A Page for the Young Folks

CURRENT TOPICS

A week ago on Saturday a family of children in Vancouver were poisoned. They blamed ice cream, bought from a Greek peddlar, for their illness. Just why these children, belonging to one family, should have been poisoned and all the other children who bought ice cream in cones from the same man have escaped has not been learned. The little folks have recovered from their very serious illness.

Although ice cream, like other sweets, is good for children, if eaten in moderation, the habit of treating one another and or spending money on every occasion, in this way, is a very bad one. Children should be able to go to town without longing for the nice things they see on the stands and in the streets. This is something boys and girls would do well to think about.

Every fourth year the run of salmon in the Fraser has been large. Many say that this year there will not be so many fish in the river as in 1905. This opinion is given by some who have been trying to learn the habits of the salmon. It is to be hoped that their fears will prove groundless, for salmon canning has always been a very profitable business.

Kipling once wrote a poem in which he called Canada "Our Lady of the Snows." The pretty name spread far and wide, but it did the country much harm. People in foreign countries were slow to learn that the snow-covered plains of winter could be converted into miles of waving grain in autumn by the glorious summer sunshine. During the last few years the truth has been learned and from all directions farmers have come to till the fertile land of the Middle West. The traveler who called British Columbia "A Sea of Mountains" was almost as unkind to our own Province. It is true that our mountain scenery is very grand and beautiful and that our mines are rich. But British Columbia's valleys contains many thousands of acres of productive soil and in some parts of the Province there are wide areas of fertile land. That the riches of the Province will in future come from orchards and meadows and grain fields is what Captain Tatlow, Minister of Finance and Agriculture, is teaching not only the people of Great Britain, but of Eastern Canada and our own Province.

The Government has taken every pains to send men through the country who shall teach the farmers, dairymen and fruit raisers how to do their work better and surveyors are finding out where the best farming lands are and how they may be best reached.

On Vancouver Island the Development League and the Canadian Pacific Railway Company are aiding in the work of bringing the people to the land. Unlike a mine, the longer and more thoroughly the farm is worked, the richer it becomes.

Before you read this the celebration of the Twenty-fourth will have begun. The editor hopes that all readers and every one they love will have the happiest possible holiday. The memory of Queen Victoria is one we all should cherish. She was a good woman and served her country long and well. It would have pleased her to see the fathers and mothers with their children spending Victoria Day in this fair city which bears her name. For she was a loving wife and a wise and kind mother. But when King Edward ordered that his mother's birthday be celebrated rather than his own during his lifetime, he asked that all his subjects should keep it in honor of the Empire she loved so well. So in all your sports remember the greatness and honor of the Empire to which you belong and do nothing unworthy of her fair fame. This does not mean that you are not to be as happy and merry as children on a holiday can be.

Now that peace has been restored in Asia Minor it has been found that a greater number were reported killed than was actually the case. People have come out of their hiding places and returned from the districts to which they fled. The truth, however, is bad enough and it will be some time yet before the whole truth is known. The Turks say that many Mohammedans were killed. This is no doubt true. It is not to be supposed that the Christians would look on and see their wives and daughters murdered in the most horrible way without trying to save them. We may hope that never again will such a massacre be allowed to take place in a region within reach of civilized nations.

Persia, another Mahommedan country, is in a very disturbed condition. The Shah has shown himself unfit for rule. It is said that the Turks are threatening to invade Persia and the Russians have sent soldiers to the front. Christian missionaries have been at work in Persia for many years and it is feared that they are now in danger at a place called Urumiah.

The trouble between the government employes in Paris and other cities of France and the government seems to be almost over. The people of France have not considered that the wrongs done to the working men and women employed by the government putting the whole country to the dreadful expense and trouble that a strike of all laborers would have caused. It is said that the government of France has acted very wisely. Not only France but the whole world may be very thankful that work has not stopped in that country. The nations of the world now do so much business with one another that what hurts one injures all the others. Try if you can find out what things even we in far away British Columbia would have to do without if all the workshops in France were closed. Perhaps one of the girls will write a letter before next Thursday and tell us.

The little country of Belgium is very proud of its art galleries. Some of the really great painters of the world have lived and worked there. Even among its workmen and women there are artists as the laces and carpets of Brussels show. But the King of Belgium seems to love money more than anything in the world. It is only a little while since the nation had to buy Congo from him because in order to make a fortune from the products of that rich territory he had forced the natives not only to work as slaves but had treated them with the most terrible cruelty. Now the King is shocking his subjects by preparing to sell to wealthy Americans the pictures and other works of art that in the course of time have been gathered in his palace in Belgium. It is felt that many of these things belonged to Leopold as King of Belgium and should be left to his successor. However, there does not seem to be any law to prevent his doing as he likes.

In far-away Abyssinia a boy of thirteen and a girl of eight were married. The boy is the grandson of King Menelik and the little girl the heiress of the opposite house. This arrangement was made so that when King Menelik dies the people would unite to support the young king and Queen. Your history of England will tell you that such plans do not always succeed.

The poet and novelist Owen Meredith is dead. He was a very old man and a great writer. Many noted Englishmen have gone to take a last look at one whose works has added to England's greatness and to express sympathy with his daughter in her sorrow. The poet Swinburne and the novelist Meredith were among the last to pass away of a group of great thinkers of the reign of Queen Victoria.

Earl Crewe has writen from England to Earl Grey thanking the government of Canada for the help offered to Great Britain for the defence of England. The British government wish that there should be a meeting held in London soon of members of the governments of all the colonies to discuss the question of how help can best be given. Earl Grey's answer, which, of course, was dictated by Premier Laurier and his other advisers, was that his government did not see the need of such a conference at this time.

A number of the soldiers who fought in the South African war ask to be given farms in Canada. They promise in return, that they will be ready to fight for the Empire when called upon. Many of these veterans are in the prime of life. Some of them left farms when they enlisted. All of them must have learned during the years they spent in the Transvaal or neighboring colonies the need of being able, not only to fight on the field, but to do many things quickly and well. Brave and ready, they will be citizens in time of peace and prompt to defend their homes and their country if need should arise. Canada has room within her borders for many such Empire-builders as these veterans should prove.

G. H. Barnard, M.P., sent a despatch last week to tell the people of British Columbia that a training ship would soon be sent to the Pacific Coast from England. All young men or boys who want to train for the navy will have a chance to do so. It seems certain that before long some plan will be completed by which all parts of the Empire will be able to work together to guard it from danger by sea. Now the colonies depend altogether on the ships of England. Australia, indeed, has some battleships of her own, but even she, should danger arise, must call to her aid the seamen of the mother country. Canadian youths will not be behind the young men of other colonies in their duty to the Empire.

Were it not for the sake of making a record in the Young Folk's Page there would be no need to mention to Victoria boys and girls the visit of the Japanese warships Aso and Soya. The Japanese officers and sailors were warmly welcomed by their countrymen living in Victoria and treated as honored guests by the government, the British officers, naval and military, and the citizens. This was as it should be. Japan is England's ally her ships, like those of any friendly nation, deserve to be courteously received. Yet to the older people of Victoria it must have seemed very strange to see the two modern warships manned by the little brown men. They can remember the time when the greatness of the Japanese nation seemed as far off as many other wonderful things to which they have since grown accustomed. When your grandfathers were boys, Japanese students were only beginning to find their way to the colleges in England, Germany and the United States. Officers from European countries may have been training their soldiers and sailors, but few people knew it at the time. Then a war with China took place and the Japanese were victorious. It was not many years till they fought with Russia, and, brave as were her soldiers and great as her territory, the Japanese defeated the mighty European nation. But meanwhile the subjects of Japan were preparing for a wider victory. In the workshops of many countries they had learned various trades and in some cases, it is said, they excel their masters. This, added to the industries that have been handed down for generations have made them dangerous rivals of modern nations in the labor markets of the world.

Canada and Australia have determined to keep the Japanese mechanics and laborers from coming to their countries in large numbers and Japan has agreed not to send her people where they are not wanted. But Canadian boys will have to work very hard if they are to excel the Japanese in skill and enterprise.

It is these, with their industry, and economy, and, above all, their patriotism that have given Japan in so short a time a very high place among the nations of the world. So, while we wish the Japanese warships and their jolly sailors a safe and pleasant voyage, we hope that their visit will spur us on to greater efforts and teach us to live so that active brains and healthy bodies shall fit us for a life of usefulness.

"Yes, sir," boasted the hotel proprietor, "that dog's the best rat-catchin' dog in the state."

Even as he spoke two big rats scurried across the office floor. The dog merely wrinkled his nose.

"Rat dog!" scoffed the traveling man. "Look at that, will you?"

"Hugh!" snorted the landlord. "He knows them. But just you let a strange rat come in here once!"

Boy (to his friend who has fallen down a well)—"I say, Tommy, if you shouldn't ever come out of there alive, can I have your big drum?"

THREE LITTLE STORIES

One Sunday morning, a hundred years ago, a working-man, carefully dressed in his best suit, came out of his house on the main street of the old English town of Gloucester and strolled leisurely down the hill. The "New Inn" was fronted then, as it is today, by a square garden overhung by the carved galleries of the tavern. There was a moss-clad well in the centre, and about it were beds of sweet-smelling pinks and columbines.

But the calm of that Sunday morning was destroyed by a crowd of street boys who fought over the flower-beds, making the day hideous with their noise and coarse talk.

The printer—for printing was his work on week-days—stopped in the midst of the crowd and looked steadily at the boys. Presently he said to himself: "At this rate those boys will soon go utterly to the bad. That must not be! There are good possibilities in them. Here, boys," he called aloud, "come with me!"

He led them, yelling and pushing, down the street into his own quiet house, planning as he went how to keep them there.

"I am going," he said presently, "to start a school for you. Now and here. It shall be a free school; I will be the teacher."

The boys received the news with shouts. They were too ragged and grimy to go to church on Sundays. No other decent place was open to them.

The next Sunday his house was crowded with the same class of children.

The idea of a free school on Sunday appealed to every Christian as a most hopeful plan for the rescue of children from wickedness. It spread through the town, through the shire, through England. It was adopted in France and Germany, it made its way to Australia and to the United States. Now, in every country in the world and in every sect there are these schools, in which, every Sunday morning, the Bible story is told, without money and without price.

In the staid old city of Gloucester they still show you the New Inn and the garden where the boys played, and the old brown house with its peaked roof in which Robert Raikes, that long-ago morning, taught the first Sunday-school.

About forty years ago, one sultry July day, Eliza Turner, a Quaker woman living on a farm in Delaware, came up to Philadelphia to attend to some business. It led her into the poorest quarters of the town. She went through the maze of alleys in which starving babes and children swarmed, panting for breath in the fierce heat. It would have been easy to hurry on and forget the sight, but she stopped often to talk to the wretched children and their mothers.

The heat had been more merciless that summer than usual. The little ones had died by the thousands. Several diseases had become epidemic. In the worst quarters so stagnant was the air in the houses that the children slept at night in the streets.

What was to be done? Who could lift this huge mass of misery? Nobody. And because it was impossible to lift it all, the wealthy class of spectators, however kind, shook their heads and passed by on the other side.

But this good Quaker woman did not shake her head.

"I cannot take all," she said, "but I can take one or two."

She chose two boys and two girls with the most hungry faces and poorest clothes, carried them to the station, put them in the train, and in an hour or two they were in her cozy kitchen, bathed and decently clad and busy devouring a substantial meal.

They stayed with Mrs. Turner for two weeks—weeks which brought health and delight to their poor little starved bodies and souls. Then she took them home and brought other children in their stead. Her neighbors—staid Delaware folk—looked at her queer doings, laughed, approved, and then imitated her. The "country week," as the plan was called, spread through Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and New York to the neighborhood of all large American cities. Then our English cousins borrowed it.

Now, so general is the custom on both continents that there are few poor city children who are not rescued from the unwholesome air of their crowded city homes during a part of every summer, or for a few glad days, at least.

Rowland Hill, a young Englishman, a teacher near Birmingham, went one day a century ago to the post-office for his mail. A young girl, poorly clad, was standing by the window crying bitterly. The postmaster held a bulky letter in his hand out of her reach.

"It's Tom's own handwritin,'" she cried. "I see it! He's all I've got. Father and mother's dead, and I've not heard from Tom for a year. There's nobody but him of my kin in the world! Oh, give it to me! I'll save the money and bring it to you."

"I'm sorry, my girl, but it's against the law," said the official. "There's a shilling due on it," he explained to the young man.

Hill paid the money and sent the girl away happy.

He left the office thinking how innumerable letters came daily from the colonies back to England to people so poor that a shilling extra was an impossible luxury.

For thirty years he worked to establish a universal cheap and prepaid postage, and at last he succeeded.

Now these three good people, when they saw a huge heap of evil on the road, were not disheartened because it was so huge and they were alone. They went to work at it, lifting a spadeful at a time.

There are huge evils in our way, and each one of us has his little spade. Are we going to use them? Or shall we pass by, daunted, on the other side?

DICKY'S BRAVERY

(By J. W. Linn)

"Nonsense!" said Jack, the big brother. "I'm going to sail clear over to Village City; and, besides, a small boy is too much in the way in a boat."

"I'll be just like a mouse," pleaded Dicky.

"Just so," answered the big brother. "Isn't a mouse always bothering round where it has not business to go, and getting hurt, like as not?" Then, as he saw the disappointment in Dicky's face, the big brother's heart softened. "Oh, well, then, come along, kiddy!" he said. "But, mind, you do just as I say."

The big brother was twenty, and there was no more skilful sailor of a small sloop round Sunfish Bay than he. Mother never worried when Dicky was out with Jack; and as for Dicky, he dumbly worshipped his wonderful big brother.

They sailed eight miles across the bay, and Jack made a few purchases in Village City. When they set our for home the wind was dying down, and a slow fog seemed to be creeping in from the open ocean outside.

"But the tide's with us," said Jack. "We sha'n't even be late for supper, Richard the Lion-Hearted." Jack winked at him, and Dicky laughed aloud for pure joy, although what the nickname meant he had not the least idea. He was sailing with Jack, and neither nicknames nor being late for supper bothered him. He watched the black seabirds sail along so close to the little waves that every now and then they touched—as if they were skipping stones, Dicky thought. Now and then the sail flapped indignantly against the sheet, demanding wind, but the tide raced them comfortably along. Suddenly, however, they were in the fog, spread like a soiled sheet everywhere over the water. Soon they could hardly see fifty yards ahead of them. "But it's all right, Dicky!" Jack reassured him. "It's only a mile more and we're close inshore anyway."

Sunfish Bay is part of a big sound, which narrows almost like a bottle toward the mouth. When the tide goes out, it tears through Sunfish Bay at six or seven miles an hour, pressed on by the great weight of the water behind. Beyond the cottage, where the boys lived a small point runs out into the sea, and past that point the waters fairly whirl out through the narrow neck into the open ocean.

As they neared their home buoy, where the rowboat was moored, Jack frowned.

"I've got to make it the first time," he thought. "With no more wind than this, we never can beat back against the tide; we might be carried miles out." So at precisely the right moment he let go the sheet and brought the little boat's head round. He reached over quickly and seized the mooring rope.

But alas! two unfortunate things happened. The sail stuck half-way down; and worse yet, the mooring was fouled somehow, and refused to be hauled in. Jack's eye caught the difficulty at once; the painter of the rowboat had been altogether too long, and it had caught the centreboard when he had come about. There they were, a hundred and fifty yards from shore, in thick fog and a spinning tide, the sail in a mess and the centreboard fouled. If Jack let go of the buoy rope, the tide would carry them down in an instant. He yelled and shouted, but no one heard him. Then, with quick decision, he turned to Dicky.

"Dicky, will you do as I tell you?"

Dicky, wide-eyed, nodded.

"Get hold here, then," said the big brother. "Now, Dick, listen. When I let go, this boat is going to pull awful hard. She's in the tide, you see. You must hold on. No matter what happens, or how mucch it hurts your arms, hold tight. Wrap your legs round this tiller, so. Now, are you braced? I'm letting go. Hold!"

Jack let go gently, to prevent any sudden strain on the boy; but then, with a spring he was half-way down the boat, working at the centreboard, and the whole strength of the tide was opposed to Dicky. He shut his teeth and hung on. The sloop swung out, then back, like a pendulum; the tide gave it great jerks, which seemed as if they were going to pull Dicky's arms from their sockets, almost, but he would not let go. Lying face down, he could see only the water racing by, but he heard Jack working and talking.

"Just a minute more, little brother, just a minute more! Hang to it tight, that's the boy! It's all right, Dicky, it's all right!" The big brother's voice was loud and cheerful. At that minute, with a sidewise twitch, the rope squeezed Dicky's hand against the gunwale. How it hurt. The tears came into his eyes, but he hung on. His arms were getting numb, and he could hardly see even the water now. And then—Jack had hold of him and the rope together, the strain was gone, and he was lying in a heap at the bottom of the boat.

When the sloop was safely moored, Jack turned to him.

"Hard work, kiddy?"

Dicky nodded.

"Why, what's the matter with your hand?"

Dicky held it up with a raw red line across the back. "I pinched it," he answered. It was into the big brother's eyes that the tears almost came this time.

"Dicky," he said, "if you had let go, we'd have been out somewhere in the sound; and with this fog and no wind, we'd have stood a very good show of being run down. But you're a little brick, and so here we are all safe; and anybody who tells you again that you aren't any good in a boat you send them to me."

And in spite of the pain in his hand, Dicky was happy.

THE STORY TELLER

Public Spirit in Pubico.

The pride of locality, which is so insisted upon in certain small Western towns in America, had an amusing illustration in a place by the name of Pubico. The landlord of the tavern was telling a friend about the arrest of "a feller for walking down Main street in the middle of the afternoon in his stocking feet. He's in jail now," continued the narrator, when the other interrupted.

"Why," cried his friend, "it isn't a crime, is it, for a person to walk in his stocking feet? Personal liberty, my dear sir—"

"Aw," replied the eloquent landlord, "personal liberty is proper enough as long as it don't interfere with the rights of other people. Anything that tends to add to the silence of our little city is an offence against the general welfare. We're public-spirited here, even if we ain't exactly metropolitan."

Praise Might Well Be Divided.

When the concert was over, and the pianist was driving along the snowy road to the country hotel where he was to spend the night, he ventured to ask his host of the evening if he had enjoyed the playing.

"You did first-rate," said his host. "That's my opinion."

"Yes," he went on, after a minute, "you certainly did first-rate. You showed power and strength beyond anything I ever expected to listen to, and you was lightning quick into the bargain.

"Anybody that heard you could tell you'd worked hard and long and steady to get your trade. But I tell ye who else had ought to have some credit—that's the man that made the piano you played on.

"'Tain't every instrument that would stand the strain you put on it, not by a good deal.

"I should call it the praise ought to be divided pretty even betwixt ye."

Too Much Grown Up.

A certain small boy was rapidly assuming manly ways. Not long ago there was to be an entertainment at his school. Songs and recitations were the principal features. The small boy waxed eloquent of the coming glories of this show, and more especially of the part he was to take.

On the morning of the entertainment his mother suggested that he should take his little sister, about four years old, with him. He hung his head.

"Don't you want to take her?" his mother asked.

"No, I don't," he answered.

"Why not?"

"'Cause there ain't none of the other fellows have to bring their children," was the reply.

Unfailing Courtesy.

To be at the same time rude and polite is an achievement of great difficulty. A French gentleman had finished his holiday in England, and had just paid a very large hotel bill. He was indignant, but his native courtesy was unimpaired.

"Send ze proprietaire to me," he said to the waiter, and presently the host entered.

Monsieur was all smiles.

"Ah, let me embrace you!" he cried.

"But why do you want to embrace me, sir? I don't understand."

"Ah, saire, but look at ze bee!"

"Your bill! Yes, but what of it?"

"Vot of it?" Vy, it means zat I s'all nevaire, nevaire see you again, saire."

Long in Learning.

Mr. Morse having bought a new bicycle of the most improved pattern, presented his old one to Dennis Halloran, who did errands and odd jobs for the neighborhood.

"You'll find the wheel useful when you're in a hurry, Dennis," he said.

The young Irishman was loud in his thanks, but regarded the wheel doubtfully.

"I mistrust 'twill be a long while befoor I can ride it," he said.

"Why, have you ever tried?" asked Mr. Morse.

"I have," said Dennis, gloomily. "A frind lint me the loan o' his wheles he was having the moomps. 'Twas tree weeks I had it, an' what wid practising night an' morning, I niver got so I could balance meself standing still, let alone riding on it."

No Need to Worry.

That everything should be neat and shipshape is most important aboard a yacht. A writer tells the story of the captain of a certain sloop, who crossed the deck in a hurry, seemingly very much perplexed. A lady stopped him, and asked what the trouble was

"The fact is, ma'am," he said, "our rudder's broken."

"Oh, I shouldn't worry about that," said the lady. "Being under water nearly all the time, no one will notice it."

Next Best.

The mother of a delicate Lancashire girl, who seemed to be suffering from loss of appetite and general debility, called in a physician, who, to tempt the patient to eat, prescribed a few oysters and a little champagne.

"Where do you suppose I'll get money to pay for luxuries like oysters and champagne?" demanded the mother.

The doctor shrugged his shoulders, knowing that many of the Lancashire miners earn good wages, and often spend a fair amount of them.

"In an extreme case like this," he suggested, "It would not be extravagance."

Some days later he met the mother, and made inquiries for the girl. "I hope she is better," said he.

"Well, she's farmer isn't," replied the mother. "She's lots worse."

"Worse?" repeated the doctor in surprise. "I thought she would begin to pick up. Did you give her what I prescribed?"

"Well, not exactly," said the mother, "but I give 'er the nearest the likes of us could afford. I give 'er cockles and ginger beer."

Unquestionable Logic.

"Vicious circle" is a term often used in the medical world. Here is an example of its psychological use applied to argument:

Tom, the son of a wealthy man, was a great favorite with all who knew him, but he heartily detested business. A merchant had engaged him as bookkeeper at a high salary. Nevertheless, Tom got into the habit of reaching the office later and later, until finally he got there about two in the afternoon. When this state of affairs had gone on for a week, the merchant remonstrated.

"But, my dear sir," returned Tom, "how can I come any earlier? I don't get my breakfast until one."

"But get your breakfast earlier."

"How can I? I don't get up till twelve."

"Then get up earlier."

"How can I," pleaded Tom, "when I don't go to bed until daylight?"

In the face of such convincing argument there was nothing to be said.

Need She Ask?

A certain man, of rather a waggish disposition, contends that his wife has no imagination. At dinner one night he chanced to mention a tragic circumstance which he had read in the evening paper on the way home.

It seemed that a passenger on a transatlantic steamer had fallen overboard in mid-ocean, and had never been seen again.

"Was he drowned?" asked his wife.

"Oh, no," answered the husband, "but he sprained his ankle, I believe."

One of Oxford's Curiosities.

Oxford University has in its time given lodging to some curious characters. In a book of reminiscences of Oxford, the Rev. W. Tuckwell tells some stories of Doctor Frowd, "a little man, an irrepressible, unwearied chatterbox, with a droll interrogative face, a bald head, and a fleshy underlip, which he could push up nearly to his nose." He was a good preacher, and was not ashamed of his native humor.

"Well," he began on one occasion, "hell is a place which men believe to be reserved for those who are a great deal worse than themselves."

Presently he became husky, drew out a lozenge, and sat down in the pulpit to masticate it leisurely, while we looked at one another, wished that we had lozenges, and waited the consumption of his lubricant.

In reading chapters from the Old Testament, he used to pause at a marginal variation, read it to himself half-audibly, and, like Doctor Blimber, smile on it auspiciously or knit his brow and shake his head in disapproval.

I remember, too, his preaching in All Saints Church. He climbed up the steep three-decker steps into the highwalled pulpit, and disappeared, till, his hands clinging to the desk and his comical face peering over it, he called down into the reading desk below—

"Thompson, send up a hassock!"

Beautiful Indeed!

It was a bright, crisp morning, and the teacher looked down at her small, eager pupils with an encouraging smile.

"Who would like to tell the class of something beautiful, seen on the way to school this morning?" she asked.

Half a dozen hands were raised, and she chose for first speaker little Michael Donovan.

"You may tell us what was the most beautiful thing you saw on your way to school, Michael," she said.

"I stopped to get Timmy Nolan," said Michael, hoarsely, "and he's coming down with the measles, and his mother showed him to me through the winder, to let me see how good they've come out!"

A Matter of Comparison.

There are at least two ways of looking at most natures. Some negroes were discussing the death of a small darky. The cause of the catastrophe was clear enough to one of the men.

"De po' chile died fum eatin' too much watahmillion," he explained.

One of the others looked his doubts.

"Huh!" he grunted, scornfully, "dar ain't no such thing as too much watahmillion."

"Well, den," remarked the first, "dar wasn't enough boy."

Queer Bird Homes.

"Queer Bird Homes" is the title of an article published recently in Germany by Harry Maas, ornithologist, in which many instances are cited to show that the tastes of birds as to their habitations vary. A swallow's nest under the eaves of a railway passenger coach he speaks of as most peculiar. Not so much because it was a car, but because this particular one made daily trips between two places. Being on the move about half the time, it was hard to say when the swallows were flying homeward. The nest remained undisturbed, and a little family of three finally emerged from it. He quotes from "Kosmos," in which a nobleman relates that for twelve years a goldfinch pair came regularly to his garden and built a nest out of forget-me-nots. The habit of the birds was so well known that a bed of the little flowers was cultivated expressly for them. In the historical museum of Soletta, a city in which watch making is the chief industry, there is a bird's nest made of watch springs. It was discovered in a tree, where it had been built by a wagtail pair. The little feathered architects used the metal for the outside and to hold the soft lining.—New York Tribune.

FORTUNE FROM SKATING

In September, 1907, Mr. C. P. Crawford, the owner of a great roller skating rink at Coney Island, New York's famous playground, started a similar affair in Liverpool.

The result was nothing short of wonderful. In thirty weeks the receipts were £8,955, or an average of nearly £300 a week. This was the beginning of a boom which left all former rolling skating booms far behind. Rinks were opened in all parts of the country, and when the season begins again next October twenty-five more buildings, erected specially for "rolling," will be opened.

The profits made last winter were enormous. Operating for an average of five months rinks in all parts of the country, in which £25,000 is invested, paid dividends at the rate of 120 per cent. per annum. After the first successes there was a great demand for shares. The £10,000 capital required in each case to run rinks at Plymouth, Hull, Cardiff, and Bristol was subscribed some time before plans for the buildings were passed.

At St. James' Hall, Manchester, where the season's takings averaged £300 a week, the total expenses were only about £80 a week. In the case of other halls, the ratio of profit has been almost as great. At the London Olympia a twelve weeks' season resulted in the shareholders receiving all their capital back, plus a dividend of 20 per cent. At Southport, where the rink was open sixteen weeks, 50 per cent. was paid on preference and 25 on ordinary shares. A twenty-eight weeks' season in Dublin brought to the holders of preference shares a dividend of 155 per cent. and of ordinary 105 per cent. In sixteen weeks the Birmingham rink paid a dividend of 25 per cent., and the one at Belfast yielded in twenty-one weeks 30 per cent. Dundee shareholders received 45 per cent. on preference shares and 22½ per cent. on ordinary after a twelve weeks' season.

Mr. Crawford had made an immense fortune out of roller skating. Apart from his American interests and his fees as a managing director of many companies, he has been drawing over £1,000 a week in dividends upon the shares he holds in English rinks.

BABY AT THE HELM

Lincoln people stood aghast on Monday morning to see a handsome motor-car go dashing through the streets with a tiny tot of four at the steering wheel, says Lloyd's Weekly.

The youngster was a merry little chap named Philip Baldock, who had made great friends with the chauffeur engaged by Dr. Winter, to whom the car belonged. On many occasions the kindly chauffeur had taken his little companion for short drives, much to the delight of the boy.

The chauffeur had occasion on Monday morning to call at his lodgings in Foster street, which runs off the busy High street, and left the car unattended for three or four minutes.

Along came Master Baldock, and saw the car which had been such a source of enjoyment to him on various occasions. Here was a chance too good to be missed! The boy had evidently studied the chauffeur's actions pretty closely when he had been taken for drives.

Climbing into the car Master Philip touched the starting gear and off the car went, with the world's youngest chauffeur standing upright at the wheel. "Honk, honk!" when the horn, and at twenty-five miles an hour the car made straight for the High street.

The sound of the horn brought the chauffeur from his house, and together with a crowd he joined in a wild chase. It was marvellous how the boy contrived to evade people, but luckily he did. A milk cart in the way, however, was sent spinning and the gutters ran with the white fluid.

To turn when the car ran into High street was more than the little chauffeur could manage, and the car crashed into a chemist's shop that directly faces Foster street. Before reaching there young Philip had tumbled out, escaping in the most remarkable way with nothing worse than a grazing. When the real chauffeur arrived the machinery of the car was still working, and the vehicle is not much damaged.