

THOMAS NAST.

HOW HE BECAME AN ARTIST.

Thomas Nast, the caricaturist of *Harper's Weekly*, has recently received an invitation to make some pictures for a prominent London fashion journal: entitled *Vanity Fair*, the leading characteristic of which is the masterly caricature portraits of public men. It selects statesmen, actors, painters, dramatists, poets; in fact, any and every man who has made a name mark before the world, is a fair candidate for pictorial immortality in *Vanity Fair*. The enterprise has been a great success in its English phases, and now Nast has been engaged to do some American portraits; and I am told that he has already sent on his earliest sketches.

The story of Thomas Nast's artistic career is a little peculiar. His father was a professional musician, and, when I first met Tommy, the old gentleman was playing that extension brass, show-out-and-pull-back, force-pump sort of old fashioned horn they used to have in bands (a friend says it is called a trombone), in the orchestra of Wallace's old theatre, corner of Broome and Broadway, at \$10 a week. Nast senior wanted Tommy to become a musician, and to that end used to thrash him with a leather strap most enthusiastically and faithfully, in order to make him learn the scales on the violin. Thomas, however, had a genius for drawing, and knew it. He used to beg his father to permit him to become an artist, to all of which the father's conscientious objections (not many years ago) would reply with additional doses of strap.

At last, young Thomas became acquainted with Mr. Borghaus, now, and for more than a dozen years, one of Frank Leslie's chief artists; and to Borghaus, who was also a German, he confided all his woes. He showed his drawings to Borghaus, and to Sol Eytinge, who is one of our most delicate and fanciful American draughtsmen, and who was at that time with Leslie; and they, seeing there was really something in the boy, then fourteen years old, advised him to continue in his efforts to convince his father that he could earn more money as an artist than as a musician.

Tommy went home that night, and to the German parent, having come home at twelve o'clock, midnight, he thus remarked: "Father, I must be an artist. If you let me go and learn to draw, in a year or two I can earn \$20 a week; and in a few years after that, I can bring in from \$50 to \$75 every week; if you make me learn music, I may save all my life, and I shall very likely find myself at fifty years old just where you are now, playing for ten poor dollars a week in somebody's band, liable to be discharged any minute, and out of an engagement a quarter of the year, even when things are at their best."

Whether it was the argument of the determination of your father to learn to draw in spite of the paternal forbidding that carried the point, I know not; certain it is, however, that the next day Tommy Nast entered Frank Leslie's employ, and was assigned a desk between Borghaus and Eytinge, which two thorough artists and admirable gentlemen gave Nast all the regular instruction he has ever had.

The young artist more than kept his word; in less than a year he could earn, not \$20, but three that, on Leslie's paper alone, besides making up much more on outside work.

His father lived to see that his son was right, and to see that son bringing home his hundred dollars in gold every Saturday night, while he was humbly toiling away for the same old hard-earned ten dollars.

Nast's industry and imaginative genius rapidly carried him forward in the *Illustrated*. I presume that, for the past ten years, there has not been a week when his work, taking his cartoons for illustrated papers, his illustrations of books and other business, has not been equal to at least \$50 a day, and up to three times that sum.

Nast's mother is a thorough German, a most estimable woman, I am told, and excellent mother—she cannot speak, or could not when I saw her first and last, a dozen words of English.

Several years ago Nast was introduced to an English family, consisting of the father, mother, son and three daughters. The mother is a thorough English lady, and her daughters are like unto her. The father is an aunt of James Parton, the biographer—who has written the lives of Andrew Jackson, Aaron Burr, Horace Greeley, etc., and who is known all over the country as one of the most versatile and accomplished magicians and men of letters in the land. The eldest daughter, Sallie, of this lady (Mrs. Edwards) Mr. Thomas Nast married some nine years ago. They have had three children; all, I think, now living. So, you see, if the caricaturist dies he leaves abundant material for a new generation.

GUMBY'S DOG.

Gumby, who lives next door to us, has bought a dog. He needed a new one. His last dog used to bark all night in the yard until, in frantic desperation, we would sly boots and oolene bottles and furniture at him. But he always went on worse; and in the morning Gumby would come calmly out and gather up those missiles and carry them into the house. He has more than twenty pairs of our boots and slippers in his possession, besides chair-legs and cukes of soap and hair brushes and match-safes and towel-racks, and he never had the manners to offer to give them back. On the contrary, he trained the dog to sit by the front gate, and to wag his tail as we came, apparently for the purpose of securing more boots. But we poisoned him one morning, and the next morning Gumby threw the carcass over into our yard. We throw it back. Gumby returned it. We both stayed at home that day, and spent the time handling the dog to one another over the fence. Then we hired an Irishman to stand there night and day to return the dog to Gumby's yard. Thou Gumby also hired an Irishman. It was exhilarating work. The corpse probably traversed the fence 6,000 or 7,000 times in the twenty-four hours. He must have become familiar with the route, even if he was dead. At last he woke away with so much handling, and on the last day the Irishman whined away the honor slinging only the tail at one another. The Irishman at last buried the tail and resigned. And now Gumby has got a new dog. It will be excessively singular if we do not fish for that dog some evening soon with a codfish line and a piece of beef, and run him up all of a sudden into our window and launch him into the sewer. No dog owned by a man named Gumby will exult over us—*Baltimore American*.

SHUFFLING.—Some paper says, "Texas has a new name in cards; one holds a revolver, the other holds the cards. A coroner holds the liquor." In one way one should wish to try the game, and find the instructions not sufficiently full, we may add that the holder of the cards "turns up," and that the fror of the revolver "outs." In New York we presume the coroner would hold the stake, in the interest of the next *do dies* when he turns up.

SCIENTIFIC ITEMS.

An intelligent resident of Manila, the capital of the Philippine Islands, writes us that there is probably at least one earthquake every day at some spot in that archipelago.

Professor Winslow of Harvard University is now engaged in taking a series of large photographs of the more prominent celestial bodies, as seen through the great refracting telescope at Cambridge. Their usefulness for purposes of instruction in schools and academies will undoubtedly be very great, in addition to the interest which they cannot fail to possess for the scientific student.

The amount of metallic iron in different articles of food has formed the subject of some recent investigations by Boussingault, the French chemist, who finds the maximum quantity in the blood of horses, and the minimum in carrots. Although the color of the blood of the higher animals is wholly attributable to the iron which it contains, the white blood of the invertebrates—that is, such creatures as are subject to the disease of yellow fever—is deficient in iron. Green plants contain more than one whole acre of a paler color, as, for example, the mushroom.

METHOD FOR ILLUMINATING OPACOUS MICROSCOPIC OBJECTS.—How to illuminate opacous objects when viewed by a high power under the microscope is a subject which has long engaged the attention of microscopists. A new method of illuminating objects is proposed by Dr. H. A. Johnson. It consists in sending a beam of light down the oblique body of the binocular upon the prism by means of a plane mirror or rectangular glass plate. By this arrangement the light is as high as the twenty-fifth of an inch in focus has been used successfully by both daylight and lamplight.

A MISTAKE MADE BY AN ENGLISH CHEMIST. Mr. Ernest Chapman was recently killed at Bielefeld in the Harz region of Germany, by an explosion which completely demolished the bombproof laboratory in which he was working at the time. As his assistants were asleep at the moment, it is believed that the disaster can only be conjectured, but it is attributed to nitric methyl ether, an exceedingly explosive substance, upon which Mr. Chapman was experimenting without an adequate appreciation of its true character. He was only twenty-one years of age, but had already attained a high position as an original investigator.

HOW TO ECONOMIZE COAL.—The most practical suggestion yet made towards economy of coal seems to be the use of solid bottom stoves. It is asserted, and indeed proved, that in any fireplace not excessively small a plate of iron placed upon the grate will halve the consumption of fuel, reduce the smoke, and leave a cheerful, free-burning fire. Quite sufficient air enters through the grate openings, and the fire never goes out till the coal is consumed. There is no ash and no dust, every particle of fuel being consumed. Any household can try this experiment, and reduce his coal-bills 50 per cent. at the cost of a shilling.

NEW MATERIAL FOR BRICKS.—During the last few years experiments have from time to time been made with the view to utilize in some way the mounds of shale (the refuse of the coal mines) which cover an area of several thousand acres in the western United States, by converting them into bricks. Several enterprising firms have already embarked in this novel but profitable business. When properly pulverized, the shale is found to be an excellent material for this purpose, the bricks produced being hard and durable, resembling in color the fire-clay bricks of the Stourbridge district, although for furnace and such like purposes they are not so valuable as the ordinary building, however, they are found to be of equal practical value to the ordinary red bricks. The material is to be had in any quantity for a merely nominal sum, and in every direction. The only objection to this method of utilizing the innumerable hills of shale which disfigure the South Staffordshire landscape will gradually develop into an industry of some importance.

ENGLISH IVY IN ROOMS.—A writer thus speaks of the winter decorations of rooms with English ivy—the best of all house plants, perhaps, though many give the preference for a single specimen to a *Calla Lily*. The use of English ivy in winter decorations is a somewhat novel and novel idea, and one not to be lightly recommended. Being very strong, they will live through almost any treatment; but should be placed in a cool, airy place, and not in a stuffy room, and they will grow without stint. Most houses are too hot for them, as indeed they are for their owners. Neither plants nor people should have the average temperature over 65 degrees Fahrenheit. Take care not to water the ivy, or to give it too much water, and you will find that it will not seem to mind whether the sun shines on them or not, or in what position or direction you place them. Indeed, so much is the case, that the ivy will render or not a room charming, that we would rather have an unlimited number of them to draw upon than anything else in nature or art. Do you wish to hang a plant in your room, or have your entry from the drawing rooms of your richer neighbor; buy a couple of brockets, such as lamps for the burning of kerosene are sometimes placed in, and screw them on the sides of the door. Put the ivy on the brockets, the longer the better; then train the plants over the top, against the sides, indeed any way your fancy dictates. You need not buy the beautiful nor the costly pots the flower dealer will advise; the common plain ones will answer every purpose. For placing in each two or three sprays of *Calla lily*, in a month's time no vestige of the pot can be discerned through their thick screen.

EXPANSION OF METALS BY HEAT.—Nearly all bodies expand when heated, but there are scarcely two solid or fluid bodies which expand alike. The metals expand most, and their rate of expansion is the same, because the greatest number of experiments have been conducted with them. Rods of the under-mentioned substances, on being heated from the freezing to the boiling point of water, elongate as follows:

Zinc (cast).....	1 on 324
Lead.....	1 on 351
Iron.....	1 on 448
Steel.....	1 on 523
Aluminum.....	1 on 533
Copper.....	1 on 581
Brass.....	1 on 584

This is the increase which these bodies sustain in length when heated. The coefficient of silver is 1/12000, and that of platinum is 1/12000. Zinc is the most expansive of metals; it expands nearly four times more than platinum with the same heat. Glass without lead expands nearly in the same degree as platinum. In consequence of the supposed possible to weld these two substances together, but we have not yet seen this done. All expanded bodies return to their original dimensions on cooling. It has been observed that in consequence of the expansion of air at high temperatures, the increase is not considerable. All solids have been observed to expand at an accelerated rate when heated up to near their melting points. Platinum has the most uniform rate of expansion in its whole range. The table we have given will be found very useful to mechanics, as a guide to them not to unite two metals having a great difference in expandibility together in a machine, especially when it has been exposed to a high heat.

A QUAKER'S LETTER TO HIS WASHINGTON CORRESPONDENT.—I herewith send you my pocket clock, which standeth in need of the friendly correction. The last time he was at thy friendly school, he was in no way reformed, and he is in the same predicament, for I perceive by the index of his mind that he is a liar and the truth is not in him; that his pulse is sometimes slow, which betokeneth not an even temper; at other times it is wretchedly slight, which betokeneth a nervous and excited mind; and he should be on duty, as thou knowest his hand denoteth, I find him slumbering, or as the vanity of human reason phrase it, I caught him napping. Examine him, therefore, and prove him, if he be true, thou shouldst be his friend, and if he be false, thou shouldst be his enemy. He is a being well acquainted with his inward frame and disposition, draw him from the error of his way, and show him the path wherein he should go. It grieves me to think that when I send thee a clock, I should be obliged to thee to send him home with a just bill of charges drawn out in the gutter, and that it shall be sent to thee in the root of all evil.

HOUSEHOLD ITEMS.

CREAM FOR FIRE.—Boil one pint of milk; beat well together one cup of sugar, two-thirds of a cup of flour, two eggs, and turn all into the boiling milk. Let it boil two minutes, then add a small piece of butter.

CREAM FOR CAKE.—One cup of sugar, three eggs, one and one-half cups of flour, one teaspoonful of cream, one-half teaspoonful of soda, and flavor with lemon. Beat the eggs and sugar as for sponge cake. Bake in two tins, which warm out upon with a sharp knife and lay in cream.

CAPRICE CREAM.—Soak two spoonfuls of lapides for two or three hours in water. Beat the cream, add the lapides, and put in the yolks of three eggs well beaten with a cup and a half of sugar; let this just boil up, then set away to cool. Beat the white to a stiff froth. Sweeten and put on the cream. This is truly excellent.

TO WASH OUT CLOTH.—Oil cloth may be made to have a fresh, new appearance, by washing it every month with a solution of sweet milk with the white of one beaten egg. Soak in time, infuse oil cloth. A very little "boiled oil" brushed up an oil cloth; very little must be used, and rubbed in with a rag. Equal parts of equal varnish I put; it gives a gloss.

TO PREVENT SILVER WARE FROM TARNISHING, warm the articles and paint them over with a solution of collodion in alcohol, using a wide soft brush for the purpose. It is the invention of Munich says that gold protected in this way have been exposed in his window more than a year, and are as bright as ever, while other, unprotected, become perfectly black in a few months.

LEMON BUTTER.—One pound of white sugar, one-quarter pound fresh butter, six eggs, juice and grated rind of three lemons, taking out all the seeds. Beat all together a few minutes, till thick as honey, strain through a cloth, and set away to cool. It will keep a long time in a cool, dry place.

COOKING RAISINS.—It is well to cook raisins before putting them into pies, cakes, or puddings. Soak them in water for a few hours, then wash them in a large quantity of boiling water among them in a lightly closing dish, and allowing them plenty of time to cook before opening, is a good plan. When raisins are used in pies, cakes, or puddings, they are not so moist and more palatable, and can be eaten without injury by most dyspeptics.

HAIR YOUR BEANS.—Some advocates for excessive hairness have the beads made up immediately after the hair is cut, so that it will grow more rapidly. Open the window as wide as possible, and set open the door also. Unless there is a thorough draught, there is no true ventilation of a sleeping-room. The only exception to this rule is in the case of those who are unable to sleep unless they remain open, and in very wet and foggy weather.

FARM ITEMS.

THE WOOLLY PORTION OF CANADA THISTLES is said to furnish, under the treatment of a recent invention, an exceedingly strong, flexible, and ready-worked material for gunnysacks and other uses. The practicability of the process is about to be tested.

PARAFFIN AS A SEED PROTECTOR.—An experiment lately made by a German agriculturist, who claims its power to keep birds from eating seeds when sown, proved so far successful that, of a handful of radish seed soaked in the oil for fifteen minutes and then sown in a garden, not a single bird was seen to touch any of them. The experiment was repeated with all kinds of seeds, and with all degrees of protection, and the result was the same.

A CURIOUS CALCULATION.—The *gradgrind* of *The New York Express* has been studying the pages of the census-taker, and with this result: Of the six States east of the Hudson River, Vermont produces 100,000 bushels of wheat in 1880, or a bushel to each inhabitant. Taking the army ration of 22 ounces of flour per day as a basis for computing the consumption of bread, it follows Vermont raises bread enough to supply the people of that State 50 days. The State of New York produces 4,200,000 bushels, or ten days' supply. Connecticut produces 278,000 bushels, sufficient to last eleven days. Massachusetts produces 1,900,000 bushels, or a half bushel to each inhabitant—and purchases 4,200,000 bushels, or ten days' supply. Connecticut produces 278,000 bushels, sufficient to last eleven days. Massachusetts produces 1,900,000 bushels, or a half bushel to each inhabitant—and purchases 4,200,000 bushels, or ten days' supply. Connecticut produces 278,000 bushels, sufficient to last eleven days. Massachusetts produces 1,900,000 bushels, or a half bushel to each inhabitant—and purchases 4,200,000 bushels, or ten days' supply.

THE POTATO ROT.—The English papers are full of reports of the potato rot, and of the devastation of the potato crop. One says that "everywhere disease is showing itself and spreading rapidly." There is one exception to this in districts infested from the potato rot, and the disease is not prevalent." A member of the Central Chamber of Agriculture writes that he recently examined a number of tubers in the potato-plantations of Lonsdale, in Lancashire, and found that already three-fourths of the tubers (by weight) are diseased, while the mischief is still in active progress. The testimony of many growers in the potato-plantations of the north of England, who can be discovered throughout whole fields, and the general anxiety is to know not what may be the probable amount of "waste" for the market, but whether a return of the crop is possible, and how it is to be saved.

SAVING AT THE SPIGOT.—If farmers were all what are called smart business men, they would be as anxious to save as to spend. The farmer who is a pig farmer, who by want of business tact, sells his goods for a less price than he might have done, had he but money, as he views it, and learns thereby to be more cautious and wary in his transactions. A farmer for instance, who sells his 12 bushels of wheat per acre, when he might have raised double this quantity by a better preparation of his ground, or the choice of better seed, or the cutting of a few dollars in guano or lime, or in manure, and thereby to increase the yield of his crop to 24 bushels of wheat per acre, and so on. So the man who cares badly for his stock, and of dirt and starvation and exposure through Winter succeeds in losing half his sheep and reducing his cow to a condition favorable to produce but half a pound of butter per day, says he never has luck with sheep or his cows don't thrive, and he is content to leave it so. If he can be brought to look at it in a proper light as a loss as described, he would be a good deal more prudent, and the road to improvement will be plainly opened. It is undoubted to those who have experienced or have studied this thing, that farmers generally make many and severe mistakes, and that they are not aware of them, and that in the future their profits might be increased greatly and their position much improved. If the cost of manuring and preparing the soil sufficiently increased, the farmer would be more cautious and wary in his transactions, and would be more likely to figure up and compare with that which produces an ordinary or average crop, it will be seen the difference is not at all comparable to the excess in the value of the crops when well prepared. The general rule may be taken as a cost of 12 bushels of wheat, 20 of corn, 20 of oats, and less than a ton of hay per acre, and for these crops probably eight loads of poor manure or guano will be used. One of clover, of good crop will be 30 bushels of wheat, 50 of corn, 50 of oats, and two tons of hay per acre; and these crops may be kept up by the use of 25 loads of well-manure, with perhaps 500 pounds of guano or superphosphate, and two or three plowings of the out stubble previously to sowing wheat. The difference in the value of these crops per acre will be, on the whole, an average of nearly \$100 per acre, or a profit of 50 per cent. The object of this regulation seems to be to preserve the wild beasts, to let the land recover strength, and to teach the people to be provident and look out for the future. But the year was not spent in a manner which could hunt, fish, look after their bees and flocks, repair their buildings or furniture, manufacture cloth, or carry on commerce; and during this year the whole people were not so busy as the people who had been made of clay mixed with straw, but stores of honey were often found in hollow trees and fissures of the rocks. (Psalm lxxxi., 16.) One remarkable provision of the Mosaic law in regard to agriculture was the Sabbatic year. (Leviticus xxv., 1-7.) Every seventh year was a year of rest, not so much to the farmer as to the farm. Nothing was sown and nothing was reaped; the trees were not pruned; there was no shearing of fruit. 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