



The art of ruby making is now extensively practiced. The gems thus produced are known to the trade as "Geneva" and are largely used for jewelling watches.

One effect, noted by the New York Ledger, of emigration to the West and hard times everywhere is the falling off in the value of farm lands. People in the central part of New York State say that many holdings can now be had for half of what they were rated at five or six years ago. These farms are neither abandoned nor played out, nor has any marked decrease in population occurred about them, but the farmers have the Western fever and want more room, or they are anxious to get into town and work at trades.

A New York electrotyping firm is said to have hit upon the idea of electrotyping articles of apparel which it is desired to preserve as mementoes. A baby's first shoes, for example, may be preserved indefinitely in metal. "We might give other instances," comments the Chicago Herald, "but, although we should be sorry to discourage the firm, so far as our own experience goes mementoes do not generally take the form of wearing apparel. Such things as Tommy's first trousers and Johnny's first 'top' hat would scarcely make good souvenirs."

There has been a singular dearth of invention in naming the many small lakes of the West, laments the Chicago Herald, and fine old Indian names have been deliberately discarded in order that persons of unlovely surnames might be honored geographically. The Indian names when translated are often found to embody an almost photographic picture of the lakes upon which they were bestowed. The French names that superseded some of the Indian names, and are likely to be superseded in their turn by modern commonplaces, are often pretty and historically suggestive.

Good horses are cheaper in some parts of the West now than dogs in the East, for there are few dogs not owned by some one, while horses cannot be given away. All over the West horses have been astonishingly cheap for some time, and two or three dollars has been a good price for a good animal. A hundred head of ranch horses, sturdy, unbroken broncos from Wyoming, were sold in Denver for \$30 and the freight recently. It is reported that a big stock firm in Idaho has turned more than 250 ponies adrift to shift for themselves during the winter, as it was cheaper to do this than to provide food for them. The firm could not get even a dollar apiece for them.

According to Major H. H. C. Dunwoody, of the National Weather Service, the weather crop service of the National bureau ranks next in importance to the work of making forecasts. The system of gathering reports upon which the weather crop bulletins are based has been greatly perfected in recent years. The crop bulletins of the States have been improved, and are now more complete than at any previous time, and the increased circulation that these bulletins have attained amply attests their value. It is believed that there is no other class of information to which so much space is devoted in the public press to-day. A file of these bulletins for all the States for a year will form the most complete history of the weather conditions attending the growth and development of the several crops throughout the country. More than ten thousand crop correspondents are to-day co-operating with the National Weather Service through the State organization; three thousand voluntary observers are furnishing monthly reports of daily observations of temperature and rainfall; and over eleven thousand persons assist in the work of distributing the weather forecasts of the National Weather Service. This latter work has been more rapidly pushed during the past year than any other feature of State Weather Service work. With the continuation of the present liberal policy toward these services there will be in a comparatively short time no important agricultural community in the United States, with the proper mail facilities, that will not receive the benefits of the forecasts.

WINTER FANCIES.

Winter without
And warmth within;
The winds may shout
And the storm begin;
The snows may pack
At the window pane,
And the skies grow black,
And the sun remain
Hidden away
The livelong day—
But here—in here is the warmth of May!

Swoop ye up spitefulest
Up the flue,
Wild winds—go!
What in the world do I care for you?
O delightfulest
Weather of all,
How! and squall,
And shake the trees till the last leaves fall!

The joy one feels,
In an easy chair,
Cocking his heels
In the dancing air
That wreathes the rim of a roaring stove
Whose heat loves better than hearts can love,
Will not permit
The coldest day
To drive away
The fire in his blood, and the bliss of it!

Then blow, winds, blow!
And rave and shriek,
And snarl and snow
Till our breath grows weak—
While here in my room
I'm as snugly shut
As a glad little worm
In the heart of a nut!

—James Whitcomb Riley.

BOOM LOG BILL.

More men than Boom Log Bill could be found in the lumber camp. No one knew whether his cynicism was natural or acquired, but certainly it was of a high, misanthropic quality. Many years ago when Bill was a dashing college sophomore and stood at the head of his class in football, his fancy fell a-turning toward a young lady who occupied a conspicuous place in the senior medical department. They were betrothed, and so great was Bill's infatuation that he became even more oblivious than ever to his studies and devoted himself more assiduously to football. Both graduated, Bill having somehow been pushed through, while his fiancée attained high honors. An engagement of long standing followed. The reason of its duration was because Bill could not find anything to do, and, although he would have been willing to marry anyhow and chance it, the young woman with prudent foresight declined an alliance without any visible or apparent means for sustenance. The pride of the football team was in despair, but finally concluded to go West. Here his fortunes did not seem to improve perceptibly and another long interval ensued. One day as Bill was following the lowly occupation of digging a canal through land that was to be irrigated a message was brought to him announcing the marriage of his sweetheart and asking him to forgive her, as the years were fleeting and fortune was a laggard—so she had concluded to take time by the forelock and become the bride of another, with the assurance of daily sustenance. This was a great shock to Bill; he lost interest in his work and became simply a machine as he plied his shovel in the dry soil of Arizona. His heart was in the East and his labor became a veritable task; the canal was interminable. He did not even have the means to go East and hunt up his rival.

Bill, being a misanthrope, held himself aloof from his companions; misanthropes usually do. He was heartily and generally disliked and detested; misanthropes usually are. When the lumber men came in at dinner time, Bill took his place at the end of the table in the cook shanty and the greater his isolation the more he liked it. He never had a word to say; not so much as "Pass the pickles, please," or "Throw the crackers this way," but when anything wasn't handy he went without rather than address himself to the others. He worked as silently as he ate; even when a log escaped from the skit he did not use profanity; when a tree fell the wrong way he had no comment to make; when the sugar gave out in the cook tent he had no expletives to hurl at unfortunate Alphonse; when the meat was too tough to masticate or the oleo not quite up to the standard he accepted the conditions in an unalterably cynical manner, making no complaint or

praising nothing. While the other men seated themselves around the big range and told a few stories in the evening, when Alphonse was making biscuits, he turned in and slept until early morning when he silently dressed and went into the woods. The cheerful toot of the mammoth horn at meal time brought no cheerful light to his eyes.

With this effective presentation of a misanthrope, dead to the better feelings of humanity, indifferent to the enticements of good fellowship, it may be well to proceed to the denouement. In a lumber camp, as everyone knows, space is utilized and the men sleep two in a bunk. Bill's companion was the antithesis to himself—cheerful, lively as a cricket, jovial and manly—a very Hercules in figure and an open hearted, affable fellow who had few of the vices of his companions—he neither drank to excess on periodical visits to town nor expended all his wages in spring, when the logs were in the streams and the camp was over. He chaffed the misanthrope a great deal. Their conversations usually were conducted on one side.

"Bill," said this hero of a thrilling tale, "what makes you such a cross-grained cuss?"
Bill only snorted.
"Why don't you mingle with the boys? I'm sure you're not such a sour, disagreeable, detestable, undesirable, ugly, mean, unsociable chap as you seem. They say beneath a rough exterior there is often a fine interior. It does seem hard to imagine that there is anything pleasant or nice about you, Bill, but why don't you surprise somebody some day by showing that you are just a trifle less selfish, mulish, obstinate, set and cussed? See if you can't make your nature belie your face."

Bill snarled and turned his face toward the wall.

"All right, old chap," remarked the other. "Pleasant dreams." Then he took a picture from his bosom. "You ought to have some woman to think of, Bill," he added almost tenderly. "Then you wouldn't be such a sour, contemptible, disagreeable chap." So saying he pressed his lips to the picture. Bill started and stole a look at him. The face of the misanthrope became convulsed.

"Who is she?" he asked in a hoarse tone of voice.

"So you are interested, are you?" said the other, laughingly. "Who is she? My wife, to be sure. We wouldn't be separated now but for the hard times. And then there's the baby to think of, Bill. But there's a good time coming, Bill, when the snow melts and the flowers peep from beneath the covering of ice; when the hills are covered with verdure and the world awakens to life and love. Then I shall once more be with my darling. Good night, old chap. I only wish you as pleasant dreams as come to me."

With that he turned on his side and slept with the picture pressed to his heart. In the misanthrope's mind a thousand conflicting thoughts ran riot, for in the sweet face he had recognized his former love, while lying by his side, sleeping so calmly and restfully in the same berth was the man who had robbed him of that which he held most dear, and changed him into one of the most miserable creatures in the world. With a curse Bill opened his clasp knife and his arm hung suspended over the sleeping man, the blade directed toward his heart. Then the thought came to Bill that to kill him it would be necessary for the knife to pass through the picture of his old sweetheart.

Carefully he removed the picture, and, holding it in his hand, raised himself on his elbow and gazed at it. The tears came to his eyes; finally he replaced the picture, and, shutting the knife, laid down by the side of the man who had stolen his love, but not to sleep. The other never knew how near the gates of death were to him that night.

The next day Bill was as cross as ever. He ate his breakfast silently and went into the woods without a word to any one, walking apart from the others. All day he worked with a woman's face ever in his mind and blind rage consuming his heart. The day was a stormy one, and the great flakes of snow spread a thick mantle on the deep, white covering which already lay upon the earth. It had

turned bitter cold and the wind swept mournfully through the tall trees, making them emit the most melancholy sound in the world, the requiem of the pines, when lost spirits seem rushing madly by. But all day a tempest, too, had been raging in Bill's heart. Toward nightfall he started to retrace his steps toward the camp. He had been working on the outskirts of the forest, and the foreman and the others were well on ahead of him. Suddenly Bill came across a prostrate figure—that of his buoyant companion—lying senseless in the snow, having been struck by a falling tree. Loss of consciousness had been immediate, and in the blinding snow his misfortune had not been observed. Bill stood there for some moments. The battle he waged with himself was a long one. Perhaps if he left him there he might yet win the woman he loved. His death would be attributed to the blow from the falling tree and the cold. He was not yet dead, but the exposure in that cold would soon stiffen the motionless form. With anger in his bosom, Bill turned away and started toward the camp. He had gone some distance when he paused and reflected. The pathetic face of the wife arose before him; the pale, appealing face of the woman he loved.

It was late in the evening when Bill staggered into camp with his heavy load. A doctor was sent for and then Bill went to bed, assured that the other was out of danger. When his rival recovered he thanked Bill profusely and slapped him on the shoulder, and with a suspicious moisture in his eyes, told him that he was the dearest old cross-grained cuss in the world and (bringing down his huge fist) he would defy anyone to say otherwise. The two shook hands and there was gladness in the heart of Boom Log Bill.

"I have only one regret, Bill," said the other.

"What is that?" growled Bill.

"I have lost the photograph of the sweetest girl in the world."

The misanthrope hung his head and said nothing. The other had no suspicions. After all he was most concerned in looking forward to spring when he would once more hold the original to his breast and the sad parting would be a matter of the past.—Detroit Free Press.

FUN.

Most servant girls have portable characters, that is to say a written recommendation.—Puck.

Mrs. Sniffwell—"Why, Bridget, you have been eating onions!" Bridget—"Share, mum, you're a moind reader."

These are the days when you wonder what he or she has made up or her mind to give you.—Buffalo Times.

Teacher—"Now, Charlie, tell us what you know about Croesus?" Charlie—"Dudes wear 'em in their pants."—Harlem Life.

Visitor—"Have you any watch dogs here?" Johnny Suburb—"No'm; but we've got some alarm-clock roosters."—Street & Smith's Good News.

It is always hard to associate quarrels and unpleasantness with a house that has vines growing over the doors and windows.—Atchison Globe.

Mrs. Binks (reading)—"Women can endure pain better than men." Mr. Binks—"Who says that—a doctor or a shoemaker?"—New York Weekly.

Young Tutter—"What we want in our society, Miss Maude, are brains, brains." Miss Summit—"But how are you going to supply them?"—Vogue.

"The telephone is like a woman; it tells everything it hears." "Yes, that's so. And it's unlike a woman, too; it tells a thing just as it hears it."—Life.

"Father," said the boy, "what is insolvent?" "Insolvent," was the reply, "is merely a long word used to describe a short condition."—Washington Star.

Turned Down.

"Do you wish to regard me," he tremulously asked, "only in the light of a friend?"

She sighed.

"I wouldn't mind," she faltered, "if it was a little darker than that." Even the gas-meter in the cellar caught her subtle meaning.—Puck.

CANAIGRE.

A NEW CROP FOR SOUTHERN COTTON DISTRICTS.

Canaiigre is the Prince of Farming Plants, and Can Be Raised All Through the South—Methods of Cultivation.

A FEW years ago, says a Dallas (Texas) letter to the New York Post, several articles appeared in Northern journals showing that canaiigre could be produced in the West and Southwest at a large profit, and figures were published later by the Agricultural Department showing the relative cost of cultivating and marketing the roots and the prices received for them in the open markets. In Arizona and New Mexico the plants were immediately brought under cultivation, and large farms have ever since been producing annually two tons of canaiigre roots. But it is only recently that the plants have been cultivated in the Cotton States, although in California and Texas it has been amply demonstrated that this prince of tanning plants succeeds satisfactorily along all the rivers and valleys.

It has been demonstrated in the last year that canaiigre will grow not only where the wild plants are found, but almost everywhere in the cotton belt where there is a sandy loam of moderate moisture. On the stiffer soils it does not do so well, but even there it will produce paying crops. Some of the more enthusiastic growers in Texas assert that it will eventually prove as widespread in its growth as Indian corn. It is certain that it is one of the greatest booms to farmers in the cotton belt. It is practically a new crop for the South, and one of extreme value. The process of extracting the tannic acid for tanning purposes is not very difficult or elaborate, and farmers can do their own fermenting and distilling at a very small expense, and in this way increase their own profits.

At Tovah in the Pecos Valley of Texas there is a large canaiigre plant where the tannic acid is extracted from many tons of the roots every season. The farmers all through the valley supply this factory with the roots, and the industry is so popular that the old crops are being abandoned. Heretofore the large factories have simply sliced, dried and packed the roots for shipment to New York, Chicago, or Boston, where the tannic acid has been extracted by secret processes, but the factories down here will soon do their own extracting and ship the concentrated article to the large leather-making centres.

A visit to some of the canaiigre farms in the Pecos Valley gives one a more adequate idea of the new Southern crop than any description can. The planting is usually done early in the fall, not later than the first of November if possible, and by early spring they are in blossom. Loose, sandy soil is selected, and after the ground is broken thoroughly single roots of the plants are dropped in rows nearly three feet apart and from six to nine inches apart in the rows, and about five inches deep. When the young leaves begin to come up, they look like a field of beets or sweet-potato vines, although as they develop the contrast becomes more decided. In fact, the roots of the canaiigre plants have the general external appearance of sweet potatoes even to the time of digging, and they are produced in hills of from three to a dozer, varying in size and quality. The weight of each tuber is from two to eighteen ounces, and when a hill is first pulled up, a stranger might be forgiven if he declared that it was a hill of wild sweet potatoes.

An acre carefully cultivated and irrigated will yield from twenty to thirty tons of green roots, which when dried for shipment will shrink to seven or ten tons. The value of canaiigre-roots properly dried varies somewhat in this country and in Europe. Good roots one year old will yield from twenty-three to thirty-three per cent. of tannic acid, while oak and hemlock bark contains only eight to ten per cent. In the rough, dried state canaiigre-roots sell to-day at from \$25 to \$30 per ton, and the prices in Europe range from \$50 to \$80. The tannic acid from canaiigre is superior

to that obtained from any other source, and it is especially adapted to tanning uppers, fine saddlery, and fancy leathers. It is said to be valuable in the manufacture of dyestuffs and mordants. According to the present demand for dried canaiigre-roots the lowest estimate of the yield would be \$175 per acre, with the average probably at \$225 per acre. The cost of planting and cultivating a crop of canaiigre is about the same as that of a sweet-potato crop, leaving much larger profits for the farmer.

The land where the canaiigre plants thrive is comparatively cheap and is held in abundance by many farmers and grazers who do not pretend to use more than one-quarter. Sheep, cattle, and hogs roam over these wild stretches, and many of them nibble at the young leaves of the wild canaiigre plants. All through the cotton belt further north experiments have been made which show that this plant can be raised there almost as successfully as in Arizona or Texas.

Canaiigre is a Spanish name, but its specific botanical name is *Rumex hymenosepalus*. It is found growing wild in the valleys and river bottoms of Western Texas, Arizona, Mexico, California, and New Mexico. It has long been used by the Indians and Mexicans as a medicinal plant, and when taken in sufficient quantity it is a purgative. The leaves have the general taste and properties of rhubarb, and cattle enjoy eating a limited quantity of them. The roots are dark externally and yellow within. The cultivated canaiigre is much larger than the wild, and cultivation and irrigation increase the yield enormously.

Female Pugnacity.

Boys' earlier inheritance is all in the way of offensive weapons, of bows, bats, balls, and noise, with a tendency to teasing and bullying, a feature for which the male has been famous, the sufferer who was put upon being the female—the weaker vessel; weaker because the males fought with one another for her; had she fought with her sisters for the males she could have been the stronger and the bigger brained.

The female, however, does inherit a pugnacious instinct, chiefly defensive. She has had to fight on behalf of her young ones, and in such cases the maternal instinct becomes very strong indeed. Children show this character; and I witnessed in one of mine a very curious exhibition of what might be called perverted instinct arising from a conflict of inherited associations. She was quite a little girl and was nursing her doll with all possible expression of affection, loving it, kissing it, and calling it all the endearing names she knew. Up came her brother and began to tease her. In an instant the pugnacious idea was aroused in defense of the doll, but, having no available weapon in hand, she seized the doll by the hind legs and, wheeling it aloft, brought its china head down with resounding force on the cranium of her brother. He retired, howling and discomfited. She, excited with her triumph, returned to the caressing of her doll with redoubled ardor, quite unconscious of the incongruity of her actions, an unconsciousness which heightened the comicality of the incident.—Popular Science Monthly.

A Costly Mink Skin.

"That is a very fine mink skin you have," said a citizen to Frank Botefuhr. "It ought to be a good one," was the reply, "it cost me enough." Further inquiry elicited the information that the mink had been killed on Mr. Botefuhr's place, up on Cornell Mountain.

It had made away with fourteen of his prize chickens, valued at \$14, and was then caught in a trap set by the man in charge. When it was found that the animal was trapped the man took out a fine shotgun to kill it, but concluding it was not worth while to waste powder and shot on so small a varmint, struck at it with the butt of the gun. The mink dodged the blow, and the man becoming excited whaled away at it again and smashed the stock of the gun. The making good this damage cost \$12 more, so the mink skin cost \$26 net. Mr. Botefuhr is not anxious to get enough skins at the same price to line an overcoat.—Portland Oregonian.