

MR. AND MRS. BOWSER.

I am deeply pained to be obliged to inform the public that Mr. Bowser has had a relapse. It wasn't entirely unexpected, but was still something of a shock. Mr. Bowser's "good streak" lasted eleven days. During that time he took me to the theatre twice, paid a millinery bill of \$12 without a word, raised the cook's wages fifty cents per week, acknowledged that I could buy groceries cheaper than he could, insisted on allowing me \$5 pin-money per week, and was so different from his usual self in other ways that I was quite bewildered. He went away from the house Saturday noon fairly beaming with goodness, and as he reached the bottom step he turned and said:

"Tra-la chickiey! We'll run down town this evening and see about getting some new silverware."

When he returned I was at the door to meet him and to greet him, but he waved me aside and growled.

"Come, now, but don't be playing baby at your age!"

"Are you sick, Mr. Bowser?"

"No!"

"Has anything happened?"

"No?" What's the matter that supper isn't ready? If that good-for-nothing, lazy cook doesn't get up and stir her stumps more lively I'll fire her on a minute's notice. Mrs. Bowser, you never have any first-class help in the house!"

"Why, Mr. Bowser! You told me only yesterday that Anna was the smartest cook you ever saw in a kitchen!"

"Never did! Never said a word which could be twisted around to mean such a thing!"

"And you raised her wages?"

"I did that to smarten her up, but it is no use. Discharge her to-morrow!"

At the table Mr. Bowser found fault with the biscuit, the tea, the cold meat, and everything else, and finally called out:

"Mrs. Bowser, are you stone blind?"

"Of course not."

"Then how came you to buy such honey as this? Any one but a blind woman could see that it is buckwheat and not clover. Why, a dog wouldn't touch it!"

"But you ordered it yourself."

"What?"

"You ordered it of Green through the telephone Thursday. Don't you remember you had to spell out the word honey before he could understand?"

"Never! Never telephoned! Never spelled out the word! Better take it out and bury it!"

After supper I began to get ready to go down town, when he suddenly looked up from his paper and asked:

"What's up now?"

"Why, you said we were to go down town this evening."

"You must be crazy! Don't you suppose I ever want a night to sit down and rest myself? It's a wonder there's a woman left alive on earth! It's nothing but gad, gad, gad, from morning till night. What do you want down town?"

"You said we'd see about some silverware."

"Silverware! Silverware! Great Scott! but is the woman a lunatic! We've got bushels of it now in the house! We've got it in the closet, down cellar, up-stairs and in the garret! It'll be the insane asylum next!"

"Mr. Bowser, didn't you call me chickiey when you went away at noon?"

"Chickiey! Never!"

"But you certainly did."

"I certainly didn't! Chickiey? Well, when I get as soft as that I want some ice-cream to run over me!"

About 8 o'clock that evening he removed his shoes to put on his slippers, but suddenly paused and inquired:

"Is there a darned-needle in this house, Mrs. Bowser?"

"Why, certainly."

"And a piece of sheep twine?"

"What on earth do you want of sheep twine?"

"I want to darn this hole in my sock. Some men's wives can see such things in half an hour, but this one has been here three weeks. I've got to darn it, the same as I have to sew on my buttons. I suppose I'll have to make the bed and sweep the floor in another week."

"Those socks were all right when you changed Sunday. I'll darn 'em the first thing in the morning."

"Not much! The limit has been reached!"

He wouldn't even let me get a darned needle for him, but he hunted one out of the basket, and then, instead of taking yarn, he got a piece of twine which had come around a package and began to sew back and forth across the hole. He also made a determined attempt to look like a martyr, and he succeeded so well that the cook, who had looked in for a moment, beckoned me out into the kitchen and whispered:

"I knew it wouldn't last, ma'am—knew it all the time! He's got his high jinks on again and now nothing will go right for the next month!"

When Mr. Bowser had finished the sock he put it on and then went for his overcoat, saying:

"I might as well do this job, too. There's been a button loose for over two years, but of course you wouldn't see it!"

"But you only got this overcoat last fall. I protested, 'and if there was a loose button you should have called my attention to it.'"

He felt of all the buttons twice over before he could find a loose one, and then he made a great ado about cutting it off and sewing it on again. I was rather glad to see that he made a mistake of two inches in putting it back. When he had finished I mildly inquired whether he would have beefsteak or mackerel for breakfast.

"There's another thing I want to speak about right now!" he sharply replied.

"You are using as much money to run this house as if it was an ordinary hotel. I can't see what you do with the provisions, unless you sell them second-hand or give them away."

"A week ago to-day you gave me \$15, didn't you?"

"Yes, and you have spent every red of it, and are now in debt for \$10 more!"

"Mr. Bowser, here is my account. It starts off with three bars of soap."

"Three bars! It's no wonder I can't lay up a cent!"

"Hold on. You have praised the table all the week, and yet my bill foots up—"

"Haven't praised a thing—not a thing!"

"Well, how much does it foot up? See for yourself. I've run our table on about \$8, while I have used another dollar for extra things for kitchen and laundry."

"Nine dollars! Nine dollars! Great Scott! But is it any wonder men seem to pity me as I walk out! You have wasted nine dollars in a week!"

"But you have said that it often cost you \$16 to run the house for a week!"

"Never! I've always run it for five or six, and been reckless at that! That's it, let a woman have the swing and she'll bankrupt the world in a year!"

"But, Mr. B—"

"No use—no use! I'm going to bed. I'll probably have to get up at 6 to defend the house against your mob of creditors clamoring for their pay. Such a house! Such a wife!"

THE VALLEY OF DEATH.

Mr. Bancroft Relieves His Mind and Loses His Conscience by Repenting an Aged Yarn.

"I visited 'The Valley of Death' when on the Island of Java three months ago," said Lieut. Leon Bancroft. The Lieutenant is connected with her Majesty's service in India, and registers from Calcutta.

"The place is called the Valley of Death," explained the officer, "on account of the deadly fumes there. But the natives cannot account for the poisonous odors, nor has their presence ever been explained. The deadly place is about thirty-five feet below the surrounding ground, looks like a dry bed of a stream, and is about one mile in circumference. As I approached the place I noticed a suffocating smell, and was attacked with nausea and dizziness. A belt of this fetid atmosphere surrounds the valley. I passed through it, and in purer air was permitted to view the awful spectacle, for it was awful. Before me I saw scattered, all over the barren floor of the valley, skeletons of men, wild hogs, deer, and all kinds of birds and small animals. The entire bed of the valley is one solid rock, and I could not discover a hole or crevice in any place from where the poisonous fumes came. The hills surrounding this desolate strip are covered with vegetation, and although the neighboring mountains are volcanic they do not emit sulphurous odors or present any indication of a recent eruption."

"There is no apparent cause for the strip of deadly fumes surrounding the valley. After I passed through it I became bolder and approached the edge of the deadly place. I was anxious to reach the bottom of the valley if possible, but was afraid to make the attempt, as I had been warned to give the place a wide berth. I determined, however, to see what the fumes smelled like, and started to descend. My pet Irish terrier was with me and as soon as he saw me step over the side of the bank he rushed down ahead of me. I endeavored to call him back, but was too late. As soon as the little animal reached the rocky bed below he fell over on his side. He continued to breathe for ten minutes. I don't believe I was ever nearer death's door than I was at that time. Four or five times I was tempted to rush down to rescue him, but I subsequently learned that such a move on my part would have been certain death. For ten minutes I suffered the agony of seeing my dog die, and then turned and fled from the spot. While there I saw a bird fall a victim to the deadly fumes. It evidently intended to fly to the bottom of the valley, but before it reached the ground it fell dead. I don't believe it lived half a minute after entering the deadly atmosphere."

"No one has yet been able to explain the cause of the fetid emanations from the earth, the natives say, and so many lives have been sacrificed in attempting to explore the valley that they have determined to keep away from the spot forever."

A Black Female Samson.

Freedman's Town, a suburb of Houston, Tex., boasts of a female Samson who has repeatedly proved herself a match for any three men that have pitted their united strength against hers, and who a few nights ago successfully routed Officer John Barker and three of his assistants, all men of fine physique.

The woman is a negress, as black as night and of a stature slightly above average, but magnificently built and extraordinarily active. Her grip is such that she was able to break two of the bones of the hand of a woman with whom she had a fracas recently, and it was on the police attempting to arrest her that she not only was able to prevent them from putting the handcuffs on her, but, taking the officer and his posse, one by one, flung them out of the house and closed and locked the door.

Baxter, in particular, is accounted a man of unusual strength, and is of large build, but he says his muscles were as a child's when compared with those of the black amazon. The woman whose name is Caroline Jenkins, is about 30 years old, and is the mother of seven children.

She has been seen to pick up a barrel of flour and carry it a distance of some yards without appearing to overexert herself, and when tested was found to be able to break with ease a new grass rope an inch in diameter. Since her exploit with the police it is said that a party of gentlemen propose travelling with her if she will go and give exhibitions of her strength, which is to be ascribed to no electrical or magnetic process, but to muscular development alone.

The Beautiful Blue Danube.

Among the most important rivers in Europe is the Danube; in fact, it is the second river. It has a length of 1,700 miles; it and its tributaries drain a valley having an area of over 300,000 square miles. Many nations live along its banks and those of the rivers which flow into it, and nearly thirty dialects are spoken from its source to its mouth. It rises in the Black Forest to the north of Switzerland, and almost in sight of the French frontier. Through Bavaria and Austria is its course, through Hungary, past Servia and Bulgaria, Roumania and Roumelia, while tributaries flow in from Bosnia and Macedonia on the south and Poland on the north, so that practically the valley of the Danube comprises the most important portion of Eastern Europe. It runs through the battle-ground of civilization and savagery. Here the Romans contended with the Scythians and the Huns; here the Greek Empire strove to maintain its supremacy over the hordes of savage tribes which came down from the steppes of Russia; here after the Empire of the East faded away Charlemagne contended with savage tribes of semi-Asiatics; here all Europe fought the Turks for generation after generation until, by a great battle fought under the walls of Vienna, the flood of the Mohammedan invasion was rolled back towards Asia.

A HUMAN TIGER.

The Nice Party Who Once Ruled the Delta of the Nile.

Of the cruelty of the Turkish grandee, Deterdar Bey, who married a daughter of Mohammed Ali, numerous anecdotes are related in Egypt. He had, it is said, a tame lion, usually lying at the foot of his divan, which, although mild toward its master, was sufficiently ferocious to terrify his visitors. Sometimes he allowed it to worry his slaves, calling it off, perhaps, just as it was about to kill the wretches.

This savage, when governor of the delta, piqued himself on the simplicity and primitiveness of his manners and his entire freedom from European habits and notions. During the period of his command in the upper country a soldier robbed a poor woman of a little milk. The woman, not foreseeing the result, laid her complaint before the bey, who demanded her to point out the culprit. This being done, the soldier was ordered to be laid upon the ground and his body ripped open. The milk being found in his stomach, the bey paid the complainant, and, dismissing her, observed:

"The robber has been punished; but had he been discovered to be innocent the same punishment would have awaited you."

It was the custom of this barbarian, who always moved surrounded by the terror of arms, to ride abroad accompanied by a number of mamelukes (or domestic slaves), each of whom carried a thousand sequins in his girdle, that, should he be compelled to fly, which, considering his decided hostility to the pasha, was by no means improbable, he might still be provided with money for his immediate use. During the Syrian campaign six of these young men, dreading the effects of his ferocity, examples of which they daily beheld, made their escape, and took refuge in Ibrahim's camp. Being discovered, however, they were immediately apprehended and conveyed back to Cairo. Here they were commanded to appear before their inexorable lord in the great hall of the palace, where they found him encircled by a number of blacks, armed with drawn swords. They were not long in learning their fate. He commanded them to take every man a sabre-charge each other in his presence, until five of their numbers should fall promising life and a thousand sequins to the victor. The mamelukes obeyed; ranged themselves three and three, and, having been trained to the use of arms, and uniting skill with courage, fought desperately, shedding their blood like water, while the Deterdar sat calmly on his divan enjoying the spectacle. At length, after a long and sanguinary struggle, only one remained the victor over unhappy companions. Exhausted and bleeding in every limb, he raised his eyes toward his master to receive the promised pardon, but at this moment the bey gave the nod to one of the black slaves who stood behind the victim and the head of the mameluke immediately rolled along the floor.

On another occasion two of his military slaves, quarreling, drew their swords in his presence; at which his anger being kindled, he commanded their heads to be struck off. The mamelukes, however, mindful of the fate of their companions, resolved to sell their lives dearly, drew their pistols, and, aiming at the head of the tyrant, were about to rid the world of such a monster, when the interposition of other of his slaves enabled him to escape into the harem. Reckless and desperate, knowing escape impossible, the mamelukes, now joined by several others who all had wrongs and insults to revenge, pursued and besieged him in his private apartments, where, but for the speedy arrival of a party of soldiers from the citadel, he would have paid the forfeit of his innumerable barbarities and crimes.

With this assistance he succeeded in repelling the assailants, who, in their turn, were shut up and besieged in one of the turrets of the palace forming the powder magazine. Here they held out during several days, fighting desperately, but at length, finding their number decreased, and being entirely destitute of provisions, they set fire to the powder and blew themselves up with the tower in which they had taken refuge.

No Mercy for Their Helpless Enemy.

Some hardy sparrows were engaged in a very cold bath in a puddle of melted snow in Queen's Park Toronto the other day, when a young husband and wife, who with their two little girls were evidently moving from one residence to another, placed their hand baggage on a seat, and sat down to rest beside it. One of the children put down on the ground, a bird cage containing a savage looking Maltese cat. The cat must have been introduced by the removal of the bottom of the cage, for the door was too narrow to have admitted him. He seemed to be dejected by the close confinement and when an audacious sparrow hopped close to the cage and stared at him he spat feebly at it and cowered in terror on the floor of the cage. Then the sparrow, stimulated, no doubt, by its bracing plunge, picked at its ancient enemy's tail and elicited a feline growl, but no active resentment.

Before very many minutes had passed a score of other sparrows had joined the first assailant, and every one of them was industriously engaged in pecking at the cat.

His head was the only part of his external anatomy that escaped their wicked little beaks. None of them cared to meddle with him above his neck. The cat was completely cowed.

When he could endure no more he fell over on his side in a fit, foaming and caterwauling. The noise attracted the attention of his owners, who had not noticed his predicament. The man swore the children screamed, and the woman had tears in her eyes as he had been far too deeply interested in the scene to interfere with it. Then she put the cage and its convulsed tenant under her shawl and moved away, with her family, toward their new home.

Ocean Cables.

The longest ocean cable in the world is that of the Eastern Telegraph Company, whose system extends from England to India and measures 21,000 miles. Africa is now completely encircled by submarine cables, which make up altogether a length of 17,000 miles. There are eleven cables across the North Atlantic, though not all of them are at present in use. Five companies control the lines of telegraphic communication between this country and Europe.

A LADY'S STRANGE ADVENTURE.

Hypnotized By Swindlers.

The astonishing adventure of a very well-known young lady with two diamond vendors in Paris has just come to the knowledge of her friends. Even the most experienced travellers confess themselves amazed at this latest development of *la Vie Parisienne*. It was in the Hotel C—one pleasant morning not so very long ago, and the young woman in question was enjoying to the full her coffee-and-roll-sleep, as the French say, when something seemed to compel her to emerge from dreamland long enough to open her eyes on her dainty bed-chamber. What she saw was enough to make her shriek ten times over; but she didn't. Surprise got the better of horror as she saw leaning over the sides of her bed two old women, hideous, yellow-skinned and hook-nosed—very eager old women withal—each holding

A HANDFUL OF DIAMONDS.

in her withered palm, and each pouring from her skinny lips an incoherent torrent of supplications—which seemed half threat—that *la belle* would buy her wares. How did they get there? Who were they? What did they want? And, oh, where in the name of wonderful Paris even did they get so many brilliants? If there were other questions than these which seemed half threat, her still semi-somnolent brain the young woman didn't allow them to alarm her.

It was still the nineteenth century in the *fin de Siecle* capital, even if these harpies did look like ghouls out of the "Arabian Nights." At last she managed to understand each of her hideous hags still clutching at one of her wrists as they proffered the gems, that she had the honor of receiving a visit from two of the agents of a certain well-known diamond house in the Rue de Sorbonne and that the bargains they were then and there offering her were so very seductive that

SHE COULDN'T RESIST BUYING,

even had she not already as many diamonds as she could use. What is more, she began to lose the feeling of intense horror at her surroundings and aversion to the physical presence of the harpy-like diamond brokers.

When she came to herself and described what the hideous old diamond merchants had done, her maid assured her she had been hypnotized, and advised that the police should be called in. But, after all, there didn't seem to have been any great amount of harm done; none of the young woman's money was missing from her portemonnaie on the dressing-table and her jewel case in the tray of her trunk had not been tampered with. Besides all that there was the handful of diamonds the hypnotic hags had left on the bed. Examination showed quickly enough that the stones were yellow, uneven and faulty. The stamped paper in which they were wrapped bore the name of a diamond-house of which everybody has heard. It was easy enough to go and explain that the young lady didn't really want the diamonds after all; that in the dim light of her bedroom, when they were so mysteriously exhibited to her without even

"by your leave."

THEY HAD SEEMED MUCH HANDSOMER than when viewed later on in the calm, clear sunlight, and that besides and above all it was an outrage demanding legal redress, that two of their disreputable-looking old diamond vendors should force their way into the bedroom of a guest at the hotel and intrude upon her privacy so shockingly, to say the least of it! This all was done, without delay and without other result than the calm announcement by the Frenchman that his agents had received from Mademoiselle a written receipt for the stones, with an explicit promise to pay 5000 francs a month for them until their total price, 45,000 francs had been paid; that a bargain was a bargain and Mademoiselle, having bought the stones, and received them, must pay for them!

"The trade is made, *voilà!*" and that was the end of it! The hotel people expressed polite surprise that any one should have been able to enter Mademoiselle's apartment while she slept and her maid was within ear-shot. If Mademoiselle said so, they believed her of course, but as the lock showed no signs of having been forced, and as

NO ROBBERY OR PERSONAL OUTRAGE had been committed while they regretted the whole affair, what could they do? Recourse was next had to the Consul-General's office, where the gentleman in charge appreciated the situation keenly, and was engaged at such extraordinary, debased and dangerous methods of plundering his fellow-countrymen. That some hypnotic influence had been exerted by the two women on his fair young countrywoman there could be little doubt, since the reaction had left her, in a dangerous condition of nervous collapse. Yet as no personal violence had been offered her, no money or property taken from her and no direct threats made to her, it was exceedingly difficult to see how to take helpful action in the case. An eminent lawyer was retained at a cost of 2500 francs, and after racking his brains for a way out of the bargain, after acknowledging the hopelessness of securing redress for the hypnotic assault and insulting intrusion, he discovered that the two particular old women in question had no license to peddle diamonds, and that therefore the sale made through them was null and void, and the promise to pay 45,000 francs must be instantly returned to his client on her surrender of the diamonds, all of which was done.

THE WORTH OF TOBACCO IN FRANCE.

Frenchmen are about to erect a monument to Jean Nicot, who introduced tobacco in France. Nicot, while Ambassador to Portugal in 1560, sent a package of tobacco seed to the Queen Catharine de Medici in Paris. The weed took so well on French soil that sixty years later Cardinal Richelieu found it worth his while to begin collecting the first French tobacco tax. In 1697 this tax was 40 sous on the hundred pounds. Shortly afterward the annual product of the tax was some \$50,000. In 1718 the right to the product of the tax was let out to the collector for \$3,200,000. Between 1719 and 1730 the tax was not collected.

It was reintroduced at the latter date and in 1791 was again abolished. Napoleon I. in 1810 began collecting the tax by means of a Government monopoly. The first empire got some \$8,000,000 annually from the tax, and in 1830 the product was \$9,000,000. In the following half century the tax grew to \$48,000,000. Altogether, the tax has brought the French Government \$1,800,000,000. No wonder that enthusiastic French smokers have suggested that the Government could well afford to commemorate in pure gold the fame of Nicot.

SCIENCE ALL ALIVE.

Building the Mt. Blanc Refuge Observatory.

The Highest Scientific Station in the World Successfully Established.

The ascent to Mt. Blanc has always been regarded as one of the most fatiguing in the list of Alpine climbs. Many tourists anxious to make the trip have been deterred by the fact that there has been no refuge at the summit in which the Alpinist could rest before retracing his steps. Last summer J. Vallot, a member of the French Alpine Club, conceived the idea of constructing near the top of the mountain a building which could be used both as a shelter and as a scientific observatory.

When Vallot announced his plan of building a refuge on the summit the idea was laughed at. It would be impossible, it was said, to engage in any kind of work at such an altitude. The originator of the idea expressed his willingness to demonstrate the incorrectness of this belief. He proceeded to pass three days and three nights at the mountain top. During the daytime he busied himself with scientific observations; at night he slept under a tent. The practicability of working at a high altitude had been proved, and Vallot received abundant assistance to carry his scheme into effect.

Plans of a small structure best adapted for withstanding high winds were drawn, and the building was constructed at Chamounix. The house was then taken apart, and each timber was marked properly so that the parts could be put together readily on the mountain top. One hundred guides volunteered their services to carry the parts of the building to the points fixed upon at the site. The dismantled structure was tied up into 111 loads, and the work of transportation was begun. It was a tedious undertaking, carrying the cumbersome packages up the ascent. Three days were consumed in conveying each load to its destination. The work commenced on June 15 and on July 31 the last section of the building and the last of the ninety packages of scientific instruments had reached the site of the refuge observatory.

Six days before the last date Vallot selected five of the hardest mountaineers as masons and carpenters, and set out for the mountain top to build the foundation. Two tents were set up for the temporary shelter of the party. The temperature was rather low for summer; the mercury dropped to 9 below zero at night, and did not rise much above zero at noon. The men were clothed in regulation Esquimaux mountain capes. The style of dress was not conducive to rapid work, but the men labored vigorously from 7 in the morning till 7 at night. In two days the foundation was completed, and on the third the frame work was in place in spite of the persistent attempts of the wind to overthrow it. On the fourth day the last plank was nailed on the roof and at night the workmen were able to sleep in a less windy chamber than their tent.

The work, however, was extremely exhausting in the rare atmosphere. At the end of the second day one of the men was disabled. He was given a few whiffs from the oxygen bag which Mr. Vallot had taken the precaution to include in his supplies, and recovered sufficiently to start down the mountain. The following day a second mountaineer was exhausted, and a third weakened on the third day.

Although the house was not entirely finished on the fourth day it was thought inadvisable to remain longer on the summit, especially as the weather had become unfavorable. All hands therefore, descended and took a brief rest. On Aug. 31 the party reascended the mountain, accompanied this time by Mr. Vallot's wife, an enthusiastic Alpinist. The refuge was properly braced with masonry, and the finishing touches were added. Lightning rods were put in position, after which colors were flung to the breeze to celebrate the completion of the work.

The building is divided into two apartments, one designed for the use of travellers, and the other for scientific observers. The latter room is a private compartment. The public room is supplied with all the conveniences needed by the tired tourist. Nine beds are placed in the room, and a supply of provisions and of oil for light and fuel is always kept on hand. The observatory, which is said to be the highest in the world, is 14,350 feet above the sea level. It contains automatic registering devices and the most approved appliances for making scientific observations in high elevations.

DECIDED BY THE TOSS OF A COIN.

The Goddess of Chance Invoked by Mr. Stanley in Africa.

In a little speech to the New York Press Club Saturday evening Henry M. Stanley said:

In Central Africa it was not the fashion to indulge in after-dinner oratory and he was consequently somewhat out of practice. Several times in his career he had been compelled to decide in a moment what course of action to pursue. In his first African enterprise he found himself stranded on an African island without friends and without money. This was nineteen years ago. He had to decide in a moment what to do, and he determined to go on. He raised a loan of \$30,000 in a few hours by paying \$5,000 premium, and went ahead until after a lapse of nine months, he found Livingstone, the object of his search.

When he reached the spot where Livingstone had turned back he was again confronted with the necessity of instantaneous decision. He was in a quandary. If he turned back he would stamp his enterprise with failure. If he went on he knew not what would happen. He held a consultation with his lieutenant, and the latter suggested that the matter might be settled by tossing a coin. He accepted the suggestion and tossed up a rupee. The coin decided against going on. But Stanley was not satisfied. He tossed again, and still again, and each time the coin said that Stanley should not go on. Then he had recourse to long and short straws and three times this divination declared that the explorer should turn back.

But he was still not satisfied to go back. He thought that something must be the matter with the rupee and the straws, and so he cast aside the prophecies of both and went on following the course of the great river until he found whence it came. When he returned to London after this expedition he found the Geographical Society debating whether it should call him a pirate or give him a dinner. It finally decided to give him a dinner.