

## Romance of the Sponge.

There's more romance about a sponge than the ordinary prosaic lover of tubbing imagines. Perhaps that is the reason why many a small boy's darling ambition is to own a bath sponge as big as his father's. He may catch a hint of crystal waters and blue sky and dusky natives and palm groves and strange lands in the dead and dried sponge. Like it he certainly does.

A well-known New York publisher says that one of the tragedies of his life binged upon this boyish passion for sponges. His father had a beautiful big Mediterranean sponge, and it hung upon a nail in the bath room, where it roused the son and heir, aged 6, to mad covetousness. All the ordinary boyish ambitions paled before his longing for such a sponge. He didn't want to grow up and be a pirate, or own a candy store or fight Indians. He yearned for maturity only in order that he might have a Mediterranean sponge as big as his porridge bowl.

One day he found 10 cents. His father didn't believe in pocket money and cents were scarce with him, but a whole dime! He retired to the woodshed to think. One could do almost anything with a dime, but the vital burning problem to be solved was what would be the very best way of spending the unexpected wealth. It didn't take him long to decide. He would buy a sponge as big as his father's, bigger perhaps. In fact he would buy the biggest one the drug store man had if it took the last cent of his capital to do it.

So he walked proudly down the street and entered the drug store with a swagger. There was a glass case full of sponges. He picked out the largest, and standing on tip toe so that the clerk could see him over the counter, he said with dignity:

"How much is that sponge?"

"Three dollars and a half," said the clerk politely.

The young Croesus blinked hastily and swallowed violently. This world had been toppled about his ears, but he was game. By a heroic effort he regained his breath and his voice.

"I—I'll take a chocolate soda," please, he said, quite firmly, and watched with dry eyes while his 10 cents disappeared in the cash drawer.

Sponges aren't so cheap as they look, though one can buy inferior quality for very little money. The best sponges in the market come from the Mediterranean and a few, almost as good come from the north coast of Cuba. The quantity of the latter is so small that they make little impression upon the market. Four fifths of the sponges brought to New York are from Key West and the West Indies, the very cheapest grade being imported in great quantities from the Bahamas. Nassau, the capital of the Bahamas, is the greatest sponge market of the world, and about 900,000 pounds of sponges are shipped from there to the United States every year. New York dealers, who absolutely control this output, ship a large share of the sponges to European markets.

"Sponging used to be a very interesting and picturesque performance," said a New York wholesale dealer to a Sun reporter. "About nine-tenths of the native population of the Bahamas is interested in one way or another in the industry, and in the old days the natives owned their boats and were spongers on their own hook."

"They took small schooners provisioned for five or six weeks, loaded their wives and children aboard, and set sail for the sponging grounds. Sometimes they got a load in a week or two. Sometimes they were out six weeks. If the weather was good, everything went easily, and the excursion was one festive and protected picnic. Cooking was done over a fire built upon the sand in a box lashed to the side of the boat. When the weather was bad, no cooking was done; but, in good weather the fire flamed up from every boat, all evening, and as there were usually a good many boats on the sponge grounds at once, the sight was picturesque. The darkies all lounged around the fires and every one of them could play some sort of musical instrument and sing. I tell you there was music worth hearing out among those spongers in the tropical rights. The Nassau Sponge Exchange runs the whole business now, and some of the zest seems to have gone out of the thing."

"There are no sponges right around Nassau, but the exchange is there, and each of its members sends out his own fleet, which is busy all the year around. The merchant has a number of schooners, of from ten to twenty tons. Sometimes he owns two boats. Sometimes he owns thirty."

He engages the negro captain for his boat, and the captain's own crew. The owner provisions the boat, and the provision included in the contract is always the same—so many pounds of flour, rice and salt pork, and so many quarts of gin, for each sponger. If a man takes wife or children along, he must provide the extra food for them.

"It isn't such bad fun to be a sponger if the weather is good and if one doesn't mind sharks. The boats are made with heavy glass set in their bottoms, and the water down there is so clear that one can look through this square of glass right down to the bottom of the sea. Sometimes instead of the glass in the boat the men carry a glass box, that is, a wooden box with a glass bottom. They hold this over the side of the boat with the glass just below the level of the surface; and, no matter how rough the water is, the bottom may be seen through the glass. The boat cruises around until it strikes a place where the sponges are thick. Then it chorsan."

"If the water is shallow the sponges are raked up with rakes a good deal like those used for oysters. If the water is deep the spongers strip and dive for the sponges. You ought to see those fellows swim and dive. There's nothing finer of the kind in the world. They are more at home in the water than on land. A man will dive down in 200 feet of water, fool around on the bottom until you think he's dead, and then bob up serenely, having gathered all the sponges for two or three yards around."

"The waters are full of sharks, but no body seems to mind them. If one happens to be swimming along right beside the boat the men wait until he passes before they dive. That's all. When there are children on board they are everlastingly falling overboard, but nobody pays any attention to that. Even the babies can swim like fish."

"When the live sponge is brought up and thrown on deck it looks more like a lot of uncomformly nasty liver than like anything else and it smells to heaven. Right there's where sponging ceases to be attractive. The spongers drink tremendous quantities of gin, to keep them from being chilled by being so much in the water; but nobody seems to get drunk."

"As soon as a good number of sponges have been collected, the boat puts in to the nearest land, and the sponges, which are dry and dead by this time, are put in keels. That is they are put were salt water can reach them, but are picketed so that they can't be washed away. After a day or two of that, they are washed by hand and laid out in the sun to bleach. Part of the men stay and watch them, while the others go off after more. When a full load is ready the boats put back to Nassau. There the sponges are sorted according to quality and put in piles on the floor of the exchange. The dealers walk around, examine the lots and write the prices they are willing to pay on slips of paper, which are handed to the clerk. He reads out the name of the highest bidder on each lot. There is no bargaining, no talking, no second chance. It is perhaps the most quiet and serene market in the world."

"Each dealer carries his purchases off to his own sponge yard, a place enclosed in stone walls and partly covered by a shed. There hosts of colored people, men, women and children, clip the sponges, cut away the roots, wash out or cut out the lumps of hard sand, &c. There is a great art in sponge clipping. The aim must be to cut out all objectionable matter with as little injury to the shape and size and texture of the sponge as possible. Often the cuts are invisibly sewed together, so that no ragged hole will show. The bits of sponge clipped off are used for packing purposes or for fertilizer."

"The sponges would in their normal state, take up too much room in shipping, so they are pressed into bales, and the decree to which they are capable of compression may be understood, from the fact that the natives boast they can pack a bushel of sponges into a cigar box. The sheep's wool sponge, which is the finest variety, sells in Nassau, for about \$1 15 a pound while the cheapest quality brings about 25 cents a pound. The owner of the boat takes half the profit of the load, and the crew divides the other half, so the men's earnings vary, but they seldom exceed 40 cents a day."

Modern doctors are inclined to frown upon the sponge. They say it is a refuge for microbes, big and little, and that the

lack of care, in regard to bath sponges, is responsible for all sorts of dreadful happenings.

"It is simply astounding that decent people can use sponges as they do," said a New York doctor. "A sponge should always be carefully washed, in very hot water, after being used; and every few days, it should be washed in an antiseptic."

### Ready to Start.

A lecturer in a California town had in his audience a lank young man who drank in every word with flattering avidity, and whose eyes bulged with delight at the pictures thrown on the screen.

As the evening wore on, the lecturer got into the habit of looking at this entranced listener, and after a while had almost the feeling that the lecture was intended for him alone.

This evidently was the idea which possessed the lank young man as well, for when the lecturer said:

"And now I will ask you to go with me two miles into the jungle," he sprang to his feet.

"Anywhere you say, mister," he shouted, with kindling eyes, "if you can just hold on long enough for me to cut home and get my gun!"

### Persistency Of the Flavor.

A Western correspondent sends us this story, which may be taken with a few grains of salt as to the material allegation contained therein:

A country customer had bought some fish at a village grocery store,—whether codfish, mackerel or herring is not necessary for the purposes of the story,—and at her next visit to the store she entered a complaint.

"They taste," she said, "exactly like English breakfast tea."

"I'm not surprised, ma'am," replied the grocer. "Those fish were caught in the Boston Harbor."

## SUFFERING WOMEN.

### A MESSAGE OF HOPE TO THE WEAK AND DEPRESSED.

A Grateful Woman Tells of Her Release From the Agonies That Afflict Her Sex After Three Doctors Had Failed to Help Her.

The amount of suffering borne by women throughout the country can never be estimated. Silently, almost hopelessly, they endure from day to day afflictions that can only fall to the lot of women. The following story of the suffering and release of Mrs. Charles Hoeg, of Southampton, N. S., ought to bring hope and health and happiness to other sufferers. Mrs. Hoeg says:—"For nine out of the thirty-two years of my life I have suffered as no woman, unless she has been similarly afflicted, can imagine. I could suffer and yet have lived. Three weeks out of four I would be unable to move about and, indeed, at no time was really fit to attend to my household duties. I consulted physicians—three of the most skillful doctors in the county of Cumberland at different times had charge of my case. These all agreed in their diagnosis, but the treatment varied; and while at times I would experience some relief, at no time was there any hope given me of a permanent cure. Many a night when I went to bed I would have been glad if death had come before morning. I never had much faith in proprietary medicines, but at one time I took a half dozen bottles of a blood making compound that was highly recommended. This, like everything else, failed to help me. There seemed to be not a particle of blood in my body. My face was absolutely colorless, and my appetite almost entirely deserted me. I often saw in the newspapers letters testifying to the merits of Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, but nine years of suffering and discouragement had made me too sceptical to see any hope of relief, when doctors had failed to effect a cure. But at last I came across the story of a cure near home—that of Mr. Moses Boss of Rodney. I knew that at one time he had been regarded as a hopeless consumptive, and his cure through Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, determined me to try them. I had not taken two boxes before I began to feel better, and grew confident of a cure. I kept on taking the pills, all the time feeling new blood in my veins, activity returning to my limbs, and the feeling of depression gradually wearing away. To many women it may seem incredible that the mere making of new blood in my veins could restore to a healthy condition misplaced internal organs, but this has been my happy experience. My pains have all left me, and I am now as healthy a woman as there is in this place. This health I owe to Dr. Williams' Pink Pills, which have rescued me from a life of suffering, if not from the grave."

Dr. Williams' Pink Pills are especially valuable to women. They build up the blood, restore the nerves, and eradicate those troubles which make the lives of so many women, old and young a burden. Palpitation of the heart, nervous prostration speedily yield to this wonderful medicine. These pills are sold only in boxes, the trade mark and wrapper printed in red ink, at 50 cents a box, or six boxes for \$2 50, and may be had of druggists, or direct by mail from Dr. Williams' Medicine Company, Brockville, Ont.

## Dr Chase Makes Friends Of Hosts of Women

By Curing Their Peculiar Ills—Dr. Chase's Nerve Food a Surprising Restorative for Pale, Weak, Nervous Women.

As a result of much confinement within doors, and the consequent lack of fresh air and healthful exercise, most women not only lose much in figure and complexion, but also suffer more or less from serious bodily derangements as the result of thin, watery blood and exhausted nervous system.

More than nine tenths of the cases of diseases peculiar to women are directly due to a weakened condition of the nerves, and can be cured thoroughly and permanently by taking mild outdoor exercise, breathing plenty of pure, fresh air, and using Dr. Chase's Nerve Food to form new blood and revitalize the depleted nervous system.

It takes time to build up the system anew, to fill the shrunken arteries with new rich blood, restore the wasted nerve cells, and renew the activities of the bodily organs, but the persistent use of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food will accomplish these results and bring health and happiness to weak, nervous and suffering women.

Mrs. Chas. H. Jones, Pierceton, Que., writes: "For years I have been a great

sufferer with my heart and nerves. I would take shaking spells, and a dizzy, swimming feeling would come over me. Night after night I would never close my eyes, and my head would ache as though it would burst. At last I had to keep to my bed, and though my doctor attended me from fall until spring, his medicine did not help me. I have now taken five boxes of Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, and it has done more good than I ever believed a medicine could do. Words fail to express my gratitude for the wonderful cure brought about by this treatment."

Mrs. Margaret Iron, Tower Hill, N. B., writes:

"Dr. Chase's Nerve Food has done me a world of good. I was so weak that I could not walk a mile without any inconvenience. Though 76 years old, and quite fleshy I do my own housework, and considerable sewing, knitting and reading besides. Dr. Chase's Nerve Food has proved of inestimable value to me."

Dr. Chase's Nerve Food, 50 cents a box, at all dealers, or Edmanson, Bates & Co., Toronto.

### MRS. MAYBRICK'S FRIENDS ACTIVE

Little Hope of Her Immediate Release—Statements of Her Case.

The friends of Mrs. Maybrick are not abating their appeals for her liberation which they renewed on the king's accession although so far the authorities have made no favorable sign. She was visited by her mother two days ago, and the latter has again returned to Rouen. She is not encouraged to hope that the release will take place before the normal period of a woman's life sentence is exhausted, which under the present regulations and with a good conduct certificate, would be about a year hence. But if King Edward should be crowned before then, and the customary acts of clemency that accompany a coronation included remissions of sentence it would mean immediate freedom in Mrs. Maybrick's case. The present Home Secretary, Mr. C. T. Ritchie, is the only occupant of that office in this generation who is not a lawyer and not therefore averse by professional training to reopen any case judged as were his predecessors who had to consider the case, Messrs. Matthews, Asquith and Ridley, all barristers. A gentleman described as honorary secretary of the Maybrick Committee issues a statement this week in which he says:

"I am constantly receiving letters from all parts of the country, and even from abroad, urging the committee to fresh action. We are forced to the conclusion that there are powerful influences at work to keep Mrs. Maybrick in prison. This is especially noticeable when any movements are made to obtain her release, for almost immediately a counter agitation is started, and currency is given to all sorts of wicked statements calculated to prejudice the chances of this unhappy woman in the public mind."

"It is a fact that a certain land syndicate on the other side of the water stands to lose several millions of dollars the moment Mrs. Maybrick is released. For some time prior to her arrest an agent of the syndicate tried to purchase an enormous area of real estate in which Mrs. Maybrick and her mother possessed a reversionary interest. Having no occasion to see their rights, they refused but when the enormous cost of the defence at the trial put the ladies in monetary difficulties the case was otherwise."

By some mysterious coincidence the agent appeared at the critical moment and offered to buy a small portion of the land for £1,000. The deed was actually signed by Mrs. Maybrick without being read during the time the jury were deliberating on their verdict. Eventually it was found that the whole area of land, estimated to be worth \$8,000,000 had been technically included in the deed. Mrs. Maybrick's mother, who is now practically penniless and infirm, took steps to invoke the American law on behalf of justice, and the title of the syndicate has been suspended. Sir Matthew White Ridley was appealed to to allow Mrs. Maybrick to make an affidavit in prison relating to this deed, but even this simple privilege was refused.

"The miserable prisoner, who is at Aylesbury Goal, is constantly in the prison infirmary; though but 41 years of age she is losing her sight and her teeth—in fact, she declares that it is only the thought of her two children and her aged mother that keeps her alive. She is broken by despair, and I fear she will not live long."

There is not one person in a thousand in this country who believe that any business document at all is signed by man or woman on trial for murder in the interval when the jury is debating the question of life or death. The invariable custom is for the prisoner to be alone with his warders in a room adjoining the public court, and to this room no person concerned in busi-

ness irrelevant to the trial has any possible access. The Honorary Secretary proceeds:

"Every item of new evidence in favor of Mrs. Maybrick is duly forwarded to the Home Office, and we have clearly shown that not only was Mr. Maybrick an arsenic eater, but that he actually did not die as the result of arsenical poisoning. To a manufacturing chemist—the son of the late Sir Valentine Blake—Mr. Maybrick said: 'I take arsenic when I can get it, but the doctors won't put any in my medicine except now and then a trifle, and that only tantalizes me.'"

"We have also sent the Home Office an affidavit by Capt J. Fleming, of the steamship Ulundi, who declares he saw Mr. Maybrick put some arsenic in his food at his office and say, 'I am taking arsenic enough to kill you. I find it strengthens me.'"

"You may remember that at the trial Mrs. Maybrick said she had mislaid the prescription of the face wash which contained arsenic, and her statement was not believed. Well that prescription has been found in an old bible which belonged to Mrs. Maybrick, and a Parisian chemist has sworn an affidavit to the effect that he once made up the prescription for Mrs. Maybrick, or Miss Chandler as she then was."

"He includes in his statement an extraordinary passage from an American appeal declaring:

"The present moment is propitious for the release of the unfortunate lady for high reasons as an act of international comity, between two great peoples united by a common language and lineage. Blood is thicker than water, and every cause of irritation between these two countries should be speedily effaced, and that complete and full unification of our people, so greatly desired in America, and as we believe in England, quickly consummated. To pardon the accused, even if guilty, would not detract one iota from that wealth of merciful kindness and goodness which has shed a halo upon the crown of England."

Americans are themselves the best judges of the value of this sort of thing which evokes no comment beyond that it does harm to the cause it is intended to help."

### Scotching to the Lungs, Throat and Nasal Passages.

Santa Monica, Calif.—I find Catarrh of the nose of more value than any other remedy I have used; it is pleasant and soothing to the membranes of the lungs and throat and nasal passages. If anything will completely cure Bronchial Affections, or Catarrh, I am sure it is Catarrh. It cured me and I do not wish to be without it. A. H. Calkins.

From Maine to California comes the same story of the successful power of Catarrh over seasons of the nose, throat and lungs. It goes wherever the air breathed goes, and is sure to reach the root of the trouble. Neither snuffs, ointments or stomach medicines can do this, and must inevitably fail. Catarrh is pleasant, prompt, and guaranteed to absolutely cure Catarrh, Bronchitis and Asthma. Druggists or by mail. Complete outfit, \$1.00; small size, 25c. A trial sent for 10c. by N. C. Polson & Co., Kingston, Canada, or Hartford, Conn., U. S.

"We are now, my dear fellow citizens, threatened the excited campaign orator, 'facing a crisis that will certainly overtake us in the near future unless, with resolute purpose, we draw it out of the underground caverns in which it forever secludes itself from the sight of men!'"

MORE COLDS are cured by Pyral-Balsam than any other one remedy. It cures quickly and certainly. Bronchial affections give way readily to it. Manufactured by the proprietors of Perry Davis' Pain-Expeller.

"Do you consider prohibition a failure?" I do, sir—most emphatically. "May I ask your business?" "I am a Kansas druggist, sir."