

The first English watches had weights and were used as a pocket clock. Such early watches had only one hand and required to be wound up twice a day. The dials were of silver and brass, and the cases had no crystals, but opened at the back and front, and were four or five inches in diameter—about the size of a common dessert plate.

The first great improvement of the watch—the substitution of springs for weights—was in 1650. These springs were not coiled but were only straight pieces of steel. Soon afterward the fuse was invented, connected with a main spring in a barrel. This was fastened to a piece of catgut, which was wound around a spiral grooved fusee in the shape of a cone. The last coils were around the small end of the cone, thus presenting in the running of the watch the least leverage to the greatest force of the spring. As the cone was unwound the leverage changed in proportion to the force of the spring. This made it possible to attain considerable accuracy in the running of the watch. A small linked chain was substituted for the catgut, and this style of chain remained until comparatively recent times. The spiral hair spring, which is so necessary for equalizing the motion, was invented and attached about the year 1658 by Dr. Hook. Lengthening or shortening the spring lessens or increases the vibrations and makes the regulation of the watch an easy matter.

The cases of the early watches were made for personal adornment and were of all sorts and shapes. One that belonged to Lady Fitzgerald tells in a curious way the classic tale of Jupiter and Ganymede. The works are contained in the body of the eagle, which opens across the centre and displays the dial plate richly engraved with scrolls and flowers.

The silver gilt watch in the form of a death's head was given to Mary Queen of Scots, by her husband, the dauphin of France. It was lately in the possession of Sir John Lander, and came to his family through Catharine Seton, to whom the unfortunate Mary gave it before her execution. There is a similar watch in a Boston museum that belonged to one of the Pilgrim fathers. It is of silver, in the form of a death's head, opening at the under jaw. It has at the top a small ring, by means which it was attached to the girdle. — *Beaver Unionian*.

GENEROUS OFFER OF A CONVICT.

"Some years ago my father rented a house in Wethersfield from Captain Willard, who was then the warden of the Connecticut State Prison. He was afterwards stabbed to death, as you may remember, by one of the prisoners, who was banged for the murder," said a Brooklyn lady.

"My father's family was very large, but so was the old house, and there was plenty of room for us all. The grounds were spacious, and required a good deal of care, so that

five or six colored gardeners were often working on them. These men were all convicts, hired by my father from the prison, which was about a quarter of a mile from our house. Captain Willard said they were a dangerous lot, and warned us to watch them closely, and advised my father not to allow any of us girls to speak to them or to go near them alone. I cannot say, however, that any of the gang alloted to us ever misbehaved—unless, indeed, it was the one about whom I am going to speak.

"This was a big, good-natured fellow, very black, a capital hand with the banjo, and about 40 years old. His wife and children went to see him in the jail every visiting day, and they all seemed to be very hopeful of the future, for the prisoner was serving a term of only five years. He was suspected of having participated in a number of burglaries, but was convicted of but one, the robbery of a jewelry store in Hartford. Very little property was found with him when he was arrested, and though the store had been completely emptied of its valuables, it was supposed that he had played but a very small part in the raid upon it, and his sentence was light.

"But one day this man, to whom my father had been very kind, told him that he had been entirely alone in his last robbery and a dozen others, and that the day before he had been taken into custody, knowing that his arrest was imminent, he had buried all his booty, amounting in value, he thought, to close on \$50,000, in an unfrequented place. He offered to tell my father where the treasure lay, and share it equally with him if he would unearth it, turn it into cash, and hold it until his term of imprisonment had elapsed. Of course, my father refused to listen to such a proposition, and tried to worm out of his informant where the wealth was hidden; but the prisoner was too cunning for him. He detected his object, and became very reticent.

"About a month after the man had been released my father received by express a package containing fully \$300 worth of jewelry, in the shape of ladies' rings and bracelets. There was no letter with the bundle, but there was no doubt about the accuracy of the address. The things were shown to the jeweler who had been robbed, but he said none of them had ever belonged to him, so we kept them, subject to an original owner's claim.

"Late last winter I was in New Orleans with my husband, and one afternoon an elderly colored man accosted me as I was walking in the street. He was dressed in the most fashionable material, cut in the latest style, and he literally twinkled with diamonds; but I easily recognized our old Wethersfield gardener. He was evidently quite rich, and I asked him when and how he had acquired his wealth.

"'Missy,' he said, forgetting that I was an elderly married woman, 'it was befo' I went to prison. I done t'ole yer pa all 'bout it, but he give me de cole sholdah.'"

SAVED BY BISMARCK.

One of the stories now going the rounds, says the *Chicago News*, tells of Bismarck's clever ruse to save a friend from death. It seems that Bismarck and his friend were out hunting one day, and the friend incautiously walked off into a morass from which he could not extricate himself. Feeling himself gradually sinking the unfortunate fellow called out to Bismarck: "For God's sake, come to my help or I shall be lost in this quicksand." Bismarck saw that the danger was great, but he retained his presence of mind. "No," cried Bismarck, "I will not venture into the morass, for then I should be lost, too. It is evident your end is inevitable; therefore, to relieve you from the cruel agony of slow death I will shoot you."

Therefore Bismarck coolly leveled his rifle at his floundering friend.

"Keep quiet," cried Bismarck, "I cannot take correct aim. Remember that in order to put you at once out of misery I must shoot you through the head."

The shocking brutality of this suggestion drove all fear of the morass out of the friend's mind, the unlucky chap thought only of dodging Bismarck's bullet, and with this in mind he struggled so violently, that finally by almost superhuman efforts he succeeded in laying hold of the root of an old tree and thereby he rescued himself.

"It was your presence of mind that saved me," he confessed to Bismarck; "in no other way could my extrication from the quicksands have been accomplished."

THE act of the provincial government of Quebec offering a bounty of 100 acres of land to all families of twelve or more children living in that province has had an effect to bring the remarkable fecundity of the French Canadians into bold relief. Applications for these grants are coming into the provincial secretary at the rate of a score a day, and since early in April, when the law was passed, the government has been placed in possession of proof establishing the existence and whereabouts of about 1000 families of upward of twelve living children, and still they come.

A NEW land office has been located in Oklahoma City, in the southern part of Oklahoma Territory, and a register and receiver appointed. The new district comprises about one-third of Oklahoma proper, and the purpose of its establishment is to expedite public business. The officials of the Kingfisher and Guthrie land offices are greatly crowded with work, and therefore it was deemed advisable to create another land district. All of the lands lying west and south of Oklahoma, except Greer County, are now part of the territory, but have not yet been added to the public domain. They will not be opened to settlement until negotiations for their purchase now in progress are concluded.