

CROSSING A BRIDGE

It Was an Important Feat in More Respects Than One

By F. A. MITCHEL

The wind howled; the rain came down in torrents. All the streams were swollen. Night came on, and the darkness added to the bleakness.

In a farmhouse near which ran a railroad track a woman sat over a baby that was moaning and tossing with fever. Now and again she would take the child up in her arms and caress it, but its sufferings were not diminished, and she would put it down with an exclamation of despair.

A boy of twelve stood by looking pityingly on his baby sister. He was a sturdy little fellow and old enough to realize that he might lose her.

"Oh, for some one to send for a doctor!" wailed the mother.

"Can't I go?" asked the boy.

"You go! Do you think I would let you go out in such a night as this, running the risk of losing you as well as your little sister? If you could go by the road I would send you, but you would have to cross the railroad bridge. The wind would blow you down into the gulf below."

"I've crossed the bridge. I know how to do it in a wind. I can crawl."

"You should not have done so even by day. The danger would be far greater at night, and on such a night as this it would be frightful. Besides, if a train should come along what would you do?"

"Hang on to a tie."

The mother shuddered. Beneath the ties a hundred feet below a river was boiling over rocks.

"There's no train to cross the bridge till 11:05," continued the boy.

"How do you know, Jakey?"

"I know all about the trains."

This was true. Jakey Summers was much interested in the railroad, the running of trains, and was known to the employees of the company at the station a few miles from his home. Many a free ride had been given him both on trains and locomotives.

"I wish I dare let you go," said the mother. "but I don't."

A spasm passed over the baby that frightened her and Jakey too. The boy went out into the kitchen, and when his mother was not conscious of his presence he was standing before her with a lighted lantern.

"Oh, Jakey," she exclaimed, "you're not going to cross that frightful bridge this terrible night!"

he proceeded the greater the inequality of the height of the rails. As he approached the center abutment this inequality was sufficient to throw a train off the bridge into the river.

Jakey quailed. The bridge was breaking down, and he knew not but that farther on a part of it might have been swept away. He hesitated, thinking to return. It vain he thought of his little sister and that her life might hang upon his getting a doctor. He dare not go on a gust fiercer than any preceding swept over the structure, and he could hear a terrible cracking beyond. He was appalled. He turned to go back, but stopped. From a distance, borne on the wind, came the rattle of a train.

Jakey knew that this was the express; that it was passing on open space some five miles away, where he had often seen it pass before. But it was seven miles by the winding of the railroad. Within a quarter of an hour it would be on the bridge. He was near the center. So far as he could judge, he would barely have time to get on terra firma by going either forward or back. The bridge would go down with the train and he would go down with both. He was reasonably sure that behind him the bridge was standing, for he had just come over it. Ahead of him he could not see through the darkness.

A whirl of influences passed through the child's brain—his sick sister, his troubled mother and now the horror of a train freighted with people going down into that terrible chasm. Perhaps it was this that decided him. He never knew what decided him. He only knew that he could not go back. All his nature revolted against doing so. He must go forward.

And he did. At the center abutment he found that it had partly given way and one rail was at the lowest point below the other. As he crawled forward it began to rise again. This gave him courage. He saw that the damage was caused by the giving way of the abutment in the river, and the one on the farther bank was likely standing. A whistle so clear that it indicated a near proximity of the train spurred him on. Despite the danger of being blown off the bridge, he stood up and walked on the ties. He was not now over the boiling water, and that was a relief.

Suddenly a bright light flashed ahead of him. A locomotive had rounded a curve and was bending on a straight track for the bridge. Jakey began to swing his lantern. He heard the sound attending the checking of a train, but the headlight of the locomotive flared nearer. Jakey was now some fifty feet from the end of the bridge and feared to be run down. He could only stand his ground and swing his lantern.

The train came to a stop after passing a few feet on to the bridge. The engineer waited for the light to advance and, leaving out from his cab, heard Jakey's report of the condition of the bridge. A shudder passed over the big man on the mammoth engine at hearing that he and his trainload of people had been saved from a frightful fall to death by the boy with the little upturned face beneath him.

A light was coming forward, and the conductor approached. Here and there in the cars a window was thrown up and a head thrust out. The conductor heard the story that the bridge was wrecked, and he, too, shuddered.

"I got to go," said Jakey.

"Go where?" asked the conductor mechanically.

"I got to go a piece up the road for a doctor. My little sister's sick."

"Get aboard the train. We're going to back up."

The engineer extended a hand to the boy and lifted him into the cab. As soon as he got him there he folded him in his arms and kissed him. Then he kissed him again and again until he heard the conductor say:

"Come; back up."

Jakey was put off at a station which was very near the doctor's house, but by this time the news of the narrow escape had spread among the passengers, and they crowded around the boy on the platform, impeding his progress. When they heard that a sick baby's life depended upon his further efforts they suffered him to proceed. When some twenty minutes later he passed the station with the doctor in the latter's car he was met by the conductor, who poured a hatful of money into his lap. Then, followed by a cheer, the auto sped on to the baby.

When the doctor arrived he took charge of the little patient, but it was some time later, when the latter was sleeping, that Jakey told his mother how he had saved the train and showed her the pile of bills and gold and silver pieces that had been contributed for him by the passengers.

WANTS U. S. PLANT FOR ARMOR PLATE

House Bill Calls For Expenditure of \$7,000,000.

AIMED AT ALLEGED TRUST.

Plan to Force Manufacturers to Keep Prices Down—Government as a Competitor Would Not Produce All of Its Own Plate—Increase in Prices Has Been Felt.

Washington.—Seven million dollars to provide for a government armor plate plant is asked for in a bill introduced by Representative Britten of Illinois. The bill was introduced coincident with the announcement by the navy department that bids for \$3,000,000 worth of armor for battleship No. 39 had been rejected because they are identical. Although Representative Britten is a Republican, his bill follows generally the ideas of Secretary Daniels, who has reported that a "trust" evidently exists in the armor plate business and that the government should have a plant of its own, not to make all its armor, but to provide enough to make competition with the private mills.

In addition, Representative Britten is about to take up with several senators the advisability of changing the Underwood tariff bill so as to admit armor plate free of duty.

Representative Britten's bill provides for the acquisition of a site, the erection of suitable buildings and the procuring of necessary machinery and supplies for the establishment and maintenance of the plant. Active operations on the plant are to be begun within six months after the passage of the bill.

In discussing his bill Representative Britten said that he had had in mind for some months the introducing of a "plan that would break up if possible the trust now controlling the armor plate situation in this country."

"The opening of the bids of the navy department for \$3,000,000 worth of armor for battleship No. 39, appropriated for last year, in which the bids of the three armor producing companies in the United States corresponded exactly and giving the same amount per ton as last year," said Mr. Britten, "shows conclusively the collusion existing in the bidding regardless of the fact that each bidder attests in an affidavit submitted with his respective bids that the company is not engaged in any such agreement and proves conclusively that competition for this enormous amount of government business is a farce."

"The only way to procure armor plate at anything like a reasonable price is for the government to enter into direct competition in its manufacture with the companies already engaged in this work. I am not in favor of entering into the field to such an extent as to put the other armor producing companies out of business, but to manufacture a sufficient amount of this commodity so as to force them into competition and compel them to offer us their armor at least at a fairly reasonable cost."

"Investigations recently made in this direction have shown that in a government plant capable of turning out 10,000 tons a year, which is about half of the armor needed on a two battleship program, the cost of the armor will not exceed \$314 a ton. The difference between this and the amount bid last Tuesday, which was exactly the same per ton as the bids submitted last year, \$454; on 10,000 tons, at a saving of \$140 per ton over the price now paid, the government would save \$1,400,000 per annum. Deducting the interest on the money used in building the plant, the government will still save considerably over \$1,000,000 a year, which amount in a very short time will completely cover the cost of the plant, and at the same time we will be independent of this branch of the steel trust. As a business proposition the plant would net the government more than 17 per cent on the entire investment after allowing 3 per cent on the total expenditure (or \$1,200,000)."

"In 1906 the price of armor plate was \$346 a ton, in 1907 the trust jumped it to \$420 a ton, and last year it was raised to \$454 a ton. The price goes up constantly and remains up, and the evidence is not lacking that the price at the present time is based more upon what the companies think they can get than what it costs."

"Some years ago we were confronted with the same problem in the purchase of powder for the use of the army and the navy. We built a powder plant, entered into direct competition with the powder companies and today are saving \$268.80 on each ton of powder."

"We manufacture our own powder in part, we manufacture our own guns, and there is no reason in the world why we should not manufacture a part of our own armor plate. The cost of the plant is not prohibitive, and the cost of operation will not be a severe obstacle."

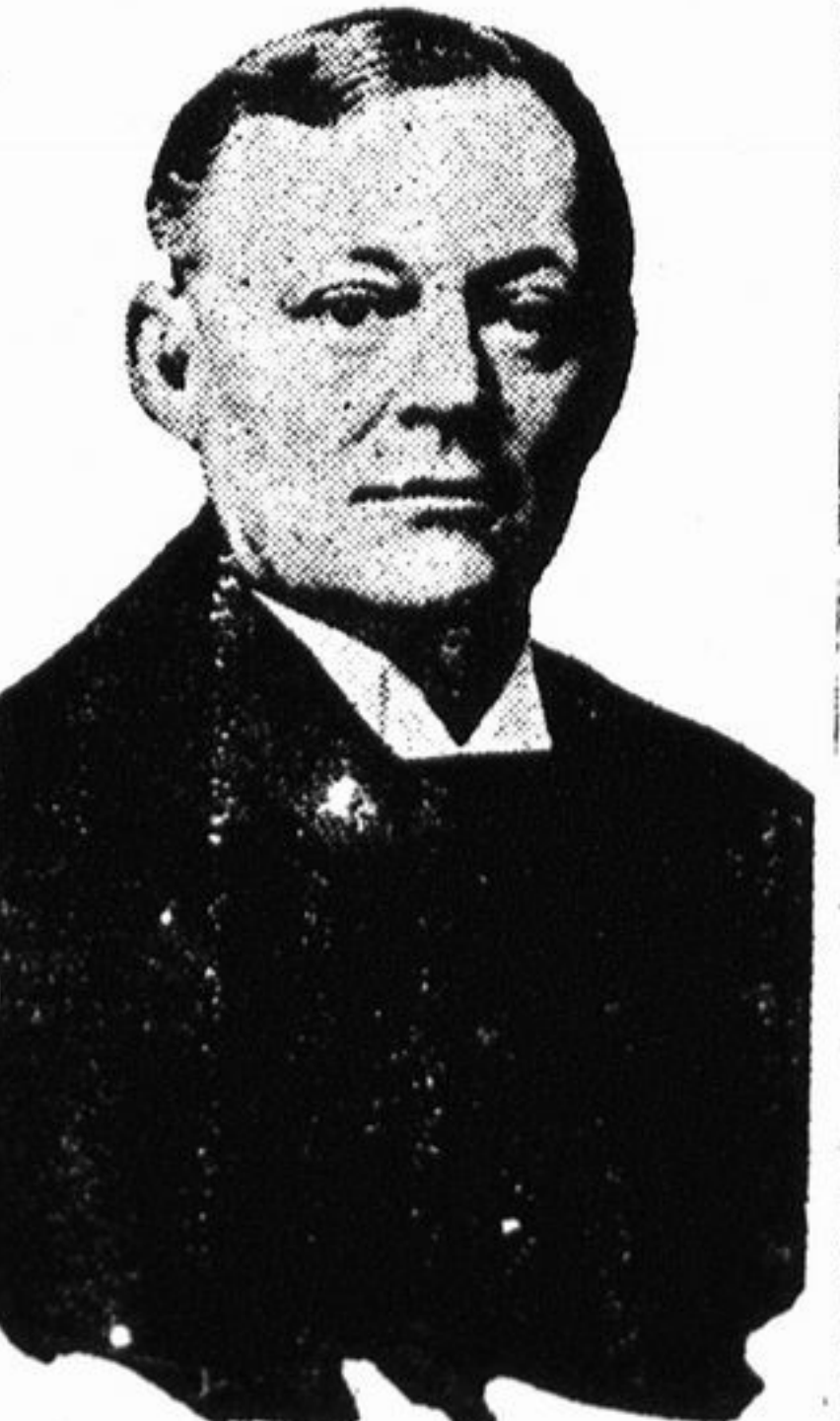
"I am convinced that the government should erect a plant to manufacture armor plate required for the navy."

JUDGE WANTS HEARING.

Emory Spear of Savannah, Ga., Answers His Accusers.

Washington.—Following the bringing of charges in congress against Judge Emory Spear of Savannah, Ga., the justice at once forwarded to Henry Clayton, chairman of the judiciary committee of the house, an informal answer to all the charges.

In his answer the judge states that his only source of information was through the newspapers, and he asked for a copy of the original charges.



JUDGE EMORY SPEAR.

He denied each of the allegations and wants a hearing just as soon as he recovers from an attack of hay fever.

Among the charges was one that Judge Spear aided his son-in-law by giving him appointments in court. This was emphatically denied. Answering the charge that he was temperamentally unfit for a judicial station, Judge Spear says that he only insists on order and decorum in his courtroom. He asserted that the men who "attempted to defame me in their statements were counsel for defendants in cases of great embezzlement or representatives of predatory interests."

PRIORITY OF DEATH TO FIX GREAT ESTATE

Relatives of Aged Couple Fight For \$1,000,000 Fortune.

Springfield, Mass.—Disposition of a \$1,000,000 estate hinges on whether Sherman D. Porter or his wife died first in a grade crossing accident at South Deerfield. According to the medical examiners, both were killed instantly.

Relatives on both sides are aligned for a legal fight. The case may be further complicated if Mr. Porter's will makes a substantial bequest to his chauffeur, who was for many years in his service and whom the railroad company blames for the accident.

Since the fatality the Porter home has been visited by relatives who were never entertained there in the lifetime of Mr. and Mrs. Porter. He was eighty and his wife much younger. If it can be established that his death occurred an instant before hers, her relatives would become heirs to the estate. His relatives intimate that the will bears a codicil which alters the provisions of the instrument if her death should occur before his.

Under old court rulings, when husband and wife perished together, the wife was presumed to have died first, being the weaker of the two, but later rulings have been based on close inquiry into all the circumstances. The relative ages of the two, it is said, may become determining factors in the Porter case.

Mr. Porter made a fortune in the candy business and at the time of his death was president of the Kibbe Bros. Manufacturing company, wholesale confectioners and importers.

TO JAIL TO SAVE FATHER.

Rough Rider Sacrifices His Liberty, Mother Caught Gun Man.

Craig, Colo.—Eugene H. Decker and Clarence E. Decker, father and son, who were tried at this term of the district court on the charge of horse stealing, were found guilty and innocent respectively. The son is one of the most widely known cow men and rough riders in this country. The horse was the property of Ira H. Olmstead.

Young Decker pleaded guilty in order to free his aged father of complicity in the crime. His mother single handedly captured William Morgan, the notorious Hole-in-the-Wall gun man, last fall after Morgan had for three weeks eluded sheriff parties in three counties.

Boy of Three Lost Two Days in Wilds. Muskogee, Okla.—After tramping two days over the mountains without food, Oran Trammell, a three-year-old boy who had wandered away from a construction camp at Woodstan, was found by James Payne, an old hunter, toward of \$500.

PACIFIC HALFWAY ACROSS THE CANAL

Twenty Tons of Dynamite Open Stretch of Work.

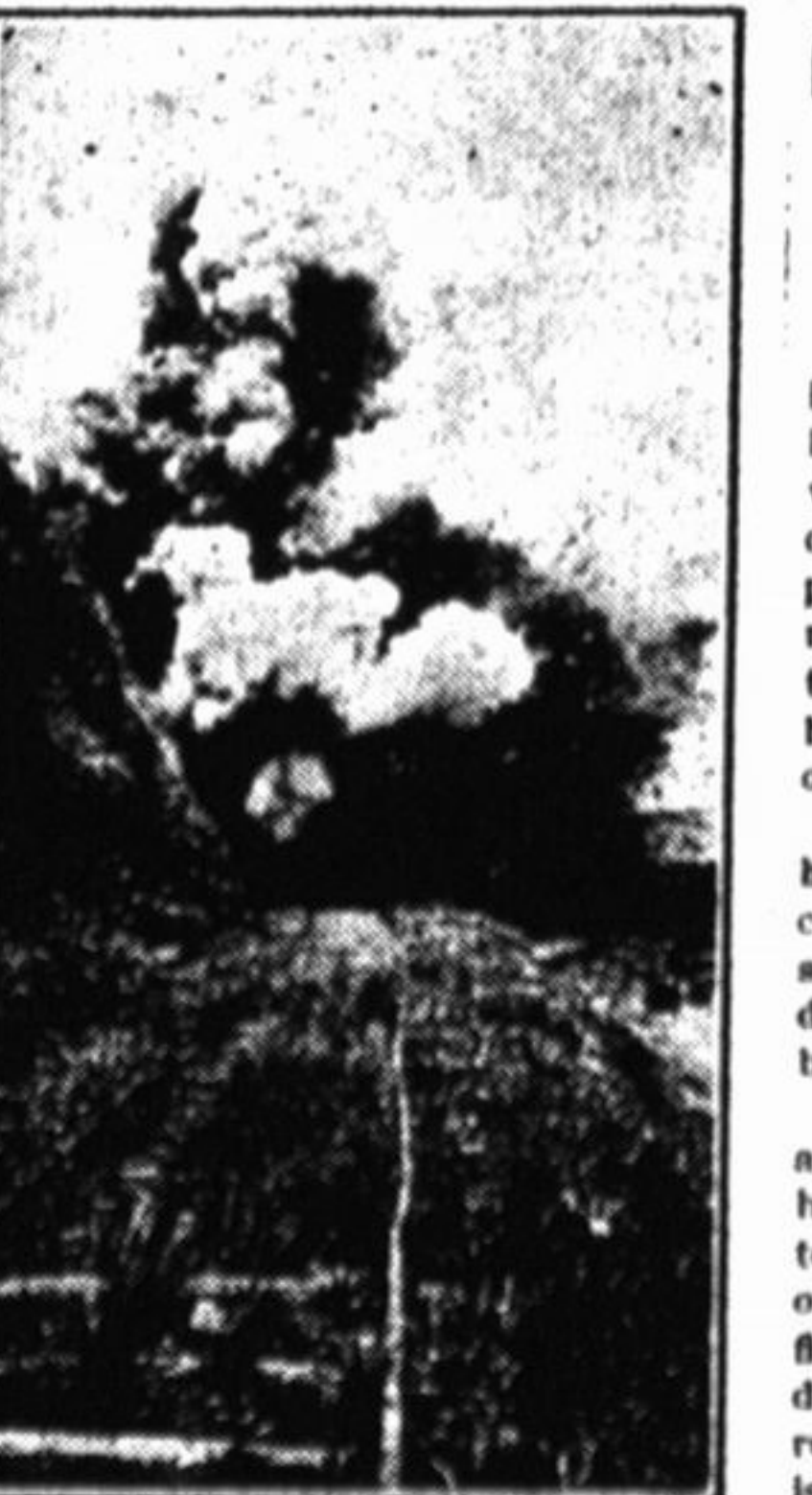
BIG CUT RAPIDLY FILLED.

Dredges Expected to Complete Work of Establishing Channel at Western End in Short Time—The Cut is 5,000 Feet Long, 500 Feet Wide and 41 Feet Deep.

Panama.—The last remaining barrier at the Pacific end of the Panama canal has been blown up by dynamite. It was an intensely interesting spectacle. An electric switch was turned on, and a moment later the 1,500 spectators and the officers of the British cruiser New Zealand saw a wonderful sight. Hundreds of tons of mud and stones were thrown high in the air. There they seemed to hang, then fall back as the roar of the explosion echoed in the nearby hills.

About twenty long tons, equivalent to 44,800 pounds, of 45 per cent dynamite constituted the blast, which was one of the largest ever set off in the canal. The charge, which was planted in 541 holes at an average depth of thirty feet, tore a big gap in the barrier, but not to a sufficient depth to permit the water to flow through, as the sea level channel was at low tide.

Equally as interesting as the explosion was the actual breaking of the barrier, the tide creeping steadily up until it was level with the top of the gap. A workman seized a shovel and made a small trench, through which a rill of water trickled. Gradually it widened until an hour afterward a torrent, with a thirty-five foot fall, poured through an opening 400 feet wide.



BLAST AT PANAMA CANAL.

Into that part of the canal between Gamboa dike and Miraflores locks which had been excavated by steam shovels.

This cut, which is 5,000 feet long, 500 feet wide and 41 feet deep below mean sea level, was immediately filled when the waters of the Pacific touched for the first time the solid masonry of the Miraflores locks.

Dredges passed through the opening, and in a few days the last vestiges of the barrier will be removed, establishing a practically complete channel at the Pacific end. The dredges have begun to remove the last barrier of the Atlantic channel. When that work is accomplished ships may navigate to the locks at both ends.

On May 18 the engineers of the Panama canal exploded 32,750 pounds of dynamite that had been loaded into 236 holes to dispose of the first dike holding back the Pacific ocean. This dike had dammed the waters of Ancon harbor, in the gulf of Panama, until the engineers practically finished excavating a long stretch of the canal near Miraflores. The mighty blast was successful, and the waters of the Pacific flowed into the canal up to the point where it was checked until the last blast removed another barrier.

DOG BARKS FOUR DAYS.

Spaniel Finally Attracts Notice to Its Dead Master.

Alpena, Mich.—For four days a small water spaniel lay whimpering in front of his master's shanty. Dozens of persons noticed the dog's peculiar actions and passed on. Several offered to feed the animal, but it refused to eat. Finally it ceased to whine and began to yelp and succeeded in inducing neighbors to enter the dilapidated building. There they found the body of Frank Cleveland, whose sole companion for years had been his dog.

BECOMES RICH IN A DAY.

Widow, Support of Four Children, Is Heir of Brother-in-law.

Los Angeles, Cal.—Mrs. S. A. T. ...

NUN DESERTS CONVENT.

Sister Leocadia Believed to Be Teaching Music in New York.

Niagara Falls, Ont.—Sister Leocadia, teacher of music in Mount Loretta convent, at Falls View, a mile south of this place, has left the convent, where she had spent more than twenty-five years of her life. It has just become known that Sister Leocadia, apparently wearying of the life within the cloister, made her departure from the convent several months ago. It is believed that she made her way to New York and is trying to earn a livelihood by teaching music.

At the age of eight Margaret Coulter of Philadelphia entered the Mount Loretta convent. She was an orphan who had one brother. Her next nearest relative was an uncle. She became a novice at the age of sixteen and took her dual vows at the age of twenty-one, when she became known as Sister Leocadia. Soon after she took the veil she became teacher of music in the convent.

Girls from all sections of the United States and Canada have studied music under Sister Leocadia. It is said that she was very popular among her pupils as well as among the sisters of the convent because she was comely in appearance and charming in manner. Her beauty had often been remarked by persons who were in the habit of visiting or passing the convent.

Mount Loretta Convent is the parent institution of the Loretta Sisterhood in Canada. When inquiries were made recently at the convent for Sister Leocadia it was learned that she had not returned. Mother Joseph, assistant to the mother superior, said that Sister Leocadia had gone away, and she added that she did not know her whereabouts. Mother Joseph, however, said she believed that Sister Leocadia was somewhere in the United States.

QUEEN MARY BARS BIG GAMBLING CLUB

Gonsort Ends Plans For Exclusive Woman's House.

London.—Queen Mary by reason of her unconquerable aversion to gambling in any form by women has prevented the establishment of a woman's club in London which, from a social point of view, by far would have outranked any existing woman's club in the city and which, in fact, would have been a kind of woman's Marlborough club.

The incident at the same time shows how, in spite of the queen's strong and constantly demonstrated objection, the society women of England are equally determined not to be deprived of their big or little gambling.

A plan was formulated a short time ago to start a woman's club the membership of which was to be restricted to past and present ladies of the various royal households in England. At first everything pointed to its immediate great success. Nearly every royal lady residing in England promised to join, and a strong body of ladies of the royal households immediately came in.

Of course it was absolutely essential that such a club should have the support of the queen, as she is the head of the select body from which the members were to be selected.

Lady Agnes Montague, the organizing secretary of the club, immediately approached Queen Mary as soon as the successful establishment of the club was assured. A couple of weeks ago the queen wrote to Lady Agnes that she would join the club, but only on the conditions that there should be no card room in it and that no male visitors should be received.

These conditions were made known, and two weeks sufficed to show that they rendered the formation of the club impossible, for of the 180 ladies who formed the original nucleus of the organization 140 have now withdrawn their names. As a result the scheme has been abandoned.

LAST OF CROW INDIANS.

Lake Metimop Dies on Reservation Near Saginaw, Mich.

Saginaw, Mich.—Lake Metimop, said to be the last of the Crow Indians, died on a reservation near Saginaw. For many decades he was closely associated with the Crow reservation, and for some time had been its only living founder. He had been blind for the last three years.

While some people doubted that the Indian was as old as he claimed to be, 107 years, it was believed that he was Michigan's oldest inhabitant. Metimop, better known as Met Wop, settled in the Saginaw valley before white men commenced to colonize that section. Although quite a leader, he was considered more of a farmer than a fighter.

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