

A MEANING.

"Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
Silver bells and cockle shells
All in a row."

Most of us children, little and big, have recited this verse; but comparatively few know there is a meaning to the last two lines. At the time this rhyme was made there were really "silver bells and cockle shells," and in rows, too, though not growing in gardens.

In those days—some hundreds of years ago—there were no coaches. Ladies travelled and visited on horseback sometimes riding on a saddle or pillion behind a gentleman or manservant, and sometimes managing their own horses, with the gentleman riding alongside, or the groom following behind. The equipments and trappings of these horses were very rich and costly. Generally, the cloth which half-covered them, and on which the lady rode, would be of finest woollen or silken material, handsomely embroidered. On grand occasions, or when the lady was very wealthy or noble, crimson velvet or cloth-of-gold would be used, edged with gold fringes and sprinkled with small pearls, called seed-pearls. The saddles and bridles were even more richly decorated, being often set with jewels or gold and silver ornaments, called "goldsmith's work." One fashion, very popular in the times of Henry the Seventh and Henry the Eighth, of England, was to have the bridle studded with a row of tiny silver cockle shells, and its edge hung with little silver bells, which, with the motion of the horse, kept up a merry jingle. Bells were also fastened to the point of the stirrup, which was formed like the toe of a shoe. And this partly explains another old nursery rhyme, made, no doubt, about the same time:

"Ride a gray horse to Danbury Cross,
To see a fine lady go on a white horse;
Rings on her fingers and bells on her toes,
So she shall have music wherever she goes."

There is a very old book preserved at Skipton Castle, in England, the account book of Henry Clifford, Earl of Cumberland. In this book, among a great many other entries, little and great, is one, of the purchase by the Earl, of "a saddle and bridle for my lady, embossed of silver cockle shells, and hung with silver bells;" and on the same page is another entry of "a hawk for my lady, with silken jesses, and a silver bell for the same." It was the custom for noble ladies to ride with a hawk perched upon their wrists; and this Countess of Cumberland, who is said to have been beautiful and stately, must have looked very grand when thus equipped.—*St. Nicholas.*

ONE OF ARTEMUS' BEST.

Of the countless good stories attributed to Artemus Ward, the best one, perhaps, is one which tells of the advice he gave to a southern railroad conductor soon after the war. The road was in a wretched condition and the trains, consequently, were run at a phenomenally low rate of speed. When the conductor was punching his ticket Artemus remarked, "does this railroad company allow passengers to give it advice, if they do so in a respectful manner?" The conductor replied in very gruff tones that he guessed so. "Well," Artemus went on, "it occurred to me that it would be well to detach the cowcatcher from the front of the engine and hitch it at the rear end of the train, for you see we are not liable to overtake a cow, but what's to prevent a cow from strolling into this car and biting a passenger?"

PRESIDENTIAL FAVOURITES.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS CONCERNING THE MEN WHO STAND CLOSEST TO THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE.

Visitors who, from curiosity or business, have called at the White House, must have been impressed by the courteous yet systematic manner with which they were received and escorted through the mansion. The gentlemen whose duty it is to receive all persons coming to the White House are Colonel E. S. Denmore, Mr. John T. Rickard, and Mr. T. F. Pendel, and they have occupied their present positions through the various administrations since and even during the war. Mr. Pendel was President Lincoln's body-guard; saw him to his carriage the fatal night on which he visited Ford's theatre, and he now has in his possession the blood-stained coat which Mr. Lincoln wore on that memorable occasion. There is not a public man in America to-day who does not know, and who is not known by, these gentlemen, and the reminiscences of public and social life which they can recount would fill a congressional volume. During the weary yet exciting years of the war; through the more peaceful times of Grant's administration; while Hayes held the reins of government, and when Garfield was shot, it was these men who stood in the executive mansion, welcoming the advent of each new administration, bowing at its departure, and receiving both martyrs through its portals.

During that long, hot and never-to-be-forgotten summer when President Garfield lay between "two worlds," the nation became aware of the deadly malarial influence which hung about White House. But all through that period these three men never deserted their posts for a single day, although each one was suffering intensely. In conversation with the writer, Colonel Denmore said:

"It is impossible to describe the tortures I have undergone. To be compelled to smile and treat the thousands of visitors who come here daily with courtesy when one is in the greatest agony requires a tremendous effort. All that summer I had terrible headaches, heart-burn and a stifling sensation that sometimes took away my breath. My appetite was uncertain and I felt severe pains in the small of my back. I was under the doctor's care with strict instructions not to go out of the house but I remained on duty nevertheless. You would be surprised to know the amount of quinine I took; on some days it was as much as sixteen grains."

"And was Mr. Rickard badly off, too?"

"I should think he was. Why, time and again we have picked him up and laid him on the mantel, here in the vestibule, he was so used up."

"Yes," exclaimed Mr. Rickard, "I was so weak I could not rise after laying down without help, and could only walk with the aid of two canes, and then in a stooping position. Oh, we have been in a pretty bad condition here, all of us."

"And yet you are all 'the embodiment of health,'" said the writer, as he looked at the three bright and vigorous men before him.

"Oh, yes," said Mr. Rickard, "we have not known what sickness was for more than a year."

"Have you some secret way of overcoming malaria and its attendant horrors?"

"I think we have a most certain way," replied Colonel Denmore, "but it is no secret. You see, about two years ago my wife began to grow blind, and I was alarmed at her condition. She finally became so she could not tell whether a person were white or black at a distance of ten feet. One of her lady friends advised her to try a certain treatment that had done wonders for her, and to make a long story short, she did so and was completely cured. This induced me to try the same means, for my own restoration and as soon as I found it was doing me good I recommended it to my associates and we have all been cured right here in the stronghold of malaria and kept in perfect health ever since by means of Warner's Safe Cure. Now I am not a believer in medicines in general, but I do not hesitate to say that I am satisfied that I should have died of Bright's disease of the kidneys before this had it not been for this wonderful remedy. Indeed, I

use it as a household medicine and give it to my children whenever they have any ailments."

"Yes," exclaimed Mr. Pendel, "I use it in my family all the while and have found it the most efficient remedy we have ever employed. I know of very many public men who are using it to-day and they all speak well of it."

"I weigh 160 pounds to-day," said Mr. Rickard, "and when my physician told me over a year ago I could not hope to recover I weighed 122 pounds. Under such influences you cannot wonder that I consider this the best medicine before the American people."

The above statements from these gentlemen need no comments. They are voluntary and outspoken expressions from sources which are the highest in the land. Were there the slightest question regarding their authenticity they would not be made public, but as they furnish such valuable truths for all who are suffering, we unhesitatingly publish them for the good of all.

THE STINGING TREE.

Though the tropical plants of Australia are very luxuriant and beautiful, they are not without their drawbacks. There is one among them that is really dangerous. It is called the stinging tree. If a large portion of the body is burned by the stinging tree, death will be the result.

It would be as safe to pass through fire as to fall into one of these trees. They are found growing from two or three inches high to ten and fifteen feet. The stem of the old ones is whitish, and red berries usually grow on the top. The berry has a peculiar and disagreeable smell, but it is best known by its leaf, which is nearly round. It also has a point at the top, and is jagged all round the edge, like the nettle. All the leaves are large; some are larger than a saucer.

"Sometimes," says a traveller, "while shooting turkeys in the scrub, I have entirely forgotten the stinging tree, till warned of its close proximity by its smell, and then have found myself in a little forest of them. I was stung only once, and that very lightly. Its effects are curious. It leaves no marks, but the pain is maddening; and, for months afterward, the part, when touched, is tender in rainy weather, and when it gets wet in washing, etc."

"I have seen a man, who treated ordinary pain lightly, roll on the ground in agony after being stung; and I have seen a horse so completely mad after getting into a grove of the trees that he rushed open-mouthed at everyone who approached him, and had to be shot in the scrub. Dogs, when stung, will rush about, whining piteously, biting pieces from the affected part. The small stinging trees, a few inches high, are as dangerous as any, being so hard to see, and seriously imperiling one's ankles. The scrub is usually found growing among palm trees."

YOUNG MEN!—READ THIS.

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