clerks a junior partner and manager of the new concern. I had been the longest in their employ, and had reason to think I was regarded with favor by "Old Gruff"—as Mr. Gruffland, the senior partner, was called—and he would be the one to make the promotion and settle the question of salary.

Indeed, for some weeks I had seen that he was working the management into my hands, so I felt justified in writing to Agnes, urging our immediate union. The dear girl consented, and in the letter received that morning she told me she was coming again to make a long visit at the Peytons' to "do some shopping." Entrancing words! What did they not imply? And that "if all went well"—if I got the position, of course—"we might be married before very long!" I was the happiest man in the world, as I folded the dear little letter away, resolving, if it was in the power of man to earn promotion, I would make myself indispensable to my employers.

Well, she came. There was a demure but delightful meeting at the station and an enchanting twenty minutes until I delivered her to Miss Georgie's arms at the Peytons' door.

Then followed days of devotion to work, followed by evenings of unalloyed bliss. I say "unalloyed," but there was one drawback. The Peyton family were very considerate, Miss Georgie especially so, but my darling Agnes was haunted with the fear that they would think her visit to them was only to enjoy my society, and was constantly suggesting that we should "join the family in the sitting-room." Old Mrs. Peyton was a bore, but a mild one—paterfamilias an unmitigated one; Miss Georgie was benignant, but slightly tiresome. There was only one other member of the family, a pretty little fellow named Ralph, but the girls had taken to calling him "Raphael," from some fancied resemblance to one of the Sistine cherubs. He seemed a quiet little chap, with a sweet innocence of expression and demeanor, who posed a good deal of the time with his cheek on his hand, after the manner of the cherub aforesaid. He was devoted to Agnes, and hung round her more than was pleasant, for which I occasionally snubbed him rather severely, but she always interceded for him. "He was such a little fellow—and then he was so lovely! was he not one's ideal of a boy?"

Agnes had been in the city a few weeks when, one morning, the telephone bell in our office rang sharply. This was of frequent occurrence, and Clarkson's desk was stationed near it to save time in answering the call. The rest of us scarcely looked up as the familiar "hullo!" was shouted, or the concluding: "All right! I'll tell Mr. Gruffland. Good-by!" But this morning Clarkson turned to me with: "This is for you, Dixon!" Accordingly I shouted "hullo!" and in return heard Miss Georgie's voice:

"Is that you, Mr. Dixon? Agnes is here, and wants to try to speak to you." Then I heard her giving directions. "Stand a little nearer; press this close to your ear—so."

"Good-morning," I called. In return I heard a giggle and my Agnes's voice exclaiming: Oh, oh! It tickles my ear! Then more directions from Miss Peyton, and at last the sweetest voice in the world began in as nearly as might be a stentorian roar: "Is that really you, Harry? Isn't this perfectly sweet? Are you sure they can't hear in the office, Georgie?"

"Well," from Georgie. "I should say they certainly could, if you shout like that."

"Harry," in a half whisper, "if you are sure it's really you, and that no one else can hear, I want to tell you something. Do you remember that queer Miss Blake in Aiken? Do you hear me, Harry?"

"Yes," I replied. Then another little giggle. "Isn't it too funny? Do you know, Harry, now that I see how to use it, I'm going to talk to you ever so often. Won't it be fun? But where was I? Dear me, how stupid! Oh, I know, Miss Blake. Well, she has just sent me the loveliest—"

Here Clarkson muttered, "Old Gruff coming," and knowing that he would ask an explanation of my receiving the telephone messages, I was obliged to abruptly interrupt: "I must go now"—I had almost said "my darling." "Tell me the rest this evening."

"But, Harry!" I heard in a grievous little voice; but Mr. Gruffland's footsteps were too near, and I hung up the receiver upside down, and hurried back to my desk. All day I worked in nervous desperation. Would she try to resume the conversation? Every time the bell rang I glanced at Clarkson. The thought that it might be her voice whispering in his great red ear covered me with cold perspiration. The fear that in Mr. Gruffland's hearing I might be called upon to answer some of her chatter was still worse. I made up my mind that I must make Agnes understand that very night that she could not amuse herself in that way, and I did so, gently but resolutely. I described Clarkson's ear, and I took some liberties with it. It would be just like the wretch to receive all her little confidences, and retail them for the amusement of the clerks.

Old Gruff was an ogre, capable of dismissing me without warning, if I did not attend every minute to my business. Our hopes of happiness depended upon his good pleasure. Miss Peyton was cool and dignified. I suppose she knew I was exaggerating. Agnes looked hurt.

Her sweet lips trembled a little, and her eyes were suspiciously dim. I longed to have her alone for a little while to comfort her, as I knew I could; but there was no chance, for, though Miss Georgie relented sufficiently to go upstairs to write an "important letter," Raphael was there, resting his elbow on the table, and looking up at Agnes with an expression of deep pity in his beautiful but sleepy dark eyes.

And yet the next day the same thing occurred. Mr. Gruffland was there, and looked up from his papers with a glance of disapproval as I took Clarkson's place at the telephone. My "Hullo" was rather savage.

"Oh Harry! Do forgive me! Indeed, indeed I felt so sorry last night, and wanted to tell you so; but, you, you see, Ralph was there. I'm all alone now. Oh Harry, won't you forgive me?"

"Of course," I returned, feeling Gruff's eyes burning unpleasantly on the nape of my neck.

"Oh Harry dear, don't talk like that to me. Do say you love me!" Was there ever such a child? I felt like a cold-blooded wretch, as I hurriedly replied:

"All right. I'll come up as soon as I can. Very busy now. Good-by."

I felt, rather than heard, a little sob at the other end of the wire. Gruff said nothing, but I was doomed to another miserable day. I managed to ask Clarkson, if I was called again, to say I could not attend, and five times I heard him give this message, and each time he turned away with a mighty grin. What might not Agnes have said to him?

Of course, I hurried to the Peyton's, determined to see her alone. She came running into the hall to meet me, bright and loving, but the annoyances of the day had made me cross, and I said curtly:

"Really, Agnes, it is very strange you don't understand that a man cannot take his business hours to talk with his friends. After all I said last night, I must say I was surprised to be called up again to-day!"

Agnes stopped abruptly, and said, with dignity:

"I do not understand you!" "Why, my dear little girl," I said, sobered by the change in her manner,

"I do not mean to be cross, but how could I talk to you about my affection or forgiveness through the telephone, with all those fellows listening, to say nothing of old Gruff?"

"But I have not touched the telephone to-day, Harry!" "What!" I exclaimed. "Georgie!" called Agnes, stepping back to the sitting-room, and I followed to tell the story.

"It is very strange," said Miss Peyton, but, of course, it is some mistake. The lines are out of order or crossed in some way. But mamma and Agnes and I have been out shopping all day, and we lunched down town, so we can prove an alibi."

It certainly was very strange, but we all concluded that it might be as Miss Georgie suggested, and the pater at once began to spin long yarns about queer messages, till at last I coaxed Agnes into the conservatory alone, and the close of the evening was all the brighter for the shadow which it began. The dear girl sympathized with me, and forgave my impatience, and was so sweet, that before I knew I found myself telling her the one event of my life I had determined to keep secret—the entanglement I once had with Lucretia Chase. Of course she had been the most to blame, and Agnes thought her very horrid and forward, so I had to admit that Lucretia had misunderstood some things I had said to her when a mere boy, and then Agnes asked me if I really, really loved her best. Ah me! what a happy evening that was!

And the next day the telephone annoyances began, but I felt sure of my ground, and told Clarkson he could refuse to listen. Imagine my surprise when he turned to me with a clever imitation of Agnes's voice, saying: "She is quite sure Harry will come when he knows she wants to talk to him about 'Cretia.'"

I was thunderstruck! Lucretia Chase lived in Vermont; I was morally sure no one in the city knew of her existence—no one but Agnes! I rushed to the instrument. It was the clear girl's voice. How could any one have known that Lucretia possessed some idiotic lines I had once written her—any one but Agnes? Yet now I heard them repeated:

"Oh, Cretia! fairest valentine!  
Wilt thou accept this hand of mine?  
A smaller gift my soul forbids;  
But ten's the number of my kids!"

I jerked away in anger and surprise, only to meet old Gruff's grim glance.

"If this thing goes on, Mr. Dixon, it might be well for you and Mr. Clarkson to change desks!"

I knew what that implied, and my heart sank to my boots.

"I do not understand it myself," I replied. "I assure you, sir, that I am exceedingly annoyed. I will not answer it again."

"I will myself, sir," he growled, and I went back to my desk to upset my ink-bottle, to make mistakes in my accounts, and torture myself with the conviction that since no one but Agnes could have sent the message, she was teasing me, without realizing the fatal consequences to our happiness. And all day Mr. Gruffland would answer that confounded telephone. That some of the messages were meant for me I could tell, and that they must be utter nonsense I could conjecture from his occasional comments: "By jimminy Johnson!" is a remarkable expression for a young lady, Mr. Dixon."

It would be too long to tell the story of these days in detail. Sometimes there would be respite, and then the nonsense would begin again. It was larks for Clarkson and the rest, but to me it seemed as if the bell of the telephone was ringing the knell of all my bright hopes. Agnes assured me of her innocence, and Miss Peyton was ready with explanations; they had been shopping, or calling, or practicing duets. But I could see that a coolness had come between Agnes and me. She feared that I doubted her, and I—what could I think? Again and again the messages referred to what I had said to her when quite alone. Could she have repeated my confidences?

At the office preparations for the new business were being hurried on, and not one word had been said to me of promotion. To crown all, Agnes informed me one evening that she was going to shorten her visit; she had heard of friends going directly to Aiken, and thought it best to secure their escort. I passed a wretched evening, but left, determined to make a desperate effort to clear the mystery.

Agnes had told me that they were all to be out the next day, so I begged off at the office, reached the house at ten, and

persuading the servant that I wanted to rest, and would let myself out when I was ready, I managed to conceal myself in a closet in the hall, where I waited four mortal hours.

At last I was rewarded. A light step came through the hall, a chair was drawn to the telephone, and a clear voice, wonderfully like Agnes's called:

"Please connect with Gruffland & Co.!"

Waiting only long enough to let him actually begin conversation in his usual style, I rushed out, and catching the culprit by the arm, bestowed a resounding box upon the ear of the astonished Mr. Raphael. The little imp! This was his revenge for his well-deserved snubs. I have no doubt he had heard every word of my conversations with Agnes.

Of course the Peytons were distressed and apologetic, and Agnes was persuaded not to hurry away, and old Gruff relented, and I got the promotion in due time; but I never could endure the sight of that cherubic boy. I verily believe that the box I bestowed upon him was his only punishment, and I rejoice to think that it was such a stinger!

If this story has a moral it is a short one. The more innocent and guileless a boy looks, the less is he to be trusted.—G. Linton, in *Domestic Monthly*.

## Among the "Thousand Islands."

Among the Islands one lives upon the water. By a certain tacit understanding between the islanders, every resident has a recognized right to explore every other resident's petty domain. No obtrusive notice-boards flaunt before the innocent face of heaven the anti-social and wholly un-called-for information that trespassers will be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law. On the contrary, the usual formula painted on the neat little placard beside the tiny landing-stages assumes the optative rather than the imperative mood: "Parties landing on this island are requested to kindly abstain from damaging the ferns and flowers." The fact is, all the islanders are there as summer visitors only; each possesses but a tiny realm of his own, often beautifully varied, but always readily exhausted of its native interest; and the whole charm of the spot would evaporate entirely if proprietors insisted with ingrained British churlishness upon their legal right to shut themselves in from landless humanity with the effectual protest of a high brick wall. Accordingly, every body always lands freely, no man hindering, upon everybody else's private island; and the day is mostly passed in wandering (afloat) in a delicious, aimless, listless fashion down tiny channels between an islet, stopping here to pick a rare wild flower from a cliff on the side, and halting there to explore and climb some jetting rock whose peak promises a wider view over all the surrounding little archipelagoes.—*Popular Science Monthly*.

## Eucalyptus and Ague.

What has been the effect of planting the eucalyptus? Professor Tommasi-Crudeli has never attributed to these trees the least influence upon fever. On the contrary he says that in the southern hemisphere, where vegetation is more richly developed than in Europe, there are numberless forests of eucalyptus where, as Professor Liversidge, of the University of Sydney, has declared, malaria obtains to a very great extent. He also mentions the futile efforts to promote health made at the instigation of the French Trappists at the Three Fountains, where among vast plantations of eucalyptus, all the inmates of an agricultural penitentiary instituted in the neighborhood of the Abbey were subject to fevers, more or less severe. Not an inhabitant of the Three Fountains escaped the malaria in 1882, during which, in all the rest of the Roman campaign the health was excellent, and the percentage of fevers very small.—*Sanitary Era*.

Professor Charles E. Bessey, of Nebraska, writes: "Men and women of the country, I want to make an appeal to you in behalf of the country boy. Give him the opportunity to become acquainted with the things around him. Put the study of soils, plants, animals, etc., into your public schools. Ask your school teachers to give instruction of this kind. Demand that they know enough to give such instruction in the right way."

The whole world seems to be hunting for natural gas or oil. While many towns in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, and other States are seriously considering the matter of securing natural gas, English capitalists are preparing to develop the oil prospects in Upper Burma, where in many places signs of oil are visible on the surface.

## POPULAR SCIENCE.

A leaf of the giant water lily (*Victoria regia*) has been known to measure 24 feet 9½ inches in circumference, its weight being nearly 14 pounds. One of the flowers was 4 feet 2 inches in circumference, with petals 9 inches in length, and weighed 3½ pounds.

A German mathematician has calculated that the snowfall of Central Germany from December 19 to 23 weighed no less than 10,000,000 tons in the area between 50 degrees and 52½ degrees north latitude, and between 7 degrees and 18 degrees east longitude.

An apparatus of iron and glass, in which a pressure of 1,000 atmospheres can be developed for the purpose of studying the influence of great pressure on animal life, has been exhibited to biologists in France. With it deep sea animals can be observed under their natural compression.

Besides its unusual temperature and rainfall observations, the New England Meteorological Society has on hand for this season two special investigations: the thunder storms in New England; and the sea breeze on the Massachusetts coast. The former inquiry is in its third year, the last is now undertaken for the first time.

The main factor in the production of consumption is believed by Prof. Hirsch to be overcrowding and bad hygiene. Damp when conjoined with frequent oscillations of temperature predisposes to the disease; but humidity of the air is less important than dampness of soil. Occupation is extremely important, but mainly indirectly, as tending to good or bad hygienic conditions.

The alkaloid solanine, from the fruit of the potato plant, is being employed to relieve acute pain and as a narcotic, in the place of morphine. It is said that its administration in large doses does not occasion the nausea and vomiting which occurs frequently from the use of this latter. The therapeutic dose is from three-fourths of a grain to four grains, and even 7½ grains have been given without any unpleasant effects.

A Russian physician, Dr. S. Th. Stein, reports such remarkable experiments, in which he has induced cataract in the eyes of young porpoises by subjecting them to the continuous vibrations of a tuning-fork for twelve to twenty-four hours, or for a much less time when the animals were deprived of the power of hearing. The cataract soon disappeared on removing the exciting cause, and could be renewed. The phenomenon has not been satisfactorily explained.

From statistics collected in parts of the German Empire, G. Hellman finds that the danger from lightning, though generally increasing, is diminishing in certain districts, the risk becoming less the more closely houses are clustered. The character of the soil has great influence. Letting one represent the danger from lightning on calcareous ground, two will give it upon marly, nine upon sandy, and twenty-two upon clayey soil. It is a curious fact, yet not explained, that oak is struck much more frequently than other trees, so that if the danger for beeches be one, that for pines is fifteen and for oaks fifty-four.

## A Cheap Incubator.

"Chicken raising has become a science," writes a Washington correspondent to the *Cincinnati Enquirer*. "I was at Keedysville last week, and the proprietor of the Union Hotel there showed me his incubator. He puts 125 eggs in a box, which cost him to make it \$2 or \$3. Three times a day he takes a tea-cup, filled with boiling water, and pours it in the middle of this box, which is surrounded on all sides by galvanized iron or zinc, filled with sawdust, or some non-conductor. The influence of the warm water is thus shed down upon the eggs, which are turned every day. He gets about eighty chickens from the eggs, which start to picking up a living at once, and are much in advance of those got by the old process of the eggs being hatched out by the mother."

Lieutenant Dudley Mills, of the British army, in a recent expedition to Shantung, China, discovered the sculptured stones near Chiansing, which he was the first foreigner to visit. The inscriptions and figures are cut on the walls of tombs, and are mainly devoted to the illustration of moral precepts. They are said to be seventeen centuries old, and the first description of them was given by a Chinese scholar of the twelfth century.

It is stated that the money given by the women of the Presbyterian Church in the United States during the past sixteen years foots up to \$2,150,000—representing the entire support of more than 200 women missionaries, 200 native Bible readers, and more than 160 schools.