

A SUPERSTITIOUS STRUGGLE.

A writer on "Superstitions" in the *Chicago Tribune* says: "If a light goes out unexpectedly or you extinguish it accidentally you must speak no word until you have relighted it. If there are no matches in the house emulate Harpocrates until some are found and utilized, or fire and fearful troubles will follow. An incident of this kind occurred not long ago. A well-known ancient maiden lady, well up in all super-religious commandments and articles of faith, suddenly put out her odorous kerosene-illuminator. Not a match was seen, not a spark of fire, as from parlor to kitchen she wended. What should she do? A mile to the nearest store and a quarter of a mile to her nearest neighbour's. She had just lighted her lamp to see about finding her sun-bonnet, that she might carry the news that she had just learned from a neighbour of a little unpleasantness between two other neighbours, when a gust of wind blew it out. She dared not speak; for who knew what might be the fearful result. Grasping a pencil, she rushed to the neighbour's, and on a huge piece of brown paper wrote in Broddingnagian characters the word 'matches.' Her face worked convulsively: her tongue protruded: she clasped one hand over her mouth. They implored her to speak, and the convulsions of her features were frightful to witness. She waved her hand hysterically. She wrote 'matches' in characters of all sizes; and at last, in letters which, had they been the sounds they represented, would have been stentorian. 'I want matches!' They brought them to her, and she rushed back. The good friends were alarmed. Was she insane? Had she any unformed purpose of cremation? They followed her. The first match was damp and refused to ignite. A groan, a gasp, an invisible convulsion. The second lighted and went out before the wick was reached. The third broke off at the top. The fourth was a fraud and had no igniting principles. But the fifth burned steadily; and the struggle which had evidently been going on in darkness, the fearful spasm which might be hydrophobia, perhaps, passed off as the wick flamed up, and she hoarsely gasped out to her terrified and sympathetic neighbours who had followed her home, 'They say Deacon Jones and Mrs. Jones are goin' to get a divorce.' Could any deity demand greater sacrifice of a devotee than this good lady's offering at the shrine of the occult?"

A MODEL.

Matilda Fletcher thus describes a farmer's wife who is not only beautiful and wise, but possesses several cardinal virtues in addition: "The most beautiful woman I have ever known was a farmer's wife, who attended to the household duties for a family of four, and also assisted in gardening and the light farm work; and yet I never saw her hands rough and red, and never even saw a freckle on her nose. Impossible! you say; how did she manage? I never asked her, but she had some envious neighbours who went slouching around with red, scaly hands, sunburnt faces, and hair matted with dust and oil, who let me into the dreadful secret. They informed me with many an ominous shake of the head that she was just the proudest minx that ever lived; that she actually wore india-rubber gloves when she used the broom and scrubbing-brush and always when she worked out-doors; that she also had a bonnet made of oil-silk, completely covering the head, face and neck, leaving only apertures for seeing and breathing, thus securing perfect freedom from sun, wind, and dust. Did you ever hear of such depravity? She also fastened her dish-cloth to a stick so that she need not put her hands in hot-water. For the same reason she accomplished her laundry work with a machine and wringer. And then to see her in the afternoon tricked out in a fashionable white dress, with a bright-coloured ribbon at her throat, and a rose in her hair, entertaining in the parlor, as though she was the greatest lady in the land, was more than their patience could endure. And her husband! He had such a satisfied expression that it was a perfect aggravation to ordinary people to look at him. He deserved to be happy, because he encouraged and helped her to cultivate beauty in herself, her family, and her home; and I don't know but her success principally belonged to him, because he brought all the new inventions that could lighten her labours and all the delicate and pretty things she needed to adorn her home, and when she was sick he wouldn't let her touch work until she was well and strong. Strange as it may seem, at such times he actually devoted himself to her with as much care and tenderness as he would if she had been the most valuable horse on the farm."

DRAMATIC GOSSIP.

Ristori is at present in Brazil.
Barry Sullivan is about to visit the States.
Lucca returns to this continent in October.
Rubinstein is to produce his oratorio "The Demon," in Paris next winter.
The opening of the new Opera House at Paris is definitely fixed for the 1st January next.
Charlotte Thompson has made here re-appearance at the Union Square Theatre, New York, in "Jane Eyre."
Lotta (Miss Crabtree) has purchased a residence in Oakland, California, and intends settling down there in the intervals of her "career."
Miss Edith Winn, report has it, will soon leave the stage to fulfill an engagement of marriage with an English gentleman, whither she will return with him.
Leon Vasseur's new opera bouffe, "La Timbale d'Argent," has been put on the boards at the Lyceum Theatre, New York, with Marie Aimee in the leading rôle.
Miss Lottie Montal, a prima donna from Australia, has appeared at the Alhambra, London, in the place of Miss Kate Santley in Offenbach's "Jolie Parfumeuse."
Mr. Julius Perkins, the young American basso of Her Majesty's, London, was married to Mile. Pouzin, better known as Mile. Marie Rose, recently. They sing together in London in the fall.
Di Reschi, a Polish singer now appearing at the Drury Lane Italian Opera, is a mere boy, but his "charm of style, lovely voice, and picturesque acting" is expected to bring him fame one of these days.

Mr. J. L. Toole, the well-known English comedian, made his first appearance on the American stage on the 17th inst. at Wallack's Theatre, New York. "Wig and Gown" was the piece of the evening.

The tenor Nicolini has made an engagement for the next carnival at Rome to sing in Verdi's "Aida." He has signed an agreement for three months, from the 20th of December next to the 20th of March, 1875. Madame Stoltz will form part of the same company.

Vieuxtemps, the violinist, who had long been unable to make up his mind to leave Brussels, and whom the Belgian Government, in accord with the director of the Conservatoire, made every effort to retain, seems to have at last decided upon taking up his residence in Paris definitively. His successor will be Henry Wieniawski, the celebrated Polish virtuoso.

The *Popolo Romano* announces that Verdi has been named by Marshal McMahon a Knight of the Legion of Honour, but the eminent composer must be at least a commander of that order, having received the first grade at the time of the performance of the "Vêpres Siciliennes," written for the Paris Opera, and having been promoted to the grade of officer when "Don Carlos" was brought out on the same stage.

The New York opera season opened yesterday, the 28th. Among the pieces that will be mounted are Gounod's "Romeo and Juliet," Verdi's "Requiem," Marchetti's "Ruy Blas," and Wagner's "Flying Dutchman;" there are also to be revivals of the "Prophet," the "Star of the North," and "William Tell," and the successes of last season, "Lohengrin," and "Aida," will be again put upon the stage. The company is of great excellence, including Mlle. Albani, Mlle. Heilbron, who has triumphantly passed the ordeal of both London and Paris; Mme. Polentini, a "dramatic" soprano from La Scala; Mlle. Maresi and that prime favourite and advancing artist, Miss Annie Louise Cary, *prima donne*; Carlo Carpi, Debassini, and Devillier, tenors; Tagliapietra and Del Puente, baritones; Florini and Scolara, basses; and Signor Muzio *chef d'orchestre*.

A Paris correspondent of *The Daily Graphic* says that two American girls are studying music in that city, both of whom give great promise for the future. They are Miss Emma Abbott, of New York, and Miss Montague, of Baltimore. Miss Abbott sang a few weeks ago in the American church in Paris, and produced a most remarkable effect. Although a delicate little girl, she has a most powerful voice, and sings with singular power and expression. She has six masters a day, teaching her elocution, vocalization, dramatization, to play the drum, and the innumerable other things an opera singer must know. Her *Maestro* is Wartel, Nilsson's instructor, who teaches the old Italian method of planting one note on another—if anybody knows how that is done. She expects to make her *début* in Paris the coming winter. The Baroness de Rothschild has taken a great fancy to her, given her ten thousand francs, and tells her she may continue her studies as long as she likes, and she will pay her bills. Miss Montague is also a Wartel pupil, or was, until she exchanged him for a real Italian. She is a beautiful girl, fresh and sweet as a rose, a fine form, and possesses the three requisites that Rossini declared to be essential in a great singer—"voice, voice, voice." A critical Frenchman who heard her sing at one of Colonel James Fairman's artistic *soirées*, declared in his enthusiasm that she had a revenue of 500,000 francs a year in her throat.

THE LITERARY WORLD.

Bret Harte's last story was written in a single night, and he got \$500 for it.

Mme. Proudhon has written to the papers asking for the loan of any letters written by her late husband, with the object of making the volume of his correspondence, which is to appear shortly under her editorship, as complete as possible.

Two of the Paris communists will have articles in next month's London magazines. Henri Rochefort will write in the *Fortnightly Review* on "The Revolution of September, 1870," and Camille Barriere in *Macmillan* on "Victor Hugo's Dramas."

M. Ernest Renan has written a new book, "La Mission en Phénicie," an account of the scientific researches in Syria during the sojourn of the French army in 1860-1. The work is an interesting record of the various Phœnician monuments, and contains some excellent illustrations.

Mr. Hepworth Dixon starts this autumn for a business tour in the United States. He is to lecture in the large cities, to revisit Utah, and to push on to California. Another intending visitor to the States, but not until next year, is Mrs. Ross Church, the novelist. She is to give readings, for which she is said to possess great ability.

Yet another Biblical theory has been started by a *littérateur* of Cairo, Henry Brugsch Bey, who declares in a pamphlet, "La Sortie des Hébreux d'Egypte," that the Israelites did not cross the Red Sea at all in their exodus from Egypt, but a portion of the Mediterranean Sea, which during high tides covered an isthmus between the sea and an inland lake, Serbonis.

Among the not too numerous interesting works published lately is S. Campanella's "My Life, and What I Learnt in It." The author was formerly a monk at Rome, and took part in the attempt to liberate Italy twenty-six years ago. He has long since thrown off his cowl, and is now a married man well advanced in years. The book is a very instructive one.

Mr. Wilkie Collins's new story, "The Frozen Deep," which is about to appear simultaneously in an English and an American magazine, will be published in complete book form early in October by Messrs. W. F. Gill & Co., of Boston, and Mr. Collins has communicated to his friends in the United States an account of the history of his novel, which will be embodied in the preface to its complete form. The tale is founded on his play, which will be remembered as having been performed seventeen years ago by a famous company of amateurs, under the management of the late Mr. Charles Dickens, and "in remembrance of the late Mr. Douglas Jerrold." In the cast of the piece, which was described as a romantic drama, and had the same title as the forthcoming story, there appeared the names of Mr. Dickens himself, his brother Alfred, and his eldest son, the present Charles Dickens (described in the play-bills as "Mr. Young Charles"), Mr. Shirley Brooks, Mr. Augustus Egg, Mr. Charles Collins, and others. It was played at the Olympic, under Mr. Horace Wigan's management, and last winter the author tried the experiment of reading a narrative version in Boston. This was a great success, and hence the enlarged story which is now to be given to the public.

ODDITIES.

The fool seeketh to pick a fly from a mule's hind leg. The wise man letteth out the job to the lowest bidder.

An old phrase has been altered to suit the age. An account of Petrarch in a morning journal says "he was born of a rich but honest father."

Rector's daughter to Sunday schoolboy: "Oh, you have an elder brother; well, how old is he?" Schoolboy—"Dunno, miss, but he has just started o'swearin'."

The log cabin which Mr. Lincoln made when sixteen years old, stands in seven different counties in Illinois, and they haven't got through counting yet.

The first mosquito of the season was captured near Newark, N.J., recently, after killing two dogs and biting off nine inches of his captor's ear.—N. Y. *Mail*.

"Sam, why don't you talk to your master and tell him to lay up treasures in Heaven?" "What's de use of him to lay up treasures up dar? He never see um again."

A Milwaukee woman, far gone with consumption, begged the doctor to give her something that would keep her up until the verdict of the Beecher Committee was published.

"My son, now that the boys have won at Saratoga, and thereby shown the mental superiority of the college faculty, I would like to send you to Columbia, but it's too near Brooklyn; too near Brooklyn."

A young woman at Trenton, who was sleeping with her feet hanging out of the chamber window, was struck by lightning and almost torn to pieces. The other Trenton women have taken their feet in.

The Zionsville girls don't spend "all their time trying to climb the holy hill of Zion," for on their way home from pic-nics they attack defenseless young men and kiss them by main force.—*Indianapolis Herald*.

An enterprising reporter in Arkansas, who was lately sentenced to the State prison for horse stealing, applied to his employers "to be continued on the journal as penitentiary correspondent."

At Niblo's, the other evening, when "Catherine Gaunt" presented to "Father Francis" a package of letters with the speech, "These will prove my innocence," a gallery god shouted shrilly, "Give 'em to Moulton!"

The boy who, when asked to what trade he would wish to be brought up, replied, "I will be a trustee, because ever since papa has been a trustee we have had puddings for dinner," was a wise child in his generation.

The Buffalo *Express* cannot understand how so large a paper as the Providence *Press* can be printed in Rhode Island, and asks where the boys stand to fold it. The folding is probably done on the mail trains where there is plenty of room.

An Ottumwa boy charged a stump with blasting powder, attached a fuse to blow it up, and got on the fence to see the fun. He isn't collected enough yet to tell how funny it was, although the citizens are collecting him in different parts of the suburbs.

A Pennsylvania boy got so homesick that he walked seventy-eight miles, without eating, in order to sit down once more at the family hearth-stone. He was received with such warmth by his male parent that he was several days before he could sit down anywhere.

A rustic couple, newly married, marched into a drug store and called for soda water. The obliging clerk inquired what syrup they would have in it, when the swain, deliberately leaning over the counter, replied: "Stranger, money is no object to me; put sugar in it."

The Milwaukee *Sentinel* is authority for the statement that the grasshoppers on their way South stopped a railroad train, and got copies of St. Paul papers. When they read that only a small portion of the crops had been destroyed, they started back to finish up the job.

"Can you tell me where the wicked boys go who fish on Sunday?" asked a sober-looking gentleman of a little chap who had worms and a rod. "Yes; some of 'em goes to the river, and them as is very wicked goes to the lake. I'll show you the best place at the lake."

"It is a beautiful sight to attend an Arizona wedding. The bride in white—the happy groom—the solemn minister—the smiling parents, and from twenty-five to forty shot guns standing against the wall ready for use, make up a panorama not soon forgotten."

A pretty American woman sailing to Liverpool a year or two ago with her baby, fell into a pensive mood one day on ship-deck, and was asked by a friend what she was thinking about. "I was thinking," she replied with frank *naïveté*, "of something mean to say to those English."

A Burlington man and his wife visited a soda fountain. He said he would take "crusade" syrup in his. Much to his horror his wife said that she would also try "crusade." But the druggist knew his business, and the woman winced under the tortures of hot ginger. Her husband was saved.

"Papa, do you think Beech—" "Hush, Johnnie." "But, papa, don't you think Beech—" "Didn't you hear me tell you to stop your noise, sir? I won't have you talking about these things. Go in and get your face washed." And Johnnie, with tears in his eyes, wants to know why papa won't tell him whether beechnuts are ripe.

A pompous village clergyman felt his dignity mightily offended by a chubby-faced lad who was passing him without moving his hat. "Do you know who I am, sir, that you pass me in that unmannerly way? You are better fed than taught, I think, sir." "Whew! may be it is so, for you teaches me, but I feeds myself."

A small boy, telling his "pals" how he came to be detected stealing apples in a grocery store, proceeded thus: "Well, I didn't care so durned much about bein' seen, but the clerk was cross-eyed, an' I thought he was watchin' a dorg fight 'cross the street, but he was lookin' square unto me, an' he helped me clean into the gutter!"

Prof. Braun is a man whose name is frequently mentioned in the Southern newspapers with such personal remarks as the following: "He is an undersized German teacher of languages, distinguished by his unparalleled cheek and his remarkable unfamiliarity with truth as an abstract principle; indeed, it may be said that with him truth is stranger than fiction."

A stump orator out West, wishing to describe his opponent as a soulless man, did it in this wise: "I have heard," said he, "some persons hold to the opinion that just at the precise instant after one human being dies another is born, and that the soul of the deceased enters and animates the new-born babe. Now I have made particular and extensive inquiries concerning my opponent there, and I find that for some hours previous to his nativity nobody died."

This is how it happened down in South-West Missouri:
He found a rope, and picked it up,
And with it walked away.
It happened that to 'other end
A horse was hitched, they say.

They found a tree, and tied the rope
Unto a swinging limb,
It happened that the other end
Was somehow hitched to him.