Killed by the Sun

It is difficult to find any Londoners of the third generation—that is to say, descendants in the third generation of people who have lived all their lives in London.

Now a scientist is pointing out that the United States is rapidly becoming a nation of dark-haired, dark-skinned people. He says that fair-haired families cannot survive south of the St. Lawrence, and that unless they intermarry with dark-haired people they will become extinct within three generations.

The Saxon is naturally hard as nails, and if in ordinary good health can settle down and enjoy life even in the Tropics. But if a fair-haired man marries a fair-haired woman and they live in a hot country, their children are seldom strong, and in a generation or two they die out. They are, in fact, killed by the sun.

One thing is certain—that blondes are more common in the north than in the south. Seventy per cent. of Swedes and Norwegians are fair, and about forty per cent. of North Germans, but only about two per cent. of French people. In Italy less than three thousand of the people have fair skins and blue eyes, and nearly all of these belong to aristocratic families who have never had to work in the sun.

From Other Worlds?

While the idea of shooting to the moon is often considered by astronomers, the possibility of projectiles ever having been shot to the earth is hardly considered at all. Yet strange carved stones of which there has been no satisfactory explanation have fallen from the sky and been picked up at different times.

In 1887, a small carved stone, covered with ice, fell at Tarbes, in France. In 1892 another stone, also carved, dropped in a plantation in Dutch Guiana, while a carved cylinder of stone was reported to have fallen in the United States in 1910.

A possible explanation concerning the stone that fell at Tarbes was made at the time by Professor Sudre, who thought that it must have been swept up in a whirlwind in some other part of the world and then dropped at Tarbes.

But while such a supposition might be accepted as possible, more convincing evidence is required, for should the scientist's surmise in regard to the whirlwind be correct, it is strange that the stone should have fallen alone—without any of the other things a whirlwind would be bound to collect.

Making Monkeys Work

In Pattani, a southern province of Siam, and in Kelantan, one of the unfederated Malay States, monkeys are trained by the natives to pick cocoanuts and edible seed pods for their masters.

The romantic notion, says a writer in 'Science,' that monkeys naturally climb cocoanut palms and throw down the nuts out of mischief is pure fiction. The monkeys must be caught young and carefully trained to their jobs by attaching them to a long pole, on the top of which is fastened a bunch of fruit. The animals quickly learn to run up to the fruit and throw it down for their own food. Having once mastered the main idea, as it were, they can then be perfected in their profession in the palm trees.

Only the larger monkeys are successful with the cocoanuts. The smaller monkeys can manage the pods which grow in small clusters on the ends of the branches of the sataw tree, and which provide the natives with an important food item. The seeds resemble a broad bean and are eaten as a vegetable, both raw and cooked. It is said that a well-trained monkey can pick as many pods in a day as a man, thus enabling his fortunate owner to earn a full day's wages with a minimum amount of effort.

A Windmill Church

While a parish church in Sussex was being repaired recently, the services were held in the rector's cowshed, and an altar and organ were erected there.

Queer churches are common in this country, and the writer knows of one in a converted windmill on Reigate Heath. It seats about twenty-five worshippers and, needless to say, is crowded at every service.

Thousands of Londoners do not know that a shop belonging to a cutler and optician, in Bishopsgate St., is actually a church. A close inspection reveals that above the shop is a belfry that has been there for over a century.

Who has heard of the "church in the wood" in the village of Hollington? Regarded as one of the quaintest churches in England, it is situated in the heart of a wood. There is a legend that the foundations were originally laid in the village, but the devil disagreed with the site and moved the stone to its present position.

On Blacklead Island, in the Arctic Ocean, stands a church constructed entirely of sealskins. A missionary sewed the skins together and stretched them over whalebone "girders."

Professor Seeley at The Popular Star

ON WEDNESDAY AND THURSDAY.

Reference to the ad on another page will show that the Management of the popular Star has again arranged with "The Strong Man" for another exhibition on Wednesday and Thursday next both afternoons and nights. In this appearance the Professor will demonstrate an entire change of strength, one of which will be the driving of spikes with his hands in a large plank, and drawing them out with his teeth. This is a feat that is almost unbelievable, but it is a fact as will be shown on these nights.

Fame Overnight

Fame comes suddenly to few men, but it came to Sir Rider Haggard in a single night. From the moment of the publication of "King Solomon's Mines," the name of this popular writer, whose death recently came as a great shock to his countless admirers, was a household word.

Sir Rider wrote "King Solomon's Mines" as a result of a five shillings bet. His brother had just finished reading "Treasure Island," then a new book, and declared it was the finest thing he had ever read. Rider bet him five shillings he would write a book that would sell as well.

His brother laughed but Rider was in earnest. He started work at once, and presently finished his book. He spent much time in these days travelling between London and Norwich, and the story was written in the train.

One of the big scenes in "King Solomon's Mines" was inspired by a memory of his schooldays. A private tutor, to whom he went when he was nine years old, always wore a ring, which, he told Rider, had been taken from the finger of a Peruvian mummy. His mummy had been found in a mound sepulchre in the land of the Incas, and as the discoverer touched the ring the whole mummy crumbled into dust.

Some time after "King Solomon's Mines" had been written, the novelist was able to secure this wonderful old ring, and presented it to the British Museum.

The Smallest Republic

In these days of great republics the smallest is not without interest.

This is Tavolara, a little island situate seven and a half miles from Sardinia, in the Mediterranean. It is little more than a mile in length, and has a population of fifty-five.

The sovereignty of the island was given in 1836 to the Bartoleoni family, and up to 1882 Paul I. reigned peacefully over his island kingdom. On his death the islanders proclaimed a republic.

By the constitution the President is elected for ten years, and both men and women exercise the vote.

There's Many a Slip

Nation (New York): The great difference between the British debt settlement and what may be called the Belgian-French-Italian negotiations is that Great Britain was known to be solvent and capable of paying substantially in full, while the other European Allies would, if they were business corporations, long since have been obliged to go into bankruptcy; intelligent students of finance do not expect them ever to pay their debts to the United States in full, nor even to settle their internal obligations without tremendous losses to those who lent to them when their currencies were at or near their gold parity.

Hard-boiled eggs can be tinted with beet juice, and, while hot, pressed into the shape of apples, to be served on lettuce with dressing.

"O Liberty, What Crimes—!"

A writer in the New Statesman draws a contrast between the English and American conceptions of liberty: "We inherited our liberties from you," said an American delegates at a recent conference in London, "and we are now discovering that in order to enjoy them we must come to England." This discovery is being made afresh every year by tens of thousands of American visitors to these shores. In England we recognize that, whatever else it means and covers, freedom in its most elementary form implies the right of a minority to existence and expression. The United States has been from the beginning the land of the merciless majority. When Harriot Martineau was there, in 1834, the Abolitionists were a persecuted sect. Twenty years later the apologists of Negro slavery were, in their turn, the detested minority. In the treatment of the defeated Southern States, after 1865, may be found the historic justification, in the popular American mind, for the treatment of Germany by the Allies. To anyone who was in America in 1917 there was a startling significance in the movement of the mass; the sudden change from America neutral to America belligerent; in the swiftness and completeness with which the drilled majority suppressed all discussion, declared a moratorium upon thought, and fell into line for the saving of food, the raising of loans and relief funds, the singing of songs, the chanting of slogans. The world was shown that when it came to the organization of the multitude for a national purpose, imperialist Prussia was, in the quaint American phrase, "not a circumstance," when put beside a great standardized democracy.

Fame's Short Cut

(By THE EDITOR OF "ANSWERS.")

The first time I heard of Lord Birkenhead, whose "maiden name" is "Freddie" Smith, was in the year 1906, a little under twenty years ago. The Conservatives, after the election of that year, were in much the same position as the Liberals in this year of grace—they were snowed under. They stood sadly in need of someone who could make up in weight what the party lacked in numbers.

It is safe to say that few in the House ever heard of F. E. Smith, although he had made a name at the Oxford Union, the University debating society of which he had been President. When he entered Parliament he was a barrister of promise. But no one who heard his first speech would ever forget him again. Next morning that young man woke to find himself famous.

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What had he done? Anything wonderful? Had he made a great scientific discovery, traced to its foul source some death-dealing disease, invented a machine which would reduce the drudgery of mankind, written a book which would be the delight of ages yet unborn? No. He had only shown himself able to stand before a critical audience of his fellow-men, and, without hesitation, in good style, in clear tones, with wit and point, make a speech.

Why the power to speak in public should be so highly regarded and so richly rewarded is a puzzle. The men who form Cabinets, whose names are known to everybody, whose doings are reported in all the papers, are almost invariably there by virtue of the fact that they are more or less masters of effective public speech. When we come to know them we are not struck with their manifest ability, their outstanding claims to special distinction.

We can easily recall quiet talks in study and garden, by the quiet fireside, or on some memorable country walk, when we have rubbed our wits against the wits of a really great man, when we have felt the presence of genius, and when we have wondered at a greatness which the world has passed by.

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So we wonder why it is that this man is in the Cabinet, while that man, with a much subtler mind, a much higher intelligence, the master of a fine literary style, learned, cultured, high-minded, a brilliant conversationalist, is only known to the "fit and few"? It is a fact that both Darwin and Tennyson regarded Gladstone with feelings akin to awe. They looked upon him as a superior being.

Yet was he? Gladstone, of course, had other claims to greatness than his oratory, but it was that which made him one of the greatest figures of the last century. It was his ability to sway an audience which made him a power at twenty-five, while Tennyson was so poor that he could not marry till he was turned forty, and Darwin an oldish man before the public heard of him.

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Instances might be multiplied endlessly. The shortest way to fame is via the platform; the most valuable asset a man can possess is the tongue of an orator; the way to preferment, whether in the Church, on the stage, at the Bar, or in public life, is what is rather vulgarly called "the gift of the gab."

Yet there seems to be no realization of this fact in our schools and colleges. The attainment of a platform manner and a capacity for public speech seem to be left entirely to chance.

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A great many of the Labour leaders—though the remark probably does not apply to the younger men—learned to speak in Nonconformist pulpits and on Sunday-school platforms. At first they stumbled and hesitated and were ungrammatical and disconnected, but practice made perfect, and to-day few men speak with more directness and force than these men, whose educational advantages have been of the slightest.

Thus we have witnessed the miracle of an engine-driver, a grocer's assistant, a carpenter, a railway clerk, a piercer in a cotton mill, and a dock labourer "keeping their end up" in debate with men whose education was gained at Eton and Oxford.

Then why do not our schools and colleges teach the art of oratory? The born orator is as rare almost as the poet. It is not he of whom one is thinking. He will probably find his platform in any case. But among the rank and file there are undoubtedly many who would make what we call "fine speakers," and our schools ought to be able to discover them, to encourage them to practice the art of public speaking, and to accustom them to thinking "on their feet."

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When we think that at the Bar, on the stage, in the Church, and in Politics men must depend for success upon this power of public speech, it is amazing that we are willing to teach anything and everything except the one thing most needful. A man may be a fine classical scholar, but if he cannot move a jury he will not be a success at the Bar. He may be a splendid mathematician, but if he cannot make an audience laugh or cry with a word he will never be a great actor. He may know English, French and Italian literature, and be a great theologian, but if he cannot preach I do not see what use he is in the pulpit.

A man may even know a "cure for unemployment," but if he cannot convince an audience that he does know it he will never be able to apply it. On the other hand, the political "quack," by the witchery of his platform style, may be able to make an audience think he has fifty cures up his sleeve for our worst problem, and will get into Parliaments and Governments, while the other man cannot even get on his borough council.

Batter cakes baked on a soapstone griddle, while more attractive in appearance, are tougher than those baked on a greased pan.

Serve fruit cocktail in sherbert glasses, topped with pink-tinted whipped cream, and garnished with chopped pistachio nuts.