

THE PINE KNOT.

SOUTHERN PINES, N. C.

The New York *Commercial* observes. "It almost seems a pity now that we did not get into war with Mexico. An officer of our army, sent by General Mackenzie to investigate the army of Mexico, reports a standing force of 40,000 men, divided between four great districts. Ten new batteries of field guns have of late years been imported from France. There is a factory for small arms near the capital. The officers come from the National Military School at Chapultepec, and the rank and file are the lowest of the peons.

Ignorance, violation of all sanitary principles, miserable poverty, the extreme rigor of winter, and neglect by drunken parents are said to be some of the principal reasons why out of 1,000 children born in Russia scarcely 423 will reach their twentieth birthday. Statistics show that 345 out of each 1,000 die in the first five years. The Russian Government is seeking means to diminish this frightful infant mortality, but with little hope of speedy success, since the main causes can only be eradicated by the progressive education and reformation of successive generations of the people.

A Nevada newspaper calmly alleges that some months ago W. J. Marsh, of Fort Churchill, built a fence around one of his meadows along the bank of the river, and for posts used young cottonwood and willow trees. A gate was made in the fence and an extra heavy post was put in the ground for the gate to swing on. It was noticed that a number of the green posts were sending out branches, but no attention was paid to this fact. After cutting the first crop of alfalfa in this field some cattle were turned into the inclosure through another gate, away from the river. They were soon found outside of the fence and a man was sent to find out where the fence was broken. He had found the fence all right, but upon coming to the lower gate found it raised about five feet in the air—high enough for cattle to go under. The post to which the gate was hinged had grown that much and carried the gate with it.

Stevens, the indomitable correspondent of an American magazine, has been obliged to give up his trip through Afghanistan, but he is still determined to get around the world on his wheel. Finding that the Russians would not allow him to carry out his original plan of proceeding by Merv to the Oxus, he applied to Sir West Ridgeway for permission to join the camp of the boundary commission, with the view of finding his way thence to India. Sir West Ridgeway replied that the plan was impracticable. Thereupon Stevens went from Meshed southward to Birgan, where he succeeded in crossing the Afghan frontier and reaching Farrah. Thence he hoped to go to Buetta by way of Candahar, but the Governor detained him and eventually sent him to Herat. He was kept some days outside Herat, and was then sent under escort to the Persian frontier. The attempt to ride across Afghanistan was thus baffled. Stevens now proposes to wheel himself to Lahore and to Calcutta, and then go by sea to Canton, to ride to Northern China on his bicycle, and finally to take ship for Japan and America.

Glaciers, the ice-rivers of lofty mountains, have been found to move downward from one or two inches to over fifty a day, from ten to twenty inches a day in summer being most common. The rate in winter is about half that of summer.

MORPHIA'S SLAVES.

PEOPLE WHO HAVE FALLEN VICTIMS TO THE DRUG.

The Lady at the Banquet—How Persons Acquire a Taste for Morphine—Its Exhilarating Effect—Ultimate Result.

Amos J. Cummings says in a New York letter: One day recently I attended a dinner at Delmonico's. The repast was truly recherche. It was given by a sedate gentleman, prior to his departure for Europe. Eight ladies and ten of the male sex were his guests. All were in full dress. The table was banked with rare roses, and tropical palms and ferns embowered the windows. The bills of fare were printed on satin and were exquisitely illuminated. The boutonnières were marvels of beauty. A string band of surpassing excellence filled the air with piquant music. At my right sat a lady richly dressed and of remarkable beauty. Her husband was on her right. He was a Brooklyn physician. His wife wore a V corsage and tight-fitting lace sleeves. Her features were regular, her nostrils thin and firmly chiseled, and her face had the charm of extreme delicacy. Her eyes were large and liquid, and her complexion exquisite. Her words were uttered as sweetly and distinctly as the notes of an Andraes canary. Her wit flashed like the scintillations of a diamond, and she was the life of the southern end of the table. Everybody was charmed by her intellectual radiance. The conversation eddied suddenly to another quarter. The Brooklyn lady essayed a remark that died away as though frozen on her lips. I looked at her in astonishment. All her *elan* had gone. The luster had fled from her eyes. The roseate lids were partially closed, and her face was as pale as alabaster. She seemed to be going into a trance. A peal of merriment at the other end of the table had attracted the attention of the guests. The husband saw my gaze riveted upon his wife. Leaning toward me, he murmured: "May I beg your good offices for a moment? Oblige me and be so kind as to steady my wife."

He was as cool and collected as though in his own drawing room. I took the lady by the arm and placed my hand on her waist, fancying that he wished me to assist her in leaving the table. But no. He had drawn from the inside pocket of his dress coat a small hypodermic syringe. He drove its point between the meshes of the lace into her white arm. In an instant the syringe had done its work. Within thirty seconds the large eyes were again sparkling with pleasure. The rich color returned to the cheeks, and the fair creature was again smiling upon the sea of merriment. She had more than regained her *chic* and gaiety. The husband drew a sigh of relief when he saw that he had revived her without attracting attention. His wife was as witty as ever, and she drank copious draughts of wine, apparently utterly impervious to its effects.

The explanation vouchsafed to me later in the evening was hardly necessary. The lady was a slave to the morphine habit. It was first acquired when the drug was prescribed in sickness. The taste for morphine thus developed, the lady for a long time supplied herself secretly from her husband's medical laboratory. He discovered it too late to check her desire for the drug. He tried to shut off the source of her supplies, but she outwitted him by patronizing pharmacies in New York. "It's of no use," he said bitterly. "The habit is confirmed, and death alone will stop it."

Every drug store in the city is patronized more or less by the victims of morphine. When the habit becomes settled, the weak mortal grows crafty and artful. The drug is obtained at pharmacists far away from his residence. He places the powder on the palm of his hand, and laps it secretly. A drug store on Hudson street has two regular customers. Both come from above Fiftieth street, the buyers fancying that they are entirely unknown. The morphine is put up in what are known among druggists as "drachm vials." Each vial contains sixty grains. One of the Hudson street customers consumes two of these vials a week. They are always labeled "poison." The law limits sales to these vials. Any one taking the contents of two vials a week is totally unfit for work. It takes two or three years for the habit to become chronic. After that a cure is utterly impossible. The cost of a vial is 35 cents. Nothing exhilarates the mind and the body like morphine. Liquor

thickens the utterance and stupifies the brain. Morphine, on the contrary, frees the tongue and makes its accent as distinct as the notes of a well-played banjo. It makes the brain bright but insouciant. A veteran morphine eater is proof against stimulants. Whisky and brandy do not intoxicate him. He defies all drunkenness except the intoxication produced by the drug. His muscles gradually become filled with the poison. Frequently pins and needles can be thrust into his flesh without producing any pain. When thoroughly saturated with morphine, the victim either dies or attains an extraordinary size. No matter how thin he may be, he begins to grow fat and in some cases is said to die of suffocation. The mind is usually shattered in advance of the body.

These few facts I have learned from a druggist, who in a lifetime has known many victims. He says that the fate of the morphine slave, however, is not more shocking than that of the confirmed taker of chloroform. The taste for this aesthetic is becoming as great as that for morphine. Dissipation and nervous tension both produce sleepless nights. To woo sleep chloroform is used. "Hundreds in our large cities," said the druggist, "saturate napkins and handkerchiefs with chloroform at night and fall asleep in breathing the fumes. The habit produces a palpitation of the heart, and in time the victim is sure to be found dead in bed."

While I was conversing with this druggist a pale but handsome young woman came in with a prescription. She seemed downcast and melancholy, but quickly brightened up when the prescription was filled. As she passed out with a hasty step the proprietor tossed me the memorandum. "It is for morphine," he said, "and it is undoubtedly a bogus prescription. But the poor girl is happy by this time." There are probably 1,200 drug stores in this city. On an average each one sells a drachm vial of morphine a day. This would indicate at least 5,000 habitual morphine takers in New York alone. Nearly 4,000 of these are women. Druggists will agree that this estimate is under rather than over reality. Place chloroform in the same crevice, and we have 8,000 miserable beings traveling the road to an insane death.

Gunning For Hares.

A Norwich (Conn.) letter to the New York *Sun* says: The Fisher's Island Gun Club and the Westminster Kennel Club of New York stocked Fisher's Island with long-legged English hares a year or more ago, and the hares thrived wonderfully. There are no trees on the island, and they find coverts in the almost impenetrable shrub corpses in the hollows between the hills. Thence they emerge into the cultivated fields and gobble up the young crops. When a man comes near them they gallop across the hills, bounding like kangaroos over obstructions, and get into their retreats. It is as difficult to catch one as it is to overtake the wind.

They have become a great nuisance to the farmers, and the city sportsmen have come up from New York to hunt them. The club men have brought along dogs whose legs are longer even than the hares' are, and daily there is wild sport on the island. The hounds penetrate into the thickets and drive the game out, and the hunters shoot the hares while they are careering through the air in their astonishing jumps. It is not easy to hit a hare in full spring, the performance combining the fine points of both bird shooting and fox hunting, and the sportsmen waste a great many shots on the Atlantic Ocean. But as the hares cannot get off the island, the chances of one once started for escape are limited.

Some big hares have been taken, the largest weighing eighteen pounds. The sportsmen hunt in the fall for prizes, the first premium being \$1,000 to the man who bags the greatest number of hares. The dog that does the best field work gets \$250.

The Best Race.

You may talk of the pleasure of yachting,
And of sailing before a stiff breeze,
But corn he had rather be husking,
With a bushel between his two knees.
For if 'mid the ears there's a red one,
He noisily jumps to his feet.
While way through the barn she goes flying,
With her hair streaming wild in retreat.

Then what are the pleasures of sailing
To this race through the keen autumn air,
And what prizes that yachtsmen may conquer

With the one that he wins may compare?
In grace lovely woman's no rival,
As she skims from the oncoming kiss,
And the lad that's her venturesome captor
Has reached the fair haven of bliss.

—Boston Budget

Clay-Eaters.

I have seen "sandhillers" in certain parts of North and South Carolina, and some within ten miles of Columbia, while engaged in eating their dinner, and have observed them consume, with evident relish, large quantities of clay, and what's more, I have joined in their frugal repast and partaken of some of the stuff myself, says a North Carolina doctor in the *Atlanta Constitution*. It is nearly tasteless, but some of the clay-eating epicures profess to enjoy it because of a delicate flavor it possesses. It is white, devoid of grit and not unlike the kaolin of which plates and saucers are made. There is nothing disagreeable about this clay and it may be taken into the stomach with impunity. It is not injurious as an article of diet, indeed many contend that it insures longevity and wards off several diseases. There are well authenticated instances of wonderful longevity among "clay-eaters," and it is well understood by such of the faculty as have studied the subject that none of the "sandhillers" ever suffer with indigestion or dyspepsia, and I have never known one to die of consumption; in fact, foolish as it may seem, I am constrained to believe that this strange habit exempts the "clay-eaters" from many of the ailments to which the rest of the human family are heirs. Of course there is nothing very succulent or nutritious about a slice of clay, but it certainly allays the gnawings of hunger. This is done by distending the walls of the stomach. It is not to be expected that a clay diet will take entirely the place of bread and meat, but it does this to a certain extent.

In my country practice, which occasionally carries me out into the sandhills (occasionally I say, for although the sandhillers are the sickliest looking, most cadaverous and woe-be-gone beings in the world, they are the healthiest), I have good opportunities to study their peculiar habits. They can subsist on exceedingly limited quantities of meat; in fact they get very little to eat, and that fat bacon, about thrice a week. They are not lazy, but decidedly shiftless. They are troubled with few wants, however, and these are supplied easily.

"Do they eat only one sort of clay?"
"As a general thing, yes," was the reply, "but sometimes their table is garnished by a kind of yellowish marl, somewhat scarce, which they consume with a keen relish. It is said to taste sweet, and they use it as a dessert. They, however, draw the line at red clay. This not even their ironclad stomachs can digest. 'Don't you eat red clay?' I asked a gawky old fellow. 'No, surree,' was his animated response: 'I have occasionally had er brick in my hat, but I'll be blamed ef I hanker after making my bowels a brickyard.'"

Origin of Some First Families of the Metropolis.

A New York letter to the *Cincinnati Enquirer* says: The genealogical record of some of the first families is threatened by an exposure which may make some wince, but no true American will be ashamed of an humble origin. In fact there is but little room for boasting among the New York millionaires. Peter Gilsey began as a journeyman pianoforte maker, and the founder of Cooper institute first appears in the directory as "Peter Cooper, machinist." The Brevoorts were market gardeners. Alderman Carman, who left a round million, was a house carpenter. A. T. Stewart began by teaching a small school. The millionaire Vermilyes were the sons of a sexton of a downtown church. Cyrus W. Field first opened trade as a dealer in rags. Lawyer Hummel began as an errand boy in the same office in which he is now partner. William Libbey, formerly of A. T. Stewart & Co., and now a retired millionaire, was the son of a Newburgh carpenter.

The first Astor that came to America was a butcher and had a stall in Fly market. Rufus Story, who is now the millionaire veteran of Front street, began here as a hard-worked boy in a cheap grocery. Jay Gould was in early life a clerk in a country store, and felt that he was doing remarkably well when he peddled maps in Delaware county. Reader, it will not do to dispute the day of small things. Why, even the Spoffords were shoemakers, the Stevenses kept tavern, and the Wolfes can be traced back to a gin-mill. Let the genealogical fiend do his worst, he will still find that wealth, like charity, covers a multitude of sins.

The island of Chiloe, on the southwest coast of South America, has 290 days of cold rain and sleet in the year. Yet catarrhs and pulmonary troubles are said to be very rare among the native dwellers in this remarkable climate.