

## THE HOUSE OF VANDERBILT.

THE house of Vanderbilt—brought once more to the attention of the American people by the recent serious illness of its present head—is distinguished in many ways, but in all ways distinguished by its association with money getting and immense wealth. It has appeared a system of railroads matchless in its beauty and utility—for whatever may be said of the Vanderbilt power it must not be said that it has been used to wreck enterprise and to create wealth for itself by killing honest competition. The Vanderbilt system has been used as an investment by its owners—the old "commodore" having but fought a rival, the Nicaragua Company, which refused to keep its contract with him. To sue was impossible. He challenged it in the open and drove it off the seas. Commercial conquest by safe, conservative methods has been the policy of the Vanderbilt life. In all the generations of the Vanderbilts there are no statesmen, soldiers, patriots, philosophers, painters, poets or scientists. But in this century all the Vanderbilts have been rich. Money getting and the up-building of vast wealth and not the sacrifice of the concrete to the ideal has been their supreme moving force.

This family has a coat of arms. The student of heraldry, looking back through its line, can find no point at which a Vanderbilt was ennobled by a king or received from a monarch a title. Nor yet can he find in the age of chivalry the Vanderbilt who, in his pride of place and of arms, took to himself the symbols of his bravery and family traits and fixed them on an escutcheon. The Vanderbilts arms, whatever they are, mean little. There is no record of an old Vanderbilt who lived on a hill in a Dutch stronghold and abused his weak-

and New York. His opportunities certainly seemed small, but his natural aptitude for money getting was extraordinary. He was a man who would have grown rich upon a desert island. At 23 he had a steamship plying from the metropolis through the Kills to New Brunswick, with a hotel at the latter place managed by his wife.

But the vision of the bold young ferryman was fixed upon far greater things. He foresaw that the future of



"COMMODORE'S" STATEN ISLAND HOME.

American commerce lay with the West, and he conceived a plan for a steamship line to the Pacific coast by way of Central America. His plan, however, proved a failure.

Meantime he was graduating from steamships into railways—a field of operations whose vaster possibilities he was one of the first to realize. He gradually obtained control of the New York Central. His operations in its stock were such as Wall street had never seen before and has not witnessed since. He found that railroad an unprofitable, second-rate concern, and he left it quite or nearly the finest and

### HEADS OF THE HOUSE OF VANDERBILT.



WILLIAM H. VANDERBILT.

COMMODORE VANDERBILT.

CORNELIUS VANDERBILT.

WILLIAM K. VANDERBILT.

er neighbors, and from whom the present family dates its foundation. Indeed, the farther back the Vanderbilts go the obscurer become the lines on both sides. The vanishing point of the breed of Vanderbilt is seen in Aris Van Der Bylt, who was a farmer. Nobody knows when he was born or where, who his parents were or why he came to America. It has been said of him that he settled in Flatbush, L. I., some time about the year 1685, and that he was married to a woman whose given name was Hiltje. What the woman's surname was no one can tell. True, so far as is known, the foundation of this illustrious house was laid by Aris, who married an unknown woman.

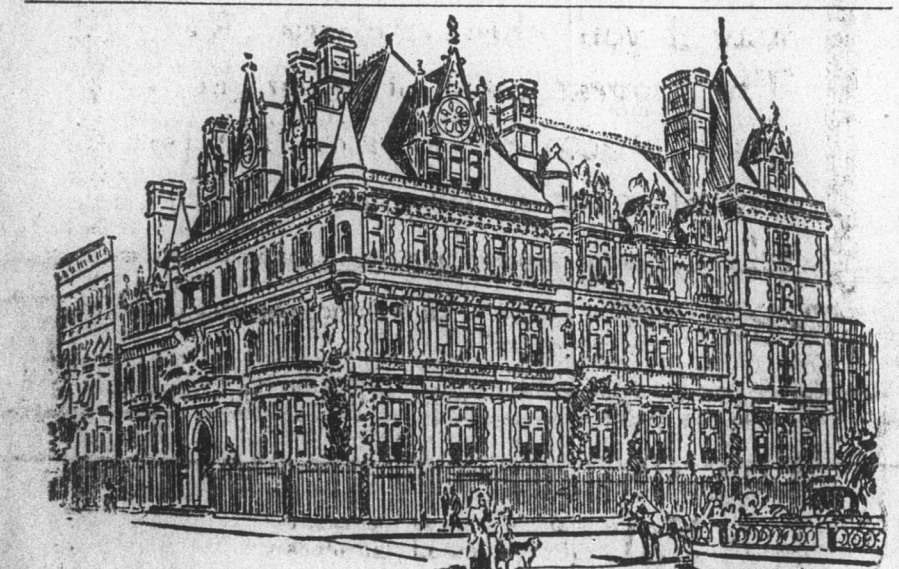
Jacob Vanderbilt I. was the son of Aris, and, like his father, was a farmer. He was born, it is said, in 1692, and moved from Long Island to Staten Island. Jacob Vanderbilt the first was married to a woman whose Christian name is said to have been Nellie. What this lady's family name was the world will never know. In 1723 Jacob Vanderbilt II. was born on Staten Island and succeeded his father as a farmer. Jacob the second was married and the name of his wife is fortunately known. She was not a Dutch woman. Her name was Mary Sprague. From this union sprang Cornelius Vanderbilt the first, who was born in 1764 and who married Phoebe Hand.

The house of Vanderbilt is now beginning to wax. With Cornelius the first comes the initial greatness of the family. Which is the equivalent of saying

most substantial railroad property in America. The second son, William H., took up the work begun by the father. He made the New York Central the nucleus of the far-reaching network of steel highways that is now the Vanderbilt system. The old commodore in his seventy years of business activity had amassed a fortune of \$90,000,000. William H. in nine years added quite or nearly \$150,000,000 to this pile and proved himself the superior financier. In January, 1877, the commodore died and in 1885 William H. followed him. The latter's estate—probably the greatest ever left by will—was divided among his eight children, the bulk of it going to the two elder sons, Cornelius and William Kissam. Each of the others—the two younger sons, Frederick and George, and the four daughters, Mrs. Elliott F. Shepard, Mrs. W. Sewall Welch, Mrs. William D. Sloane and Mrs. H. McK. Twombly—received \$10,000,000 and a Fifth Avenue mansion.

### An Ant's Dwelling.

One of the strangest members of the vegetable kingdom and one which of late years has become quite common as a greenhouse plant is the myrmecodia tuberosa. The plant was first sent to Europe in 1811 by Dr. Collingwood from Malacca. Its stem is tuberous and everywhere covered with thorns. In its native country every plant is constantly inhabited by thousands of ants of the great family of myrmica, and it is on that account that



CORNELIUS VANDERBILT'S NEW RESIDENCE.

that if the first Cornelius had stuck to farming the last Cornelius would not now be lying in the finest marble palace in America. Had the first Cornelius had any faith in the soil the last Cornelius might have been a railroad switchman. But Cornelius the first bought a rowboat and varied his pursuits of agriculture with the occasional occupation of a ferryman. In this departure lay the seed of the Vanderbilt millions.

Eighty years ago Cornelius Vanderbilt was a country lad of 20, the son of a Staten Island farmer, and the descendant of a line of Dutch settlers who had never manifested any ambition to rise above the paternal soil. His worldly possessions consisted of a small boat with which he was operating a primitive ferry between his native is-

the plant was given its scientific name of myrmecodia. The ants pierce the tuberous stems in all directions and coat the galleries thus formed with an insect cement that is of surprising durability. In fact, it is so strong that when a branch or plant dies it will rot away, leaving the cement galleries intact, the whole then having the appearance of a beautifully ramified specimen of seaweed.

### Lunatic's Square Meal.

An escaped lunatic captured at Lewiston on Tuesday after a two-day fast ate four platefuls of green pears before the policeman who stood watching him decided that his limit had been reached. Then the peace guardian gave him a cup of hot ginger tea to top off with.

### EATS POISON FOR A LIVING.

Succeeds in His Feat Because He Eats Too Much to Kill.

Poison eating, instead of a means of death, may become a means of livelihood for all who care to adopt it.

One man, "Captain" Vetro, as he styles himself, has for several years been gathering in the cash of those in this country and in Europe who wish to see him apparently endanger his life by swallowing poisons of sufficient quantities to kill a dozen men.

His performance has been described in the press of both continents, but it has remained for a New York physician, Dr. P. J. Sallierum, to reach a solution of the mystery with which Captain Vetro's feat has been surrounded, though many noted doctors have pronounced it beyond the scope of medical knowledge.

Dr. Sallierum explained the secret to a reporter as follows: "I have been for many years deeply interested in toxicology, and have carefully studied Captain Vetro's performances. It is undeniable that he eats sufficient poison of different kinds to kill a dozen men. I witnessed his performance while he was exhibiting in a museum in this city.

"This man eats enough poison to kill outright from ten to fifteen people, but the whole secret is in the fact that he does not only eat enough to kill one or two men, but fifteen.

"Arsenic, Paris green, phosphorus and 'Tough on Rats' are what medical men call irritant poisons. They act primarily by producing inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach and of the intestinal tract.

"When irritant poisons are taken in very large quantities, as this man takes them, they produce in a little while such irritation of the stomach that they are involuntarily vomited before they have time to pass into the intestines, or, being absorbed, cause no

other harm than the gastritis which he sometimes feels.

"He also takes some bismuth just previously to eating the other poisons. It is a noticeable fact that Vetro eats the poisons just after coming upon the stage. The bismuth forms a sort of coat around the stomach, which for a short time prevents the toxic effects of the several other poisons. By the time Vetro leaves the stage the different poisons have not had sufficient time to work themselves through the coating of bismuth formed in his stomach, and they are ready to be vomited.

"In the vomiting process the bismuth is ejected together with the other poisons, and he is ready to again go upon the stage and repeat his seemingly wonderful performance."—New York World.

### Drifted Four Thousand Miles.

On one of the coral reefs off the Marshall group, far away in the South Pacific, there rests a large railway transfer barge, which was carried by winds and currents from some point on the California coast to its present resting place. Its ownership, home port and the date of its loss are unknown. John Crowley, mate of the missionary brig Morning Star, saw the barge. Speaking about it recently, he said: "We ran into the Marshall group in September last in the course of our tour through the islands, and our intention was attracted to this huge barge resting on a reef. I made a careful examination of it, but the only marks of identification on it were the word 'Transfer' and the abbreviation 'Cal'.

"There were narrow gauge tracks on it, and a couple of big cranes still intact and very well preserved. The barge itself was pretty badly weather beaten, but it was still in very good condition. It was about 150 feet long, built of heavy timbers. The bottom had been copper covered, but the natives had stripped that off. They had made an attempt to break the craft up, too, but that was beyond their power. "The experiences of that barge would be hard to conjecture. It may have drifted the 4,000 odd miles which divide our coast and the Marshalls in a very short space of time, or it might have taken a remarkably long period."

Inquiry among shipping men as to the identity of the strange craft failed to throw any light upon the subject. There is no record of the loss of any such barge, and the general impression is that it was probably swept away from one of the lower coast ports by a storm, and carried out to sea, to be guided by wind and sea to the Marshalls.—San Francisco Chronicle.

### Effect of High Altitudes.

Some German savants have shown recently that there is a notable increase in the proportion of the number of corpuscles in the blood in persons who go from a low to a high altitude. This increase takes place in from twenty-four to thirty-six hours. It is possible that this fact may be one of the reasons for the beneficial effects of high altitude in cases of pulmonary tuberculosis.

Almost all opinions are narrow, because almost all opinions are based on personal experience.

## PERSONAL and Tidbits.

Quida never shakes hands. She declares it to be the most vulgar form of salutation.

Queen Victoria, it is said, has taken quite a fancy to the young Duchess of Marlborough.

The commander-in-chief of the Sultan of Morocco's army is a Scotsman, McLean by name.

The last words of Sir Augustus Harris were: "Do not let anyone disturb me. I want a long, long rest."

Sir Edward Clarke's retainer on receiving the Jamestown brief was 500 guineas, while every day he had a "refresher" of 100 guineas.

William T. Richardson, of Cambridge, Mass., left an estate of \$100,000 and his old wearing apparel to "some poor worthy Baptist minister."

Charles Dickens, the son of the novelist, who died a few weeks ago, was named Charles "Boz" by his father, but when he grew to man's estate he dropped his middle name.

Among young society women who are thoroughly accomplished musicians are Miss Villard, Miss Rockefeller and the Misses Hewitt. Each plays the violin, violoncello, harp and piano.

Among the Sultan of Turkey's plate there are dishes of solid gold large enough for a baby's bath, and there are plates, cups and saucers, tureens and pitchers, massive and heavy, made of this same precious metal.

M. Waddington's great collection of coins has been sold by his family to the French Government for \$100,000. He had intended to bequeath it to the State, but was prevented from doing so by heavy pecuniary losses.

Miss Virginia Fair has forsaken her bicycle and is learning to ride horseback, and inasmuch as this young woman is an acknowledged leader there is a probability of other Newport young girls forsaking the wheel and taking to the horse.

The will of T. S. Woodward, of San Jose, Cal., leaves \$2,041,000 to his nephew, William F. Woodward, of Boston, aged 24. He was in delicate health, out of work, without money and in debt for board and lodging when the good news reached him.

Mrs. E. J. Loring, of Washington, goes in swimming every day in the bathing pond at Appledore, and regularly swims four times around the pond. As she is 85 years old, the islanders declare that the smartest old lady on the coast is a guest there.

The jewel casket of the dowager empress of Russia is the most fashionable in the world, from a gem point of view. Hardly second to it is that of the empress of Austria, whose black pearls are noted throughout Europe for their extreme beauty and rarity.

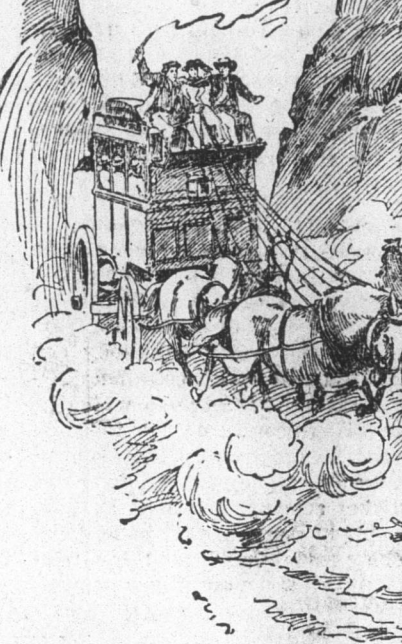
Col. North's fine house at Eltham, which cost \$1,500,000 to build, was recently put up at auction, but as the highest bid was only \$250,000, it was withdrawn from sale. The auctioneer described it, and very properly, as "one of the most princely homes in the kingdom."

The Princess of Wales, who was brought up in the most democratic fashion by the sensible Danish king, has found that actually milking cows at Sandringham and superintending the dairy gave her better health than all the medicine of the court physician.

### DOWN THE "DEVIL'S INCLINE."

An Old Stage Driver's Story of a Ride When the Brake Broke.

Bill Henderson, who now lives quietly near Pomona, Cal., was many years ago one of the most famous of drivers on the San Diego stage line. He never drove fewer than eight horses and frequently his team numbered ten feet.



AN EXPERIENCE IN THE LIFE OF AN OLD-TIME STAGE DRIVER.

half-wild animals. He has many stories of adventure to relate, one of which is the following:

"I never lost my nerve but once; then my heart was in my mouth for two or three minutes. We were descending the Devil's Incline, a long, straight, smooth hill, with twenty-two passengers on board, two of them ladies occupying outside seats. One of the ladies sat behind me; the other, a handsome young married lady, was between her husband and me. When within a quarter of a mile from the bottom of the hill my brake broke, and I knew that within a second the coach, with its load of passengers, would dash forward upon the rocks. The team was in a swinging trot, and legs, arms and possibly necks would be broken if the passengers should attempt to jump off, as they would be certain to if I gave them warning of their danger. There was not an instant to lose, so I grasped my whip, shouted to my leaders, and cried, 'Here is where we make time,' and down the long, smooth hill we went on a run. If a horse should stumble or fall it meant death to more than one passenger on board; but fortunately the road was smooth, and the animals kept their feet. I plied the lash, and again shouted to the leader as the big coach began to gain upon them. The passengers grew frightened as the vehicle reeled and rocked under the tre-

mendous speed. Several cried, 'Stop! Stop!' but this was just what 'I' could not do. The young husband believed me insane for the moment, and drawing a pistol, cried, 'Now, hold up, or by heaven I will put a bullet through your heart.' Instead of attempting to comply I again lashed my team, for in a moment or two the danger would be over. The young man sternly repeated his threat, but just then his wife struck the pistol and knocked it out of his hand. With a wild yell at the team, which made them all spring forward out of the reach of the mighty wheels, we dashed out upon the plain at the foot of the hill, and I soon was in a position to pull up and explain our danger. The young married woman, who had been quite cool up to that instant, fainted dead away, and came near falling from the seat. On reaching the end of our journey the passengers clubbed together and bought me a handsome gold watch, but I assure you that I would not take that ride again for all the watches on earth."

### CUP WHICH COST MANY LIVES.

Facsimile of the Czar's Souvenir Which Caused a Tragedy.

A Chicago dry-goods firm has on exhibition some of the drinking cups which were given away as souvenirs of the coronation of the Russian Czar. The dreadful calamity on the Khodynskoe plain, marring the magnificent pageants arranged upon the occasion of the crowning, and costing upward of 6,000 lives in the short space of a few hours is still fresh in the memory of everyone.

The origin of this appalling disaster is to be traced to an ancient Russian custom. Among other curious usages it has been usual to distribute among the many thousands congregating from all parts of the great empire to witness the imposing ceremonies of the coronation a present to be kept as a remembrance of the great event.

At the last coronation a drinking cup had been selected for this purpose, which was to be given away with a parcel of eatables, cakes and sweets, to



CORONATION CUP.

every corner. Of course everybody was anxious to bring home one of these mementos, but nobody thought that so tragic a memory would be added to the general interest of this little piece of metal.

The cut is an exact illustration of the memorable cup. It is made of white enameled metal, covered with curious Russian ornamentation. A broad line of gold runs around the top and bottom. The narrow dark lines of the illustration are of brick red, while the broader lines are of a pale blue and yellow. The shield on one side bears the Russian coat of arms, while the other shows the initials of the Czar and Czarina in Russian characters and the Imperial crown with the date 1896 below. The effect of the whole is very curious.

These cups were furnished by one of the largest establishments in Austria. This firm laid down 600,000 pieces in eight weeks. The fact will be of interest that twenty-six railway cars were necessary to transport these 600,000 cups.

### Our Turn Next.

The Chinese Government has aroused itself after centuries of slovenly house-keeping. It proposes to refurbish and redecorate. It has sent out its wily old

### BIG TOWER CLOCKS.

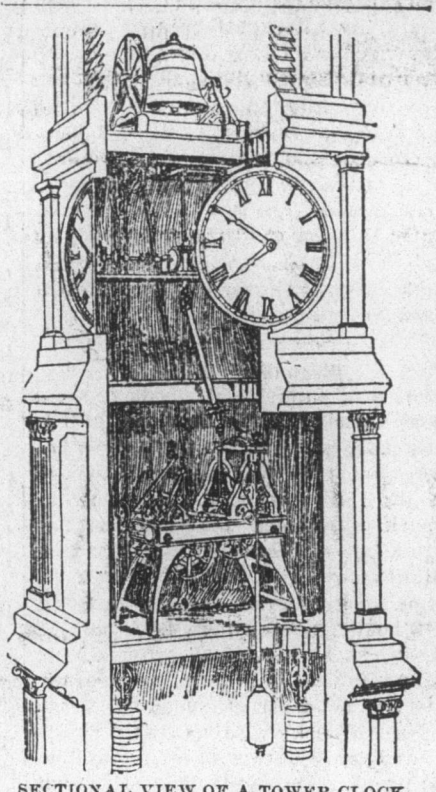
Very Costly Machines to Keep Time on Father Time.

Chicago has one of the greatest and in every way most magnificent quarter-striking, Westminster chime tower clocks in the United States. It is in the tower of the St. Francis German Catholic Church, 12th street. The four ten-foot dials are 180 feet from the street, and are automatically illuminated, the regular movement being supplemented with a mechanism by which the dials become illuminated at nightfall and the light closed off at daybreak. Every fifteen minutes there peals forth a chime from five great bells of considerable melody. This clock was built six years ago at a cost of between \$5,000 and \$6,000. These Westminster chime attachments for tower clocks usually vary from 2,850 to 11,000 pounds.

The largest tower clock that Chicago ever had was the Board of Trade time, with four out-of-door dials, each ten feet and a half wide. It was bought from exhibits at the Centennial Exposition, 1876, although not bought until 1885. Additional to the four massive outside dials, it also had two others down below, one in exchange hall, and another in the delivery room, the latter dial being about 400 feet from the clock movement. Last year when the tower was taken down as a matter of safety the clock was considered too large to replace, and, with its 4,500-pound bell, was consigned to the lumber room. It cost \$5,000.

The second largest clock in the world is now building for the new City Hall at Minneapolis. It will have a dial 22 feet 8 inches in diameter. Until this work is accomplished the San Francisco Chronicle clock, put up about five years ago, and having 10 1/2-foot dials, holds the belt for America. Chicago's biggest time-piece is that in the tower of the Grand Central Railway Station. Its dials are 12 1/2 feet across. The Polk Street Depot clock is a 10-foot dial; so is the Rock Island. The Illinois Central's is 8 feet. On a 10-foot dial the numerals are 2 feet and 4 inches long; on a 10-foot, 18 inches long; and on a 5-foot they are 9.

People have been heard wondering whether these tower clocks with more than one dial required a clock to each dial. No. One complete movement suf-



SECTIONAL VIEW OF A TOWER CLOCK.

fices for any number of dials. The shaft that turns the hands is a solid one running from the clock's movement to the dial room, where it is connected with a tower center, consisting of four bevel wheels operated by one on top that moves the four simultaneously. These four move the hands. A first-class tower clock should not vary more than five to ten seconds a month.

### That Good and Dull Boy.

We started him off with "Ivanhoe," and he was graciously pleased to volunteer his opinion that it was a funny name. And for a whole month he devoted himself for perhaps two hours a week to "Ivanhoe," and such was his conscientiousness that we fully believe he never skipped a word, and so great his sense of the injury which the great intellectual effort was inflicting on his leisure that he never took a single word in.

"Well, old fellow, how is 'Ivanhoe' getting on?"

"Pretty well, thank you."

"How far have you got?"

"Oh, I've nearly read"—and he consults the top of the page—"120 pages."

"And whom do you like the best?"

A hasty glance at the page to see what name came handiest.

"Oh, Wamba."

He looks so extremely woe-begone over our cross-questioning that we make a feeble attempt at a joke.

"A little fellow—feeling, eh, my boy?"

Blank gaze.

"You don't know what I mean, I suppose?"

"No."

"Well, you know what Wamba was?"

"Yes," rather dubiously.

"Well, what?"

"One of the chaps in the book."—Blackwood's Magazine.

### Spiders Like Music.

Spiders are affected by music. An organist in a church noticed one that would swing down on thread every time the organ was played. At the close of the music the spider would disappear. The spider could be enticed out by either very soft or very loud music. During a concert at Leipzig the orchestra leader noticed a spider which descended from a chandelier while a violin solo was being played and quickly ran back at the close of the selection.

### Stupid British Humor.

British humor is a queer thing. As a "joke" a British comic paper printed an item saying a dozen millionaires had subscribed from \$150,000 to \$250,000 to Guy's hospital. As this cut short other donations to the hospital, which needed them badly, the treasurer has been obliged to go to great trouble denying that the millionaires sent in any contributions. He does not see the joke.

No woman over twenty-eight years old has a right to wear her hair in a braid down her back.

When a summer girl looks sticky it is a sign that the weather can't get much hotter.



When the mercury's a sprinter 'Twill cool you if you try To remember how last winter Made the coal-pile fly.

—Chicago Record.

"Who was best man at the wedding?"

"The bride's father, if cheerful counts for anything."—Puck.

Jaglets—Who invented work, Bill? Raglets—I don't know, but he ought to have stayed and finished it.—Truth.

"Doctor, my wife has insomnia—lies awake most of the night. What shall I do for her?"

"Get home earlier."—Life.

"Does your husband spend much at the races?"

"No. George doesn't draw a very large salary."—Town Topics.

He—Let's kiss and make up. She—If you kissed me, I'd have to make up all over again, sure enough.—New York Press.

Mrs. Sequel—I understand your husband can't meet his creditors. Mrs. Equal—I don't believe he wants to, especially.—Truth.

Customer—I would like to have a nice gown to wear around the house. Salesman—Size of the house, please?—Philadelphia Record.

Dyer—Colonel Kaintuck hasn't laughed in years. Dyer—Why? Dyer—Some one told him his laugh sounded like rippling water.—Town Topics.

"Gainsby is a fellow who 'understands economy.'"

"That's what—he has just had a composite portrait made of his three other wives."—Puck.

Block—Riches do not bring happiness, my son. Chipp—Neither does poverty. And riches do not prevent happiness, and poverty does.—Truth.

She—The Billingtons have an eight-pound boy, and I suppose we ought to send a gift of some sort. He—Why not send Billington a pedometer?—Puck.

Nodd—I've got to raise one hundred dollars this week. Todd—Is it a case of necessity? Nodd—I should say so. My wife will come back if I don't.—Truth.

Miss Gotham—It must be awful to be buried alive! Miss Penn (thoughtfully)—Well, I don't know. I have spent all my life in Philadelphia.—Somerville Journal.

"Claribel" is respectfully informed that milk does not come from milk-weed, and that pies are not plucked ready grown from the pie plant.—Boston Transcript.

Gertie—Where do you get shaved, Freddie? Freddie—On the face—ha! ha! Gertie—Pardon me, Freddie, I mean where do you get shaved on the face?—Roxbury Gazette.

Richard—What makes you so sure that she will marry you? Harry—Well, you see, her mother and I have engaged a mortal hatred of each other.—Boston Transcript.

"Well, old man, I've spent every cent of money I have in the world on my doctor." "Does he know it?" "I guess he does. He has pronounced me a well man."—Buffalo Courier.

Mrs. Kidd—There, now, thank goodness! I've sung the baby to sleep. Mr. Kidd—Poor little chap! When he is 25 he won't dare to go to sleep over a woman's singing.—Truth.

She—For my part I would never forgive a young man who would kiss a girl against her will. He—Nor I; but do you suppose a young man really ever did?—Somerville Journal.

Pip—A lawyer's highest aim should be to keep his clients out of law. Flip—True; but the trouble is so many of them are content to take a humbler view of the matter.—Truth.

"The butcher offered me his hand this morning," said the hired girl. "Indeed?" "Yes'm. He tried to sell it to me with the steak, but I made him take it off the scales."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

"What made you return from England so soon?" "The Prince of Wales manifested a disposition to become chummy with me," replied the wealthy but eminently sensible American.—Puck.

Mamma—I am inclined to be suspicious of Mr. Smithes. Maud—Why, mamma, he always wears a dress suit when he calls. Mamma—Yes; but it is not always the same one, my child.—Judge.

"Your daughter, sir, is an angel." "Maybe; but after you've been married awhile you'll find she wants considerably more clothes than angels are accustomed to wearing."—Philadelphia American.

"What are your politics, my man?" asked the portly visitor of the prisoner behind the bars at the penitentiary. "Well," replied the latter, hesitatingly, "I haven't come out for anybody yet."—Buffalo Times.

"Don't you get awfully tired doing nothing all the time?" asked the young man who thought himself interested in sociology. "Mister," answered Perry Patette, "I git so tired doin' nothin' that I can't do nothin' else."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Mrs. Hendricks (proudly walking out of the sewing room)—Well, Perry, how do you like my bloomers? Mr. Hendricks—Oh, they do very well; but, dear me, how much older than usual they make you look. On the following day a neat package, intended for the far-away heathen, was forwarded from the Hendricks home.—Cleveland Leader.

### Wear of Common Roads.

Gen. Morin of France says that the deterioration of common roads, except that which is caused by the weather, is two-thirds due to the wear of the horses' feet and one-third to the wheels of vehicles. Motorcycles and rubber tires would therefore minimize the expense of road repairs.