

NOTES AND COMMENTS

Hope has been expressed over a new rat killer that has been introduced. According to report it has been successfully used not only in France but in England and Germany. It is not a poison but a virus that communicates a fatal disease to the rats, drives them from their usual haunts and makes them good in from ten days to two weeks. It will not harm domestic animals, and "once, where the German government made an experiment with biscuits soaked in the virus, in a certain village, some of these prepared biscuits were eaten by ignorant peasant children, who experienced no ill effects." This is all very interesting, but the scheme of extermination for the rats and safety and encouragement for all other forms of life is hardly a novelty. Articles for which the same claims are made have been on the market for some time and good results have been obtained from them. Rats have been known to appear in the old haunts, however, after a promising clean-up. They become wary of the traps and exercise a cunning that seems almost supernatural. The crying need is for a systematic campaign of extermination in which the whole human race shall take part.

San Francisco set the example when its people were frightened by the bubonic plague. It carried on an unremitting warfare whose effects were most beneficial, and other coast cities went to work in the same fashion and achieved like results. As an incident of the campaign there was a general improvement in the matter of cleanliness. There was a better disposition than there had been of garbage and all manner of filth. The subject should attract the attention of city authorities everywhere, because it concerns both the public health and the protection of property. Rats spread disease, destroy annually many millions of dollars' worth of merchandise and food, and cause much damage indirectly. Experience demonstrates that they deserve all that is coming to them and still some more for full measure.

The German officers still continue to believe that an invasion of England would be practicable. While the English fleet is vastly superior to that of Germany, yet plenty of occupation would be found for English ships elsewhere than in the Channel, and the German war vessels might hope to control the crossing of that narrow strip of water. Once in England with 200,000 men it is believed that the English would not be able to expel the army, but it could dictate peace in London. We simply reiterate our firm belief, that this is a chimera, and that the German officers might well study the remark of the negro who narrowly escaped drowning while undergoing immersion. He said as he came up sputtering, "Somebody's likely to lose a valuble nigger some of these days by this here foolin'." The Germans would be likely to lose a very valuable army if they attempted to invade England.

GERMAN TOURIST INDUSTRY.

Protected by New Regulation, Draconic but Just and Practical.

Germany appreciates more and more every year the financial benefits accruing from "the tourist industry," and is especially desirous of attracting American travelers, because they are most lavish of all in the expenditure of money. Tourists generally will be interested in the new regulations which are to go into force on the German railways on the first of next month. They are drastic, which is not an unusual quality in German rules, and on the whole they seem to be just and practical. Carrying of railway employees on trains is prohibited; passengers giving tips will be punished. The railways will be responsible for passengers' baggage for fourteen days and at all times responsible for luggage lost. Children over ten years will not be permitted to travel in compartments reserved for women. If a train is full, a traveler, although he may have a ticket, may be compelled to wait for the next train. A friend taking leave of a traveler and remaining in the train until it moves will have to pay a fine of \$1.50.

IN DOUBT.

"Was there ever any insanity in your family?" "I don't know. You see none of us has ever been tried for murder."

MAN OVERBOARD AT SEA

SUCH ACCIDENTS ARE USUALLY FATAL.

Small Boats are Generally Found of No Use After They are Launched.

Is it a true picture of what actually takes place at sea when that terrible cry, "Man overboard," rings over a ship that we conjure up in our minds? Is there always one willing to spring overboard? Is the boat always launched with expedition? Ask the man who knows; ask the sailor himself, in whose ears has rung more than once the cry. And we shall begin to doubt if our imaginations are correct. No sailorman could deny, that, where sailing vessels are concerned, the cry, "Man overboard!" is, in effect, "Man dead!" At night time, should an accident hurl a man into the water, there is absolutely no chance to save him. He is seen to fall, and there it ends.

It is a matter of time and difficulty to launch a boat, and what chance has it of finding the "man overboard"? The open sea at night, the water running high, and a squall blowing, the spot where the man was lost, perhaps, three-quarters of a mile away; what hope is there? None. But, it may be urged, such can only be when a man is lost during the night; during daylight, of course, the lost man will be saved, providing he can keep afloat until the boat reaches him.

LAUNCHING A BOAT.

Will he? Again ask the man who knows. He is aware that, except the skipper be a man of extraordinary vigilance and forethought, the launching of a boat is next door to impossible, or, at least, so lengthy an operation as to render it valueless.

Let us see what has to be done when a boat is launched. To begin with the canvas covers have to be removed; these are fastened over with cords running through metal eyelet-holes. True, the covers may be ripped off with knives. Then the boat has to be freed of the clamps holding it on to the bar on which it rests. These may be difficult to move, owing to the blocks not working. Still, they may be knocked away. The four-fold ropes by which the boat hangs from the davits may also be hauled through instead of the trouble being taken to remove the canvas lashings covering the four places in each where the ropes are strapped.

Then the ropes, by which the boat so far freed is lowered from the davits, have to be straightened out and the hooks adjusted; when this is done, it may be found that, because the pins of the wheels on which the ropes travel at the davits, head are rusted the wheels will not revolve.

LEAKS LIKE A CASK.

Finally, when this difficulty is got over by cutting these ropes and allowing the boat to drop into the sea, it is a fifty-to-one chance that the seams of the boat will have opened owing to dryness, and she lets in water precisely as will a cask that has stood dry for a long time.

But, it may be objected, the Board of Trade is very precise as to the means for life-saving a ship shall carry. Agreed, but there is little or no supervision of ships to see that these requirements are provided.

When does a Board of Trade representative examine a British vessel in a British port to see that boats, for instance, are in the condition for immediate use which should exist? Why, never.

Let us take an example of the Board of Trade regulations: A British owned, full-rigged ship, of nearly 2,000 tons burden, from London out to San Francisco, was hailed when in the South Atlantic by a Norwegian barque in distress. The latter had met bad weather, had been beaten out of her course, was many weeks overdue, and her provisions were exhausted. She sought to obtain these from the English vessel.

SENT HER OWN BOAT.

The skipper of the latter was perfectly willing to assist, but, when it came to getting out a boat to convey food to the Norwegian, it was found to be impossible. His lifeboats—the ship carried two—leaked so badly that, had they remained in the water for ten minutes, they would have foundered. This was due to their want of immersion for months past; the seams had become apart. Moreover, neither of the boats contained a single oar. The other two boats, the captain's gig and the dinghy, were seaworthy, but both were too light to be launched in the heavy sea then running. Ultimately, the Norwegian had to send one of her own boats.

Once again, when in "Frisco Harbor," barnacles had to be removed from a ship's sides, and it was necessary to erect a staging for those doing the work to stand upon, as the boats wouldn't float. This was a ship owned by a respectable firm, who were, but cer-

tainly should not have been, ignorant of the existing condition of things; and what has been said of this ship holds equally good of scores of others, which leave the English ports.—Pearson's Weekly.

LEECHES OF PALESTINE.

Menace to Health and Even Life—Found at Pools and Springs.

Leeches are common in the springs and wells of Palestine, and especially so in Galilee and Lebanon. In 1907 they were so numerous during the summer and autumn months that nearly all the horses and mules suffered from bleeding at the mouth. In some places they were got rid of by placing fish in the springs.

The drinking water used in the house is generally harmless, owing to the practice of filtering the water through a piece of muslin, which is done by the water carriers in filling the pitchers. On the other hand the thirsty agricultural laborer is more exposed to the danger, especially when he drinks in the evening or during the night.

The leeches generally attach themselves inside the mouth, in the larynx and oesophagus, but Mr. Masterman is convinced they are killed as soon as they reach the stomach. At any rate no special symptoms have been remarked in the case of persons who have swallowed them entirely. When the leeches are very numerous, and Mr. Masterman observes as many as three dozen on the same person, they may be found in the nostrils and are especially frequent in the larynx.

The presence of the leeches is indicated by slight but persistent hemorrhages in the mouth and nose, their intensity varying naturally with the number of the parasites, and in certain cases they may bring about serious anaemia and even death.

CURIOS HEADACHE REMEDY

Not Generally Available, However—A French Legend.

They have an old way of curing headaches near Billiers in France. The sufferer pricks his or her forehead with a needle until blood flows, then with the same needle he or she pricks a certain cross that was erected in 1874 near the village. By this means it is believed that the headache is made to "enter the wood," where it will remain for at least a fortnight.

This cure, says the Wide World Magazine, is attributed to the intervention of the Virgin Mary, who is said to have appeared in the above mentioned year where the cross is erected with a promise that she would perform miracles "to prove her descent at that spot."

Adding the cross for curing headaches is another that is reputed to be of great service in the cure of diseases of the scalp. All that the sufferers need do is to come and pray there, leaving their bonnets or caps behind them, attached to a forked branch stuck in the earth.

The inhabitants of Billiers have other superstitions. They put a large cross in whitewash over the doors of their cottages so as to protect them against lightning; they stretch cords over their huge iron stoves and sit watching them for hours to see if they are vibrated by some unseen power, vibration being a sure sign that those who take part in the experiment are to be happy for the remainder of the year; and on the fish-women receiving the first proceeds of a sale they fall down on their knees to make the sign of the cross, which will insure a profitable day's work.

A GREAT MIGRATION.

Movement of American Settlers to Canadian North-West.

In less than six years 388,000 American farmers have pulled up stakes in their native States and moved from Wisconsin, Minnesota, the Dakotas, Nebraska, Arkansas, and Oregon, across the invisible line of the international boundary which separates the Canadian North-West. Moreover, 100,000 Americans have gone north as investors, speculators, miners, lumbermen. So writes Agnes C. Lamb in the Century Magazine in "The Last Trek to the Last Frontier."

A railroad traffic manager and customs officer both told me the same thing; very few of the American homesteaders came in with less than \$1,000, and many came in with capital ranging from \$3,000 to \$10,000. The capital brought in by the investing classes varies from the \$10,000,000 placed by the Morgan banking house in the Canadian Northern Railway, to the \$200,000 and \$300,000 capital placed in actual cash by the land and lumber and fish companies. Average the American new-comer's capital at \$2,000, and the American invasion of Canada in the last six years represents in hard cash an investment of a billion dollars.

This has been a "panic year." Yet more American settlers came into the Canadian North-West than ever before. Of 148,754 homesteaders in the Canadian West, 58,000 were American. Other countries sent fewer colonists during the panic year. The United States sent 5,000 more than in the preceding year.

BRITISH COURT UNIFORMS.

Expensive Garments Worn on State Occasions.

Much of the splendor of any of his Majesty's courts would be lacking if it were not for the dazzling uniforms of the high officers of state and the great officers of the royal household who assemble at these impressive functions, says London Tit-Bits.

There are always five or six different grades of gentlemen in attendance present when his Majesty holds a court, and each has its distinctive dress, the difference usually being indicated by the trimming, either gold or silver, or the number of buttons worn. The complete outfit of a first class court official runs up to £200, the jacket alone costing £50 to £100. It is made of the finest royal blue cloth lavishly embroidered with gold lace or a highly elaborate design. The waistcoat and knee breeches are made from white kerseymerie silk richly embroidered, set off with buttons and buckles of gilt, and white silk stockings, sword, cocked hat and white kid gloves make a complete costume as rich as it is dignified.

An ambassador or foreign diplomatist wears a special distinction—black velvet collar with a gold embroidered floral design. The uniform costs the wearer about £115.

Lord Lieutenants are dressed in a coat of royal red cloth cut swallowtail and adorned with silver buttons and the collar embroidered with silver lace. Silver faced trousers are worn with a cocked hat without plumes. The uniform is very handsome and costs the wearer 100 guineas simply for the privilege to wear it, let alone the making of it. To the Duke of Norfolk, as the Earl Marshal, however, falls the enviable distinction of wearing the most costly apparel of all great officers of state. The dress is absolutely unique, and for sheer magnificence has no parallel in any country. Nearly three miles of the finest gold thread is used in the embroidery on the coat, collar, front and on the lapplets of the sleeves. Each suit costs £250.

All Cabinet Ministers and other high state officials are expected to have at least one state uniform. A complete court outfit will cost from £150 to £170.

There are of course many others, such as the Captain of the Yeoman of the Guard, and Captain of the Horse and the squire and pages of honor, who have to possess a distinctive dress for special occasions, costing from £20 to £50. Court dandies will only wear these uniforms once, while noblemen sometimes make the same uniform last a lifetime. It has been computed that on these great state occasions the value of the uniforms worn exceeds £30,000.

A TOWN INSIDE A CRATER.

Ships Built by the Inhabitants Who Inhabit It.

Saba, in the West Indies, is one of the most extraordinary places in the world. By courtesy it is called an island, but it is really nothing more than the summit of an extinct volcano sticking up out of the sea. Inside the crater live the only inhabitants of Saba. They live there because there is nowhere else for them to live, the outside slopes being nearly as steep as the sides of a house. The place belongs to Holland, and the people are all Dutch. Nevertheless, they speak English as their native tongue. They call their crater town Bottom, because it is situated on top of a mountain.

Although surrounded on all sides by the sea, they often spend weeks without seeing it, for that involves a long climb up to the rim of the crater. Still less frequently do they touch salt water, because to do so they must, in addition, climb downwards for a distance of fifteen hundred feet by a precipitous rock-hewn path, known as the Ladder.

It is, however, in regard to their staple industry that these Dutch people who speak English, and who live aloft in a volcano in a summit city called Bottom, reach the extreme of topsy-turvydom. One might imagine them making balloons or kites, or, in fact, anything but what they do make, which is ships.

Not ocean-going liners, of course, but good, serviceable schooners and luggers, whose reputé is great all over the Windward Islands. The ships, when finished, have to be hauled up to the rim of the crater, and there lowered over a precipice into the sea.

The family with a 16-year-old boy in the house has no earthly use for a 36-volume encyclopedia.

If some people were to marry for brains instead of money they would probably get left just the same.

There are many men of many minds—but a lot of them are unable to mind their own business.

Some people act as if they were afraid they might forget their troubles if they didn't talk about them all the time.

THE ROCK OF AGES LIGHT

WARNS VESSELS OFF LAKE SUPERIOR COAST.

Construction of This Lighthouse Was a Great Engineering Feat.

Giving warning of the perils of one of the most dangerous coasts on the lakes, the Rock of Ages lighthouse and fog signal will go into commission for their first full season at the opening of navigation this spring. In course of construction since May, 1907, these notable aids to navigation were completed only last October and thereafter did duty until the advent of snow and ice forced the shipping to tie up for the winter.

Built of concrete, steel and brick, the lighthouse is erected on a rocky islet off the south-western extremity of Isle Royale and not many miles from the northern shore of Lake Superior. Rising to a height of 130 feet above the level of the water, its powerful light is visible under ordinary atmospheric conditions for a distance of more than twenty miles.

AN ENGINEERING FEAT.

The construction of the lighthouse was an engineering feat of no small importance. The Rock of Ages being a tiny island swept to the fury of the gales that sweep the great inland sea, it was possible to work only in comparatively calm weather and smooth waters. There was no place in the immediate vicinity to accommodate the crews, and it was necessary to erect camps for the men and a storage house for the supplies and building materials four miles distant in a sheltered location on Washington harbor.

In the centre of the foundation is a two-storied cellar for the storage of oils and other supplies, each compartment of which is twenty-four feet in diameter and ten feet high. In the tower there are seven stories. There is a kitchen, a dining-room, an office, quarters for the lightkeeper and his three assistants, watchman's gallery, service room and engine room. The latter is located on the first floor and is equipped with two 24-horsepower engines and an air compressor.

THE LIGHTNING LIGHT.

These machines are for the operation of the fog signal, a six-inch siren whistle, the blasts of which may be heard over a wide expanse of sea. Through them there is cast out into the darkness every ten seconds a double white flash, the bands of which follow each other with such rapidity as to give to the illuminating apparatus the appropriate designation of "lightning light."

The double white flash timed to shine forth at regular intervals six times each minute, is the peculiar characteristic of the Rock of Ages light and by which it may be instantly recognized by mariners, just as may the fog horn with its own peculiar combination of short and long blasts.

SCENE OF MANY WRECKES.

It was on the Rock of Ages that the Henry Chisholm and the Cumberland came to grief. The freight and passenger steamer Algoma was wrecked near Rock Harbor, on the north-eastern coast of Isle Royale. This was one of the greatest disasters in the history of the Great Lakes, for some seventy lives were lost. The ore carrier Centurion stranded on the south-western shore in 1905 and was badly damaged. It was in November of the same year that the steamer Bransford figured in one of the most marvelous escapes from disaster ever recorded. Driven by terrific gale, the vessel struck a reef, but almost immediately there came rolling in a great sea that picked up the ship as though it were a mere chip, carried it clear of the reef and set it down, safe and sound, in the deep water beyond.

The freighters Harlem and Osceola went aground on the south-western shore of Isle Royale, but both were recovered, the former ship after having been abandoned by the owners. The passenger steamer Monarch was lost on the north-eastern shore, and with her went to their doom a number of the persons on board.

QUITE A MISTAKE.

"What do you mean, sir," said the angry man in the crowd, "by sticking your umbrella in my eye?" "Oh, no," replied the cheerful offender, "you're mistaken, I assure you."

Put this naturally had the effect of making the angry man more so. "Mistaken!" he roared; "do you mean to say that I don't know when my eye is hurt? Why, hang it, sir, I saw you do it! How can I be mistaken?"

"I assure you that you are, nevertheless," was the easy rejoinder; "you may know when your eye is hurt, but you don't know my umbrella. This isn't mine—I borrowed it."

In Saxony no one is permitted to shoe horses unless he has passed a public examination, and is properly qualified.

Awaiting Reprieve

Men sometimes say they would rather be hanged and get it over than spend their lives in prison. Those who make the remark have never known what it was for the last glimmering hope of a reprieve was fading away.

I am an old man now, though young in years. The hairs that should still be black are silvered, and the hands that once were strong and well-shaped are trembling and gnarled with toil.

It seems like a century since that awful moment when I was sentenced to death.

The grim law held me guilty of murder. There are times when a gaoled being, losing control of himself, feel reckless for sixty seconds. Such has been my case, and I faint-ed in the dock as the judge put the black cap on his head to pronounce sentence.

For days I remained in a state of stupor. Men spoke to me in my cell, but I did not understand them. I did not sleep, and if I ate it was without knowing it. The blow had almost unhinged my brain.

I was sitting, with bowed head and staring eyes, in my little cell, when the song of some poor captive lark floated to my ears, bringing with it a flood of memory. It was that gay, careless trill that brought me to myself with a jar.

My mind flew back to the glorious sunshine, the waving corn, and the merry laughter of honest men. For the first time for years my eyes filled with tears, and I cried bitterly—not with the tears of childhood, but with the great, gasping sobs of the doomed man who sees the gallows gaping at his feet.

AS THE HOURS PASS.

The song that had roused me came a nightmare. I got up and paced the cell wildly. The clear, sweet notes were exquisite torture. I stopped my ears to drown the sounds, and then listened, dreading that I should still hear it. Fancy waded the song to my brain, and I rang for a warden frantically. I should indeed have gone mad had they refused my request to be moved to another cell; but they humoured the man who is on the brink of the unknown, and I was transferred.

The hours of sweet life seemed to race past towards the moment when justice had decreed that I was to cease to exist. The scaffold itself had not much terror for me; I knew I could meet my fate like a man. The thought that made my head feel a raging furnace and my eyes grow dim was that by one act of madness I had forfeited the right to live.

A week before the last dawn I was to see they told me there was a chance of reprieve, but I must not set my hopes too high. A petition was out, and "sympathy was being shown."

At times I persuaded myself that I should be saved; but in the long, sleepless nights fear used to steal over me, and as the longed-for tidings did not come, the reaction began to set in.

Anxiously I questioned those who approached me. The wardens were kind, and tried to cheer me up; but it was life I wanted, not just kindness. The golden hours were dwindling to minutes, already there were but three days left. It seemed yesterday that there were as many weeks, and I gave way to despair. I began to see that the ray of hope had been a false one. I stretched my healthy limbs in impotent remorse, now pacing the cell feverishly, blindly; now sitting in mute agony of mind, digging my nails deeply into my palms.

While I sat there, the door opened, and they told me I was to live. Sweeter words were never heard by man, and I broke down into tears of thankfulness.

ORDERS BY PIGEON-POST.

An entirely practical use of homing pigeons was cited recently in the London Daily Mail. The inventor of the system is a butcher's son, who employs his birds regularly to carry orders from outlying districts—presumably where there are no telephones—to his father's shop. The plan works excellently. When the boy goes to collect orders, he takes six of his fastest birds in a trap with him. After he has gone a mile or two and collected a dozen orders, he liberates a pigeon with the slips enclosed in a little metal case attached to the bird's foot. Before five minutes have elapsed these orders are in the delivery wagon on the way to the customers. At the various stages of his round, which usually takes three hours, the other birds with more orders are set free, and the time the shop is reached orders received by this pigeon post have been despatched.

Owing to the scarcity of whales, the whaling industry is dying out. Only 150 are now caught each year.