

Jim Richmond's Chance

By mutual consent that night a move had been made to the lawn, for the open air was as an invigorating tonic after the closeness of the dining-room. Cigars aglow, Jim Richmond and myself lay comfortably stretched in the garden chairs, while in the French window Jim's wife sat industriously playing her needle on some dainty little garment that augured a coming interesting event, from time to time addressing her husband in his inquisition as to my doings from the date of our previous meeting.

"But come," I said—my examination being completed to their satisfaction—tell me something about how the world has been going with you. Three years ago I left you James Richmond, a patientless medico, and a more or less miserable bachelor. Surely some extraordinary chance that comes not to every man who dreams of fat fees and Harley Street must have lifted you into your present established position? There is no other deduction possible. Who, then, is the wealthy valetudinarian, and how did this chance come about?"

My words caused them to smile. "Your deduction is not far wide of the mark," returned Jim, after a pause, "but—that is a story my wife can tell better than I, for to her I owe everything."

"Jim exaggerates my share in the affair, I'm afraid," said Mrs. Richmond, shaking a reproving finger at her husband.

"Tell me the story, and I will judge," I said, promptly, and yielding to my persuasion, Jim commenced—

"Well, Jack, as you know, I was always keen on toxicology, and shortly after leaving the hospital, where I had made a name for myself, I contributed a paper to the 'Lancet' on 'The Effect of Certain Little-known Oriental Poisons.' Three days after it was published I was surprised to receive a telegram. It read the following message:—'Just read your article in the 'Lancet.' Shall be glad if you will dine with me to-night. My carriage will meet you at the station.—Didsbury.'"

"Didsbury of Elton Towers?" I cried, involuntarily, and gave a whistle of amazement and surprise. "It was a chance that the most noted of my confreres would have jumped at."

"Bradshaw" informed me that it was a three hours' journey, and dining meant leaving at Elton the night. There would be time to pack my bag and run round to see my friend Eileen with the news. Need I say that she was as excited over it as myself. Her whispered "Good luck" was ringing in my ears all through the journey.

Alighting in due course at my destination I entered the waiting brougham, and was rapidly driven to the Towers. "You are expected," said the man who took my card. "Come this way, and I will show you your room. His lordship dines at seven."

By the time I had donned my evening clothes the man reappeared and ushered me into the spacious dining-room. An old gentleman, with snow-white hair, was leaning on a cane, and looking at the fire. He turned at my entrance, and I was immediately struck with the corpse-like pallor of his cadaverous face. It needed no second glance to tell me that this man was ill.

Crossing over to him I took his extended hand. It was limp and cold, and his fingers seemed powerless to exert the slightest pressure.

"I am glad to see you, Mr. Richmond," he said, weakly. "Pray be seated. Johnson, you may serve."

The dinner was perfect, and, feeling hungry after my journey, I did justice to each dish, however, however, took nothing. He sat back in his chair breathing stertorously, his eyes glaring into vacancy, and, after attempting conversation and being answered in monosyllables that proclaimed his utter exhaustion in mind and body.

It was a somewhat trying experience, and I was not unthankful when I found myself assisting him back to the fireplace. He motioned the servant to leave the room.

"My lord," I said, when we were alone, "I do not know whether you wished to consult me in my professional capacity, but your condition—"

"I know it!" he interrupted, querulously. "I want you to listen. Three months ago I was as hale and hearty as any man of my age. To-day I am what you were me—a physical wreck. Carter, my medical man—would have me believe it is only what is to be expected in short that I am breaking up. He's a fool! I tell you no man understands his life better than myself. A man does not break up in a few short weeks like this. I have studied myself for years. It was all incomprehensible to me until this morning I read your paper, Richmond. If you had studied my case you could not have described the symptoms clearer."

His utterance came disjointedly, as if every word was an effort. To say that I was astonished would be to put it mildly.

"My lord!" I cried, amazedly; "you mean—"

"As true as heaven's arch is over us," he whispered, solemnly, "I believe that I am being slowly poisoned."

I was not unprepared for the announcement, for, truth to tell, the suspicion had been with me as I watched him at the table.

"Pray, allow me," I said, bending towards him and taking his wrist. My examination and questioning made suspicion conviction. There was not the least doubt of it. He was suffering from the cumulative

effect of a certain drug I had described in my paper.

"It's true, then?" he said, reading my face. "Pshaw! I know it, man. I have known it for weeks. Good heavens! It is horrible. I am, and always have been, an abstemious man. When the certainty forced itself upon me I surreptitiously took samples of my food and drink and had them analyzed. Three times I did so, but nothing deleterious could be found. It is baffling. It is fiendish! I know that someone about me is murdering me, and yet I am impotent. It is driving me mad. I fear to eat. I dare not drink. For Heaven's sake, I adjure you, prevent this crime!"

"Calm yourself, my lord," I said, quietly. "Excitement in your present low condition is dangerous. Will you leave this matter to me?"

My quiet manner reassured him, and he fell back in his chair with a feeble gesture of assent. I touched the bell. "Pray be good enough to order a conveyance," I said to him. "I wish to go to the nearest drug-gist."

The man appeared and received the order. With a parting word of encouragement I went out, and was rapidly driven to the town. The coachman was inclined to be communicative, and ere I re-entered the Towers I had learned that for some years or more his lordship had lived the life of a recluse.

"A real 'lar' 'em!' said the man; 'nothing to 'ave the 'art' for anything. It was different when 'er ladyship was alive—before Lady Flora went away. She was 'is only child—made what they call a runaway match—eloped with Captain Didsbury. You read about it?"

The old man thought a powerful blow at the business nearly broke 'is 'art, for 'e knew the Captain for what 'e was—nothing more nor less than an adventurer. They visit occasionally—for there was some sort of reconciliation, I believe, when 'er ladyship died—but 'is very rarely. The last time was three months ago, as near as no matter."

The man's chatter gave me food for reflection.

I found his lordship sitting as I had left him. Pouring out a dose of the mixture I had obtained from the chemist I watched him drink it.

"If it be what we think, your lordship," I said, "that is the antidote, but plainly I must tell you the administering of it cannot be prolonged indefinitely. The bane must be discovered." I rang the bell. "His lordship wishes to retire," I said to the man, and assisting him up the stairs I saw him immediately he fell asleep. Leaving him, I stole downstairs and, dropping into a cosy chair, gave myself up to thought. The solemn-visaged butler placed the tumbler and glass at my elbow and proceeded to replenish the fire. It struck me that he was taking an inordinate time over the business, and suddenly looking up I found him gazing intently at my face. Anxiety was plainly apparent in his look.

"His lordship seems far from well, Johnson," I said.

"Sorry I am to see it, sir," he returned. "For a truer gentleman never breathed. Thirty years I've been in his lordship's service. Only a year ago I've seen him come back after a day with the guns as keen on his food as the best of 'em. It broke my heart to see him like this. He eats nothing. It seems almost as if he was afraid to touch the food."

"I suppose his daughter's marriage upset him terribly?" I suggested.

"Yes, it was a bad business that, sir. She was always a headstrong, flighty girl, and the Captain, I see, the sort of a man to attract such a one as her ladyship was. Absolutely impetuous he was. It's common talk that he married her for the fortune he knows some day will come to her. There's queer tales about him. They say he spends most of his time at some gambling casino on the Continent, only showing up here occasionally to bleed the old man for more money. He takes care to be most assiduous in his attentions while he's here. A rank bad lot, if I may be excused for saying it."

"His lordship, I understand, is of a studious disposition?"

"Yes, sir. Spends most of his time in the library. Most punctilious, too, and a regular stickler for rules. He's yesterday he discharged a maid because she had forgotten to set out a new pen and clean stationery on the table."

He rambled on for some time, rising to the bait of my questions, until having ascertained all that I wished to learn from him, I picked up a book and, taking the hint, he withdrew.

After he had gone I lay back and revolved the whole of the circumstances in my mind. The man had informed me that Didsbury had seen service in India previous to leaving the army, and the conviction forced itself upon me that he, hoping to hasten the old man's death, was the culprit. The deduction seemed the only possible one in view of my knowledge of his antecedents and the peculiar means employed. By some means he was even then administering the noxious drug to his victim. But how? It could be through the medium of his food. That idea could be dismissed at once. How, then? It struck me that the solution could only be arrived at by someone who had the opportunity of observing his lordship's daily routine.

It was impossible for me to remain, for my doing so would only arouse suspicion, and defeat the end. Provided with the antidote the old man would be safe for some days.

Unexpectedly a word spoken by the butler recalled to my mind, and I, like a flash, saw the way revealed itself to me. Next morning, after a conversation with his lordship, who seemed a new man, I left the Towers, and four hours afterwards was revealing my plan to my love. Without demur she agreed to aid me, and—By Jove! there goes the bell. Eileen, I must leave you to finish the story. Jim here rose and went to answer

the summons. With a smile his wife took up the tale:—

You will, of course, have guessed Jim's plan. I was to take upon myself the duties of parlour-maid in his lordship's household. Though somewhat doubtful as to my capabilities for the post, the thought that I might assist him in his career decided me, and the next train carried me to my situation. Lord Didsbury was apprised of my coming, so the ground was made easy for me.

I must have played the part well, for no suspicion as to my real character entered into the minds of my fellow servants. My explicit instructions were to discover how the poison was administered, and immediately on my arrival I set my woman's wits to work to read the riddle. Association with the servants convinced me that none of them were taking a hand in the dastardly business.

The scheme had been devised by some more subtle forger than I. I was given every opportunity, but though I observed him closely for three days I could discover nothing, and every day he had been compelled to have recourse to the antidote.

On the fourth day Captain Didsbury, having visited his lordship, the wife was indisposed, and he had left her at Mentone. His manner with his lordship struck me as like nothing else than that of a cringing hound, but there was that in his face when he watched the old man sitting at his desk that made me insensibly think of a tiger stalking its prey.

He left in the evening with a smile on his face. Previous to his going, however, he approached Johnson, the butler, in the hall and, slipping a small package into his hand, said: "You might see that this is placed on the old man's table, will you? They're his special nibs. You know what a faddist he is over them. Won't write with anything else. I forgot to give them to him."

The incident seemed trivial at the moment, but almost immediately it passed out of my mind. It was the next morning when his lordship came into the library and, sitting at his desk, took up his pen that its significance dawned on me.

It was the duty of the maid to set out fresh stationery was laid out every day, and, fortunately, I had punctiliousness in the matter. I had neglected to insert a new nib in his penholder. With an ejaculation of annoyance he drew the old one out of the pen and replaced it with one taken from the open box. Then, unobserved, he placed it in his lips to moisten it, as one naturally is in the habit of doing to cause the ink to flow easily.

Like an inspiration sent from Heaven the solution of the mystery revealed itself to me, and I dashed forward to arrest his hand.

"He regarded me in silent amazement."

"What do you mean?" he said, presently.

"The secret is out at last," I cried; "I believe those nibs are poisoned."

He started back in alarm and the pen dropped from his nerveless fingers on to the table.

"Merciful Heaven!" he quavered, staring wildly at the box.

Fifteen minutes later the wire was strung in my message to Jim. His analysis fully confirmed my supposition. Every nib in the box had been immersed in a deadly poison. Its tastelessness had precluded discovery. Through the medium of his habit Lord Didsbury had unconsciously assimilated into his system a daily modicum of drug.

That night his lordship wrote to his son-in-law. What he wrote is known only to himself and his would-be murderer.

Some months afterwards the body of a suicide bearing a strange resemblance to the Captain was exhumed from a shallow grave in the Morgue. It was never claimed.

Lord Didsbury was not unimpaired of the part Jim had played in plucking him from the jaws of death, and with many things were possible. That is why the Harley Street has become such a pleasing reality.—London Tit-Bits.

SCREWS YOU CAN'T SEE.

The minuteness of some of the screws made in a watch factory may be measured by a statement that it takes nearly 150,000 of a certain kind to weigh a pound. Under the microscope they appear in their true character. The finished bolts of the pivot of the balance-wheel are one-hundredth of an inch in diameter, and the gauge with which pivots are classified measures to the thousandth part of an inch. Each jewel hole into which a pivot fits is about one five-thousandth of an inch larger than the pivot to permit sufficient play. The finest screw for a small-sized watch has a thread of 260 to the inch, and weighs one one-hundred and thirty thousandth of a pound. Jewel slabs of sapphire, ruby, or garnet are first sawed into slabs one-fiftieth of an inch thick, and are shelled out to plates so that they may be surfaced. Then the individual jewels are sawed or broken off, drilled through the center, and a depression made in the convex side for an oil-cup. A pallet jewel weighs one one-hundredth and fifty thousandths of a pound. A roller jewel is a little more than one two hundred and fifty thousandth of an inch in diameter and fifty-six thousandths of an inch in length. A small screw for a watch has a thread of 260 to the inch, and weighs one one-hundred and thirty thousandth of a pound.

Canal Worked by a Model.

A most ingenious system is employed by which the director of the Suez Canal can tell at a glance the exact position of all vessels passing through it. A model is placed in the office of Port Said, and the whole canal is worked from headquarters by means of the telegraph, the position of each ship being marked by a figure on the model. It is thus quite easy to arrange for vessels passing each other.

About the ...House

SOME CRANBURY COOKERY.

Sauce—Add 1 cup boiling water to 1 cup carefully picked cranberries and cook slowly until the skins burst, then stir in 2 cups granulated sugar, and simmer 10 minutes longer. Turn into molds and let get cold. Cranberries cooked in this manner will jelly beautifully and are by many considered the best for the strain-jelly. Cooking too long develops a more acid taste, and will make the skins tough and indigestible.

Tart—Line a deep perforated pie dish with good paste, and fill it with cranberry sauce cooked as in preceding recipe. Put several strips of puff pastry across the top in lattice fashion and bake in a quick oven.

Pudding—Mix together 1 beaten egg, 1 cup sugar, 2 tablespoons butter, 2 cups sifted flour, 1 teaspoon baking powder, and 1 cup chopped cranberries. Turn into a greased mold, cover, and steam for 2 hours. Serve with any sweet liquid sauce.

Cranberry Olives—Spread slices of turkey, veal or roast beef with cranberry sauce cooked as in first recipe, sprinkle with grated crumbs, season lightly with salt, and dip in melted butter, roll up in seasoned crumbs (using salt, pepper, minced onion and celery for seasoning), and brown lightly in a quick oven. Delicious for breakfast, lunch or tea.

CABBAGE RELISHES.

Fried—Chop cabbage fine, place in a frying pan containing 1 cup bacon dripping, 1 pt boiling water, 1 teaspoon soda, 2 teaspoons sugar, 1 pepper pod, salt to taste. Stir often, cooking until brown.

Foam—Slice a solid cabbage very thin. Season with salt and pepper. Add 1/2 cup cold cream, according to size of cabbage, 2 teaspoons sugar. Stir vigorously with a fork and just before serving stir in as much cider vinegar as you have used of cream. Keep very cold.

Cold Slaw—Slice a solid head very thin. Season with salt, pepper and sugar. Stir in enough cider vinegar to have it real sharp.

Cream—Slice a solid head very thin. Place in a pan 1 tablespoon butter. When hot, add in the cabbage, with a very little water. Let simmer until thoroughly done. Beat 1 egg very light and stir in slowly, then 1/2 cup sour cream. Season with salt and pepper to taste.

Warm Slaw—Beat 2 eggs, 2 tablespoons sugar and 1 cup cream. 1 tablespoon butter, and 1 cup vinegar. Pour this over finely cut cabbage that has been seasoned with salt and pepper. Serve at once.

FANCY CAKES.

Sublime Cake—Beat the white of 11 eggs to a stiff froth, add to them the yolks of 3 eggs well beaten and 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar well sifted. 1 cup lemon extract and 1 cup flour sifted five times, with 1 teaspoon cream tartar. Bake in a moderate oven in an ungreased pan. Place the pan upside down for cake to cool slightly lifted on one side, and it will drop out or can be easily removed by slipping a knife around the edges when cold.

Rose Cake—Two cups powdered sugar, 3 cups sifted flour, whites of 6 eggs beaten stiff, 1/2 cup butter, 1 cup water, 2 teaspoons baking powder. Color part of the dough pink, flavor with rose, and bake in layers. Make a filling of icing, and put with same. Ornament the top with three roses made as follows: While the icing is still wet, arrange candied rose leaves in circles, letting them overlap a little. Three layers make them about right. Leave a small circle in the center, into which drop the yolk of hard-boiled egg pulverized. It will stick while frosting is wet, and a little care will make the imitation of roses perfect.

VARIOUS RECIPES.

Green Corn Pudding—Draw a sharp knife through each row of corn lengthwise, then scrape out the pulp. To one pint of this corn add one pint of milk and one pint of cream, three eggs, thoroughly beaten, one tablespoonful of butter, two tablespoons of sugar, one-half tablespoonful of flour. Bake for one hour, stirring occasionally until it thickens.

Foamy Pudding Sauce—Cream half a cupful of butter, add a cupful of powdered sugar and flavor with vanilla. Set aside until just before serving, then add a fourth of a cupful of hot milk and the white of an egg beaten to a foam. Beat till light and foamy.

Spiced Grapes—Take seven pounds of fruit, three and a half pounds of sugar, one pint of vinegar, and one tablespoonful each of cinnamon, cloves, allspice and grated nutmeg. Pulp the fruit, boil in the vinegar until soft, press through a colander, add the skins, sugar and spices; then boil until thick.

Canning Grapes—Whole—Pick only sound grapes off the stem, being very careful not to break the skins. Fill cans with grapes, then cover with cold water, put into a kettle or boiler packed with hay and water, and keep the cans from breaking. Cover up and let them cook until grapes are heated through. Carefully turn off all juice and fill with hot syrup as thick as molasses. Seal at once. They are delicious. Jelly may be made by taking the same proportions of juice as are used for crab apple jelly.

HOW TO PRESERVE FERNS.

Gather, during a walk through the woods, an armful of ferns, selecting perfect ones; lay smoothly between newspapers and put to press under a trunk. These may be kept until returning to the city. Fill rose

bowls half of sand and stick these preserved ferns in them, placing them about your rooms, making a woody spot all winter. If the ferns become dusty wash gently and return to place. The smallest ferns may be used with fresh flowers for the table, or bouquet for the dress, says Harper's Bazar.

To make a pretty table fernery, make a birch-box six inches wide, nine long—or round if you prefer it—and three inches deep. Paste cloth around the edges to prevent bits of earth from finding their way out. Plant in the box roots of small ferns, filling the spaces with green moss or "running pine." Sprinkle every day and keep in a cool place at night, and your table fernery will keep fresh and green all summer.

KNITTING AS A MEDICINE.

Knitting is declared by specialists in the treatment of rheumatism to be a most helpful exercise for hands liable to become stiff from the complaint, and it is being prescribed by physicians because of its efficiency in limbering up the hand of such sufferers. For persons liable to cramp, paralysis or any other affection of the fingers of that character, knitting is regarded as a most beneficial exercise. Besides, the simple work is said to be an excellent diversion for the nerves, and is recommended to women suffering from insomnia and depression. In certain sanitariums patients are encouraged to make use of bright needles, and the work is so pleasant that it is much enjoyed by them.

HINTS TO HOUSEKEEPERS.

It is said that two ounces of permanganate of potash thrown into a cistern where the water has become foul will purify it completely.

Rusty iron articles, if left overnight in a bath of sour water, can be cleansed more easily than in any other way, according to an exchange.

Tomatoes may be canned at home by paring them without scalding or blanching, putting them in a kettle on the back of the stove and letting the juice draw out slowly. When there is sufficient juice so they will not burn, let them cook till done, then can in the usual fashion. Use no water in them, or they will spoil.

Very few people dry sweet corn these days. It is good for a change in midwinter, for it seems to have a different flavor from the canned.

Babies' knitted hoods, crocheted and knitted wool shawls, etc., can be nicely cleaned by rubbing them in dry flour.

A sure way to use hard pears is to "ginger" them. To two pounds of fruit allow two pounds of sugar and a pint of water, with one ounce of tincture of ginger or its equivalent in fresh ginger root. Make a syrup of the sugar and water and cook the pears in it until transparent, but not until they break. The pears should be chopped into small pieces. Apples may be put up in the same way.

PIERPONT MORGAN.

What the Great Financier Looks Like.

Imagine a face which combines the chief characteristics of Bismarck, Cecil Rhodes and Lord Roberts, and you can get an idea of what Mr. Pierpont Morgan is like. There is not another face like it in the wide world. Like the two historical giants first mentioned, he is tall, being over six feet in height, and fairly heavy. One's first impression of Morgan's countenance is that it is a fierce one, but a subsequent glance reveals an underlying good nature. It has enormous powers of expression, and is marked by strong lines.

Life has written a great story upon Pierpont Morgan's countenance, which tells of battles, hardships, hard fought, but won openhanded, with-out dissimulation or subterfuge. Written in his countenance are his life secrets, hard work, indomitable will, tremendous powers of observation, and assimilation, elephantine toughness, tempered by flexibility, and enormous volubility of voice.

Morgan does not conceal his emotions, nor does he attempt to do so. When pleased he signifies his pleasure by emphatic approval, if of a humorous kind by the heartiest laughs. To look at him is to almost catch the intonation of his intensely energetic nature, and he infuses all with whom he comes in contact with his spirit.

Like most Americans, he smokes incessantly, large strong cigars. He eats much, drinks moderately, works hard, and sleeps hard.

The only sign of failing about him is his hair, which is growing thin. What remains, however, is crisp, bright, and silvery.

He is one of those huge masses of vitality which every now and again, as in cases of Napoleon, Bismarck, Gladstone, and Cecil Rhodes, affect the destinies of their generation, and there is no living personality possessed of so much gigantic energy backed up by such colossal wealth.

A SURE SIGN.

In a Scotch rural district two boys were one day discussing what sign it was when the cuckoo is heard for the first time in the year. One of them said it was getting married, while the other said it was a sign that they were going to be rich.

A farmer, overhearing them, said: "That cannot be true, because I have heard it many times, and I am not married yet, and I am certainly not rich."

Just then a local worthy, known as Jamie, was passing by, and the farmer said:

"Jamie, can you tell us what sign it is when you hear the cuckoo for the first time?"

"Yes," said Jamie, as he took the pipe from his mouth. "It's a sign you're not dead."

We give away nothing so generously, and receive nothing so reluctantly, as advice.

SOME STARTLING TRIALS

ODD EXPERIMENTS FOR TESTING INVENTIONS.

Sixteen Hours in a Submarine Boat in 30 Feet of Water.

A diver, though supplied with air from the surface, in communication with his crew in a boat above him, rarely remains under water for more than four hours at a time. The French naval authorities recently determined to subject their new submarine, the "Morse," to a submergence of sixteen hours on end, says London Answers.

The "Narval," a previously built boat of the same type, had been submerged for twelve hours, and her crew had suffered frightfully. But the "Morse" was said to be better fitted with air-renewing apparatus. The boat was sunk in harbor one gloomy winter day, and lay at the bottom of nearly 30 feet of water. The cold was intense, as it was impossible.

SPARE SUFFICIENT AIR.

For any kind of fire. The silence, of course, was absolute, and the four men who composed the crew were as cut off from their fellows as though they had been in another world. The air became heavily charged with fumes of poisonous carbonic acid gas, and the men were obliged to frequently inhale oxygen, and rub their nostrils and lips with a pomade made of lime.

"Minutes," said one of them afterwards, "seemed like hours."

But the time at length elapsed, and the "Morse" was obliged to water from her tanks, and rose again to the surface, with all aboard safe and sound.

In their efforts to give the public confidence in their novel inventions, inventors frequently make startling claims for their apparatus. Mr. Probst, of Geneva, has devised a wonderful life-saving suit, which is made of indiarubber, and so buoyant that half the body of the wearer remains out of water. Air-tight pockets hold water, food, even tobacco and matches, a trumpet for signaling, a torch, and a big knife with which to cut.

FIGHT OFF SHARKS.

or similar man-eaters. Nothing could be more thorough than the trial to which Mr. Probst has subjected his invention. He has spent seventeen days consecutively in the open sea off Havre, eating, and even sleeping, among the tumbling wave-crests.

Almost equally alarming was a test made recently of a new mechanical brake, for which its inventor, an engineer named Meares, claimed that it would stop a train travelling at fifty miles an hour within twenty yards. To test it, an old line leading to a disused colliery in Lancashire was utilized. The rail was continued to the very verge of the pit-mouth, so that, if the brake failed, nothing could save the inventor from falling headlong into the depths beneath.

A large number of people gathered to watch the test. A light engine, with Meares alone as passenger, driver, and stoker, was working along full speed and came roaring along the track. To those who watched it seemed beyond belief that it could be pulled up in the given space. But, just as it seemed on the point of crashing into the black gulf, the inventor moved a handle, and, as if by magic, the engine stopped, with its front wheels not ten feet from the pit-mouth.

To prove that his newly-invented motor-cycle was the most powerful yet built was the reason of Mr. Locking's recent attempt to ride up the Penton Pass, in

THE AUSTRALIAN ALPS.

The pass is nearly three thousand feet in height, and in places only eight feet wide, with a drop of three or four hundred feet to the torrent below. Had the motor failed to work in such a place, rider and machine would probably have fallen headlong over the unprotected edge.

As a matter of fact, the motor did fail, but fortunately in a spot where the road was wider. So Mr. Locking managed to dismount in safety. The terrible airship tragedy of May last was the result of an inventor putting too great confidence in the product of his brain and hands. It was on May 31, 1901, the 12th, that the people living in Avenue du Maine, in Paris, were aroused from sleep by a most appalling crash, followed by a glare of flame. Rushing out, they found the street blocked with the tangled remains, steel plates, and broken cordage. Among the ruins lay two crushed and mangled forms, those of Senhor Severo, of the Brazilian Parliament, and Suchet, his engineer.

Shortly after five o'clock that morning the inventor had started from Vaugirard in his brand new airship "Pax," for a first

TRIAL OF ITS POWERS.

At a height of 1,500 feet above the city the great balloon suddenly exploded, and it and its passengers shot downwards through the air. The test was the more foolish, because the inventor had hardly ever been in a balloon before, and had only finished work upon his machine a few minutes before it was inflated.

DENSEST POPULATION.

The Belgian Government has just issued a statistical report showing that the population of Belgium is the densest in Europe, there being 605 persons to every square mile, as against 410 in Holland and 349 in England. There are still over 12 per cent. of Belgian soldiers who can neither read nor write.

TOO MUCH BRAIN.

An abnormal amount of brain is not necessarily an unmixed blessing. A child of five years has just died of heart apoplexy, and the doctor who made a post-mortem examination stated that the boy's brain weighed 520 grs., that being heavier than the brain of an ordinary man.