THE AMERICAN BISON.

Millions of Buffaloes Once Ranged the Western Plains.

The early explorers who describe the buffalo numbers do not give us anything more exact than superlative expressions, such as "countless herds," "incredible numbers," "teeming myriads," "the world one robe," etc. I have endeavored to get at a more exact idea of their numbers.

The total area inhabited by the buffalo was about 3,000,000 square miles. Of this the open plains were one-half. According to the figures supplied me by A. F. Potter of the forest service, the ranges of the Dakotas, Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Kansas, Colorado, Texas and Oklahoma (a total of about 750,000 square miles, or half of the plains) were, according to the census of 1900, carrying 24,000,000 head of cattle and horses and about 6,000,000 head of sheep. This means that when fully stocked they might sustain a number of buffalo at least equal to the number of cattle and horses. The buffalo had to divide their heritage with numerous herds of mustang, antelope and wapiti. On the other hand, a buffalo could find a living where a range animal would starve, many of the richest bottom lands are now fenced in, and we have taken no account of the 6,000,000 sheep. Therefore we are safe in placing at 40,000,000 the buffalo formerly living on the entire plains area.

Their prairie range was a third as large, but it was vastly more fertile—indeed, the stockmen reckon one prairie acre equal to four acres on the plains. Doubtless, therefore, the prairies sustained nearly as many head as the plains. We may safely set their population at 30,000,000. The forest region was the lowest in the rate of population. For its 1,000,000 square miles we should not allow more than 5,000,000 buffalo. These figures would make the primitive number of buffalo 75,000,000.

Many other calculations based on different data give similar or slightly lower totals. From these facts it will appear very safe to put the primitive buffalo population at 50,000,000 to 60,000,000.—Ernest Thompson Seton in Scribner's.

A Quaint Inn Sign.

At Boxted, in Essex, England, there is a beer house with the strange sign of the Whig and Fidget. Inquiry elicited the fact that the house was built many years ago by a man who was a Whig in his political opinions. His neighbors also regarded him as a "fidgety" man; hence when the house was opened the people of the parish, having regard to its owner's peculiarities, named it the Whig and Fidget, otherwise the Fidgety Whig.

The Art of Saying Things.

To say a thing to any purpose it must be uttered with that childlike sense of a suddenly discovered treasure, which (despite the fact that Adam and Eve may have understood all about it) hoodwinks the listener into the belief that he is being told something new.—Lady Phyllis in Bystander.

A Warranted Suspicion.

"My wife was arrested yesterday."

"You surprise me. What was the trouble?"

"She got off a trolley car the right way, and a policeman thought she was a man in disguise."—Puck.

FULTON'S FIRST FARE.

An Incident Which the Steamboat Genius Never Forgot.

There was one little incident in Robert Fulton's life which Fulton never forgot. It took place shortly before the return trip of his famous boat's voyage by steam up the Hudson river. At the time all Albany flocked to the wharf to see the strange craft, but so timorous were they that few cared to board her. One gentleman, however, not only boarded her, but sought out Fulton, whom he found in the cabin, and the following conversation took place:

"This is Mr. Fulton, I presume?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you return to New York with this boat?"

"We shall try to get back, sir."

"Have you any objection to my returning with you?"

"If you wish to take your chances with us, sir, I have no objection."

"What is the fare?"

After a moment's hesitation Fulton replied, "Six dollars." And when that amount was laid in his hand he gazed at it a long time, and two big tears rolled down his cheeks. Turning to the passenger, he said:

"Excuse me, sir, but this is the first pecuniary reward I have received for all my exertion in adapting steam to navigation. I would gladly commemorate the occasion with a little dinner, but I am too poor now even for that. If we meet again I trust it will not be the case."

As history relates, the voyage terminated successfully. Four years later Fulton was sitting in the cabin of the Clermont, then called the North River, when a gentleman entered. Fulton glanced at him and then sprang up and gladly shook his hand. It was his first passenger, and over a pleasant little dinner Fulton entertained his guest with the history of his success and ended with saying that the first actual recognition of his usefulness to his fellow men was the $6 paid to him by his first passenger.

Letter Carriers' Scars.

"Show me a letter carrier," said a postal official, "and I'll show you somewhere or other on the man the scar of a dog's teeth. Letter carriers hate dogs, and with good reason, for they are continually getting nipped. It is at houses with front gardens that they are troubled most. Dogs run loose in these gardens, and it is their delight to bite letter carriers. I myself have two scars on my hand and two on my leg. Take a census of every trade, and I'll guarantee that the letter carriers will lead all in their percentage of dog scars."

An Artist's Handicap.

"What is the reason the public doesn't take a greater interest in Shakespeare?"

"The public takes too much interest in Shakespeare," answered Mr. Stormington Barnes. "The difficulty is that every man in the audience is thinking of how much better he could do it if he tried."—Washington Star.

A Big Mosquito.

Mosquitoes grow to great size in Burma. A young Scotchwoman who was making her first visit to that country had heard travelers' tales of the insect pest and was prepared for the worst. When she saw an elephant for the first time she said, "Will you be what's called a muskeetae?"

PURE WATER.

Every Home Can Have It With Little Trouble and Expense.

A good filter is an expensive thing, a poor one is of little or no account, and almost any filter, unless it is kept clean, is more destructive of life and health than the water it filters. The care of the filter can never be given over to the care of irresponsible servants. It soon begins to smell foul, and it is ultimatetly given up with disgust, as costing more than it comes to.

It is within the power of every housekeeper to provide the family with pure and sparkling water at the expense of but a few cents a year and the smallest amount of attention every day.

In France the purifying of water in this way is carried on to a considerable extent and with elaborate and expensive machinery. But with no machinery at all the housewife can produce practically the same result.

Take any vessel you may chance to have handy. I have found a stone pot, which you can buy any place for 10 cents, one that slopes down the sides to a small base at the bottom, about the best of anything. Be sure that your vessel is clean. Fill it nearly full with water from the faucet.

The rule for mixing the precipitating purifier which you are about to use is 1 to 6,000. It is more than likely that you will have no way to ascertain these exact proportions, but do not let that discourage you. A little experience is worth a good deal in this world, whether the work be done is complicated or simple. A few days of trial in using the separator will serve to guide you all right.

For a starter, say that to a pitcher holding a quart of water you take a small amount of pulverized alum, about what would go on the rounded point of the blade of a pocketknife, toss it into the water and mix it thoroughly. This you can do with a spoon, an egg beater or a whip cream churn. The only thing is to see that the alum is thoroughly mixed with the water, and it takes considerable stirring to do this.

If you notice little moss islands in the water, which same little islands do not seem to want to go to the bottom with their companions, you will know that you have not properly mixed the alum with the water. As water costs nothing and the alum but the merest trifle, you can throw the water away and "set" some more. But you need not do this. All you have to do is to stir it all up good again.

When the work is properly done the water is crystal clear and has a live taste. One thing that makes distilled water so unpalatable is the absolutely dead taste it has.

Another great advantage of water thus prepared is that it is not subject to auto-infection or self contamination, which is such a great enemy to most filtered waters. This water will remain pure even though exposed to the air in open vessels for thirty-six hours.

Although so small an amount of alum would not hurt you if you were to drink every particle of it, be not alarmed. You do not get any of the alum when you drink, for the water upon analysis is found to be chemically free from alum. The alum has settled to the bottom in an insoluble compound with the filth and impurities it has carried with it.

In half an hour or less you will see a deposit on the sides and bottom of your pan or pot in which you have "set" your water. If you will shake the vessel a bit you will see this deposit go to the bottom. If you can spare the time the water should stand for about six hours before it is decanted. Then place in clean bottles on the ice.

In this way you drink a pure, cold, sparkling water without the contamination that is bound to come from putting ice in the drinking water unless the ice has been manufactured from filtered water.—Ruth Everett in New York World.

Cocoanuts.

The milk in the water cocoanut is a food as well as a beverage. The cart driven through the streets of Jamaica by the quaint old darky urging along his rebellious steed in the form of a native donkey is an interesting sight. One is amazed at the dextrous manner in which the vender takes the unripe cocoanut in his hand and deftly cuts a hole in the top, from which you drink the milk. Then you return the nut to the man, and with his machete he cracks it into three pieces and cuts a spoon shaped sliver from one side, from which you eat the white, jelly-like substance scraped from the inside. These are the unripe cocoanuts. When ripe the jelly hardens into the hard white substance to which we are accustomed.

Luck Versus Labor.

Luck is ever waiting for something to turn up; labor, with keen eyes and strong will, will turn up something. Luck lies in bed and wishes the postman would bring him the news of a legacy; labor turns out at 6 o'clock and with busy pen or ringing hammer lays the foundation of a competence. Luck whines; labor whistles. Luck relies on chance; labor, on character.—Cobden.

An Exception.

"My oldest boy, if I do say it myself," declared Skinner proudly, "is a thoroughly honest and truthful young man."

"Well, well!" exclaimed Knox. "And yet some people insist that heredity figures largely in the development of a character."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Rather than make an effort to reach the top some men prefer to remain at the bottom for the purpose of helping pull others down.—Mexican Herald.

STAIN REMOVERS.

Grass Stains.—Alcohol or molasses.

Blood Stains.—Soak in cold soapsuds to which a little kerosene has been added.

Fresh Paint.—Try kerosene, vaseline or machine oil; then wash with soap and cold water.

Ink Stains.—Dip into boiling water, spread over a basin, rub well with salts of sorrel; then rinse thoroughly.

Wine Stains.—Sprinkle thickly with salt while still wet. If dried wet with boiling water, rub thoroughly with salt and pour boiling water through.

Rust.—Wet in cold water, spread on the grass; then apply to each spot ordinary table salt wet with lemon juice. As fast as it dries renew the application. As soon as the stain is removed rinse thoroughly.

Indelible Ink.—Soak in a solution of common salt; then wash with diluted ammonia. Rinse well. Javelle water and a solution of oxalic acid will also remove indelible ink. Rinsing must follow immediately and thoroughly.