

A BORN COWARD.

An Eminent Dramatic Critic Makes This Strange Confession.

We were talking together in a club corner, says the Boston Journal. There was peace, for the chief bores were all down town and the generals had not yet arrived, expectant of cock-tails. Mr. Bludyer, the eminent dramatic critic, who is popularly supposed to live chiefly on raw meat and New England rum, put his hand on her knee and made the following confession:

"My great-grandfather, a man of handsome property, raised a regiment at the breaking out of the revolutionary war and fought in several battles. He was finally accused of criminal cowardice—they say the accuser was a personal enemy. He demanded an investigation, but before his innocence could be established he was captured by the British in an engagement, and he died a prisoner. His widow was left poverty-stricken.

"Great is the power, lasting the curse of heredity! My dear boy, I tell you in confidence, I firmly believe that the charge was true, that my great-grandfather Hezekiah was a coward. And for this reason: Cowardice has ruined my life; it has also saved me. As a boy I was afraid of fire, of flood, of loneliness, of ghosts. I would not run in any sport; I feared lest I should be hurt. I could not learn to swim, and the reason was nothing but heredity. Thus I grew up timid, sickly. Even now I would not go alone in a flat. Even now I dislike to go upstairs in the dark, for I am sure that some hand will clutch my shoulder and I hear strange ironical remarks in the shadows. In the night, and, oh, the irony of it! I cannot bear the view of the dramatic critic I am praised, and I am cursed for the 'courage' of my opinions. Man, dear, this 'courage' is a colossal bluff. I do not sign my articles—and I give as a reason, the managing editor does not believe in the practice, whereas he really wishes me to sign. I feel that I am merely a part of a big machine, without personal responsibility. I slash away and cut and carve and use the bludgeon, rejoicing insolently in my anonymity. As a reward, I hear myself described as 'a brave fellow'—one who is not afraid to say what he thinks—you can't buy his opinion! If I were obliged to sign a dramatic review I should follow the formula of a certain western critic, who writes invariably of any actor: 'He done noble, and the brilliant audience went home well pleased with its evening's entertainment.'

"In reality I am the shyest of men. Here I am drinking New England rum. And why? I don't enjoy it. I drink it to give me artificial courage—for I must see a new American play this evening—and to round out the impression of vigor and boldness. At home I drink weak tea with a great deal of sugar. I know you will not believe this confession. You will call me a modest. I know that my great-grandfather must have been a coward, and there is one that knows my cowardice—she is my wife." And with this remark Mr. Bludyer, the eminent and fearless dramatic critic, called for another New England rum and water.

SPAIN'S NATIONAL DEBT.

The Enormous Amount of \$94 Per Capita in American Money.

Some idea of the magnitude of this burden resting upon the Spanish people can be gained by a comparison with our own situation. Their national debt per capita is about 486 peetas, or \$94 in American money. Mulhall, in few years ago, estimated the wealth of Spain at about \$455 per capita; perhaps by this time it could be placed at \$460. The per capita debt of the Spanish government, therefore, is more than 20 per cent. of the per capita wealth of the entire nation.

The debt of the United States government, which in 1866 amounted to two and three-quarter billions of dollars, stood in January, 1898, at (net) \$1,011,701,338.64, including the greenbacks. This would be a per capita indebtedness of about \$14. The per capita wealth of the United States was, in 1890, \$1,036; now it is of course greater, but even on the 1890 basis, the per capita indebtedness of the government to-day amounts to only 1 1/2 per cent. of the per capita wealth of the nation. The per capita interest charge on this debt amounted, in 1896-97, to about 53 cents; in Spain the annual cost of the public debt is nearly \$6 per capita.—Guntton's Magazine.

A Peculiar Lark.

Probably the only inland body of water in the extreme north which does not freeze in winter is Lake Salaurk, near Dawson City, Alaska. Though it is not known to have any connection with the sea, the water of this lake rises and falls simultaneously with the tides of the Arctic ocean.

Provisions Cheap in China.

Provisions are cheap at Kiau-Chou in China. A chicken costs five cents, a duck seven, a goose 15, and eggs are five cents a dozen.

A NEGLECTED BRANCH.

Common Ignorance of the English Language Even Among Students.

The student completes his early training with as little knowledge of the history of his speech as he would if it were Greek, says Prof. Mark H. Liddell in Atlantic. Indeed, he often knows more about Greek than he does about English; so that later on in his educational career, when he becomes a special student of English and makes some attempt to read it in its earlier form, he fails to grasp the significance of its commonest phenomena, because he will look at them through the blue spectacles of his Hellenic culture.

The consequent ignorance of English that is to be found among the most highly educated men is amazing. The public discussions that turn on points of "etymology," pronunciation, or syntax rarely fail to reveal it. Men cavil at idioms that are as old as the language itself, and argue with one another about questions of authentication fact until "philologist" has almost come to mean "quibbler."

What wonder that the ignorance is so widespread when so little interest is taken in the scientific study of the subject? We have now associations for the furtherance of almost every doctrine or endeavor conceivable; the collection of postage stamps has its society, the propagation of esoteric Buddhism has its band of enthusiasts, the study of Browning's poetry has its cultus, and hundreds of other objects and aims, trivial or serious, are thrust upon the notice of the public through the organized effort of unselfish propagandists. But there is no American society or association in existence whose sole object is the dissemination of scientific knowledge of the history and structure of the language by which all such concerted action is rendered possible and effective. Nor are we better off in respect to special journals. Germany has two excellent ones devoted solely to the scientific study of English; America and England have none.

SPANISH PUNCTILIO.

Amusing Phase of Castilian Character Exhibited by a Cabinet Crisis.

The cabinet crisis which took place in Spain in 1888 exhibits an amusing phase of Spanish character. The ministerial crisis had existed almost a year when the resignation of cabinet took place as the result of a trivial question of military etiquette. The queen had left Madrid for an excursion to Valencia, which the minister of justice insisted on her making, according to the published arrangement, lest the postponement should be construed as a sign of fear of the Zorrillist republicans, who had conducted a mass meeting in the same city. The Infanta Isabel, who was left to represent her, decided to take a journey also, and informed Gen. Martinez Campos that her sister, the Infanta Eaulalie, would give out the military watchword. The military governor of Madrid replied that the married infanta was not legally competent to perform that office, and that it was impossible, according to military rules, for him to receive the password from her husband, Prince Antonio, Duc de Montpensier, who was only a captain in rank. The minister of war, who was not on good terms with the captain-general, sent a brusque telegram, ordering him to receive the password from the Princess Eaulalie, whereupon Gen. Campos offered his resignation. All attempts to settle the quarrel failed and, as a majority of the cabinet sided with the captain-general, Gen. Cassola and the ministers who had supported his view resigned their portfolios. Senor Sagasta handed in the resignation of the entire cabinet to the queen regent, but subsequently, upon the latter's request, formed a new ministry.

Naming the Bicycle.

Both the velocipede and bicycle have given the French a lot of trouble to satisfactorily christen either machine. Beginning with celerifere and velosifere, there has been a progressive movement in the direction of "bicycle," "bicyclette," "veloce" and "velo." The popular vehicle is also known under the name of "becane." In Spain it is velosifer, velocipedo and bicycleta. In England it is "wheel," in Germany, "farrad" or "rad." In China it is "gaugma," meaning "foreign horse," or "fei chai," "flying machine." In the same country it is also called "tzu trun," or "carriage that goes without horse." With respect to names, however, the Flemings distance all the rest. Beginning by calling the bicycle the "snelwiel" or "voetwiel," they have developed the name into the monstrous "gwielsnelrijnoetrappend-neudrekgestel." Those contemplating a bicycle tour in Europe had better skip Flanders or else ride around the country.

His Undying Love.

Intimate Friend—Has your husband's love grown cold? Sarcastic Wife—O, no! He loves himself just as much now as he did when we were married 20 years ago.—Stray Stories.

BUILT OF MARBLE.

A Boom Town in Canada That Is Now Deserted.

"I was assistant engineer on the Ontario & Quebec railroad, a branch of the Canadian Pacific railway," said an engineer in Tacoma, "and in running our preliminary lines one of them touched Bridgewater, Ontario, a deserted town that was the personification of Oliver Goldsmith's 'Deserted Village.' Bridgewater was brought into existence by one of the strangest gold finds and crazes in the history of this continent.

"Nearly 25 years ago a farmer's wife was searching the woods surrounding their farm for a sow that had strayed, and, becoming thirsty, stopped to get a drink from the spring. Slipping she fell against a small, loose rock, which rolled to her feet, and which proved to be a twenty-pound nugget of almost pure gold. Bridgewater at that time was almost 40 miles from the nearest railroad, and the present site of the town was nothing but a wilderness, but the effect of that accidental find of the farmer's wife was such that inside of six months what had been a burned over barren wilderness was converted into a substantial city of nearly 5,000 people.

"In digging a shaft about a mile south of the town site, on the claim of Billia Flint, a life senator of Canada, an immense quarry of the purest white marble ever found on this continent was discovered, and, at the suggestion of the senator, the town of Bridgewater was practically built of marble, for it has to-day the only hotel, church, school, courthouse and private dwellings constructed entirely of white marble in the world, and a mile north of the town are an abandoned ax factory and grist mill whose foundations are built of the same beautiful material.

"During the building of the town thousands of men prospected the entire country, and shafts and tunnels were driven—some of them nearly 100 feet, but, strange as it may seem, there was never enough gold found to pay the cost of a single shaft or tunnel sunk or run in the entire district. So excited did the farmers around Bridgewater become that some of them actually hired guards to keep them from going on their land to pick up gold. Pat Kehoe, an old Irishman, who owned 100 acres of rock-strewn, barren land, was offered \$125,000 for his holding, but held out for \$150,000. To-day you could buy the property for probably \$150.

"One rancher, whose farm adjoined 'Aladdin's Cave,' the place where the original nugget was found, sold five acres to an English syndicate for \$100,000, and it is an established fact that the syndicate spent as much more developing their claim, as everything was very costly, all material having to be hauled nearly 50 miles, over rough roads, and they did not get a single ounce of free gold out of their purchase, but they mined some quartz—about 100 tons—shipped it to the states, and, in return, got a bill from the smelting company for \$360 for smelting charges over and above the gold in the quartz. This was the first, and I believe the last, shipment of quartz ever made, as the cost of hauling, shipping and smelting was \$150 a ton more than the rock produced."—Portland Oregonian.

A GERMAN WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

At Her Marriage She Gives Up Her Whole Independence.

Germany and Japan are the only civilized countries at the present day where the rights of women are restricted. In all civilized communities, everyone is supposed to have rights, but, nevertheless, in these two countries the legal rights of women are hard to find.

In Germany a woman cannot control property, or, indeed, her own actions, for whatever property she has acquired in any way belongs to her father, her husband or her son, and the law requires that she should obey their orders. When a German woman marries she gives up the whole of her independence, if she can ever be said to have any, and confers on her husband absolute power over her. He can compel her to work and do anything which it is lawful for women to do, and she has no relief or protection, should he prove harsh and unkind, except public opinion. Whatever property she has at her marriage becomes absolutely her husband's and forever. He has power to dispose of it exactly as he sees fit, even in the face of her opposition, and in case of the couple being divorced, the woman's property still remains with the husband. Some of the English and American girls who have married German nobles have—afterwards learned to their sorrow how different the laws regarding women and women's property are in the Fatherland, from what they are in their own countries. German women, as a rule, however, seem contented in spite of antiquated laws.

Wear Spurs with Full Dress.

The officers of the Swedish navy are considered military officers, and in full dress must wear spurs.

Bulletin Financier.

Mardi, 29 juin 1898.

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Bulletin Commercial.

Mardi, 29 juin 1898.

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