

NEWS OF THE PASSING WEEK.

[Continued from Page Four.]

Denver & Rio Grand Western at their present capitalization would create a capitalization of over \$84,000,000. The capitalization of the Colorado Southern and the Colorado Midland would add \$58,000,000 or a total of \$142,125,000, providing all should be placed in one corporation, as is said will be the case.

The Indian secretary, Lord George Hamilton, in the house of commons, London, Tuesday, said the government had no intention of again considering proposals for the free coinage of silver in India. The coinage last year was 16 crores, nearly as much as the higher free coinage year, 1877-78. Gerald Balfour, president of the board of trade, declared no steps had been taken to call an international bimetallic conference.

A report has been received at the war department, Washington, from Gen Wood, showing that the death rate for the city of Havana for the month of February was 19.82 per 1000, which is said to be below the average of most American cities. The death rate, it is said, steadily decreases and this is taken as an indication of improved sanitary conditions. During the last February of Spanish rule in 1898, it was 82.82 per 1000.

A half dozen vessels of the British Mediterranean squadron have been located long the course of the Ophir so as the communicate by wireless telegraphy with telegraph stations along the coast to report to Vice Admiral Sir John Arbutnot Fisher at the squadron headquarters at Malta, Island of Malta, the exact position of the duke and duchess of Cornwall from time to time as well as to test the strategical value of the wireless telegraphy and to pay a compliment to the duke and duchess.

"Auld Lang Syne."

Out in a Western forest, where a little log cabin had stolen a bit of ground for itself in the very shadow of the forest trees, a lady traveller found herself benighted. The dwellers in the cabin were simple, kind hearted people, who had lived so long in their primitive surroundings that they missed neither the world nor its conveniences. Everything looked as if they were contented and happy, but the visitor, by what seemed like an accident, learned that one heart was sad. Ella Higginson tells the story in the Seattle Times.

After supper, the traveller, who had observed a little old fashioned melodeon in one corner of the room, went over to the instrument and was about to open it. The action was arrested by the movement of a young girl, who came hurriedly to the stranger, and with a look of fear on her face whispered:

"Oh, you mustn't play! Grandma don't let us touch the melodeon since grandpa died. She says music is only for happy folks."

For a minute the lady hesitated; then with a pitying glance at the old, bent figure by the fire-place, she opened the melodeon, and touching the yellow keys softly began to sing in a low, sweet voice the words of "Auld Lang Syne."

Each word as it dropped from her lips quivered through the silence that had fallen upon the room. The child stood beside the visitor, awed and frightened, but the old white-haired woman by the fire only leaned forward and listened.

Presently, as the full meaning of the simple, tender words stole in upon the narrow, grief-hardened mind, her hands began to tremble, her head sank upon her breast, and tears fell from her eyes. When the song was finished, she was sobbing like a weary child that in its sorrow no longer refuses to be comforted.

The Beefsteak was Good.

It may be a question whether Thackeray cared very much for the pleasures of the table, but at least he wrote as if he did. Take the following reminiscence from one of his essays, and judge whether it could have been more lovingly composed if the subject had been a romantic one, and not merely—a beefsteak. He says:

After the soup, we had what I do not hesitate to call the very best beefsteak I ever ate in my life. By the shade of Heliogabalus! As I write about it now, a week after I have eaten it, the old, rich, sweet, piquant, juicy taste comes smacking on my lips again; and I feel something of the exquisite sensation I then had. I am ashamed of the delight which the eating of that piece of meat caused me.

G. and I had quarrelled about the soup; but when we began on the steak, we looked at each other and loved each other. We did not speak; our hearts were too full for that. But we took a bit, laid down our forks, looked at each other and understood each other. There were no two individuals on this wide earth, no two lovers billing in the shade, no mother clasping her baby to

her heart more supremely happy than we. As you may fancy, we did not leave a single morsel of the steak; but when it was done, we put bits of bread into the silver dish, and wistfully sopped up the gravy. I suppose I shall never in this world taste anything so good again.

A Race With Death.

The New York Tribune recounts an exciting adventure which befall a man and his wife on the northern coast of Long Island, one of the rare occasions in winter when the salt water freezes hard enough for trips to be made on the ice.

As every one knows, the northern coast of Long Island Sound is broken up by a succession of small peninsulas and islands, which have been utilized for building sites for country houses. These points of land, formed by the deep indentations of the sea are very near each other, so that houses that are miles apart by land are often directly opposite each other, with only a short stretch of water between.

It was one evening, after a pleasant little dinner at the opposite house, that Mr. and Mrs. B. announced their intention of returning home on their skates. Their host remonstrated.

"There is a southerly wind blowing," said he, "and some fisherman told me today that the ice wouldn't last long. You know how rotten salt-water ice is when it begins to go. You had much better let me lend you a trap, as you told your man not to come back, and return home by land."

But Mrs. B. insisted. "We skated this afternoon all over the bay, and the ice was perfectly strong," she said. "I have set my heart on skating home by moonlight."

So she pinned up her skirts and covered her dinner-gown with a long coat, and they started.

Heavy clouds obscured the moon from the start, and they had gone only a short way when a fine rain began to fall.

"Let us go back," proposed Mr. B., "and take the trap they said they would lend us." But his wife would not hear of it. She bitterly repented of her obstinacy, however, when they reached the middle of the bay and heard through the gloom sharp reports like pistol shots.

"It is the ice breaking up!" shouted Mr. B. "Skate for your life!" How they got over the remaining distance neither clearly knows. Crack after crack opened before them; the water rushed up about their ankles as their weight sunk the great pieces down for a second. A single stumble would have ended matters for both of them, and the icy water would have rushed up and engulfed them if they had rested a second on the rotten salt ice. Only their fleetness saved them, and the fact that the tide was coming in, jamming up the ice on the shore instead of leaving an impassable distance of water along the edge.

When they finally reached the shore they threw themselves down on the frozen ground, too much exhausted even to speak or to take off their skates.

When Mr. B. got his breath his shouts brought the servants to their aid, and they were soon in the house, comforted by hot drinks and a blazing fire.

A Scholar's Pets.

If the following illustration of animal instinct is less remarkable than one given in a zoology class by a student, who said he knew a fellow who had a sister who had a "tame jellyfish that would sit up and beg," it is not without interest, for it concerns two intelligent dogs once the property of Prof. Max Muller. Says the London Telegraph:

Max Muller's dogs were quite as notorious a part of Oxford as himself. He had two dachshunds, one black and tan, called Waldmann, another red, called Maunerl, own brother to Geist, Matthew Arnold's dog, for whom the poet wrote a splendid epitaph.

They were generally well behaved, but they were not above making incursions into the gardens in Professor Muller's neighborhood, and even the artiscocratic Maunerl was sometimes seen with his head in an odoriferous garbage barrel.

However their master thought he might even be able to prove that his dachshunds could distinguish colors. He had one basket for his black-and-tan dachshund, Waldmann, and another for his red dachshund, Maunerl. The black dog looked best Professor Muller thought, on a red pillow, and the red dog on a blue one. In these two baskets they slept for years. When their master said, "Blue bed," Maunerl would go into his; when he said, "Red bed," Waldmann would jump into his. They never mistook one for the other.

One day Mrs. Muller was sitting in the drawing room when Waldmann came in evidently much disturbed. She asked him if he wanted to go out, to have dinner to have water. No, it was none of these; but he kept running to the door, then waiting and looking back. At last Mrs. Muller

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got up and followed him, and he led her to the dining room.

There in the red bed, lay a new dachshund just brought from Germany, and Maunerl was in his own blue bed. 'Waldy' stood between, looking first at one, then at the other, evidently saying, 'and where I ask am I?'

The dog was driven out, and then Waldman got in, quite content.

In a Businesslike Way.

Men of experience are not anxious to give notes, as a rule, but there is an old negro in Mount Pleasant who, says the Pittsburg News, once insisted on doing so—and did it an original way.

He had bought a cow from a Captain Jordan. Burgess, the negro, hadn't the money just then, but Captain Jordan knew he would pay, and told him to take the cow. That was too informal to suit Burgess.

He knew that notes and other papers of that sort passed between white men, and he insisted on a note in this transaction, Captain Jordan told him to draw up one to suit himself. When he presented it, it read:

"I, Davy Burgess, do hereby promise to pay Captain Jordan thirty-five dollars for the spotted cow when I has the money to spare.

"DAVY BURGESS."

"Now," he said, "I'll jes' keep dis en take de cow."

He put the note into his pocket and drove the cow away. When he was ready to pay the thirty-five dollars, he went to Captain Jordan with it.

"Heave's yo' money," he said, counting it out. "An' now, sah," he remarked, with considerable satisfaction, "dat transaction may be considered closed."

A Shadow on Her Life.

Somebody once asked a tranquil old resident of Nantucket if her life had always run as smoothly as she could wish; if no great sorrows or disappointments had ever come to mar its serenity.

The old lady sat looking out of the window for a moment, and then turned to her questioner with a little smile on her sweet face.

"I suppose you'll think it's foolish maybe," she said, "but I did have the great disappointment, and I've never forgotten it. There was a man that came to the island once with a hand organ and a monkey. He got as far as the corner of our street, and I thought he was coming right this way, but he didn't."

"I was housed with a cold and couldn't go out to see him and his monkey, so I only caught just a glimpse of them. They played half an hour in the next street."

"Disappointments like that stay by folks all their lives," she added, after a sympathetic ejaculation from her visitor. "It was more than thirty years ago, but I've never ceased regretting I didn't see that monkey. I've been wonderfully blessed in every other way, dear; but that organ-grinder never came to the island again, never!"

Signalling Under Water.

The late Prof. Elisha Gray, shortly before his death, completed a series of experiments which demonstrated that sound can be readily conveyed to considerable distances through the sea. An 800-pound bell was let down about 20 feet in the water through a well-hole in a specially constructed vessel, the clapper of the bell remaining under the control of those aboard the ship. When the bell was struck, the sound was plainly heard in the hold of another vessel a mile away. By lowering a speaking-trumpet into the water, the listeners could hear the sound three miles, and with the aid of an electrical receiver connected with a telephone diaphragm, the strokes of the bell were audible at a distance of 12 miles.

Scientific Farming in Germany.

Recent reports to our Department of Agriculture indicate that farming is conducted in Germany on more improved and

scientific principles than anywhere else in the world. The German farmers employ less machinery but more chemistry. They pay very close attention to the fertilization of the soil. Yet with all their efforts, and all the advantages of their advanced science they are unable to fully supply the demand of the population of Germany for breadstuffs. They do supply seven eighths of that demand, but the remaining one-eighth, which has to be imported from abroad, amounted in 1899 to more than 50,000,000 bushels of wheat alone.

A Pair of Runaway Kites.

Two kites, which were the leading members of a flight of five sent up last summer from the Royal Aeronautical observatory near Berlin, broke away from their companions, and, dragging a long wire which touched the ground and extended two miles behind them, fled before the wind almost a hundred miles before they were brought down to the earth. The resistance of the wire trailing over the land sufficed to keep the kites properly presented to wind, and their lonely journey lasted through an entire night. When the kites started on their remarkable break for liberty they were at a height of more than two and a half miles.

An Insect with a Spring-Board Nose.

Among the curious insects of the Malay Peninsula recently studied by Mr. Nelson Annandale of the London Zoological Society, is one called the lantern-fly, which is remarkable for its sudden leaps, made with out the aid of its wings. It was only after he had carried a specimen back to London and carefully examined it that Mr. Annandale discovered that a curious projection on the front of its head, a kind of nose with a crease in it, was the leaping organ. When bent back under the abdomen and suddenly released it sent the insect flying.

Association of Ideas.

The three year old son of a flat dweller, who had heard his father complain occasionally because the janitor was drunk and 'in no condition to attend to his work,' went to the flat above his own last week and rang the bell. When Mrs. Blank answered it, the young man said:

"Please, Mrs. Blank, can't your little girl come down and play with me?"

"Not today," said Mrs. Blank; "she is in no condition to play."

"What's the matter?" asked the boy anxiously. "Is she drunk?"

Argon and Its Companions.

Since the discovery of that new constituent of the atmosphere, argon, a few years ago, four other previously unknown gases have been found, and Professor Ramsay recently gave an account of their properties before the Royal Society. They are helium, neon, krypton xenon. Of these, xenon is the heaviest and helium the lightest. In the vacuum tube they are very beautiful, neon being extremely brilliant and of an orange-pink hue, while krypton is pale violet and xenon sky-blue.

Africa's Frollicsome Dwarfs.

Sir Harry Johnston, who recently visited the dwarf people of the Congo forest, studying their habits and photographing them and their dwellings, says that notwithstanding their apt like and hideously ugly appearance, they are usually of a winning and cheerful disposition, and their dancing is frolicsome, gay and full of pretty movements, but markedly different from the motions of the negroes. Their intelligence as a rule, well developed.

Betrayal.

Out of the chilling rain and fog That hid the mountains from our sight, A dusky cloud came floating down At early dawn of light. The cloud dropped softly to the lake Amid a sound of whirring wings, And spread into a graceful line A host of living things. We hailed the burst of joyous life, The sunless day seemed dark no more; When suddenly a shot rang out And echoed round the shore. The water-fowl were nature's guests, But they were doomed; and all that day The shots pealed forth and on the waves The dead and dying lay. At last into the brooding mist, They vanished, softly as it came A broken flock, with plumage torn, After that day of shame. Mary Thacher Higginson.



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