

the most agreeable kind, although not very disastrous in its results. Just as we were pulling out of Kansas City a heavy, well-dressed man stepped up to a member of our party who had just taken his wallet from his pocket in order to get his ticket, and intimated his desire to borrow money. He was met, however, with a refusal. The stranger then asked for change for "a 40," and was again answered with a respectful no. Thereupon he snatched the wallet, which contained \$10 and the railway ticket and made for the door. This was instantly opened by a confederate from the outside, but the victim of the robbery caught the thief before he could reach the door. The two fell upon the platform together in the course of the struggle, but assistance was soon given to each party, the assistant thief trying to get his companion off the train, while several of our company endeavored to hold on until an arrest could be accomplished. The robber, however, slipped out of his two coats and disappeared in the darkness. The property he left behind was estimated to be worth \$20, and was sent back to the police for identification. When last seen blood was running down the face of the fugitive thief.

The American Language.

Americanese is not a mere modern improvement or corruption—whichever we like to call it—of the language which is spoken in these islands, says the *London Telegraph*. Quite the contrary. Dr. Freeman, in one of his essays, has pointed out that, while in some respects Americans are a great deal "newer" than ourselves, in some others they are considerably older. Much that has died out of our politics, our societies, our habits and customs, still survives in the states. So it is with the language. As every investigator knows, much of it is not new English at all, but genuine old English. Old provincial forms, old local words, old dialectal peculiarities, which have become obsolete or mere vulgarisms with us, have kept their freshness in the New England States, and thence have spread over the continent—to spread in time over the world. A good deal of what we regard as Yankee vulgarity is good, honest Anglo-Saxon that was current in conversation and books for centuries before the Mayflower sighted Plymouth Rock. The perpetual "I guess" of the New Englander is a case in point. "Full 20 year he was of age, I guess," says Chaucer, concerning the "yonge squyre" of the Canterbury pilgrimage. Hosea Biglow would hardly have used the phrase differently. Similarly, such words as "pearl" and "brash" and "slick" and even "squirm," which strike us as specially racy of the states, are used to this day in the common speech of the common people in northern and eastern England. In the works of that eminent philologist, Sam Silek, one may find mention of a person being "smoked"—that is, made a butt of—just as in Smollett and Fielding and others of

our last century novelists. An American will use "sick" or "mad" just as their forefathers would have done in places where we should employ "ill" and "angry."

We owe our cousins a certain amount of gratitude for re-clothing with conversational respectability many of the highly-convenient words which had somehow dropped out and been replaced by much less direct and much less expressive substitutes. Whether we need be so much obliged to them for the odds and ends which they have picked up everywhere and put into current circulation is more questionable. For the American is the most larcenous of linguists. He has "been at a feast of languages and stolen the scraps." The slang of the Chicago or San Francisco loafer has levied contributions on half the Aryan and two or three of the non-Aryan tongues. All the elements that go to make up the cosmopolitan population of the Union contributed something to the medley. There is a little French, a good deal of "Dutch," a fair quantity of Spanish, a sprinkling of Scandinavian, Italian, a hint at Chinese, and something more than a perceptible dash of the tongue of the red man. It is altogether a strange amalgam, this American language—not unlike the equally remarkable mixture out of which in due course the American people is to be evolved. But at present both the people and the language are in the process of making, and it is pretty certain that they will exhibit more remarkable developments still before the manufacture is completed.—*Ex.*

Sponging a Tiger.

When Pezon, the lion tamer, was at Moscow with his menagerie, he had occasion to employ a moujik, a fine specimen of a Cossack, to clean out the cages of the wild beasts. The Cossack did not understand a word of French, and the terms of the contract were settled in dumb show. By way of instructing him in his new duties, Pezon went through a sort of pantomime with the broom, sponge and water bucket. The moujik watched him closely and appeared fully to understand the details of the lesson given.

Next morning, armed with a broom, a bucket and a sponge, he opened the first cage he came to and quietly stepped in, as he had seen his master step on the previous day into two cages of harmless brutes, but this one happened to be tenanted by a splendid but untamed tiger, that lay stretched on the floor fast asleep. At the noise made by opening and closing the door the creature raised its head and turned its green eyes full on the man, who, all unconscious of his danger, stood in the corner dipping his big sponge into the bucket.

At that moment Pezon came out of his caravan and was struck dumb by the terrible sight that met his gaze. What could he do to warn the man of his danger? A sound, a movement on his part might enrage the great beast and hasten its attack on the defenseless Cossack. So Pe-

zon stood awaiting developments, ready to rush to the scene when the crisis came. The moujik, sponge in hand, coolly approached the tiger and made ready to rub him down with the stolidity of a military boot-black polishing his captain's boots. The sudden application of cold water to its hide evidently produced a very agreeable effect on the tiger, for it began to purr, stretched out its paws, rolled over on its back and complacently offered every part of its body to the vigorous treatment of the moujik, who went on scrubbing with might and main.

All the while Pezon stood there with his eyes wide open and as if nailed to the spot. When he had finished his job the Cossack left the cage as quietly as he had entered it, and it required the most energetic and expressive gestures on the part of the lion tamer to prevent his repeating the experiment on a second wild beast.—*London Times.*

Cliff Dwellers.

One of the most attractive portions of Colorado, if not in the entire west, is that part of the State in which are found the cliff dwellings of a long extinct race. The district in which these ruins are located covers an area of nearly six thousand square miles, chiefly in Colorado, but which includes narrow belts in the adjacent territories of New Mexico, Utah and Arizona. The ruins of this region, says the *Cincinnati Commercial Gazette*, like most others of the extreme west and south, are the remnants in a great measure of stone structures. It is evident, however, that a great portion of the villages and dwellings of the lowlands which comprise the district have been of material other than stone, frequently, doubtless, of rubble and adobe combined. The cliff houses conform in shape to the floor of the niche or shelf on which they are built. They are of firm, neat masonry, and the manner in which they are attached or cemented to the cliffs is simply marvelous. Their construction has cost a great deal of labor, the rock and mortar of which they are built having been brought hundreds of feet up the most precipitous places. They have a much more modern look than the valley and cave remains, and are probably in general more recent, belonging rather to the close than the earlier parts of a long period of occupation.

It seems probable that a rich reward awaits the fortunate archaeologist who shall be able to thoroughly investigate the historical records that lie buried in the masses of ruins, the unexplored caves, and the still mysterious burial places of the northwest. But it is quite improbable that any certain light will ever be thrown on the origin of this curious race or its history.—*Ex.*

Prophetic Trees.

In parts of Germany, when at evening the clouds rise and bear some resemblance to a great tree—that is, when there is, as it were, a pillar of vapor between the horizon and the overarching canopy of cloud, the peasants call it "Abraham's