LEAP YEAR CURIOSITIES

An Old Custom which is no Longer Observed.

A CHAPTER FOR THE LADIES.

When the nations of the earth first began to measure time they did it in a happy-go-lucky sort of way that sometimes got them sadly mixed up. The old Roman emperors used to fix the calendar to suit themselves, each after his own fashion. Thus it happened that sometimes there would be 20 months in a year, sometimes but 10, and at one time there were five days that were not in the year at all, but simply served to fill up between the end of an old year and the beginning of a new one. The matter that troubled the ancient calendar makers was that they really didn't know a year when they saw it. They would just go on saying that so and so many days made a year, and then when they found themselves dropping behind, or outrunning the sun, they would as the case might demand, drop or add a few months or days, it was immaterial to them which, and then live on contentedly until the necessity for another patching up arose. If an emperor had a friend whom he particularly wished to honor, or felt inclined to propitiate any of the numerous gods and goddesses that managed celestial and terrestrial affairs in those days they simply added a new month to the year, named after the party the taffy was intended for, and the thing was done. Those old Romans were modest chaps, and occasionally one would name a month after himself.

When Julius Cæsar assumed control of matters in the Eternal City he found the calendar in an infernal mess. With an energetic promptitude that was characteristic of the man, he at once rearranged things according to his own notion, and succeeded in doing a better job than any of his predecessors. But in order to do this he had to mix one year up so that neither he nor anybody else could make head or tail of it, and this period has since been known to those who are interested in these matters as the

"YEAR OF CONFUSION,"

which was a very appropriate appellation. When he had brought his plan into running order he had what is known as the Julian calendar, which contained 12 months named as at present. February had 29 days ordinarily, but every four years had 30. This may be called the first regular installation of leap year on a permanent basis. After he had secured the general management of the earth and had the title of Augustus added to his name, a day was taken from February, which already had less than the others, and added to August, which had been named from himself, because July, which was named after the first Cæsar, had 31 days, and Augustus did not propose to have anybody own a bigger month that he did. Having thus glorified himself (it is said he did it to flatter the vanity of Octavius), he was compelled to alter the length of the later months in order that three long months might not come altogether.

Though Julius Cæsar did pretty well, he didn't quite make both ends meet. The solar year contained 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 46.05 seconds, while the Emperor's year contained 365¼ days—about 11 minutes and 13 seconds longer than the solar year. Things ran along in this way until 1582, when Pope Geogory XIII. tried his hand at tinkering the calendar, and fixed up a year with 365 days, 5 hours, 49 minutes and 12 seconds, which has been in use ever since, and seems to answer the purpose very well. To be sure, it exceeds the solar year by nearly 26 seconds; but as that would only make one day in 3,325 years, we can struggle along with it for a time at least.

The necessity for leap year arises, as everybody knows, from the fact that the earth does not move around the sun in a certain number of whole days, but finds at the end of its journey thas it has a fraction of a day, approximating one-fourth, to dispose of; so, to make matters easy and convenient for all concerned, an extra day is slipped in every fourth year, and as February, since it was the victim of the Roman spoiler, is worse off than ever, it is thrown this vagrant day much as one would throw a picked bone to a dog.

THE FAIR SEX,

who, to tell the truth, are not slow to observe anything new, especially if it is a bonnet, soon saw that times had changed, so to speak, and at once set about contriving to turn the new order of things to their own account. Whether a general convention of duly appointed delegates was held, or an understanding was arrived at by correspondence or intuition (intuition is one of the attributes of women), this historian declines to state, though it doesn't follow that he couldn't if he would—but at all events the understanding was arrived at that on any day of the 366 in leap year it would be lawful for any spinster, maid or widow to propose marriage to the man of her choice without losing or in any way endangering, damaging or otherwise affecting that feminine delicacy and reserve which is the chief charm of the spinsters, maids and widows aforesaid. It was also unanimously enacted that proposals made in accordance with the above law must be accepted, but in practice it was found that this provision was likely to upset the whole matter, so it was amended to require that all proposals should be respectfully entertained, and where the union was thought inadvisable or undesirable the party asked might get out of it in the usual way of asking time to consider, and then declining finally in a polite note.

The mysterious part of this whole matter is, why did the gentler sex elect to reverse the established order of things every fourth year? And yet, on mature consideration it may possibly be accounted for. In the olden time when the custom originated, women were under much greater restraint in social matters than at the present day. Then they were kept in the house almost constantly, and never allowed to stir out at all, except in the company of some old duenna in the pay of stern parents, who would no more hear of an innocent flirtation than they would cut their own heads off. The maids were not even allowed to receive a proposal of marriage, except through their guardians; much less to make one. It was not then, as now, when if a girl wants to marry a dude, even though she cannot ask him, she can give him to understand quite plainly that any proposition he may have to make in that line will be received, the customary and decent confusion ending in assent. It was the state of seclusion in which marriageable girls were kept in those days that probably incited them to demand

EXTRA PRIVILEGES FOR LEAP YEAR,

and they probably selected that time on the strength of their knowledge that men generally spend about three-fourths of their earnings on themselves and the remaining fourth on their womankind, and so reasoned that perhaps they might give up one-fourth of their privileges with respect to courtship. Though the imperceptible encroachments of time and custom have so changed the social structure that leap year rights are no longer necessary to the fair sex, since they now practice what amounts to nearly the same thing in all years, yet the ancient traditions are not forgotten, if not observed, and efforts to revive them in some degree are frequently made. Thus it happens that on New Year's day in leap year some people try to have the ladies make the calls of the season while the gentlemen remain at home to entertain. Society, however, is very conservative as regards its customs, if not in regard to whom it admits within its charmed and charming circle. All attempts to introduce leap year practices have ended in failure. There is a class outside the sacred pale of what is self-styled "society," but, nevertheless, quite as good as that which sparkles in Vanity Fair, who are not so ultra formal but that they can enjoy a little innocent fun, and in this circle leap year parties are sometimes indulged in, but rarely; and take the year all around, the bachelor's liberty is about as secure as in any other.

ETIQUETTE AT HOME.

It Should Not Be Reserved for Society Alone.

The ease and neglige of home often induce carelessness as to etiquette, the impression being that politeness and polish are only needed in society, and that carelessness of manner is appropriate to home life. All such views are erroneous. There is positive comfort in politeness, and etiquette is as important at home as abroad. We distinguish etiquette as the outward expression of politeness. It has to do with forms and attentions which are external. A lady in society is treated with a certain deference, which manifests itself in delicate attentions. Children in society are treated with considerate kindness, which is always considerately expressed. There are rules of étiquette which relate to the many little attentions and formulas. These in society are carefully graded, and often rigidly enforced. They may be made onerous and so oppressive. But etiquette is clearly defined. We do not advocate an etiquette for the home so rigid as to be burdensome. Yet it ma be the means of teaching politeness to children. Those who have an instinctive politeness easily fall in with the rules of etiquette. But all have not this instinct. Some are careless, rude, selfish, inconsiderate. These need discipline. To give this is not to lecture on the rules of good order or politeness. It must be instilled more by example than precept. And where the parents are careful to observe the forms of politeness, its importance is naturally impressed and its rules are speedily learned. Therefore, all deference that would be shown in public society should mark intercourse at home. And if husband and wife are courteous, children imbibe and practice it. Example is the great teacher in this line.

Beyond this courtesy exerts a very decided influence on character. Trained to the etiquette of politeness gives a balance and evenness to character. Its very inception involves self-control and conscious restraint. It is with most second nature. The forms and rules are acquired and the habits slowly grafted on. Where this is done so much has been accomplished in the line of self-control that its influence extends to temper and habits of mind. Such persons are apt to be self-contained in all emergencies. A gentleman will be such under all provocation and amid all trials or tests. Hence children thus educated receive something more than polish. It is something to gracefully escort a lady to dinner, or to maintain an agreeable conversation, or to show, at all times, the air of good breeding; but the value of it all is the traits of mind that have been imparted. A clean person will feel clean, and one accustomed to politeness will naturally realize the elevation of feeling that attends courtesy. So habits formed at home are important, and the habit of courtesy ranks among the first.—*Philadelphia Call.*

A Brave Scotch Farmer.

At a recent meeting in London of the British Royal Humane Society, a silver medal was unanimously voted to Mr. D. McCulloch, a young farmer, of Cardran, Drummore, Stranraer, Wigtownshire, for a gallant act performed by him on the 11th November last, whereby he was instrumental in saving the lives of six persons. On that date the barque Ennsmia was wrecked, during a heavy gale, on the rocks beneath the cliffs, some 200 feet high, at Carnegavon, where Peter Nicol, the master, and five of the crew were washed up. Owing to the tempest it was found impossible to pass a rope to the poor sailors, and, though several persons realized the perilous position, no one ventured a rescue until Mr. McCulloch appeared upon the scene. He at once consented to allow himself to be lowered over the face of the cliffs by a single small rope tied around his waist, having another rope in his hand, to the men below. In this position, and at the mercy of the wind, which blew with terrible force, the brave young farmer passed the rope down to the sailors, who were subsequently hauled up in safety one at a time.

Perished in the Snow.

During the night of Friday last a man named Gilbert Gensaun started for his home, some five miles distant from a tavern at Little Mills, near Laurenceville, Que. Being lame and in liquor, he could not resist the severe cold, as well as the blinding storm, and so perished when within three acres of his own door. A mittened hand above the snow was the only mark that led to the finding of the frozen body by a neighbor. The deceased was 50 years of age, and leaves a wife and three children.

The true way to render ourselves happy is to love our duty and find in it our pleasure.—*Mme. de Motteville.*

THE PERILS OF HOME.

Mark Twain on the Dangers of Travelling.

WHO MOST NEED ACCIDENT INSURANCE.

The man in the ticket office said:

"Have an accident insurance ticket also?"

"No," I said, after studying the matter over a little. "No, I believe not; I am going to be travelling by rail all day to-day. However, to-morrow I don't travel. Give me one for to-morrow."

The man looked puzzled. He said:

"But it is for accident insurance, and if you are going to travel by rail—"

"If I am going to travel by rail I sha'n't need it. Lying at home in bed is the thing I am afraid of."

I had been looking into this matter. Last year I travelled 20,000 miles, almost entirely by rail; the year before I travelled over 25,000 miles, half by sea and half by rail; and the year before that I travelled in the neighborhood of 10,000 miles, exclusively by rail. I suppose if I put in all the little odd journeys here and there, I may say I have travelled 60,000 miles during the three years I have mentioned. And never an accident.

For a good while I said to myself every morning: "Now I have escaped thus far, and so the chances are just that much increased that I shall catch it this time. I will be shrewd, and buy an accident ticket." And to a dead moral certainty

I DREW A BLANK

and went to bed that night without a joint started or a bone splintered. I got tired of that sort of daily bother, and fell to buying accident tickets that were good for a month. I said to myself, "A man can't buy thirty blanks in one bundle." But I was mistaken. There was never a prize in the lot. I could read of railway accidents every day—the newspaper atmosphere was foggy with them, but somehow they never came my way. I found I had spent a good deal of money in the accident business, and had nothing to show for it. My suspicions were aroused, and I began to hunt for somebody that had won in this lottery. I found plenty of people who had invested, but not an individual who had ever had an accident or made a cent. I stopped buying accident tickets and went to ciphering. The result was astounding. The peril lay not in travelling, but in staying at home.

I HUNTED UP STATISTICS

and was amazed to find that after all the glaring newspaper headings concerning railroad disasters, less than 300 people had really lost their lives by those disasters in the preceding twelve months. The Erie road was set down as the most murderous in the list. It had killed 46—or 26, I do not exactly remember which, but I know the number was double that of any other road. But the fact straightway suggested itself that the Erie was an immensely long road, and did more business than any other line in the country; so the double number of killed ceased to be matter for surprise.

By further figuring, it appeared that between New York and Rochester the Erie ran eight passenger trains each way every day—sixteen altogether—and carried a daily average of 6,000 persons. This is about a million in six months, the population of New York city. Well, the Erie kills from thirteen to twenty-three persons out of its 1,000,000 in six months; and in the same time 13,000 out of New York's 1,000,000 died in their beds! My flesh crept; my hair stood on end. "This is appalling," I said. "The danger isn't in travelling by rail, but in trusting to those deadly beds. I will never sleep in a bed again." I had figured on considerably less than one-half the length of the Erie road. It was plain that the entire road must transport at least 11,000 or 12,000 people every day. There are many short roads running out of Boston that do fully half as much; a great many such roads. There are many roads scattered about the Union that do

A PRODIGIOUS PASSENGER BUSINESS,

therefore it was fair to presume that an average of 2,500 passengers a day for each road in the country would be about correct. There are 846 railways in our country, and 846 times 2,500 are 2,115,000. So the railways of America move more than 2,000,000 people every day—650,000,000 of people a year, without counting the Sundays. They do that too—there is no question about it—though where they get the raw material is not clear beyond the jurisdiction of my arithmetic; for I have hunted the census through and through, and I find that there are not that many people in the United States by a matter of 610,000,000 at the very least. They must use some of the same people over again, likely.

San Francisco is one-eighth as populous as New York; there are 60 deaths a week in the former and 500 a week in the latter—if they have luck. That is 3,120 deaths a year in San Francisco, and eight times as many in New York—say 25,000 or 26,000. The health of the two places is the same. So we will let it stand as a fair presumption that this will hold good all over the country, and that consequently 25,000 out of every million of people we have must die every year. That amounts to one-fortieth of our total population.

ONE MILLION OF US THEN DIE ANNUALLY.

Out of this million ten or twelve thousand are stabbed, shot, drowned, hanged, poisoned or met similarly violent death in some other popular way, such as perishing by kerosene, lamp and hoop-skirt conflagration, getting buried in coal mines, falling off housetops, breaking through church or lecture-room floors, taking patent medicines or committing suicide in other forms. The Erie Railway kills from twenty-three to forty-six; the other 845 railroads kill an average of one-third of a man each; and the rest of that 1,000,000, amounting in the aggregate to the appalling figure of 987,631 corpses, die naturally in their beds! You will excuse me from taking any more chances on those beds. The railroads are good enough for me. And my advice to all people is, don't stay home any more than you can help; but when you have got to stay home a while buy a package of those insurance tickets and sit up nights. You cannot be too cautious.

[One can see now why I answered that ticket agent in the manner recorded at the top of this sketch.]

The moral of this composition is, that thoughtless people grumble more than is fair about railroad management. When we consider that every day and night of the year fully 14,000 railway trains of various kinds, freighted with life and armed with death, go thundering over the land, the marvel is, not that they kill 300 human beings in a twelvemonth, but that they do not kill 300 times 300.

Favoritism

is a bad thing, but Dr. Pierce's "Favorite Prescription" deserves its name. It is a certain cure for those painful maladies and weaknesses which embitter the lives of so many women. Of druggists.

Virtue will catch as well as vice by contact; and the public stock of honest, manly principle will daily accumulate.—*Burke.*

Being entirely vegetable, no particular care is required while using Dr. Pierce's "Pleasant Purgative Pellets." They operate without disturbance to the constitution, diet or occupation. For sick headache, constipation, impure blood, dizziness, sour eructations from the stomach, bad taste in mouth, bilious attacks, pain in region of kidney, internal fever, bloated feeling about stomach, rush of blood to head, take Dr. Pierce's "pellets." By druggists.

The export of diamonds from the Cape between Aug. 1st and Nov. 30th, inclusive, amounted in value to less than $5,000.

If bilious, or suffering from impurity of blood, or weak lungs and fear consumption (scrofulous disease of the lungs), take Dr. Pierce's "Golden Medical Discovery" and it will cure you. By druggists.

A lady was asked the reason why she always came so early to church. "Because," said she, "it is part of my religion never to disturb the religion of others."

AMONG THE AGED WE FREQUENTLY observe an almost complete suspension of the functions of nutrition. The machinery of the body being nearly worn out, the feeble stomach is unable to digest and assimilate food to nourish and repair the exhausted frame and sustain the vital forces. Such systems having feeble powers of resistance suffer much from extremes of temperature, and succumb easily to disease, from which they rally with difficulty for want of constitutional vigor. Here Dr. Wheeler's Compound Elixir of Phosphates and Calisaya is invaluable to restore the waste of tissues, and prevent prostration and general debility, by furnishing the elements of bone, muscle and nerve, in an easily assimilable form.

Every man has three characters: that which he exhibits, that which he has, and that which he thinks he has.—*A. Karr.*

Diamond Dyes are so perfect and so beautiful that it is a pleasure to use them. Equally good for dark or light colors. 10 cents.

An advertisement says that "parlor matches are the only true matches for the household." We don't know about that. We think some very satisfactory engagements have been made at the front gate, or out on the piazza.

Lydia E. Pinkham, whose benevolent face is shadowed in almost every paper we pick up, appears to have discovered what Addison calls "The grand elixir, to support the spirits of human nature." It is quite evident that she has the patent and has secured the contract for making over and improving the invalid corps of American Womanhood.—*Globe.*

Forty students in the Texas University are women.

"Neglect old friends for the sake of new, and lose both." But remember that Kidney-Wort is a friend you cannot afford to neglect. Plasters may relieve, but they can't cure that lame back, for the kidneys are the trouble and you want a remedy to act directly on their secretions, to purify and restore their healthy condition. Kidney-Wort has that specific action.

A minister in Orkney used to pray that all good influences "might cleave to the hearts of his congregation, and to their children's hearts, like butter to bere bannocks!"

HAYESVILLE, Ohio, Feb. 11, 1880.

I am very glad to say I have tried Hop Bitters, and never took anything that did me as much good. I only took two bottles, and I would not take $100 for the good they did me. I recommend them to my patients, and get the best results from their use.

C. B. MERCER, M. D.

Thinkers are as scarce as gold; but he whose thought embraces all his subject, who pursues it uninterruptedly and fearless of consequences, is a diamond of enormous size.—*Lavater.*

"ROUGH ON COUGHS."

Ask for "Rough on Coughs," for Coughs, Colds Sore Throat, Hoarseness. Troches, 15c. Liquid, 50

Love is a religion of which the great pontiff is nature.

DECLINE OF MAN.

Nervous Weakness, Dyspepsia, Impotence, Sexual Debility, cured by "Wells' Health Renewer." $1.

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MOTHER SWAN'S WORM SYRUP

Infallible, tasteless, harmless, cathartic; for feverishness, restlessness, worms, constipation. 25c.

School committeeman examining scholar: "Where is the north pole?" "I don't know, sir." "Don't know! Are you not ashamed that you don't know where the north pole is?" "Why, sir, if Sir John Franklin and Dr. Kane and Captain De-Long couldn't find it, how should I know where it is?"

KIDNEY-WORT

HAS BEEN PROVED The SUREST CURE for KIDNEY DISEASES.

Does a lame back or disordered urine indicate that you are a victim? THEN DO NOT HESITATE; use Kidney-Wort at once, (druggists recommend it) and it will speedily overcome the disease and restore healthy action.

Ladies. For complaints peculiar to your sex, such as pain and weaknesses, Kidney-Wort is unsurpassed, as it will act promptly and safely.

Either Sex. Incontinence, retention of urine, brick dust or ropy deposits, and dull dragging pains, all speedily yield to its curative power.

SOLD BY ALL DRUGGISTS. Price $1.

Acts at the Same Time on Kidneys, Liver and Bowels.

KIDNEY-WORT

There are some beautiful flowers which are scentless, and some beautiful women who are unlovable.—*Howells.*

A NOTED BUT UNTITLED WOMAN.

[From the Boston Globe.]

Messrs. Editors:—

The above is a good likeness of Mrs. Lydia E. Pinkham, of Lynn, Mass., who above all other human beings may be truthfully called the "Dear Friend of Woman," as some of her correspondents love to call her. She is seriously devoted to her work, which is the outcome of a life-study, and is obliged to keep six lady assistants, to help her answer the large correspondence which daily pours in upon her, each bearing its special burden of suffering, or joy at release from it. Her Vegetable Compound is a medicine for good and not evil purposes. I have personally investigated it and am satisfied of the truth of this.

On account of its proven merits, it is recommended and prescribed by the best physicians in the country. One says: "It works like a charm and saves much pain. It will cure entirely the worst form of falling of the uterus, Leucorrhœa, Irregular and painful Menstruation, all Ovarian Troubles, Inflammation and Ulceration, Floodings, all Displacements and the consequent spinal weakness, and is especially adapted to the Change of Life."

It permeates every portion of the system, and gives new life and vigor. It removes faintness, flatulency, destroys all craving for stimulants, and relieves weakness of the stomach. It cures Bloating, Headaches, Nervous Prostration, General Debility, Sleeplessness, Depression and Indigestion. That feeling of bearing down, causing pain, weight and backache, is always permanently cured by its use. It will at all times, and under all circumstances, act in harmony with the law that governs the female system.

It costs only $1. per bottle or six for $5., and is sold by druggists. Any advice required as to special cases, and the names of many who have been restored to perfect health by the use of the Vegetable Compound, can be obtained by addressing Mrs. P., with stamp for reply, at her home in Lynn, Mass.

For Kidney Complaint of *either* sex this compound is unsurpassed as abundant testimonials show.

"Mrs. Pinkham's Liver Pills," says one writer, "are *the best in the world* for the cure of Constipation, Biliousness and Torpidity of the liver. Her Blood Purifier works wonders in its special line and bids fair to equal the Compound in its popularity.

All must respect her as an Angel of Mercy whose sole ambition is to do good to others.

Philadelphia, Pa. Mrs. A. M. D.

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A NEW DISCOVERY.

For several years we have furnished the Dairymen of America with an excellent artificial color for butter; so meritorious that it met with great success everywhere receiving the highest and only prizes at both International Dairy Fairs.

But by patient and scientific chemical research we have improved in several points, and now offer this new color as *the best in the world.*

It Will Not Color the Buttermilk. It Will Not Turn Rancid. It is the Strongest, Brightest and Cheapest Color Made.

And, while prepared in oil, is so compounded that it is impossible for it to become rancid.

BEWARE of all imitations, and of all other oil colors, for they are liable to become rancid and spoil the butter.

If you cannot get the "improved" write us to know where and how to get it without extra expense. (46)

WELLS, RICHARDSON & CO., Burlington, Vt.

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When I say cure I do not mean merely to stop them for a time and then have them return again, I mean a radical cure. I have made the disease of FITS, EPILEPSY or FALLING SICKNESS a life long study. I warrant my remedy to cure the worst cases. Because others have failed is no reason for not receiving a cure. Send at once for a treatise and a Free Bottle of my infallible remedy. Give Express and Post Office. It costs you nothing for a trial, and I will cure you.

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