

**A REMARKABLE IMPOSTURE.**

In the goal in Santa Fe, New Mexico, lies the hero of one of the most remarkable impostures modern times have known. No writer of fiction has conceived anything half so audacious. These are the facts as made public at the trial. For the past twenty-five years Congress, the Government Departments, and the courts have dealt with the Peralta Land Grant. This was an attempt on the part of the descendants of a grantee of Spain to establish claim to a strip of land 75 miles wide and 225 miles long in the richest parts of New Mexico and Arizona. On this land are situated cities and thriving towns; railroads cross it in all directions; and beneath the surface are gold, silver, and copper mines of great value. At a moderate estimate the territory is worth at least £15,000,000. Had the claimant won the Government would have had to refund at least \$10,000,000 for land sold to settlers, and these settlers would have been cast in damages for an additional \$5,000,000. It was a stake worth while playing for. The claimant to all these untold riches was the alleged descendant by marriage of Don Miguel de Peralta de la Cordova, Baron of Arizona and the Colorados, Knight of the Fleece and Baron of the Order of Charles III., Knight of Montesa, Knight of the Colorados, Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber with entrance at will, who, in return for great services rendered his Most Christian Majesty Phillip V. of Spain, had been given this principality in the New World. The immediate descendants of the Gentleman of the King's Bedchamber had long ago joined their royal masters, and the title to the grant had lapsed. In investigating some land titles in the Far West a man named James Addison Reavis discovered the title to the Peralta land grant, and after extensive searches, he filed with the Surveyor-General of Arizona a claim to the grant, asserting that it had been devised to him by a Dr. Willing, who in turn had been made the beneficiary under the will of Miguel de Peralta, a lineal descendant of the original grantee. In substantiation of his claim there was filed with the Surveyor-General what purported to be original documents from the Government archives in the City of Mexico, certified copies of the last will and testament of Baron de Peralta, and a mass of other documentary evidence. After careful consideration, the Surveyor-General refused to entertain the claim, and in a long and carefully prepared report pointed out many missing links and evidences of forgery in the documents.

For four years Reavis was unheard of; then he filed

an amended petition with the Surveyor General, again making claim to the grant. In his new petition he set forth that he had by marriage become the legal representative of Dona Sofia Loreto Micaela de Peralta Reavis, nee Masoy Silva de Para'ta de la Cordova, who was alleged to be the great-granddaughter of Don Miguel Silva de Peralta de las Flores. The amended claim was substantially the same as the original petition, except that the missing links were duly supplied, and the evidence in support of the claim was even more minute and voluminous. Apparently his evidence was complete, and his title, through his wife, unassailable.

A few words as to the claimant. According to his own testimony he was born in Missouri, served in the war of the Secession, and then went to Brazil. Returning to St. Louis, he found work as the driver of a tram-car, then he was a clerk, then a salesman, afterwards a news paper correspondent, and then an estate agent. It was while engaged in the last business that he met Dr. Willing, through whom he obtained the famous grant. Reavis was a man of no education up to that time. And yet this 'plain Western man of almost childlike candour and simplicity' managed to fool such astute men of the world and able lawyers as the late Senator Conkling, Colonel Ingersoll, Colonel Broadhead, now United States Minister to Switzerland; and others; while from the Southern Pacific Railroad, and various keen business men he secured hundreds of thousands of dollars to carry on his fight. Perhaps the most remarkable thing in connection with this forgery was that a man of no education became one of the most proficient Spanish scholars of the day; and not only did he learn modern Spanish, but he became a master of the classical Spanish of the eighteenth century, the language employed by the Court of King Ferdinand VI. It was necessary for him to become an expert archaeologist; and so perfect was his knowledge of the seals and signets, the decorations and Orders of the Courts of Spain of a century and a half ago, that he deceived the most learned archaeologists of Madrid. Again the Surveyor-General of Arizona rejected his claim, and it was necessary for Reavis to appeal to higher authority. To successfully carry on his fight he needed money and influential friends. Money he soon found, and with the money came the friends. The case was submitted to Senator Conkling for his opinion. Mr Conkling spent a month in examination of the papers, and at the end of that time declared unhesitatingly that, if the title in dispute was to a farm in the Connecticut, 'the title would be absolutely perfect. As it is, on its face, the case is flawless.' But investigations made in Mexico and Spain added the most startling climax to the wonderful romance. Not only did the attorneys for the Government learn that all of Reavis's evidence was forged, but that Don Miguel Silva had absolutely no existence except in the brain of the imaginative Reavis.

**AN APPALLING RUMOUR.**

THEY SAY THAT—



PADEREWSKI



IS GROWING BALD.

**CYCLISTS' SPEED.**

EVERY time a bicycle rider pushes down one pedal he travels as far as a man eighteen feet in height would go in making one step. That is an interesting statement, and is made on the authority of a scientific journal.

The large gentleman in the illustration suggests the fabled person who wore the seven-league boots. A single glance at the picture will convey to the mind in an instant what the bicycle does and why it is so popular. Think of such a little fellow as the man on the wheels moving along at each downward pressure of his foot at the rate a man eighteen feet high walks, and you will



understand, if you are not a bicycle rider, why old and young seem to have got wheels in the head. The sensation of a rapid, smooth motion through the air, accomplished with little effort, is very agreeable. This is the sort of motion provided by the bicycle.

The accompanying picture does not really show what a difference in size there must be between the bicyclist and the pedestrian who would cover the ground with the same effort. It would be easier for the bicyclist to make the fifteen feet on a level with one pressure of one foot than to take two steps. All bicycle paths, however, are not level.



"OUR ANCESTORS."—FROM MAX'S PICTURE IN VIENNA.