

ENTERTAINING MISCELLANY

VARIOUS SUBJECTS CLEVERLY TREATED

An Old Man's Valentine.

The dim, sweet eyes of yesterday
Look sadly into mine,
And dreamily old Memory
Pours out his mellow wine,
I drink it to the dregs, and then
See one fair face again:

Lips curved with merry laughter,
Eyes bright with tears unshed,
Two cheeks like poppies red,
A slender shape, a stately air,
And curling clouds of hair.

Her gown—ah! "quaint" you call it,
But fair and gracious too;
Hooped skirt and tight-laced bodice,
And petticoat of blue,
Embroidered in pure silk and gold
From countries far and old.

About the sloping shoulders
Droops low in lovely lines
A silken shawl of creamy crape,
Whose lustrous surface shines
And shimmers on that panting breast
Like billows, crest on crest.

Ah! lady, sweet and stately,
Still gleam thy lovely eyes,
And still I watch thy lashes
Curve low in shy surprise,
And hear thy voice, whose mellow note
On lucid air doth float!

Dear lady, gay and gracious,
Whose beauty haunts me still,
Brush from thee, like a cobweb,
Time's ancient, senseless ill!
Step from thy frame, oh, sweetheart
mine,
And be to-day my Valentine!

Items of Interest.

The tree frogs of South America sing as musically as birds.

The chipmunk lays by stores and sleeps from mid-November till spring.

A silken thread is three times as strong as a flaxen one the same thickness.

Horses, giraffes and ostriches have, in proportion to their size, larger eyes than any other living creature.

At the railway stations in Russia books are kept in which passengers may enter any complaint they wish to make.

In the capital of Honduras all the houses in the poorer quarter are made of mahogany, which costs less than pine there.

The salmon is, for short distances, the swiftest swimmer of any fish. It can travel at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour.

The mattresses used in the German army are stuffed with little rolls of paper, and are said to be a great improvement on straw.

Of all the boy workers in London newsboys are the healthiest, barbers' boys the most unhealthy—a tribute to the open-air life.

The largest plow ever built has been successfully used on a Texas ranch. The implement tears a strip of ground seven feet wide.

Instances of extreme old age are more common among those who exercise themselves with gardening than in any other employment.

Greenland was so called when first discovered by an exploring party of hardy Icelanders. The sight of this green oasis amid arctic wastes was the source of much pleasant surprise.

So many languages are spoken in the provinces of Austria-Hungary that interpreters are employed in the various parliaments to interpret the speeches of the delegates and make them intelligible to all the members.

A Calcutta paper tells of a doctor in a Bengal hospital who had a bearskin doormat. In a few days it was plucked entirely bare. Whatever ailments the patients complained of, they regarded a few hairs from the doctor's mat as more curative than the medicines he prescribed.

The egret in a woman's bonnet is the crowning beauty of an egret mother. The collector seizes the bird while she is on her nest, with the young bird just hatched, and tears off her plumes and wings, leaving her to die beside her little ones, who, deprived of her fostering care, also die.

Many centuries ago, in Florence, the very first men who made a business of lending money were members of the great Medici family, whose coat-of-arms consisted of three gilt balls. When other men took up the same sort of business, they adopted the Medici arms also, and so the custom has continued to the present day.

There are several species of fish, reptiles and insects which never sleep in the whole of their existence. Among fish it is positively known that pike, salmon and goldfish never sleep at all; also that there are several others in the fish family that never sleep more than a few minutes a month. There are dozens of species of flies which never indulge in slumber.

Milan, the centre of Italy for the moving picture machine trade, has already about forty such theatres. Every available hall is being turned into a moving picture show, while nearly every second and third-rate theatre and "café chantant" finishes the evening's entertainment with a few cinematograph pictures. During the summer months even the larger theatres are used.

Locusts are proving hardly less destructive in German Southwest Africa than the three years' rising of natives. A settler not long ago attempted to defend his little plot of land by digging all around it a ditch one yard broad and of equal depth, at the bottom of which he lit a fire. But the insects swarmed into the ditch till the flames had been extinguished by their accumulated corpses.

The largest mica mine in the world is located at Sydenham, Ontario, sixteen miles from Kingston. The product is mostly amber mica, with some silver amber, the highest quality mined. The mine is one mile from the upper end of Sydenham Lake, and the mica is transported in bulk from the mine by barge to the railroad at Sydenham, where it is shipped to Ottawa for trimming for the market.

With the final closure of the Colorado River, the great Salton Sink, which was inundated as the result of a poorly-constructed headgate of an irrigation canal, and rapidly converted into an inland sea, will gradually dry up. Inasmuch as there are practically no outlets for this vast body of water, the Sink must naturally evaporate to dryness. According to scientific opinion, the Salton Sea will dry up in about eight years.

An extraordinary addition has been made to the exhibition of inventions now being held in Berlin. A shoemaker named Wagner, living in Strasburg, sent in a clock of the grandfather shape, nearly six feet high, made entirely of straw. The wheels, pointers, case and every detail are exclusively of straw. Wagner has taken fifteen years to construct this strange piece of mechanism. It keeps perfect time, a Berlin report says.

Beggars in Persia ride on donkeys and often make long journeys. How they manage to obtain these useful animals, or even to exist themselves, is beyond European comprehension.

The Persian tramp, astride his donkey, will journey as far as Meshed or Mecca, when he returns with the proud title of "Hadjil." Useful as the donkey is to his mendicant master, the latter often treats him in a most brutal fashion. When the unfortunate animal needs encouragement a piece of chain is a frequent substitute for a whip.

There is a blind girl in Nova Scotia, about thirty-five miles from Halifax, who has done such wonderful things in the last two years that the people have come to believe that she is a witch and are afraid of her. She can tell when a storm is coming, no matter if it is two weeks off. She can tell when schools of fish come along the coast; when anyone in the village is to fall sick; when anyone is to lose his cow or horse. If a crime is committed she gives a description of the criminal and sometimes tells where he is hiding. In July she predicted the loss of a steamer on which her own father would be a passenger, and he was lost with the vessel.

General Information.

The first almanac was printed in Hungary in 1470.

Switzerland, in proportion to its size, has more hotels than any other country.

The first lightning-conductor was invented by an obscure Bohemian monk in 1754.

The Japanese release pigeons instead of smashing a bottle of wine on the stem of a ship which is being launched.

Italy owns the world's three largest churches—St. Peter's, Rome; The Duomo, Milan; and St. Paul's, at Rome.

Death from accidents among seamen number fifty-three per 10,000, five times higher than in "dangerous occupations."

When an oyster is a fortnight old it is not much larger than the head of a pin. At the end of four years' growth it is fit for the table.

The biggest estate in the United Kingdom is the lordship of Sutherland, the property of the Duke of Sutherland. The estate is no less than 739,200 acres.

A French statistician estimates that about 550,000 motor-cars have been manufactured in the nine years since the experiments of self-propelled road vehicles first succeeded.

During a thunderstorm a remarkable incident happened at a house near Deal, the lightning imprinting a perfect photograph of a flower-vase on a mirror before which it stood.

The largest orchards in the world are at Werder, near Berlin. They extend without a break to about 13,000 acres. They yield some 48,000,000 pounds of apples and pears every year.

A curious insect has arrived from Brazil at the South Kensington Museum. It is a beetle. At its head gleams a red ruby lamp, and eleven green lights glow forth from each side of the little creature. These peculiarities have earned it the name of "Railway Beetle."

As the result of experiments, it has been found that the greyhound is the fastest of all four-footed animals. When going at full gallop it can cover twenty yards a second, or about a mile a minute and twenty-eight seconds—a speed that comes very near that of a carrier pigeon.

The smallest motor is that made by a German mechanic. It is worked by a battery deposited in his pocket, and he uses the motor as a scarf-pin. It is working all the time, simply to show that it is an actual working motor. It is curious to see the little wheels revolving as the machine rests on the scarf.

What is claimed to be the largest single leather belt in the world has been made in Chicago for an American saw-mills plant. It was made from pure oak bark tanned leather; is 48 inches in width, three-ply in thickness, and weighs just 2,300 pounds. The belt is 114 feet long; it took the centres of the hides of 225 steers to make it, and each piece of this leather was separately stretched before being placed in the belt.

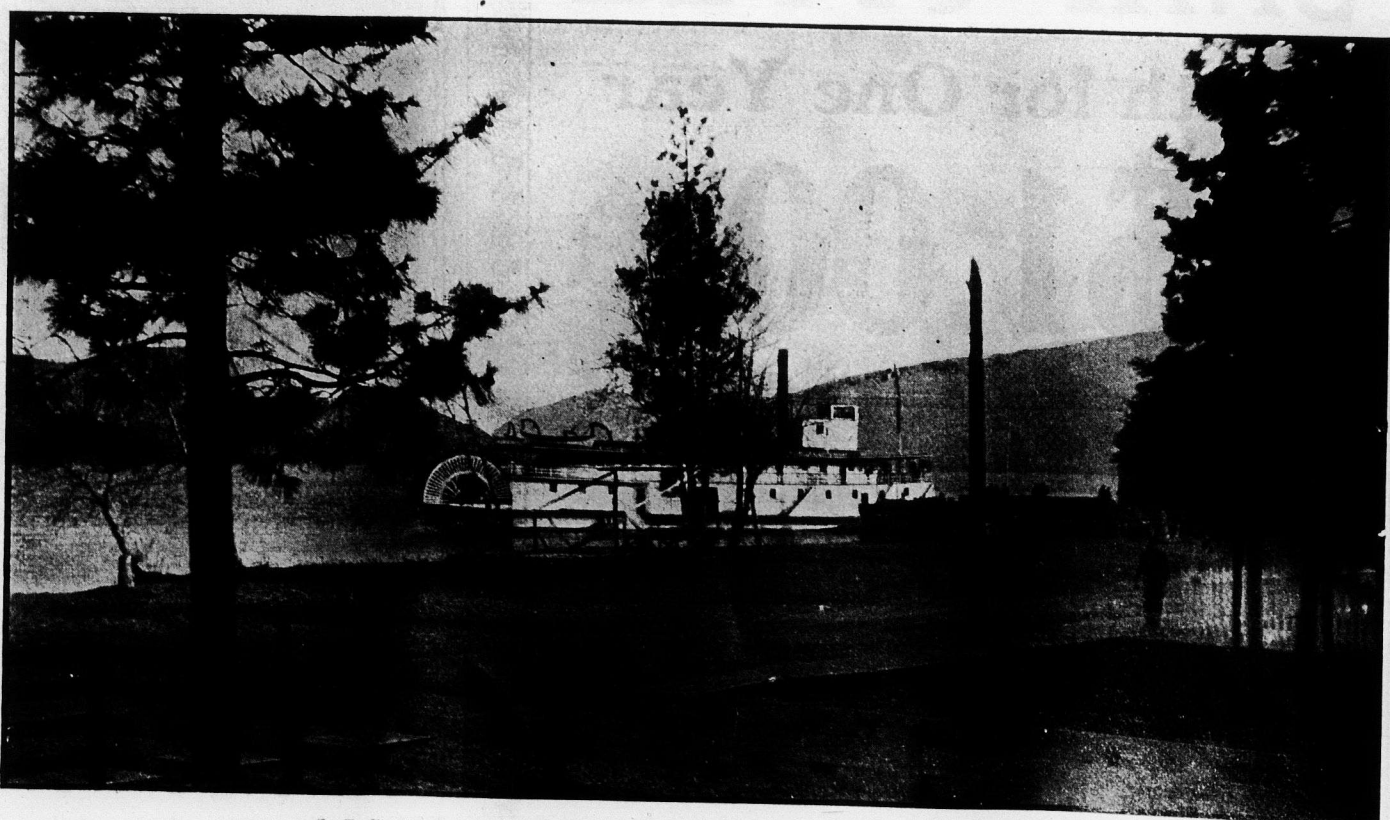
An ingenious device has been invented by an employee of the street railway in an American city and is being tested. Whenever a passenger stands on the lower step a buzzer sounds in the motorman's compartment and warns him not to start the car until the signal ceases, which it does the instant the passenger reaches the platform or the ground. Contact points are placed in the step which are brought together by the weight of the passenger.

The British House of Commons and local representative assemblies are not the only places where word-spinning has developed into a fine art. In a recent session of the United States Congress 40,000,000 words were uttered in the seven months. The official record contains frequent instances of sixty columns of speeches for a six hours' sitting, an average of 165 words a minute. The Senate devoted seventy days to debate on the Railway Rate Bill.

Grow Peppermint.

Miss Mary Clark, of Galien, near Indianapolis, is the only woman in the world to enter upon the culture of peppermint for market. She has made a study of the plant and its culture, and so improved upon the methods employed by the veteran mint growers that her farm of eighty-three acres is the best mint producer in the world. Miss Clark watches her crop so carefully that she produces a higher grade of crop and more to the acre than any other mint grower, and in addition she attends to the other duties of her farm in Indiana, where she lives alone with her widowed mother. There are no men employed on the farm except in summer.

Be There a Will, Wisdom Points the Way.—The sick man pines for relief, but he dislikes sending for the doctor, which means bottles of drugs never consumed. He has not the resolution to load his stomach with compounds which smell villainously and taste worse. But if he have the will to deal himself with the ailment, wisdom will direct his attention to Parmelee's Vegetable Pills, which, as a specific for indigestion and disorders of the digestive organs, have no equal.



C. P. R. Steamboat "Aberdeen" at wharf, Peachland, Okanagan Valley, B. C.

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