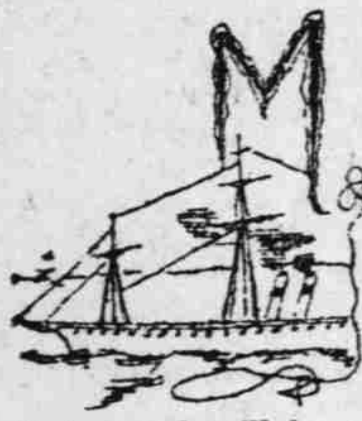


## NOVELTIES OF THE DAY.

### NOTABLE FACTS DEEMED WORTHY OF RECORD.

**An Ancient Bell—Only Person Born in the White House—Four Crops of Strawberries in One Year, etc., etc.**



that speed will be so increased that a passenger can reach New York before leaving England?

ORE fast ocean steamers are being built and the trip across will soon be a mere bagatelle. The world do move. As London time is five hours faster than New York time may we not hope, in the course of years, that speed will be so increased that a passenger can reach New York before leaving England?

In Harper's Richard Wheatley presents some interesting figures about the price of real estate in New York. He says: "Land has reached its highest price on this side of the Atlantic in the lower wards of New York. When the Drexel building, at the southeast corner of Wall and Broad streets, was erected, the price per square foot of the ground whereon it stands was the highest paid up to that time. When, in 1882, William H. Vanderbilt gave \$40 per square foot for the lots on Fifth avenue, Fifty-second and Fifty-third streets, on which the family mansions stand, that was the highest price ever paid for residential purposes. For store sites on Fifth avenue, \$65 per square foot were paid in March, 1886. D. O. Mills paid \$85 per square foot for the area occupied by his magnificent building on Broad street, the Astors \$100 per square foot for Nos 8 and 10 Broadway, and the Williamsburg Fire Insurance Company \$115 per square foot for the site of their equally impressive structure on the northeast corner of Liberty street and Broadway. In the neighborhood of the old Jumel estate prices rose from 75 to 100 per cent. between 1882 and March, 1886.

In regard to spontaneous combustion, the fires of the year in Boston have furnished some new observations of considerable importance. In one case, says the *American Architect*, a quantity of feather dust in a bedding manufactory took fire without apparent reason. It was found, however, that a piece of thick glass had been lying on the feathers, and the sun's rays, concentrated in some way by the glass, had set fire to them, although the day was a cold one in the month of March. In another case a number of tarpaulin hats were lying packed together in a window. The high temperature, with, perhaps, the close packing of the hats, caused them to burst into a blaze. Two other fires were caused by putting paraffine paper, such as candy is wrapped in, into a refuse barrel which contained a little sawdust; and a third, which destroyed twenty thousand dollars' worth of property, was occasioned by putting greasy paper, which had been used to wrap lunches in, into a wooden refuse barrel, which contained some sawdust and sweepings.

A QUEER character died of consumption in Bellevue Hospital, New York, the other night. He was John Walters, better known as "Johnny the Morgue." About eight years ago he came to the hospital sick. That's all that is known of his history. On his recovery he went to work in the Morgue as assistant to the keeper. His duty was to undress and prepare for burial the dead of the morgue. The solemnity of his surroundings seemed to have impressed him deeply, and he wore always a grave and melancholy air. He was not paid by the Charities Commissioners, but made his living by fees received from undertakers. His health broke down in the morgue atmosphere, and about a year ago he was taken with consumption and was obliged to give up his place. All his predecessors in the same place died of consumption.

"THE German doctors," says the *St. James's Gazette*, " profess to have discovered a new danger. They assert that the custom of carrying portfolios to school has a tendency to distort the figures of young girls between the ages of eleven and fourteen. Parents are exhorted to provide wallets for their young daughters, which can be carried like knapsacks on the back. In many parts of Germany this equipment is already in use, and to the unaccustomed eye of the stranger nothing is more comic than suddenly to come upon a crowd of little girls trooping out of school, each provided with a knapsack for the march. The next funniest thing to be seen among school-children on the Continent is the long pipe or the bilious cigarette of the diminutive Dutch boy."

THE *Journal des Debats* describes a novelty introduced in the watch by Armand Schwab. Upon the ordinary dial is another smaller, entirely similar. Its hands, however, can be brought to zero by a pressure upon a small spring in the stem. When, for instance, the wearer takes a cab by the hour he brings the hands to zero, and then is enabled to read off the time consumed. On a railway the train stops twenty-five minutes for dinner; bring the hands to zero and you know exactly how much time to dally over the dinner. The wife boils eggs to be done in three minutes, but after a while she forgets the time when she began to count. It is also serviceable for the photographer and other like tradesmen.

INFORMATION collected by the *Popular Science Monthly* goes to show that longevity without regularity of habits is very rare. In the blanks received, old people, men and women alike, are put down as early risers and retires, almost without exception, and fully ninety-

out of every twenty have observed this custom throughout life, except, perhaps, at some short period in youth. Meals have been eaten regularly, three each day, with dinner at noon, the exception being so rare as to indicate nothing. Exercise in most cases has been hard work up to sixty-five or seventy. Old people are, as a rule, as active and fond of constant occupation as most persons at thirty-five.

A FIRST-CLASS American watch, well kept, will last thirty or forty years, or sometimes even longer, before the works wear out, but the average life of an ordinary low-priced American watch is ten years, and that of a Swiss watch of the same grade seven years. The length of life for a watch depends largely on the number of its jewels. The range of prices for American watches runs from \$5 to \$500, the costliest being a split second minute register timing watch. In the United States about 3,500 watches are manufactured every day. The Waltham factory turns out 1,500 per day, and the Elgin factory between 1,200 and 1,900.

AN archaeological discovery of some interest has been made in the tidal river Hamble, near Botley, Hants. A boat house is being built at the point of the junction of the Cardridge Creek on the river, some distance above the spot where there is a still existing wreck of a Danish man-of-war. In moving the mud and alluvial soil to make sufficient waterway something hard was encountered, which, on being carefully uncovered, proved to be a portion of a prehistoric canoe. It is about twelve feet long and one and a half feet wide, beautifully carved, and in a fairly good state of preservation.

THE attention of visitors to Mount Repose Cemetery, at Haverstraw, N. Y., is attracted by a novel grave in a secluded spot. It is the grave of a pet canary bird which belonged to a wealthy family in Brooklyn. The pet a short time ago became quite ill and was attended by persons skilled in bird doctoring. All their treatment was useless, however, and the bird died. So strong was the attachment of the family for the bird that it was given an aristocratic burial, with all the honors that could be bestowed.

FISHING in Alaska is good if a Canadian gentleman recently visiting there tells the truth. He says that at Tongass Narrows he saw a creek so crowded with salmon that the surface was actually blackened with their backs and dorsal fins. In some places they were crowded so closely that they could hardly move, and could be picked out of the water by hand. At a canning establishment he saw 8,000 fish just taken, waiting treatment, and in one case one draught of a seine brought to shore 2,500 salmon.

ELIGIBLE women are at a premium in Dutch India. They are so scarce in that country that young men who wish to get married write to friends in Holland to find them wives. The friend selects a willing lady and forwards her photograph. If all is satisfactory the would-be husband sends back a soiled left hand glove with power of attorney. The friend then marries the young lady as a sort of legal proxy, and the marriage is as binding as though the groom himself were present.

A DESCRIPTION given in *Nature* of an instance of "sonorous sands"—sands that give forth a distinctly musical note when moved by the hand or a stick—has called forth a number of letters from various parts of England describing other cases of this phenomenon. Musical sand was found in several instances at particular spots in large areas; and the quality of the sound is thought to be influenced by atmospheric conditions.

In the present alarming dearth of giantesses it may be worth while to consider Miss Sallie Macallister, of Springfield. She is 19 years old, blacker than darkness, is five feet two inches high, and measures seven feet three inches about the waist and three feet six inches round the arm above the elbow. Her net weight is 672 pounds, notwithstanding which she earns a living at the wash-tub.

ACCORDING to the census of 1880-81, the last one taken, there were at that time 20,980,626 widows in India, of whom 668,000 were under nineteen years of age, and 278,900 under fourteen years. According to the native custom, none of these widows are at liberty to marry again. The same census gave the total female population at 99,700,000, and of these only 200,000 were able to read.

A SHOWER of partly pulverized corn and husks fell in a lumber yard at Lacrosse, Wis., a few days ago. The particles were very thick in the air, and could be seen upward as far as the eye could reach through the cloud. The phenomenon was a puzzle to everybody.

THE wife of a New York banker has invented a machine for making wire rope, the patent of which she has sold to a San Francisco firm for \$25,000 cash and a royalty. The way she came to hit upon this was from a device she used to twist her worsted.

ACCORDING to official statistics there were 2,647 avalanches last winter in Tyrol and Vorarlberg. The number of human lives lost was fifty-three, and about 500 beasts were killed. Many hundred buildings were destroyed.

Mrs. ELIZA WILCOX is the only person born in the White House. She was the only daughter of President Jackson's adopted son, and was born in the Presidential mansion during the administration of "Old Hickory."

THE employees of the Providence Bleaching and Calendering Company are called to work by a bell which was taken from a convent in Spain, and was cast in 1815 in honor of Ferdinand VII.

## TOTEM POSTS.

### Curious Genealogical Trees of the Alaska Indians.

Among the most curious sights in Alaska are the Indian totems—lofty, carved posts, often thirty or forty feet high, of pine or cedar logs, sometimes four feet in diameter, laboriously wrought out to represent the ancestral crests and rude coat-of-arms of the chiefs and the wealthy men of the tribe. These totem posts are peculiar to the tribes of the Northwest coast, though something resembling them is found among the South Sea Islanders. One, and sometimes two, of these wooden pillars are erected in front of a chief's house, over which they tower and seem to keep watch and ward like guardian genii.

The carving is grotesque and startling in its savage imagery. In addition to distorted human faces, the heads of bears, ravens, frogs, wolves and beavers are frequently represented, rampant, or engaged in combat with each other.

Where there are two posts before a single house, the design is to celebrate the lineage of both the male and female heads of the household; or, in other words, to give the pedigree of both the chief and his squaw. The posts are thus literally genealogical trees, and are to be read from the top downward.

Thus, the carved head of a chief at the top of a pillar over the head of a bear, which, in turn, is over a frog, while the frog is over an eagle, would record that this chief was descended from a family whose hereditary totem, or crest, was a bear, and that in the previous generation there had been an alliance with the frog family, and so on down the post.

The setting up of a totem post was a social event of importance. It was ushered in by many pottaches (gifts), feasts, and the ceremonies peculiar to the Indians, and it will surprise no one to be told that the tree (chief) who thus celebrated his pedigree, usually found the expenses mounting up to a large sum.

As to the origin of the custom, little can be learned. Both the Tlinkat and Chilkat tribes, as also the Haidas of Queen Charlotte's Islands, have their totem posts, and the practice has not yet wholly ceased. At Fort Wrangell the writer was shown one raised so late as 1876.

At the same village are also to be seen three rude sarcophagi, each of which is surmounted by a large carved figure representing the bear, the whale and the otter respectively. These heraldic beasts, no doubt, the totems of the chiefs whose bodies are interred within.

Certain students of Indian lore have attempted to establish an Indian mythology upon the evidence of these totem posts, associated with religious worship; but from all that can be learned, it seems more probable that the totem posts are merely a means of commemorating ancestry and ancestral exploits.

Considered as an effort on the part of savages to establish genealogical records, they are interesting records of aboriginal skill.

Fac-similes of these totem posts are now wrought in slate stone, on a small scale, by the Haidas, and sold to Alaska tourists. Some of these toy totems are very beautifully executed, and make pretty bric-a-brac for mantel adornment. They are sold at prices ranging from five to twenty dollars each.

## MIKADO AND SHOGUN.

### Japan's Double System of Government Explained.

Twenty-one years ago, the Emperor of Japan was a mere figurehead, and his predecessors for more than five hundred years had been little more. They lived in strict seclusion and exercised no ruling power. Only a few nobles of the highest rank had the privilege of beholding the Emperor's face. The Japanese throne has never been banded about from one dynasty to another. Their history begins twenty-nine hundred and forty nine years ago, before Nebuchadnezzar conquered the Jews. During this time, one hundred and twenty-three sovereigns have sat on the throne, nine of whom have been women; and all have belonged to this one dynasty. It is a nameless dynasty, for it is beyond the need of a family name. The form of government was an absolute monarchy, and early emperors were the direct executive heads. The empire was divided into gun (governor), or provinces, and these subdivided into ken. This was called the gun ken system, and the whole was under the rule of the Emperor.

There was, from very early times, a Shogun, or general; but at first his power was small. Yoritomo, one of the most celebrated men in Japanese history, obtained great power during a civil war in the twelfth century by restoring order and establishing firm government. He became the most powerful subject in the empire, and the Mikado appointed him Sei Tai Shogun (say ti sho-noon) in 1192. This title means "Barbarian-quelling Great General," and it was the greatest honor that could be bestowed on a subject. The whole country was placed under military rule, and this was the beginning of the double system of Japanese government. Gradually, more and more power was concentrated in the Shogun's hands, while only empty dignities and numerous titles were left to the Emperor.

That "son of heaven," however, though often a child, was the source of all rank and dignity; and though the office of Shogun became hereditary in certain families, and though the Shogun lived with the pomp and splendor of a king, he always owed his appointment to the Emperor. The Shogun assumed the protectorship of the Emperor.

This form of government was called the Shogunate.

Under this double system of government, the Mikado and the Shogun, the outside world supposed there were two emperors, one a spiritual, the other a temporal emperor. This "temporal Emperor" was merely the Mikado's general. The Mikado, the "son of heaven," lived at Kioto, a city beautifully situated, in a palace much like a temple in outward appearance, but with little of the splendor of a European palace. Magnificence of display might do very well for upstart generals, but was unseemly for the semi-divinity of royalty. The Shogun lived at Yeddo, which was thus the real seat of government.—*St. Nicholas*.

## Attacked by Pirates.

The Norwegian steamship *Kong Alf*, Captain Kierouff, arrived recently at Philadelphia from Jamaica, having on board Captain Jacobsen and one sailor belonging to the Norwegian bark *Inga*, which was wrecked on the Island of Cayman, September 17th, while on a voyage from Montevideo to Ship Island, Miss.

Captain Jacobsen when landed was a very sick man, caused by his great exposure since his vessel was wrecked. He says when the vessel struck on the island it was the second mate's watch, and when the latter saw the breakers ahead he called all hands to furl the sails; but all efforts to save the vessel proved futile. Soon after the vessel struck on the island, which is two hundred miles to the southward of Jamaica, she was boarded by nearly two hundred colored wreckers who made a bold and daring attempt to take possession of the crew and rob the vessel. Captain Jacobsen and his men fought bravely and drove the uncivilized pirates back. They made an attempt to gain entrance to the after cabin and were only prevented from so doing at the point of the pistol.

When the savages were driven from the vessel's deck the crew made an attempt to land in their life-boats, knowing the *Inga* would soon go to pieces, as she was thumping terribly. At first all efforts to launch a boat failed, as the sea was very rough. After several efforts the crew accomplished their object, and landed on the Island of Cayman. They were the only civilized people there, and subsisted two weeks on coconuts and a little gin they had saved. At the expiration of this time Captain Jacobsen got possession of a small twenty-ton sloop, in which he and his crew made sail for Jamaica. They only had a very little quantity of provisions, and expected to reach Jamaica in two days, but instead of this were a week. Their sufferings from exposure and want of sufficient food are beyond description. When they landed at Jamaica, October 7th, they were kindly cared for by the natives. The rest of the crew will ship from Jamaica.

## Pocketbooks and Money.

He came with the circus to Lowell, and might have passed for a minister, but never for a fakir as far as looks went. A crowd gathered around.

"I have here Russian leather pocket-books that I am actually going to give away. Pay me 50 cents and I will give you your money back and a pocketbook. There are enough of you here to hold me to my word. Merely an advertising dodge, gents, deposit your money with the driver and come around to the front of the wagon and get your money back and a pocketbook."

Twenty customers took him at his word. The next round was: "Make it one dollar, gents, I will do all I agreed to do."

Thirty or more this time while the crowd doubled in numbers, all intent on getting something for nothing.

"Make it two dollars this time, gents. I will do all I agreed to do." Sixty customers paid in.

"Make it a V, gents—five dollars; it is worth your while to get a pocketbook." As many as 75 paid their money to the driver, while the fakir kept drumming on the wagon seat until all had paid in.

"Here, gents, are your pocketbooks. Now, gents did I say I would give you your money back this time?"

"N—no," stammered a man near the wagon with a rather mournful expression on his face.

"Well, gents, I will bid you good day." And he went apparently satisfied with his half hour's work.—*Detroit Free Press*.

## An Esquimau Execution.

James Jordon, lately arrived from the Arctic Ocean on schooner *Era*, relates the circumstances of the death of John Bull, an Esquimau sailor, who, with his wife, left Croton, Conn., a few years ago to hunt the whale. Jordan says John Bull met a terrible death at the hands of the natives for some transgression of the Esquimau law, whose edicts are executed somewhat after the manner of the cold-blooded Italian Mafia. Two weeks before the tragedy his wife was notified, according to custom, of his coming death at the hands of his countrymen, but under pain of death could not acquaint him with the information. When the day arrived he was decoyed out of the village by two companions to the place designated, where he was prostrated on his back.

Then the leader delivered a short speech and called on the man selected to advance and stab him through the heart, while he opened the victim's clothing and pointed out the places. The native first chosen stepped forward, but became so nervous that his heart failed him, and a second man was called upon to plunge the fatal knife. Poor John Bull was firmly held by the twelve assembled friends and literally butchered, his body being left on the spot, a prey for bears and other wild animals, which infest the country.

## CARL DUNDER.

### He has Decided Not to Become a Great Man.

"Shildrens, let me told you somethings. I vhas an oldt mans, und I haf some fun und be happy, doan' you try to be great. I doan' pelief dot vhas when I vhas a poy, und so I lay oop sorrow for myself.

"You haf all heard of Napoleon Bonaparte. He vhas a great sheneral. He can lick all Europe mit one hand tied behind his back. He vhas der greatest man for a hundred years. Some people vhas so afraid of him dot dey shum up in der river, und some like him so dot dey looks awfully nice to you, but how vhas she. Dot Bonaparte can nefer go in a tobacco store und play sheekers mit a fireman. He doan' haf no time to go on a picnic. He nefer sees a game of base ball. Ho doan' haf some fun mit der boys at ward caucus. All he does vhas to plan some fights und knock esaferybody into der middle of two weeks ago. Take him for ten years und he doan' laugh once. He vhas great, but does dot pay? Where vhas der fun—der benefits?

"Some poy cry because dey vhas not Shewrge Washington. Maype it looks awful nice to be President und a sheneral, und to swell around und boss esaferybody, und to haf your name in der papers, but you hold on. Do you pelief Shewrge Washington efer haf some fun mit der poy? Does he efer steal some apples, carry off somepody's gate, or hook sugar from der pantry, und nopody dares slap him an der back und call him oldt mans, und nopody dares ask him to shlip his ticket. He must shust be a big gun und keep quiet und comb his hair five times a day.

"Maype some of der little gals vhas mad because dey won't nefer be Queen of Spain. A queen vhas nice dresses, und she can haf some quails on toast esafery day, und if she says she wants this or that she can haf him. When she rides out esaferybody shmile, und bows, und cheers, und if she vhas seek der papers come out esafery hour. Dot looks nice, but hold on a little while. If you vhas queen you can't play tag mit der poy, you can't eat some peanuts nor chew gum, you can't put on an old dress nor wear some old shoes, und if you go to a picnic you can't eafen fall ofen a log and skin your nose. How it would look for a queen to stand out by her gate und gossip with Mrs. Blank about dot new neighbor and her nine cats! If her husband comes home late she can't say one word, und if she goes by der kitchen der hired girls bounce her out. She must sit oop very straight, und look very solemn, und if she looks out der window und a poy falls down she can't eafen shmile. If you want some comforts in dis world doan' you be some queens.

"I shust like to be as I am und like I vhas. If some man calls at my house he takes off his hat und says my wife vhas looking petter ash she vhas, und dot we vhas hafing sooch bad weather as he nefer sees before. When a man comes in my place of peensness he says: 'Hello! Dunder, vhas he cold enough for her! How vhas your left lung to-day, any how?' I can laugh at him, or I can poke him in der ribs, or I can tell him to go by Halifax. Dot makes me happy, und I grow fat some more. If I vhas sooch a great man dot I haf to hold my legs stiff as crowbars und my back bone like a gate post, und say 'um' und 'ha' und go py der barber once a day, I vhas so seek und tired dot I run away from myself. When I vhas who I vhas I can wake oop in der morning und box Shake's ears, keek my dog out doors, shmile on my wife, und go down town, und feel dot I like to stay in Detroit ten hoonered years."—*Detroit Free Press*.

## A Phantom Cow.

A farmer named Burt B., living in the bottoms, between Kansas City, Kan., and Quindaro, tells of a peculiar annoyance which he has with what he claims is a phantom cow. According to the story which he tells, and in which his family acquiesce, a large brindle cow of his dairy got into his basement one afternoon and ate a large number of water-melons which his boys, Frank and Archie, aged eleven and thirteen, had put on ice, intending to take them to town and sell them for spending money. They found the bovine, after she had despoiled their hopes, and were so enraged that, after cornering and tormenting her with a vindictiveness that only disappointed boys can contrive, they shot the cow. Mr. B. caught them just then, and, as she was a valuable animal, did all in his power to save her. But the wound was bad, and, coupled with the severe cold which the overindulgence in melons had caused, she died in the morning, after a night of horrible agony during which the most dreadful groans broke continually from her suffering system. Since that time, at irregular intervals, the inmates of the house are nearly driven to distraction by pitiful, sepulchral moans, that burst forth without warning and continue for hours. They pervade the house and render the place a perfect pandemonium. Two or three times he has gone to the cellar, avowing that a cow had got in there. The worst of it is, however, that the two boys rave when they hear the dreadful sounds, and insist they see a cow in the room, and that it is trying to gore them. Again they assert the bovine is jumping through the window, and next it is in that corner, then under the bed. When the boys are away there is no trouble, but as soon as they return the haunt re-commences. He is at a great loss as to means by which to conjure the "bossy's spook" to rest.

More than a sixth part of the land of the globe and nearly a sixth part of the population of the world are under the control of Great Britain; Russia ranks second in territorial extent and the United States third.