

Chats with the Children.

Many persons, says Comma, have been waiting, and still wait, with impatience for the news that ought to reach us from the Andree expedition by means of the twenty-five carrier pigeons that were taken with it. I was agreed, it seems, that these pigeons should be set loose from day to day and, whatever may be the fate of the balloon 'Engle, it seems very astonishing that only one of these birds should have reached us, the one set at liberty in latitude 82 degrees. An English naturalist, Mr. Tegetmeier, explains that we have been misled by a false hope, carrier pigeons not being able, according to him, to traverse the great distance that in less than one day would separate the travellers from the home of the pigeons, and still less to traverse the 1,400 kilometres (870 miles) between Tromsø and the North Pole. Pigeons have flown from Belgium to Rome (less than 500 miles), but the proportion of those that made the journey was very small, besides, the flight took fifteen days, and, finally, it was made under favorable conditions, in that wherever a pigeon might alight it found food and a resting place. These conditions are absolutely lacking in the Arctic regions, and the probability is that the pigeons of the expedition have perished miserably and uselessly. No brooder who had any affection for his birds, says Mr. Tegetmeier, would have consented to expose them to such a trial, if he had had the least experience in his business.

THE BELFRY PIGEON. On the cross beam of the old South bell tower. The nest of a pigeon is built well; In the summer and winter that bird is there. Out and in with the morning air. I love to see him track the street, With his wary eye and active feet. And I often watch him as he springs, Jangling the steps with easy wings. Till across the dust his shadow has passed. And the belfry edge is gained at last. 'Tis a bird I love, with its brooding note, And the trembling throbs in its mottled throat; There is a human look in his swelling breast. And the gentle curve of his lovely crest. And I often stop with the fear I feel— He runs so close to the rapid wheel. V. Hatorer is rung on that noisy bell— Chime of the hour or funeral knell— The dove in the belfry must hear it well. When the tongue swings out to the mid-night moon— When the sexton cheerily rings for noon— When the clock strikes clear at morning light— When the child is waked with "nine at night"— Whom the chimera plays soft in the Sabbath air— Filling the spirit with tones of prayer— Whichever tale in the bell is heard, He broods on his folded feet unstartled; Or, rising half in his rounded nest, He takes the time to smooth his breast, Then drops again with flamed eyes, And sleeps on the last vibration dies. Sweet bird! I would that I could be A hermit in the crowd like thee! With wings to fly to wood and glen, Thy lot, like mine, is cast with men: And daily, with unwilling feet, I tread like thee the crowded street; But unlike me when day is o'er, Thou canst dismiss the world and soar, Or, at a half-felt wish for rest, Canst smooth the feathers of thy breast, And drop forgetful to thy nest. —N. P. WILLIS.

BIRD MIGRATION. Prof. Dickson has been delivering an interesting lecture on birds before the New York school teachers. "Birds fly," he said, "in long, well-recognized lines or roads, usually along mountain ranges and river courses. There is a little island in the North Sea, opposite the mouth of the River Elbe, where several of these lines of flying birds converge. The island of Heli-goland is only about one-eighth the size of Central Park, and is two hundred feet above the sea level. There is a lighthouse upon it, and in foggy weather thousands of birds are attracted by the light, and come down to the island, when the wary natives secure many for their food. There are said to be more birds about this little island than upon any other spot in the world. The same thing happens at the light-house on Point Lepreau, in the Bay of Fundy, when the birds, losing their way in the fog, rush down to the light, and are frequently battered to death against the glass panes of the light. "The weaker birds generally migrate only by night, but the stronger ones advance also by day. They depend upon their sight for guidance, but it is miraculous how they pick their way across the trackless ocean! The migration of any one class of birds—like the geese, for example—is very interesting. They start out with a slow, orderly march, forming a long line across the country, swimming, in unbroken ranks, across the rivers in their way. Then the leaders begin to fly, going gradually higher and higher, until they are high up in the clouds. All behind follow them, and thus they go through the air together. When a leader is tired he drops out, and waits for the rear of the column, which he joins when it comes to him."—Our Dumb Animals.

A LION TAMER'S REMINISCENCES. The best instances of the way animals remember are usually afforded by elephants. That, I think, is greatly due to the elephants having more opportunity, they are free, whereas lions are caged up. I dare say I have trained twenty elephants, and used to perform as many as six at a time in one ring. One of my elephants—Bill we used to call her, though her name was really Bella—imported in 1861, was sold about twenty years later. Nine years after that I was at Vienna, and at a show exhibiting there I met Bill. She was just going into the ring, and I spoke to her. She stood stock still for just a couple of seconds, then she came right up to me, lifted her trunk, trumpeted, and began to be so thankful that I was glad to be there, and not sorry for Bill's sake. For I was the first to put her in her nest, and she kept by the side of her trainer a night. Another one of my elephants picked a man out from a crowd of five hundred people round the tent at Toulouse, knocked him down, and killed him. It was several years afterwards that that man had tormented her the day before. 'Pam' was another elephant, a mate of Bill's; he got into a transport of rage one morning at Toulon, killed his keeper, and threw the assistants and every body he could get hold of into the air. At last a body of artillerymen were called out, and they shot him with cannon. But I was speaking about the memory of animals. Well, some years ago there was a sale of animals at North Woolwich Gardens. In the catalogue was a group of elephants that I used to 'perform,' and that I hadn't seen for twelve years. As they were being led into the ring, I said to one of them 'Hallo, Pa!' an expression that used to be part of the performance. That elephant was electrified, and began to trumpet in an extraordinary manner. The others joined in the chorus, and got round me, encircling me with their trunks, as if to embrace me. It was with great difficulty that I could get away from them; and when I did, I fairly broke down and wept. The people at the sale asked me to repeat the performance; but I couldn't—I was too much upset. You see I'm fond of animals generally, and that's why I became an animal trainer. But animals also: I've lived with, that I've travelled every town and village in Europe with, that have become part and parcel of my life—well, do you wonder at me breaking down?"

SPLITTING IN THE CARS. A friend asks our help to stop the filthy habit of spitting in our street cars, which all physicians pronounce to be very dangerous to public health. We have in Boston a city ordinance making it punishable by a fine of not exceeding \$100 for each offence, and the practical method of stopping it, as it seems to us, is to have it published in all our city papers that half a dozen police detectives in citizens' clothes have been ordered to ride on the various lines of street cars and prose out every case they see. We think that after half a dozen spittores have been prosecuted and fined, and the cases reported in our daily papers, spitting in the cars will be pretty much stopped.—Geo. T. Angell, in Our Dumb Animals.

THE GLORIES OF KILLARNEY. "How shall I tell the glories of this place? Rapt stands the tourist wandering amid its splendours. The lakes look up to him with the soft beauty of remembered eyes. Rugged and grand the hills stand round him. Green appears the trees on rock and shore. Light follows shadow, shadow follows light. The air bears perfume from each bloom it cools; wild notes throb from many a songster's throat. Wherever the eye turns it rests on loveliness. Even the most noteworthy of spots about Killarney is delightful."—The Independent.

SAM HUGHES WARNED. Hamilton Times—The Toronto Register flouts facts by jesting at London's 'bellicose colonel. It thinks his any-part-of-the-world or is but blank rhetoric, and says the field in which he has chosen to fight is Egypt, whether he will go as soon as the Red Sea freezes over. Something happened to Pharaoh there some time ago. Sam ought to carry life insurance to his full value before attempting that route.

THE EMPEROR'S DOG. Several years ago one of the striking figures in the Russian palace at Gatchina was Peter, the great Danish hound that strobed his powerful form in the hall leading to the private apartments of the Tsar. This great dog is said to have been the largest of his species in the world, and was presented to the Tsarina by her father. It is said that the Tsar took a liking to the animal from the start, and never went any long journey without his company. Having but little confidence in those about him, he seemed to centre his faith in the dog as a guardian of unflinching fidelity, and the dog apparently reciprocated the attachment. At one time, when nihilist ruffians were rife, and documents of a threatening nature found their way to the very table of the Tsar's private cabinet, the ancestor of all the Russian permitted the hound to sleep in the hall adjoining the bedroom. For some unexplained reason the dog became very suspicious of one of the guardsmen and growled continuously when this man was put on duty as sentinel in the palace. Nothing could be shown and nothing was suspected against the man, but to satisfy the dog he was withdrawn from sentry duty.—Soured Heart Review.

Farm and Garden. A W. Wheeler, in New England Farmer Wood ashes, either leached or unleached, will almost invariably improve any pasture. So, too, will nitrate of soda, marlate of potash and fine steamed bone. Of these the important question is, Will it pay? One can judge by a trial on a small scale. It is little use, however, to spread such costly fertilizers upon land that is not well set with good grasses. Brakes and bushes do not pay for manuring.

BEWARE OF THE PARROTS. The British Medical Journal recently sounded a note of warning to those who make pets of parrots. These birds are the source of a disease, psittacosis, which has lately occurred at Genoa. The disease takes the form of a malignant pneumonia, and the mortality is 75 per cent. at the height and grave consequences, which are almost terminal, the old incident are most predisposed. The post mortem examination of two cases by Professor Lucatillo showed a general infection prevailing in the lungs, in which one observed the most varied acute alterations of tubular pneumonia, this infective did not exempt a single organ, there was incipient dissolution of the blood, and the spleen was so softened that it could not be extended. It is those individuals who lavish caresses on the birds that usually suffer.

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IN THE CURRENT NUMBER OF THE FORUM. Mr. C. Wood Davis, who is an authority on the relation of food bearing to the world's bread making population, undertakes to show that our Western farmers are entering upon a period of unbroken and increasing prosperity. He maintains that, after Europe shall have exhausted all possible supplies from the harvest of 1897, and such crops as may be harvested prior to July, 1898 there will be a deficit of the equivalent of 700,000,000 bushels of the bread making grains, with no resource except wheat; remainder from former harvests, and with no substitution possible, unless Europeans can be induced to eat bread made from Indian corn.

Mrs. Joseph Youll writes as follows in The Weekly Star: I believe that want of water in the poultry yard house is the cause of more loss to farmers than anything else which affects poultry. When a soft day comes the water drops from the roof into the manure. The hens being thirsty drink this liquid manure, which is sure to cause scour. We have bred Barred Plymouth rocks for years, but are giving the White Plymouth a trial. Not that I consider them any better fowl, but on account of being white they are easier cleaned for market. We raise one hundred and fifty chickens every year. The chances are that one-half of them will be cockerels. As soon as they are large enough to kill we commence killing them and supplying private customers at 50 cents per pair. When all the cockerels are killed we commence killing off the old hens. We never keep a hen over the second winter except a few for mothers. I find the best way to stop hens clogging is to have a box three feet wide, by about six feet long, with a seat bottom round so that the hen will have no place to sit down on except a bar. Set the box say six inches from the ground to allow a current of fresh air to pass under the box. Give plenty of feed and water, and in three days she may be let out and will commence to lay.

TO COMPREHEND THE PRESENT SITUATION with regard to breadstuffs, and its bearing upon the prospects of our Western farmers, the following facts, brought out by Mr. Davis, must be kept steadily in view. First, although the world's output of wheat in 1897 is several hundred million bushels less than the world's requirements, acre yields have been but little below the average. Secondly, even an average yield from the acres now employed would be 275,000,000 bushels less than present needs, and the greatest crop ever grown would not equal them. Thirdly, although requirements for wheat and rye progressively increase year after year by more than 40,000,000 bushels, not an acre has been added to the aggregate of the world's bread-bearing area since 1884. Lastly, an acreage deficit exists equal to the supply of as many bread eaters as have been added to the world's population in the last twelve years.

WE SEE, THEN, THAT THERE IS NO LIKELIHOOD that the world's supply of breadstuffs will again meet the world's requirements, unless, as we began by saying, Europeans can be persuaded to eat bread made from Indian corn or maize. There is no foundation for the belief that the Trans-Siberian Railway is about to open a vast region adapted to the production of wheat and rye. In all Siberia not more than 20,000,000 acres can be regarded as cultivable, and much more than half of these are already employed in the production of food staples. Mr. Davis tells us that when the Russian Minister of Ways and Communications, Prince Rilkeff, was in this country last October he declared that Siberia never had produced, and never would produce, wheat and rye enough to feed the Siberian population.

A Taxidermist. A taxidermist writes The Boston Daily Advertiser [in substance] that the principal part of the military feather business nowadays requires only access to a hen-yard and an [artificial] dyepot. We always knew that a useful and beautiful bird, but it may be well for our ladies to know how largely indolent they are to the hen-yards for their borrowed plumage.

SABBATHARIAN LOGIC. Marvellous and fearful are the arguments in general use amongst the advocates of a puritan Sunday, in support of their peculiar views. The brain turning sophisms and acrobatic twisting of logic (not according to Mill) are enough to open the mental equilibrium of any ordinary thinker. Fortunately or unfortunately, the general mass of the supporters of Sabbatarianism like followers of most other sects, don't think they know all that sort of thing to the genius whose business it is to find them arguments. But they have come the end of their tether. The force of logic can no further go, than in the following statement, emanating from that august body, the Lord's Day Alliance of Toronto. To wit: "If six men work seven days, they are doing the work of seven men in six days. Marvellous sophistry! more than Jeaneau! (Protestant Jesuitical casuistry! The consequence following this wonderful premise is, that if a man works on Sunday he is taking the bread out of the mouth of a fellow workman who (it is to be supposed) can get no work in consequence of the inconsiderate proceeding of the Sabbath breaker. And so the unthinking people who use the street cars on Sunday, and who allow who delivers an important message or letter on Sunday, are taking the bread out of the mouths of so many luckless individuals, who there were no street cars and no Sunday delivery of letters, (there isn't a never mind) would be in receipt of comfortable incomes. But, stay a moment, let us go back to the area must and repeat carefully and slowly: "If six men work seven days they are doing the work of seven men in six days? How long does it take seven men to do six days' work? And seven men work seven days, how many men will it take to do eight days' work? Oh we are getting muddled, let us take a different case. If a man marries his grandmother's niece, his sister's cousin what relation is to his wife? How do you work the things out, anyway? By equation or by application of the differential calculus? Here's an easy one, this: "If a herring and a half costs three cents, how much will the herrings cost?"

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