

SIDE TALKS.

By Ruth Cameron.

MEN, WOMEN AND TELEPHONES.

Why is it that men as a rule like the telephone so much less than women do? It is so, isn't it?

A man called my attention the other day to this difference of the two sexes toward the small but influential instrument.

"When things come up, my wife always says 'I'll telephone' where if it were left to me I'd write or let it be declared. 'And when the phone rings at night, my wife usually picks it up but I hate to hear the thing. You have to use them for business but no visiting over them."

They Get Enough.

Perhaps in that last sentence is one key to the difference in feeling. Men are to use the telephone so much more than women that they don't care to do anything to do with the instrument out of business hours.

And here's another explanation. The average man's life is led under conditions which make an interchange of casual conversation with fellow workers part of the day's routine. Whereas a woman works in the house alone, or with only small children to talk with. The telephone is a welcome outlet for her social needs. It takes the place of the back fence as a chat conductor. And has this vast advantage over the

back fence that it makes it possible for her to talk with the people she enjoys most instead of with those who happen to live next door to her.

When He Was Courting.

"But what I don't understand," said another man with whom I was discussing this subject, "is the way a woman feels so at home with a telephone and talks just as naturally over it as if she were sitting opposite the person she's talking to. Men aren't at home on a telephone. Now when I was courting my wife I used to go out to see her every other night, and the alternate night I'd telephone. Well, after I'd told her how business was and when I'd get out the next day, and so forth, I was through but she wanted to go on talking. And then if I didn't, she'd think I didn't care as much as I did at first."

A third man whom I consulted on this all important subject had a very interesting suggestion to offer.

An Hour's Chat.

"I can't tell you why women love to telephone so," he said, "that's beyond me. But I can tell you one reason why men hate it. Because when they have to call their homes for any purpose they have such a devil of a time getting the line. And then they find their wives have been having an hour's chat with some other woman and that makes them sore on the whole proposition."

And now I can just see Himself showing this triumphantly to herself and herself getting cross at Ruth Cameron for giving him ammunition when he has plenty of his own.

Soviets Seize Religious Treasures.

Requisition of church valuables by the Soviet government, reported in dispatches from Russia, raises a question as to the wealth of the various religious institutions of the world.

"Since the dawn of history people have been lavish with their gifts for religious purposes, whether they worshipped gods or an unseen God," says bulletin from the Washington, D.C., headquarters of the National Geographic Society.

"The result is that in all ages treasure, usually in the form of gold and silver and precious stones, has flowed into temples and churches, monasteries and other religious institutions. In every period and in most parts of the world, then, except during recent decades in the west, a considerable part of the liquid wealth of the world has been in ecclesiastical hands. Only the treasures of temporal princes surpassed those of the religious institutions, and in some instances as in the monasteries and temples had practically all the country's treasure."

Religions Use Gold.

"Archaeologists find that the pagan temples of civilization dead for thousands of years were ornamented with wealth of precious metals. Indian temples of several faiths have had rich treasures and their ornaments of gold and silver for centuries; and they have made use as well of a glittering array of diamonds, rubies, sapphires and other jewels. Many an old temple, from the dim interiors of Egyptian temples, look out through eyes of great lustrous, precious stones, and

wears other gems that might ransom an emperor.

"Christianity had to fight for its life for the first 300 years of its existence, and its rites were carried on in the simplicity that secrecy made necessary. But with its official recognition came the tendencies which had marked most of the openly accepted religions which had gone before; toward the making of gifts to churches by devout followers and powerful patrons, and toward the use of more elaborate and costly paraphernalia in the services. Constantine, first Christian emperor of Rome, lavished gifts on St. Peter's Church in Rome and on Sancta Sophia in his new capital, Constantinople. He gave a hand in enriching the two most famous, and once the two richest churches in Christendom.

Treasures Often Looted.

"The marked enrichment of Christian churches began in earnest in Italy and the east in the fifth and sixth centuries and spread in early medieval times to France and other western countries. Not only did the churches accumulate gold chalices, patens, candelabra and other small objects, but many had large screens of gold and silver, as well as fonts and altars. To a few of the churches altars of solid gold were presented, but later church regulations prescribed stone and wood as the only permissible materials for altars. Precious stones also came into use to ornament images of the saints or as gifts to them. Thus the sacred baby of the Church of Ars Coeli in Rome has been given over a space of many years a wealth of jewels.

"The accumulation of treasures by temples and churches and monasteries has not been unbroken. Time and time again these convenient stores of precious metals and precious stones

have been seized by conquerors. Pagans have looted the shrines of other pagans. Mohammedans looted Roman churches, including St. Peter's in 846, and the churches of Constantinople in 1453. Sancta Sophia, after the break between the western and the eastern churches, was sacked by western Christians during the fourth crusade, and church vessels were taken or destroyed in many cases at the time of the Reformation.

Russian Churches Richest.

"Russian church treasures have been among the richest in existence in late years. When Russian envoys were sent out by the then semi-civilized state in 1877 to choose a national religion, they were most impressed by the wealth and rich beauty of the services at Sancta Sophia. Since that time Russian churches have been marked by their wealth of ornamentation. Screens, reliquaries and canopies of precious metals were to be found in all of the well-to-do churches. In some of the richer institutions whole walls of sanctuaries were of silver and some floors were of Jasper. Numerous icons were studded with jewels and some were almost completely covered with various precious stones. Some of the palls used were practically small rugs of gems.

"Probably the wealthiest of all religious institutions in Russia was the Lavra or super-monastery at Kiev. Before the world war it had an annual income of \$500,000 and a well stocked treasury. The second most important institution, the Lavra of St. Sergius, near Moscow, had treasure with a pre-war value of about \$325,000,000. At the Cathedral of St. Isaac, St. Petersburg, there was more than a ton of silver in the form of ecclesiastical vessels, and in addition much gold."

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Coal Diggers of Australia

Opal is the Australian natural gem, but latest reports from that country show that the diggers are experiencing very hard times, owing to the slump in the precious stone in the European markets.

Cooper Pedy, the home of the fam-

ous South Australian black opal, is 100 miles from anywhere, and probably the most primitive village in the British Empire. The Australian blacks christened it Cooper Pedy, or "white man living in a hole," and it well deserves its name.

Of all the rough outback jobs in Australia, digging for opal is about

the worst. Cooper Pedy lies in the heart of the Stewart Range, 170 miles from the nearest station on the East-West Railway, and its whole population of between 70 and 80 diggers lives underground in burrows scratched out of the hillside. A tin shanty, in which diggers keep their tools, is the only sign of life showing above

ground. Every morning the diggers come out of their burrows and set out for the opal fields, to cut patiently through the rock in the hope of finding the beautiful black diamonds lying beneath. Between them they have dug many thousands of pounds' worth of opal in the last four years, though

they have worked only a small area of a field said to be 40 miles long. In normal times opal is worth \$150 an ounce, but now there is practically no demand for the gems and the diggers have opal, but no money.

Cooper Pedy has a dug-out post office, of which it is very proud, and a mail once a week, but neither food nor water are to be found within a day's journey. At present water is carried from a water-hole 14 miles distant, but as it is some time since the last shower occurred, the diggers will, this month, have to go to a creek still further away for their water. As much as \$15 per 100 gallons has at times been paid for the precious fluid.

Beef and bread are brought by mail cart from Kingscary, the nearest station, but the people of Cooper Pedy insure themselves against sudden scarcity by taming the rabbits that abound in the neighborhood. One man alone has 50 of these pets, and it is a curious sight to see them every evening trooping to their master for their food.

An Old Fishing Net.

The natives of New Guinea have a very cheap way of providing themselves with fishing-nets for use in their rivers and lakes. Cutting a long bamboo, they bend it into the shape of a large tennis-racket, fastening the small end to the staff or handle with fibre. This they take into the forest and leave it for a few days. When they call for it again the huge spiders of the country have been at work and covered it with a network of web strong enough to imprison any fish that may come in contact with its meshes. The bamboo is carried away, and no doubt the spiders wonder what has become of their new home, made with so much labour.

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