CURRENT NOTES.

Announcement of the discovery of new gold fields has become commonplace in recent years, but the news of the rich field of the Klondyke placer diggings has renewed an interest which so long as the desire for acquisition remains, is never likely to wholly die out. The new gold fields lie in the Canadian Northwest Territory, about seventy miles east of the 141st meridian, which constitutes the boundary between Alaska and Canada, and nearly midway between Fort Selkirk, a trading post of the Hudson's Bay Company, and old Fort Yukon. The Klondyke creek, flowing from the northeast, here enters the Yukon river and it is from its bed and the narrow valley through which it flows, that the gold is taken. The reports of the richness of the auriferous deposits tax the imagination, but it is believed that $5,000,000 have been taken out during the past season and that the annual yield will not be less than $10,000,000.

As the region has, save in a few favored spots not been thoroughly explored, the latter estimate is little more than an assertion. The wealth of placer diggings is by no means proof that it will continue or increase in the lower levels, and the yield may, like others which have absorbed attention for a time, soon be exhausted. But indications are that the confidence expressed in the future of the field will be borne out by results, and in any event the discovery will doubtless be to suddenly transform that remote corner of the earth, and to disorganize all neighboring society. Mining in that region is attended by unusual hardship, transportation is slow and the cost of living heavy, but should the yield continue, these conditions will be reversed as if by magic. Since the dawn of history the existence of gold in any locality has always had that effect. It was the gold of the East that stimulated the development of its vast commerce, and upon which as a base its great empires were built up. It was gold that took the Phoenicians to Spain and Ophir, that made the Spaniards great navigators and conquerors, and the yellow metal of Mexico and Peru that lifted the Spanish state to a position of pre-eminence in Europe. It was the acquisition by the United Kingdom of rich gold-bearing districts that has been one of the chief causes of the development of the British empire.

The transformation of a region and the disorganization of society near it has always been th effect of such discoveries as those reported from the Klondyke. The uncertainties attending the rush for the precious metal only tend to make the change more rapid and remarkable. The imagination of men is awakened by the prospect of quick gains, the gambling instinct is aroused, and greed quickened to a fierce passion. Already the movement has begun. Throughout the northwest men are forsaking their usual avocations, and pushing into the Arctic wilderness, to brave cold and toil and privation for the chance of digging up the shining metal. A few may acquire great wealth, and others a competency, but the mass will struggle on for months or years, to find at last that their gains would have been greater from some quiet business at home. Most of them, perhaps, know this, and few of them would take half the risks they will run to get any other metal, though it represented proportionately as great a profit.

And one wonders why. What is the special attraction of gold which makes desire for it a thirst which does not extend in anything like the same degree to notes or even to fortunes gained by stock gambling? The fact that gold is, like precious gems, concentrated value, and that it does not need changing to be available, does not adequately explain it; for when all is said, the use of gold is to buy things with, and a note or cheque will do that. The attraction must go deeper and extend to the metal itself. That it does do so seems to be shown by the fact that gold is the favorite form of hoarding and by the confessions of thousands of men that the mere contemplation of gold has a charm for them that nothing else has. The late shah of Persia hoarded gems, and nothing gratified him so much as to plunge his arms up to the elbows in his store. The feeling is, we imagine, far more widely diffused than men are willing to admit. And to it must be added the thirst born of the use of gold through all ages to represent concrete value, and so the permanent incitement it gives to desire. No doubt the color and glitter are also an attraction. But our belief is that the peculiar thirst which gold excites is due mainly to its real and high value, and to the taste bred in the race during the thousands of years in which it has stood as a safeguard against personal privations.

ART NOTE.

Miss Gallagher is as fleet as Diana, isn't she?

I don't know; an the Dianas I have ever seen were made out of solid rock and weighed a ton.

A DEAD RECKONING

CHAPTER XVII.

For the first few moments after Picot's startling confession had fallen like a thunderbolt among those assembled in the justice-room of Cummerhays, the silence was so intense that, to use a common phrase, a pin might have been heard to drop. Every eye was focussed on the mountebank, who stood on the spot where he had risen, erect and very pale, his eyes glowing in their deep orbits like live coals, and pressing his soft felt hat with both hands to his breast. Suddenly there was a slight commotion close to where the magistrates were sitting; the strained silence was broken, and all eyes turned as with one accord. The lady in black, she who was said to be the wife of the accused man, had fainted. But Margery's strong arms had caught her ere she fell. Another woman in the body of the court hurried to her help, and between them the unconscious young wife was carried out.

"Place that man in the dock," said the red-faced magistrate, "and allow the other prisoner to be seated."

Picot stepped quietly forward of his own accord, the people near making way for him with wonderful alacrity, and placed himself on the spot the magistrate had indicated, a couple of constables stationing themselves behind him as he did so. Then the clerk put certain questions to him, which Picot answered without a moment's hesitation. When these came to an end the entry on the charge-sheet stood as follows: "Jules Picot. Age, forty-three. Native of France. Profession, acrobat. No fixed place of residence.

Then the magistrate, clasping the fingers of one hand in those of the other, and resting them on the table in front of him, as he leaned forward a little, said: "Jules Picot, you have confessed openly and in public to the commission of a most heinous and terrible crime. Such being the case, we have no option, but to detain you in custody while inquiries are being made as to the truth or falsehood of the extraordinary statement just volunteered by you. Any further statement you may choose to make, we will listen to; but at the same time we must caution you that anything you may say will be taken down and used as evidence against you elsewhere. Is it your wish to make any further statement, or is it not?"

"Ma foi, monsieur," answered Picot, with a slight shrug, "that is what I am here for—to make what you call statements, to tell the truth, to prove that this gentleman is innocent, and that I, Jules Picot, and I alone, killed Otto von Rosenberg." He paused, and in the hush that followed the rapid scratching of the clerk's pen as it raced over the paper was clearly audible. The pencils of the two reporters who sat in a little box below the clerk moved at a more deliberate pace. One of them even found time to make a furtive sketch of Picot on a blank page of his note-book.

It was so evident the prisoner had something more to say that no one broke the silence.

"Eight years ago, monsieur," he began in a low, clear voice, "I had a wife, a daughter, and a son. Now I am alone. I was living in Paris. No man could have been more happy than I was. Stephanie, my daughter, had an engagement at the Cirque de l'Hiver. She was beautiful, she was good. In an evil hour she attracted the attention of the Baron von Rosenberg. He followed her everywhere; he gave her rich presents; he even went so far as to promise to make her his wife—scelerat that he was! Of all this I knew nothing till afterwards. One day Stephanie does not come home. I make inquiry for her. She has fled. Von Rosenberg, too, has disappeared. They have fled together. From that day I never saw Stephanie more." Again he paused, and although there was no trace of emotion in his voice, it may be that the hidden depths of his being were profoundly moved.

"A little while later, ma pauvre Marie died. She had been ill a long time; but what killed her was the loss of Stephanie. Ah, yes! After that, Henri and I set out, wandering from place to place, not caring much whence we went, but always looking and asking for Von Rosenberg, because I want to demand of him what has he done with my child. All at once I discover him. It was at the house of this gentleman, Monsieur Brooke. Next day they tell me that he has gone away back to his own country, and they know not when he will return. But I wait and wait while one week go away after another, and at length he comes back. I hide myself in the wood. I climb into a thick branch of a tree, and stay there hour after hour till he shall be alone. At length I see him coming down the path that leads from the house to the chalet near the wood. He whistles as he comes, and he is alone. I wait a little while, then I come down from the tree and walk up to the chalet. The Baron is standing up, examining a pistol—a pistol with inlay of ivory and gold and with strange figures marked on it. On the table close by is a heavy riding-whip. He has not heard my footsteps. I enter, and he starts and stares. I make him a profound bow, and say: 'Bonjour, Monsieur le Baron. My name is Jules Picot, and I come to demand from you what you have done with my daughter Stephanie." He still stares, and seems to be thinking to himself how he shall answer me. At last he says; "I know nothing whatever of your daughter; and if I did I should decline to tell you." "She left Paris in your company," I reply. "Possibly so," he answers with an evil sneer. "Monsieur, I repeat that I am her father. I seek for her everywhere, but I cannot find her. You, monsieur, if you choose can give me some clue by which I may be able to trace her. Her mother is dead, and I have no other daughter. Think, monsieur—think." He laughs a laugh that makes me long to spring at his throat and strangle him. "I altogether refuse to give you any information whatever about your daughter," he says. "How, monsieur, you refuse!" I say as I draw a step or two lenarer. He has laid the pistol on the table by this time, and his fingers now shut on the handle of the riding-whip. "'Then you are a coward and a villain," I continue; "and I spit in your face, as I will do again and again whenever I meet you. I have found you now, and I will follow you where-you now, and I will follow you wherever you go." He replies only by seizing the whip, hissing it quickly through the air, and bringing it down with all his strength round my head and shoulders. Strange lights dance before my eyes; there is a noise in my ears as of falling waters. The pistol is close to my hand; I grasp it; I fire. Von Rosenberg falls without a cry or a word. I fling the pistol away and walk quietly back through the woods. As I reach the village, where my boy is waiting me the hanging out of its mouth.
church clock strikes seven. The evening is that of the 28th of June."

He ceased speaking as quietly and impassively as he had begun; he might have been reading something from a newspaper referring to some other man, so little apparent emotion did he display; yet his hearers felt instinctively that he was speaking the truth.

"What you have just told us," said the magistrate, "will be taken down in writing; it will afterwards be read over to you, in order that you may make any additions or corrections that you may deem necessary; and you will then be asked to affix your name to the document. You will have no objection to do so, I presume?"

"To write my name on the paper, is that what monsieur means?"

"That is what I mean."

"Certainement, monsieur, I will write my name. Why not?"

"Then for the present you are remanded."

Picot looked round with a puzzled air; but one of the constables touched him on the shoulder and whispered, "Come this way."

He turned to obey, and as he passed Gerald the eyes of the two men met. Gerald's hand went out and gripped that of the mountebank. "Oh Picot!" was all his lips could utter. The mountebank stroked the bac kof Gerald's hand caressingly for a moment while a strangely soft smile flitted across his haggard features. "Ah, monsieur, you and la belle madame will be happy again," was all he said. Next moment he had passed out of sight.

Gerald was now replaced in the dock; and one of the magistrates, addressing him, said that although, on the face of it there seemed little reason to doubt the singular narrative to which they had just listened, it would have to be confirmed by ample inquiry before it could be accepted and acted upon. Meanwhile, he regretted to say Mr. Brooke would have to remain in custody. But on the morrow, or next day at the latest, both prisoners would be transferred to King's Harold, when the amplest investigation would doubthe amplest investigation would doubtless at once take place. With that the prisoner was removed.

Before going back to his cell, Gerald was allowed to see his wife for a few minutes. The meeting was almost a silent one, words would come after a time; just now their hearts overflowed with a solemn thankfulness, the roots of which struck deeper than speech could fathom.

As soon as Picot reached the cell allotted to him, he asked to be supplied with a cup of coffee, after which he lay down on his pallet with the air of a man thoroughly wearied out, and in a few minutes was fast asleep. He slept soundly till aroused some three hours later when he was conducted to a room where he found one of the magistrates, the clerk, the governor of the jail, and two other officials. Here a paper, which had been drawn up from notes taken in the justice-room, was read over to him. After having caused it to be corrected in one or two minor particulars, he affixed his name to it; and his signature having been duly witnessed, he was reconducted to his cell.

About eight o'clock after the gas had been lighted, he asked for pen, ink and paper, and a small table to write on. These having been supplied him, he sat and wrote, slowly and laboriously for nearly a couple of hours, finally putting what he had written inside an envelope and sealing and directing it. Then, after having taken off his shoes and coat, he wrapped himself in the blanket which had been supplied him, and lay down to sleep. The gas was lowered, and silence reigned throughout the prison. Once every hour during the night a warder went the round of the cells and peered into each of them that was occupied through a grating in the door. All through the night Picot apparently slept an unbroken sleep. When the warder visited him at one o'clock he found that he had turned over and was now lying with his face to the wall, after which he seemed never to have stirred between one visit and another. At seven o'clock another warder, who had just come on duty, went into his cell to rouse him. To his dismay, he could not succeed in doing so. He turned the unconscious man over on his back and then the drawn, ghastly face told its own tale.

"Ah," remarked the doctor, who was quickly on the spot, as he held up to the light a tiny phial only about half the size of a man's little finger and smelt its contents, "five drops of this would kill the strongest man in three seconds."

(To be continued.)

YOUNG FOLKS.

Be good, sweet maid, and let who will
 be clever,
Do noble things, not dream them, all
 day long;
And so make life, death, and that vast
 forever,
 One grand, sweet song.

JENNIE'S DISBEDIENCE AND WHAT IT LED TO.

The Todd family got up early that morning, for it was the day of the Sunday-school picnic. Eight-year-old Jennie hurried about dressing herself and little Emma, and helping her mother clear away the breakfast and get the lunch packed, and, last of all, she went over the house and shut down the windows, taking the stick from under each lower sash, and standing it on top to keep the window from being opened. You see Jennie's home was far out in the country, and there was scarcely a house around that had such things as sash cords or window fasteners.

Then came the long drive to the bay where all the Sunday-school scholars and their parents and teachers were gathered in the picnic ground on the cliff.

"Don't go down the cliff, children, without your parents' permission," said Mr. Torrey the superintendent.

"Don't go down the cliff," said Mrs. Todd to Jennie and Emma.

And there was so much to do that it wasn't until long after the lunch had been spread out and eaten that Jennie thought again of the cliff.

A long stairway led down from the hill to the beach below, and there were two reasons why going down was forbidden. It was dangerous to trust the children near the water, and besides up by the steamboat dock was another large picnic that had come from the city on the steamer that was fastened there, and the children might get lost among the crowd. It was the whistling from the steamer that first caught Jennie's attention and drew her to the head of the stairway, where she stood looking at it.

"Come on, Jennie," called Addie Lewis, "they said not to go down the cliff."

"Well, who's going down?" said Jennie, crossly; "they didn't say you couldn't stand by the stairs."

"But I'll want to go down if I stand there," returned wise little Addie, "so I'm going away."

And away she went, but Jennie remained there.

"I do want to go down," she thought after a few moments, "I want to see that boat nearer. I don't see why we mustn't. Anyway, they didn't say we mustn't go on the stairs," and slowly at first, but faster as she thought it over and tried to make herself believe it was all right, she walked down and almost before she knew it, was at the bottom. Something inside of her kept saying, "Go back, you're not minding mamma," but she wouldn't listen, she only hurried on up the beach toward the steamer. Never before had Jennie seen anything on the water but rowboats and little sailboats, and this great floating house seemed very wonderful to her. It was drawn up to the dock, and groups of people were constantly going up into or coming out of it.

Nearer and nearer Jennie went until at last she found herself holding fast to the rail of the gang-plank, and a minute more and she was on board. It was so grand that she entirely forgot that she had no right to be there, so she walked about, looking at everything. She found a beautiful stairway all shining like gold, and she went up into a lovely big room with velvet sofas all around it. Here she sat down a moment to look about and rest. A great bell was ringing very loudly, but as the little girl did not know what that was for, she paid no attention to it. After awhile she made up her mind to go back. There were people coming up the stairway, and she could scarcely push her way through. She became a little frightened, there were so many of them now, and it was so noisy. It had been quiet there when she came on. She fairly ran toward the gang-plank, but men, women and children were crowding up and down helped by two men who stood there. Jennie rushed forward.

"Look here, where you going?" said one of the men roughly.

"I want to get off," she cried.

"You can't," he said "it's too late. You'd be getting left," and he pushed her back.

Again and again in the next few minutes she tried to get off only to be pushed back by the crowd. At last, the plank was hauled in, the ropes loosened, and the big steamer started out into the sound.

Everybody was so busy, and there was such a noise of laughing and talking, the bells ringing, and the band playing, who could hear a little girl sobbing, almost screaming up among some boxes in the bow of the boat? It was a long time before a kind lady noticed her and asked what was the matter.

"They said not to go down the cliff," she sobbed, "and I did, and oh, I want my mamma."

After asking a great many questions, the lady understood, but the steamer was already miles away from Pine Cliff. She could do nothing, but take Jennie to the city, and the next morning send word to her folks. She talked kindly to the little girl, and tried to amuse her, but Jennie was too ashamed, as well as afraid and sorry to stop crying and enjoy anything.

And oh, how sad it was up on the cliff when it was found that Jennie was lost. Addie told where she had seen her last, but at first Mrs. Todd would not believe that her little girl had failed to mind her, but they searched and searched, and finally even her mother made up her mind that Jennie had disobeyed and gone down the cliff. But where then could she be? They went down and asked everybody, but so many strangers had been there that afternoon that one little girl would not have been noticed. However, they thought that she could scarcely have fallen in the water without being seen, and some persons suggested that she might have gone on the boat. They could do nothing more then until Mr. Todd telegraphed to the people who owned the steamer to see if they knew anything about his lost girl.

Every one knows how sad mothers feel when their children are lost, and the people were all sorry for poor Mrs. Todd and tried to keep up her hope that Jennie would be found. But two nights and one whole day passed before she was brought home, and then both she and her mother were sick from crying.

"O, mamma," Jennie said as soon as she saw her mother's pale face, "I'll never do anything you tell me not to again."

"I feel too bad to care about anything," she would say when questioned as to what she had seen in the city, but a long time afterward when she was helping her mother lock up the house one night, she said suddenly:

"Mamma, when I was in the city I saw the funniest thing I ever saw. You know if it wasn't so I wouldn't tell it, but I expect it'll be hard for you to believe, 'cause it seems almost like a fairy-story, but the windows in the house that I was in staid up without sticks under them."

—Alice Augusta Smith.

HER REMEDIES.

Charms Are Still in Use in Some Backwood's Settlements.

Doctors in the "backwoods" districts often find that their patients will refuse all medicine, as long as they fancy that there is any possibility of effecting a cure without its aid. Their belief in "charms" is difficult to unsettle or combat.

A young doctor was called to attend the father of a large family, a stalwart backwoodsman, who was in the grip of a malarial fever, on which his wife, with all her supposed skill, had been unable to make any impression.

On his second visit the doctor noticed that one of the children had around her neck a string from which dangled some small bones.

"What are those intended to cure, rheumatism?" he asked the mother, with a smile.

"No, doctor, those are so Mirandy'll have an easy time getting her teeth," was the response. "Those are rattlesnake bones. The critter was plowed up last spring when the men folks broke up a new piece of land. I jest took and biled him a couple o' days and strung his bones on a string to hitch on to Mirandy's neck when it was time; she wa'n't but six weeks old then. I mistrust they might be good for rheumatics, too, but 'taint best to run no resks. I s'pose you know the best thing for rheumatics?"

"Perhaps I don't know your remedy said the shrewd doctor.

"I reckoned everybody knew," said the woman, with momentary animation. "Why you jest take four pieces of eelskin, about three fingers wide, and bind 'em on your ankles and wrists. It drives the worst kind o' rheumatics off, they say,"

"Doctor," said this believer in charms, with a dubious glance at the tumbler of medicine prepared for her husband, "be you sure that aint any ways p'isonous? 'Cause I aint tried binding raw tomatoes on him yet, and there'd be some by the first o' next week!"

A QUEER FACT.

The Greater Part of London Has No City Government.

In the first place the world's metropolis is unique in being the only city known to civilization that has existed for centuries without a uniform or an organized government. The city of London proper is only about one mile square and has a population of less than 37,000, while the London we are accustomed to think about covers an area of 500 square miles, with a population of 6,000,000 or more and embraces parts of five other counties—Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, Hertfordshire and Essex. This vast area and this multitude of souls massed closely together have no municipal existence, as we understand that term, and as it is applied to other civilized cities. Notwithstanding the anomaly the people have moved on and expanded at a marvelous rate, unconscious of their own condition, without stopping to think how they are governed or whether they are governed at all. It is a safe assertion that 75 per cent. of the people who are living within the metropolitan district could not explain their municipal system correctly if they were required to do so. It is the most extraordinary phenomenon that is presented in the history of civilized governments.

NEW JAPANESE STEAMERS.

A new Japanese mail and passenger steamer—the Tai-Hoku—built at Middlesborough, England, has just passed successfully her official trial. She has a length of 343 feet, beam 43 feet, depth molded, 28 feet; her upper decks are teak, her main deck steel, with water ballast in a cellular double bottom. She has a speed of 15 knots, and the owners will receive a subsidy from the Japanese Government.

LIVES ON INSECTS.

Their is a quaint plant which grows in pea bogs. It has large flowers, with an odd umbrella-like shield in the center. The leaves are generally about half full of rain water, in which many insects are drowned. Some naturalists say that the flower lives on the drowned insects.