

The Dispersal of Animals.

The manner in which animals may be conveyed from one area or region to another by what may be called chance agencies has always formed a subject of much interest in the eyes of naturalists. The same opinion may be expressed of the dispersal of plants. Darwin found over eighty seeds in a little clod of earth, attached to the leg of a migrating bird, and we can readily imagine how such agencies serve to widen the distribution of life. Sir C. Lyell gives an instance of a pig—an animal popularly believed to be anything but an adept at swimming—being found far out at sea bravely making its way toward some haven of rest. Such animals as tortoises may easily be conveyed on driftwood over long tracts of ocean. A recent report of the Indian Marine Survey gives a case in point. A female leopard was brought down the Moulmein River, and then came aboard a cargo steamer. Then she swam to land, and was thereafter dispatched. Snakes were also found on the floats of the paddlewheels of the surveying steamer, having been carried down by the flood. A lucky settlement in a new territory thus implies the extended distribution of a race. It is interesting to note how greatly what we may call chance may influence the extension of life over the earth's surface.—From the London Chronicle.

Thread in the Bible.

The first mention of thread occurs in the passage where Abraham said to the King of Sodom that he would not take from him so much as a thread to a shoe-latchet, lest he should say that it was he who had made him rich. Three times there is special mention of a scarlet thread, as when the elder of Tamar's twins was distinguished by a scarlet thread bound on his hand, and when the spies told Rahab to put a line of scarlet thread in the window from which she assisted them to escape; and again, when the rapturous writer of the Canticles says the lips of his love are like a thread of scarlet. On two occasions the easy breaking of bonds is likened to the breaking of a thread.

Extravagant Speech.

A tendency toward gross exaggeration marks the common speech of many very good people who would be seriously offended if one should accuse them of telling an untruth.

Two young girls full of the vivacity and heedlessness of youth met in a street car. They greeted each other with real school girl effusiveness, and one said to the other:

"I never was so glad to see anyone in my life!"

"And I've just been dying to see you!" was the reply from the brilliant and blooming girl, who was certainly in the full flush of health at that moment.

"How do you do, any how?"

"Oh! I've a perfectly fearful cold!"

"I nearly died with one last week."

"I've nearly coughed and sneezed my head off!"

"I know. It makes one feel so perfectly wretched. Mamma has a horrible cold."

"We've been having a regular hospital at our house. Isn't it horribly cold to-day?"

"Fearful! I thought I should perish before the car came along."

"My feet are exactly like lumps of ice! I don't believe that they'll ever be warm again."

"And only two weeks ago it was so horribly warm for the time of the year."

"I know. I thought I should smother to death one day in school. Have you been skating since the cold weather set in?"

"O, yes, dozens of times. I went last night and got a fearful fall. I thought I should die."

"You'd have died laughing if you'd seen the tumble I got one day last week. And that, too, when there were about a million people looking at me. I nearly died, I was so mortified."

"Have you seen Mabel Reid lately?"

"Not for ages. It's certainly two weeks, anyhow, since I saw her. I'm crazy to see her."

"So am I. And it seems like an eternity since I saw Helen. I'd give the world to see her. How frightfully slow this car is going. I could go faster on my hands and knees."

"So could I. I hate to drag along so. I like to go like lightning."

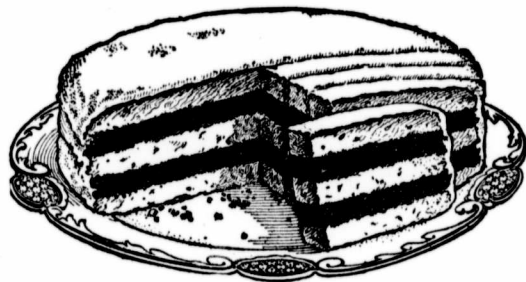
And so the conversation ran on, each girl telling what was certainly untrue every time she spoke. It is not asserting too much to say that such exaggerations are unbecoming to the Christian character, and if for "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment," what a reckoning there will be for those who are thus heedless in their common speech.

Victoria's Wonderful Smile.

A writer in the Quarterly Review tell us much of the Queen's manner, her "genius for movement," her fine dramatic instinct, and above all, of her wonderful smile. "No smile was the least like it, and no shadow of it is preserved for posterity in any of her published likenesses":—"It came very suddenly in the form of a mild radiance over the whole face, a softening and a raising of

the lines of the lips, a flash of kindly light beaming from the eyes. Then, in another moment, it was gone, leaving behind a suffused softness, something that was the antidote to embarrassment or fear. The Queen could express all varieties of feeling by her smile. Sometimes it would suggest the gentlest of reproofs, in a deprecating glance, with a sparkle in the eye, which withdrew the least apprehension of offence. Sometimes it would be a little espiègle, with a hint that the smiler was wide awake, was aware of the subtleties of the occasion. Sometimes it would be coyly negative, leading the speaker on, the lips slightly opened, with a suggestion of kindly fun, even of a little innocent 'Schadenfreude.' But all of the varieties of the Queen's fascinating smile perhaps the most delicate was the sorrowful one at the troubles of her friends; this was a sort of pale beam emanating from the motionless features, a faint illumination all made up of affection and sympathy and regretful experiences of the fragility of human happiness."

The Queen, we are told, had a rich sense of humor, though the jests in which she delighted were not of a very subtle kind. "A rather primitive kind of fun, when she was in the mood for it, would amuse her almost beyond her own endurance, till she was simply breathless and could bear no more. Yet there was no taking liberties with her. 'At the shadow or less than the shadow of an undue freedom she would freeze, and in all probability not thaw again all through dinner.' She always used the same formula about these mischances. 'I am not quite sure that—is discreet,' and the indiscreet one was for the time struck off her dining-list. Yet when she was alone with her usual companions nothing could be easier than she was in her deportment and conversation."



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