

PLEASANT HOURS

A PAPER FOR OUR YOUNG FOLK

QUAINT SCENES IN FOREIGN LANDS.

ONE of the pleasures of travel is the variety of quaint customs and costumes one meets with in foreign lands. In many parts of Europe the peasants still keep up the customs of hundreds of years ago. Their holiday garb is made up of bright colours, often strangely embroidered in gold or silver tinsel. In passing through Bulgaria, on the confines of Turkey, last May I saw a village fair in which the men and women wore a dress remarkably like that shown in the upper picture. The blending of light and dark colours, the brilliant gold embroidery, and the cut of the garment was something very odd and curious.

Another characteristic of travel in Europe and Great Britain is the number of crumbling ruins of old castles and churches, stained by the storms of a thousand years and gnawed by the tooth of time, speaking most emphatically of the long dead past to the living, active present. In one of our lower cuts one of these is shown, with a queer native calache drawn by its diminutive donkey in the foreground. You will observe the brake handle at the left side indicating that the roads are very steep and that a brake is required.

One of these steep roads leading up to the top of the mountain is shown in our third cut and also the queer way the peasants have of bringing tourists down, on a sort of rough sleigh the friction of which upon the rock makes a sufficient brake. I well remember viewing this same mountain from the top of an old Roman tower at Martigny, and trying to get a little lad to tell us its name. He spoke French with such a queer accent that we had hard work in making out what he said.

PEARL.

THE substance known as pearl is a product of certain shell-fish, some being marine and others belonging to fresh water. These mollusks are provided with a



SLAVONIAN PEASANTS—EASTERN EUROPE.

incurred in this work, as sharks abound in these seas; but it is a singular fact that accidents seldom happen. This immunity from an apparent danger is attributed by the divers themselves to the incantations of shark charmers who are employed during the fishery; but Sir E. Tennant is of the opinion that the bustle and excitement of the water while the men are diving has the effect of frightening away those much-dreaded creatures.

Among the Romans pearls were highly valued, enormous prices being paid for those of a fine shape or large size. Admirable imitation pearls are made by blowing thin beads of glass and pouring into them a mixture, of which the white matter from the scales of some fish forms an ingredient. The French and the Germans in this way produce imitation pearls so fine that the most practised eyes can scarcely see any difference between them and the genuine pearls. Roman pearls differ from other artificial ones by having the coating of pearly matter placed on the outside, to which it is attached by an adhesive substance. The art of making these was derived from the Chinese. In many of the rivers of Wisconsin, pearl-bearing clams are found, and in the last few years many magnificent gems have been discovered and sold for high prices. Indeed, pearl-fishing has become quite an important and profitable industry. It is said that some of the most perfect pearls on sale in the great jewellery houses of Tiffany of New York, or Giles Brothers of Chicago, were found in the Wisconsin rivers.

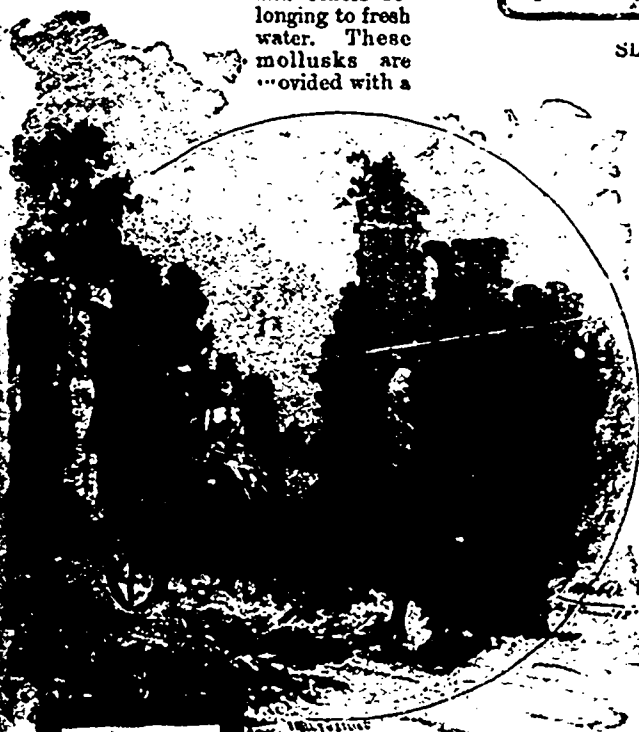
NEVER SWEAR.

1. It is mean. A boy of high moral standing would almost as soon steal as swear.
2. It is vulgar altogether too low for a decent boy.
3. It is cowardly, showing a fear of not being believed or obeyed.
4. It is ungentlemanly. A gentleman, according to Webster, is a genteel man—well-bred, refined. Such a one will no more swear than go into the street to throw mud with a chimney-sweep.

fluid secretion, with which they line the interior of their shells in order to prevent friction of their tender bodies against anything rough. When this secretion is hardened it is known by dealers as "mother of pearl." Besides this pearly lining, small rounded portions of this material are often found within the shell; and it is generally supposed that these are the result of accidental causes, such as the intrusion of a grain of sand, which the mollusk, not being able to expel in self-defence, covers over with the secretion, thus forming what is known as a "pearl."

The clever Chinese avail themselves of this knowledge to compel one species of fresh-water mussels to produce pearls. They keep a large number of mussels in tanks, introducing small pellets of lead into each shell; and in course of time they reap their expected harvest.

The particular oyster which produces the largest pearls is only found in tropical waters, Ceylon being from the earliest times the principal locality of the pearl fishery. On a certain bank, about twenty miles from the shore, these oysters are found in prodigious numbers, adhering to one another, and all of a very large size. Divers are employed to bring them up to the surface of the water, where boats are waiting to receive the shells. Some danger is



DONKEY CALACHE—CENTRAL EUROPE.



PIERRE A VOIR, WITH MODE OF DESCENT.