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D. G. SMITH, EDITOR & PROPRIETOR
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A LITERARY SHOCK.

I'm very fond of whist, said Mr. Meekton. Henrietta and I play it a great deal.

I have just been reading up on the game.

I never look at such books. They affect me like downright impertinence. The men who wrote some of them seem to think they know more about the game than Henrietta does.

AWFUL EXPERIENCE.

Hungry Higgins—Wotever you do, don't never let no old jay coax you into gettin a hard-cider jag.

Weary Watkins—Such a headache?

Headache? You get plumb bughouse. Time I got roped in on the game, I sawed a half a cord of wood before I knowed what I was doin'.

FIVE MEN TO TAKE ONE.

The military rule is that five times the number of an intrenched enemy are required to dislodge the latter.

EDITORIAL NOTES.

The Chinese Minister to the United States, Wu Ting Fang, says that the world needs a universal language, and he intimates that the English, with some few variations and modifications, would meet that want. In an address just delivered at the University of Pennsylvania he mentioned that in all the Oriental centres the English language holds a prominence such as no other tongue can claim. "It is spoken in the streets of Shanghai as well as in those of Hong Kong," he remarks. "It is taught in the schools of Yokohama as well as in those of Singapore. Chinese, Japanese, Germans, Russians and Frenchmen alike use it in their business offices, in their clubs and in their family circles. In short, it may be called the commercial language of the Orient. Signs point to its ultimate adoption as an international tongue."

Wu Ting Fang is not the first foreigner of intelligence and prominence who has made predictions of the eventual supremacy of the English tongue. German and French philologists many decades ago talked on this subject in the same strain as the Chinese Minister does now, but they could not give quite so many reasons for the faith that was in them as this close observer can furnish. It is known to every one who has followed up the discussion of this question of a world's language that the number of persons using English as a mother tongue has increased marvelously in the past 100 or 200 years. At the beginning of the present century only about 20,000,000 people spoke this language, while today it is used by 120,000,000. It is growing faster than any other two or three tongues of the world. Of course its most conspicuous conquest has been made in the United States. This country had only 5,000,000 people at the beginning of the present century, but 75,000,000 or more inhabitants will be found in it by Census Director Merriam's assistants this year. English is the language of nearly all of these and to the children of the small fragment of the population who use some other tongue instead, English will be their native speech.

A century ago French was spoken by more persons than English. Two centuries ago it was generally supposed that French would eventually be the universal language. It had a vogue at that time such as no other two languages could command. It became the language of polite society and diplomacy all over the world, and the time seemed to be approaching when it would supersede all the others in all the walks of life. At the time when Bacon was writing his works in Latin, so as to put them in a language which he supposed would be extant when his own tongue had vanished from the earth, only about 5,000,000 people spoke the English language and nobody at that time was bold enough to predict that this number would be increased to any great extent in the future, while many, like Bacon himself, imagined it would diminish. At the time when Charles V. was, as he said, addressing God in Spanish, his lady friends in Italian, his statesmen and diplomats in French, and his horses in German he was not using English for any purpose, but, of course, England was not part of his empire. When Charles died there was not a single settlement of English-speaking persons in any part of the present territory of the United States, and neither he nor anybody else in his time could have foreseen that three centuries after that day the English would be supreme among civilized tongues, and that much more than half of the people who use it would be in this country.

GIFTS.

I thank thee, God, for good and bad,
For all the tangled skein
Of blows that made my manhood glad
And joys that were a pain!

Defeat I thank thee for and strife
In this blind year gone by!
'Tis he who lives the lightest life
The darkest death must die.

And he who doth a star pursue
Both home and fire must leave,
As he who guards a life or two
A death or two must grieve.

And he who wins shall lose again
And, having lost, shall win,
Since they are strong who saw great pain
And wise who knew great sin.

—Arthur J. Stringer in Ainslee's Magazine.

Nubian Weaving.

In times past the Nubians wove their own clothing, but of late years, owing to the introduction of Manchester cottons, which are more easily and even cheaply obtained, this industry is dying out, being confined almost entirely to the particoloured robes worn by the chiefs. A coarse cotton grows wild in the alluvial deposits along the banks of the rivers, but the best kind comes from the Abyssinian valleys. This is spun into yarn, the Nubian spindle being an exact counterpart of that used by Greek and Roman women many centuries ago, while the rude hand loom with which the thread is woven into cloth resembles in every particular those depicted on ancient Egyptian monuments.—Harper's Magazine.

Diamond Cut Diamond.

A Quaker was negotiating with an insurance agent as to effecting a policy on a vessel overdue. At this juncture he heard of the vessel's loss, and wrote at once to the agent of the company:

"Friend, if thee hasn't filled up the policy, thee needn't, for I've heard of the ship."

"Eh," said the officers, "cunning fellow, he wants to do us out of the premium." So they wrote to the Quaker:

"Thou art too late by half an hour. Thy policy is filled up."

Why She Did It.

"Why is it," they asked, "that you let your husband have his own way in everything?"

"Because," she replied, "I like to have some one to blame when things go wrong."

England Is Exclusive.

The Victoria cross has never been awarded to a woman. It is not designed for female decoration. In Germany heroines are decorated with the iron cross, and in France with the Legion of Honor.—Spare Moments.

On the Farm.

FROST PREVENTION.

The early autumn and late spring frosts are disastrous to vegetation, particularly to fruits.

There are several methods to prevent these frost ravages. Of late years fruit growers and gardeners have realized the benefit of smudges and protective agencies, whereas in times gone by the loss of fruit crops or vegetables from untimely frosts was considered unavoidable.

The most practical of all methods and the one most generally adopted is that of smudges. These are made of the various substances that may be at hand, such as dampened straw, chips from the woodpile, cow ships, corn cobs, tar, crude kerosene or tan bark. The idea is to have as much smoke as possible, with no blaze from the smudge, or smouldering fire.

It is only by anticipating frost and preventing its damages that fruit can be saved. There is no possibility of restoring frozen or frost bitten fruit in the embryo, or when further advanced. On the other hand, vegetables and flowers may be revived, and, even if nipped by frost, may recover. For instance, the water method of restoration acts like a charm, on flowering plants in a hothouse, or vegetables in hot beds or cold frames. They may be frozen, but if water at a temperature well above the surrounding air is showered over them, the ice melts and slides off, and then if the lids of hothouse or cold frame are closed and the plants kept darkened until the weather moderates, they will emerge as fresh as if there had been no freeze. Absolute darkness, without a ray of light, will, with almost certainty, bring them through uninjured.

Smudges, as said before, are used with great success. A frost that is approaching in the spring may have its deleterious effects prevented by smudges that emit smoke enough to hang over the fruit, or grapes, like a cloud. This is a time-honored way of protecting fruit from frost. Dr. Serre, a prominent agriculturist of the sixteenth century, recommended the method. And in Wurtemberg, in 1796, the men were divided into companies of about twenty, under a captain, to protect certain assigned districts, and were called out by a watchman, who sounded the alarm. This service was compulsory, since there is a rule chronicled which reads that whoever "shall refuse to obey shall be prosecuted before the bailiwick and receive exemplary punishment."

There were co-operation among the horticulturists, fruit and grape growers. Plantations were formed into districts, and the organized efforts of 115 growers, we read, reduced the cost of prevention to twenty-five cents a thousand vines for the season. The smudges were so effectual that where ice had formed on wire trellises not far from the vines under smoke, not only were the vines, the buds and every shoot thoroughly preserved, but tender leaves just putting forth were uninjured.

Smudges for vineyards and orchards surpass all other protective agencies, but for vegetables and flowers there are inexpensive methods that are efficacious because they are scientific Potatoes, cucumbers, or other sensitive vegetables, strawberries and raspberries or flowers may have straw matting or paper spread over them, and although the materials themselves are too light to be of apparent value, yet they give the needed check to the heat and moisture escaping from the ground The relatively high temperature maintained under these coverings is due to the continued evolution of heat which accompanies the condensation of moisture.

Water methods require great care and consideration or they do more harm than good. Small fruits that grow in a hollow, or in a declivity, have frequently been deluged with water on the evening that indicates frost, so that the air which floats over the plants will be saturated with moisture. When the temperature falls, water vapor is condensed and the temperature of the air is raised. The thought naturally presents itself that, in case of a return of frost, the dampness in the soil would produce chilly, lowered temperature. The water methods do better for experts than for amateurs, but there is one method involving no complications, that is to tie a large rope high up among the branches of a fruit tree and let the lower end be in a tub of water set under the tree. It is said that the water may be coated over with ice, but the large surface of the rope exposed by capillary attraction, carries the moisture up among the branches, and the heat evolved by the condensation of the moisture raises the temperature above frost, and the fruit is preserved.

CEMENT FLOORS UNDER COWS.

A cement floor clear to the manager for cows to stand on is all right if you have plenty of bedding on it, says a writer. We keep our cows on such a floor, and have for years. But we have an abundance of straw for bedding, stored over the stables, so it is dry and handy to get, This is used freely, and the cows are entirely comfortable, as shown by the way they milk. There is no wearing of holes under their feet, as where a dirt floor is used. The floor is less slippery than a plank would be. It is more cleanly, as it does not absorb any filth It costs less than timber and planks, would here, and will last many times as long. It is not slippery because gravel was used to mix with cement, partly, thus making the surface slightly rough.

But if you are short of bedding, as many are in Vermont, why it may not be best to lay a cement floor under the front feet of cows. You can lay about two feet from edge of gutter, and then fill in in front with clay, or gravel, and pack down. This will save the manure all right, and enable you to make the cows comfortable with less bedding. I tried this plan years ago, only I put planks along next to manure gutter for the hind feet of cows to stand on. I found they would work holes in the earth under their feet, and was not fully satisfied with the arrangement, and soon took it out. If short of bedding, I might put up with it.

CHARCOAL.

While we think there is no other thing as good a medicine for swine and poultry which are being fed upon soft food as is a mixture of charcoal with it, there are some who claim that for the swine at least a little hardwood ashes is equally good. If so, we think it must be because its effect is to sweeten the acids in the stomach which are greatly increased by fermentation there, even if the food has not been allowed to ferment before it is given. But we would not resort to ashes as long as we could buy charcoal for a reasonable price. A tablespoonful in a pail of mash is sufficient if given every day, and it has been frequently proven that poultry fatten much more readily when it is used in their food, and the same thing is asserted of swine, though we do not remember of having seen any report of careful experiments in testing it.

FRUIT TREES ALONG HIGHWAYS

The cultivation of fruit trees along the high roads of France is being extended year by year. Following the example of the Government, the communes in certain departments adopted the practice as a sort of revenue, and now it has become an important branch of national industry. In Germany, Belgium and the Duchy of Luxemburg also the system is being rapidly developed. Last year the fruit harvest from the roads of Wurtemburg amounted to more than $600,000 as compared with $200,000 in 1878; for the last 15 years Saxony has gained a revenue of about $340,000, from the same source; and Belgium's three-quarters of a million fruit trees, planted along the roads in 1894, now furnish $200,000.

QUEER PLACE FOR A BIRD'S NEST.

Built in the Thick Hair Between the Horns of a Buffalo.

It was a good many years ago that old Hugh Monroe, who for more than 75 years had traveled the prairies of the northwest, told me that once he had found a bird's nest in the thick hair between the horns of a buffalo bull that he had killed. He had two Indians with him, and had killed the young bull, which the Indians were beginning to skin and cut up, and while they were doing this he plucked some of the long hair from the forehead to use in wiping out his gun. As he reached down and grasped the hair a little bird—a little gray bird—flew out from under his hand and away. Parting the hair to see whence it had come, he found a round, smooth nest, containing four little young birds. He could not tell what kind of birds they were.

Some time after, when I was sitting in the lodge with my Indian father and elder brothers, principal chiefs of the Blackfeet, I spoke of this tale that had been told me, and learned that all who were present had heard of just this thing. On-ests-pokan, the White Calf, had known of one case of this kind where the bird was a blackbird, but this he had not seen himself.

Once, however, he did see the nest of a snowbird, containing four eggs, between the horns of a bull. Inquiry, followed by a careful and detailed description, showed that the bird which the Blackfeet call snowbird was the prairie shore lark.

After we had talked about this for some time E-kus-kini, the Low Horn, said to me: "My friend, I will now tell you something. Do you know that Neo-po-muki counts the months of winter on his tongue?"

"No," I said, "I know Neo-po-muki, but I do not know what you mean by counting the months of winter on his tongue."

"This is it," said Low Horn. "In spring if you kill one and open his mouth and lift up his tongue you will find under the tongue five other tongues, one tongue for each month of the winter. In the fall he does not have these extra tongues. I do not know why he has them nor what it means."

Neo-po-muki is the chickadee, and he is so called from his cry, for he says always: "Summer is coming! Summer is coming!"—Forest and Stream.

HALEVY'S SURPRISE.

Opera Air Whistled on the Street Before Its Production.

When Halevy, the noted composer of "The Jewess" and other successful operas, was economizing strictly just before the production of "The Musketeers of the Queen" at the Opera Comique, in Paris, a singular incident occurred, according to his own story. His bank account was all but exhausted, and he walked back and forth between dwelling and theater to save expenses.

He was counting heavily on a big success for the new opera. Everybody at the rehearsals was enraptured with the music and prophesied great popularity for it. One day after leaving the theater Halevy was walking along the boulevard and noticed presently that a man a few steps ahead of him was whistling loudly—an unpardonable sin among well bred people in Paris. The air the man was whistling struck him as familiar at first. Then suddenly it dawned upon him that it was the principal melody of his new opera.

The composer quickened his pace and, overtaking the whistler, saw that he was a workingman. He accosted him, saying quietly:

"My good man, do you know what you are doing? Do you know that there are not two men in Paris that can whistle that melody?"

The stranger looked at Halevy with a puzzled expression and asked simply. "Why?"

"Simply because no one else knows the song as yet."

"Is that so? How do you know?"

"It is true. It is part of the new opera which is now being rehearsed in the Opera Comique. Now, won't you be good enough to tell me where you heart it?"

"I heard it yesterday while I was repairing a damaged spot in the wall of the Opera Comique."

Avoiding Wartime Raids.

J. H. Gore writes an article for St. Nicholas on "Hiding Places In Wartimes." In describing a house on debatable ground that had many secret nooks, the author says:

The house had a cellar with a door opening directly out upon the "big road," and never did a troop, large or small, pass by without countless soldiers seeking something eatable in this convenient cellar. It was never empty, but nothing was ever found. A partition had been run across about three feet from the back wall, so near that even a close inspection would not suggest a space back of it, and being without a door no one would think there was a room beyond. The only access to this back cellar was through a trapdoor in the floor of the room above. This door was always kept covered by a carpet, and in case any danger was imminent a lounge was put over this, and one of the boys, feigning illness, was there "put to rest." In this cellar apples, preserves, pickled pork, etc., were kept, and its existence was not known to any one outside the family.

"The Best Man That Ever Lived."

After hearing so many women express themselves upon the subject we have come to the conclusion that "the best man who ever lived," if he ever marries, will have to take what he can get The ordinary everyday sort of man will probably continue, as heretofore, to gather in the cream of the fair ...

Promoted.

Medical Professor—In a patient, what is the first thing to find out?

Student—Find out if he can pay.—Bait Fiend.

FASHION AND FABRIC.

The new jet and cut steel embroideries are quaint and elaborate in design, and the work on net, velvet or satin is very beautifully executed.

The new weaves of lustrous corded silks that are in such high vogue this season share with satin the honor of making special gowns of ceremony.

More and more svelt and clinging, if this be possible, grow the dress skirts, tunics, princess robes and long peplum and tablier effects on the front and sides of the gown.

Very handsome ball dresses are this season made of chenille dotted net over satin, trimmed with very fluffy plaited ruffles of chiffon bordered with tiny lines of chenille the color of the dot in the net.

All sorts of quaintly flounced polonaises, redingotes, newmarkets, camisards and princess shaped cloak dresses, with loose, curved fronts and bishop sleeves, prevail among the unusual variety of winter wraps.

Among the gray furs sibeline, Persian lamb and chinchilla are the most fashionable used this winter. Chinchilla is one of the most expensive and certainly it is the least durable and less becoming than the other pelts.

Many of the new French demidress gowns are made with three or five overlapping flounces arranged upon a very closely fitting foundation skirt which expands very much on the lower portion. The round waist is joined, or else cut in one with the upper flounce.

Very novel and pretty effects are employed in decorating the tops of new winter sleeves that are as close fitting as they can comfortably be worn. Crescent shaped puffs of fur or velvet, vandykes covered with special pieces in passementerie, stitched straps and Queen Bess puffs slashed and laced across all are used.

Italian red, much like the tint of the heart of a Jack rose, is a marked favorite in the brilliant winter list of colors, and cloth gowns of this becoming shade, with sable, mink, otter or fox band collar and revers by way of trimming, are considered among the smartest of the winter styles for youthful wearers.

ORCHARD AND GARDEN.

Wire is better than wood for any kind of grape trellis.

The older a tree gets the less adapted it is to transplanting.

Give the orchard good care. It will pay better than any other labor.

Too much manure before the tree comes into bearing often induces an excessive growth of wood at the expense of fruit.

In lifting trees for transplanting secure all the roots possible—not so much the stout roots as the fine, threadlike or fibrous ones.

Mulching continually is a dangerous practice, as it draws the roots too near the surface, so that they lose their hold upon the soil.

House plants will need watering usually once or twice a week. One thorough watering a week will give better results than a daily sprinkling.

Drainage is necessary for success in the growing of plants in window boxes as well as every place else. See that it is provided when the dirt is put into the boxes.

In raising trees or plants from cuttings the important point is to have the callus formed as soon as possible, so that the emission of roots will be a little ahead of the unfolding of the leaves.—St. Louis Republic.

THE COOKBOOK.

Raisins are most easily seeded by pouring boiling water over them, letting it stand a few minutes and pouring it off. Then the seeds can be removed without much trouble.

It is said that cake that is stale and dry may be freshened so as to seem newly baked by putting it in a tin, covering the tin with another pan and leaving the whole in a warm oven for 20 minutes.

The secret of good cranberry sauce is the use of a very little water and quick cooking. Eight or ten minutes is long enough, as otherwise the bitter taste of the seeds is developed. A small cup of water to a quart of cranberries is sufficient. The sugar is added just as the sauce is taken from the stove.

A common fault with the usual way of cooking scrambled eggs is that they are cooked so hard as to be indigestible. This may be obviated by allowing a tablespoonful of milk or water to each egg, cooking the mixture only until it is creamy and stirring meanwhile with a fork. Strained tomato may be substituted for the water or cream, and the mixture served on hot buttered toast.

TOWN TOPICS.

Truth is stranger than the estimated population of Chicago.—Adams Freeman.

Kansas City gives as an excuse for her footpads that the streets are slippery and the police are unable to hold up the pedestrians.

The person who wrote "The Beautiful Snow" never saw a snowfall in Kansas City after it had been let alone for about a week by the street cleaning department.—Kansas City Star.

Captain Sigsbee's presentation of a Bible to the St. Paul Commercial club appears to be a hint to that body that there are some standard works it doesn't read enough.

Temple's Temper.

An English paper says that a deputation of complaining laymen waited upon the archbishop of Canterbury and laid their burden before him, one item after another, the last one being, as expressed by the spokesman, "And, my lord, we regret to observe that you fail to treat us as gentlemen."

"But you are not," replied Dr. Temple in his most rasping manner.

A Zulu Woman's Opinion.

Mrs. Dube, a native Zulu woman, who was educated in an American mission school in Natal, says that on coming to this country the strangest thing to her was the quantity of clothes that the women here have. The women seem to be always buying new clothes or having them made in new styles.

"Now in Zululand," she says, "those of us who wear clothes wear them until they are old. American women demand much attention. You want to be made a great deal of and you want the men to wait on you so much. In Africa it's different, I tell you. The women wait on the men there. Not but what I guess I like the change a little," she admitted meditatively, "but you go to the other extreme here. When you have ever so little a trouble you feel it so much That is because you have been petted until you do not know how to be strong."—New York Tribune.

The Boy Gatling.

Mr. Richard Gatling, the inventor of the famous gun which bears his name, was a dabbler in science at the age of 13. At that time his father was puzzling over a machine for sowing cotton seeds, but, try as much as he would, he could not perfect it, and at last, in a fit of despair, he called in young Richard to his aid. The lad listened attentively to the details of the proposed invention, fully grasped the difficulties, shut himself up in a room to think, and in a little while suggested a way out of them. This was eagerly adopted by the elder Gatling, with the result that the machine was perfected and became a great success.

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