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THE BANNER,
Rutherfordton, N. C.

THE CHIMNEY'S SONG.
BY BRET HARTE.
Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the woman stopped as the babe she tossed,
And thought of the one she had long since lost,
And said, as her tears dripped back the forehead,
"I hate the wind in the chimney."
Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the child, as he sat on his knees alone,
"Tis some witch that is cleaving the night air
through—
"Tis a fairy trumpet that just now blew,
And we fear the wind in the chimney."
Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the man, as he sat on his knees alone,
And to himself "It will surely blow,
And I'll stop the leak in the chimney."
Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
But the poor husband and child, all three,
And he said "It is God's own harmony,
This wind that sings in the chimney."

PICKLED LIMES.
A Boarding-School Frolic.
L.—PROVINCIAL MISTRESS.
"Who likes pickled limes?" asked one.
"O, I do!" "And I!" "And I!"
shouted about a dozen of the other girls.
"All right! We'll each contribute a few pennies, and have a regular feast of pickled limes and stick-candy."
"That's so!" cried No. 2. "Won't we enjoy them, though! My mouth waters to think of it."
These young girls were all pupils in a very aristocratic boarding-school not many miles away, where everything was conducted on system, and the young ladies were expected to turn out perfect models of intellectual womanhood. Some did, but alas! for human hopes, very many graduated with but one fixed idea, namely: that boarding-school was a place in which to have fun, and to torment the teachers to the utmost of their ability.
Miss Woodward was a fine principal and a very discerning woman, but the girls would get the best of her occasionally, in spite of her keen eyes and ears; and just now, after a whole month of goodness, they were positively pining for mischief, and had ransacked their brains for something wicked enough to check the whole community.
The morning before, while their worthy principal was taking her beauty-sleep, some one had climbed up to the veranda, and just before her window had placed a most ridiculous caricature of her august self, adorned with her precious brown ringlets, and a set of teeth that were supposed to have been a profound secret. How they got out of her top drawer on to that figure will always remain a mystery to Miss Woodward. But there they were; so the poor lady was obliged to pull the object in, and stifle her indignation as best she could, because 'twould never do to have the story spread abroad.
The young Professor of Languages had been tormented to such a degree that, had it not been for an attachment to the very ringleader of all the mischief, he would certainly have thrown up his situation for more peaceful haunts; but, being hopelessly in love, he bore it all, to the great disgust of the girls, who daily expected some explosion from him. Nothing was said, and, as Miss Woodward had kept quiet about the figure, they were quite melancholy, and felt that nothing but great disobedience, in some form, would compensate for their disappointment.
One of the rules of the school strictly enjoined the putting out of all the lights by 9:30 o'clock, and the putting of one's self quietly to bed; but here were these girls this afternoon planning for pickled limes and a good time in the evening, after all the good people of the house should be in their beds.
It was decided that, after tea, Nettie Cutler, the very essence of fun and the leader in all the mischief, should feign illness and start for her room, but should steal out the back gate and down into the town for the goodies. So while the others were in the dining hall, Nettie, having been excused on "account of a severe sick headache," made her escape and did all that was desired of her—and more. She bought all kinds of dainties the town afforded, then stole in and went up stairs with her large bundle, unseen.
At 10 o'clock, when they were supposed to be sweetly sleeping, fourteen of the fifty decorous young women in the establishment were perched on Nettie's bed, sucking pickled limes and discussing more mischief.
"If we could only do something to exasperate Prof. Sterns, I should be satisfied," said Grace Darnley, who disliked the professor for something the same reason as the fox detested the grapes.
They all sat busily thinking for about a minute, nothing being heard but the smack of lips over limes and candy. Then, "Oh, girls, I have an idea!" from Grace.

All mouths suspended motion.
"You know Mr. Lam Woodward thinks the professor is perfection itself, and, although she is about twenty years older than he, thinks that those ringlets and

her bewitching manner have surely captivated him. Well, we'll send her a touching love-letter, and sign his name; won't that be fun, though?"
The other girls were astonished at such a vigorous movement, because, notwithstanding all their mischief, they thoroughly respected the young man, and did not wish to disgrace themselves in his eyes. Nettie, although knowing nothing of his feelings for her, was quite tenderly disposed toward him, and did not care to see him intrapped, and perhaps led into marriage. They all demurred some time, but were finally overruled by Grace.
"He won't mind it a bit," said she; "and think how mad 'twill make the 'old'un, when she discovers that we are aware of her passion for him!"
That was sufficient; they all detected her—so agreed.
A week from that night was to occur a monthly social circle given in the school, when the young ladies of the town outside were invited, and also a few irreproachable young men, who afforded great amusement for the girls by their meek and lowly appearance. It was decided that in the letter a place and time of meeting should be appointed. Time—nine and one-half o'clock, social night; place—Miss Woodward's private parlor.
The pickled limes and candy having by this time all disappeared, the party broke up with a parting injunction from Grace to think up an awful letter for the old lady.

II.—EXECUTING MISTRESS.
The next few days were busy ones. Every spare moment was occupied by the girls in writing and comparing love-letters; but finally one was composed which it was decided could not be improved upon. It spoke of the overwhelming passion the author had for Miss W., and his utter inability to keep it longer to himself. "Having fancied, from several slight advances, that she was not entirely indifferent to him," he had ventured to address these lines to her. He knew there was some difference in their ages, but if she would overlook that, he would make her a faithful, devoted husband. If she could return his love, would she meet him in her private parlor the next evening, while the others were making merry above stairs? And could he ask her to make no sign until that time, as, in case of a refusal, he would like to think of her as his own, for a while, at least.
Grace had been spending hours trying to imitate his handwriting, in which she succeeded to some degree; but, being a love-letter, the lady would scarcely think of the writing simply of the supposed writer.
One afternoon, two days before social night, while the principal was out taking her "constitutional," the letter was carried to her room and placed where she would surely see it; then the girls waited with some fear and trembling for the result.
At the tea-table, that night, Miss Woodward was late, and came in with a peculiar expression of triumph on her face that amused the girls, even in their anxiety.
That she had read the letter was evident, for occasionally she would glance down to the other table so happy, where Prof. Sterns sat unconsciously eating, that had the poor fellow been really an anxious lover, it would have lightened his heart considerably. But he, being ignorant of the plot against his peace of mind, was serenely talking with one of the other teachers; so Miss Woodward restrained her raptures until the appointed meeting should take place.
That night the same fourteen conspirators gathered again in Nettie's room to talk over matters.
"Oh, dear," said pretty little Alice Grant, "I wish we'd never had anything to do with that old letter! I know something horrid will turn up."
"That's so!" said Nettie; "and I would not have Prof. Sterns know that I was in the scrape for the world!"
They all echoed the sentiment except Grace, and even she did not seem so desirous of mischief as formerly; but 'twas done, and they must await the consequences as best they could.

III.—THE CONSEQUENCES.
The next evening, while the young professor was arranging his toilet for the affair, a note was handed him by one of the servants requesting his presence in the principal's parlor at half-past nine. Supposing it to be some business connected with school duties, he thought little about the matter; now this was unknown to any but Grace. She had decided to make the little plot more complicated.
"I'll serve him right if he does get into a scrape," thought she. "Perhaps it will teach him to treat some of the younger girls with a little more politeness."
About 8 o'clock they all came to the long drawing rooms, looking as pretty as new-blown roses. The rooms were filled with young people, and of course they straightway proceeded to enjoy themselves.
Miss Woodward was arrayed in "spot-

less white," and looked the very ancient maiden she was, notwithstanding her attempts to appear extremely youthful.
Prof. Sterns was enjoying himself heartily, and never so much as looked her way. "But," thought she, "tis because he is fearful lest the girls should joke him. But they'll hear it to-morrow, for I shall tell them myself. After so many years of waiting, I wish to be the first to spread the news of my engagement."
As the clock sounded the half hour after 9, Miss Woodward skipped youthfully out of the room down into her own parlor, and a few moments later Prof. Sterns also left the room, followed by many anxious eyes until out of sight. As he entered her room, the principal gave a little shriek of what was meant to be joy, and rushed into his arms.
"Miss Woodward?" exclaimed the astonished man, trying to shake her off. "Pray explain yourself! What has alarmed you?"
"O! Edward, this moment is too much for me! Can I believe my own eyes?" still clinging to him like grim death.
The professor could scarcely believe his senses, but, giving her a decided shove, sat her down on the sofa.
"Now, madam, please explain yourself! You wished to see me on business, and here I am! What is wanted of me?"
"Why, Edward," very tenderly, "there is no need for such secrecy; no one is within hearing but ourselves, and you know, love, you wished an answer to your note. It is here; I have loved you from the moment I saw you, and am willing to be your wife. The sooner, the better;" and once more she made a rush for his coat-collar.
To say that the young fellow was astonished is but a feeble expression—he was simply dumbfounded. And the note! What could it all mean? But, having forcibly seated the too-loving woman again, he said:
"Let me see the letter!"
With a look of great consternation on her face, she produced it, and watched him closely as he read.
"Miss Woodward!" after reading slowly from beginning to end, "believe me, I never saw this before."
"What! You didn't write it?" shrieked the almost-frantic woman; "then who did? Who has dared to make such a fool of me? Who has dared do it, I say?"
Now if the professor guessed, he said nothing, but tried to calm the poor woman, for he pitied her grief and rage.
But 'twas in vain! In her raving, she dropped off her beautiful curls, and that was the "straw which broke the camel's back;" she fell to the floor in a swoon. The young man, thinking she would be better without him, took his leave, and sent one of the servants to her assistance; then went to his own apartments to think it over.
That Nettie Cutler was at the bottom of the mischief, he was certain, and he suffered some sharp pangs to think she cared so little for his feelings and those of her teacher as to do such a thing. After much meditation on the subject, the poor fellow took himself to bed with a heavy heart.
Miss Woodward was, with some difficulty, tucked away for the night, and her feelings were pitiable indeed. She meant to be kind to the girls, and to think they should do such an act (for by this time she had thought of some of her pupils as the authors) troubled her greatly. Then, how should she ever meet that fellow again? But, while thinking over these things, she gradually fell asleep and forgot all her woes.
The mischief-makers themselves were almost as uneasy as their victims. Not much was said among them, and they retired early; but none of them rested well, and Nettie cried herself to sleep.
The next morning, as Nettie was going down the corridor, who should she meet but the professor himself going up. She attempted to pass with a simple "Good-morning," but he stopped.
"Miss Cutler, I could scarcely believe that you would be guilty of such a deed as you performed at Miss Woodward's and my expense. I have lost respect for you!"
"Oh! Professor! I—we—really didn't mean to do any harm!" sobbed Nettie; "and we thought you'd know 'twas all in fun!"
"Yes! It must be remarkably funny to hurt the feelings of your principal as you have done," he said, sternly, and passed on.
Nettie stood gazing after him with fearful eyes. "If we hadn't had those horrid old pickled limes to eat, we should never have thought of it. Oh! he will never look at me again! I wish I was dead and buried!"
But, bless you! he did; he couldn't help it. The girls went to their principal, confessed their crime, and were punished according to the deed; but they were not expelled, to their great relief; and Miss Woodward recovered from her grief and disappointment in time.
The professor, after making friends with Miss Nettie, and discovering that she really was not the leader for this time, found another professorship not

far away, and resigned his to a much older man, who at last accounts was intending to make the principal and himself one.
After Nettie became Mrs. Sterns, she would often say, laughingly, that pickled limes were not good food for young women—they encouraged mischief.

AMATEUR ECONOMY.
"My dear fellow," said Lavender, "it's all very nice to talk about economizing and keeping a rigid account of expenses and that sort of thing, but I've tried it. Two weeks ago I stopped in on my way home Saturday night, and I bought just the gayest little Russia leather, cream-laid account book you ever saw, and a silver pencil so much it I said to my wife after supper: 'My dear, it seems to me it costs a lot of money to keep house.'
"She sighed and said: 'I know it does, Lavvy, but I'm sure I can't help it. I'm just as economical as I can be. I don't spend half as much for candy as you do for cigars.'
"I never take any notice of personalities, so I sailed right ahead. 'I believe, my dear, that if we were to keep a strict account of everything we spend we could tell just where to cut down. I've bought you a little account book, and every Monday morning I'll give you some money and you can set it down on one side, and then during the week you can set down on the other side everything you spend, and then on Saturday night we can go over it and see just where the money goes and how we can boil things down a little.'
"Well, sir, she was just delighted—thought it was a first rate plan, and the pocket account book was legally—regular David Copperfield and Deba business. Well, sir, the next Saturday night we got through supper and she brought out that account book as proud as possible, and handed it over for inspection. On one side was 'Received from Lavvy \$50.' That's all right! Then I looked on the other page, and what do you think was there? 'Spent it all!' That I laughed, and of course she cried, and we gave up the account-book racket on the spot by mutual consent. Yes, sir, I've been there, and I know what domestic economy means, I tell you. Let's have a cigar."

HE WON THE BET.
A wag, who was anxious to test how much confidence a certain friend had in him, took a standard dollar, and, coating it with quicksilver, passed it to the other's store. In less than half an hour the dollar, whose peculiar appearance had aroused distrust, was brought back with:
"Here, Billy, you have given me a bogus dollar, and I came to get it redeemed."
"It isn't a bogus dollar at all; it's as good as any money ever coined in America," replied the wag. "Can't you believe me? No man has a right to call money counterfeit until he subjects it to a fire assay."
The other said that under ordinary circumstances he would believe his friend, but when it came to trying to palm off lead dollars on him for silver ones it was another matter, and offered to bet \$10 that the dollar was bogus. The bet was accepted and the dollar turned over to an assayer who pronounced it a standard silver \$10 fine.
"Well," said the loser, "if you set up the oysters and we'll go down to the store and get the money."
The winner, whose conscience began to smite him, spent exactly \$10 in champagne and oysters, and then walked down to the store. The assayer handed him a \$10 bill, which he shoved into his pocket only to find a few hours later that it was counterfeit. He went back to expostulate, but the loser insisted that it was genuine, and added significantly: "If you have any doubts as to the correctness of my statement you had better subject it to a fire assay."
The smart Aleck waddled off blaspheming, and is now trying to figure up how much he is ahead on his trick.

HINTS TO HORSEMEN.
It seems, says the *Société Américaine*, to be a characteristic failing of most coachmen to lay the lash on a horse that exhibits fear at an object in the street or beside of the road. Mr. Bergh, the President of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, says in the organ of that society, what every reasoning being ought to know, and that is never to whip a horse for becoming frightened at any object by the roadside, for if he sees a stump, a log or a heap of tan bark in the road, and while he is eyeing it carefully, and about to pass it, you strike him with the whip, it is the log, or stump, or the tanbark that is hurting him, in his way of reasoning, and the next time he will be more frightened. Give him time to smell all of these objects, and use the bridle to assist you in bringing him carefully to these objects of fear.

REV. DR. JOHN HALL, of New York, says there is more positive Christian life in New England to-day than ever there was before.

THE LAWYER'S FEE.
There is a good story which illustrates the advantage of being skilled in reading faces. An Englishman who could speak no language but his own boasted that he had traveled through Europe without a courier, and had not been cheated one farthing. He was a good physiognomist, and filled his pockets with the small coins of the country in which he was traveling. Whenever called to make a payment to a man, he would begin by slowly dropping into the man's hand several of these coins, looking him keenly in the face. The moment he saw by the gleaming of the eye or twitching of the mouth, that he had dropped the amount of the bill, he stopped.
A cotton speculator who once paid a fee several times greater than his lawyer expected was not so shrewd a man. Soon after the fall of Vicksburg, he became involved with the authorities, who charged him with fraud. His cotton, which was worth a large sum of money, being seized, he sought the aid of Mr. Geiger, an influential Ohio lawyer, then visiting the city.
The lawyer in one day satisfied the authorities that there was no fraud, and secured the release of the cotton. The speculator was gratified, and informed Mr. Geiger that he would see him the next morning after he had finished loading his cotton on a steambot.
The lawyer retired, but not to sleep. He was debating with himself what he should charge his client. The amount involved was large, the speculator would make a handsome fortune, and Geiger thought that \$500 would not be an unreasonable fee for his services. But in the morning the sun seemed so great for one day's work that he feared to ask it.
In this frame of mind, while walking toward the steamer which was to carry off the cotton, he met the speculator.
"Well, Mr. Geiger, that was a good day's work you did for me yesterday," said the client, taking from his pocket a large roll of bank notes.
Holding up one knee, he thereon counted out four \$500 bills, and, without looking up at the lawyer, asked, "Is that enough?"
Geiger looked on speechless for a moment, but recovering himself said, with the habitual coolness of a lawyer: "I guess you had better lay on another."

THE MOTHER OF A FAMILY OF SEVENTY.
Everybody in Pittsfield knows the Tatro tribe, but few know their remarkable history. High up on Washington mountain, in a small old farm-house, Isaac Tatro has his home. Isaac is 63 years old, and while neither a model farmer nor a model man, has a model wife. Born in Canada and reared by prudent parents, Isaac wisely remained unmarried until he was 32 years old. Then he took to his wife a widow, eight years his junior, a Mrs. Lydia Doras, one of a family of sixteen children by the name of Shepherd. Lydia had three Doras children, and Isaac groined not a little because of the size of his family. But the poor man dreamed not of what was in store for him! Thirty-one years have passed since then, and up to the present time Mrs. Tatro has presented her husband with twenty-two children, making twenty-five by including the offspring of her first marriage. Of those was one pair of twins; two died in infancy; seven died after attaining their growth; and sixteen are living, the oldest about 40, and the youngest a babe. Mrs. Tatro is said to be 68 years old. Of her children ten were boys and fifteen girls, and all having thriving families. The grandchildren and great-grandchildren at present number about fifty. This mother of more than seventy souls is a stalwart French woman, who peddles berries and mats from house to house at Pittsfield, and looks as hearty and strong as do any of her numerous daughters.—*Springfield (Mass.) Union.*

MUSIC AND MILLINERY.
"Good morning, Fogg," said Brown, briskly. "How did you like the opera last night?" "Oh, so-so," answered Fogg, moodily; "nothing striking about it excepting the drum-sticks." "Come, come," returned Brown, "be serious. Didn't you think that bravura passage with pizzicato and appoggiatura embellishments was lovely?" "Guess I didn't see it," answered Fogg, as before; "there was only feathers and flowers and things on the one in front of me." "What are you talking about, man?" exclaimed Brown. "That girl's hat, of course. Wasn't you?" "Good morning," said Brown, as he turned the corner.

Farriz has been hunting up the pedigree of Dr. Tanner, the celebrated hungry man, and finds he is of very ancient lineage. The forty-third verse of chapter nine, Acts of Apostles, reads: "And it came to pass that he tarried many days with one Simon A. Tanner."—*Bur.ington Hawk.*

THE RIGHTS OF THE PRESS.
In deciding the case of Edward Crane against the Boston *Advertiser* in the United States Circuit Court at Boston, Judge Lowell overruled the plaintiff's demurrer in these terms: For the purpose of deciding this demurrer it must be assumed that the plaintiff had conceived and begun to carry out a plan for making a railroad from Boston to New York by the consolidation of certain shorter lines and otherwise, and that it was a part of his plan to obtain control of the New York and New England Company by electing Directors favorable to his scheme; that the publication of the article complained of interfered with this plan to his prejudice, and that the statements of the article were not true, but were published in good faith, without express malice, and were, upon reasonable inquiry by the defendants, believed by them to be true. The contention then is, on the part of the defendants, that the subject-matter is one in which the public has an interest, and that, in discussing a subject of that sort, a public speaker or writer is not bound at his peril to see that his statements are true, but has a qualified privilege, as it has been called, in respect to such matters. The modern doctrine, as shown by the cases cited for the defendants, appears to be that the public has a right to discuss in good faith the public conduct and qualifications of a public man, such as a Judge, an Ambassador, etc., with more freedom than they can take with a private matter, or with the private conduct of any one. In such discussions they are not held to prove the exact truth of their statements, and the soundness of their inferences, provided that they are not actuated by express malice, or that there is reasonable ground for their statements or inferences, all of which is for the jury. Some of the affairs of a railroad company are public and some are private. For instance, the honesty of a clerk or servant in the office of the company is a matter for the clerk and the company only. The safety of a bridge on the line is a subject of public moment. The public, in this sense, is a number of persons who are or will be interested, and yet who are at present unascertainable. All the future passengers on the road are the public in respect to the safety of the bridge, and as they cannot be pointed out you may discuss the construction of the bridge in public, though you thereby reflect upon the character of the builder. If this definition of the public is a sound one, the Commonwealth, considered as a stockholder, is not the public, for its interests are intrusted to certain officers, who are easily ascertainable; nor would the interests of the shareholders become a public matter merely by reason of their number, unless it were proved that it would be virtually impossible to reach them individually. If, therefore, the question were merely of the effect of the scheme upon the shares of the New York and New England Railroad Company, a corporation already chartered and organized, I should doubt somewhat whether it would be of a public nature. But, inasmuch as the project was one which affected a long line of road, and as yet only partly built, and the consolidation of several companies, it assumes public importance. Perhaps the right of legislative interference may be taken as a fair test of the right of public discussion, since they both depend upon the same condition. The Legislature cannot interfere in the purely private affairs of a company, but it may control such of them as affect the public. It cannot be doubted, I apprehend, that the Legislatures of Massachusetts and Connecticut would have power to permit, or to prohibit, or to modify a scheme such as is now in question. It interests the public, consisting of those who are to be asked to take shares in it and those through whose lands it will pass, or whose business will be helped or hindered by it, that such a line should be well, and built and carried through. For this reason the character of the plaintiff as a constructor and manager of railroads seems to me to be open to public discussion when he comes forward with so great and important a project, affecting many interests beside the shareholders of one road, and that, therefore, the defendants, or any other persons, have the qualified privilege which attaches to the discussion of public affairs. The distinction is that when a railroad is to be built, or a company to build it is to be chartered, the question whether it shall be authorized is a public one; when the company is organized and the stock is issued, anything which merely affects the value of the stock is private. The demurrer to the answer is overruled.

"I HAVE little about me, but that little you will share," said a Dublin Queen's Counsel to an ugly customer who, with a menacing air, asked for alms at night in a lonely suburb. "This revolver," said the Q. C., as he drew it from his pocket, "has six chambers. I will give you three—" Just then the Q. C. found himself alone.

PLEASANTRIES.
A cool swindle: Collecting the ice bill twice.
Inquired: Where is the best place to learn to sing? The desert.
"I OCCASIONALLY drop into poetry," as the man said when he fell into the editorial waste-basket.
The difference between a hungry man and a glutton is: "One longs to eat and the other eats too long."
It was a good thing for the whalers when Jonah blubbered in the marine monster that took him in. That blubber had made the fortune of thousands.
SOMEBODY has figured out that Vanderbilt's income would allow him to, in one day, visit 8,000 circuses, eat 10,000 pounds of peanuts, and drink 5,000 glasses of lemonade.
The late Thomas Hood, driving in the country one day, observed a notice beside a fence, "Beware the Dog." There not being any signs of a dog, Hood wrote on the board, "War be the Dog?"
BROWN says he hates inquisitive people, but has a qualified privilege, as it has been called, in respect to such matters. The modern doctrine, as shown by the cases cited for the defendants, appears to be that the public has a right to discuss in good faith the public conduct and qualifications of a public man, such as a Judge, an Ambassador, etc., with more freedom than they can take with a private matter, or with the private conduct of any one. In such discussions they are not held to prove the exact truth of their statements, and the soundness of their inferences, provided that they are not actuated by express malice, or that there is reasonable ground for their statements or inferences, all of which is for the jury. Some of the affairs of a railroad company are public and some are private. For instance, the honesty of a clerk or servant in the office of the company is a matter for the clerk and the company only. The safety of a bridge on the line is a subject of public moment. The public, in this sense, is a number of persons who are or will be interested, and yet who are at present unascertainable. All the future passengers on the road are the public in respect to the safety of the bridge, and as they cannot be pointed out you may discuss the construction of the bridge in public, though you thereby reflect upon the character of the builder. If this definition of the public is a sound one, the Commonwealth, considered as a stockholder, is not the public, for its interests are intrusted to certain officers, who are easily ascertainable; nor would the interests of the shareholders become a public matter merely by reason of their number, unless it were proved that it would be virtually impossible to reach them individually. If, therefore, the question were merely of the effect of the scheme upon the shares of the New York and New England Railroad Company, a corporation already chartered and organized, I should doubt somewhat whether it would be of a public nature. But, inasmuch as the project was one which affected a long line of road, and as yet only partly built, and the consolidation of several companies, it assumes public importance. Perhaps the right of legislative interference may be taken as a fair test of the right of public discussion, since they both depend upon the same condition. The Legislature cannot interfere in the purely private affairs of a company, but it may control such of them as affect the public. It cannot be doubted, I apprehend, that the Legislatures of Massachusetts and Connecticut would have power to permit, or to prohibit, or to modify a scheme such as is now in question. It interests the public, consisting of those who are to be asked to take shares in it and those through whose lands it will pass, or whose business will be helped or hindered by it, that such a line should be well, and built and carried through. For this reason the character of the plaintiff as a constructor and manager of railroads seems to me to be open to public discussion when he comes forward with so great and important a project, affecting many interests beside the shareholders of one road, and that, therefore, the defendants, or any other persons, have the qualified privilege which attaches to the discussion of public affairs. The distinction is that when a railroad is to be built, or a company to build it is to be chartered, the question whether it shall be authorized is a public one; when the company is organized and the stock is issued, anything which merely affects the value of the stock is private. The demurrer to the answer is overruled.

NEURALGIA AS A WARNING.
One of the London medical journals declares that the great prevalence of neuralgia—or what commonly goes by that name—should be regarded as a warning indicative of a low condition of health, which must necessarily render its subjects peculiarly susceptible to the invasion of diseases of an aggressive type. It is always essential that the vital forces should be vigorous, and the nerve power especially in full development; but neuralgia indicates a low depressed state of vitality—a poor and weak state—and should be promptly placed under treatment.

M. DUPONCEAU announces in Les Mondes that he has in his yard two bars of iron planted in the earth, to each of which is fixed a conductor of coated copper wire, terminating in his receiver, apparently a telephonic. These, he says, never fail to give notice twelve or fifteen hours in advance of every storm which bursts over the town.

HOW LARGE HATS WERE INTRODUCED.
A long-earred hat went to buy a hat. Said the hatter, "I've none that will do, unless with the ears I shorten your ears, which might be unpleasant to you." The long-earred hat was so much at that. He flew over lands and seas, till in Paris (renowned for its fashions) he found a hat that he wore with great ease.

HESE lies a man whose "an" was won by blowing in an empty gun. No sooner in the gun he blew than on the golden stairs he flew. And met the girl, on heaven's green, who lit the fire with her own. He also saw stride a stock. The man who tampered with a mule, He also saw—'twas mighty sore—The man who whistled "Finisfore"—And further on the minor cove Who thrust his powder in the stove.

THE CHIMNEY'S SONG.
BY BRET HARTE.
Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the woman stopped as the babe she tossed,
And thought of the one she had long since lost,
And said, as her tears dripped back the forehead,
"I hate the wind in the chimney."
Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the child, as he sat on his knees alone,
"Tis some witch that is cleaving the night air
through—
"Tis a fairy trumpet that just now blew,
And we fear the wind in the chimney."
Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
And the man, as he sat on his knees alone,
And to himself "It will surely blow,
And I'll stop the leak in the chimney."
Over the chimney the night wind sang,
And chanted a melody no one knew;
But the poor husband and child, all three,
And he said "It is God's own harmony,
This wind that sings in the chimney."

PICKLED LIMES.
A Boarding-School Frolic.
L.—PROVINCIAL MISTRESS.
"Who likes pickled limes?" asked one.
"O, I do!" "And I!" "And I!"
shouted about a dozen of the other girls.
"All right! We'll each contribute a few pennies, and have a regular feast of pickled limes and stick-candy."
"That's so!" cried No. 2. "Won't we enjoy them, though! My mouth waters to think of it."
These young girls were all pupils in a very aristocratic boarding-school not many miles away, where everything was conducted on system, and the young ladies were expected to turn out perfect models of intellectual womanhood. Some did, but alas! for human hopes, very many graduated with but one fixed idea, namely: that boarding-school was a place in which to have fun, and to torment the teachers to the utmost of their ability.
Miss Woodward was a fine principal and a very discerning woman, but the girls would get the best of her occasionally, in spite of her keen eyes and ears; and just now, after a whole month of goodness, they were positively pining for mischief, and had ransacked their brains for something wicked enough to check the whole community.
The morning before, while their worthy principal was taking her beauty-sleep, some one had climbed up to the veranda, and just before her window had placed a most ridiculous caricature of her august self, adorned with her precious brown ringlets, and a set of teeth that were supposed to have been a profound secret. How they got out of her top drawer on to that figure will always remain a mystery to Miss Woodward. But there they were; so the poor lady was obliged to pull the object in, and stifle her indignation as best she could, because 'twould never do to have the story spread abroad.
The young Professor of Languages had been tormented to such a degree that, had it not been for an attachment to the very ringleader of all the mischief, he would certainly have thrown up his situation for more peaceful haunts; but, being hopelessly in love, he bore it all, to the great disgust of the girls, who daily expected some explosion from him. Nothing was said, and, as Miss Woodward had kept quiet about the figure, they were quite melancholy, and felt that nothing but great disobedience, in some form, would compensate for their disappointment.
One of the rules of the school strictly enjoined the putting out of all the lights by 9:30 o'clock, and the putting of one's self quietly to bed; but here were these girls this afternoon planning for pickled limes and a good time in the evening, after all the good people of the house should be in their beds.
It was decided that, after tea, Nettie Cutler, the very essence of fun and the leader in all the mischief, should feign illness and start for her room, but should steal out the back gate and down into the town for the goodies. So while the others were in the dining hall, Nettie, having been excused on "account of a severe sick headache," made her escape and did all that was desired of her—and more. She bought all kinds of dainties the town afforded, then stole in and went up stairs with her large bundle, unseen.
At 10 o'clock, when they were supposed to be sweetly sleeping, fourteen of the fifty decorous young women in the establishment were perched on Nettie's bed, sucking pickled limes and discussing more mischief.
"If we could only do something to exasperate Prof. Sterns, I should be satisfied," said Grace Darnley, who disliked the professor for something the same reason as the fox detested the grapes.
They all sat busily thinking for about a minute, nothing being heard but the smack of lips over limes and candy. Then, "Oh, girls, I have an idea!" from Grace.

All mouths suspended motion.
"You know Mr. Lam Woodward thinks the professor is perfection itself, and, although she is about twenty years older than he, thinks that those ringlets and

her bewitching manner have surely captivated him. Well, we'll send her a touching love-letter, and sign his name; won't that be fun, though?"
The other girls were astonished at such a vigorous movement, because, notwithstanding all their mischief, they thoroughly respected the young man, and did not wish to disgrace themselves in his eyes. Nettie, although knowing nothing of his feelings for her, was quite tenderly disposed toward him, and did not care to see him intrapped, and perhaps led into marriage. They all demurred some time, but were finally overruled by Grace.
"He won't mind it a bit," said she; "and think how mad 'twill make the 'old'un, when she discovers that we are aware of her passion for him!"
That was sufficient; they all detected her—so agreed.
A week from that night was to occur a monthly social circle given in the school, when the young ladies of the town outside were invited, and also a few irreproachable young men, who afforded great amusement for the girls by their meek and lowly appearance. It was decided that in the letter a place and time of meeting should be appointed. Time—nine and one-half o'clock, social night; place—Miss Woodward's private parlor.
The pickled limes and candy having by this time all disappeared, the party broke up with a parting injunction from Grace to think up an awful letter for the old lady.

II.—EXECUTING MISTRESS.
The next few days were busy ones. Every spare moment was occupied by the girls in writing and comparing love-letters; but finally one was composed which it was decided could not be improved upon. It spoke of the overwhelming passion the author had for Miss W., and his utter inability to keep it longer to himself. "Having fancied, from several slight advances, that she was not entirely indifferent to him," he had ventured to address these lines to her. He knew there was some difference in their ages, but if she would overlook that, he would make her a faithful, devoted husband. If she could return his love, would she meet him in her private parlor the next evening, while the others were making merry above stairs? And could he ask her to make no sign until that time, as, in case of a refusal, he would like to think of her as his own, for a while, at least.
Grace had been spending hours trying to imitate his handwriting, in which she succeeded to some degree; but, being a love-letter, the lady would scarcely think of the writing simply of the supposed writer.
One afternoon, two days before social night, while the principal was out taking her "constitutional," the letter was carried to her room and placed where she would surely see it; then the girls waited with some fear and trembling for the result.
At the tea-table, that night, Miss Woodward was late, and came in with a peculiar expression of triumph on her face that amused the girls, even in their anxiety.
That she had read the letter was evident, for occasionally she would glance down to the other table so happy, where Prof. Sterns sat unconsciously eating, that had the poor fellow been really an anxious lover, it would have lightened his heart considerably. But he, being ignorant of the plot against his peace of mind, was serenely talking with one of the other teachers; so Miss Woodward restrained her raptures until the appointed meeting should take place.
That night the same fourteen conspirators gathered again in Nettie's room to talk over matters.
"Oh, dear," said pretty little Alice Grant, "I wish we'd never had anything to do with that old letter! I know something horrid will turn up."
"That's so!" said Nettie; "and I would not have Prof. Sterns know that I was in the scrape for the world!"
They all echoed the sentiment except Grace, and even she did not seem so desirous of mischief as formerly; but 'twas done, and they must await the consequences as best they could.

III.—THE CONSEQUENCES.
The next evening, while the young professor was arranging his toilet for the affair, a note was handed him by one of the servants requesting his presence in the principal's parlor at half-past nine. Supposing it to be some business connected with school duties, he thought little about the matter; now this was unknown to any but Grace. She had decided to make the little plot more complicated.
"I'll serve him right if he does get into a scrape," thought she. "Perhaps it will teach him to treat some of the younger girls with a little more politeness."
About 8 o'clock they all came to the long drawing rooms, looking as pretty as new-blown roses. The rooms were filled with young people, and of course they straightway proceeded to enjoy themselves.
The professor, after making friends with Miss Nettie, and discovering that she really was not the leader for this time, found another professorship not