



The Czar of Russia tells his subjects that he is an autocrat, as his father was, and means to remain so.

M. Andre, a European aeronaut, thinks he could get to the North Pole in a balloon at an expenditure of about \$35,000. He is still looking for a millionaire to blow him off.

The New York World announces that a prize of \$100,000 is offered by this Government for the best air-ship for passenger and freight traffic. Inventors have until 1900 to perfect their plans.

Switzerland is about to establish a State bank at Berne, which will have the exclusive right to issue bank notes. The capital is fixed at \$5,000,000, the Swiss confederation making itself responsible for all liabilities.

Observes the Baltimore American: All the reports of M. Felix Faure since his accession to the highest office in France indicate that he will make one of the very strongest Presidents in the history of that remarkable country. He is a solid, sensible man.

A movement is on foot in England to celebrate the sixth centenary of the British Parliament, which will be rounded out this summer. It was in 1295 that Parliament first assembled on the basis from which has grown the form of the present assembly.

The statistical fiend has been figuring out the cost of the chain letter business asking for stamps. He estimates that if the letter reached its fiftieth number and brought back ten stamps for each letter written it would take 101,372,794,958,094,779 cars to carry the stamps.

The San Francisco Argonaut exclaims: A toy has wrought a revolution in this country. The agitation in favor of good road, begun by the bicycle manufacturers some years ago, and taken up and given force by the riders, has at length reached the masses of the people.

The examples of New York and Ohio in founding colonies for epileptics is about to be followed by Illinois, announces Harper's Weekly. The medical societies of that State and of the city of Chicago are moving in the matter, and have submitted a bill for the purpose to the State Legislature.

Theodore Roosevelt maintains in the Forum that "there is not in the world a more ignoble character than the mere money-getting American, insensible to every duty, regardless of every principle, bent only on amassing a fortune, and putting his fortune only to the basest uses—whether these uses be to speculate in stocks and wreck railroads himself, or to allow his son to lead a life of foolish and expensive idleness and gross debauchery, or to purchase some scoundrel of high social position, foreign or native, for his daughter. Such a man is only the more dangerous if he occasionally does some deed like founding a college or endowing a church, which makes those good people who are also foolish forget his real iniquity. These men are equally careless of the workmen, whom they oppress, and of the State, whose existence they imperil. There are not very many of them, but there is a very great number of men who approach more or less closely to the type, and just in so far as they do approach, they are curses to the country. The man who is content to let politics go from bad to worse, jesting at the corruption of politicians, the man who is content to see the maladministration of justice without an immediate and resolute effort to reform it, is shirking his duty, and is preparing the way for infinite woe in the future. Hard, brutal indifference to the right, and an equally brutal shortsightedness as to the inevitable results of corruption and injustice, are baleful beyond measure; and yet they are characteristic of a great many Americans who consider themselves perfectly respectable, and who are considered thriving, prosperous men by their easy-going citizens."

A SONG OF HOPE.

No tears, dear, if the black skies frown—
Hope for the best.
No storm the rainbow's smile can down—
Hope for the best.
There is a light somewhere. Some day,
From east to west
Will shine a deathless morning's ray;
Hope for the best.
Old proverb! Yes, but cheering—sweet—
Divinely blest;
Even with the sharp thorn around your feet
Hope for the best.
What hope in sighing? Time still flies
From life's unrest;
Tears blur the blue in God's sweet skies,
Hope for the best.
And, old or new, still sing the song
That life loves best;
One melody a whole life long—
Hope for the best.

AN INSPECTOR.

BY HELEN FORREST GRAVES.



PINKTON'S boy again!" said Hannah Digby. "Now what does Pinkton's boy want this time! Didn't I give him half a mince pie and all the rest of the cold boiled ham not two hours ago! Thumping away at the door loud enough to wake the Seven Sleepers, when uncle has just laid down for his nap! I declare, I've no patience with that child!" "It's on an errand he's come this time, Miss Hannah," said Thyra, the help. "At least that's what he says. There ain't no believin' Pinkton's boy, though." Outside in the angry red twilight, the March wind was howling like some infuriated demon, rocking the bare tree tops to and fro and rattling the loose window shutters against the side of the house, while under the hill the breakers of Lone Bay flung themselves like miniature parks of artillery along the rock bound shore. Hannah shuddered as she stepped out on to the porch and confronted a dirty, red-haired little varlet. "What is it, Hezekiah?" said she, sharply. "Now you can't be hungry, and I know you are not cold, for you are wearing uncle's old overcoat. I should like to know what sends you here now." "Please, miss," said Hezekiah, "it tain't I; it bees old Mrs. Kesley." "Mrs. Kesley again?" said Hannah, with a gesture of despair. "Why, it was only yesterday that unco was there." "It bees old Mrs. Kesley," stolidly repeated Hezekiah. "She be in a mortal hurry. Her have got mortal bad pain in her bones." "Pshaw!" said Hannah, more to herself than to Hezekiah, who added: "Her told I to run; then I ranned, I did, an' the wind 'most blow'd I off the hill." "Poor child!" said Hannah. "Thyra, give him a bowl of tea and a slice of gingerbread. But all the same, I am not going to disturb unco. He was out all night, and this morning he had to drive over to Castle Peak, and he has only just laid himself down for a nap. I'll take a bag of hops and a little quinine and some aconite, and drive over myself, with old Blackie, in the gig." "But how will Mrs. Kesley like it?" said Thyra, with a broad smile. "Oh, she won't care!" said Hannah. "And besides, she can't help herself. I shall tell her that unco sent me." And with haste and speed the doctor's niece bundled herself into a black and green shepherd-plaid shawl and a hood from which her plump, dimpled face looked out like a pink trailing arbutus from a snow drift. "Come, Thyra—come, Hezekiah!" she said. "Light the lantern and come along; we'll harness up ourselves. Unco must not be disturbed." Hannah Digby was one of those bright, spirited girls who understood a little of everything. She led out old Blackie and skillfully harnessed him while Thyra held the lantern, and the half-witted boy lent ready assistance with girths and buckles, and she was soon on her way to Mrs. Kesley's house, in the face of the howling March wind. "I suppose all doctors have such patients," she said to herself. "But what a blessing it would be if Mrs. Kesley would either die or get well!"

It was a long and dreary drive. Hannah was thoroughly out of patience, besides being chilled through, before she sprang out on the doorstep of Mrs. Kesley's old brick house. "I'd give her a piece of my mind," said Hannah. Fresh as a rose she came into the room—nobody bolted their doors or turned an inhospitable look on Green Mountain—bringing with her a fragrant accompaniment of pine wood breath and sweet hillside breezes. "Well, Mrs. Kesley, what is it now?" she said, tartly, as she saw a figure huddled up on the broad chintz sofa, just outside the coral-shine of the fire. "I do think it is too ridiculous of you to be sending for poor Unco Zalman every ache and pain that you have; and so hard as he has to work, too!" A groan was the only reply. "Now don't lie there and groan in that senseless sort of way," said Hannah, uncoiling the layers of the black-and-green shepherd-plaid shawl. "Because you know it won't do a bit of good. I don't want to be cross with you, but—" "Bless me, Hanner Digby, is that you?" said a voice behind her; and there entered on the scene a stout, short old lady, with a double chin overlapping her brown cap ribbons, and a candle in her hand—none other than Mrs. Kesley herself. "Why, where's the doctor?" "He couldn't come," said Hannah crisply. "He sent me." "Well, I never!" said Mrs. Kesley. "Who is—that?" said Hannah, with a quick inclination of her head toward the prone figure tossing to and fro on the lounge. "It's my husband's nephew from York State," said Mrs. Kesley—Lawrence Neville. Larry, we've always called him, for short. Stopped here on his way to Concord, and was taken sick." "Oh, what shall I do?" exclaimed poor Hannah, clasping her hands. "And I have been scolding him like all Billingsgate!" "Eh?" said Mrs. Kesley, upon whom the classic allusion was lost. "It's fever, I calculate; or p'traps measles. I don't remember that Larry ever had the measles as a child." "What will he think?" said Hannah despairingly. "La, he don't sense a word you say!" said the old lady. "He's as crazy as a cricket!" Hannah went up to the side of the lounge. "Hold the candle, Mrs. Kesley," said she, as she laid her light, cool hand on the fevered brow and felt the bounding pulse. "Why, you don't know nothin' of doctorin', do you?" said Mrs. Kesley, in amazement. "Don't I, though?" said Hannah, who had, in very truth, gleaned many a pathological experience among her uncle's patients. "This is nothing more than a heavy cold, Mrs. Kesley, accompanied with a slight sympathetic fever." "La!" said the old lady, again. "Let his feet be soaked in hot mustard-water, and kept warm by water-jugs," said Hannah, authoritatively. "Give him nine drops of the contents of this vial once in two hours. Use every effort to throw him into a profuse perspiration." "Folks used to steam themselves over a tea kettle when I was a gal," said Mrs. Kesley. "Ah!" said Hannah. "That was the old system." "La!" again repeated Mrs. Kesley. "But," calmly added Hannah, "we have improved upon all that now. You'll be sure and not forget the mint-drops, Mrs. Kesley. The pulse is frequent, but not alarmingly so. I think I should recommend cold-water bandages around the throat and on the forehead. And be sure that he is kept very warm. How strangely he looks at me! You are quite sure, Mr. Kesley, that he is delirious?" "As crazy as a croton-bug!" repeated Mrs. Kesley, rather at a loss for a comparison and remembering a peculiar variety of insect which she had known as a New York house-keeper thirty years ago. "Now he is shutting his eyes again," said Hannah, passing her hand with light, magnetic touches over his brow. "Poor fellow?" "P'raps," suggested Mrs. Kesley,

"I'd better get the big shears and cut off his hair. It's plaguety thick; and if his head has got to be kept cold—" "Oh, no, I wouldn't do that!" said Hannah. "It's such soft, curly hair! Let it remain." And she applied herself to measuring out sundry camphor-smelling powders from a pocket-case. "I will call early in the morning," said she, when the powders were all measured out. "La!" said Mrs. Kesley. Hannah Digby drove home, silently and meditatively, old Blackie picking his slow way along the dreary road, while the wind shrieked and the pines rustled mysteriously on either side of the highway. "Now I have got myself into a p'traps scrape," said she, addressing old Blackie's ears. "Shall I tell Unco Zalman, or shaan't I? Will he scold, or won't he? After all, the man has only got a touch of influenza. If congestion set in— Oh, pshaw, it won't! If there is any danger of pneumonia— But the man breathes as regularly as a pair of bellows. No, I'll risk it. I've begun the case, and I'll carry it through." While Larry Neville, smiling to himself in the firelight, thought: "How pretty she was!—and how velvety and cool her hand felt on my forehead! Oh, yes, I'll take all the powders between here and the Maine line if she says so!" The next morning the patient was decidedly improved. He was sitting up in the big rocking-chair, in front of the fire, while Pinkton's boy piled on more logs, and shuffled back and forth on errands for Mrs. Kesley. "Here she comes!" said Pinkton's boy, starting out of the window. "Who comes?" Larry asked. "The doctor-young-oman," said Pinkton's boy. "Will I tell her you've got well and don't want she no more?" But Larry only frowned at him. "Open the door for her, you young scamp!" said he. Miss Digby was as good as her word. She conducted the case triumphantly through to its end. It is just possible that Mr. Neville protracted his convalescence unnecessarily, but that is neither here nor there. "So Larry is going home to-morrow," said Mrs. Kesley. "Well, I declare I shall miss the boy!" "Yes," said Hannah, demurely. "But he's coming back again in May, he says." "What for?" said Mrs. Kesley. "To marry me," said Hannah. "La!" said the old lady. "We had a little explanation, you see," said Hannah. "He confessed to me that he was not at all delirious that first night, you know, while I felt his pulse and smoothed his hair. Wasn't that dreadful?" "Dear, dear!" said Mrs. Kesley. "And then," said Hannah, "I told him I wasn't a doctor at all—only a wretched impostor." "And what did he say?" said Mrs. Kesley. "He didn't seem to mind it in the least," Hannah said; and we are engaged. He says he fell in love with me that very first evening." "La!" said Mrs. Kesley. "And, after all," went on Hannah, "the whole thing can be traced back to that ridiculous blunder of Pinkton's boy. To think that I should owe my life's happiness to—Pinkton's boy!" Pinkton's boy himself was not at all surprised when he heard that Mr. Neville was engaged to Hannah Digby. "Yes," said he reflectively, "if I was a grown-up man, with a real gold watch chain, I'd marry her. Her's the kind of gal to suit I!"—Saturday Night.

Electric Shuttle.

The numerous accidents due to shuttles flying out of the loom have been reduced in a large English mill by magnetic action. The electromagnets are placed along the side of the shuttle and arranged to bear against a reed. By their attraction toward the wires of the latter, says the Philadelphia Record, they tend to keep the shuttle in the race. In many cases this will be found sufficient, but in addition there are a number of magnets in the face of the race, and an iron roller, provided at each end of the shuttle, which, being attracted by the magnets, keeps the shuttle from flying out.

ASBESTOS.

A WONDERFUL SUBSTANCE THE PARADOX OF MINERALS.

Quarried Just Like Marble Yet Feathery Enough to Float—Its Manifold Uses—Deposits More Valuable Than Gold Mines.

ASBESTOS is a wonderful substance. Its name comes from a Greek word meaning inconsumable. Fire will not burn it, acids will not gnaw it, weather will not corrode it. It is the paradox of minerals—for a mineral it is quarried just like marble. The fibers of which it is composed are as soft as silk, and fine and feathery enough to float on water. Yet in the mines they are so compressed that they are hard and crystalline like stone. Although the substance has been known for ages in the form of mountain cork or mountain leather, comparatively little has been learned as to its geological history and formation. A legend tells how Emperor Charlemagne, being possessed of a tablecloth woven of asbestos, was accustomed to astonish his guests by gathering it up after the meal, casting it into the fire and withdrawing it later, cleansed but unconsumed. Yet, although the marvelous attributes of asbestos have been known for so long they were turned to little practical use until about twenty years ago. Since that time the manufacture of the material has grown until it can take its place shoulder to shoulder with any of the giant industries of this country. Indeed, so rapid has been its progress and development that there is almost no literature of any kind on the subject, and to the popular mind it is still one of those dim, unexplainable things. Up to the '70s nearly all the asbestos used came from the Italian Alps and from Syria, but one day a party of explorers discovered a rich deposit in what is known as the eastern townships of Quebec in Canada. Companies were at once formed and in 1879 the mines were opened. The Canadian mines are located in a wild, rough country almost outside of the pale of civilization. The sides of the hills gape with great holes in which the men—mostly French Canadians—are at work. The veins of chrysotile, as the Canadian asbestos is called, are from two to four inches in thickness and are separated by thin layers of hornblende crystals. The nearer to the surface the veins run the coarser are the fibers and the less valuable. The mining is done by means of the most improved quarrying machinery. Holes are drilled in long rows into the sides of the cliffs by means of steam drills. They are then loaded with dynamite and exploded simultaneously by wires connecting with an electric battery in such a way that a whole ledge of the rock falls into the bottom of the pit at once. Then the workmen break out as much of the pure asbestos as possible, load it into great tubs or trucks, which are hoisted out by means or steam derricks, and run along to the "cob house." Here scores of boys are kept busily employed crumbling or "cobbing" the pieces of rock away from the asbestos and throwing the lumps of good fiber to one side, where it is placed in rough bales or sacks ready for shipment to the factory. The greatest work in connection with the mining of asbestos is in disposing of the waste rock and the refuse of the quarry. Only about one-twenty-fifth of the material quarried is real asbestos and the rocky parts have to be lifted out and carried away to the dumps at great expense. As the asbestos comes from the mines it is in small lumps of a greenish or yellowish hue and the edges are furried with loose fibers. The more nearly white the asbestos is the better its grade. The length of fiber is also of great importance, the largest being the most valuable. From the mines the asbestos is taken by rail to the manufactories in the United States. Here the lumps of the substance are emptied from the sacks and fed into the hopper of a powerfully built machine, not unlike an old fashioned stone process flour mill. They are crushed through a series of rolls until the fibers are all separated into fluffy masses, when they pass out along a trough and into a separator. Here the small pieces of stone and other refuse rattle out through a sieve and the long fibers are separated by a series of comb-like sieves into various lengths. The very short ones are taken out to the pulp-mills, where they are ground up fine for the manufacture of solid packing for steam pistons, mill board and other commodities. The longer fibers are gathered together, carded and spun into yarn, just like cotton or wool. After that the substance may be woven into cloth in various ways. The cloth is of a dirty white color and has a soapy feeling. The uses of asbestos are almost innumerable. Ground fine and combined with colors and oils by a secret process it makes a beautiful paint, which is said to go far toward fire-proofing the surface to which it is applied. Various kinds of roofing are also made by treating strong canvas with a combination of asbestos and felt and backing it with manilla paper. It is extensively used for roofs of factories, railroad shops, bridges, steamboat decks and other places where there is danger of fire. Nearly every one has seen the thick asbestos felt covering for steam pipes and furnaces. Asbestos cement is sometimes used for hot-blast pipes and fire-heated surfaces. As packing for locomotive pistons, valve stems and oil pumps it is almost indispensable. It is also made into ropes and mill-boards, which can be used almost everywhere. Asbestos cloth is being used more every year. Some States require theatres to use an asbestos drop-curtain to protect the audience if the scenery catches fire. The yarn is knit into mittens for workers in iron and glass. Goldsmiths use a block of asbestos to solder upon. Asbestos is found in a good many hundreds of places in the world besides Italy and Canada, but the fibers are nearly all too splintery and brittle. Rich deposits have recently been found in Wyoming, California and Montana. A good mine of asbestos is more valuable than a gold mine, and as the substance becomes better known and more used it will be still more precious. The time may not be far distant when firemen will be clothed in suits made from asbestos.—Chicago Record.

The Sea Threw Rocks.

An Astoria (Oregon) dispatch says the Lighthouse tender Columbine has returned from a trip to Tillamook Rock to investigate the damage to the light from the recent hurricane. The sea was too rough to approach within speaking distance of the rock, and the chief keeper sent his report to the steamer in a bottle, attached to a buoy. The report stated that the hurricane was the worst ever experienced on the coast. Mountains of water dashed against the rock on which the light stands, carrying away the top of the adjoining rock. Great waves leaped over the high walls, spending their force on the building, which trembled and rocked as if about to fall into the raging sea below. A crash of glass told of the damage caused by the waves. Fragments of rock, torn loose from the foundation, were hurled against the outer glass, which protected the costly lenses. The panes were all broken and the lenses ruined, and the clock machinery revolving the light rendered useless. The force of the wind and waves can be imagined from the breaking of the lights 136 feet above the water. At one stage of the storm the water was six feet deep in the living room and four feet deep in the living rooms, which are eighty-eight feet above high water. A monster rock, weighing about a ton, was hurled upward by the waves, and, coming down, crashed through the roof of the living room, everything movable being washed away. Supplies were destroyed and the tanks flooded with salt water.—Northwest Magazine.

An Eye to the Main Chance.

The Philadelphia Record tells of a careful citizen who refuses to walk in the middle of the street when the sidewalks are slippery, because if he should slip down and sustain an injury on the sidewalk he could recover damages from the city, while he could not if he was walking in the middle of the street.

Japan is almost as large as California, having 147,000 square miles, while the American State has 158,000.