

Something You Ought to Read.

BY RUTH CAMERON.



"So different are the colors of life as we look forward to the future or backward to the past, and so different the opinions and sentiments which this contrariety of appearances produces that the conversation of old and young generally ends with contempt or pity on either side. One generation is always the scorn and wonder of the other; and the natures of the old and the young are like liquors of different quality and texture which never can unite."

—Johnson.

We had been discussing the political situation and our political ideals. A very enthusiastic young man, radiant with youth's beautiful belief in a possible panacea that should promptly do away with all the trouble in the world, had been promulgating some very progressive ideas.

"Does your father agree with you, David?" someone asked.

"Oh, no," said the young man with an evident touch of bitterness. "Of course he doesn't. Dad and I never agree. He makes it a point to be as conservative as he can—mostly, I think, because I'm a radical."

This young enthusiast evidently thought he was describing a peculiar condition of things due to his father's unusual temperament. As a matter of fact he was voicing the struggle of the ages, the eternal conflict between youth and age.

I haven't a doubt but that twenty-five or thirty years ago David's father was so unprogressive; and I'm equally sure that twenty-five or thirty years hence David's son—if he exists—will be just as bitter against his father's lack of progressiveness.

Now there is a certain great essay on this subject which I think it would help every man and woman of us to read just about once a year. Probably many of you already know what I am going to say. I am speaking, of course, of Robert Louis Stevenson's essay on "Crabbed Age and Youth."

To be sure Mr. Stevenson is rather inclined to take the part of youth in this essay, but it seems to me that any old man or woman who has been young once will forgive him. And as for those old dry bones who never were young—what does it matter what they think, anyway?

Now I am not just saying all this to fill space. I really want you to see the essay; I believe it will give every one, old and young, a wiser point of view on the whole matter.

When a firm wants to introduce a new product it not only advertises it by praises but also by samples. Please permit me to offer the following little sample of my wares.

"It is held," says Mr. Stevenson in the course of his essay, "to be a good taunt, and somehow or other to clinch the question logically, when an old gentleman waggles his head and says: 'Ah, so I thought when I was your age.' It is not thought no answer at all if the young man retorts: 'My venerable sir, so I shall most probably think when I am yours.' And yet the one is as good as the other: . . . When the old man waggles his head and says, 'Ah so I thought when I was your age,' he has proved the youth's case. Doubtless, whether from growth of experience, or decline of animal heat, he thinks so no longer; but he thought so when he was young; and all men have thought so while they were young since there was dew in the morning or hawthorn in May."

Doesn't that fill you with a desire to read more?

I hope it does.

Ruth Cameron

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A Little Gunner.

Brown Spider Causes Consternation
In a Cape Town Castle.

The smallest creature ever known to become a gunner in the world came into prominence in Cape Town, South Africa, not so long ago. At the castle situated in that place there is a large gun worked by electricity and used for giving the midday and evening time.

All the military and civilians in Cape Town were astonished to hear the gun go off one fine morning at 10.30, an hour and a half before the proper time, 12 being the usual hour of firing.

Messengers came from the general commanding officers of each regiment and battery stationed in Cape Town, and from everybody interested, but the answer was that no person had been near the gun, nor had anybody interfered with the wires, battery or source from which it was fired.

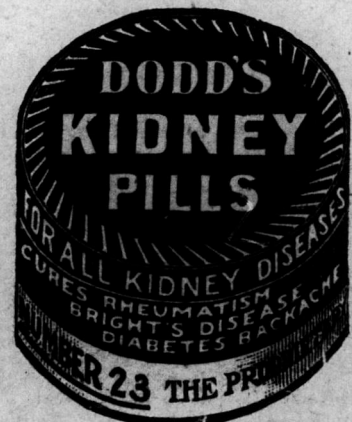
All the officials were fearfully puzzled at the extraordinary occurrence, but could give no explanation whatever. The general in command of the station became furious and said that there was mismanagement somewhere and gave orders for a strict search to be made by the officials for the guilty party.

Search was made, but nothing resulted to throw any light on the extraordinary affair, although the greatest possible pains were taken to solve the mystery.

They had practically given the search up, when suddenly the news came from the officials stating that the culprit had been caught and arrested. It seems the electric current for firing off the gun is supplied by the Royal Observatory of Cape Town, and goes there by means of an instrument known as a relay that is in the central telegraph office of the station, the distance being about 500 yards.

The action of the current going through the instrument's main moves a sort of light tongue, which is very finely set—so fine that the least little thing would affect it. This forces the current directly into what they term the time fuses, which have the power of firing the gun at the castle.

On examining the instrument one of the officials found a big brown spider inside. It appears that while having an exploring trip round the instrument the unfortunate spider must have touched this tongue sufficiently to move it, and consequently it fired off the gun. The general commanding the station sent the spider to the Cape Town Museum, where it is now to be seen with a card underneath him venturing him the "Little Gunner," and giving a full account of his adventure with the Cape Town midday time gun, which proved his last adventure, however.

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