

# 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 for its association with money getting and immense wealth. It has upreared 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 Nicaraguan 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 upbuilding 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 Vanderbilt 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-



"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 vast 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

## 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. Sallicrur, to reach a solution of the mystery with which Captain Vetro's feat has been surrounded, through many noted doctors have pronounced it beyond the scope of medical knowledge.

Dr. Sallicrur 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 Routh on Rats" are what medical men call irritant poisons. They act primarily by producing inflammation of the mucous membrane of the stomach and 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

## PERSONAL TIDBITS.

Ouida 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 Harri were: "Do not let anyone disturb me. I want a long, long rest."

Sir Edward Clarke's retainer on receiving the Jameson 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 old worthy Baptist minister."

Charles Dickens, the son of the novelist, who died a few weeks ago, was named Charles "Buz" 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.

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, and costing upward of 6,000 lives in the short space of a few hours is still fresh in the memory of everyone.

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