

IN THE BELFRY OF THE NIEUWE KERK.

(AMSTERDAM.)

Not a breath in the stifled, dingy street!
On the Stadhuis tiles the sun's strong glow
Lies like a kind of golden snow.
In the square one almost sees the heat.
The mottled tulips over there
By the open casement pant for air,
Grave, portly burghers, with their rouses,
Go hat in hand to cool their brows.

But high in the fretted steeple, where
The sudden chimes burst forth and scare
The lazy rooks from the belfry beam,
And the ring-doves as they coo and dream
On flying-buttress or carved rose—
Up here, *mein Gott!* a tempest blows!—
Such a wind as bends the forest tree,
And rocks the great ships out at sea.

Plain simple folk, who come and go
On humble levels of life below,
Little dream of the gales that smite
Mortals dwelling upon the height!

T. B. ALDRICH.

HOW GAME SLAUGHTERERS ARE TREATED IN AMERICA.

Although the game laws in many of the States of North America are infinitely more stringent than in England, the greatest difficulty is experienced in enforcing them on account, in the majority of cases, of the vast areas over which such laws extend. Even in the more populous Eastern States the game laws are defied in the most flagrant manner, and more especially the law for the protection of wild-fowl. These latter are slaughtered for the market at all seasons in the rivers, estuaries, and creeks of the Eastern seaboard. The Susquehanna in particular, a river which is a very favorite resort for all kinds of aquatic birds, has, we gather from a Baltimore paper, been haunted for a long time by a gang of law-breakers. This gang, armed with huge punt guns, go out at night and slaughter ducks "by thousands" on their roosting places. Although an old Act existed previously, a new and more stringent one was passed by the Legislature last year. This, however, failed to have the deterrent effect desired, and consequently these pot-hunters became a band of outlaws. They took possession of Spesutia Island, about six miles below the town called Havre-de-Grace, and made it their stronghold. No sportsman could shoot ducks in the neighborhood, as these poachers cruised round in their sloops all day, and purposely scared the ducks away by raising and lowering their sails. The charge used in the "night guns" was one and a half pounds of powder and shot *ad libitum*, and from \$5 to 100 canvas-backs were sometimes killed at one discharge. The last act passed by the Legislature imposed a fine of 200 dollars, or imprisonment, on any one found using a sneak boat or swivel gun at night in Chesapeake Bay or its tributaries for the purpose of shooting ducks, and the Act also provides that if any person is found with such big gun in his possession in the neighborhood where ducks, etc., were, "it shall be deemed *prima facie* evidence for his conviction." To meet this, however, the poachers in the present case fitted their guns with patent buoys, by which they could, if they feared surprise, pitch them overboard, and return to them again when the way was clear. They also fitted their punts with runners, to run them over the ice, which also gave them the whip-hand of any pursuers. Numerous attempts have been made to convict the gang, but one great obstacle was the fact that some of the band are "politically influential men."

Some gentlemen and sportsmen, however, determined, if possible, to capture their guns, seeing that bringing the men before the magistrates of the district was useless, as the latter were probably sharing the profits. These gentlemen put the matter into the hands of an attorney, whose name and connections are surrounded by historical recollections, both in England and America. This gentleman was Mr. J. E. Semmes, a nephew of Admiral Raphael Semmes, commander of the Confederate vessel *Alabama*. He enlisted the services of a Philadelphia detective. The latter first went to Havre-de-Grace and found out who the great duck killers were. Of course nobody knew how they killed their ducks, but to these men the detective went, and being an engaging and companionable fellow he made them all his friends. They took him down to the stronghold on Spesutia Island, and gave him all the duck-shooting he wanted, but they were very reticent about their big guns. At last the detective was taken out with the ringleader of the poachers. On this occasion 104 ducks were killed. Afterward the detective was taken out with another man, and was shown the *modus operandi*. With this evidence and the knowledge of the fact that upon a certain day all the poachers except one would be away from the island, the detective joined Mr. Semmes, and the two set out in a small boat from Havre-de-Grace for the island, for the purpose of capturing the guns. The detective knew where they were hidden. Unfortunately the river began to freeze, and after about five hours' hard pulling the boat became ice-bound when near the island. The two men were discovered by the sloops of the duck pirates which were cruising around, and three of them made a descent upon the yawl and its occupants.

The law-breakers suspected a raid and smelt a rat, and Mr. Semmes and the detective were taken aboard the ringleader's schooner. In the cabin there were two Henry rifles, three double-

barrelled shotguns, and several revolvers. The detectives, by a little finessing, managed, however, to allay suspicion, and subsequently another raid was planned. This time more detectives were brought into requisition, and several special officers. The lines were laid with great judgment, and the party made an attack on the island, armed with warrants for the arrest of the ringleaders. To the surprise of the raiding party, the poachers were found entrenched on the island armed to the teeth, and prepared to make a desperate defence. It was afterwards learned that a special officer who had been sent to Belair to be deputised by the sheriff had acted in an injudicious manner, and the duck-killers got wind of the affair. There were eleven poachers in all, and about six in the party that had come to arrest them. The poachers swore that they would die rather than be arrested. Mr. Semmes hoisted a flag of truce and opened a parley. He told the men he should certainly arrest them, and that they had better submit. They could not better their misdemeanors by adding to them the capital crime of murder; whereas if the officers of the law should kill anyone in making the arrest, it would be a praiseworthy act in the eye of the law.

The poachers considered this too potent an argument to be resisted, and surrendered, thinking that at best they would only be taken before their county magistrate. A provision of the law, however, allows offenders to be prosecuted in Baltimore, and when Mr. Semmes told them that he was going to put them "into the jail at Towson," they begged for mercy. A compromise was then effected, and Mr. Semmes promised that they should be taken before their county magistrate, and that he would allow the law to take its course without argument upon the evidence if they would give up their "big guns." The men begged and implored, and even wept over parting with their guns. Mr. Semmes took them, however, and brought them to Baltimore, when they were broken up on the 3rd of February last.

The latest files of all the American sporting papers express themselves as highly gratified at the successful issue of Mr. Semmes's enterprise, as they say that the creeks and rivers on the eastern coast will be as completely denuded of wildfowl as many parts of the States are of all kinds of game if the race of thieving game slaughterers is allowed to indulge in its poaching propensities a few years longer.

BETTING ON A CERTAINTY.

In the British army in India betting among the officers often runs to an extreme of vice that is sometimes fearful to contemplate. Perhaps it is no worse than in club life in London, where the most amusing as well as tragical stories are told of the curious bets that are made. Betting on a certainty is held to be unfair, unless the avowal is distinctly made, so that no undue advantage is taken.

An officer in the army had imported for his private apartments a new and beautiful mahogany table. A day or two after it had arrived and had been duly installed in his quarters, a brother officer, a great swell and very unpopular, dropped in familiarly, and greatly admired the beautiful table. The owner was shaving himself at the glass with his back to his visitor—Colonel Brown—but continued the conversation until the colonel withdrew, the latter remarking that he hoped soon to have his legs under that elegant mahogany.

The owner of the table, whom we must call Major Jones, made up a little dinner party in the course of a few days, and Colonel Brown was one of the number. It was natural that the new table should be the subject of remark, and Brown, who affected to be a connoisseur in all matters, said the table was perfect, with one exception.

Jones. "And pray what is that, colonel?"
Brown. "It is just a little too high."
Jones. "Do you think so? How high would you suppose it to be?"

Brown. "I presume it is the usual height, just thirty-six inches, and it ought to be less than that by at least half an inch."

Jones. "That is the exact height, thirty-five and a half inches, not thirty-six, as you suppose."

Brown. "Pardon me. I am certain it is three feet high; I will make you a bet on it."

Jones. "You will lose if you do, for I give you notice that I know its exact height to half an inch, and if I bet I shall bet on a dead certainty."

Brown. "I am just as sure as you are; I am betting on a certainty also; my eye never deceives me. I will lay you a hundred or a thousand pounds that this table is thirty-six inches high; no more, no less."

The major sought to dissuade his guest from his purpose to make a bet, assuring him that he *knew* the height of the table, and did not want to bet on a certainty, but when the excitement grew furious, the wager was finally laid at an enormous sum—I have heard it stated as high as \$50,000—£10,000. That seems preposterous, when such a trifle was the subject, but the gambling spirit does not stick at trifles. When the betting was finally arranged, Colonel Brown exclaimed, exultingly, "I told you I *knew* the table was exactly thirty-six inches high; I did *know* it, because when I called, just after it arrived, I took its measure on my cane as I sat by it, and after I went out I measured, and found it to be, as I have said, precisely thirty-six inches high."

"Yes," said Major Jones, "I was sitting with my back to you, but I was shaving before the looking-glass, and I saw you taking the measure of the table with your cane. Suspecting that you were preparing for a bet as to its height, after you left I had half an inch taken off, and it is now precisely thirty-five and a half inches high."

The applause that followed this result was tremendous, and completed the discomfiture of the unpopular colonel. It was evident that he had been laying a plan to cheat, and would have pocketed the money if he had won. He was sent to Coventry. He sold his commission and returned to England, being unable to stand up against the contempt of the officers, who thoroughly despised his character.

SANITARY CONDITION OF DWELLING HOUSES.

The unsanitary condition of ordinary dwelling houses has been very forcibly brought before the public by the report issued by the London Sanitary Protection Association, on the houses inspected by its officers during the past year. In no less than six per cent. of these dwellings—which, in the majority of cases, were inhabited by well-to-do people—the drains were choked up, and had no communication whatever with the sewers, the whole of the sewage of the houses soaking into the soil, and rendering the occurrence of typhoid fever amongst the inmates almost inevitable. Even where the evil was not so strongly marked, proper sanitary precautions were not taken to ensure healthy conditions of life. In one-third of the houses examined the drain pipes were found to be leaky, allowing the sewage to soak into the foundations, and give out emanations most prejudicial to health. And in three out of every four houses under surveillance, the waste pipes from the baths and sinks led directly into the sewers, forming conduits by which the fatal and noxious sewer gas could be conducted into the buildings so as to be respired by the occupants. It was very rarely that a house was found to be in a really healthy condition. In some instances the drain pipes ran under the house—a state of things quite incompatible with sanitary safety. Not unfrequently the overflow pipes from the cistern that supplied the drinking water conveyed sewage gas on to the surface of the liquid, by which it is absorbed and rendered poisonous. In some instances the complicated arrangements of the skilled architects were themselves at fault, and produced the very evils they were designed to prevent. The general prevalence of unsanitary evils disclosed by the inspection of the Association renders it probable that at some future time public officers may be appointed, whose business it will be to inspect all houses, and to protect the inmates against the evils introduced by dishonest builders and inefficient plumbers. Sickness in any class of society is a loss of valuable labor, and it may be regarded as the duty of every Government to protect the people against evils from which they are too apathetic or too ignorant to protect themselves.

CORN, BEANS AND PUMPKINS.

Prof. Asa Gray contributes to *Science* an interesting review of De Candolle's new work, "The Origin of Cultivated Plants," and gives the following concerning the history of our well known trio of staples:

Phaseolus vulgaris, our common bean, ranks in De Candolle's table as one of the three esculent plants, the home of which, even as to continent, is completely unknown. Linné credited it to India, as he did our Lima bean also; but he took no pains to investigate such questions. This has been so generally followed in the books, that even the "Flora of British India," in 1879, admits the species, adding that it is not anywhere clearly known as a wild plant. But Alph. De Candolle, in his former work, had discarded this view, on the ground that it had no Sanskrit name, and that there was no evidence of its early cultivation in India or further East.

Adhering, however, to the idea that our plant was the Dolichos and the Phaseolus or Phaseolus of the Greeks, and of the Romans in the time of the Empire, he conjectured that its probable home was in some part of Northwestern Asia. But recently, as "no one would have dreamed of looking for its origin in the New World," he was greatly surprised when its fruits and seeds were found to abound in the tombs of the old Peruvians at Ancou, accompanied by many other grains or vegetable products, every one of them exclusively American. In his present very careful article he admits that we cannot be sure that it was known in Europe before the discovery of America, and directly afterward many varieties of it appeared all at once in the gardens, and the authors of the time began to speak of them; that most of the related species of the genus belong to South America, where, moreover, many sorts of beans were in cultivation before the coming of the Spaniards; and the idea that it might have been native to both hemispheres is discarded as altogether improbable. Upon this showing, it would appear that the plant should have been set down as of American, rather than of wholly unknown, origin. Indeed, when all the evidence is brought out, the discovery of these beans in the Ancou tombs need excite no more surprise than that of the maize which accompanied them.

For maize, beans and pumpkins were cultivated together, immemorably, all the way from the Isthmus to Canada. And, although some of the sorts of beans mentioned by Oviedo in 1526, as raised in great abundance in Nicaragua, where they are native, and also of those everywhere met with by De Soto (1539-42) in his march from Tampa Bay in Florida to the Mississippi, doubtless belonged to Phaseolus lunatus, yet most if not all of those which at the same early period Jacques Cartier found cultivated by the Indians of Canada must have belonged to Phaseolus vulgaris, or its dwarf variety, P. nanus; for only these are well adapted to the climate of Canada, especially the low and precocious variety, which alone has time to mature between the spring and the autumn frosts. Indeed those same beans, derived from the Indians along with maize and pumpkins, have doubtless continued in New England in direct descent, to form that staple diet for which the northern part of the coast of Massachusetts has long been famous.

FLYING FOXES IN AUSTRALIA.

Once I visited a great "camp" of fruit eating bats, "flying foxes," as they are here called (*Pteropus poliocephalus*).

In a dense piece of bush, consisting principally of young trees, the trees were hung all over with these bats, looking like great black fruits.

As we approached, the bats showed signs of uneasiness, and after the first shot were rather difficult to approach, moving on from before us and pitching in a fresh tree some way ahead.

The bats uttered a curious cackling cry when disturbed. They were in enormous numbers, and although thousands had been shot not long before by a large party got together for the purpose, their numbers were not perceptibly reduced. They do great harm to the fruit orchards about Paramatta, and the fruit growers there organize parties to shoot them. They have the cunning to choose a set of trees where the undergrowth is exceedingly dense, and where it is therefore difficult to get at them.

I shot seven or eight, but they are very apt to hang up by their hooked claws when shot, and I lost several. I could find no Nycteribia living on these bats, although these insects are usually so common on the various species of Pteropus. —Prof. Mosely.

A LEARNED GENTLEMAN.

An Arkansas man arraigned before a justice of the peace, became indignant, and in reply to a statement made by the magistrate, exclaimed: "You are a liar, sir, you are a liar." "I'll fine you fifty dollars," said the justice, "and if you don't pay the amount immediately, I'll send you to jail."

"Judge, I do not possess fifty dollars."

"Then take him to jail, Mr. Constable."

"Hold on, Judge," said the man, thoughtfully, "why am I to go to jail?"

"For calling me a liar."

"I meant that you were not a liar. I said twice that you were a liar, and if two negatives make an affirmative, two affirmatives ought to make one negative. So, you see, what I said was really a compliment."

"That's a fact," replied the Judge. "I used to be good in arithmetic, but have forgotten a good deal. Give me your hand, sir. Mr. Clerk, fine the State ten dollars, and give the money to this learned gentleman." —Arkansas Traveler.

ECHOES FROM PARIS.

Paris, March 3.

PARIS was always fond of devils. Everything has been named after one or other of the fraternity. Now a good devil or a merry devil, a poor devil, a lame devil, a young devil, an amorous devil, a sly devil, but rarely ever a wicked devil. It shows the radical goodness of the people in endeavoring to give the best character possible to even the worst. Now it is "the four devils" we are bid to admire. Ungallantly enough, they are ladies who are thus designated—fair and charming *diabesses*, in the pretty ballet by Grévin, at the Palais Theatre. They do wonderful and pleasant things with their legs, and we are quite sure that they are not pincushions, which is often the case nowadays, when they have gone to grass, and are not "gras."

AN incident that threatened to be a tragic one recently startled the habitués of the Casino at Monte Carlo. A lady gambler, who had been playing in a desperate and continually disastrous fashion for some time, seemed to be driven suddenly mad by her losses, and shrieking vehemently, "I have lost two hundred thousand francs, and unless I can obtain two thousand francs I am ruined!" she drew out a small revolver and attempted to shoot herself. She was disarmed by two of the bystanders and was afterwards persuaded to leave the room by a promise that she should receive the sum that she demanded. It is needless to remark that she did not get the two thousand francs, being civilly dismissed as soon as she was lured beyond the precincts of the Casino. Her nationality was unknown, but it is said that she was an American. The question is also raised among the grey-headed diplomatists of "Monte" if she lost 200,000 francs, or even lost her wits—It is cruel to destroy dramatic interest in this way.