



CHAPTER IV.—(Continued.)

"Ah!" exclaimed Aube, raising her face at this revelation, and looking wonderingly in the old lady's face.

"It was this necessity which kept her from coming to see you again and again. If she had done so, she says, she could not have kept you here."

"My mother!" sighed Aube, with her eyes dilating; and the Superior went on in the same low, sweet voice:

"She says now, Aube, that you are a woman grown, and that she can bear the separation no longer—that her heart yearns for you—that she cannot rest until she clasps to her breast all that is left to her of that dear husband who was to her as a god—I give you her own words, my child; and I ought to utter words of reproach to the vanity—the wickedness of a woman giving herself up so wholly to such a love—but—but, my darling, I cannot say them now. For it touches me to the heart, Aube, and I can only see the sweet, loving, widowed mother there, all those thousands of miles away—stretching out her trembling hands, my darling, her long eyes strained yearningly to me, as she says, 'I have done my duty—I have worked, and watched, and waited—I have done all that my long penance has fulfilled, give me back my child!'"

The solemn silence was broken now by Luce's sobs, as she sank into a chair, and laid her head upon her arm.

"Yes, my dearest one," continued the Superior, "we poor women here, devoted as we are, have never known a mother's love; but as I read that letter, Aube, I seemed to realize it all. Between its lines there stand forth in burning words all that you poor, patient woman tried to express, and suffer as I may at having to part from you, I know it is your duty to go to her—to go, she says, at once, for life is short, and I can send you to her, glad in my heart, with the blessings of all here, and say we now send you back the infant you confided to us, a woman now, and as sweet and true and pure as ever knelt before God."

"Sister Elise! Mother!" sobbed Aube. "My child!"

There was another long pause, and then smiling on her pupil the Superior took the letter, and placed it in Aube's hands. "Take it and read that letter, Aube, calmly now—it is the letter of a mother, of whom you may say, 'Thank heaven, I am her child!' It is a terrible experience, for it is a long voyage, and to a land of which till now I have heard naught but evil. Now I know that there is one there whom I should be glad to call sister, and now there will be one whom I am glad to call my spiritual daughter. Hayti cannot be all bad, Aube, so now wipe away those tears, for the pangs are past, and it is a day of joy—the day on which the first steps are taken to rejoin two such hearts as yours."

"But, mother, am I to go soon?"

"In a day or two at most. The Consul brought me the letter. He had received one as well, and family returns to the island in whose charge you could make the voyage. This might have been months, Aube, but heaven smiles upon the project, and the Consul tells me of a widow lady who has been in Paris a year with her daughter about your age. She, too, lost her husband, it seems, in the war when your father died. This Madame Saintone will be glad to be your chaperon, my child, her daughter your companion, but—"

"But, what, mother?" whispered Aube, who seemed half-stunned.

"The mail steamer leaves Havre within a day or two, I hear, and our parting will be very soon."

Aube gazed at her wildly.

"No, no," her darling, no more tears, she whispered the Superior, "Go to your room now, and rest and pray. Then read your letter as I would have you read it. Go, my child. Your true, loving mother, who must have passed through a martyrdom for your sake, waits to press you to her heart. Luce, my child."

Luce started from the chair, to run forward with her face swollen and convulsed with weeping, to lead her companion to the room they shared.

As the door closed, Aube flung her arms about her friend and sobbed out:

"Luce! Luce! is it all true?"

Luce was silent, only gazed at her wildly as Aube raised the folded letter to her lips and kissed it passionately.

"Yes, mother, it is all true," she said, with a wild, far-off look, "yes, mother, I come!"

"Aube!" rang out in a wild cry.

"Luce, darling, what are you thinking?" cried Aube, startled by the agony in her friend's eyes.

"I was thinking you must not, shall not go."

Aube shrank from her with the letter pressed to her lips once more, and she stood blank, hard and strange-looking as if she had been turned to stone.

"Aube, darling, what will poor Paul say?"

CHAPTER V.

"You're a fool, Jules Deffard."

"You're a gentleman, Etienne Saintone."

"There, I beg your pardon, man, but you make me angry. Have you no ambition?"

"Of course I have! to become your brother-in-law. What day will the steamer arrive?"

"How should I know? I'm in no hurry; place has been right enough without the old lady."

"Dull enough without Antoinette."

"Rubbish! What a sentimental lover you are," cried the first speaker, who lazily tilted back the cane chair in which he balanced himself so as to reach a cigar from a little table, placing one in his lip and throwing another to his vis-à-vis.

"They were two well enough looking young men—dark, tall, and well-dressed, after the fashion of the creole of the South. They were seated in the broad veranda of a good house, slightly elevated and overlooking the town of Port au Prince, and over it, away to sea, with its waters of deep and dazzling blue."

"Now, then, light up. I want to talk to you. Have some 'rack'?"

"No; had enough. Talk away."

"Well, look here, then," said Saintone, lowering his voice, after a glance round to see that there were not likely to be overheard. "I've quite made up my mind to join the Vaudoux."

"And I've made up my mind not to," replied Deffard, tilting back his chair; "I'm going to be very good now, and marry your sister."

"Tchah!"

"Yes, and I'm coming every day again, dear," he said, as he threw his arm round her and tried to draw her to him. As he did so there was a faint sound as of a hissing breath at the back of the place, and Saintone looked sharply round. "What's that?" he said.

"Snake or little lizard," said the woman, coldly, freeing herself from his arm.

"Oh, come, don't be afraid," said Saintone, laughing, as he tried again to catch her in his arms; but she eluded him, and her eyes opened widely now.

"No; go and make love to the new lady," she said, spitefully.

"What new lady?" he cried. "Why, you silly, jealous girl, I never loved any one but you."

"Lies!" said the woman, vindictively. "It's true!" he cried angrily. "Come, Genie, don't be so foolish."

"It is not foolish. That is all over. Go to her."

"Why, you silly thing, I tell you I have been too busy to come."

"Yes, too busy to send a boy to say mass 'can't. All lies."

"Genie!"

"I know. I am not a fool," she said, scornfully.

"Sit down, silly girl," he cried. "There, I will not try to touch you; I'll smoke a cigar. Look here," he continued, as he lit the little roll of tobacco, "I'll now prove to you how true I am. Do you know why I came to-day?"

"Because you said Genie is a fool, and will believe all I say."

"No," he said in a low voice, as he leaned toward her. "I came up because I wanted you to help me, dear. I want to be more as if I were one of you."

The woman shook her head, and half closed her eyes; but he had moved her, and she watched him intently, as she stood shaking her head.

"You understand me," he whispered. "The Vaudoux, I want to join—to be one of you. There, do you believe I love you now?"

"No," she said, panting. "Don't know what you mean."

"You do," he whispered. "You need not try and hold me off. I know you are one of them."

"One of the Vaudoux—you?"

"Yes. You can take me to one of your priests, and let me join at the first meeting."

"The Vaudoux?" she said, opening her eyes widely now. "Ah, yes, I know what you mean. Oh, no; you could not join them. They say it is all very dreadful and secret. No one knows who they are or what they do."

"Yes," he said, laughing, "you do for one, for you could take me to join them."

"Oh, no," she cried, with an eager movement of her hands, as if she disclaimed all such knowledge. "It is only the blacks who know of that."

"You are trifling with me," he said. "You are offended because I have been away so long. Now I have come and want to be nearer to you than ever, you refuse."

"What can I do?"

"Take me to one of their meetings tonight."

"I?" cried the woman, shaking her head. "You play me with now. How could I know?"

"You mean you will not," he said, frowning.

"Eugenie will not do what she cannot," replied the woman, coldly.

"All very well," he said in a cavalier way. "I dare say I can find some one else who will take me to a meeting; or, I don't know! I do not matter. I dare say I shall give it up. Well, I must be off back."

"Going?" said the woman, coldly.

"Yes, I am going now. A bit disappointed, of course, but it does not matter. Good-by."

(To be continued.)

BARNUM'S WOOING.

The Great Showman Knew Human Nature Pretty Well.

The recent marriage of the widow of P. T. Barnum to a wealthy Creole has brought out a story of how the great showman won his English bride. It was his theory that the people liked to be humbugged, and he made good use of the idea in the management of his show, but it will be news to many that he worked the same scheme in securing his British wife. As the story goes Barnum at the time was Mayor of Bridgeport. He was lonesome, and his beautiful home, Waldemere, on the shore of Long Island Sound, was not much visited, except by sightseers. He became interested in the beautiful daughter of John Fish, of Southport, England, a retired manufacturer, and solicited her hand in marriage. Barnum was well advanced in years, and knew his fame as the prince of showmen was not sufficient to win the prize. In fact, that fame might have hurt his suit more than helped it, for Miss Fish greatly disliked the notoriety attached to the "greatest show on earth," and after she married its owner always managed to hold herself aloof from the publicity her husband loved so well. But the old showman's knowledge of the English love for official celebrity led him to play a winning card. He had his photograph taken with Waldemere as a background. The picture represented him seated in a showy landau, harnessed to four beautiful black horses, his coachman on the box and two footmen up behind. Under the photograph were the words, "Lord Mayor of Bridgeport." A copy of this picture was forwarded to Miss Fish, and Barnum always thought it "did the business."

The Farmer and the Sportsman.

A gentleman of means, and an enthusiastic sportsman, having purchased a country residence, began (to the astonishment of his neighbors) to devote his time to his gun and hounds, instead of the culture of his land. After a time an old farmer took a favorable opportunity to make some remarks upon his course, that was, in his view, not only profitless, but devoid of interest. "If you will for one day go with me," said the sportsman, "I think I can convince you that it is intensely interesting and exciting." The farmer consented to do so; and the next morning, before daybreak, they wended their way to their hunting ground. The dogs soon scented a fox, and were off, and the two worthies followed, through woods and meadows, and over hills, for two or three hours. At last the sportsman heard the dogs driving the game in their direction; and soon the pack, in full cry, came over a hill that had previously shut out the sound. "There! my friend," said the sportsman, "there! did you ever hear such heavenly music as that?" The farmer stopped in an attitude of intense attention for some moments, and then said, "Well, the fact is, those conformed dogs make such a noise I can't hear the music!"

Do not nurse good intentions, but give them immediate exercise.

#### NOTES AND COMMENTS.

The tendency in modern English buildings is to do away with stairs in favor of inclined planes. This will be good news to the man who is always taking twenty-three steps in the dark on a twenty-two step stair.

The exact value of the Chinese war indemnity to be paid to Japan was, at the time of its enactment, 200,000,000 keeping taels, or measured as Chinese exchange usually is, by Mexican silver dollars, \$150, 176,000 in American money.

At least there is one locality in the wide world where prohibition prevails, and that is on the waters of the North Sea. By an agreement recently entered into between the powers of Europe, the sale of liquor to fishermen and sailors in that sea is prohibited.

A woman named Butler is the first of her sex to vote at a general election in England. Her name was put by mistake on the voting list of Barrow, and the presiding officer at the polls held that he had no authority to inquire into her sex when the name was on the list.

A correspondent of a Chicago paper calls attention to the curious fact that 50,000 children are running on the streets of New York because that city has no school accommodations for them. Mayor Strong is at work securing new schoolhouses, and he declares that he will soon see that the defect is remedied.

The National Education Society recently held at Denver a general movement throughout the country for promoting education in the field of American citizenship, and has emphasized the importance of placing before the people of our country a fuller history of what has been accomplished by arbitration to secure peace throughout the country.

Certain Missouri towns and counties are arranging to send a trainload of the State's products through the principal sections of the country. This suggests the fact that while Missouri has many resources, and is, in fact, one of the most prosperous of the States, little has been done to exploit it. The failure of the late legislature to provide for an immigration bureau is regretted by the citizens generally.

Chicago is doing work on its public library, which furnishes a good example to other American cities. The fine new building just completed is to be decorated with the best of the art, and for furnishings, Boston has long held the supremacy for its public library, but the enthusiasm shown by Chicago will make the young western city a dangerous rival for first place.

Here is more bad news for the horse. They are slaughtering the animal in the West and making him into canned corned beef, and now he is attacked another way in the East. William Steinway, the piano maker, has begun the erection of a factory at the little town on Long Island that bears his name, and here the motive power for horseless carriages will be made. It is likely that the plant will be increased so that the entire carriage, motor and all, will be completed on the spot.

According to a London paper, the efforts of the railroad employees charged with a recent transportation of the Princess of Wales and her daughters on a short trip went to laughable lengths to insure a spick and span appearance for their train. The coach in the tender were whitewashed, the top layer only, and the fireman drew his supply from a trap door at the bottom, preserving the snowy appearance unbroken. It is, of course, too late to suggest that this was not high art. It would have been in better taste to have polished each piece separately, after carefully washing off all superfluous dust. A high degree of natural perfection is preferable always to any veneer. But coal stokers probably do not read Ruskin, so their transgression of the canons of taste was quite pardonable.

The "new woman" has been reduced to the condition of a common place, and taken what it considers the twelve most advanced women of the day and made of them a composite photograph. The World selects Mrs. Elizabeth Cadogan, Susan B. Anthony, Frances E. Willard, Mrs. E. B. Gramis, Lady Henry Somerset, Mrs. Annie Besant, Rev. Anna Shaw, Mrs. Belva A. Lockwood, Mrs. Mary E. Lease, Lillie Devereux Blake, Miss Sarah Drew and Mrs. Mary Estlin. Of its production it says: "It will be seen at once that the composite new woman has a strong face. It is an intellectual face and a stern; unyielding face. Yet it is a face that indicates character and progression. The predominant feature is the mouth, which is a sad, fixed mouth. In fact, the face is only saved from acidity by its ear-lobes, which are not here a lesson that our tasks in life should not be allowed to take therefrom all its cheer."

WHITTIER CREDIT ISLAND, one of the Shoals group, is in Maine or New Hampshire and whether the government charters or claims run by the point of the compass are correct are disputes that will soon be fought out in the courts. For a long time there has been a quarrel between Lemuel Caswell and his nephew, Clarence, as to their respective rights of ownership on the island—based on deed. One party to the controversy claims that the island is wholly within the jurisdiction of the State of Maine and that the line follows the center of the channel between Star and Cedar, leaving the former in New Hampshire and the latter in Maine. But the uncle asserts that the line runs by point of compass from the center of the channel at the mouth of the harbor, and diagonally divides Cedar Island, placing the southern portion, in which the house in which Clarence Caswell lives, in New Hampshire, and that the State of Maine could not convey what it did not own.

In a paper read by Dr. Swope before the Kentucky Medical Society recently he summarized the accepted points in the treatment of consumption, namely a dry climate, having a maximum number of fair days and a minimum humidity, with slight range of temperature; a moderate degree of high altitude; and ample facilities for outdoor life. Among the data made by Dr. Swope in this connection is that of permanent or even long continued residence. Both research and experience have led to the conclusion that Southern New Mexico comes nearer to fulfilling what is required for the advantageous treatment of pulmonary diseases, and especially to be mentioned is the high plateau southeast of Silver City, partly across which runs the little mountain stream Mimbres, until it loses itself in the dry, sandy plains. This plateau, about 4500 to 5000 feet in altitude, about fifty miles long and forty wide, is sheltered on every side by high mountain ranges and peaks, has constant winds from the northwest and west, its maximum temperature is 90 degrees, and here an invalid may be out of doors 360 days in the year.

THE CONTRAST between the career of Dr. Marion A. Cheek, whose death in Siam has been mentioned in the earlier columns of some of the unhappy missionaries in China is great, indeed. Dr. Cheek went to Siam in 1874 as a missionary. Fortunately for him, he had studied medicine in this country, and his knowledge soon

brought him into prominence. The native physicians were unable to contend with the insidious diseases of the country, and the doctor's fame as a successful physician soon spread abroad. The wife of the chief of the Lavei fell ill, and the natives tried in vain to heal her. She was taken to the "white magician," who cured her, and immediately became a man of great influence in the country. Among his patients were soon numbered members of the royal family and prominent men of Siam. A few years ago the Borneo Company found it necessary to carry on its negotiations with the people of North Siam through Dr. Cheek, as his influence was greater than that of any white man in the country. Honors of all kinds were showered upon him, but he never accepted an official place under the crown, although he had the refusal of many. His death is sincerely regretted. Mrs. Cheek has been in California for some time. It was there she received the word of her husband's death.

How to Breathe.

An old gentleman gave good advice to a young lady who complained of sleeplessness. He said: "Learn how to breathe and darken your room completely, and you won't need any doctoring."

"Learn how to breathe! I thought that was one thing we learned before coming into a world so terribly full of other things to be learned," the insomniae said ruefully.

"On the contrary, not one in ten adults knows how to breathe. To breathe perfectly is to draw the breath in long, deep, inhalations, slow and regular, so as to relieve the lower lungs of all noxious accumulations. Shallow breathing won't do this."

"I have overcome nausea, headache, sleeplessness, seasickness, and even more serious threatening by simply going through a breathing exercise—pumping from my lower lungs, as it were, all the malarial inhalations of the day by long, slow, ample breaths. Try it before going to bed, making sure of standing where you can inhale pure air, and then darken your sleeping room completely. We live too much in an electric glare by night. If you still suffer from sleeplessness after this experiment is fairly tried, I shall be surprised."

Citric Acid.

Enormous quantities of citric acid are used in calico printing, in pharmacy, and in the preparation of artificial lemonade. About an ounce and a quarter (570 grains) of pure citric acid dissolved in a pint of water gives a solution which has the average acidity of good lemon juice. When diluted with several times its bulk of water, sweetened with sugar, and scented with a single drop of essence of lemon, an artificial lemonade is cheaply produced, which is much used as a cooling drink in fever hospitals.

It has also been used in the navy as a substitute for fresh lemon juice in the treatment or prevention of scurvy, but has been found much less efficient. In fact, this artificial lemonade is by no means equal to that made from pure lemon juice, whether used at table or for invalids. In rheumatism or rheumatic gout, the fresh juice of the lemon is considered the best of the bicarbonate of potash which it contains. Pure citric acid is also a valuable remedy in sore throat and diphtheria; cases have been recorded in which children have apparently been cured of this terrible disease by constantly sucking oranges or lemons.

Pure citric acid possesses, like some other acids, the power of destroying the bad effects of polluted water used for drinking, but it is perhaps best to boil the water before adding a little citric acid to it.

Curious Wall in Michigan.

Alfred Pagett, a Michigan archaeologist, has been making explorations of an ancient wall which he discovered in that State, which seems to be a sort of aboriginal counterpart of the great wall of China, though some incredulous people declare that it is nothing more nor less than a moraine left by some prehistoric glacier. Mr. Pagett has traced its course from the county line between Tuscola and Sanilac counties, near Cass City, to a point near Lake Huron. The wall, he thinks, makes a complete semicircle from Saginaw Bay to Lake Huron. In its course the wall touches land covered with boulders, scattered over areas from one to five acres, at intervals of from five to six miles. At Tyre it is a complete mass of stones, many being of gigantic size. Mr. Pagett believes there is not a break in the wall anywhere. It is remarkably even running usually on the edge of a swamp. There are some who still think the wall is a mere natural freak, but the greater number believe it the remains of some ancient fortification, which perhaps cut off the "Thunb" from the main peninsula of Michigan.

Fighting One Fire for Forty Years.

The commissioners appointed by the local government to inquire into the "history, causes and effect" of the coal mine fires of Pictou County, Nova Scotia, have just finished taking evidence. The work of the commission was directed mainly to an investigation of the Ford pit. This mine has been on fire in one place or another since the '50's, and it is burning yet. Explosion after explosion has occurred, and many lives have been lost. When fire broke out in one place the miners resorted to another, sinking a new shaft. To avoid the fire on an upper level a new shaft was sunk and coal taken out on the level immediately below the fire. Soon the fire came through, and again the miners were driven out. Nothing that the owners could do availed to drive out the fire, and the splendid mine has been practically abandoned, though a little coal has been taken out on a level below a part that is on fire. The object of the commission is to learn whether something cannot be done to save so valuable a property as the Ford pit.

Remarkable Family of Big Boys.

A remarkable family of big boys met at their old home in Tioneesta, Penn., a few days ago, after many years of separation. The shortest of the young men is just six feet tall in his stocking feet. Two of the brothers are six feet five inches tall, and others six feet three inches, and the remaining one six feet two inches. The mother and father of the boys, Mr. and Mrs. Harman Coleman, are of only average height.

#### ALL IN HER CHIN.

The Right Kind of a Woman for a Man to Marry.

"Never marry a woman with a square, prominent chin," said the philosopher with a beard, gazing abstractedly out of the car window, "unless you want a boss."

"And don't go off and get a wife with a retreating chin, either, if you care to know just what's going to happen when you come home at two in the morning." This wise observation came from a small nervous man on the opposite seat.

"That's right," put in a third, a slovenly looking, stout gentleman in a red necktie that had gone wrong, "that's right; nor a woman with one of those little, round, sharp pointed chins, for she'll expect too much of you, sure. She won't wash—no, sir; she won't wash."

"But I don't want to get married," I protested. "I don't want a boss. Neither do I want a woman who will take in washing. If I did want to get married, I'd never think of hunting up a woman by her chin."

"The chin is the best indicator of a woman's true disposition," replied the philosopher. "By her chin ye shall know her. Now, there is an ideal domestic chin up there in the end of this car—the other end. One of those kind of chins, neither pointed nor square, retreating nor prominent, but round and dimpled—the blue shirt waist."

"Hold on there, old man!" exclaimed a red faced man, with a slight discoloration beneath his left eye, who had been listening from an adjacent seat. "You have been chinning there about chins a long time and I ain't said no word, because I ain't none of your business, but now you bring in the little woman with the chin waist up there, who has been a watchin' down this way, and she's my wife, and you're dead wrong and don't know nothin' about chins. That's what! For she can talk the whitewash off'n a fence and does her wash before breakfast every Monday. And if you are looking for a boss she's right in it. As for knowin' what she'll do when you come in full at two o'clock in the morning—do you see that eye of mine? Huh! You fellows make me sick!"

The philosopher looked silently out of the car window while the rest of us busily got our traps together for the next station.

Great Texas.

It should be remembered that Texas has nearly 375,000 square miles and 174,585,840 acres. It has more coal than Pennsylvania, more iron than Alabama, more granite than New Hampshire, more oak than West Virginia, more prairie than Kansas, more corn land than Illinois, more cotton land than Mississippi, more wheat land than the two Dakotas, more sugar land than Louisiana, and more rice land than South Carolina. It contains as many rivers as any other five States, and as much coast as any other three. As was appropriately said by Mayor Tamm, of Denison, the iron mines of Michigan, the granite quarries of Maine, the wheat fields of the Dakotas, the corn fields of Illinois, the cotton fields of Mississippi, the prairies of Kansas, the oyster beds of Maryland, the orange groves of Florida and the vineyards of California are all duplicated in Texas.

Simplicity of Clever Inventions.

The best way to become an author is to be born with a brain subject to flashes of inspiration that will supply you with first class plots. But if you want to be an inventor you should work from the opposite standpoint. Find a crying need and seek to think out a means by which it may be met. Here is the fashion in which one man did this: Walking through a greenhouse one day, he noticed that the gardener was obliged to go to a good deal of trouble to raise each ventilating window separately.

"Why could not some arrangement be devised," this observant individual said to himself, "by which all these windows could be opened by one movement?"

He thought over the problem and contrived a model, and the result was the apparatus now in use in all conservatories.

A Pin Machine.

Among the operative exhibits in Machinery Hall at the Cotton States and International Exposition is a pin machine. It is in two parts, the first of which makes pins and the second sticks them in paper. This will be done in full view of the visitors. A slender thread of brass wire is started in one end of the machine. It is cut, pointed and the head put on, and the completed pin is dropped into a bath which plates it with white metal. From this receptacle the pins are dropped into a sifter, which carries them rapidly to the sticking machine, where they are stuck in regular rows in the paper, and a complete paper of pins is turned out. The mechanism of the machinery is delicately elaborate, and one of the most interesting exhibits in the Machinery Hall.

Odd Advertising Scheme.

A Broadway shoe dealer has hit upon what seems a new advertising scheme. Every day he places a fine pair of shoes, narrow fives or sixes, in his show window, and offers to sell them at a price ranging from one to twenty-five cents to any man whom they will fit perfectly. It is a proof that many New Yorkers have small feet that the shoes rarely remain unsold for more than a day. Though seemingly new, this is but a variation of an old and successful scheme of a well-known Brooklyn firm of hatters of exhibiting a very large-sized hat and offering to give it to any man whose head it will fit.

Useless Letters.

The French language contains 15 per cent. of useless letters. There are 6,800 journals published in this language, and they print 108,000,000,000 letters every year, so that 14,040,000,000 letters are printed, not because they are needed, but because they have come to be spoken in the French language as it is used.

SMOOTHING THE WAY.

"Shall I speak to your mother, Ethel, about our engagement?"

"Yes, George, dear, and don't be afraid of her. 'She isn't half so dreadful as she looks.'"

#### A FLOATING THEATER.

Russia Has One, and the United States May Follow Suit.

The Washington Post is authority for the statement that a number of theatrical ladies and gentlemen in this country contemplate chartering a steamboat and establishing a floating theater, which shall be at the same time the hotel and the means of transportation of the actors, on the co-operative principle.

The idea is not original. A St. Petersburg syndicate has already a great steamboat of the character built, some 400 feet in length and 40 feet in width. The steamer is just about to start out on a tour of the Volga, and as many of the Volga cities and the towns of its navigable tributaries are without theaters, it is believed the venture will prove a gold mine to its projectors.

The Russian floating playhouse is so constructed that an audience of 1,000 can be comfortably seated. A large mass of scenery is carried for the production of an extensive repertoire of Russian comedies and dramas and French operettas.

The quarters of the actors, actresses, supernumeraries, stage hands, orchestra and all the crew are in the extreme bow of the vessel. The extreme stern is taken up with the machinery, which is of the lightest possible kind, so that its weight will not throw the bow in the air. All the fuel is carried under the body of the theater, which occupies four-fifths of the entire length of the boat and all of its width.

From the lowest point of the orchestra to the roof is fifty feet. The stage is a trifle less than thirty feet wide, and all the scenery is let down from the roof. The wings are just wide enough to admit of the entrance and exit of the players. Of course the scenic effects are limited by the lack of room, but a much smoother performance can be given than in the meagerly equipped theater of the small town. The players are not fagged out by a tiresome journey or made unfit for first-class work by the fare of indifferently conducted hotels.

If such a boat were built by a syndicate in this country its construction would necessarily be based upon the requirements of the large canals. Using the stern paddle wheel a boat of this kind could be constructed of great beam and length, yet one which would draw comparatively little water.

It is suggested that, starting from New York, such a vessel could make a trip up along the north shore of Long Island Sound, stopping at the towns on the Connecticut and Rhode Island coast; thence back to New York, and after doing New Jersey towns, up the Hudson, stopping at the various places up to Albany and Troy. From Albany to Buffalo the Erie Canal can be used, and once in the lakes a cranking business would lie open to the adventurous thespians.

Rare Books.

During the last year the most remarkable acquisition made by the department of printed books at the British Museum has been the extraordinary collection of rare English books, chiefly ballad books, of the period of Elizabeth and James I. discovered in 1887 by Mr. C. Edmunds, at Lampport Hall, Northamptonshire, the seat of Sir Charles Isham, where they had been laid aside and forgotten for probably not less than two centuries. Twenty-two of these books have now found a home in Bloomsbury, and form by far the most important acquisition in early English literature made by the museum for a long time. All are exceedingly scarce, and two are absolutely unique. One of these is "The Transformed Amorphophorus," a poem by Cyril Tourneur, the celebrated tragic poet, 1600; the other, "The Lamentation of Amintas for the Death of Philia," by Thomas Watson, "paraphrastically translated out of Latin into English hexameters by Abraham Fraunce," 1596. A book called "Epitaphion on Lady Helen Branch," subscribed "W. Har." is remarkable as containing an allusion to Shakespeare's "Lucrece." Only two other copies of this are known.

Home and Carrier Pigeons.

The homer and the carrier are both brilliant fliers, but the homer is the speedier bird and better fitted for long distances. The homer has the widest spread wings of all pigeons, and can sail for an enormous distance through midair. It is also considerably lighter than the carrier and is possessed of more phenomenal powers of endurance, having been known to fly 800 miles without alighting. On a clear day with a good sky and favorable wind, 400 miles is an admirable record, although 500 miles a day is the goal of every pigeon-flier's ambition. A bird that can perform this remarkable feat is worth at least \$100, and may be valued at \$500 if it is capable of a better record. The bird's gameness, stamina, and speed reach their highest point of excellence at three and four years of age, which is the natural prime of life for a flier. After they have passed their prime they deteriorate in a scarcely noticeable degree, and at ten or twelve years of age are still good for the shorter distances.

Train Derailed by a Buzzard.

As the mail train on the Pensacola and Atlantic Division of the Louisville and Nashville Railway was bowling along between Bonifay and Caryville, Fla., a heavy object struck the headlight, smashing the glass and knocking the burner of the lamp. The oil caught fire and in an instant the front of the engine was in flames. The engineer was alarmed and reversed the lever so suddenly that the cars bumped together with great force, injuring several passengers and derailing the engine. By hard work the flames were extinguished and then the engine was examined. It was found that a buzzard had struck the headlight and caused the trouble. The bird was found wedged in the headlight, with its feathers burned off and thoroughly cooked. The accident cost the railroad several hundred dollars and traffic was delayed for five hours.