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THE NEW YEAR.

A song for the Old
While it's knell is tolled,
And its parting moments fly!
But a song and a cheer
For the glad New Year,
While we watch the Old Year die!
Oh! it's grief and pain,
Ne'er can come again,
And it's care lies buried deep;
But what joy untold
Doth the New Year hold,
And what hopes within it sleep!

A song for the Old
While it's knell is tolled,
And the friends it gave so true!
But with hearts of glee
Let us merrily
Welcome in the bright, bright New!
For the heights we gained,
For the good attained,
We will not the Old despise;
But a joy more sweet,
Making life complete,
In the golden New Year lies!

A song for the Old
While it's knell is tolled!
With a grander, broader zeal,
And a forward view
Let us greet the New,
Heart and purpose ever leal!
Let the ills we met,
And the sad regret,
With the old be buried deep;
For what joy untold
Doth the New Year hold,
And what hopes within it sleep!

—*George Cooper.*

POLLY WANTACRACKER.

A NEW YEAR STORY FOR THE GIRLS.

"She is the meanest girl I ever saw in my life," said Alice Hays.

"A regular little miser," added Mary Reynolds.

"Who is?" asked Jessie Fergus, the new scholar.

"Why, that girl over there in the corner by the register nibbling away at a soda cracker. She never brings anything but a cracker or two for her lunch, 'cause she's afraid, I suppose, that if she brought any goodies some of the girls might want her to go halves."

"We call her Miss Polly Wantacracker."

"What is her real name?" asked Jessie.

"Oh! her real name's Stella Burton. But Miss Polly Wantacracker is a much more suitable one according to my way of thinking."

"Perhaps she is poor and can't afford any goodies for her lunch," suggested Jessie, who was a sweet tempered, kind hearted girl.

"Well, if she's poor, I don't see how she can afford to come to such an expensive school as this and dress as nicely as she does."

"That dress she's got on (doesn't it fit horribly, though?) is made of cloth that costs two dollars a yard. I saw some like it in my father's store last week. And she gets pocket-money every month from somebody. The letters come to Mrs. Blossom's care, and I've seen Miss Polly Wantacracker open them and take money out."

"I peeped over her shoulder once," said Mary Reynolds, "and spied a five dollar-bill. 'Aren't you going to treat?' says I. 'Not this time,' says she, with a perfectly sickening smile, and after that she never opened her letters in the school room. Look at her now. She's glancing this way. Don't she look ashamed? She knows we're talking about her."

"Poor girl!" said Jessie; "to me she looks more grieved than ashamed. And isn't she pretty? I wish I had her lovely, blue eyes and beautiful, curly hair. It curls naturally, that is plain to be—"

"Oh! there now," interrupted Alice Hays, spitefully, "the girls won't think much of you if you are going to stand up for Miss Polly Wantacracker, I can tell you that."

"I shall stand up for her," declared Jessie, with sturdy Scotch self-assertion, "until I am convinced that she deserves the harsh things you say about her—no matter what the girls think. I like to judge people for myself, and I haven't been here long enough to form any decided opinion about anybody. Maybe in a month or so I'll find out whether Stella Burton is 'a regular little miser' or not. And until I do, I'm most certainly not going to take sides against her."

But when "a month or so" had passed Jessie reluctantly admitted that she had come to the conclusion that Alice and her friends were right. She had watched the daily nibbling of the crackers at lunch time and had seen the reception of the monthly allowance. She had noticed the costly material of which Stella's dress, cloak, hat, and even aprons were made, and had been much mortified by the girl's persistent refusals to share her—Jessie's—candies, cakes, or fruit.

"It's because she's afraid you might expect something in return," said Mary Reynolds, with a scornful toss of her head. "When she first came here, six months ago, we told her that all the girls took it in turn to bring sweets for the class, and she turned as red as a beet and said, 'please leave me out. I can't afford it.'"

"I wonder what she is saving her money for?" Bella Smythe joined in. "Perhaps to buy a gold watch. But I'd do without a gold watch forever before I'd be such a stingy thing."

The Christmas holidays drew near, and the pupils of Blossom academy started a subscription list for the purpose of raising the means with which to purchase for their principal and teachers some handsome gift. "I can contribute nothing," said Stella, when they laid it on her desk. "That's too bad," sneered Alice Hays. "We'll have to take up a contribution for you." And they did, and the next day at recess Stella was presented most ceremoniously with a paper bag of cheap crackers. Not a word did she say when it was placed in her lap, but when school [illegible] over Mary Reynolds, whose wa[illegible] the same direction as hers for [illegible] two, saw her hand the bag [illegible] woman who kept a [illegible] the corner, "Did [illegible]ess?" said the [illegible] heard of it. "Never," in [illegible] School [illegible] of Jan- [illegible] Mrs. Blossom, the principal, gave a welcome-back New Year party to her scholars and their near relations. Stella came with the rest, dressed in a delicate lavender silk polonaise, looped over a dark purple velvet skirt, and embroidered with bunches of lovely purple pansies, a bunch of real ones serving her for a breast-pin, and another making, by contrast, her golden hair look still more golden.

"How sweet she looks," whispered Jessie Fergus to Bella Smythe.

"Who?" answered that young lady. "Oh! Miss Polly Wantacracker. I must confess I don't see any sweetness about her. I'm going to sit beside her at the supper table and see if she only eats crackers then. And she did. She sat on one side of Stella and Mary Reynolds on the other, and while eating from the heap of dainties on their own plate they kept a sharp look-out on the heap on hers. She ate very slowly, but, one by one, cake, mottoes, bunch of grapes, almonds and raisins quickly disappeared. "She never ate them," whispered Bella to her cousin Caroline, who sat next her. "She's eaten nothing but some macaroons and her ice cream. They're gone into her pocket. We've got her now. Come to the dressing-room when she starts for home and you'll see some fun. Pass the word to the other girls."

So when Stella started for the dressing-room, a short time after supper, she was followed by nearly all her school-mates. And when she found herself seized on the right by Bella Smythe and on the left by Alice Hays, while Mary Reynolds sought for and found the pocket in her skirt, and in the pocket were cake, the mottoes, the grapes and the almonds and raisins that had been served to her at the supper table. "Oh, for shame, Miss Polly Wantacracker!" burst from the lookers on. "They are mine," said Stella, defiantly. "I did not steal them. They were given to me and I have a right to do with them as I please."

"For shame!" said the girls again. And "no ladylike girl would do such a thing," added Bella Smythe. "Dressed in silk and velvet, too," said her cousin Caroline. "With a gold chain and locket, and getting $5 a month spending money," said Alice Hays.

Stella looked from one scornful face to another; the tears came to her eyes, but she forced them back and with trembling lips she turned to Alice and said: "Your carriage will be here for you in a few moments, will it not, Miss Hays?"

"It will, Miss Polly Wantacracker. And what then?" was the reply.

"Will you take me to my home in it? And—"

"Well, if that isn't sublime coolness," interrupted Alice.

"And will you take," Stella went on, not noticing the interruption, "Miss Smythe, Miss Reynolds and Jessie Fergus with us if they will go?"

"Indeed, I'll go!" exclaimed Jessie, springing to the girl's side. "And I'm sure Mary and Bell will, too. Girls, you must. I feel that we have misjudged Stella, and that now she is offering us a chance to do her justice. And in what better way could we—could anyone—begin the New Year than by setting right, as far as possible, the wrong of the old?"

There was no resisting this appeal. And when a few moments after some one called out, "Miss Hays' carriage!" away went the five girls to stop in a little less than half an hour before the door of a neat brick house in a pleasant old-fashioned street.

There they got out of the carriage and Stella led them in at the front door and up the stairs until they reached the attic, where she softly pushed open the door of a low-ceilinged room and an old woman sitting in a rocker by a tiny stove, started out of a doze to welcome her. "Dearie's been as good as gold ever since—" she began, and then stopped suddenly and stared in surprise at the unexpected visitors "Thank you, Auntie Brown. Come girls," said Stella. And following her to the bed in the corner they saw the sweetest, prettiest, little girl sleeping there that ever went to dreamland. "What a darling!" exclaimed they. "Who is she?" "My sister," answered Stella, proudly. "And she has no one to take care of her but me, except Auntie Brown, who lives on the floor below, and is kind enough to look after her a little when I am obliged to be away. And now I will tell you how we live. A very distant relation of mine (I have no near relatives but Dearie) owns our school building, and it is through some arrangement between Mrs. Blossom and him that I am being educated there. And I study very hard, as you know, for I believe the better education a person has the better her chance of succeeding in the world. And beside his kindness in this way, my fifth cousin sends $5 a month. That $5 just pays my rent, and the dollar and a half that I earn a week by knitting woolen baby shirts and socks for a store near by, is all the other money I have. My clothes are made (I make them myself, and that's the reason they so fit badly, Miss Hays) from the wardrobe of my dear mother, who became very poor before she died, and could leave me nothing else. The gold chain and locket she gave to Dearie. Dearie was two years old when mamma left us; she is four now; and during the two years she has been all mine I have tried to make her life happy. To night I told her that I was going to see Santa Claus—I could give her nothing but a cheap doll for her Christmas—and that I wouldn't bring her from him some goodies—"

"Don't say another word, don't say another word," cried Miss Hays. "What young wretches we have been."

"Why didn't you tell us before?" asked Bella Smythe.

"Because I thought it would seem too much like begging, you are so well off, compared to me. Beside, I've never really wanted for anything; and as for Dearie, she's one of the merriest children in the world, and thinks her sister, Miss Polly Wantacracker—"

"Don't! don't!" begged her listeners. "Please let all that be forgotten. And do, we beg of you, let us four girls be aunts, cousins, grandmothers, or something, to Dearie from this day forth."

"Bless her heart, she's awake," said Jessie.

And the little one tossed the curls out of her eyes—raised her head from the pillow—sat up in bed—looked gravely from one to another with big, blue, wondering eyes, and she lisped in a swee[illegible], chirpy, baby voice, "How do, ladies, me wish you a happy New Year."—*Margaret Eytinge.*

Silk-Making in China.

The home manufacture of silk in China is almost universal, and affords remunerative employment to hundreds of thousands of women. In many cases the wives and sisters of poor laborers become the mainstay of the household. The process is very simple, and as follows: In a moderately warm room a matting is strewn with fresh mulberry leaves. Upon these are placed several hundred silk-worm eggs. As fast as the silk worms eat the leaves fresh ones are supplied, care at the same time being taken to remove all those mildewed and moldy. The feeding is done once or twice a day, and takes about fifteen minutes each day. At the end of about forty days ninety per cent. of the eggs have become large cocoons. These are scalded, slit at the end, and the dead worm removed. The empty cocoon is then put on a small bamboo stick that fits it loosely. The end of the thread is then pulled out and attached to a small piece of lead, shaped like a top, from whose upper surface projects a long, thin stem, terminating in a hook. The top is then twirled, and the weight and rotation serve to pull out the thread and spin it at the same time. When two feet are thus spun the spinner grasps the top, reels the spun thread upon the stem and fastens it with a running noose upon the hook. The top is again twirled and another two or three feet extracted and spun. Again the top is grasped, the noose untied by pulling the thread from beneath the hook, and the second reeled upon the stem. When enough thread is spun and reeled upon the stem the latter is removed and serves as a bobbin in the subsequent weaving. A new stem is inserted and the process re-begun. This ingenious but simple method produces a thread homogeneous and perfectly smooth. The latter is now cleaned and, if desired, colored according to the pattern to be made. It makes a silk finer than the finest cambric. To increase its thickness the thread is doubled, trebled, or quadrupled, and then respun. The loom varies according to the wealth of the weaver. The common type is a simple affair, similar to the rag carpet looms of New England. These, in skillful hands, turn out a superior kind of dress goods. More complicated looms are at times employed, but are not popular. The entire outfit in China costs about $1 for the eggs, $2 for the loom, and ten cents for the top and stems. The leaves are gathered by the children, and the labor is supplied by the women of the household. Silk in China varies from fifteen cents to $4 a yard. Upon this basis an intelligent and active woman in China makes twenty-five cents a day without interfering with her domestic duties. This is equal to $1.75 in this country. There would seem to be, therefore, a splendid field in our country for this industry.—*Chicago News.*

How to Buy a Horse.

An old horseman says: If you want to buy a horse, don't believe your own brother. Take no man's word for it. Your eye is your market. Don't buy a horse in harness. Unhitch him and take everything off but his halter, and lead him around. If he has a corn, or a stiff, or has any other failing, you can see it. Let him go by himself a way, and if he staves right into anything you know he is blind. No matter how clear and bright his eyes are, he can't see any more than a bat. Back him, too. Some horses show their weakness at tricks in that way when they don't in any other. But, be as smart as you can, you'll get caught sometimes. Even an expert gets stuck. A horse may look ever so nice and go at a great pace, and yet have fits. There isn't a man could tell it till something happens. Or he may have a weak back. Give him the whip and off he goes for a mile or two, then all of a sudden he stops in the road. After a rest he starts off again, but he soon stops for good, and nothing but a derrick could move him.

The weak parts of a horse can be better discovered while standing than while moving. If he is sound, he will stand squarely and firmly on his limbs without moving any of them, the feet flatly upon the ground with legs plump and naturally poised, or if the foot is lifted from the ground and the weight taken from it, disease may be suspected, or at least tenderness, which is a precursor of disease. If the horse stands with his feet spread apart, or straddled with his hind legs, there is a weakness in the loins and the kidneys are disordered. Heavy pulling bends the knees. Bluish, milky cast eyes in horses indicate moon blindness or something else. A bad-tempered horse keeps his ears thrown back. A kicking horse is apt to have scarred legs. A stumbling horse has blemished knees. When the skin is rough and harsh, and does not move easily to the touch, the horse is a heavy eater and digestion is bad. Never buy a horse whose breathing organs are at all impaired. Place your ear at the side of the heart, and if a wheezing sound is heard it is an indication of trouble.

Health and Laughter.

Nothing is so productive of health as a contented mind. We the other day heard of a physician of this city who was jocularly represented as a preacher, when, with a friend at a Sunday-school picnic, which the regular minister had failed to attend, the doctor turned the tables on his jocose friend by promptly accepting the invitation to preach, and in doing so preached probably the shortest sermon on record. Taking the stand he read the text, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine." Then turning to the congregation of sad young faces, re-read the text and said, "Therefore, my young friends, laugh and grow fat. Let us pray." The way the children tumbled out of the seats and took to the enjoyments of the occasion, proved it to be one of the most successful sermons ever preached.—*Washington Health and Home.*

St. Stephen's college, Delhi, boats of a prodigy in the person of a blind student named Chanda Singh. He cannot read or write, but has such a wonderful memory as to be able to repeat all his text-books—English, French and Urdu—by rote, and to rapid[illegible] sums in arithmetic, even the m[illegible] a of any number of figures by a [illegible]dly in front [illegible] large.

THE LAND OF THE BANANA.

GLIMPSES AT VILLAGE LIFE IN HONDURAS.

How the Indians Gain a Living from Small Fruit Plantations—Their Modes of Life.

A letter from Truxillo, a seaport town of Honduras, Central America, to the New York *Times*, says: Scattered along the Honduris coast, north of Truxillo, are many little villages where a few half-breed Indians, and perhaps a foreigner of lighter color, make their homes, and where the former gain a meagre subsistence from fruit plantations. You cannot see these villages as you pass along the beach on shipboard, and the whole country looks like one vast wilderness of green. In the middle of the day not a sign of industry nor of habitation is evident, but toward night, when the sun is hiding behind the high mountains, that form a rich background to the green below, scores of canoes or dories will be seen putting forth from the shore. Each one will be filled with fruit. In the stern the owner of the few bunches of bananas sits guiding with his paddle the light craft, dexteriously steering it through the rollers and fetching his bananas dry to the ships side. In the bow sits his wife or son, who bends the paddle with a strong arm. Throwing the bunches upon the ship's deck he hauls himself up, receives his money for the cargo he has brought, drinks with unrelaxed features a glass of whisky or wine that the captain has brought him, and then returns to his home.

Indian life in Central America is not to be desired. The natives live in little thatched huts, with no comforts, surrounded by vermin, and spend most of the time in chewing sugar cane. A few cocoanut trees stand in front of the house, and back of it a few banana plants are shooting up. In every village, beside the Indians, there are half a dozen Caribs, perhaps one or two Spaniards, who, on account of political or other troubles, have found it necessary to emigrate to a new State. These men are not of the best class, and mixing with the Indians, a half-breed population has been the result, and a bad one at that. Every Indian who has made a little money or got a start in his plantation, immediately discovers that he is a Spaniard. There are hundreds along the coast who will pass themselves off for Spaniards, but who have not one drop of Spanish blood in their veins. The only difference between an Indian and a half-breed is that the latter has a little more cunning and an aptitude for making more money.

During the night after a steamer has been off the village bedlam reigns. It becomes a time of carousing, drunkenness and gambling. Every Indian has learned to gamble. The Spaniards taught them that, and they are ready learners. Twenty one is a favorite game, and dice playing is practiced to a great extent, with all the simple ways of gambling. Monte is perhaps played as much as any game. Poker is a little too intricate for the average Central American Indian, though many of them who have sufficient money allow themselves to be fleeced by Spaniards in the great American game. Gin is the national drink of Honduras, and gin does not improve the humor of the Indian. Then he has a native drink, a sort of pulque, which Hondurians are supposed to drink—liquor brewed in their own country only, on which the government relies for its income to a large extent. Liquor from the States will find its way in, however, and no one need go thirsty for want of it.

Late in the evening the Indians have become thoroughly excited and their money is nearly used up. Reeling through the streets, shouting and fighting, they make the night hideous. The fighting once commenced, it keeps on and a wholesale spearing goes on. I saw a man with twenty-seven scars on his back and shoulders with one or two cuts on the neck. He had received them in village fights. You could not persuade that half breed to leave his native village, however, and he would remain there until he was cut to pieces. No matter how drunk a native may get he will not attack an American in that condition, or any foreigner of position. Indeed, they always hold an American in reverence and think he carries a revolver. The Central American Indian respects a revolver, and especially one in the hands of an American. An old planter said he had gone for four years without a revolver, but every Indian and Carib firmly believed he had one. Revolvers are being imported into these villages nowadays in large quantities, but somehow the Indian does not get the knack of using them with any accuracy, and they are in a measure harmless enough with them. The danger is greater to themselves than to others. The gambling and drinking is kept up all night, until the money is spent and the noisy inhabitants tired out.

Christmas is the great time for carousal. Hence it is that at Christmas time the planter with a little capital can step in and purchase new plantations for a mere song. The native must have money for his Christmas carousal, and his plantation must go if necessary. It is in this way that Spanish residents have built up their large banana farms. The Indian or half breed who sells out his little place, after his grand spree finds himself without means of support. He goes immediately to work, or rather sets his wife to work, and clears up a new one. He gets it well started and has cut some fruit when Christmas comes around and away it goes for rum. This is a great reason why the Central American never gets ahead any. Again, they are easily cheated, and will sometimes make contracts for their fruit, which will keep them in poverty. They have not the moral power to stand up for themselves, and readily fall in the trap of designing schemers.

What little work is done on an Indian half-breed's plantation is done by his women, and that is little enough. No attempt is made to obtain a full yield from the ground. Undergrowth of all kinds is allowed to choke off the young plants. When the time for gathering the fruit comes the women often have to cut a path out or drag their bananas through, or back them out, as they call this work. While the women are thus at work the [illegible] in front [illegible] trees, some naked and some with an apology of covering, growing up without any education and without an incentive to get out of the state their parents have lived in. Yet they are half-civilized, and each year, perhaps, sees them in a little better condition than the last. There is hope for them only through education and connection with the enterprising foreigners who come into the country, with whom the native must contend. Leave them to themselves and in a year they would be in the same condition that Cortez found them when he visited the little city of Truxillo and built his wall there, which has constantly been a reminder to them of the civilization of the world outside. Plantations that are owned by the natives are never kept in good order, and the fruit raised is consequently not what it should be. What the country is capable of in this line of industry alone has never been realized by its inhabitants, and it is only the enterprising American who, settling on the rich fruit land along the coast, discovers that he can have a perfect garden at his feet.

Senate-pages vs. Reporters.

The following extract is from a United States Senate page's recollections, published in *St. Nicholas:*

While we were employed to wait upon the Senators, "outsiders" would often encroach upon our good nature and ask us to do things. We always refused to attend to these matters, if they were put in the shape of a demand instead of a request. There were several newspaper reporters in the gallery over the Vice-President's chair, to which I have referred, who frequently ignored our rights. A reporter would wish to ask a question of a Senator, and, not caring particularly to come down the stairs and send in his card, would drop a note from the gallery, expecting one of us to pick it up and hand it to the Senator to whom it was addressed. This was a rather officious request sometimes, as we were tired and worn out from excessive running, and would hardly feel like going up to where the reporter was, in the roundabout way in which we should have had to go, to deliver him the information called for, and then come all the way back. But, whether we were tired or full of activity, we did not like the matter-of-course manner in which some of the reporters had demanded our services, and we would often let the note remain where it had fallen on the carpet. Sometimes, out of pugnacity, we would surround the paper and walk around it, gazing at it apparently with great curiosity, but evincing no inclination to touch it. Finally, when the reporter would lean over the edge of the gallery, and, in a very obsequious manner, would bow his head and smile and go through a lot of gymnastics to indicate to everybody else in the galleries that the "squib" would not "go off," and he would be exceedingly obliged if one of our excellencies would graciously convey the paper to its desired destination, one of us would pick it up; but not until then.

New Year's Gifts.

The social observances of the first day of the New Year appear to have been very similar in all ages. From the earliest recorded commemorative services, we find reference to feasting and the interchange of presents as usages of the day.

In olden times, as now, they enjoyed finding out what their friends wished, without their knowledge. The Roman emperor required his noble subjects to bring him magnificent offerings on New Year's Day. Suetarius alludes to the bringing of presents to the capital; and Tacitus makes a similar reference to the practice of giving and receiving New Year's gifts.

This pleasant custom was continued by the Christian kingdoms into which the Western Empire was divided. "In Merrie England" we find numerous examples of it, even as a part of the public expenditure of the court, as far down as the reign of Charles II.; and, according to antiquarian writers, the custom of interchanging presents was common in all classes of society. We are told that Queen Elizabeth especially on this day received jewels and splendid apparel from her citizens

The old Romans not only made presents upon this day, but they guarded every word and act, superstitiously believing the first day of the new year to be an omen that controlled the following days.

Emerson calls our tokens of compliment and love for the most part barbarous. "Rings and other jewels," says he, "are not gifts, but apologies for gifts. The only gift is a portion of thyself."

Is not the philosopher right?

Speed of the Arab Horse.

The popular notion about the speed of the Arab courser is, I think, erroneous. Great speed is not his strong point; the chances are that on any ordinary race course the best Arab in the world would be beaten by a second-rate English race horse. These Arabs were not, of course, first-rate specimens of the race, but they were certainly not bad ones. A fortnight or so afterward, when I was at Tebessa, the commandant showed me an English thoroughbred, which, he said, had easily run away from every Arab he had ever tried him against. But what was far more remarkable about this horse was that once acclimatized and accustomed to the hard life and hard fare of the Arab horses he quite equaled them in hardiness and endurance, as had been proved in the course of many expeditions and tours of inspection among the tribes of the district.—*London Society.*

Fish and Fowl at One Shot.

I send you a particular incident that happened with me while going around the shore of a pond near Kalamazoo, Mich., in search of crippled ducks. The morning's fight being over, I fired at a duck in the bushes, and upon wading out to get it I noticed considerable commotion among the bushes just beyond the duck, and supposed, of course, that I had killed another duck. You can imagine my astonishment when, instead of a duck, I found that a two pound black bass with a No. 4 shot in its head was making the disturbance. I have seen a pigeon and a squirrel killed with the same charge, but when you get fish and fowl at the same time it simply beats the record.—*Forest and Stream.*

SCIENTIFIC AND INDUSTRIAL.

A late investigation shows that Australia contains 108 species of snakes—thirty-five of them harmless, and seventy-three venomous.

Leather car wheels are made in France. The inventor is M. de la Roche. Untanned bufialo hides are cut into strips, and built up into solid disks, which are strongly represented by two iron rings after they have been subjected to hydraulic pressure.

The finest grades of crude rubber come from Para, the trees being tapped and the sap gathered by means of paddles which are dipped in a tub of sap and held over a smoky fire that the coating may harden. This process is repeated until a cake of gum of the size and shape of a squash is formed, when the paddle is cut out and the lump is ready for market.

In lobsters and crabs the mouth is situated underneath the head, and consists of a soft upper lip, then a pair of upper jaws provided with a short feeler, below which is a thin lower lip. Then follow two pairs of membraneous under jaws which are lobed and hairy, and hairy, and next three pairs of foot jaws. The horse-shoe crab has no special jaws, the thighs answering the purpose.

A new process for disinfecting rags supposed to be infected with the cholera contagion consists in driving into the bales a series of hollow screws, through which sulphurous air or superheated steam is forced. In experiments recently made the best results were obtained with the sulphurous air. Five minutes after the screws were thrust into a bale it was found that a perfect fumigation had been accomplished, and the bale, on being torn apart, was found to have been permeated by the sulphurous fumes in every part.

Travelers in polar regions have survived exposure to a cold as great as seventy-five degrees below zero Fahrenheit. On the other hand, the inhabitants of some parts of the globe are forced to endure at certain periods a natural temperature considerably higher than 100 degrees above zero. A still greater heat—greater even than 200 degrees—may be borne by the human body for a short time. Brewster mentions that Chantry and five or six friends remained two minutes in the sculptor's drying furnace, bringing out a thermometer which stood at 320 degrees. Chantry's workmen entered the furnace when the temperature was as high as 340 degrees.

Wooden Legs for Veterans.

"We have the names of about 18,000 veterans, who have applied for repairs," said Mr. Ramsey, who has charge of the artificial limb department of the surgeon-general's office, to a *Star* reporter. "You know we fit them out with new sets of legs, arms, or other apparatus every five years. It is now getting toward the close of one of those periods, and we have repaired 14,000 veterans."

"Aren't the one-legged men dying off?" asked the *Star* man.

"Now that's an interesting question. I guess they are. I presume many of them whose names we have have since died, but I can't tell certainly. Now, as I've said, every five years we reconstruct the maimed veterans of the army, but they have their choice to take the repairs or the money. The allowance for a leg is seventy five dollars, for anything less than a leg is fifty dollars. From one period to another many old veterans drop out. Some of them make one or two applications, and then we never hear from them again. Naturally, we conclude when they don't send for their money or legs, they must be dead and have no more use for them. But we don't limit ourselves to men who have actually lost their limbs. A man who has simply lost the use of his limbs is entitled to a wooden leg or arm, as the case may be, though he can't wear them. So you see we can't keep a record of all the one legged men, but I guess there aren't as many as there used to be. Yet there are lots of them, and many who haven't any legs at all, and some with neither legs nor arms. Then there are many who have not lost their limbs, but who have no power to move. There is one man who gets two arms and two legs allowance, who cannot move any part of his body except the little finger on the left hand, which he can bend the least bit. There is another, a New England soldier, whose arms and legs are dead, and who is blind in both eyes. Not long ago a man came in here with no arms and sat down at one of the desks and wrote with his teeth. It was not particularly fine writing, but you could read it. I know of another man—he was in the sharpshooters' service—who can't be stood on his feet because he is bent in the back, so that his head would strike the floor first. Think how many years these men have suffered, and many of them are still living! Why, there's hardly enough left of them to hold together.

"Willow wood generally, and there are variety of styles. They can take their choice. Some take the straight stick and stump it through life. Some legs have rubber feet and rubber joints. There is one made with a very fine 'ball and socket' joint at the foot. There are many men with wooden legs whom you would never suspect. We furnish limbs to some brave and distinguished men. There are several officers of high rank who come here for arms and legs. There is a young lieutenant we recently supplied with one arm who is, I believe, the only survivor of the Custer massacre."—*Washington Star.*

Holiday Mince-Pie.

In the old time the Christmas season properly began on the 16th of December (described in the prayer-book calendar as O Sapientia), and ended January 6, with Twelfth-night. When the learned Dr. Parr was asked what day in December it was proper to begin eating mince-pie, he said, "Begin on O Sapientia; but please to say Christmas-pie, not mince-pie—mince-pie is Puritanical." If there is any merit in eating mince-pie, as this association of it with the holy season seems to imply, then we have a certain test of the piety of the Pilgrims to New England, for they and their descendants did not hesitate to eat mince-pie any day in the year they could get it, and had so much grace that they could take it with impunity for breakfast on a summer m[illegible] [illegible] Magazine.

WINTER DAYS.

The winter days are coming, John,
The skies around us lower—
The summer birds have southward flown,
The frost is on the flower;
And chilly winds blow loud, John,
Where late the joyous strain
Of feathered warblers charmed the ear,
By forest, field and lane.

The winter days are coming, John,
And scanty is our store,
A blight is on the harvest field,
The wolf is at the door;
Our children cry for bread, John,
When there's no bread to give—
A course has come to poverty,
That we may ne'er outlive.

The winter days are coming, John,
And you have labored long—
Through weary weeks, with hopeful heart,
You've toiled the fields among;
For all your hard work done, John,
And all the prayers I've said,
For all the joys we dreamed were ours,
There's wretchedness instead.

The winter days are coming, John,
The tempests gather near—
The rich may smile beside his grate,
And fill his home with cheer;
But 'tis not so with us, John,
Crouched beneath the storm,
With blessed babies, dearly loved,
And naught to keep them warm.

The winter days are coming, John,
The frost is on the pane—
There's snow upon my aching breast,
There's frenzy in my brain;
But, ah! my love for you, John,
Grows tender, day by day,
The world that pilfers round my heart,
Can ne'er steal that away.

—*J. N. Matthews.*

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

A hard case—A watch's.

Contempt of court—The fellow who has just been refused.

It takes a pretty good tailor to patch a dog's pants.—*New York Journal.*

The latest returns—Husbands getting home from the club.—*Georgia Cracker.*

Marriage promotes longevity among men, notwithstanding its tendency to produce premature baldness.—*Boston Courier.*

A London physician says death has no sting. Did he ever press his finger on the fighting precinct of a dead hornet?—*Lowell Courier.*

A hen's heart beats 150 times a minute. Perhaps that is the reason why its body wabbles so much when a woman "shoos" it.—*New York Journal.*

A Stock Yards' young lady at a ball the other evening referred to her gentleman escort as an Indian, "for," said she, "he's always on my trail."—*Chicago Sun.*

Dame Nature most unequally
Bestows her gifts, 'tis said
Man combs his own but Nature, she
Combs every rooster's head.

—*Judge.*

A man arrested in northern Texas for counterfeiting had six different dies. If he had been arrested for stealing a horse he would have had only one die.—*Siftings.*

A scientific paper says that the ear of a clam is at the base of the foot. It must be funny to see a clam walking around listening for earthquakes.—*San Francisco Post.*

There is a glacier in Alaska moving along at the rate of a quarter of a mile a year. It acts very much like the average small boy on his way to school.—*Burlington Free Press.*

Sixty Harvard freshmen have dropped their Latin, eighty their Greek, and 100 their mathematics. None of them have dropped their baseball or their boating, however, and college culture is still safe.—*Lowell Courier.*

A New York editor has been struck by the fact that so many young men are now wearing glasses, and asks: "Are Americans growing weak-eyed?" If the glasses are of the single-barreled pattern, it is more likely that they are growing weak-headed.—*Norristown Herald.*

HUSKING TIME.

Now the huskers are arrayed on
Many a dusky barn's wide floor,
Every swain beside his maiden
Round the heaped-up golden store.
With what blissful expectation
Do they watch the corn appear,
Till the sudden osculation
Loud proclaims the rare red ear.

—*Burlington Free Press.*

A lady—a French lady—is showing a visitor the family portraits in the picture gallery. "That officer there in the uniform," she says, "was my great-great-grandfather. He was as brave as a lion, but one of the most unfortunate of men—he never fought a battle in which he did not have an arm or leg carried away?" Then she adds proudly: "He took part in twenty-four engagements."—*Chicago Herald.*

Chinese Child Venders.

We read in a Hong Kong letter to the Cincinnati *Enquirer* that in Nankin and Kai-fun children from six to twelve years of age are sold by tens of thousands. Not hired out or transferred—but sold for a small sum in cash, in consideration of which the progenitor, by a tacit understanding, renounces all parental rights, even the right of inquiring into the fate of his offspring. The purchasing trader may be the middle man of a well-to-do childless couple, or the agent of a wholesale tea planter, or a coolie breeder, raising and training slaves for a foreign market. For the equivalent of $15 any commission peddler will undertake to "adopt" the same number of young Mongols in the name of any employer, and at very short notice. The authorities might object to a formal and public purchase, but the meaning of the adopting transaction is well understood and connived at. It is a lesser evil, and few parents ask any questions. Rather than see their children starve they will resign them to any fate—with one exception. The orthodox Buddhists seem to have evinced occasional scruples in delivering up their youngsters to the proselytizing missionaries, whom they suspect of all sorts of practices. But even such scruples can be readily outweighed by a few extra dollars.

There are said to exist a few supporters of the vi[illegible] that cholera is merely an [illegible] of ague.

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