THE POPULAR SIGN.

Drifting along with the current along,
Questioning not be it right or wrong,
Asking not, "To what does this tend?
Where are we going, and what is the end?"

Sailing along with the rising tower,
Over glassy river or rolling wave,
Yielding all to the current's sway,
Using no compass to mark the course.

Drifting along on the sea of the world,
With rudderless soul and sails unfurled,
On the popular current bear your craft,
With hundreds of others side by side!

There were public house and trade,
Starting brightly bright to parade;
They are lost sandbanks, all hidden
Sometimes the concealment is sealed by their
wreck.

Merrily onward our bright barks glide,
Pleasure smiles around us on every side,
But aloof and deep in the underflow,
Hide and lurk the hidden hulks.

On with the current and over the surf
Dare any one know where the hurling will
be!
"Tis easy to sail in the current's side track,
But we'll do some hard pulling before we
get back.
—Cora Gardella in Women's Journal.

SOMETHING BIG IN RUBBER.

A Single "Biscuit" That Weighs Over a Thousand Pounds and Cost $1,018.

The biggest "biscuit" of rubber ever seen in North America is on exhibition in a store in Warren street. It came from the upper Amazon, weighs a little over a thousand pounds and cost its owners $1,018. Around its largest circumference it measures 10 feet, being composed of successive layers that form a practically solid mass throughout. There is enough rubber in the lump to make 3,000,000 "election" bands, or, if made into a single string, there is enough to make a line which would reach 150 miles.

Although the biscuit is now perfectly black, it was pure white, like the juice of the milk weed, when taken from the tree. The native who made the lump first drove two crotched stakes in the ground at a distance of ten feet apart, and in the crotches he rested a smooth pole. Then he built a fire midway between the posts in such a position as to concentrate the heat at the center of the crosspiece. The rubber, in its fluid consistency, was poured on the heated surface of the stringer, and as it felt the warmth of the fire it congealed. By turning the pole slowly around the layer of rubber took its present shape, which is that of a big, overgrown biscuit.

It is slow work turning the stick and congealing the rubber, and a whole day is consumed in making a single layer. It took forty days to complete the biscuit in question, for, besides hardening it, it had to be cured and smoked by processes very similar to those used in curing and smoking hams. The Amazon natives use a peculiar bark to effect the curing process, which is burned in the fire, and which imparts certain properties that prepare the rubber for preservation.

The rubber which is here described smells so much like the ordinary sugar cured ham that one could not tell the difference if blindfolded. In this respect the rubber from the Amazon possesses a distinct superiority over that from Africa. In the latter country the natives seem to know nothing whatever about the curing and smoking process, and the result is that their rubber has an indescribably vile odor.

In preparing this big lump for commercial use it will be first put into the grinder or mill, where it will undergo a treatment very like that of mastication. This makes it pliable. It will then be put into a calendar, where it will be flattened and drawn out into the required size and shape, after which it will be cut up into the shapes used in commerce.—New York Times.

The Key of Death.

The "Key of Death" is apparently a large key which is shown among the weapons at the arsenal at Venice. It was invented by Tibaldo, who, disappointed in love, designed this instrument for the destruction of his rival. The key is so constructed that the handle may be turned around, revealing a small spring which being pressed a very fine needle is driven with considerable force from the other end. This needle is so very fine that the flesh closes over the wound immediately, leaving no mark, but the death of the victim is almost instantaneous.—Detroit Free Press.

Doctor Fossils for Removing Stains.

A device has been patented in England for the purpose of removing grease from gloves or labels. It is called a benzine pencil, and consists of a cylindrical body, which is about the size of an ordinary lead pencil, containing benzine. At each end there is a thick piece of felt, one piece intended to be moistened by the benzine, while the other end of the pencil is kept perfectly dry to take up the superfluous moisture.—New York Telegram.

Only a Simple Question.

Senator Zeb Vance, of North Carolina, while at the Palace hotel, San Francisco, with a party of friends, entered a young man who, with a slight limp walk across the corridor and paused to glance at the register. The senator eyed him for a moment, and turning to a reporter said: "You didn't know that I limped for years, did you? Well, I was hit in the leg by a Federal bullet that caused me no little inconvenience. I got around pretty well, but while stumping in Jackson, Miss., I noticed a long haired countryman eying me pretty closely, and he finally approached me.

"'Look here, my friend,' he said, 'I don't want to appear curious, but I would like to know if you're really lame.'

"I replied that I was.

"'Well, you'll excuse me, won't you! I just thought I'd ask, reckonin' you wouldn't get riled about it. Wounded, I suppose, in the war?

"'Yes, I was wounded,' I said abruptly.

"'You sure, I don't know, and I'd like to ask you another question,' still eying me critically.

"'Go ahead. What is it?'

"'I'd just like to know if you was shot yourself or caught in a trap?'

"Somebody smoked who heard a

Woman's Greatest Hour.

A young girl, attractive though not pretty, bright and witty, well educated well bred, whom I love dearly, asked me the other day what I thought was woman's greatest hour.

I have since then discovered her reason for asking the question.

She anticipated my answer with the picture that she thought it was when, having brought the man of her choice to the point of proposing, she listens for the one momentous for her answer, regarding the nature of which she has given no inkling as strong as to make it certain that it will be "Yes."

I am also a young girl, three years her senior. I have not yet experienced that "greatest hour"—that, at least, from a woman's standpoint. Still, I can well understand that to see and feel the anxiety of one's lover, and to know that it is all caused by love for you, should constitute unbounded happiness.

To my friend's idea strikes me as somewhat inconsiderate and a little cruel. When I ever sailed upon to answer the most important question of my life, propounded by the man of my heart, I would feel keener for in unhesitatingly saying "yes" than to feign a doubtfulness I did not feel.

A little beating about the bush on the subject is perhaps proper enough, but when you have assured yourself that you are dealing with an honest man that loves you, I think that all parrying and dispensary and better be engaged by frankness and sincerity. I think the honorable woman entitled to as much information as he has imparted to his sweetheart.—New York Herald.

What the Bell Bird Women Does.

Are you a thoroughly well bred woman? If you are there are some little "Thank you's" that you never omit in public and in strangers. You never forget to say "Thank you" to a man.

Who stands aside to let you step into the elevated stand of life.

Who gives you his place in a line of waiting persons.

Who stays a moment in his hurry to hold a door open for you.

Who stops aside to let you pass on a stairway.

To the policeman who helps you across a street.

To a servant who renders you a personal service.

To a horse car conductor who stops the car carefully exactly where you asked him to.

To the postman who gives you your letter on the street.

To the newsboy who folds your paper neatly and cleanly for you.—New York Evening Sun.

Pay of Laundresses.

Laundresses work from 7 or 8 o'clock in the morning until 5 at night, with less than an hour's rest at noon. Few work more than five days in a week, and the average only four. There is no denying the hardship of a laundress' life, who lives in an atmosphere of perpetual steam, when standing between a rolling stove and an open door or window, and compelled to be on her feet the entire ten hours of service. In consequence nearly all suffer from swollen feet. Brain fever are common, and the women who go to the insane asylum is by no means small.

Shirts pay the best of any laundry work, varying from five to seven cents each. A good hand can iron thirty five in a day, although twenty is considered a fair average. In a steam laundry a woman's chances are better at piece work, but in the so called home laundries, where family washing is done by hand, the wages rarely exceed five dollars a week.—New York World.

Mrs. Moulton's Writing Room.

Mrs. Louise Chandler Moulton's place of writing is the front room on the second floor of her house. It can hardly be called a study, for there is nothing severe or professional in its aspect. In the center of the room is a table always piled with the newest books, and from the walls look down pictures of poets or saints, or ideal forms of beauty. The dainty desk has no official character, nor has its possessor any fixed methods of composition. A flower, a passing face, a sonnet, a storm at sea, a picture, a thought or an ideal vision, each in turn will touch the spring of her poetic power and the melody flows forth.—Boston Budget.

An Opinion of Mrs. Oliphant.

The London Queen thinks that Mrs. Oliphant is "the most feminine of women writers," and when she talks about Burns in her new book on Edinburgh it finds "a tenderness Mrs. Grundy's, in the remark that "a foolish and almost vulgar fiction produced one of the most impassioned and most exquisite songs of love and duty which has ever been written in any language—'Ae fond kiss, and then we sever.'" The Tantalusses and vulgarity, The Queen more than finds, belongs to the woman writer who objects to the flirtation rather than to the flirtation that gave the song. We are there always two sides of a case.

An Outraged Doctor.

An elderly lady, who was very wealthy, and who had a very inflated idea of her own importance, owned a pet monkey, which suddenly became quite ill. The lady, whom we shall call Mrs. Portly Pompous, had the assurance to send for one of the most prominent physicians to attend the ailing simia.

When the doctor was introduced to his patient he was very much enraged, but he did not betray it. He examined the sick monkey's pulse, and asked the usual questions. In the corner of the room was a little boy, a grandson of Mrs. Portly Pompous. The doctor approached the boy, examined his pulse and then said solemnly to the lady:

"Madam, your two little grandchildren are suffering from indigestion. Give them light food, with plenty of exercise, and they will soon come around all right."

After the doctor had said this he bowed himself out, with a feeling that he had in a measure vindicated his professional dignity. The bill which he sent in was so heavy that Mrs. Portly Pompous, who is somewhat stingy, almost had a fit herself over it.—Irish Times.

Turning the Tables on the Chorus.

One of the earlier pastors of Bridgeton was a pump maker, a good citizen, but with "no religious preference." One day he was waited upon by one of the church committees, who handed him a bill for the support of preaching.

"I hadn't heard no preaching," said the old man, somewhat surprised.

"Well, brother, it's your own fault then," replied the churchman. "It has been accessible to all, every Sabbath for a year."

The old gentleman acknowledged the corn and paid. Not long after this the parish received from him a bill for a pump.

"We have bought no pump of you," was the answer.

"Well, then," replied the old gentleman, with a twinkle in his eye, "it's your own fault, for I have been making them for years."—Lewiston Journal.

IN SHAKESPEARE'S HOME.

Thoughts of a Traveler Writing Near the Resting Place of the Poet.

A man may take pen and ink and write of a place as he will, and the page will likely enough be a pretty honest index to his own temperament. But never will it do for another man's reflections. So let it be confessed that for a day we searched Stratford streets and found nothing of the Shakespeare that we sought. Neither up the famous thoroughfare in Henley street—renowned "out of all whooping," crammed with worthless memorabilia, and peopled over with lower jaws not to the boot, nor Memorial theater, nor in the New place, where certain holes restricted with wire gratings mark what may have been the foundation of Shakespeare's house—in none of these could we find him.

His name stood in the parish pipe, in the tiny little parish church, and also on monuments, shops, inns and banking houses. He dwelt were everywhere—in photographs, in statuettes, now doing duty as a tobacco box (with the lid made so movable), now as a trade mark for beer. And even while we despised these things we felt that we were wrong. All these memorials stood high above, while we "walked under his huge legs and peep'd about," you near to see.

Not until we strolled over the meadows to Anne Hathaway's cottage at Shottery did understanding come with the quiet folding of the city. Rarely enough, and never but in the white between sunset and twilight, may a man hear the sky and earth breathing together, and drawing his own small breath quietly to hear what they tell them, "but this he is greater than he knows." But here and at this hour it may pend to be taken, for hearts being uplifted we might assume Shakespeare (if a nonsent, could know him for the pensive intelligence that held communion with all earth and sky