

unquestionable right to a place on the Commission. Mr Gerald Balfour, as Member for Central Leeds, may be expected to represent the vast industries of the West Riding of Yorkshire. Sir W. T. Lewis, the manager of the Cardiff Docks, revealed such a strong personality in the great labour struggle at Cardiff, that it was impossible that his claims to a seat on the Commission could be ignored. Mr Thomas H. Ismay makes another good appointment for the shipping interest. He is a senior partner in the firm of Ismay, Irvine and Co., the owners of the famous White Star line of steamships. Sir Frederick Pollock and Professor Marshall will represent the academic and theoretical side of the labour question. The former appears to have been selected because of his legal knowledge, and the latter as a Professor of Political Economy. Mr Flinsoll's speciality we all know. Mr David Dale and Mr E. Trow come from Darlington to represent the iron-workers: the former for the masters, the latter for the men. Tom Mann will, of course, represent the dockers; Mr Tait, the Scotch railwaymen, and Mr Austin, Irish labour. Mr Tunstall is the representative of the cotton kings, while Mr Maudsley is for the cotton operatives. Mr Hewlatt is chairman of the Wigan Coal and Wagon Company, and will espouse the cause of the coal and iron employers; while Mr George Livesey holds brief for the gas companies.

WHEN WE WERE YOUNG.

BLITHE were the hours, gay were the flowers,
Pleasant the showers, when we were young;
How sweet the hay then! how hard the play then!
How the birds sang! when we were young.

O, how the bobolinks merrily whistled,
Tilting and liting down in the rye!
We said, with such singing, 'tis good news you're bringing
To your little brown mates on their nests near by.

Bright were the hollyhocks, poppies, and larkspurs,
(Gorgeous the daffodils, yellow as gold;
Bachelors' buttons, with sweet-scented clover,
And queer little bags of house leek so old.

The burrs! you remember our joys when they blossomed!
What baskets we made! what wreaths, stars and chairs!
But, my stars, it was strange that, somehow or other,
They always would manage to tangle our hairs.

And the brook that ran down at the foot of the meadow—
We called it a river, when we were young:
How it danced over pebbles to rest in the shadow,
Then swiftly again to the sunlight it sprang!

The castles we builded! too quickly they crumbled;
The fleets that we floated! all wrecked on the shore;
But little recked we, we had plenty of time then—
Long, long sunny hours in which to build more.

Ah! the day-dreams we dreamed in the great drooping willow,
Of a life full and strong as the swift-running stream—
Of a life full of love, and gladness and glory.
Could such passionate longings be naught but a dream?

Our river's still running with bubbling laughter,
The bobolinks still carol musical lays,
The flowers still bloom with the same sweet perfume,
But where is the joy we felt in those days?

Alas! we are older, we will not say colder,
The gala days few now, the dark days among;
But our dark days are brighter, our hearts they are lighter,
For those days full of sunshine, when we were young.

THEY MARRIED BECAUSE THEY WERE OLD AND POOR.

HALF A-DOZEN men were discussing the problems of marriage in a café one evening.

'These young chaps make me very weary,' said a colonel. 'I mean these young fellows who, though in receipt of good incomes, spend all their money in foolery, and then say they can't afford to marry.'

'I agree with you,' said a Maryland gentleman. 'If a man wants to marry he never reckons the cost. I am reminded of a story of two of our old house servants. They had both been in our family for years. When the emancipation proclamation was signed we told them that they were free.

'We could scarcely drive them away with a club, however. They had been born and reared on the place. Sam had lost his wife. He was eighty years of age. Old Kate was our "mammy." She was sixty or seventy. Her husband was killed duck-shooting a dozen years before the war. It was a great blow to the old people when we told them they would have to go. They did not want to leave us and hustle for themselves, but we could ill-afford to keep them at that time. It was particularly hard for the old "mammy." She thought we children all belonged to her.

'Finally we compromised the matter and let old Kate have the use of one of the cabins and work on the place. Sam went to live in a little shanty in the town a mile or two away. Kate did washing, and Sam did washing, too, whenever he could get a job—white-washing I mean.

'We were astonished one day at hearing that these old creatures, each with one foot in the grave, had married. My father sent me to Sam to learn if the report was true. I found him whitewashing the wooden fence around his shanty.

'"Sam," I said, "what in the world have you and old Kate been up to, marrying at your age? What did you do for?"

'"Why, Massa Will," he replied, "yo' see it war this way. Ole Kate an' I were a talkin', an' I say to ole Kate, "Kate, we po' fool niggers. I see done live 'bout long's I ker to."

'"An' Kate, she say:—"I dunno 'bout dat, Sam, but guess you is telling de truff."

'So Kate, she say as how she's ole, too, an' can't grow much older, an' how she po' an' can't be no poorer. An' so we clude to get married, kase we can't be no o'er, no no poorer when we's married, den when Kate is juss Kate, an' Sam's juss Sam.

'An' so those two old darkeys were married,' said the Maryland man, 'because they were old and could not live much longer, and because they were poor and could not be any poorer whether they were single or married.'

The story touched the warm spot in the breast of the Colonel, who forthwith celebrated old Sam's philosophy by ordering up a round of the old bourbon for which the Society's cellar is famous.

'Here's to the memory of old Sam and old Kate,' said the Colonel, draining his glass. 'Write the story,' he said to a newspaper man present. 'Perhaps someone will take the hint and do as old Sam and old Kate did.'

A RARA FELIS.

A NUMBER of men were seated in a chop house one evening recently, when in walked a typical street fakir (dodger), bearing a mysterious box under his arm.

The proprietor of the resort started to hustle the stranger out of doors, when the man began to explain in his glib way that he was not a pedlar, but that he had merely dropped in to exhibit a rare animal, one he had captured himself in the interior of Brazil.

'It's as tame as a kitten,' he said. Then he added: 'The likes of it has never been seen before. Naturalists believe it to be the last specimen of an extinct species. It's a rare curiosity, gentlemen. I'd like to show it to you if the boss is agreeable. You can give me what you like afterward.'

'No, no, the gentlemen don't want to see the thing,' spoke up the proprietor testily, as he made a movement toward the intruder.

'Hold on. Let us see what the man has,' spoke up one of the men present. Several others requested that the fellow be allowed to exhibit his treasure, and the proprietor gave his consent.

Placing his box on one of the tables the fakir opened it, and out stepped the oddest looking animal imaginable. It paused, looked around at the company, walked to the edge of the table and then leaped almost noiselessly to the floor.

'What in the world is it?' came from a chorus of men.

'Looks like a long legged rat said one.

'A mishapen monkey or a hairless 'possum,' interjected another.

'Is it a small kangaroo?'

'What is it?'

'Where did it come from?'

Everyone present asked some question or offered some suggestion at the sight of the queer thing.

'I don't know what it is,' said the fakir.

'I captured it after a hard struggle,' he added. 'I've been offered £200 for it, but I am attached to the creature and I won't part with it. It's worth while seeing, isn't it?' he added, with some pride.

The men thought it was, and gave the fellow quite a sum of money.

The animal was small, not larger than a half-grown cat. It was entirely bare of hair and was of a light liver colour. It walked about the floor, jumped upon chairs and tables and appeared perfectly at home.

'It is certainly the oddest thing I have ever seen in the way of an animal,' remarked a well educated man. 'The animal is of the cat tribe, I think,' he added, 'and yet it is an anomaly. It has claws, a sensitive, nervous organism, as shown by its movements and the action of the tail, and yet it has a smooth hide. I really can't account for such a peculiar make up. It is contrary to all established natural law.'

Then came a long discussion into which the shades of Cuvier and Darwin and several other famous gentleman were dragged by the ears. The authorities were quoted and misquoted at length. The fakir stood by smoothing the smooth hide of the mysterious animal, now and then accepting a drink from one or the other of the gentlemen, and listening to the discussion with the greatest interest.

It is difficult to say how long he would have remained had not a young gentleman, accompanied by a fox terrier dog, chanced just then to enter the resort. The dog spied the mystery, emitted a sharp, angry bark and sprang toward it. The hairless creature leaped with great agility to the bar, then to a shelf back of it. There was a crash of broken glasses and crockery 'tobs,' thrown down by the animal's efforts to escape the dog.

The latter barked furiously. In vain his master tried to still him. The fakir looked nervously at his pet. Everyone else did the same. The creature stood aloft. Its back arched high, its tail moving furiously. The proprietor tried to dislodge it, it crouched back and gave forth a sharp 'pat! pat!'

'By Jove! you can't blame the dog,' said the young man. 'You have no business to keep such a looking cat as that about,' he added.

'Cat?' said everyone at the same time. 'Why, that isn't a cat.'

'Yes it is,' said the first speaker. 'It's a shaved cat. The dog recognised it if you don't. A man who would serve an animal that way ought to be arrested.'

At this speech everyone turned towards the spot where the fakir had stood, but he had sought safety in flight. A glance at the animal convinced the company that it was really a cat, but that it had been shaved to the hide from tip of tail to tip of nose.

It was really a remarkable piece of tonsorial work, and the company agreed that if, for no other reason, the fakir was entitled to his money as a reward for his ability and dexterity in shaving a cat. Had the feat could be performed without an immense deal of scratching and caterwauling is difficult to imagine.

The St. Lawrence is a phenomenon among rivers. No other river is fed by such gigantic lakes. No river is so independent of the elements. It despises alike rain, snow, and sunshine. Ice and wind may be said to be the only things that affect its mighty flow. Something almost as phenomenal as the St. Lawrence itself is the fact that there is so little generally known about it. Among all the great rivers of the world the St. Lawrence is the only absolutely floodless one. The St. Lawrence despises rain and sunshine. Its greatest variation caused by drought or rain hardly ever exceeds a foot or fourteen inches. The cause of this almost everlasting sameness of volume is easily understood. The St. Lawrence is fed by the mightiest bodies of fresh water on the earth. Immense as is the volume of water it pours into the ocean, anyone who has traversed all the immense lakes that feed it, and for the surplus waters of which it is the only channel to the sea, wonders that it is not even more gigantic than it is. Not one drop of the waters of the five great lakes finds its way to the ocean, save through this gigantic, extraordinary, and wondrously beautiful river. No wonder, then, that it should despise the rain and defy the sunshine.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

LONGEVITY.

Out of over 1,000 people nearly 100 reach 75, 38 reach 85, and two reach 95. The number of persons in proportion to the whole population that reach 70 in Norway is one-third, in England nearly one-fifth, in France one eighth, and in Ireland one eleventh. As far as can be calculated, the average length of life which is computed in the seventeenth century to average only 13 years, is in the eighteenth increased to 20, and in the nineteenth to 36. Men used to be considered old when they passed 50.

A WEATHER PROPHECY.

Mr Hugh Clements states that he has discovered certain relations between the moon and meteorological conditions as will enable him to foretell the weather with great exactness and certainty. 'By means of these co-ordinates,' he says, 'it will be possible to forecast the weather not only at London, but at every place on the earth's surface, where meteorological records have been kept for past years. I shall publish a work on the weather shortly, pointing out how the rainfall may not only be forecast for many years in advance for months, but even for days.'

EXTINCT BIRDS.

The *dinornis* or 'moa,' must have equalled ten feet in height and it probably represents therefore, the largest species of the bird world. No less interesting is a certain extinct wingless bird of Madagascar, called the *Epiornis*. This form was as large as the moa of New Zealand, and that its extinction is only of recent date is proved by the circumstances under which its remains occur in the alluvial formations of the great island just noted. Curiously enough, the eggs of the *epiornis* have been discovered in the deposits which yield its bones. These eggs measure from 15in. to 14in. in diameter, and the cubic capacity of one of the eggs has been calculated to equal that of six ostrich eggs, or 148 hen's eggs.

THE BACTERIAL PLAGUE.

Are we safe nowhere from bacteria, some one inquires, not even when we are sealed up in a vacuum in a glass case? Not content with showing us that horrid monster's claw and fight in every drop of water we drink, scientific gentlemen have now been microscopically overhauling a hailstone and finding that an infinitesimal speck of the ice contains no less than 400 to 700 bacteria. They may be the germs of smallpox, scarlet fever, leprosy, naughtiness, and crime. Not even ice will kill them, for they thaw out and wriggle ferociously. The invention of the microscope revealed wonders to man, but it has made life a burden to nervous people. Nothing is free from microbes any more, nothing is pure, except the benevolent motive of one, says the same inquirer, who lends a friend five dollars when he never expects to get it back again.

LA GRIPPE MICROBES.

Dr. W. G. Gentry, of Chicago, has secured what he thinks is undoubtedly a microbe of la grippe. He found that thirty-four years ago and again sixteen years ago la grippe was epidemic among human beings, and that seventeen years it attacked horses, causing the well remembered 'epizootic' epidemic. He inclines to believe that the earth at intervals passed through a stretch of space impregnated with what astronomers call 'star dust.' Several days ago it occurred to him that he might trap some of the dust or microbes. Carefully polishing a blank microscope slide he took it out of doors and passed it through the air. Placing the slide under his microscope he counted seven heretofore unidentified microbes in the instrument. He had the slide mounted, and then obtaining some microbes from a patient afflicted with la grippe, found them identical in every respect with those he caught in the air.

CATERPILLAR CATCHER.

This invention will, doubtless, interest some of our readers who are interested in gardening. The system is in use largely in Germany. The trap consists of a strip of gauze wire, 2in. wide, and of a suitable length. On this is fastened a thin layer of flax or hemp thread, about 12in. long, arranged so that 7in. are below and 5in. above the gauze. Over this there is a strip of gauze wire 4in. wide, of which 2in. are cut in sharp points and bent horizontally. A strip of felt, 1in. wide and 1/2in. thick, is fixed right round the tree below the first branches; on this the gauze wire strips are laid, and fixed to the tree with small nails. The flax threads (5in. long upwards) are turned down over the horizontally lying wire points so that they hang downwards. The felt strip prevents the thread from touching the tree, and the points hold the upper and the lower flax threads two inches apart. The caterpillars and beetles, etc., that climb up the tree, come into direct contact with the threads, are caught in them, and must die.

A NEW BUTTER.

Cocoonnut butter is a new food-stuff, which seems to have a useful future before it. According to a report by the British Vice-Consul at Berlin, the production of an edible fat from the marrow of the cocoonnut has been carried out for the last two years by a firm at Mannheim, the process having been discovered three years before by Dr. Schlieker. Factories having the same object are about to be established at Paris and Amsterdam. The nuts come from the South Sea Islands, and also from certain places on the African and South American coasts. The butter, which is sold at less than half the price of ordinary butter in London, contains from sixty to seventy per cent. of fat, and twenty-three to twenty-five per cent. of organic matter. Its colour is white; it is of an agreeable taste, is suitable for cooking purposes, and is being purchased by the poor, who prefer it to margarine. Being free from acid, it digests with greater ease than dairy butter, and it is preferable in other ways to the bad butter which too often finds its way to market. It is also a more attractive compound than the various preparations called margarine, some of which have such very questionable origin.