

The Oxford Democrat.

VOLUME 45.

PARIS, MAINE, TUESDAY, JULY 23, 1878.

NUMBER 28.

The Oxford Democrat

PUBLISHED EVERY TUESDAY.

GEO. H. WATKINS,
Editor and Proprietor.

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Poetry.

The Two Mysteries.

BY MARY MATHEW DODGE.

In the middle of the room, in its white cot, lay the dead child, a nephew of the poet. Near it in a great chair sat Walt Whitman, surrounded by little ones, and holding a beautiful little girl on his lap. The child looked curiously at the spectacle of death, and then inquiringly into the old man's face. "You don't know what it is, do you, my dear?" said he, adding: "We don't, either."

We know not what it is, dear, this sleep so deep and still.
The folded hands, the awful calm, the cheek so pale and chill;
The lids that will not lift again, though we may call and call;
The strange, white solitude of peace that settles over all.

We know not what it means, dear, this desolate heart pain.
This dread to take our daily way, and walk in it again;
This life that is a mystery as deep as death can ever be;
Yet oh, how sweet it is to us, this life we live and see.

But this we know: Our loved are dead, if they should come this day—
Should come and ask us, "What is life?" not one of us could say.
Life is a mystery as deep as death can ever be;
Yet oh, how sweet it is to us, this life we live and see.

Then might they say—the vanished ones—and blessed be the thought—
"So death is sweet to us as life, though we may let it go."
We may not tell it to the quick—this mystery of death—
Yet may not tell us, if ye would the mystery of death.

The child who enters life comes not with knowledge and insight.
So those who enter death must go as little children.
Nothing is known. But I believe that God is ever-
And as life is to the living, so death is to the dead.

Selected Story.

TWO FAIR DECEIVERS.

What do young men talk about when they sit at the open windows smoking on summer evenings? Do you suppose it is of love? Indeed, I suspect it is of money; or, if not of money, then at least of some thing that either makes money or spends it.

Cleve Sullivan has been spending his for four years in Europe, and he has just been telling his friend John Selden how he spent it. John has sent his in New York—he is inclined to think just as profitably. Both stories concluded in the same way.

"I have not a thousand dollars left, John."

"Not I, Cleve."

"I thought your cousin died two years ago; surely you have not spent all the old gentleman's money already?"

"I only got \$20,000; I owed half of it."

"Only \$20,000! What did he do with it?"

"Gave it to his wife. He married a beauty about a year after you went away, died in a few months afterward, and left her his whole fortune. I had no claim on him. He educated me, gave me a profession, and \$20,000. That was very well; he was only my mother's cousin."

"And the widow—where is she?"

"Living at his country-seat. I have never seen her. She was one of the St. Maurs of Maryland."

"Good family, and all beauties. Why don't you marry the widow?"

"Why, I never thought of such a thing."

"You can't think of anything better. Write her a little note at once; say that you and I will soon be in her neighborhood, and that gratitude to your cousin, and all that kind of thing—then beg leave to call and pay respects, etc., etc."

John demurred a good deal to the plan, but Cleve was masterful, and the note was written, Cleve himself putting it in the post-office.

That was on Monday night. On Wednesday morning the widow Clare found it with a dozen others upon her breakfast table. She was a dainty, high-bred little lady, with

"Eyes that shone with dreamy splendor,
Cheeks with rose-lip tinge tender,
Lips like fragrant pinks."

and with a kind, hospitable temper, well inclined to be happy in the happiness of others.

But this letter could not be answered with the usual polite formula. She was quite aware that John Selden had regarded himself for many years as his cousin's heir, and that her marriage with the late Thomas Clare had seriously altered his prospects. Women easily see through the best laid plans of men, and this plan was transparent enough to the shrewd little widow. John would scarcely have liked the half-contemptuous shrug and smile which terminated her private thoughts on the matter.

"Clementine, if you could spare a moment from your fashion paper, I want to consult you, dear, about a visitor."

Clementine raised her blue eyes, dropped her paper, and said, "Who is it, Fan?"

"It is John Selden. If Mr. Clare had not married me, he would have inherited the Clare estate. I think he is coming now in order to see if it is worth while asking for, encumbered by his cousin's widow."

"What selfishness! Write and tell him that you are just leaving for the Suez Canal, or the Sandwich Islands, or any other inconvenient place."

"No! I have a better plan than that—Clementine, do stop reading a few minutes. I will take that pretty cottage at Ryebank for the summer, and Mr. Selden

and his friend to visit us there. No one knows us in the place, and I will take none of the servants with me."

"Well?"

"Then, Clementine, you are to be the widow Clare, and I your poor friend and companion."

"Good! very good! 'The Fair Deceivers'—an excellent comedy. How I shall snub you, Fan! And for once I shall have the pleasure of outdressing you. But has not Mr. Selden seen you?"

"No; I was married in Maryland, and went immediately to Europe. I came back a widow two years ago, but Mr. Selden has never remembered me until now. I wonder who this friend is that he proposes to bring with him?"

"Oh, men always think in pairs, Fan. They never decide on anything until their particular friend approves. I dare say they wrote the letter together. What is the gentleman's name?"

The widow examined the note. "My friend Mr. Cleve Sullivan." "Do you know him, Clementine?"

"No; I am quite sure that I never saw Mr. Cleve Sullivan. I don't fall in love with the name—do you? But pray accept the offer of both gentlemen, Fan, and write this morning, dear." Then Clementine returned to the consideration of the lace in *coquilles* for her new evening dress.

The plan so hastily sketched was subsequently thoroughly discussed, and carried out. The cottage at Ryebank was taken, and one evening at the end of June the two ladies took possession of it. The new widow Clare had engaged a maid in New York, and told into her part with charming ease and a very pretty assumption of authority; and the real widow, in her plain dress and pensive, quiet manners, realized effectively the idea of a cultivated but dependent companion. They had two days in which to rehearse their parts and get all the household machine in order, and then the gentlemen arrived at Ryebank.

Fan and Clementine were quite ready for their first call; the latter in a rich and exquisite morning costume, the former in a simple dress of spotted lawn. Clementine went through the introductions with consummate ease of manner, and in half an hour they were a very pleasant party. John's "cousinship" afforded an excellent basis for informal companionship, and Clementine gave it full prominence. Indeed, in a few days John began to find the relationship tiresome; it had been, "Cousin John, do this," and "Cousin John come here," continually; and one night when Cleve and he sat down to smoke their final cigar, he was irritable enough to give his objections the form of speech.

"Cleve, to tell you the honest truth, I do not like Mrs. Clare."

"I think she is a very lovely woman, John."

"I say nothing against her beauty, Cleve; I don't like her, and I have no mind to occupy the place that beautiful ill-used Miss Marat fills. The way Cousin Clare ignores or snubs a woman to whom she is every way inferior makes me angry enough, I assure you."

"Don't fall in love with the wrong woman, John."

"Your advice is too late, Cleve; I am in love. There is no use in us deceiving ourselves or each other. You seem to like the widow—why not marry her? I am quite willing you should."

"Thank you, John; I have already made some advances that way. They have been favorably received, I think."

"You are so handsome, a fellow has no chance against you. But we shall hardly quarrel, if you do not interfere between lovely little Clement and myself."

"I could not afford to smile on her, John; she is too poor. And what on earth are you going to do with a poor wife? Nothing added to nothing will not make a decent living."

"I am going to ask her to be my wife, and if she does me, the honor to say 'Yes,' I will make a decent living out of my profession."

From this time forth John devoted himself with some ostentation to his supposed cousin's companion. He was determined to let the widow perceive that he had made his choice, and that he could not be bought with her money. Mr. Selden and Miss Marat were always together, and the widow did not interfere between her companion and her cousin. Perhaps she was rather glad of their close friendship, for the handsome Cleve made a much more delightful attendant. Thus the party fell quite naturally into couples, and the two weeks that the gentlemen had first fixed as the limit of their stay lengthened into two months.

It was noticeable that as the ladies became more confidential with their lovers, they had less to say to each other; and it began at last to be quite evident to the real widow that the play must end for the present, or the *dénouement* would come prematurely. Circumstances favored her determination. One night Clementine, with a radiant face, came into her friend's room, and said, "Fan, I have something to tell you. Cleve has asked me to marry him."

"Now, Clement; you have told him all; I know you have."

"Not a word, Fan. He still believes the widow Clare."

"Did you accept him?"

"Conditionally. I am to give him a final answer when we go to the city in October. You are going to New York are you not?"

"Yes. Our little play progresses finely. John Selden asked me to be his wife to-night."

"I told you men think and act in pairs."

"John is a noble fellow. I pretended to think his cousin had ill-used him, and he defended him until I was ashamed of myself; absolutely said, Clement, that you were a sufficient excuse for Mr. Clare's will. Then he blamed his own past idleness so much, and promised if I would only try and endure 'the slings and arrows' of your outrageous temper, Clement, for two years longer, he would have made a home for me in which I could be happy. Yes, Clement, I should marry John Selden if he had not a five-dollar bill between us."

"I wish Cleve had been a little more explicit about his money affairs. However, there is time enough yet. When they leave to-morrow, what shall we do?"

"We will remain here another month; Levine will have the house ready for me by that time. I have written to him about retouching the parlor."

So next day the lovers parted, with promises of constant letters and future happy days together. The interval was long and dull enough; but it passed, and one morning both gentlemen received notes of invitation to a small dinner party at the widow Clare's mansion in the street. There was a good deal of dressing for this party. Cleve wished to make his entrance into his future home as became the prospective master of a million and a half of money, and John was desirous of not suffering in Clement's eyes by any comparison with the other gentleman who would probably be there.

Secretly had they entered the drawing room when the ladies appeared, the true widow Clare no longer in the unassuming toilet she had hitherto worn, but magnificent in white crepe lisse and satin, her arms and throat and pretty head flashing with sapphires and diamonds. Her companion had assumed now the role of simplicity, and Cleve was disappointed with the first glance at her plain white Chambers gown dress.

John had seen nothing but the bright face of the girl he loved and the lowlight in her eyes. Before she could speak he had taken both her hands and whispered, "Dearest and best and loveliest Clementine!"

Her smile answered him first. Then she said: "Pardon me, Mr. Selden, but we have been in masquerade all summer, and now we must unmask before real life begins. My name is not Clementine Marat, but Fanny Clare. *Cousin John*, I hope you are not disappointed." Then she put her hand into John's, and they wandered off into the conservatory to finish their explanation.

Mr. Cleve Sullivan found himself at that moment in the most trying circumstance of his life. The real Clementine Marat stood looking down at a flower on the carpet, and evidently expecting him to resume the tender attitude he had been accustomed to bear toward her. He was a man of quick decisions where his own interests were concerned, and it did not take him half a minute to review his position and determine what to do. This plain blonde girl without fortune was not the girl he could marry; she had deceived him, too—he had a sudden and severe spasm of morality; his confidence was broken; he thought it was very poor sport to play with a man's most sacred feelings; he had been deeply disappointed and grieved, etc., etc.

Clementine stood perfectly still, with her eyes fixed on the carpet and her cheeks gradually flushing, as Cleve made his awkward accusations. She gave him no help and she made no defense, and so soon becomes embarrassing for a man to stand in the middle of a large drawing-room and talk to himself about any girl. Cleve felt so.

"Have you done, Sir?" at length she asked, lifting to his face a pair of blue eyes scintillating with scorn and anger. "I promised you my final answer to your suit when we met in New York. You have spared me that trouble. Good-evening, Sir."

Clementine showed to no one her disappointment, and she probably soon recovered from it. Her life was full of many other pleasant plans and hopes, and she could well afford to let a selfish lover pass out of it. She remained with her friend until after the marriage between her and John Selden had been consummated; and then Cleve saw her name among the list of passengers sailing on one particular day for Europe. As John and his bride left on the same steamer, Cleve supposed, of course, she had gone in their company.

"Nice thing it would have been for Cleve Sullivan to marry John Selden's wife's maid, or something or other! John always was a lucky fellow. Some fellows are always unlucky in love affairs—I always am."

Half a year afterwards he reiterated this statement with a great deal of unnecessary emphasis. He was just buttoning his glove preparatory to starting for his afternoon's drive, when an old acquaintance hailed him.

"Oh, it's that fool Belmar," he muttered; "I shall have to offer him a ride. I thought he was in Paris—Hello, Belmar, when did you get back? Have a ride?"

"No, thank you. I have promised my wife to ride with her this afternoon."

"Your wife! When were you married?"

"Last month, in Paris."

"And the happy lady was—"

"Why, I thought you knew; every one is talking about my good fortune. Mrs. Belmar is old Paul Marat's only child."

"What?"

"Miss Clementine Marat. She brings me nearly \$3,000,000 in money and real estate, and a heart beyond all price."

"How on earth did you meet her?"

"She was traveling with Mr. and Mrs. Selden—you know John Selden. She has lived with Mrs. Selden ever since she left school; they were friends when they were girls together."

Cleve gathered up his reins, and nodding to Mr. Frank Belmar, drove at a snail's pace up the avenue and through the Park. He could not trust himself to speak to any one, and when he did, the remark which he made to himself in strict confidence was not flattering. For once Mr. Cleve Sullivan told Mr. Cleve Sullivan that he had been badly punished, and that he well deserved it—*Harper's Weekly*.

A TRUE STORY.

About twenty years ago a party of young men had gathered in an upper room at a warehouse in a Western town. People going by saw the lights, and heard the cheering and shouts of laughter, and nodded to each other good humoredly. "The boys are getting on well with their plan," they said, for the town was a small one, where everybody knew his neighbor, and took a kindly interest in him; and the military company which "the boys" were going to form was a matter of public pride and interest.

There were about thirty or forty young men. They had most of them been at school together at John's Academy, and were now clerks in the town, salesmen, students of law or medicine.

Among them the heartiest good feeling reigned, therefore, when they met to adopt their Constitution and By-laws. They had been drilling all winter in private, and were to appear in public for the first time on Saturday, in their new uniform. It was a gorgeous uniform, chosen from a dozen different patterns sent by the Eastern manufacturer. It fairly blazed in crimson and gold. They had kept it a secret from every one, even fathers mothers and sweethearts, so that the grand display on Saturday would break with more effect upon the dazzled eyes of the townspeople.

Now, all this was before the war. The military ardor which prevailed like an epidemic in the town did not mean patriotism or self-sacrifice, but only a little agreeable vanity, and a great deal of cordial good fellowship, fun and kindly feeling.

Some more weighty sense of the constraints of honor, too, rested upon the young fellows, with their swords and glittering epaulets; some increased strictness of obligation to bear themselves as men, gallant and chivalric in soul as well as in body. Many of the wise elders of the town, therefore, lent their hands to the undertaking, and old Col. Storrs, a retired army officer, accepted the post of captain, and gave himself up zealously to the work.

The organization had been rather lax until to-night, when the by-laws had been definitely adopted.

"No. 9 seems to me superfluous, Captain," objected Ned Moore. "The company pledges itself to attend the funerals of all members, saving and excepting such as may have suffered the penalty of the law or laid violent hands on themselves." That appears to me more melodramatic than necessary. There are not likely to be any suicides or murder among us," glancing about with a laugh to his companions.

"The rule is customary in such organizations," said the colonel, dryly.

The rule remained, therefore, in spite of Ned's jokes which caused a good deal of laughing.

Ned was youngest of the boys, the most genial young fellow in town. All knew his frank, handsome face and curly hair. He was book-keeper in one of the iron mills and out of his small salary, supported his mother. But the money was a small matter, compared to the fun, jollity and tumultuous affection which he brought into the poor widow's life.

"The last years of my life," she used to say, "have the warmth and brightness that were missed out of the others."

Ned ran down the stairs of the hall when the meeting was over, singing "Lilly Dale" at the top of his voice. He had a clear tenor, which was the delight of everybody who loved music in the town.

"That's right!" said Joe Wilson; "come up to the house, Ned; the girls are at home, and we'll have a little singing. You are in voice to-night."

"All right! What do you say, Charley?" For Ned and Charley Hill seldom spent an evening apart.

"Better the girls!" muttered Charley; "they're a bore. Their rattle-de-bang pianos set my teeth on edge. Some of the fellows are going to have an oyster supper down at Brice's, and I promised them that we'd join them."

Ned hesitated. "Is Phillips to be there?"

"Yes. He asked the crowd."

"There's sure to be liquor and rattle-bang. I promised mother I'd keep out of men's parties this winter, particularly where there were cards or drinking. We'd better go to Wilson's."

"O never mind Wilson! Come along!" Ned laughed and nodded. "Charley has made an engagement for me, Joe. I'll come up to-morrow evening and sing with the girls. I'll go round and tell mother not to sit up for me Charlie, and will be after you in five minutes."

The boys went on. Nobody laughed at Ned for "running home to tell mother." Not even Phillips thought of him in leading strings. The lads were neither coarse nor vulgar, as Mrs. Moore thought. They were manly enough to appreciate her manly boy.

She followed him to the door. "Good night, my son. God bless you."

"Good night, little mother. I'll be home by eleven, at the latest."

There could be no harm, she thought, in a party of intelligent, clear-minded boys, tired with the day's work, meeting to sharpen and strengthen their wits together over a well cooked supper.

Nor would there have been, perhaps, if the poor, foolish lads had not essayed, like some of their foolish elders, to drink the poison which makes them feel as gods and not as beasts.

"I say, Brice, let's have champagne," cried Phillips, when the supper was over. "Let's have the pop of the corks, just for to-night." For Phillips had made one or two journeys to New York, and affected the reckless humor of a juvenile Anacreon.

Ned Moore arose. "I must go, Phillips. I promised to be home early."

"Not till you have tasted Brice's dry wine. Not a step."

"I cannot touch liquor, you know, Phillips. It makes a fool of me. I don't want to be a killjoy."

"You needn't touch it. Sit down! Sit down!" shouted a dozen voices.

Ned sat down. The pleasant, easy-going fellow, they all knew, was no obstinate sportsman. Presently he tasted the wine to please the others. He could not bear liquor. Phillips might sip and tinkle all night, and be comparatively cool and sober in the end, but a single glass made a fool of Moore; the second made him a madman.

Nobody had ever known him so witty; he kept the table in a roar. The means of such fun was there in abundance, and they urged him to drink more.

When Charley Hill drank he grew surly. "You've had enough," he growled. "You'd better go home, Moore, to your mother. I wish she and Clara Wilson might see you, and I'll call on Clara in the morning, and tell her how and where I left her sweetheart."

Now, in fact, Ned cared more for his old chum, Hill, than for all the Clares in the world; but he was in no mood to be jeered about a woman, so he faced Hill, white with drunken rage.

"You play the spy, do you? Coward!" As I said, the liquor made him surly. He was roused at once, and struck Ned full in the face. Ned was the slightest of the two and fell heavily to the ground. He sprang up and closed with him, and was thrown again and again, before their companions could separate them.

"He's a little fellow beside you!" cried Joe Wilson, holding Ned back, trembling and colorless. "Shame on you! Shame, Hill!"

Hill stood dumb and sulky. But the liquor and defeat had driven Moore mad. "Let me go! Am I to bear a blow? Let me go, Joe! I never was struck before."

There was a dangerous gleam in his eyes, that frightened the boys. Phillips motioned Joe to take him out. He led him into the cool air outside.

"You shall not touch Hill, Ned! You don't know what you are doing, t'ye. Why, Charley is the best friend you have in the world," wiping the foam from his lips. "Come, let me take you home."

"I'll go home alone. Go in! I want neither help nor advice." He turned off, and Joe thoughtlessly went in.

Hill had already repented. "I'll go after him and make it up," he said, rising and going out. The door closed behind him.

"It's curious, said Phillips, 'that one or two glasses of wine should make such an idiot of that fellow Ned.'"

There was a sharp cry outside, then a dull, heavy thud on the ground, and then silence.

When the men rushed out, Ned Moore stood, sober and motionless, looking down at his old friend, Charley, who lay before him, quite motionless, with blood oozing from wounds upon his head. He had been violently knocked down, and as he fell, his head struck the curb-stone, inflicting a mortal wound.

I began to write this story, (which, but for the change of names, is altogether true), simply because I thought it ought to be told to the thousands of boys who will read it. But when the remembrance of the day of pain that followed comes upon me, I feel that I must be content to set down the facts as briefly as may be.

The dead boy was taken to his own home. Where his friend had gone who had killed him, no one knew. In the confusion he had disappeared. It was curious how strong the remembrance was with every one, how near the friendship had been between the two boys. Even the mother of the dead boy placed the guilt where it belonged.

"It was the wine that did it," she said; "I have no anger against Ned. He would have given his life for my poor Charley."

But the police were not so lenient. There was talk of malice being proved

by his watching outside for his friend. Still, their search was of the feeblest, and singularly unsuccessful. "They were giving him time to escape," people said, under their breath.

It was a gray, cold day in November, the fogs low and heavy in the valleys. Late in the afternoon, Joe Wilson, mounted on a strong, swift horse, left the town by the by-streets, and crossed the hills to the South. Just before sunset he met Ned Moore, wandering aimlessly by the side of the river.

He rode up to him, and dismounting, stood beside him.

"I thought I'd find you hereabouts, on our old hunting-ground. I've brought you this horse, Ned, and all the money I could raise. 'You had better keep in the hills for a day or two.'"

But he saw that Moore did not hear him, though his eyes were fixed on his face.

"I've been waiting to hear," he said. "Is he—his head?"

Joe did not speak.

The boy turned his back on him, and stood looking in the river.

"Nobody blames you, Ned," Joe whispered. "Charlie himself, if he were alive!"

"It's not Charlie," said Moore, with the same dry, hard tone. "He knows how I loved him—he'll forgive me. Its mother I think of—mother. It's all over with me now."

"No, no! There are plenty of chances yet. Take the money, old fellow, and the horse. You'll start all fair again."

Ned went on as though he had not heard him. "Tell the boys that it was the liquor. Don't let it ruin their lives as it has mine. Good by, Joe. He held out his hand.

Joe wrung it heartily. "Good by, Ned. God bless you! Now mount at once."

Moore shook his head, and turning away, walked to the edge of the river, drew out a pistol, and before Joe could reach him, fired and fell.

"It's all done and over!" he muttered, groping with his hands a moment, and the next he lay dead upon the pobbly beach.

And, in closing, I can only repeat the last words of the unfortunate young man:

"Tell the boys it was the liquor. Don't let it ruin their lives as it has mine."

The Sack of Earth.

[From the German.]

A rich man had cheated a poor widow out of a field which had belonged to her husband, and which was the only property she had, in order to make his own garden larger. A day or two after the poor woman met him in that very field with an empty sack in her hand. With tears in her eyes she said to him, "Sir, I wish you would give me just as much earth out of the field as would fill this sack." The man laughed and said, "I can't refuse such a foolish wish as that." The widow filled the sack with earth, and then said, "And now, Sir, I am going to ask you to help me lift this on to my shoulder!"

The man had no wish to do this, but the widow begged him so hard that he was obliged to give way. But when he tried to lift the sack, he found it was too heavy for him to move. He told the widow so, and she said, "Oh, sir, if you find only one sack of earth too heavy, how you will be able to bear the weight of this field, which holds a thousand times as much earth, upon your conscience at the day of judgment?" The man trembled at these words, and gave her hand back to her again.

Be Something.

It is the duty of every one to take some active part as an actor on the stage of life. Some seem to think that they can vegetate, as it were, without being anything in particular. Man was not made to rust out his life. It is expected he should "act well his part." He must be something. He has a work to perform which it is his duty to attend to. We are not placed here to grow up, pass through the various stages of life, and then die without having done anything for the benefit of the human race. Is a man to be brought up in idleness? Is he to live upon the wealth which his ancestors have acquired by frugal industry? Is he placed here to pass through life an automaton? Has he nothing to perform as a citizen of the world? A man who does nothing is a mere cipher. He does not fulfill the obligations for which he was sent into the world, and when he dies, he has not finished the work that was given for him to do. He is a mere blank in creation. Some are born with riches and honors upon their heads. But does it follow that they have nothing to do in their career through life? There are certain duties for every one to perform. Be something. Don't live like a hermit, and die unregretted.

"Henry" writes to learn why it is that one side of a moustache curls more easily than the other. He says that the right side of his naturally curls upward, while the opposite end as naturally lops downward. This is not a natural function of the moustache. It is in the training. If the owner of the moustache is unmarried, the curl of the moustache indicates on which side of a young lady he most frequently sits. For instance, if on her right side, the left hand and arm have an office of their own to fill, the hand of the right arm is left free to toy with that side of the moustache, and curling up the end is its favorite pastime. This is reversed if her left side is preferable to him. As a general thing, it will be found that young men's moustaches curl best on the right side. If the wearer is married, the curl indicates on which side of the church is his paw. If on the right of the church, the curl will be on the left of the moustache, as this position throws his left elbow on the back of the seat, thus bringing the left hand to his face, while the fingers naturally fall to work at once. The reverse occurs if the paw is on the opposite side. Henry can rely on this information, as it is the result of years of careful study and research in moustache statistics.—*Danbury News*.

