

The Moma Diamond.

Over and over again John Marsden had been told that his nocturnal rambles would bring him into contact with unpleasant citizens. If he had contented himself with walking upon the main highway that ran past his suburban home, his midnight walk which he said was absolutely necessary to his getting sleep when he went to bed, would have been safe enough. But there were byways in that neighborhood, some of them narrow, many of them with evil reputations, all of them very dark and entirely deserted by honest citizens at a quarter to 1 in the morning—which was John's favorite hour for a solitary stroll—and these queer byways were his favorite strolling paths. Again, if he had had nothing about him to tempt a footpad his friends would not have been so solicitous, but, for a man in which there was no suspicion of poptery, John Marsden carried a remarkable collection of valuable jewelry about his person. There was his watch, with a circle of brilliants and a remarkable enameled miniature set in the back, presented to him as a souvenir by a famous foreign actress whose life he had saved in a railroad wreck; there was also a wonderful old intaglio brooch, an heirloom, which he wore in a huge signet ring, and lastly, there was, as a general



A HAND FLEW STRAIGHT AT HIS THROAT

thing, the Moma diamond, which ought to have been kept in a museum or a safety vault, but which John Marsden persisted in wearing constantly as a talisman.

He said he wore the Moma diamond for luck, but no one who knew him believed that the man had even one superstition. It would have been worth the while of any footpad to engage professional assistance just to get possession of the Moma diamond, and hundreds of men connected with that profession that Mr. Marsden always carried about him, would have been glad to do so.

And at last the warnings of John Marsden's friends were justified. He was walking on a dark, autumn night along one of his favorite byways, with a row of blank, windowless brick walls on his right, and on his left a ditch and rail fence, when there was a sudden leap of something from the ditch, and a hand flew straight at his throat.

Instantly—as if he had been expecting to meet the attack just at that spot—John Marsden's left fist darted out and up, and there was a sound like the word "Clow," followed by another like the fall of a bale of hay on the earth. Then he leaned forward cautiously, and the next moment he was glad of his caution. The man leaped to his feet almost as soon as he was glad of his caution, and then, instead of drawing knife or pistol, he went at John in the most approved pugilistic fashion.

Very likely, if the fight had been in a twelve-foot ring, by daylight, begun in regular form, the other man might have won the Moma diamond—supposing it so have been the prize. As it was the footpad had been taken by surprise, and, still worse, Marsden's very bony fist had fitted itself snugly into the delicate space between the triangle of the lower jaw and the Adam's apple. The mere fact that his antagonist had recovered himself so quickly after such a blow assured Marsden that he had no ordinary fighter to deal with. Still, that first blow placed the other man at a disadvantage, and the fistfights did not last long. In less than two minutes Marsden's assailant was back in the ditch from which he had sprung, only now he lay kicking convulsively and sobbing in a way that meant, as Marsden knew, internal hemorrhage.

Now, when you have been assaulted on a lonely road in the small hours, and the assault has been with the evident intention of stealing your valuables, you are generally inclined rather to go your way rejoicing, and leave well enough alone, if you have been as fortunate as to knock the intending thief silly. That is what most people would do. But Marsden was in many ways unlike most people. He sat on the edge of the roadside ditch, lifted the man's head, and fanned his face until, in the darkness, he could detect signs of recovery.

"Feeling better now?" he said.

The only answer was a struggle to sit up, which ended in the beaten man sinking back exhausted. Then there was another pause, and Marsden began to be really alarmed. He had almost made up his mind to go and look for water when the patient suddenly made one more violent effort, succeeded in sitting up, and stared at him.

"Who are you?" were the first words that came, in a hoarse, half-strangled whisper. "You're not a policeman?"

"Oh, no," said Marsden, "I'm not a

policeman. Hope I haven't hurt you badly. Now, look here, young fellow, a man that can box like you isn't a common thief. That's sure. If you had been a common thief, you would have come at me with a pistol or something.

The prostrate man said nothing.

"See here," Marsden went on. "I can easily hand you over to the police, you know. Oh, you needn't try to get up and run. I could give five yard's start and catch you in 100, as you are now. I'll let you go. I'll take you to my house and fix you up ship shape, if you'll do one thing. Tell me why you have turned highway robber just to get the Moma diamond?"

At that question the man seemed to start. Marsden waited a few seconds, and then repeated, "Tell me about it."

"Where did you get it?" was at first the only answer roused by him, and that in a vehement, angry whisper. Then the man in the ditch went on: "You're right. I didn't want your watch. The diamond is mine."

"Aha!" said Marsden. "I thought so. I knew there was something wrong about that blessed diamond. Did you see me wearing it?"

"No."

"Did some one tell you I wore it as a scarf-pin?"

"Yes."

"Well, you can't go on talking in the condition you are in. Come to my house and let me give you a drink. It isn't far."

There must have been something very frank and convincingly honest in the ring of Marsden's voice, for the man actually did consent to go with him, even leaning on his arm for support on the way.

They entered the house together, stealthily, for everyone else was in bed, and the lights all out. Marsden struck a match and lighted his highwayman friend to his own den, where he soon found means to stimulate his powers.

"I am a stranger to you, you see," said the guest, recovering after a mouthful of diluted brandy.

It was not the face of a thief, certainly. It was rather the face of a well-bred, if not intellectual, man, but it was unshaven, and suggested that its owner had fallen upon hard luck. Otherwise, it was not at all an uncommon face.

"You have treated me fairly," he said, "so far, at least. Tell me where you got my diamond, and I'll tell you how I lost it."

"Your diamond—if it is yours," said Marsden, "was won by me at a game of cards. I staked \$1,000 in American money against it. The game was played in the smoking-room of an ocean steamer."

"Was it an elderly man you were playing with?"

"Yes. A Brazilian. I believe—wore the stone in a ring."

"The upstart scoundrel! Anything peculiar about his eyebrow?"

"One eyebrow had a cut across it that gave it a peculiar tilt."

"That's right—the left eyebrow. And the gentleman always spoke as if his mouth was full, didn't he?"

"He did. You have described him perfectly. He was a Brazilian."

"I beg your pardon. He was my maternal uncle, Charles August Froehman. My father borrowed money from him to buy shares in his confounded bogus enterprises, and gave him mortgages on everything we possessed. It was understood, when the mortgage was drawn on our household effects, that my mother's jewelry was not included. At my father's death the rogue put in a legal claim for the Moma diamond, because, he said, it was set in a ring which my father wore and not my mother's. The lawyer advised my mother to let it go, for fear of the expense and uncertainty of litigation. In that way the scoundrel got possession of a



"I AM A STRANGER TO YOU."

jewel worth as much as three times all the money he had lent my father. When his stock-watering tricks were found out he had to leave England. That was five years ago."

"That was when I met him," said Marsden.

"And now at last I have been obliged to come to this country and try to earn a living as a car conductor. I can't complain of that. It was always an idle, good-for-nothing fellow."

"H'm," said Marsden. "And your uncle—I mean the Brazilian gentleman—said this stone was called the Moma diamond from the name of the negro who found it in Brazil. Was that correct?"

"Perfectly."

"Now, please give me your own address and—is your mother still living?"

The would-be highwayman gave both. That night he slept in Marsden's house. A month later he sailed for England, a steamer passenger, but rich, for the eccentric Marsden had made him a present of the Moma diamond.—Pittsburg Press.

There is nothing so trying as a hard day's work every week. If you work every day, you get used to it.

FIFTY MILLIONS OF GERMANS.

East Census of the Empire Shows 250 Population at That Figure.

The results of the professional and social census of the German empire taken in 1895 have just been published by the government. The book is one of the most important statistical works that have been brought out by any government. A similar, but less complete, census was taken in Germany in 1882, and most other governments have at various times, either in conjunction with the ordinary census or separately, made some effort to inquire into the classification of the population by its occupation and social status. But no other country has entered on an investigation of this kind with anything even approximating the thoroughness and method that characterized the German statistical office, both in the drawing up of the census and in its subsequent elaboration for statistical purposes. To give only an instance, the census officials had the strictest instructions not to take the word of a householder as to the occupation and earnings of the members of his household, but to make a personal inquiry of every single member, even including small children. The whole enormous work of collecting this census was done at a cost of not more than \$180,000.

According to this census, the total population of Germany on June 14, 1895, amounted to 51,770,284, of whom 25,408,161 were males and 26,362,123 were females. The similar census taken in 1882 gave a total of 45,222,113, of whom 22,150,749 were males and 23,071,364 females. The population had thus increased by 14.48 per cent in the thirteen years—an increase which, it is interesting to note, was larger in the case of the males, who increased at the rate of 14.71 per cent, as against an increase of only 14.26 per cent in the case of the females. The decrease of German emigration since the growth of modern German prosperity may possibly have had something to do with this fact. How rapid the increase of the German population is may be gathered from the fact that the ordinary quinquennial census, taken in December, 1895, gave a population of 52,279,901, or an increase of 599,617 souls in six months. The increase between 1882 and 1895 was greater in the towns and districts already peopled; thus, for example in the government district of Berlin it was 39.04 per cent; in Düsseldorf, 32.97; Dresden, 29.13; Leipzig, 29.98, etc. The town population of Germany in 1895 amounted to 49.83 per cent of the total population, as against 41.8 per cent in 1882. It had increased by 36.47 per cent over the town population of 1882, whereas the country population had decreased by 1.31 per cent. The population of towns with over 100,000 inhabitants increased in the same period by 111.29 per cent and amounted to 7,930,530 persons.—London Times.

PEGGOTTY'S HOME SOLD.

Approaching End of the Old Shop-Immortalized by Dickens.

Peggotty's house, the home of "Little Emily" and of Peggotty herself and of Ham Peggotty, is to be taken away from its old moorings in Yarmouth. It has been sold by auction for \$460 (about \$2,300), and will be removed from the surroundings in which Dickens first saw it, and in which it has remained for many a year since. The home of the Peggottys is one of the principal scenes in "David Copperfield." It was there and on the seashore near it that "David" spent the happiest days of his childhood, and there he played at "old love with little Emily. Thither came the incomparable Steerforth and thence he fled with Emily, and not far away he lay "with his head upon his arm" (as David had often seen him do at school), but this time on the sand and cold dead. No scene in Dickens is more associated with tender feeling than the old inverted boat, the prototype of which is now to be dissociated from its original site. The old time-stained hulk will be torn down to make room for trade. The moss-grown timbers, every one of which is linked in the minds and hearts of book lovers with some episode of the great novelist's masterpiece, will be torn apart and burned up, except such relics as will be carried away by piecemeal hunters, and a warehouse or something of the sort will take the place of the quaint old structure which gave background for a picture which for its intense humanity, its power to move, its contrast of the most selfish of vices and the most generous of virtues, has few equals to be found anywhere in English literature.

Twin Chickens.

Twenty-five dollars for a pair of spring chickens is a liberal price, yet a Massachusetts farmer rejected it. His pair of chickens, he thinks, are quite unique, for they are twins, five weeks old, and it is said that two chickens born from a single egg have never before been proved to live beyond eight days.

The buff brahma hen laid rather a large egg, but no one thought much about it until one morning the farmer saw two bills instead of one trying to break out of the shell. He quickly removed the egg to the kitchen, extracted the twin chicks, wrapped them in cotton batting, and placed them in the oven.

For three weeks the chickens were kept indoors on a diet of malted milk and breads dropped down their throats with a medicine dropper. The twins are now hale and hearty, and run about the yard as vigorously as any of their comrades.

One peculiarity, however, distinguishes them from their mates. They are exclusive little aristocrats, and neither of them will associate with any other chicken except his twin.

Too Big for His Heart.

A policeman in Long Island City died recently from phenomenal growth. In other words, heart trouble, supposed to have resulted from the abnormal growth of his body, is supposed to have caused death. He was 6 feet 3 inches tall. It is said that he never stopped growing, and continued to grow taller every year. Patrolman Darcy weighed about 250 pounds, and he was not a fat man, though his brother, a police captain in the town, was the largest man "on the force."

It is very bad taste to tell any one that you always defend him.

AN AGE OF RAILWAYS.

SUPERIORITY OF THE AMERICAN SYSTEMS.

In What Respects They Are Invaluable Aids to the Life and Extension of Commercial Activity—Used as Models by Other Countries.

In making an address before the International Commercial Congress recently, George H. Daniels, General Passenger Agent of the New York Central and Hudson River Railway and president of the American Association of General Passenger Agents, said:

One of our great writers has said of this closing period of the nineteenth century, that it is an age of transportation. Transportation underlies material prosperity in every department of commerce. Without transportation commerce would be impossible. Those States and nations are rich, powerful and enlightened whose transportation facilities are best and most extended. The dying nations are those with little or no transportation facilities.

Mr. Mulhall, the British statistician, in his work on "The Wealth of Nations," said of the United States in 1895: "If we take a survey of mankind, in ancient or modern times, as regards the physical, mechanical and intellectual force of nations, we find nothing to compare with the United States."

Mr. Mulhall proved by his statistics that the working power of a single person in the United States was twice that of a German or Frenchman, more than three times that of an Austrian and five times that of an Italian. He said the United States was then the richest country in the world, its wealth exceeding that of Great Britain by 35 per cent, and added that in the history of the human race no nation ever before possessed forty-one millions of instructed citizens.

In an address before the New York Press Association, four years ago, I referred to the future of our export trade, as follows: "One of the inevitable results of the war between Japan and China will be the opening to the commerce of the world of fields heretofore unknown, perhaps the richest on the globe," and urged the members of the New York Press Association to do everything in their power to assist in securing to the United States a portion of the great commerce to be developed between the western nations and those two old countries of the world.

At that time we had no idea that a war between one of the old nations of the earth and our young republic would be fought; at that time we had no idea that American manufacturers would be furnishing locomotives to the English railroads as well as to those of nearly every other country on the globe. No one thought four years ago that American bridge builders would go into the open market and successfully compete for the building of a great steel bridge in Egypt; nor that in so brief a time American engineers would be building railroads into the interior of China from her most important seaports.

At that time no one supposed that the Trans-Siberian Railway would be laid with steel rails made in Pennsylvania, upon cross-ties from the forests of Oregon, and that its trains would be hauled by American locomotives; nor that this great railway which is to stretch from St. Petersburg to Vladivostok and Port Arthur, a distance of more than 6,000 miles, would be completed two years in advance of the original expectation, as a result of the use of American construction tools and machinery.

In a letter from a friend in Tokio, Japan, written only a short time ago, there was this significant sentence: "You will be interested in knowing that I have framed on the wall of my office a picture of your 'Empire State Express,' and we expect in the near future to be hauling a Japanese 'Empire Express' with an American locomotive." They have now in Japan more than one hundred locomotives that were built in the United States. In Russia they have nearly one thousand American locomotives, and practically every railway in Great Britain has ordered locomotives from this country since the beginning of the war with Spain.

But it is not alone our locomotives that have attracted the attention of foreigners who have visited our shores, our railway equipment and its maintenance command admiration and in now receiving the highest compliments. Imitation by many of our sister nations. Prince Michael Hillkoff, Imperial Minister of Railways of Russia, has since his visit to the United States a few years ago, constructed a train on much the same lines as the "Limited Trains" of the New York Central and Pennsylvania.

MADE A STUDY OF MICE.

They Have a Keen Sense of Humor and Love Excitement.

Few people understand the mystery of mice. I think I can, without immodesty, claim to understand mice, for I have made them a study for many years. I used to think that nature supplied mice, wherever there seemed to be any call for them. For example, if you live in a house where there are no mice, and in a rash moment provide yourself with a mouse trap or set up a cat mice will immediately make their appearance. To the superficial observer this looks as if nature, perceiving that you have a mouse trap, proceeds to supply mice for it, or, noticing that you have a cat, sends mice enough to satisfy the animal. But this is not the true explanation. In order to understand mice you must grasp the fact that the mouse is an animal with a keen sense of humor and a love of excitement. With this key in your possession you can readily unlock the mystery of mice.

That the mouse has a sense of humor is conspicuously shown by the way in which he will rattle a newspaper in your bed room at night. The mouse does not act on newspapers, neither does he put them to any domestic use. He merely makes a noise with them, knowing that of all sounds the midnight rattle of a newspaper is the one which will most successfully banish sleep from your eyes. If a mouse finds an eligible newspaper in your bed room he will rattle himself down to a night of quietude. He will rattle that and only that all morning; and the only

effect of rattle the paper at him as of getting up and lighting the gas and setting for him with a poker will be that he will hide himself till 7 1/2 he comes down to sleep and then resume his little newspaper game. If this does not show a sense of humor it would be difficult to say what it does show.

Then there is the well-known fact that no sooner does a mouse trap or a cat enter a house than it is followed by a troop of mice. Cats and traps draw mice as the pole draws the magnet. The mouse loves the game of teasing the cat by stimulating the latter's hopes of capturing mice. It is considered the height of fun among mice to scuttle across a room in the presence of a cat and to disappear in a hole just as the cat is ready to pounce. Of course, now and then a too reckless mouse pays the penalty of rashness by being caught by the cat, but accidents of this kind are more rare among mice than foot ball accidents among men and in no way render mice shy of the game.—Pearson's.



SCIENCE OF THE AGE.

Hawaii is said to have more telephones in use in proportion to the population than any other locality in the world.

A newspaper printed on the excursion steamer Ophir published one number in 80 degrees 2 minutes north latitude. It claims to be the paper published furthest north of any on record.

A series of experiments made by Benno Erdmann and Raymond Dodge show that in normal reading the letters are not spelled out separately, and one after the other, but that a short word of not more than four letters can be read off in less time than a single letter.

The Pike's Peak Power Company proposes to develop 3,200-horse-power for distribution for mines in the neighborhood of Cripple Creek, Colo. The source of the water supply is Beaver canyon, and a steel and rock dam will be built having a storage capacity of 150,000,000 cubic feet.

Only a short time ago, at the request of one of the Imperial Commissions of Germany, I sent to Berlin photographs of the interior and exterior of our finest cars and other data in relation to the operation of American railways. Several other countries have asked for similar information and there is a general waking up of foreign nations on the subject of transportation, brought about mainly by the wonderful achievements of American railways.

On the principle of the sounding-board, which repeats a sound at so short an interval that the original and the repeated waves impress the ear in unison, a device called the polyphone has recently been applied to the phonograph for the purpose of doubling the volume of sound issuing from that instrument. A polyphone with the polyphone attachment has two horns, each provided with a diaphragm and stylus. Not only is the sound made louder, but its quality is improved.

Lake Superior appears to exercise a greater effect upon the annual amount of precipitation of rain and snow near its shores than any other of the Great Lakes. The average precipitation in a year is about eight inches greater on the southern than on the northern side of Lake Superior. Lakes Erie and Ontario also show more precipitation on their southern than on their northern shores, but the difference is only three inches annually. In the case of Lakes Huron and Michigan, it is the eastern shores as compared with the western which get the largest precipitation, but the difference is not great.

The distances over which birds migrate vary between wide limits, and are often surprisingly great. The bobolinks, which rear their young on the shores of Lake Winnipeg, Canada, and go to Cuba and Porto Rico to spend the winter, twice traverse a distance exceeding 2,800 miles, or more than a fifth of the circumference of our earth, in a year. The kingbird lays its eggs as far north as the fifty-seventh degree of latitude, and is found in the winter in South America. The biennial pilgrimages of the little redstart exceed three thousand miles and the tiny humming bird two thousand.

Madame Cerasaki, of Moscow, has discovered in the constellation Cygnus a star of between the eighth and ninth magnitude which undergoes wonderful variations in its light. It belongs to the same type of variable stars as the celebrated Algol, but its variation is larger. Its period is four days thirteen hours and forty-five minutes. When at a minimum it is three magnitudes fainter than when at a maximum; in other words, it periodically loses, and then regains so much light that at one time it is sixteen times brighter than at another. In stars of this type the changes of light are supposed to be caused by a dark body revolving around the star, and producing eclipses as it comes within our line of sight.

A Witty Peasant.

A thunderstorm overtook the Emperor Francis Joseph of Austria, when out shooting in 1873 with old Emperor William of Germany and Victor Emanuel. The three monarchs got separated from their party and lost their way. They were drenched to the skin, and in search of shelter, hailed a peasant driving a covered cart drawn by oxen along the high road. The peasant took up the royal trio and drove on.

"And what may you be, for you are a stranger in these parts?" he asked after awhile of Emperor William.

"I am the Emperor of Germany," replied his Teutonic majesty.

"Ha, very good," said the peasant, "and then addressing Victor Emmanuel, 'And you my friend?'"

"Why, I am the King of Italy," came the prompt reply.

"Ha, ha, very good indeed! And who are you?" addressing Francis Joseph.

"I am the Emperor of Austria," said the latter.

The peasant then scratched his head, and said with a knowing wink: "Very good, and who do you suppose I am?"

"Right, majesty," replied they would like very much to know.

"Why I am His Holiness the Pope."

SMOKELESS POWDER COSTLY.

Half a Million Dollars Worth Found to Be Worthless.

The vastly increased expense of a military establishment under the more scientific methods now employed is sharply illustrated in the discovery that about half a million dollars' worth of smokeless powder for seacoast guns turns out to be worthless, through an unexpected deterioration in its quality. Military experts have supposed that the smokeless powder manufactured for the United States army was the best ever made, says the New York Post and a contract was not long ago signed which involved the expenditure of about \$1,000,000 for a supply of it. But it is stated that recent experiments at Sandy Hook showed that the smokeless powder now on hand is worse than valueless. A ten-inch gun was being fired with charges from a supply that had been stored for about two years and a delayed detonation occurred, which burst the gun, a new one, valued at \$30,000. An examination of the powder revealed the fact that it had undergone chemical changes of some sort and all of the supply on hand is supposed to be equally affected. Experts will now try to discover the cause of the deterioration, so as to make the needed change in the formula. Meanwhile the contracts for manufacture must be suspended, and if a war should break out it might be necessary to use the old variety of black powder. Apparently large charges to the profit and loss account must be allowed for in estimating the cost of keeping up with the times in warfare.

REVIVES A SCANDAL.

Wedding Brings to Memory an Affair Such as Often Stirrs Army Circles.

One of those scandals which now and then stir army circles has just had an interesting sequel in the marriage of



Second Lieutenant Frank E. Bamford of the Fifth Infantry to Mrs. M. A. O'Brien, widow of the late Lieut. Michael J. O'Brien, of the same regiment.

The scandal occurred at Fort McPherson, Ga., early in 1897. Lieut. Bamford, while engaged to marry Miss Nina Romeyn, daughter of Capt. Henry Romeyn, of the Fifth Infantry, paid such marked attention to Mrs. O'Brien, that the betrothal was summarily broken by Capt. Romeyn. This, of course, led to a great deal of comment, and Lieut. O'Brien, meeting Capt. Romeyn on the parade ground, accused him of circulating scandalous stories about Mrs. O'Brien. Capt. Romeyn's reply was a sharp slap in the face.

Lieut. O'Brien placed the matter before his superior officers, and Capt. Romeyn was court-martialed and sentenced to dismissal from the army, but the sentence was reduced to a reprimand. He is now on the retired list. Lieut. O'Brien died some months ago in Florida. During the Chinese-Japanese war he was sent by the United States Government to take observations. Capt. Romeyn has a reputation as an Indian fighter.

An Endless Chain.

Some weeks ago a gentleman left a small package at the home of a young lady upon whom he was making his first call. She wrote him a note telling him he had left it. He wrote her one telling her it was some edibles, and that she might appropriate it to her own use. She wrote again to express her appreciation. He replied to express his appreciation of her appreciation. She retailed with an expression of her appreciation of his appreciation of her appreciation.

At the present time the expression of appreciation is going forward in arithmetic progression, as the letters multiply, and as they contain something a little more serious in its nature there promises to be some very interesting complications resulting from a correspondence, presumably for the expression of appreciation.—Memphis Scimitar.

Big Ben's Tone.

Whatever complaints may be made against the tone of Big Ben, the famous London clock, and musicians say it is a terribly bad "E," at any rate, every one will acknowledge that the clock in the House of Commons tower is a wonderful timekeeper, not varying a second in time all the year through. The mechanism for setting in motion the massive hammer which brings out the tone of Big Ben's sixteen-ton bell is very interesting. The striking machinery is driven by weights of about a ton and a half, which hang on a shaft 174 feet deep; and it is so arranged that after the chimes are over the hammer falls on the big bell within one second of Greenwich mean time.

Timothy's Mistake.

Timothy Knockdown, the auctioneer, took his wife for a seaside trip to Margate.

On the second day of their visit Mr. K. evinced a strong desire to return home. "And pray for what reason, Timothy?" angrily inquired his better half.

"Simply because everybody knows my business down here. To-day, for instance, I have been confronted by at least forty grinning boatman who reminded me that it is 'a nice day for a sale.'" sadly responded the unhappy auctioneer.—Answers.

The secret of good looks is often a good stomach.

CORN IS KING.

Interesting Facts Concerning the Growth of the American Staple.

The word maize is derived from the Greek word sea. It is not definitely known where the plant had its origin. Humboldt asserts that it is American. Other writers claim that it originated in Asia, whence it was brought into America by the Spanish explorers. There is nothing so far discovered in the records of ruins of Egypt to indicate that the early dwellers along the Nile ever knew of the grain. In an ancient Chinese book, however to be found in the French library at Paris, corn is mentioned. In Chile corn has long been grown, and it is called sea caragua. There is an old Japanese legendary poem, "Manek Maya," which likens the grain of corn to a maiden's tooth, and to-day, in certain parts of the middle West, there is a variety known as "horse tooth."

Most of the South American Indians know of corn. Some make a sort of beer from it. A Quicha legend says that Con, son of the Sun and Moon, gave maize to man. The Inquios say that corn was given by the Spirit of the South. One of the snake legends of the Moqui Indians tells of six bachelors, Red Corn, Blue Corn, Yellow Corn, Green Corn, Spotted Corn and Black Corn.

It is not alone with the Indians that myth and legend endure. To-day farmers of New England, and, in fact, in the newer West, have their manifold "signs" for the planting of corn. Go through the agricultural regions and you will hear them talk of planting "in the full of the moon," and the like. Among the German settlers, in certain localities, it is believed that in selecting seed-corn for the next year's corn all the stalks and refuse must be taken into the highways and instantly destroyed, but not by burning, as that would insure the presence of the black fungi, or "smut," as it is provincially termed.

Corn is the great staple of the United States. It is the most important product of the American continent, be it grains or the output of mines or factories. More acres are devoted to the raising of corn than in the annual yield of oats, wheat, barley, rye, buckwheat and cotton combined. Corn provides more employment for laborers, provides more work for distributors and makes basis for more industries and activities than any other American commodity. In the past thirty-seven years the value of the corn output has been \$16,900,000,000.

Last year (1898) a corn farm of 6,000 acres in Iowa yielded a net profit of \$50,000. About 3,800 acres of corn were actually planted. Thirty-one planters were used to put the seed in the ground, seventy-six cultivators did the "tending" and seventy-five wagons hauled the crop from field to cribs. To hold the corn cribs twelve feet wide, sixteen feet high and half a mile long were required. The corn yield of the United States for 1898 is estimated at 2,050,720,000 bushels, the number of acres planted being 81,550,000. Corn is king.—John L. Wright, in Leslie's Weekly.

The Stage.

The stage continues to form the mirror of fashion. One need scarcely take in a fashion paper if one pays constant visits to the theater. Here one can study all the varieties of la mode and the latest and newest designs. Each play seems to have its own speciality in dress, its favorite color and its favorite dressmaker.

Possibly spectators never give a thought to the fact that these constant changes of costume form no inconsiderable portion of the fatigue incurred by an actress in a long and heavy party. Dress cannot be slurred over now. Gowns must be laced and buttoned up, gloves, shoes, hats, petticoats be worn to match. It was different in the good old days, when actresses shuffled one gown over another and fastened them lightly with a button. The Japanese costume is one of the most intricate. The real Japanese lady wears three gowns, one over the other, a small portion of each showing at the neck, the gowns being artistically shaded, say, from pale pink to deepest rose, or from violet to sky blue. The chemist, too, must match, and a special touch of deep-contrastive color is given by the waistband.

Nutritious Foods.

Prof. Atwater, who has devoted himself to the study, for a number of years, declares that there is no single perfect food, the nearest approach to it being milk. No food, however, contains the essential constituents in right proportions, and thus we have to get what we want by combining them. There will be a shock to many of those who are among the greatest of all practical mistakes. A single dollar's worth of wheat flour will yield as much nutriment as \$30 spent of a pound of sugar. Sugar ranks next to wheat flour as an economical food, for a dollar's worth of sugar contains as much nutriment as \$6 worth of milk, \$12 worth of eggs, or \$40 worth of oysters. In proportion to their cost oysters are almost the least nutritious of all foods. Beans and potatoes run a close race for the third place among valuable and cheap foods, and the fourth place is shared between fat, salt pork and cheese made from skimmed milk.

Warships Injured by Electricity.

An Italian court recently, after a trial, ordered the removal of some wooden yachts, whose bottoms were sheathed with copper, from the neighborhood of iron warships anchored in the harbor of Leghorn. It was alleged that an electric connection was established through the ships' cables when the copper-bottomed ships were turned into the poles of a galvanic battery, the result being a rapid corrosion of the iron in contact with the sea water.

The Dewey Plant.

A blooming plant, with clusters of blood-red tassels depending from its glossy leaves, is to be seen not far from Broad and Chestnut streets. It is labeled "The Dewey Plant" in conspicuous letters. Six months ago the duplicate was seen in another part of town, with an inscription declaring it was "Admiral Dewey's favorite flower." The plant is a native of the