

A PACIFIC GIANT

C.F. HOLDER IN N.Y. LEDGER.

In former years a singular fishery flourished on the island of Santa Catalina, Southern California, known as the boneless cod. Scores of Italian fishermen, who could not speak a word, or but few words, of English, made the attractive island their headquarters, and any one familiar with the bay of Naples or Palermo might have thought that they had been transported to those places, as here were the same boats—double-enders, low in the water, thick and heavy, with picturesque lateen sails, which dodged in and out of the bays in a suspicious way that suggested piracy, or at least smuggling. But all these boats were fishing for the Los Angeles market, and the boneless cod constituted an important item.

The first time I saw the meat of this cod I was struck with its fine appearance; and the evident size or bulk of the fish and a desire to see one caught induced me to take passage on one of the fishing boats. The fishing ground was on the southeast end of the island, near a huge bed of kelp that stretched along shore, forming a perfect barrier against the heavy sea that came pounding in to break and wear away the rock-bound coast.

Instead of anchoring, the men hauled aboard a long branch of kelp and made it fast, and by this seaweed cable the craft swung in the tide. Small lines were then thrown out, baited with crawfish. I soon hooked a fish, and had it fairly at the surface when I distinctly saw some large black object dash upward from the depths below. A violent wrnch, and my fish, hook and line were gone. The fishermen laughed at my confusion, and handed me another line. A few moments later my nearest companion jerked in a fish, when the same big object appeared, flinging itself partly out of the water in its eagerness to capture it, then, turning as it descended, literally drenching me with water, at which the Italians laughed uproariously.

and cut deep furrows in the side of the boat; and when the fish turned and made a side rush the force and power of the creature were almost irresistible. But gradually the struggles became less and less, and a final effort brought a huge body of rich color alongside. I caught a momentary flash of great eyes, then a ponderous tail again drenched me with water, and the fish made a last and futile plunge, then lay on its side pounding and beating the water with its tail and rolling about from side to side. It was finally hauled up so that its head was out of the water—a magnificent creature fully six feet in length and bulky in proportion; a black bass in general shape, elaborated and grown out of all semblance to itself, so that it weighed nearly five hundred pounds, a type of power and strength among fishes.

"You want see boneless cod?" said one of the fishermen; "that's him." So, then, the secret was out. Boneless cod was neither cod nor boneless, but the famous Santa Catalina black sea bass that was caught by the wholesaler, cut up into great slices or steaks, and salted down as cod—a very good deception.

Our first capture was, after it was killed, fastened astern, and later several other fish were hooked, some of which must have weighed several hundred pounds, as they carried off the lines and straightened out the big iron hooks. Sometimes they would follow up the small fish that were being caught for bait, and would strike heavily against the bottom of the boat. We had struck a school of these giants of the bass tribe, and nearly a dozen of them were taken, ranging from one hundred and fifty to five hundred pounds in weight.

Late in the evening the heavily-laden craft came to anchor in the little bay, and the great fish were towed ashore, cut up and salted down without their bones, to be sent out later as boneless cod.



The small fish which had been caught was now placed on a hook almost as large as a whale hook, with a powerful line, and thrown over. Hardly had it struck the bottom before the line began to run slowly out, at which the fishermen made great excitement. When about twenty feet had gone over the rail a lusty Genoese seized it, and when it came taught jerked it with all his force. As a response came a jerk that nearly threw him upon his face, and the line, torn from his grasp, rushed over the side with a force that made it smoke and hiss. Out it went, the coils leaping into the air like living things, the men rushing from side to side to avoid them. Ten, twenty, fifty, one hundred and more feet went smoking and hissing over the gunwale before the fisherman dared to touch it, and then, when he did, his arms went down, elbow deep, into the water, so deep, in fact, that his companions seized him by the legs to prevent his utter disappearance. By the greatest exertion the Italian stayed the progress of the big fish and gained twenty feet or more of line; then, in a magnificent rush, the gamy creature rushed out again, to be finally stopped by a turn taken about a belaying pin; even then the big line creaked and groaned ominously. For half an hour this struggle went on, the line being handed around from man to man as they grew weary, and finally it fell to me. The big fish even then was more than I could manage. When it made a rush, the line burned my hand

The great fish is closely related to the groupers, and may be termed a gigantic bass, and is known to science as the *Stereolepis gigas*. It lives in deep water in winter, though occasionally coming in shore to deposit its eggs, at this time being caught in great numbers in water from thirty to fifty feet deep. In summer its capture constitutes one of the sports of the island, visitors going out to the various points or even watching the big fish from the wharf. The capture of so gigantic and powerful a fish is an experience to be remembered by the uninitiated, and when one is brought into Avalon at the beginning of the season there is great excitement, and the big fish is duly photographed with the fortunate fisherman.

The Bellman's Little Joke.

Kirriemuir, in Forfarshire, the "Thrums" of Mr. Barrie's delightful studies of Scottish life and character, once possessed a humorous bellman. On one occasion he was instructed to make the following announcement on the day of the local fair: "Notice! All persons driving cattle through the lands of Logie, to or from the market, will be prosecuted with the utmost rigor of the law." Then, seeming to be sorry for the harshness of the order, and anxious to clear himself in the eyes of his neighbors, he added: "Ye needna mind a' this, lads; it's only a haver (nonsense) o' the grieves (the farm overseer)."

HE DIDN'T DESERVE THE GIRL

Was Assent-Minded to the Last Degree.

There is something at once amusing and pathetic in the fact that Robely never married, says the Detroit Free Press. He was a bright, healthy, cheerful young man twenty years ago. Under these conditions it was inevitable that he should fall in love and his affection was reciprocated by a beautiful young lady, who was as happy as he in building air castles. In everything they were fitted for each other, unless in the fact that Robely was the most absent-minded young man that ever went a-wooing.

Occasionally he would start to see his girl and wander in some other direction, forgetting his dereliction until it was too late to make amends. Twice he called for the special purpose of proposing and left without attending to the matter. Even when the time came to appeal for a parental consent and blessing the matter escaped his mind until the indignant old gentleman appointed a special conference and curtly insisted that failure to meet the date would prove disastrous. Theater engagements and parties were overlooked in the same way, and it was all passed happily over because it was Robely. It was not expected that he would comply with any special code of conduct.

But when the church chimes were pealing the bride was in a flutter of anticipation, the bridesmaids and groomsmen were on hand, the minister was ready, the families were there and the wedding festival needed but the presence of the bridegroom. He was missing. This was different. There was no way of doing without him. He had been urged, warned and cautioned, but he was allowing that absent mind of his to drift him down the river in a rowboat unmindful of the penalty fate would exact. The pitcher had gone to the well once too often, and the wedding was never celebrated.

THE POPULAR IDEA.

But They Are Not All Innocent Men Who Go to Siberia.

There was a popular idea that the wastes of Siberia are peopled with men who have been unjustly exiled from Russia and that the criminal is really as difficult to find as the traditional needle in the bunch of hay, says Tit-Bits. Facts, however, do not substantiate this theory any more than they do the large majority of popular impressions.

A great sensation was created two or three years ago by the finding of seven Russian exiles or prisoners who had made their escape from Siberia. They were in an open boat in the Pacific and were taken to San Francisco, where they became the objects of popular commiseration, as well as the text for the denouncing of the Russian methods of dealing with political offenders.

The Californians, ever ready with sympathy, gave them clothes and found them work to do. It now appears that during the interval that has elapsed between their arrival in San Francisco and now every one of them has been punished by the law of the land. The last of the party has just been sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment for burglary, while one of his comrades only a short time ago was hanged for two murders which he had committed.

Investigations which have been made show that every one of these men had been sent to Siberia for reasons which would have earned him a corresponding period of exile from the haunts of his fellow-men if not absolute deportation from the country in any other part of the world.

Wedded on a Trolley Car.

The conductors and motormen who run on the electric cars which ply between Council Bluffs and Omaha look nowadays with suspicion upon young couples who seem only casual acquaintances. They don't know when they are likely to get roped in as witnesses to marriage, says the Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph. Conductor Thorne and the motorman of car No. 55 had this experience several days ago. A young man and a woman boarded the car at Broadway and Pearl street in the morning. The fare to Omaha was paid by the man. Neither the man nor the woman seemed to take much interest in life until the car neared Omaha. When the car reached the crossing near Twelfth and Douglass streets the man looked out anxiously, and in a few minutes the Rev. Mr. Overton of Omaha came puffing in. There was a big crowd on hand and as the electric car sped back to Council Bluffs the nuptial knot was tied. At Broadway and Pearl street the car stopped and the husband and wife disappeared in the snowstorm. The minister carried back to Omaha a good-sized fee, nor was the car crew forgotten.

On the House.

"Talk about trained dogs," said Larry Phillips recently, as he was standing before a down-town mixed-goods restaurant, "they ain't in it with Mike. Come here, Mike!" he shouted, and Mike, a three-legged bull terrier, wailed and leaped, with an upper lip like a County Kerry squire's, sauntered up. His owner walked into the saloon and laid a quarter behind a cuspidor. "Mike," said he, when he returned, "I left a quarter in the room yonder. Get in and get it." Mike looked up intelligently and ran into the room, coming back presently empty mouthed. "That's the first time he ever failed me," said Larry, with some chagrin, as he walked in and picked up the coin. Then, looking at it closely: "Why, no wonder the dog wouldn't touch it. The blamed thing's a counterfeiter. Who changed that quarter?" But the bartender only remarked: "Guess they're on the house, Larry."—Philadelphia Record.

NO COURT OF APPEAL.

ENGLAND'S CRIMINAL JUDGES HAVE THE FINAL WORD.

Why One Justice Changed His Mind—A Pardon from the Home Secretary the Only Resort After Conviction—An Urgent Reform.



ENGLAND enjoys the strange distinction of having been until now about the only civilized country in the world that has no criminal court of appeal, says the New York Tribune. There is a court of final appeal for

civil cases, in the house of lords, over which the lord chancellor presides, composed of the members of the High Court of Judicature known as the lord justices, who are not peers, and likewise of those peers who have held office in the past as chancellor of England or as lord chancellor of Ireland, as lord justice general of Scotland or as merely a lord justice. These ex-law lords take their places on the side seats, arrayed in ordinary morning dress, while the lord justices of appeal, arrayed in wig and gown, occupy the cross seats, the lord chancellor, likewise in his robes, directing the procedure from the woolsack. But nothing of the kind exists for criminal cases, and there is at the present moment no means of quashing and reversing the decision of a criminal court except by the grant of a pardon in the queen's name to the prisoner. In instances where the innocence of the latter has been brought to light after the conviction this is obviously a most unsatisfactory method of dealing with the affair, since the concession of the act of grace in the name of the crown implies that a crime has really been committed which needs forgiveness and mercy.

Moreover, judges, no matter how eminent and how anxious to be impartial and just, are, after all, but

stands now there is no means of reversing these sentences, no method of appealing against them.

Perhaps no more striking illustration of the urgent necessity of a court of appeal for criminal cases can be cited than a case related by Leslie Stephen in his recently published life of his brother, the late Sir James Fitzjames Stephen, who was one of the most eminent jurists and judges of his day, but who was undoubtedly suffering from an unbalanced mind during the last year or two that he sat on the bench as judge of the high court judicature. It seems that he had sentenced a convict to a certain term of imprisonment. As the man was being led from the dock by the jailers he called out: "Ye can't do it! I tell yer, ye can't do it." Sir James, who was at that time in perfect mental and physical health, was so much struck by the remark that, very much to his credit, he had the prisoner brought back and asked him what he meant. The convict explained that the punishment for his offense was a shorter term than the judge had awarded him. Sir James, on looking up the law, found that the prisoner was right and amended on the spot the decree which he had issued, diminishing the term of penal servitude by no less than three years. But had he not done so, had he not consented of his own accord to modify the sentence before the court rose, no power on earth could have saved the man from suffering the full term of the original sentence—unless, of course, the home secretary, in the name of the queen, had granted the man a pardon.

Now the home secretary, in the majority of cases, is not a lawyer by profession. Moreover, he is obviously susceptible to the political influence of the party which looks upon him as one of its leaders in parliament. Yet it is upon him, as matters now stand, that the responsibility rests of repairing any judicial error by the unusual means of a queen's pardon. Indeed, he is possessed of no legal knowledge and, moreover, exercises the right of granting the crown's pardons not through any constitutional prerogative but merely by modern usage, the state of affairs is extremely unsatisfac-

growth of Democratic sentiment in England, the sovereign would be allowed to reassume possession thereof. For, with the popular theory that it is the people, rather than the monarch, who are really sovereign, it stands to reason that parliament prefers to see the power of pardon vested in the hands of one of its members who holds his office as home secretary, subject to its votes, and who can, therefore, be held to strict account, rather than in those of the queen, who cannot be asked to explain her motive, and who is answerable to no one but to her own conscience.

THE JUNGFRAU RAILROAD.

It Will Be Finished Before Many Seasons Are Past.

Apropos of the Swiss railroads, there seems to be every prospect that before many more Swiss seasons are past the railway up the Jungfrau will be an accomplished fact, says the London Truth. M. Guyer-Zeller of Zurich, the projector of the line, and chairman of the syndicate which has the concession, sends me an English translation of his descriptive account of the undertaking, from which it appears that the capital is now being raised and that the construction of the line is to be commenced early in the summer. It is expected that the first section of the line, ending at the Eiger station, will be finished in two years. Unless, therefore, unforeseen difficulties are encountered—which, in view of what has already been accomplished in the way of mountain railways in Switzerland, seems highly improbable—the completion of the whole undertaking is purely a question of time. The line, as at present projected, will start from the Scheidegg station on the Wengernalp railway and run straight to the foot of the Eiger glacier. There it will take a turn to the east and burrow around the inside of the mountain to the Eiger station, where the tunnel will be opened with an arcade at the side, like the galleries on the Axenstrasse. Thence the tunnel will proceed in a straight line through the Monch and the Jungfrauoch, curving around the upper portion of the Jungfrau until it terminates on a platform sixty-five meters below the summit of the mountain. Here the adventurous mountaineer will leave his carriage and perform the remainder of his journey by an "elevator" fixed in a shaft opening on the very summit. For the benefit of those who like a little exercise when ascending the Alps there will be a corkscrew staircase to the top round the outside of the elevator.

A Rare Book by Mrs. Browning.

The discovery is reported from Sandwich of another original copy of Mrs. Browning's "The Battle of Marathon," which was printed by W. Lindell, 87 Mimpole street, Cavendish square, in 1820. It was bought at a local sale with a number of other books for a few shillings. Up to the year 1891 but three copies of this scarce work were known to exist, and the only one that has ever been sold by auction realized \$330 at the Foote sale held at New York a couple of years ago. This may have been one of the three copies already mentioned, but in any case only five at the most can be accounted for at the present time. The book is consequently scarcer than "Pauline." Mr. Browning had neither seen nor heard of a copy up to a short time of his death, and, when his attention was called to it, expressed a doubt whether it might not be a fabrication.—Atheneum.

The Next Morning.

"Do you believe in wave thoughts, Learnly?"
"Yes. I've had them dashing around in my head in the morning till I thought the skull would crack."—Detroit Free Press.

Where the Trouble Came In.

Spykes—Do you have any trouble meeting your creditors?
Spokes—Not at all. I find my trouble in getting rid of them.—Detroit Free Press.

POPULAR SCIENCE.

The bones of very aged persons have a greater proportion of lime than those of young people.

The owl's wise look is the result of a physiological oddity, his eyes being fixed immovably in their sockets.

Only one person in fifteen has perfect eyes, the larger percentage of defectiveness prevailing among fair haired people.

In tropical forests so large a proportion of the plants are of the sensitive variety that sometimes the path of a traveler may be traced by the wilted foliage.

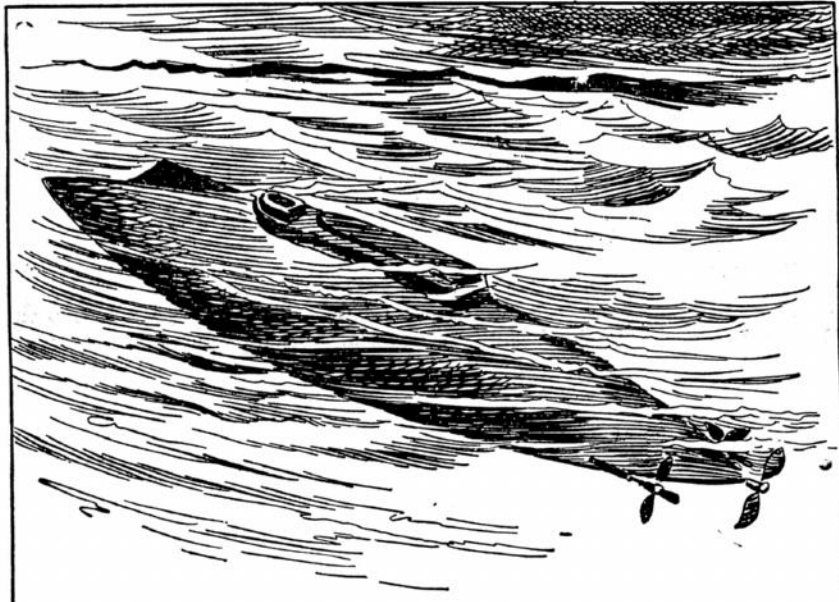
According to the most delicate experiments of the most famous scientists, the heat of the lunar rays which reach the earth is scarcely the twelve-millionth of a degree.

For seven years the St. Lawrence river gradually decreases in depth; then for seven years it gradually increases in depth, the difference in level being about five feet. Why it does so no one has yet discovered.

Although the brain is perpetually active, yet the whole of it is never at work at one time. The two hemispheres or halves do not operate simultaneously, but alternate in action—now it is the one-half, then the other.

A chameleon from the Cape of Good Hope was seen by Mr. Blakiston to turn white with fear, having been saved from the attacks of a cat. The most extraordinary thing about this lizard is the wonderful way in which the two eyes work quite independently of each other, and enable it to survey comfortably objects in quite opposite directions.

SUBMARINE BOAT LAUNCHED.



THE HOLLAND SUBMARINE BOAT.

In the presence of a few persons the Holland submarine torpedo boat was launched at the Crescent shipyards, Elizabeth, N. J., the other day. The vessel was christened "The Holland" by Mrs. Nixon, wife of Lieutenant Lewis Nixon, the constructor. Inventor Holland says there will not be any attempt at submarine evolutions for several weeks.

The boat is cylindrical in shape, fifty feet three inches long, with a four foot screw-protecting extension. The diameter is ten feet three inches amidship and the molded diameter is the same. The boat can travel under water eight knots an hour for eight hours and ten knots on the surface. The power comes from a gasoline engine and a dynamo, the former to be used when the boat is sailing along the surface and the latter when she is submerged. It will take less than a minute to submerge the boat and about the same length of time for her to rise to the surface. Six men will constitute the crew. The armament consists of three torpedo tubes, one at the upper

bow of the boat being an aerial torpedo thrower, with a range of one mile. Six projectiles weighing 180 pounds each, with charges of 100 pounds of explosives, are to be stored for this gun. Almost directly beneath the torpedo thrower is an explosive tube for Whitehead torpedoes. Only three of these torpedoes will be carried, as each one weighs 850 pounds. At the stern of the boat is a submarine gun, which, with a 100-pound charge of explosive, can hurl a 400-pound projectile 100 yards or more through the water. Five of these projectiles will be carried. Mr. Holland was asked by the United States, British and Spanish governments to allow a representative on board during the trial trip of the boat, but he refused the request. After a trial trip he says he will allow an engineer from each government to see the workings of the boat, which it is believed will revolutionize warfare. Several foreign nations have bid for the vessel, but it is likely that Mr. Holland will sell it to the United States.—From the New York Journal.

mortal and just as much subject to idiosyncrasies as their fellow-creatures. These idiosyncrasies are sometimes manifested in an exceedingly distressing manner upon the bench, and when they take the form of imposition of the sentences which, while permitted by law, are altogether out of proportion to the gravity of the offense, it stands to reason that some means should exist of repairing the wrong thus inflicted upon an unfortunate fellow-creature. Sir Robert Reid, who was the attorney-general of the last liberal administration, did not hesitate to declare the other day in the house of commons, during the course of a discussion on the subject, that "ferocious and cruel punishments" were sometimes inflicted from the bench and cited the incident where a certain judge had been "guilty of the awful wickedness of increasing a prisoner's sentence by several years for impertinence to himself during the course of the trial." Moreover, the quarter sessions of the various counties—tribunals which are composed of county gentlemen and territorial magnates—are renowned for the terrible severity with which they punish petty offenses against property and the same laws, while manifesting an extraordinary leniency where crimes of violence are concerned. As the matter

of the present reign that the duty of deciding upon the merits of the cases worthy of royal pardon has been left in the hands of the secretary of state for the home department.

Before Queen Victoria came to the throne this prerogative was exercised exclusively by the sovereign, who likewise signed all the death warrants of criminals, the home secretary merely acting in an advisory and secretarial capacity, seeing that the monarch's orders were carried into effect.

But when Victoria succeeded to the crown as a girl barely 18 years old it was felt that it would be unjust to ask so young and innocent a mind to assume the responsibility of sending to or holding from the gallows criminals convicted of capital offenses. Accordingly it was resolved in council that the secretary of state for the home department should take charge of the matter himself and should sign the warrant in the queen's name without consulting her or taking her wishes upon the subject. It was in this way that the queen and the British monarchy lost forever that constitutional prerogative of mercy and pardon which has always been regarded as the most priceless jewel in the crowns of the old world monarchs, and it is doubtful whether today, with the