

the combat were provided, and after the fight was over the ranks of the various combatants were officially fixed. The number of ranks was seven in all, the seventh being the highest. Rarely did any player attain the distinction of reaching this, but the sixth generally had one or two representatives. There appears to have been a certain element of heredity in the game as played in Japan, for certain families took the lead for many generations, and the contests between their champions were a salient feature of every tourney. To this time-honoured custom, as to many another of even greater merit, the revolution of 1867 put a stop. A long era of neglect ensued for chess-players. But it did not fall into disuse because Court patronage was wanting. Its votaries still studied their gambits and elaborated their variations, and now once more the science promises to resume its place of importance. In October last a grand meeting of all the principal chess-players in Japan was organized in Tokio. Over 200 players assembled, all boasting greater or less degrees of skill from the first up to the sixth. Count Todo, the former Daimio of Tsu, who has the honour of belonging to the sixth rank, is among the chief promoters of the revival. Another meeting took place on the 18th of January, when a ceremonial in honour of the revival of chess was performed. There appears to be a considerable chess literature in Japan; one leading work contains problems the solution of which are said to make the player worthy to be placed in the sixth rank.

#### DR. ABBOTT ON THE CANE.

MEANTIME, greatly though we may dislike inflicting corporal punishment, it is our duty to inflict it if it is for the good of the school as a whole. From an interesting report of Mr. Fitch on American schools, published last year, I learn that "in most of the state and city regulations, teachers are absolutely forbidden to inflict it;" and that is a point well worth considering. One would like to know what punishments are reserved for graver offences; whether the teachers themselves acquiesce in this restriction; whether they are satisfied with the tone and morality of their pupils, as well as with the outward order and discipline which favourably impress Mr. Fitch; and whether there is, owing to national character and circumstances, an earlier seriousness and sense of responsibility among boys at school and young men at the Universities in the United States. It may be we can learn something from a fuller knowledge of what is done elsewhere. But meantime I hope none of my fellow-teachers will be deterred from their duty by mere abstract arguments apart from facts. "Caning brutalizes a boy," people say. I do not believe it does, unless a brute holds the cane. But if it did, bullying, falsehood, dishonesty and indecency do worse than brutalize him; and not only him, but also the innocent companions among whom he is spreading the infection of his evil habits. Under proper regulations and in the hands of experienced and responsible teachers the cane seems to me an instrument for good in English schools as at present constituted; and if, as I believe, this is the general opinion, not only of school teachers but also of school managers, it seems time that some pressure should be brought to bear upon those magistrates who set their faces against caning under any circumstances. The magistrate's son, if he went to a public school, would be freely birched in some schools, or caned in others, and if the father dared to utter a word of remonstrance against an ordinary caning he would be ridiculed by his old school-fellows and friends, repudiated by his own son, and rebuffed in any appeal to the laws. In the elementary schools the work of maintaining discipline and morality is, or ought to be, infinitely more laborious than in the schools of the wealthy; surely, therefore, it is monstrous that a punishment freely allowed in the latter should be denied to the former—and this not by any recognized interpretation of the laws, but by an eccentric and capricious abuse of the power of a local magistrate. In the infliction of all punishments, corporal or otherwise, the old and humane caution of Deuteronomy is ever to be present with us. There is to be a limit to the number of stripes, "that thy brother may not seem vile unto thee." The young teacher should bear this in mind in the infliction of metaphorical as well as literal stripes.

#### PALMYRA, CITY OF ZENOBIA.

WHEN Zenobia was born, Palmyra was a great commercial city of the Roman Empire. From the earliest times, when a tribe of nomads settled in the spot, doubtless attracted by the phenomenon of a copious spring in a desert land, the genius of the place was commercial. Gradually it became the centre of many caravan-routes between the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, Petra, and central Arabia. Its isolated position always secured for it a sort of independence; but as early as Germanicus it acknowledged Roman control in general. Hadrian celebrated his visit to the city by calling it Adrianopolis. Later on it received the *jus italicum*, and became a Roman colony. When the Persian Sapor captured the Emperor Valerian, in the year 258 A.D., we hear of a certain Palmyrene, called Odenatus, sending propitiatory gifts to the Eastern conqueror. Odenatus then enjoyed the honourable Roman title of Consul—a title which may have just been conferred in person by Valerian. However, Sapor refused the gifts, and Odenatus, who always had an eye to the main chance, promptly joined his forces with those of the weak Emperor Gallienus, who seemed a promising sort

of suzerain, and the united armies were soon victorious over Sapor. Odenatus was named Supreme Commander in the East, and though he was looked upon at Rome as a subject of the Empire, yet within his own wide realm he was practically sovereign. Our interest in him, of course, is merely for his wife's sake. Aurelian gives Zenobia the credit of her husband's successes. At any rate, the assassination of Odenatus made no difference in the power which radiated from Tadmor in the wilderness, except that this increased until it was felt through Syria, Egypt, Mesopotamia, and in Asia Minor as far as Ancyra. After a few years of actual royalty Zenobia decided to assume the name of it as well. Coins were struck in her own name and that of her son, with no reference to the Empire.—From *Tadmor in the Wilderness*, by Frederick Jones Bliss, in *April Scribner*.

#### THE FUNNY MAN.

Who is that man who sits and bites  
His pen with aspect solemn?  
He is the Funny Man who writes  
The weekly Comic Column.

By day he scarce can keep awake,  
At night he cannot rest;  
His meals he hardly dares to take—  
He jests, he can't digest.

His hair, though not with years, is white,  
His cheek is wan and pale,  
And all with seeking day and night  
For jokes that are not stale.

His joys are few; the chiefest one  
Is when by luck a word  
Suggests to him a novel pun  
His readers haven't heard.

And when a Yankee joke he sees  
In some old book—well, then  
Perhaps he gains a moment's ease,  
And makes it do again.

The thought that chiefly makes him sigh  
Is that a time must come  
When jokes extinct like mammoths lie,  
And jokers must be dumb.

When every quip to death is done,  
And every crank is told;  
When men have printed every pun,  
And every joke is old.

When naught in heaven or earth or sea,  
Has not been turned to chaff,  
And not a single oddity  
Is left to make us laugh.

#### THE DETERIORATION OF WORDS.

A *knave* was originally a young man, in German *ein Knabe*. In the Court cards the knave is simply the page or the knight, but by no means the villain. *Villain* itself was originally simply the inhabitant of a village. A pleader once made good use of his etymological knowledge. For this is what Swift relates: "I remember, at a trial in Kent, where Sir George Rooke was indicted for calling a gentleman knave and villain, the lawyer for the defendant brought off his client by alleging the words were not injurious, for *knave*, in the old and true signification, imported only a servant; and *villain* in Latin is *villicus*, which is no more than a man employed in country labour, or rather a bailiff." I doubt whether in these days any judge, if possessed of some philological knowledge, would allow such a quibble to pass, or whether in return he would not ask leave to call the lawyer an *idiot*, for *idiot*, as you know, meant originally no more than a private person, a man who does not take part in public affairs; and afterwards only came to mean an outsider, an ill-informed man, and, lastly, an idiot. A *pagan* was originally, like villain, the inhabitant of a *pagus*, a countryman. It came to mean *heathen*, because it was chiefly in the country, outside the town, that the worshippers of the old national gods were allowed to continue. A heathen was originally a person living on the heath. Heathen, however, is not yet a term of reproach; it simply expresses a difference of opinion between ourselves and others. But we have the same word under another disguise—namely, as *hoiden*. At present *hoiden* is used in the sense of a vulgar, romping girl. But in old authors it is chiefly applied to men, to clowns, or louts. We may call Socrates a heathen, but we could not call him a hoiden, though we might possibly apply that name to his wife Xanthippe. Sometimes it happens that the same word can be used both in a good and in a bad sense. *Simplicity* with us has generally a good meaning. We read in the Bible of *simplicity and godly sincerity*. But in the same Bible the simple ones are reproved: "How long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity, and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge?" (Prov. i. 22). If at present we were to call a boy an *imp*, he would possibly be offended. But in Spenser's time *imp* had still a very good sound, and he allows a noble lady, a lady gent as he calls her, to address Arthur as "Thou worthy imp" ("Faerie Queen" I. ix. 6). Nor is there any harm in that word, for *imp* meant originally graft, and then off-

spring. To graft in German is *impfen*, and this is really a corruption of the Greek *εμφύειν*, to implant. *Brat* is now an offensive term, even when applied to a child. It is said to be a Welsh word, and to signify a rag. It may be so, but in that case it would be difficult to account for *brat* having been used originally in a good sense. This must have been so, for we find in ancient sacred poetry such expressions as, "O Abraham's brats, o broode of blessed seed!" To use the same word in such opposite meanings is possible only when there is an historical literature which keeps alive the modern as well as the antiquated usages of a language. In illiterate languages antiquated words are forgotten and vanish. Think of all the meanings imbedded in the word *nice*! How did they come there? The word has a long history, and has had many ups and downs in its passage through the world. It was originally the Latin *nescius*, ignorant, and it retained that meaning in old French, and likewise in old English. Robert of Gloucester (p. 106, last line) still uses the word in that sense. "He was nyce," he says, "and knoweth no wisdom"—that is, he was ignorant and knew no wisdom. But if there is an ignorance that is bliss, there is also an ignorance, or unconsciousness, or simplicity that is charming. Hence an unassuming, ingenuous, artless person was likewise called *nice*. However, even that artlessness might after a time become artful, or, at all events, be mistaken by others for artfulness. The over-nice person might then seem fastidious, difficult to please, too dainty, and he or she was then said to be too nice in his or her tastes. We have traced the principal meanings of *nice* from ignorant to fastidious, as applied to persons. If *nice* is applied to things, it has most commonly the meaning of charming; but as we speak of a fastidious and difficult person, we can also speak of a difficult matter as a nice matter, or a nice point. At last there remained *nice*, which simply expresses general approval. Everything, in our days, is nice, not to say awfully nice. But unless we possessed a literature in which to study the history of words, it would be simply impossible to discover why nice should express approval as well as disapproval; nay, why it should in the end become a mere emphatic expression, as when we say, "That is a nice business," or "That is a nice mess."—*F. Max Müller on the Science of Language*.

#### BOOK-READING HERE AND ABROAD.

ONE of the most brilliant English successes in recent years is Green's "History of the English People." The English publishers announced about a year ago the sale of a hundred and thirty thousand copies. I know of nothing with us comparable to this. Higginson's "History of the United States" has had a very large sale, but the price is much lower. It is intended, moreover, for young readers, and there has been a large school consumption. I am not unmindful of the wonderful success of General Grant's "Memoirs"—a success unprecedented in literature. But look how many circumstances combined to make it so. A general, passionately loved, writing on his death-bed the history of campaigns that enlisted the profoundest patriotism of the people, insured for it at the beginning a vast circulation. Then we recall how it was carried by thousands of active agents to every house in the land. Never was a book waited for by so eager, so admiring a multitude. A book produced under circumstances so extraordinary, and sold by methods so special, is in no wise a test of the intellectual tastes of the people. We must compare the sale of Green's "History," not with that of Grant's "Memoirs," but rather with the sales of Bancroft, or McMaster, or Hildreth, if we would accurately judge of the comparative demand for historical literature. When the first volume of McMaster's "History of the People of the United States" appeared, it was believed to have been inspired by Green, and was hailed with enthusiasm. There were many indications of a brilliant literary and popular success, and yet the sale has not been more than a twentieth of that of its great English model. This is very significant, and is enough, of itself, to dispose of the notion that we buy more books than the English do.—*O. B. Bunce in North American Review for April*.

#### CITY JURIES.

A PAPER called the *Bulletin* makes a furious attack upon our jury system. We believe it is perfectly true, as the writer states:—"Juries, in the city especially, are simply farcical. As a rule, they consist of a dozen men brought together from every quarter of the E.C. district, not one of them in the slightest degree understanding the business or case to be tried, and simply hoping to get away from the court as soon as possible. . . . As a rule, a strong-minded jurymen will decide any case as he pleases, and very likely he may be a friend of or biased by acquaintance with the plaintiff or defendant. It is quite a common enough affair for a jurymen, on entering the box, to make up his mind that he will not listen to a word of the case, simply determining to vote with the majority, never mind which way this may go. Many others snooze through the case. We have come across many instances where, as we say, the verdict has been determined by one man, who from the first made up his mind, and who forced conviction into the mouths, if not minds, of his companions in misery." Juries are not what they were; but, nevertheless, all the most important cases are carried by the parties themselves before juries in preference to a single judge. The non-jury list has been proved to be largely composed of undefended cases.—*Law Times*.