

CONVERSAZIONE.

Notes for the Week:

"The bridge between joy and sorrow is not long."—(German Proverb).

A Wonderful Mirage.

On a recent Sunday, between 8 and 9 p.m., a mirage was observed by many persons at Valla, in Sweden. The entire lower part of the northwestern horizon shone with a lurid glare, above which was a dark bank as, assuming the most remarkable forms. From time to time animals, trees and shrubs were seen. Soon a bear changed into an elephant, and soon a dog into a lion, men being distinguished from women. Further north the cloud formed an oak forest, in front of which was a valley, and nearer still a park with garden paths. At about 9.30 the cloud sank into a mass, and the phenomenon disappeared.

The Peculiar Epitaph of John Berge.

It is his personal history and was written by himself: "Here lies the earthly remains of John Berge, late Vicar of Everton, an itinerant servant of Jesus Christ, who loved his Master and his work; and, after running his errands for many years, was called up to wait on him above. Reader, are thou born again? No salvation without birth. I was born in sin, February 1716; remained ignorant of my fallen estate till 1730; lived proudly on faith and hope for salvation till 1751; was admitted to Everton Vicarage 1755; fled to Jesus for safety 1756." These were the lines he composed and pasted upon his housecoat:

"Here my master bids me stand,
And mark the time with faithful hand,
What in his will is my delight,
To tell the hours by day and night.
Master, be wise, and I will be too,
To serve thy God as I serve thee."

Note-Taking in Battle.

Alphonse Daudet, the famous French novelist, is an assiduous note-taker and a collector of "human documents." He makes a note in his commonplace book of everything striking that he sees—the shape and color of a cloud, the passing expression on a face, the tone of a voice. Nothing is too little to escape his notice, and if he goes out to dinner he is bound to photograph his fellow-diners in words when he gets home. A singular instance of this passion of his for note-taking is reported by a London correspondent. At the siege of Paris Daudet volunteered for service. He formed one of a sort of party, and was told off for skirmishing purposes. Just in the thick of the engagement Daudet's eye caught the artistic effect of the great background of smoke rolling off against a great background of the wood. Forgetful of everything else, the novelist laid down his rifle, took out his note-book, and began committing his impressions to paper. Bullets fell round him in a perfect hailstorm, but the novelist went on writing with perfect sangfroid. Daudet treasures up that "impression" to this day, and shows the book in which at the time of great personal danger he recorded it.

One on Senator Ingalls.

"You'll notice that this long session is not having any apparent effect on Senator Ingalls," said a gentleman from the far West in the Senate gallery one afternoon, according to the Washington Star. There was nothing in the Senator's appearance to dispute that assertion, so the reporter asked, and the gentleman from the West went on:

"I used to know Ingalls years ago. He was thinner than he is now and looked just about the same. He lived in Atchison, and had the reputation of being possessed of more brain and less flesh than any man, adult in the State of Kansas. One day he went up to the office of a friend of his, a doctor, and while he was in there a newswoman dashed in. Now, the kids who sold papers around Atchison in those days were the most sly I ever heard of, and the doctor's assistant, a cheerful young student, was always on the alert to shut some of them up and to prevent them from invading the privacy of his room. Their stamping feet and ear-piercing yells of 'S' Louie papers!' The assistant had seen this particular boy as he entered the building, and in an instant he placed him in the doorway of the office of the well-known skatologist. When the youngster threw open the doorway and was midway through one of his declamations the skeleton fell over on him. With a shriek that was worse than his regular street cry, the boy rolled down one flight of stairs and tumbled into the street, and his murrainous continued right straight along."

"You've scared that boy to his death," exclaimed the budding Senator, who was overflowing with indignation. Then he went to the window, and bending out, called to the grimy but pallid face of the victim: "Come back here, boy! I'll pay some of your papers. He shan't hurt you."

"The response was instantaneous. The boy ceased, and he shouted, 'No, you don't! You can't fool me if you have put your clothes on!'"

A Noted Counterfeiter.

The most remarkable counterfeiter at present living has been keeping the United States secret service in such a confusion of exasperation for a long time past that no trouble or expense would be considered excessive for the accomplishment of his capture. And this although he produces on an average not more than two bogus notes a year. The remarkable thing about these imitations is that they are executed entirely with a pen. Once in six months, almost as regular as clockwork, one of them turns up at the treasury here, to the disgust of the Government detectives, whose most efforts cannot discover so much as a clue to follow. The strangest point about the matter is that the work of producing bills in this fashion, merely considered as a question of labor, remunerative or otherwise, cannot possibly pay. They are always either fifty or twenty, and to make one must require pretty constant work for quite half a year. The last one, which was received only a few days ago was a double X. Fortunately enough, they come each time from a different city, and the supposition is that the forger leaves town for another locality immediately upon passing one. He gets rid of the note he has just completed, which may remain in circulation for some time before reaching a bank, and departs long before the police agents have a chance to arrive upon the scene. The most plausible theory seems to be that he is a monomaniacal means, who gratifies a morbid taste in this astonishing way. His imitations are so perfectly done that no short of a professional expert would hesitate to take them for good money. From the vignettes to the signatures the work is performed with an accuracy that bears scrutiny with a powerful magnifying glass. It is an ill-fated hood the reason why the notes are not made of larger denominations is that they would be proportionately more difficult to pass. One can imagine that this eccentric

counterfeiter indulges in the employment simply for the gratification of his vanity. It is probable that he himself has been shown the frame at the Treasury building in which two specimens of his handiwork are shown by polite attendants to visitors as the most extraordinary samples of forgery in the Government collection. Anyway, he goes on turning out the bills at regular intervals of six months, thus occasioning periodical spasms of exasperation in the Secret Service Bureau.—(Washington Star.)

An Ideal Husband.

The exemplary man does not, when Sunday comes, tell his wife that she can go to church if she wants to, but that he will stay at home and read the paper; and in the evening say that he is too tired or does not feel in the notion and that she can go with some of the neighbors. With a beaming face he puts on his hat, walks proudly by her side—not a yard or two ahead—and still manifests all the small, sweet courtesies of a well-bred courtship.

His conversation with her is not made up of frivolous trifles, as if believing that a woman's brain can grasp anything more than the most commonplace of subjects. He talks to her on equal terms as with creation's lords; he confides in her wholly, and asks her advice.

He shows due appreciation of her efforts to make home attractive, praises her handiwork, and commends her economy and thrift.

He does not take occasion to warn all youthful acquaintances not to hang themselves in the hymeneal halter.

He never complains about family cares or unavoidable interruptions, nor looks for martyr, as he lays aside his book to put down carpet or soothe a fretful baby (providing, of course, that there is one). He complacently and crosses "just as he used to," overlooks faults and never mentions them before company.

If an impatient word ever escapes his lips, he speedsily atones for it by a kiss. He does not discard all social pleasures, and dolefully declare that they are "old folks now and have settled down."

He declines that which is elegant or fashionable, and declares that women may paint, powder and lace—but not him. He spends money judiciously and trusts his better-half to do the same.

He never speaks of Mr. So and So's "lady" instead of "wife," and when sick, never complains of not being able to get quick in town and tell everybody in his hearing how she is always ailing and how hard it is to manage.

I short, the model husband utterly contradicts Shakespeare when he says: "Men are April when they woo, December when they wed."

Curiosities of Acclimatization.

Our failures in the acclimatization of vegetable life have always been due to sentiment. The useful plants and trees have, as a rule, flourished admirably. For example, Mr. J. A. Froude states in his "Oceanic" that the oats, barley, peas, beans and potatoes were produced in such luxuriance in Ballarat that he could believe Herodotus' account of the crops grown on the plains of Babylon. A reaping machine had stopped in a field of oats, the stems of which stood up like a wall, and seemed as if no horse could force a passage through them. For seventeen successive years the ground had been cropped and not a particle of manure had been put upon it. The strangest point about it was that there was no weeds, and Mr. Froude offers the bold suggestion that "weeds are said to be product of high civilization and do not exist in nature." Almost the only failure in useful plants has been the watercress. Introduced some years ago into New Zealand, it has spread as rapidly as did the "American weed" in our own country, choking up the rivers and involving the outlay of many thousands of pounds in keeping the rivers sufficiently clear for navigable purposes.

Otago and Canterbury have been sufferers from the watercress. Sentiment, however, has always been a deadly foe to the colonist; for example, some 20 years ago a Scotch emigrant to Australia took with him a thistle in a flower pot. Great were the rejoicings among the Scotch colonists, a dinner was given in honor of the thistle, and it was then carried off to the new colony.

It was transferred to the soil. Now it has spread the same part on land as the watercress in the rivers, and has rendered whole tracts of land useless. It defies all attempts at extermination and great sums of money are paid yearly in restraining the once welcomed plant. That the thistle would probably become an injurious plant ought to have been anticipated, and the very emigrant who brought it to the colony should have been prohibited as readily as we prohibit the Colorado beetle. But who would have thought that the sweetest war would do any harm? At home we are only too glad to have it in our gardens, and a weed which is a thing of joy and an object of justifiable pride. No one, therefore, would have blamed the missionary and his wife who took with them a plant of sweetbrier as a fragrant memorial of their garden in the old country. But when set in the fresh soil of Australia the plant grew with almost savage fury. It drove great roots into the ground, developed at extinction and great sums of money are paid yearly in restraining the once welcomed plant. That the thistle would probably become an injurious plant ought to have been anticipated, and the very emigrant who brought it to the colony should have been prohibited as readily as we prohibit the Colorado beetle. But who would have thought that the sweetest war would do any harm? At home we are only too glad to have it in our gardens, and a weed which is a thing of joy and an object of justifiable pride. No one, therefore, would have blamed the missionary and his wife who took with them a plant of sweetbrier as a fragrant memorial of their garden in the old country. But when set in the fresh soil of Australia the plant grew with almost savage fury. It drove great roots into the ground, developed at extinction and great sums of money are paid yearly in restraining the once welcomed plant. 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