On the Road to Herat.

THE INDIAN RED RIDING HOOD.

With the dangerous signs in the East which prevail
For some reason,
A new version of Little Red Riding Hood's tale
Comes in season.

On Afghanistan's borders the scene has been laid
For the story;
And Miss India stands as the sweet pretty maid
In her glory.

Now that glory has stirred up the Russian bear's bile,
So he's running
To perform the wolf's part with insiduous guile
And much cunning.

By grandmotherly words and disguise 'tis his plan
Just to cheat her;
Though we know that he'll catch her at once,
if he can,
And then eat her.

But a something she sees to distrust in his face
And expressions,
So she doesn't accept with a very good grace
His professions

Life's Arithmetic.

In a rude school-house where sunbeams fall,
And make quaint shadows along the wall,
Sits a little boy with his brown arms bare,
With tear-stained face and sunny hair,
Plodding a lesson with school-boy hate,
From ink-dashed book and battered slate;
"No rest, no rest, till the task is done,
Two are equal to one and one."

In a quiet room where moonbeams fall,
And make quaint shadows along the wall,
Our schoolboy, now to manhood grown,
Is holding a maiden's hands in his own,
Adding, as on that summer's day,
But adding now in a different way:
"One and one are only one;
One from a million will leave none."

In a noisy room, where laugh and call,
Awake strange echoes along the wall,
And children shout and romp about,
And turn the house all inside out,
Our boy of old, with a father's smile,
Holding a babe in his arms the while,
Studies, still studies time's changing slate;
But "One and one now equal eight."

In a churchyard old, where shadows fall
Heavy and thick, like a sombre pall,
By the grass-grown graves of his lowly dead
Sits a grey-haired man, with bowed head,
An aged man of grief and care,
The schoolboy once, with the sunny hair.
"No rest, no rest, till the task is done,
The eight that were are now but one."

DEAF AND DUMB UNTO DEATH.

The End of a Noted Canadian Criminal.

On April 17th, 1883, a man giving the name of George Enos, Quebec, died in a hotel at Watertown, N. Y. He pretended to be deaf and dumb, and on his dying bed wrote his request. It has just been discovered that the dead man is none other than Hiram B. Thomas, a noted burglar and forger. Thomas was neither deaf nor dumb, but pretended to be so at times to enlist sympathy and secure contributions from ministers and others. Thomas belonged to Suspension Bridge, where his family now reside. He served four and a half years in Kingston penitentiary, being sent from Hamilton for horse stealing, and in St. Thomas was wanted for forgery. He was a shrewd cook, a most intelligent man and an intimate acquaintance of Shang Clark. He always suffered from lung troubles, and died a victim of consumption. His left thumb had been amputated.

A Forest of Puzzle Trees in Chili.

Soon after reaching the first araucarias we found ourselves surrounded by them and all other trees gave way to them, though the ground was still gay with purple peas and orange orchids, and many tiny flowers whose names I did not know, and which I had not time to paint then—such flowers when picked die almost directly. Many hills and the valleys between were covered with old trees, covering some miles of space, and there are few specimens to be found outside this forest. I saw none over 100 feet high or 20 feet in circumference, and, strange to say, they seemed all very old or very young. I saw none of those noble specimens of middle age we have in some English parks with their lower branches resting on the ground. They did not become flat topped like those in Brazil, but were slightly domed like those of Queensland, and their shiny leaves glittered in the sunshine, while their trunks and branches were hung with white lichen, and the latter weighed down with big cones, as big as one's head. The smaller cones of the male trees were shaking off clouds of golden pollen, and were full of small grubs, which, I suppose, attracted the flight of parroquets I saw so busily employed about them. These birds are said to be so clever that they can find a soft place in the great shells of the cone when ripe, into which they get the point of their sharp beaks, and fidget it until the whole cracks and the nuts fall to the ground. The most remarkable thing about the trees was the bark, which was a perfect child's puzzle of knobby slabs of different sizes, with five or six decided sides to each, and all fitted together with the neatness of a honeycomb. I tried in vain to find some system on which it was arranged.—*Pall Mall Gazette.*

A Delicate Question.

A book entitled "The First Families of the United States" is soon to be published. Whether the people whose grandfathers made their money in lard or those whose wealth comes originally from whiskey, will be given precedence, says the Chicago *Tribune*, is a mystery only to be solved by the book's appearance.

THERE are, according to Sir Robert Kane, seven extensive coal districts in Ireland. The Leinster coal-field extends over the greater part of Kilkenny, Queen's County and Carlow. This bed, consisting chiefly of slate-coal, lies within an average of 140 yards of the surface, and covers an area of over 5,000 Irish acres. The Munster coal-field extends over the counties of Cork, Limerick, Kerry, Clare and Tipperary, and consists mainly of six layers of coal, altogether forming one of the most extensive developments in the United Kingdom. The whole of this vast tract remains comparatively unworked. The Ulster district includes the coal beds of Coalisland and Dungannon, covering over 7,000 acres; and the Antrim beds, resting on the mica slate. The Connaught district, covering an area of 114,000 Irish acres, extends over parts of the adjoining counties of Roscommon, Sligo, Leitrim and Cavan.

Children grow taller, it is said, during an acute sickness, such as fever, the growth of the bones being stimulated by the febrile condition.

RUSSIAN FINANCES.

The Empire in a Quagmire of Debt—But Always Ready for War.

(London Standard.)

Until 1870, or thereby, nothing whatever was known about Russian budgets. A vague kind of tradition existed that they always miraculously balanced, but how or why they balanced nobody knew. Gradually since that date a little more light has been let in upon the affairs of the Finance Ministry. Regular budgets and accounts of a sort have been published, and a few facts are now known. They all tend to sustain the conclusion that Russia is not solvent. Deficits are the rule, and recent years have brought little reduction in their amount, although the Empire has been at peace. For the year 1883—the last whose accounts have been published—the shortcomings was about three and a half million pounds, and it is doubtful whether there has been a single year of honest surplus since the Crimean war. Facts like these are well calculated to alarm the creditors of Russia, but the methods of Russian finance are such that they need not disturb the equanimity of the Imperial Finance Minister very much. We have said that a State may contend with bankruptcy for well-nigh a century, and that is, we suspect, what Russia has been doing. The wars against the first French Empire unquestionably made Russia bankrupt, for her silver rouble then went to a premium of 320 per cent., so completely was the currency swamped by over-issues of paper. But part of this depreciated paper was withdrawn by means of a funding loan, partly issued abroad. That was in 1817, and from that date until now the necessities of the Russian Treasury have been met from time to time by large drafts upon the purses of wealthy and credulous foreign investors. The diversity of Russian borrowings has been somewhat wonderful, especially since the Crimean war. When the State itself could not find a pretext for coming upon the money markets of Holland, England, France, and latterly of Germany, there was always a railway loan handy. By one means or another the Treasury was replenished, and not only so—financiers and banking establishments at home were kept in good heart. The Crimean war added at least seven hundred million roubles to the total obligations of the Empire, including the new issue of bank notes, and Russia ought then to have stopped payment. She did nothing of the kind. She merely borrowed the more industriously abroad. Between 1859 and 1884 upwards of two hundreds millions sterling was raised in foreign markets on the pre-amount. The pace of the borrowing has, therefore, been terrific, and there is reason to believe that it has almost exhausted the carrying capacity of the Empire. In all probability, therefore, war on a large scale would at last strain Russian credit to breaking point.

Burning Mulch on Strawberries.

Perhaps my experience in this may be of interest to some of your readers. I have been in the fruit business nearly twenty years, and I have not dared to burn the mulch of strawberries before, but the last season my strawberries were mulched with straw containing foul seeds, which I did not discover until spreading the same. As soon as I was through picking the fruit I concluded to try the experiment of burning off the mulch to destroy these foul seeds, concluding if it destroyed the strawberry plants so be it. My practice heretofore has been, as soon as through fruiting, to plough a light furrow with one horse, from the rows on each side, only leaving a space about a foot wide of the plants left, which is worked out with a hoe. The furrows cover the mulching, and if old straw is used it will be so fine and rotten that it will not trouble much when working the furrows down with the cultivator. When using new straw have had some trouble with its clogging the cultivator, but in this case now, from the season's experience, my plan will be to burn it off first. It was very dry, and I put fire into one corner of the plot; and it burned over every foot of ground, so there was not a green leaf on the plot of any kind. It remained dry for some time, and I said I thought it was a gone case, but when the rain came, they soon began to push out at the crown, and I worked them out as usual and they came on, so it is as fine a plot as need be. After this experience I burned another plot with the same satisfactory result. I have an idea that there will be another beneficial result of the burning, it will destroy the insects and their eggs.—*J. N. Stearns in Michigan Farmer.*

The Wheel-Destroying Rails.

Though the Europeans got from this country the idea of street railways, they refused to adopt our form of rail, which is so damaging and destructive to vehicles, but insisted on one much more practical. We are an inventive people, but we do not always excel other people in this particular, as many Americans fondly believe. The fact that we have so long submitted to a form of rail for street railways that tears the wheels off carriages, whenever they are unfortunate enough to fall into the snare, is ample proof that we are often stupidly good-natured and inactive. A rail like those used abroad, that is too narrow to admit an ordinary wheel, is a simple contrivance, yet it seems never to have occurred to Americans to save their carriages by demanding its introduction.—*From Bradstreet's.*

INVENTORS of new military appliances are anxious to see a big war, in order that they may have an opportunity to display their resources, and if Great Britain and Russia fall out the desired opportunity will be afforded. Among recent contrivances are balloons with photographic appliances, torpedo boats which may be sunk out of sight and guided under water by electric lights, and nitro-glycerine cartridges warranted to blow a mountain into smithereens.

The small boy feels that it is tempting Providence for a leading grocery firm to put large and luscious looking oranges right out on the sidewalk and label them: "Do not fail to try these oranges. They are very nice."

That pegged shoes and boots are still quite extensively used might be inferred from the fact that a peg manufacturing company at Bartlett, N.H., is turning out the little wooden articles at the rate of 1,800 bushels a day, and has orders on hand that will require several months to fill.

HALF-BREEDS AND INDIANS.

An Eastern View of the Northwest Trouble.

(Halifax Chronicle.)

The forces required to bring half-breed and Indian again into submission to the law have been variously estimated. It is proposed to arm such savages as can be enlisted in Dominion service to harry the country, and slay, and scalp with discrimination. We hope, for the credit of our common humanity, that no such base measure will be adopted. To let loose upon the half-breeds, who are British subjects, the savages would be a cowardly outrage. Five thousand volunteers will also be required in the Northwest according to some authorities. There will be difficulty in getting the men, arming and equipping them suitably for a campaign that promises to be arduous, and transporting them to the scene of the disturbance. The cost of carrying on the war, if we cannot avoid it, will still further cripple Canadian finances, now unstable from the sap and mining of the C.P.R. Co. It may plunge the country into difficulties not far removed from bankruptcy. Its end is not to be foreseen. From present appearances our armies will have no King Pepin's march of it, first up and then down. The stiff Northwesters are having things pretty much their own way. They know the country, which will enable them to pick off their foes from under cover. The season of mud and freshets will be against our men most materially. The rebels are imbued with the idea that they cannot be conquered by any force Canada can send against them. They are hardy, skilled riflemen, and good horsemen. Their self-confidence is excusable. Perhaps their wrath is as well, but the last man and dollar of Canada must be used before an independent state shall be tolerated within its borders. Nevertheless, the Ottawa authorities should remember that a good compromise is better than a bad fight. We have no intent to join in the yelling warcries coming from throats Liberal or Conservative. The half-breeds are our fellow citizens. Shooting them or burning up their homes, or driving them away from their farms, is a recreation not too desirable. If they have been ill-used as they claim, there should be zeal exhibited to get their grievances redressed, rather than to get up a little butchery. The tenders of services of volunteer regiments by their officers to the Government without consulting the men, and in the full consciousness that the Minister of Militia could send the battalions wherever he thought fit, show how ardent is the military spirit among a class of persons who would run a mile on the starting of the bung of a molasses puncheon, and others who want notoriety, and offices. There are orders for troops from Nova Scotia. These should be taken from farther west. There they have the veterans of Ridgeway and the Wolseley campaign. The disturbance is the West's business. Except for the cost, and this call for volunteers, it would touch the East lightly.

There should be much prudence exhibited in the selection of the men from Nova Scotia, especially of those from Halifax. The services of no men with families depending upon their labor should be accepted. Unmarried candidates for honors in the west can be had, and we shall not be obliged to listen to the refrain of "Mother, is the battle over?" The men who serve in this war will be as well entitled to pensions as the never-dying soldiers of 1812.

Parliament has one plain and pleasant duty to perform, that is to dismiss Dewdney with as much ignominy as possible. If it follow this up with a vote of censure on the Ministry, which in sheer laziness brought about this lamentable difficulty, it will do justice. Our voice is for peace, and as much of it as we can get.

Gray Hair.

Many persons begin to show gray hairs while they are yet in their twenties, and some while in their teens. This does not by any means argue a premature decay of the constitution. It is a purely local phenomenon, and may co-exist with unusual bodily vigor. The celebrated author and traveller George Borrow turned quite gray before he was thirty, but was an extraordinary swimmer and athlete at sixty-five. Many feeble persons, and others who have suffered extremely both mentally and physically do not blanch a hair until past middle life; while others, without assignable cause, lose their capillary coloring matter rapidly when about forty years of age. Race has a marked influence. The traveller Dr. Orbigny says that in the many years he spent in South America he never saw a bald Indian, and scarcely ever a gray haired one. The negroes turn more slowly than the whites. Yet we know a negress of pure blood, about 35 years old, who is quite gray. In this country, sex appears to make little difference. Men and women grow gray about the same period of life.

In men the hair and beard rarely change equally. The one is usually darker than the other for several years, but there seems no general rule as to which whitens first. The spot where grayness begins differs with the individual. The philosopher Schopenhauer began to turn gray on the temples, and complacently framed a theory that this is an indication of vigorous mental activity. The correlation of gray hair, as well as its causes, deserve more attentive study than they have received. Such a change is undoubtedly indicative of some deep-seated physiological process, but what this is we can only ascertain by a much wider series of observations than have yet been submitted to scientific analysis.—*Med. and Surg. Reporter.*

Men were cutting ice on one of the ponds in Woburn, Mass., a few weeks ago, while robins were singing blithely in the trees on the shore.

In Arizona any person who uses profane, indecent, vile, or abusive language, or threats, within the hearing of women or children, is held liable by law to fine or imprisonment.

An unprinted letter of Charles Lamb's has come to light, giving his opinions on the relative value of Wordsworth's and Byron's work. It reads thus: "I never relished his lordship's mind. * * * Why, a line of Wordsworth's is a lever to lift the immortal spirit. Byron's can only move the spleen. He was at best a satirist; in any other way he was mean enough. I dare say I do him injustice, but I cannot love him nor squeeze a tear to his memory."

HER MAJESTY'S DRAWING ROOM.

The Courtesies and the Clothes—Minor Tortures of the Occasion.

The London *Telegraph*, in good-humored fun, publishes a description of the Queen's drawing room, and in the course of it says: Cards duly presented, and verified by stern officials, the stream moves on into the first room, and there a stand is made for a whole hour, during which weary interval of waiting the elect take advantage of the broad daylight into which they have emerged to criticise each other's clothes. It is amusing to mark the shades of behavior between the dowager of many summers and the debutante of to-day. The first, aware by sad experience of the time she will have to wait, makes a dash at one of the sparse chairs, and like a wary hen, gathers her chickens as near as possible to the entrance of the second room. The debutantes, on the other hand, are all in a delightful flutter, like so many snow-white doves, and a just remark is made that among the bevy there is a singular amount of loveliness. "Must I take off my glove now?" one whispers with so intense an anxiety that it must almost amount to physical pain. "Oh, do attend to me, mamma! Must I?" "Of course not—not till we reach the third room," returns a superior elder sister. "Whatever you do, don't forget to courtesy all the way; and, oh! don't turn your back!" Then ensues a wild and wonderful discussion as to how many courtesys will be necessary. "Will six do?" "Oh, dear, no! You must go on courtesaying until you get well through the door." After which verdict the debutante subsides into anguished apathy, born of dumb despair.

The Mexican National Pawn-shop.

Letter in Baltimore *American*: After seeing all these things we felt for our pocketbook, and on taking an inventory we found our Mexican dollars were rapidly evaporating. We therefore concluded to visit the national pawnbroking establishment. We did not have much to pawn, but we went there anyhow. This is one of the most remarkable institutions in Mexico, and is well worthy of a visit. It is situated on Empedradillo street, almost opposite the famous Aztec calendar in the wall of one of the Cathedral towers. This is one of the oldest edifices in the city, having been originally built as private residence for Cortes shortly after the conquest. It retains a good deal of its primitive style, and the modern tourist has much to admire in its quaint old doors, windows, staircases, ceilings, etc. Its founder was Count de Regia. Don Pedro Terreros, who, in 1744, endowed the institution with $300,000 out of his private fortune. His object was philanthropic in every respect, being to relieve the poor and those whose difficult circumstances compelled them to have recourse to usury. Money is loaned on very liberal terms, according to the rules and regulations of the establishment, the rate of interest never being lower than 3 or higher than 12½ per cent. per annum. There are many curious articles stowed away in the picture, candelabra, silver-plate, timepiece and miscellaneous rooms, and the grand vault of the bank contains from $5,000,000 to $10,000,000 in solid silver and gold. The jewellery department contains one of the richest and rarest collections in the world. Pearls, rubies, emeralds and diamonds in great number dazzle the visitor's sight. Many of these jewels are merely placed here for safety, others for the consideration of money. Some are handed down from the date of the conquest, and, besides their intrinsic value, are of great interest to the antiquarian.

THE correspondent of the London *Times*, writing from the advance post of the British army in the Soudan, says: "The Arabs seem to be more like wild beasts than human beings. Even women and children fight in their ranks, and when our men sought to afford aid to some of the enemy who could not walk the latter crawled toward them with their spears between their teeth, striving even yet to slay a Kaffir. These traits somewhat diminish the sympathy which we should otherwise feel for such brave antagonists. Were their ferocity shown in the heat of battle it would be excusable, but these wretches hours after were animated by a fiendish desire to injure those who sought to relieve their sufferings. Even the nobler animals have some idea of gratitude, and Arabs must henceforth be regarded in the light of the most savage of the worst description of beasts of prey. The fact is they are maddened into brutality by fanaticism."

A prize of a gold watch put up recently by a tradesman of Ottumwa, Iowa, to any one guessing the number of seeds in a certain pumpkin on exhibition was won by a farmer's daughter, who guessed the exact number—494.

The people of Pelee Island have abolished the system of statute labor. Instead, the roadways are cared for by taxation and properly directed labor.

There is a salt lake in Hidalgo county, Texas, which is one mile in length, five miles in circumference, and from three to four feet deep. Its bed consists of crystals of pure salt.

Lake Erie has been frozen over this year from shore to shore—a rare event. A fisherman of Port Dover, Canada, is said to have walked across on the ice from Long Point to Erie—twenty-eight miles.

"He tried to kiss me, and I just told him to behave," said an irate young lady, after a sleigh-ride down the road the other day. "Well, did he kiss you?" asked her friend. "No, the idiot, he behaved."

People—ladies especially—often wonder how it is that the Queen has an apparently inexhaustible supply of Indian shawls. Some thought they had solved the mystery when the name of an Indian shawl-maker appeared in the list of "tradesmen by appointment" to the Queen. But it is not so. The explanation given is that in 1844 a large tract of territory was ceded to Ghoaob Singh, Maharajah of Jumnoo, who, in consideration of the grant, bound himself to pay to his suzerain seventy-five lacs of rupees and an annual tribute of three pairs of cashmere shawls and twelve perfect shawl goats. As this treaty is still in force, the number of Indian shawls at the disposal of Her Majesty is accounted for.

HANDSOME CHILDREN OF UGLY PARENTS.

A Phenomenon That Puzzles a Scribe in Detroit.

(Detroit News.)

Speaking of working girls, who are nearly all foreigners or of foreign parents, the observer in Detroit will note the striking physiological improvement of American children over their parents. This improvement is especially marked in the poorer classes. The father and mother will display all the characteristics of ignorance, contracted mentality and vulgarity in their manner, while their large feet and hands, stooped shoulders and ungraceful bearing tell the tale of old world hereditary toil and grinding poverty. And yet this is their daughter: Beautiful eyes, a rosy, Hebe-like mouth, a swan-like neck, dainty hands and feet, the form of a sylph! How wonders breed on the free soil of America! Is it the climate? Well, hardly. The same phenomenon can be seen from Lake Winnipeg to the Rio Grande—from the frozen north to the tropics. Political institutions? Yes, indirectly. But not those of the United States particularly. Canada presents the same phenomena of race improvement, and yet her government is theoretically founded on a monarchy. But her monarch is distant, her titled aristocrats are scarce as hen's teeth, and primogeniture is unknown. Both are free countries therefore, in fact, and from freedom indirectly springs the race improvement. Food? Yes, a great factor in female pulchritude is nourishing food, and it is furnished in better quantity and quality in North America than anywhere else on this world's surface. The manners and customs which prevail on this continent also give social freedom and beauty to the poorer classes. The common school system is the alembic which fuses the forces of society, and refines and beautifies the crude matter with the aid of the glowing fires of thought. Another great cause is the social consideration in which woman is held in America. The worship of the sex prevails all over the civilized world, but in the older countries it is confined to the higher and middle classes. Here it descends to the very poorest, and respect and courtesy are extended freely to the daughter of the hod-carrier. On this continent woman does no degrading labor, and everywhere she is surrounded by social honors and privileges which in the old world are only extended to the wealthy. Even in crime she reaps the advantage of sex in immunity from punishment. How many convicted murderesses are executed? But while these facts are enough to indicate some of the causes of race improvement, and particularly the production and development of female beauty in the lower classes, still they signally fail to explain a very common phenomenon in the very same connection, and which may be the initial cause of all. An emigrant family, poor and ignorant, arrives in Detroit directly from the old world. Their children, born abroad, partake of the mental and physical characteristics of the parents—low mentality, homely faces and ungraceful physique. But the next child who comes into the world in this country, in nine cases out of ten, will be keener, handsomer and more graceful than its brothers and sisters. Why is this? Is it the subtle influence of a freer and sweeter civilization acting on material imagination? Let the local savans and psychologists answer.

Arabs vs. Europeans.

The Arab is probably, man for man, the fighting equal of the European. He is physically unchanged since he destroyed the Roman Legionary, and his barbarian auxiliary swept the fierce Visigoths up the Pyrenees, and contended during two centuries with the picked warriors of Europe for the possession of Syria, which he ultimately retained; but, nevertheless, he will not win now. He can charge as Englishmen charge, but it will be in vain. The 600 at Balaklava were not braver than the 540 who got inside the British square at Abu-Klea, and stayed there dead on the ground; but 40,000 of them will not disperse 20,000 Englishmen. The physique, and the bravery, and the self-sacrifice of the children of Shem will all, when the crowning moment arrives and the fate of half the world hangs in the balance, be as completely wasted as if they were attacking higher beings. The Arab has lost nothing in the ages, but the European has gained something, some imperceptible moral quality—brute though he often is, some new intellectual faculty—ignorant animal as he often seems, which enables him to use, as his rival cannot, resources as open to his rival as himself. There is nothing whatever to prevent a regiment of dervishes from Kordofan from acquiring the discipline of the Guards, using the rifles of the Guards, or destroying the Guards whenever they outnumber them; but we all know they cannot do it. Something is wanting, be it what it will, some quality that goes to make up strenuousness; and the want is fatal.—*London Spectator.*

In certain French steel works a workman in cutting fifteen-inch files uses a hammer weighing seven and seven-tenths pounds and wears out a handle of holly wood in about one year, after having struck about 11,250,000 blows with the hammer. In cutting triangular files about five inches long, and in metal somewhat softer than the above, the hammer used weighs two and two-tenths pounds and the holly handle lasts about two years, and has been used in striking 25,440,000 blows. This is another instance of the constant, but long continued dropping that is said to wear away stones.

THE oldest bank note probably in existence in Europe is one preserved in the Asiatic Museum at St. Petersburg. It dates from the year 1399 B. C., and was issued by the Chinese Government. It can be proved from Chinese chroniclers that, as early as 2697 B. C. bank notes were current in China under the name of "flying money." The bank note preserved at St. Petersburg bears the name of the Imperial bank, date and number of issue, signature of a mandarin, and contains even a list of the punishments inflicted for forgery of notes. This relic of 4 000 years ago is probably written, for printing from wooden tablets is said to have been introduced in China only in the year 160 A. D.

Thos. W. Hodgson, the cheese exporter, who failed in Montreal so disastrously, has again been unfortunate in Chicago, where he has been exporting pork to Liverpool.