

THE CHRONICLE.

WILKESBORO, N. C.

Helena, Montana, claims to be the richest city of its population in the world.

Li Hung Chang says there are millions of people in China that do not know that China had a war with Japan.

In discussing W. W. Astor's chance of espousing a royal princess a European paper recalls the fact that the founder of the Duke of Fife's family was a Scotch peddler, Adam Duff by name.

Ten thousand employes under the War Department have been classified in the civil service in accordance with the order of President Cleveland of May 6 last, which extended the operations of the law to practically all Government employes.

Argentina means to get ahead of the European Powers in taking possession of the South Shetland Islands on the edge of the Antarctic continent. An expedition will be sent out for the purpose this year. The islands may possibly be of some use as a sealing and whaling station.

Conservative Yale College is invulnerable to the attacks of women, its doors being still closed against them; the faculty have, however, made a concession in their favor, and have provided for a teachers' course. Teachers, both male and female, can enroll their names in the university catalogue.

It seems that the X-rays, generally regarded as so beneficent in action, are to be pressed into the service of mutilating as well as of mending humanity. A London dealer offers for sale cartridges tested by the obliging Roentgen rays to make sure that they have been carefully loaded. To such multifarious use does busy-brained man put every new invention as soon as elaborated!

Mischievous persons in the West, whose idea of fun consisted in frightening timid people by circulating false predictions of approaching tornadoes, have learned that the issue of counterfeit weather predictions is punishable under Federal law as is the issue of counterfeit money. The counterfeit of Government weather reports is a misdemeanor whose crime subjects him to a fine of \$500 or imprisonment for ninety days, or to both fine and imprisonment. The law was intended to prevent speculators from affecting the prices of agricultural products on the exchanges by spreading spurious prognostications of the weather. It has been invoked for the first time to suppress the wild Western "humorists."

Lord Russell's visit to America reminds the London Chronicle of an ancient story. It says that during Lord Russell's previous tour in this country with Lord Coleridge he came in contact with many members of the bar, including Ex-Senator W. M. Everts. It was while walking with Mr. Everts one day along the banks of a stream that his attention was called to a point at which Washington, according to a tradition, had thrown a dollar right across. The water was wide, and Lord Russell looked doubtful. "You know a dollar went further in those days than it goes now," the American lawyer blandly insinuated. "Ah," said Lord Russell, quite equal to the occasion, "and it may have been easy enough to Washington; it is well known that he threw a sovereign across the Atlantic."

Thrift and melody do not seem to go together, exclaims Harper's Weekly. The author of "Kathleen Maureen," who died a few weeks ago, had his share of prosperity during his career, but came to want long before the end of it. A few weeks after, died Percy Gaunt, joint author with Charles Hoyt of that famous and familiar song, "The Bowery," and he too outlived his means of support. Yet "The Bowery" was immensely profitable to some one, and was reported to have paid its authors \$37,000; and Gaunt wrote a great number of other songs, some of which were popular. But probably with song-writers, as with persons in other lines of industry, it is one thing to make money and another to keep it. The obituarists, who dwell at generous length upon Croch, told one amazing story about him—that he had been married four times, and had been the parent of thirty-three children. There was certainly no thrift about that, but the story was printed without affidavits, and possibly it was not true.

LOVE'S WAY.

Where Love builds his nest, dear,
Where his steps incline,
Rosy sat or west, dear,
That sweet way be thine.
That sweet way be thine,
Where dwells the May—
That sweet way be thine.

Where Love reaps the blooms, dear,
Where his bright stars shine,
Sheltered from the glooms there,
That sweet way be thine.
That sweet way be thine,
Until God's day—
That sweet way be thine.

And still for thee, the light, dear,
Though never light be mine;
And thank God for the night, dear,
If morning's rose be thine.
And Love's dear way,
Until God's day—
And Love's dear way be thine.

—Frank L. Stanton, in Atlanta Constitution.

MY OWN DECEASE.



ALTHOUGH undoubtedly I had been very ill, I am by no means certain of my facts at about this time; so whether I was the victim of a lively imagination, or of a hypnotic trance, I really cannot say.

Any way, one morning I seemed to be conscious that I was talking with a demon, who sat by my bedside. He was a very pleasant sort of fellow and not bad looking, but somehow I knew he was a demon.

"Would you like to hear what they are saying about you and go to your own funeral?" he asked pleasantly.

"People generally do attend that ceremony personally," I suggested; and after a moment's reflection, I asked, "Am I dead, then?"

"Of course. Did you not know it?" "If I did it must have escaped my memory," I replied imperturbably.

"Well, you are dead, but I will give you the remarkable power of going among your family in the spirit and invisible to them."

"That's very kind of you, but I've heard you people seldom perform services for nothing. What recompense do you require?"

"None. The penalty you will pay will be sufficient reward to me."

"What penalty?" "To see yourself as others see you, and hear what they say of you."

My friend then dematerialized himself into thin air, and the next moment I was gliding noiselessly down the stairs.

I should explain to you that I am an orphan, without parents, but a member of a large family; sisters, brothers, cousins and all the rest of it. I happen to have more money than any of the others, and have hitherto been much sought after on account of many excellent personal qualities. I am not married. Well, the fact is, I am of a rather retiring disposition, and not having yet come across a girl who would help me out with the preliminaries, I had not found courage to take the fatal plunge.

My eldest sister, Priscilla, had therefore been keeping house for me.

I easily passed through the closed parlor door without opening it, which was very convenient, and found myself, unseen by them, in the midst of relatives from different parts of the country. They were waiting breakfast for some important person who had not yet made his appearance. I was foolish enough to think it might be myself and sat down to my customary seat at the foot of the table; but, of course, no one saw me. I had forgotten for the moment that I was a dematerialized spirit. Soon, however, the door opened, and the important individual entered the apartment. It was my eldest brother Tom.

Now I began to understand. He was my executor and residuary legatee. He represented me, the late Crawley Slowquicker, Esq., deceased, hence all the court and deference paid to him. This was absurd, you know, for a bigger fool never lived.

Well, he made straight for my chair, and sat down where I was sitting! This was stepping into my shoes with a vengeance—actually usurping the same place occupied by my disembodied spirit. Tom was a bulky fellow, and I felt the affront. Besides, wishing better to watch the proceedings, I got up quickly and sat behind my chair.

Two things especially attracted my attention, and somewhat shocked me. In the first place, Priscilla's presiding seemed much more lavish than under my regime, and in the second I was struck by the happiness and gaiety of the whole company. This was calculated to take my fatuity down a few pegs; for I had fondly imagined that my death would plunge my entire family in the uttermost depths of despair. But it hadn't!

"I never like going into black," Priscilla was saying in her even tones to Aunt Gwen; "it's so very unlucky."

"I don't mind the change at all," said Aunt Gwen; "the color just suits me, you know. But I really can't tell what orders to give, not knowing how I am provided for."

"That's as good as asking," said Tom, with one of his horrible laughs, which I used to consider so hearty. "A nod's as good as a wink to a blind horse. I suppose the regular thing is to read the will after the funeral; but as it's all among ourselves it does not matter, and I'll read it to all directly after breakfast."

Then they started talking about their late relation, Crawley Slowquicker, and the things I heard about myself positively astonished me.

They were all sadly deficient in the bump of reverence, and I found that

not one of them entertained that respect and affection for me of which I had imagined they were all possessed. Now I fully realized the truth of my friend, the demon's, words. It was a dreadful penalty to pay, a sad mortification to hear what they said of me, and to see myself as others saw me.

"Well, of course," my cousin Vernon said, responding to some remark in a virtuously deprecatory tone. "Of course, de mortuis nil nisi bonum, and all that sort of thing, you know, but I can't help saying that Crawley was always mean—horribly mean!"

Confound the fellow! And this was a man to whom I had left \$500, forgiving him all the money he owed me, which was as good as doubling the legacy!

"No, no; not mean," Tom answered, and I blessed him for those words, but he spoiled it all by adding, "A bit careful, you know."

"Ah, I should think so," says Priscilla. "You will hardly believe it, but it's a fact he never allowed me money enough to keep house decently."

Of course, this was not true, as you may imagine. She was always wanting more money, and yet never succeeded in purchasing anything remarkable. And this was my sister Pris, whom I had always thought so affectionate, so entirely devoted to me. Oh, it was too horrible.

These three were my principal legatees. If I had only known sooner! But how was that possible?

I knew what I would do. I had made up my mind—and having no body, I was all mind now—I would go at once to my solicitor's, and have a codicil drawn up while there was yet time. But stay, there was no time; it was too late. I had quite forgotten that I was only a poor ghost, a dematerialized spirit, and that old idiot, Sharpbill, was so wedded to routine and old-fashioned custom that he would certainly regard a posthumous testament as informal, and as I was invisible he would treat my signature as null and decidedly void.

When next I turned toward my amiable and disinterested family circle, I perceived that the breakfast things had been removed, and Tom Slowquicker sat in the armchair with my will spread out before him.

"There's some one missing," he said, looking around him magisterially; "who is it?"

"Only my sister Minnie," Venon remarked casually. "I went to her this morning, but she's so upset about his death that she feels quite ill, and could not come down to breakfast."

"Don't be absurd," said Priscilla; "why she never gave him so much as a civil word." Then, sotto voce to her brother: "And that's what has upset her, I expect. She is afraid she has spoiled her chances of a legacy."

Oh, that spiteful Priscilla! If I could only alter my will! But it was too late, for here was my executor standing, or rather sitting in my place. At least there was one thing I could do; I would find my friend the demon, and see if arrangements could not be made for haunting them!

But these precious words about Minnie had sent balm into my tortured spirit, so that my incorporate heart throbbed, shaking the venetians, and Tom asked where the draught came from. I would go to her at once, so I traversed the closed door again, passing them all as the sigh of a summer breeze, which is we know not what, or whence it comes, or whether it goes—a breath from—well, no matter where; I don't exactly know myself.

Thus I went upstairs and into Minnie's room, where I found the poor girl still in bed, her cheeks pale, her eyes red with weeping, all the signs upon her of a sleepless night of sorrow, and pressed close to her soft bosom she held a likeness of my unworthy self, which I had given her once long ago. And this was the girl who never spoke save to ridicule and poke fun at me, whose dislike for me was almost proverbial in the family; and yet the girl whose love—with usual human perversity—I would have given all the world to win.

Ah, this knowledge of her heart's secret was sweet to me! It gave me courage. I would comfort her. I would pour forth my love. I would tell her—stay! what could I tell her? Was I not forgetting again that I was only a poor ghost—merely the shadow of a shade? Was I not unseen by her? And even were it possible for me to make myself visible for a few moments, I should only succeed in terrifying my poor love out of her senses.

Alas! was this the realization of a hereafter? the punishment of early vanities and sins? To see things just as they are, and yet to be so miserably impotent to alter them; to see, too, what might have been, and to beat out my weary spirit on into eternity in vain longing for a fruition that can never come.

My funeral was appointed to take place the next day. It was a very grand affair altogether, and cake and tea had been laid in the parlor to entertain the guests upon this festive occasion.

As I accompanied the mourners down the steps, I suddenly perceived my friend the demon by my side. Vainly I sought a coach, but could find no room, I turned to him somewhat angrily and remarked:

"I say, you promised I should go to my own funeral, but I don't seem to have been considered in the arrangement at all."

"You forget that corporeally you hold the place of honor at the head of the procession but in the spirit you can get in here. There's only the doctor and the clergyman."

"Between the doctor and the parson! Really my dear demon, you are remarkable for a most sardonic humor."

Well, the men of medicine and religion talked politics all the way, which I thought inappropriate; but as they were both conservatives they did not disagree. I am a Liberal myself, and

began vociferously expounding Mr. Gladstone's policy, quite oblivious that my words were unheard by them.

"Good job for yourself you are dead," said the demon. "You're just the sort to get into a jolly row with red hot politicians!"

The cemetery was soon reached, and I looked down and saw my coffin lowered into the open grave.

"Earth to earth—"
A few lumps were thrown, and fell upon the lid with a growling rattle, and—

I awoke with a start, and my eyes met those of my brother Tom, who asked cheerily, "Well, how do you do now, old fellow?" But I turned from him—for I could not help thinking of him as I had seen him last, reading my will down in the parlor—turned away and encountered my darling little Minnie, who sat unobserved in a remote corner of the room, and I felt, oh! so grateful and happy at seeing her there. I felt then that it was not all a dream.

I have used feigned names in this veracious tale, because I think she would not like to know the strange experience which led me to take courage to woo, and by and by, wed her.—Spare Moments.

Facts About Sponges.

Some of the finest kinds of sponges are found in Florida waters, and the culturist would find profit in raising such species as the "sheep wool," the "velvet," the "hard head" and the "grass" sponge. Some of the kinds recognized as quite distinct are, nevertheless, so much alike in appearance that only an expert can tell them apart. The sheep's wool sponges are best of all for the bath.

It is a fact worth knowing that it pays very much better to buy unbleached sponges. The bleached ones look much prettier, but the chloride of lime employed in the process injures the skeleton, and lessens its strength so that it soon comes to pieces. When you find sand in a sponge, you may know that you are indebted to trade dishonesty. Sponges never grow on a sandy bottom. The sand is added in the bales to make them weigh more.

The sponges are gathered by small boats. In each boat are two men; one sculls, while the other leans over the bow. When he sees a sponge, he spears it and drags it aboard. If the water is rough, he uses a "water glass," which is simply an ordinary pail with a glass bottom. The pail is hung around the neck of the fisherman, who sinks it below the surface when he wishes to see. In this way he can get a perfect view of the bottom. In the Mediterranean sponges are collected usually by dredges, but sometimes by naked divers.

The sponges of commerce are warm water animals. They come chiefly from the Mediterranean, the Red Sea, the Bahamas, and Florida.

The Stair Cure Now.

A new form of regular daily exercise that is being prescribed by more than one London physician is stair climbing. It is recommended for strengthening the heart.

This can only be done by taking regular, systematic and sufficient muscular exercise. Let a person who finds his pulse increased fifty to sixty beats in a minute after mounting a staircase, climb a hundred staircases day after day for a month or more, and it is said, he will find that the exertion does not add ten beats to the normal number of his heart throbs.

The exercise has acted upon this vital organ just as it does on the biceps of a prizefighter or a blacksmith, and strength and the capacity for endurance have been the result. But this is not all the good to be gained by climbing a hundred staircases a day, say fifty in the morning and fifty in the afternoon. Doubtless the person with a weak heart has suffered more or less from what is called nervous dyspepsia. His food, instead of being properly digested, has been mainly fermented in his stomach, and has caused him various uncomfortable feelings, which he has been in the habit of attributing to everything but their proper cause.

It is claimed that not only have the hundred minutes so spent in climbing staircases put strength into his legs, expanded his chest, and saved his heart from fatty degeneration, but that they have given tone to his abdominal muscles and to his digestive organs.—New York Journal.

Freaks for the Paris Exposition.

The freak exhibitors are just now besieging the managers of the coming Paris Exposition for space to exhibit their wonders. One man has a pair of hairless horses, each of which has a horn in its forehead and skin of the color of a ripe banana. Another wants to exhibit a woman who has two faces and three tongues, but who is perfectly dumb. Another writes for space in which to exhibit a winged sheep, which only has two legs, and a horse which has eight perfect hoofs in his four legs. An Austrian wants to send a hen that always walks backward, and an Italian banker thinks that he ought to have room enough in which to exhibit a pure white Shetland pony eighteen inches high and "shod all around with gold."—St. Louis Republic.

A Bicycle Somnambulist.

"La Sonnambula" up to date was seen at Bath Beach, N. Y., Sunday morning, when a young lady, beautiful, of course, was discovered riding a bicycle, and yet sound asleep. This particular young lady was rudely awakened by her bike striking a stone. When she realized her situation she showed herself a perfect lady by immediately fainting away.—Boston Transcript.

FLEET-WINGED CARRIERS.

PIGEONS THAT ARE TRAINED TO CARRY WAR DISPATCHES.

How the Birds Are Taught—Mystery of Their Unerring Flight—A Quick Trip From Chicago to New York.

EXPERIMENTS were tried by a signal corps at the recent State encampment in Michigan by sending carrier pigeons to Detroit with dispatches. In the four or five trials the birds brought the messages a distance of forty-two miles in the average of an hour and ten minutes, according to the Detroit Free Press.

It might seem to some to be a new departure in military work, but its origin is buried beyond the records of history. For centuries back the peaceful dove has played an important part in the wars and politics of the world. As long ago as the reign of Rameses III., King of Egypt, the carrier pigeon was used in conveying important dispatches from one point to another. It is even thought by some that Noah's "dove," which flew all day over the cheerless waters, was a carrier. Certain it is that the Egyptians made good use of this method of conveying intelligence from remote parts of the kingdom.

Frequent allusions to the carrier are made by the classic writers of Greece and Rome. A Roman of means, in going to the market place, took one of these birds with him in a basket, so that he might send home the names of the guests whom he invited to dinner. Messages were sent in this way to the Saracens in their wars with the Christians. Communication was thus kept up between the people in besieged cities and allies without. In China, Turkey, and, in fact, all Eastern countries, the use of the carrier is still one of the customs. During the wars between France and Germany this was, in many cases, the only means of communication. In the siege of Paris, it is said that 25,000 of the birds were used. The Germans employed hawks, as the Saracens had falcons, to destroy them.

Now, however, it is more for amusement than as a means of useful communication that the carrier pigeon is cultivated. In Belgium, pigeon flying is one of the greatest of the National amusements. Races are held, at which from ten to twenty thousand of the birds are liberated, and great crowds of people assemble to see them start on their journey. The course is from fifty to 500 miles, according to the age of the birds, and the distance is sometimes covered in remarkably fast time.

Very few persons know that there is, in this country, a National association, or league, of homing clubs. Nearly every large city, from New York to San Francisco, has one or more clubs that have for their object the raising and matching of fast birds.

It is a wonderful power that the carrier has, of finding its home, though separated from it by hundreds of miles of unknown country. Some have called it instinct, and others say that it is a matter of sight and memory. It seems to be both. Certain it is, at any rate, that the carrier is very intelligent, and has a good memory and remarkable power of sight. On the other hand, it can see, at the most, a distance of seventy-five miles from its exalted position in midair, while 200 miles of country, hitherto unseen by the bird, is often given to it for a course.

The education of the carrier is begun when it is four months old. It is first taken just outside the loft and allowed to make its way back to its nest. It is then taken a distance of one or two blocks away and again liberated. It often happens that the bird will take a long time to find its home on this trial, but on the next at the same distance it will rise a little way in the air and then dart straight for the nest. The distance is gradually increased until the bird can find its way home from two or three miles away. Then begins a regular scale of flights until 500 miles is reached.

The carrier's flight is very swift, the average being over forty miles an hour. Several birds in this city have flown 300 miles at the rate of over sixty miles an hour, and there are well-authenticated cases in which a speed of ninety miles an hour has been attained. This, however, is with the help of a good breeze. As night comes on the pigeon rests on some tree or in some plowed furrow, but at the dawn it is away again on its swift career.

It sometimes happens that a pigeon misses the right direction in its flight. When it finds this to be the case, instead of flying around until it sees something familiar, the carrier goes directly back to the starting point and tries again.

The carrier is not fond of flying over water, perhaps because there are no guide marks and no resting places. A large number of New York homing pigeons were liberated at the World's Fair. All but one soared around for awhile and then started down Lake Michigan, following the shore. The one exception flew to the top of one of the high buildings, where it sat for fully ten minutes and then shot off eastward, directly across the lake. This bird made the flight to New York in thirty-six hours. Very often the pigeons lose their way and never reach home. The fanciers are desirous of getting rid of these birds, as either their flight is not strong or their instinct weak. Only the swift, strong birds are kept, and the greatest care is taken in breeding them.

"Willie Taddells," said the school-teacher firmly, "you have a piece of chewing-gum in your desk. Bring it to me instantly." "Yes'm," replied Willie, "but it ain't the flavor you use. Yours is orange, an' this is wintergreen."—Harper's Bazar.

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A monument is soon to be erected at Little Falls, N. Y., in honor of the memory of the revolutionary general, Nicholas Herkimer. In the naming of the counties of New York the achievements of various revolutionary heroes and patriots were not forgotten, particularly Hamilton, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Montgomery, Schuyler, Steuben, Clinton, Delaware (after Lord De La Ware), Franklin, Paine, Lewis, Greene, Livingston, Putnam, Sullivan, Wayne, Yates and last, but not least, Washington. By some erroneous neglect, for which the early democrats of New York are responsible, there is no Jackson county in this State.

Germany is increasing its production of coal more than any other European country. Some of its coal is sold in the California and Oregon markets, together with that from British Columbia, Australia, Japan and Great Britain. Indian and Japanese coal is said to be driving other supplies out of the Far East. They are both inferior as steam producers, but are very cheap. The steamships using them make a saving of 40 per cent. over the cost of British coal. Russia is trying to supply her Black Sea fleet with coal from her own mines. She has a duty of 40 per cent. on imported coal, but even that rate is unable to keep it out of the country.

Overcrowded Japan turns eager eyes toward the vast unpeopled territory of north Australia. Though English officers predict that trouble would follow Japanese colonization in the great island, it is probable that one of the greatest exoduses of the age will shortly set in from Japan to the north Australian coast. The old world peoples must have room, and they will follow the precedents of all history by taking it wherever it lies open.