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FIRE DANGER AT SEA.

How Flames Can Sweep the Inside of Even a Metal Ship.

The danger from fire on a transatlantic liner is more serious than is generally believed. It is much greater than the danger from collision and is becoming more and more dangerous with the increased outlay upon luxury and display. The main structure of the ship and most of its essential parts are of metal, but many of the fittings, nearly every feature of ornament and every trapping of luxury, are highly inflammable.

No one who has not been aboard the Spanish wrecks at Santiago can conceive how fire can sweep the inside of even a metal ship. Admiral Cervera described to me the experience on board the Teresa in these words: "The second shot that came on board set us on fire. The fire main was damaged. Soon we were unable to cope with the fire. It swept through her from bow to stern. There was not a space as big as the palm of your hand where life could have been sustained. An insect could not have lived on board. We had to get overboard or be burned."

It is true the Spaniards had not cut out their woodwork and thrown overboard all unnecessary inflammables, as we had in the American fleet, but the inflammability of one of their warships was much less than that of a luxurious ocean liner.—Captain Richmond Pearson Hobson in Engineering Magazine.

PINEAPPLE PLANTS.

They Do Not Die After Fruiting, but Reproduce Themselves.

Pineapples do not grow on trees. Imagine a plant four feet in extreme height from the ground to the tip of leaves, a single stalk at the surface, but dividing at once into swordlike blades or leaves, fifteen in number, from the center of which appears a stiff, upright stem, at the top of which is the crown of the fruit when fully grown is a foot or more below the points of the leaves.

At the end of a year and a half from planting each plant produces a single fruit, even as a cabbage plant produces a single head. But the pineapple does not die after fruiting once. Down on the stem below the fruit and among the long, narrow leaves a sucker appears. If allowed to remain this will soon become the head of the plant, and within another year it will yield another fruit. This process may go on for a term of years. In the meantime, however, other suckers will make their appearance.

These are broken off, and when stuck into the ground they put out roots and become other plants. Thus a single pineapple plant may produce a dozen or more others while it is yielding fruit from year to year.

The Intruder.

A certain boat coming up the Mississippi one day during a flood lost her way and bumped up against a frame house. She hadn't more than touched it before an old dork rammed his head up through a hole in the roof, where the chimney once came out, and yelled at the captain on the roof: "What's you gwine wid dat boat? Can't you see nothin'? Fust thing you knows you gwine to turn dis house ober, spill de old woman an' de childer out in de flood an' drown 'em. What you doin' out here in de country wid your boat, anyhow? Go on back yander froo de co'nfields an' get back into de ribber whar you b'longs. Ain't got no business sev'n miles out in the country foolin' roun' people's houses n'how!" And the boat backed out.—Life.

The Largest Described Snake.

Speke in his narrative of the journey to the source of the Nile describes the largest snake that has ever been seen by man. "I shuddered," he says, "as I looked upon the effects of his tremendous dying strength. For yards around where he lay grass, bushes and saplings—in fact, everything except full grown trees—were cut clean off, as if they had been trimmed with an immense scythe. The monster when measured was fifty-one feet two and one-half inches in extreme length, while around the thickest portions of its body the girth was nearly three feet."

Looking Ahead.

It was the first night of a new play. "I say," remarked the author to the manager, "that scene shifter over there is a most peculiar looking fellow." "Yes; he's an Eskimo," said the manager. "An Eskimo! What on earth made you take him on?" "Oh, I thought it would be a comfort to see one happy face if the play turns out to be a frost!"

Cases in Point.

Rivers—Brooks, that's the second time I've heard you use the phrase "aching foot." I wish you would tell me how a void can ache. Brooks—Well, not to speak of a hollow tooth, don't you sometimes have a headache?—London Telegraph.

In the Mountains.

Climb the mountains and get their good tidings. Nature's peace will flow into you as sunshine flows into trees. The winds will blow their own freshness into you, and the storms their energy, while cares will drop off like autumn leaves.—John Muir.

Punishment For Whom?

Boss Barber—What? You have cut the gentleman four times? Well, just for punishment you must shave him all over again right away!—Flegende Blatter.

LAYING OUT A ROAD.

Billings Was in No Hurry, So the Work Was Done Right.

A good many years ago C. K. G. Billings, who made his millions in Chicago gas, bought a good sized plot of ground on the heights overlooking the Hudson river at the upper end of Manhattan Island. Some time later he put up a house which still remains the pride of "seeing New York" guides.

When the land had been bought the question arose as to the best means of laying out a roadway up the steep and rocky hill, at the crest of which the house was to stand. Mr. Billings was puzzled. He wanted to make it as easy a climb as he could. He mentioned the problem to his friend W. C. Muschenheim, a New York hotel proprietor. Mr. Muschenheim, who was familiar with the hills and dales of that part of New York, gave the following advice:

"You aren't in any great hurry, so why don't you have it done right? Put one of your cows on that land and give her time to lay out a path up that hill. Trust her to find the easiest and most comfortable grade."

Mr. Billings followed the suggestion, and in the course of time the cow made a path which has long since been developed into a permanent, winding, slowly ascending roadway.—Saturday Evening Post.

BIRTH OF A LETTER.

The Way "W" Came to Take the Place of the Old "VV."

The printers and language makers of the latter part of the sixteenth century began to recognize the fact that there was a sound in spoken English which was without a representative in the shape of an alphabetical sign of character, as in the first sound in the word "wet."

Prior to that time it had always been spelled as "vet," the v having the long sound of u or of two u's together. In order to convey an idea of the new sound they began to spell such words as "wet," "weather," "web," etc., with two u's, and as the u of that date was a typical v the three words above looked like this: "vvet," "vveather," "vveeb."

After awhile the typesetters recognized the fact that the double u had come to stay, so they joined the two u's together and made the character now so well known as w. There are books in which three forms of the w are given. The first is an old double v (vv); the next is one in which the last stroke of the first v crosses the first stroke of the second, and the third is the common w we use today.

Real Literary Crumbs.

The librarian opened the book wide and shook it hard.

"Looking for possible love letters and mementos?" a visitor asked.

"No; breadcrumbs," said the librarian. "Subsequent readers do not mind love letters, but they do object to breadcrumbs. Half the books brought back have crumbs tucked away between the leaves. That shows what a studious town we are. Our people are so enamored of literature that they can't stop reading long enough to eat; also it shows what a lonely town we are. Only people who live alone a great deal read anything except the newspaper at mealtime. And it shows what a slovenly town we are. In the interests of hygiene and aesthetics those voracious readers who cram their heads and their stomachs at the same time ought to clean their books of crumbs, but they never do."—New York Press.

Hindu Caste.

The four grades of society among the Hindus are the Brahmins or sacerdotal class, who are said at the moment of creation to have issued from the mouth of Brahma; the Kshatrya or Chuttee or military class, sprung from the arm of Brahma; the Vaisya or Balu or mercantile class, from the thigh of Brahma, and Sudras or Sooders or servile class, from the foot of Brahma. The business of the Sudras is to serve the three superior classes, more especially the Brahmins. Their condition is never to be improved. They are not to accumulate property and are unable by any means to approach the dignity of the higher classes. These divisions are hereditary, impassable and indefeasible.

Precedent For "Governess."

Albert VII, archduke of Austria, married Isabella Clara Eugenie, Infanta of Spain, who brought to him as dowry the sovereignty of the Low Countries, etc. When Philip IV, of Spain ascended the throne in 1621 he took from his aunt the sovereignty of the Low Countries, but left her the title of governess. Her husband died soon after, whereupon she took the veil, though still retaining the reins of government. She died at Brussels in 1633, aged sixty-six. Here there is precedent for the use of the word governess when a lady holds the post.—London Notes and Queries.

Franklin on Long Grasses.

Ben Franklin found the long grasses used by his father before and after meals very tedious. One day after the winter's provision had been salted he said, "I think, father, if you were to say grace over the whole cask once for all it would be a great saving of time."—Life.

No Danger.

Blotbs—I heard Tightwad boasting today that he had money to burn. Slobbs—Well, I wouldn't be in any hurry to call out the fire department if I were you.—Philadelphia Record.

To be overpolite is to be rude.—Japanese Proverb.

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