

FOR THE LADIES.

Seal Skins.

The Philadelphia Times says that the best seal skins come from the Antarctic waters, principally from the Shetland Islands. New York receives the bulk of American skins, which are shipped to various ports. London is the great centre of the fur trade of the world. In our own country the seal bear of the north has the most valuable skin. Since 1862 over 500,000 have been killed on Behring Island alone. In 1867 there were 27,500 seal bears killed; in 1871 there was a very large decrease, only 3,614 being killed. There were 26,960 killed in 1876, and in 1880 the number killed was 48,504, a large increase. Seal-otter for it is about as expensive as any, and some 48,000 skins are used yearly. Over 100,000 martin or Russian skins are annually used. Only about 2,000 silver foxes are caught every year, and about 6,500 blue foxes. Other fox skins are used more or less. About 600 tiger skins are used yearly, over 11,000 wild cat skins, and a very large trade is being carried on in house cat skins; about 35,000 skunk and 42,000 monkey skins are used annually. The trade in ermine skins is falling off, as is also the trade in chinchilla. About 3,000,000 South American nutrias are killed every year, and a very large business is being carried on in muskrat skins; about 15,000 each of American bear and buffalo skins were used last year. There are also used each year about 3,000,000 lamb, 5,000,000 rabbit, 6,000,000 squirrel, and 620,000 fish skins; also 195,000 European hamster, and nearly 5,000,000 European and Asiatic hares.

Washing Requisites.

The first great requisite toward beauty is absolute cleanliness. This can never be attained without the plentiful use of pure, soft water and good soap. Nothing keeps the hands in so good condition as rain-water or distilled water; but as these are often unobtainable, the next best must be made use of. A bottle of ammonia and a box of powdered borax are indispensable toilet articles. A few drops of one or a tiny bit of the other in the hardest water will make it soft and pleasant to the touch. Neither very hot nor very cold water should be used; tepid water softens and cleanses better than either. Extremes and sudden changes in temperature should be avoided also. Fine white sand—which may be dried and used again and again—poured into the basin and used with the water, will be found very efficacious in smoothing rough places and in removing certain stains which have not become too deeply settled into the pores.

For whitening the hands there are various preparations which may be used without harm. Glycerine, vaseline, cold cream, or mutton tallow, well rubbed in, with a pair of old gloves worn over night, will do much to soften and whiten. The white of an egg, with a grain of alum dissolved in it, spread on the hands and wrapped in old linen over night, will, as the chroniclers of Queen Anne's time say, make even soft and flabby flesh firm and clear-looking. Oatmeal and corn meal, both dry and moist, may be used with good effect. The roughest and ugliest pair of hands may be made smooth and soft, if not white, in one month, if the owner will but see to it that they are well washed in warm water every night, and rubbed with whichever of the simple preparations mentioned agrees with the skin—one or two applications will discover that—and then increase within a pair of gloves, from which the ends of the fingers have been cut.

Now that we have the hands shapely, soft, and white, let us turn our attention to the nails. The modus operandi of the professional manicure is as follows: The finger tips are put to soak in delicately colored finger bowls half full of tepid water, slightly scented with perfume. After twenty minutes of patient waiting the operator takes one hand, and, with an ivory blade, or dull pointed steel one, loosens and pushes back the cuticle from the half moon, which in most cases is nearly or quite covered. This is often attended with considerable pain, or at least discomfort; in stubborn cases some manicures use acid, but this is not desirable, as it makes the finger very sensitive for days. When the flesh is well loosened all the superfluous part is cut away with a tiny pair of curved scissors, made expressly for the purpose. The nails are then trimmed to their proper shape. Pointed French ones are considered the latest, but people of the best taste find that an oval-shaped nail, a little longer and about the shape of the finger, gives a better taper to the finger than the pointed ones. However, that is a matter of individual taste; but no matter what the shape, they must be left to grow quite long.

After a filing, a chamois polisher and powder are used until they shine beautifully; then comes a thorough washing and brushing in the tepid water, and again are they polished with the attendant's bare hand, the oil from the human hand giving a higher degree of polish on finger-nails as well as on wood. This process consumes about an hour, and is rather enjoyable. Many people pay a stated sum quarterly and go to the manicure twice a week, but this is not at all necessary; after they are once well attended to a few minutes care and attention daily will keep the nails in good order. Every time the hands are washed the flesh should be carefully pushed back with the towel; this will keep it loose and in good shape, and two minutes' rubbing will give them a good polish.

Marriages in Mexico.

Marriages are arranged here much the same as they are in Europe and the United States. The gentleman sometimes manages to get introduced into the family, and is acknowledged the "novio" of the young lady by the father and mother, even before there is any formal engagement; but it is rather difficult to visit with assiduity a Mexican house until after the engagement, and even then the visits are paid in the presence of the entire family. It is generally a person of influence who acts as an ambassador in asking the hand of the young lady. Engagements are of long duration in Mexico, and very often come to nothing. First, the civil marriage takes place, which is followed by a breakfast, dinner or ball at the house of the "novia," and a few days afterward the religious ceremony is performed, to which a great number of persons are invited, and at which the ladies attend dressed entirely in black, with a handsome silk, satin or velvet toilet, and a black lace mantilla. To dress

in black at a wedding in another country would be considered a bad omen, but here it is considered quite the thing. There are no bridesmaids here; only one "madrina," who may be married or single, but who is generally married, and a "padrino." The number of witnesses required is three, and the bride is given away, as in the United States. In Mexico the regular white wedding dress with orange flowers is always worn, and the bridegroom has to provide it, as also a number of other handsome dresses, jewels, etc. Immediately after the ceremony the newly-married couple, go to a photograph gallery and have their photographs taken in their bridal attire. Marriages take place here very early in the morning, and always in church, as it is not permitted to perform the nuptial ceremony in the house. A breakfast is given by the family of the bride, and afterward the bride and bridegroom leave for some estate, or for their own house, which is prepared some time before. The outfit is sometimes provided entirely by the bridegroom, but generally the family give the underclothes and some of the simple dresses.

A Chapter on Pies.

As there are two sides to every question I wish to say a few words for the much slandered pie. Perhaps the condemnation so severely passed on this common article of food refers to those which are unskillfully made; but in my opinion (and I have had long experience in planning for the ever-recurring three meals a day for a family) nothing gives the housekeeper more satisfaction than good pies which can be easily and quickly made at any time. She may then welcome the unexpected visitor without being troubled with the first anxious thought, "What shall I have for dinner?"

For dessert what is nicer than a green-apple pie made of tart, mellow apples and flavored with cinnamon or lemon peel? I never thought pies unwholesome either. I know people who have eaten them in moderation for three score years, whose health compares very favorably with that of many people of half their age who live and diet scientifically and do everything by rule. It is my custom late in the autumn, or after cold weather has fairly come on, to prepare mince meat for the coming season by boiling several pounds of lean, fresh beef; when cold it is chopped and seasoned with cinnamon, cloves allspice and salt, and so forth. Chopped raisins are added in such quantities as one feels like using.

It is sweetened with part sugar, part molasses. Apples are chopped and added last—about twice the bulk of the other materials. If they are insipid in flavor, two or three teacups of vinegar will "help it," then water enough to make all moist enough for pies. A piece of butter does no harm. This is then placed on the stove in a proper dish, and cooked until the apples are done, or nearly so. Dried currants, cherries, or raspberries stewed, add both to the color and flavor if they are at hand.

This may be packed while hot in small stone jars and put away in a cool place for future use, or fastened up in glass preserving cans, if one has them empty. It will keep all winter in a cool place with molasses spread over the top, and covered tightly.

Enough of it may be used at any time to make pies for a week or two if desired; or the apples may be left out and added to the seasoned meat, as the pies are made.

This plan gives a housekeeper a sense of satisfaction equal to any other preparation for winter; and any one who tries it as an experiment will be quite apt to repeat it afterwards as a matter of convenience. Whatever makes housekeeping easier and pleasanter is to be recommended. Pie making or eating need not be overdone; neither need pies be banished from the house-wife's bill of fare.

The "Staff of Life."

"You will have to excuse the bread, if it is sour," said a neighbor. I was not hungry, and it did not matter to me; but I thought how often this happens in our households, and began to think out the causes. If dough remains too long before baking, acetic acid is produced. Sometimes, when yeast is added that contains decomposed flour, a small amount of alcohol is formed and the carbonic acid is set free. This makes the bread light and porous. It becomes then a study to know just when the right time is for baking up. The temperature at which the dough is kept has a decided influence on its quality. If kept warm the bread will be whiter and tenderer than if set to rise at a low temperature. The yeast plant grows best at about 72 degrees, and every little item makes a difference in the quality of the bread. The best yeast does not contain flour, and is made as follows: Boil a handful of hops in two quarts of water ten minutes; strain, and add to the liquor one cup of sugar, six grated potatoes and a tablespoonful of salt. Let it simmer half an hour, add a cupful of good yeast when lukewarm, and let it rise without being in any way chilled.

The Short-Hair Craze Among Women.

The fashion of cutting woman's hair close to the head is said to have become very common in Chicago recently—to such an extent, in fact, that it amounts to a craze. Some women are alleged to be carried away by the novelty of the matter, and to some are given a striking appearance which measurably improves their looks. This class appears animated by a desire for admiration and the attention naturally attracted to them. But there are others who emerge from the barber-chair with sandpapered craniums who evidently feel as silly as they look. Others are prompted by the erroneous belief that it will make the new growth more luxuriant, for it is said to be a fact that the hair will not grow out thicker and heavier, and, as a rule, wavy hair is transformed by the operation into locks that are perfectly straight. Besides, submitting to such wholesale work at the hands of the barber at this season of the year is very dangerous, as the exposure of the head, after it has been used to bountiful protection, is certain to cause severe cold, which might lead to more serious disease. The craze is principally confined at present to the young women of 20 years of age, and so on up to the middle-aged.

Among the rich men of Boston young Mr. Montgomery Sears pays a tax of more than fifty thousand dollars.

OUR YOUNG FOLKS.

Little Ocean Travellers.

"Come here a moment," said Inspector Eichler of Castle Garden to a New York reporter recently.

The reporter followed, and Mr. Eichler held up a little German boy about two years old.

"This is the youngest chap I have ever seen who came across alone. It is a common thing for parents to come to this country and go West, and then, after they make a little home for themselves, to send home for their children. There was a German and his wife who came over about five years ago. A friend of mine in Europe told them to find me, and I would set them right. Well, when they came here they told me they had left three little children behind with their grandparents, and wanted to know if I would look out for them on their arrival. I promised. A year later, a little fellow about five years old came up to me, gave me his name, and said his parents had told him to look out for me.

"Where are your brothers? I asked.

"My father could not afford to send for us all at once, so we will come one by one."

"Two years and a half after the arrival of the parents the whole family were united, and it seemed strange to me to see these little fellows going alone so confidently to meet their father. The father is now mayor of one of our Western towns."

"What is the average age of the little ones who come alone?"

"Well, about six years, although we have quite a number coming here alone who are between three and four, but this little fellow"—referring to the boy he first drew the reporter's attention to—"is the youngest I have ever seen. It would be better for the children to come unaccompanied, for the sea companies are tender-hearted. When they find children on board they take them into their own cabins, and give them the best to eat and drink. A curly-headed little girl came from Sweden, and she had one of those little flutes which she used to play on board for the amusement of the passengers. There happened to be a lot of opera singers on board, and the child amused them so much that they gave a concert for her benefit the night before they arrived here, and the little girl found herself the happy possessor of one hundred and twelve dollars."

"What class of people generally allow their children to come alone?"

"The German, Irish, and English generally."

The little fellow, whom the inspector had been holding by the hand during this colloquy, now began to cry for his dinner, and the kind-hearted man started for a restaurant.

Spiders.

It is not uncommon thing to meet with instances of animal sagacity which go to show that animals are possessed of a sort of reasoning capacity which is greater than mere instinct. In a recent publication there is cited an instance of this kind. A small spider had been placed in the centre of a large spider's web some four feet above the ground. The large spider rushed from its hiding place under a leaf to attack the intruder, which ran up one of the ascending lines by which the web was secured to the foliage.

The big insect gained rapidly upon the little one; but the fugitive was equal to the emergency, for when barely an inch ahead of the other it cut with one of its hind legs the line behind itself, thus securing its own escape, the ferocious pursuer falling to the ground. The writer says: "It is not the habit of spiders to cut the slender thread below them when they are ascending to avoid threatened danger. As a rule spiders do not run from danger unless there is a hole close at hand—and a hole that is known to be unoccupied." From which it would seem that this little creature's action was the result of some kind of reasoning. Instinct led it to run away, but it must have been something more than instinct that led it to sever the line and cut off pursuit. The same writer says that spiders are cannibals, and that they are naturally pugnacious; but they do not fight for the satisfaction of eating one another. If two spiders fight there is generally good reason for the attack and for the vigorous defense that follows.

"It is not generally known that after a certain time spiders become incapable of spinning a web from lack of material. The glutinous excretion the slender threads are spun from is not inexhaustible, therefore spiders cannot keep on constructing new snares when the old ones are destroyed. But they can avail themselves of the web-producing powers of their younger neighbors, and this they do without scruple. When a spider's web-constructing material has become exhausted and its last web has been destroyed, it sets out in search of another home; and unless it should chance to find one that is tenanted, a battle usually ensues which ends only with the retreat or death of the invader or defender."

History of the Alphabet.

How many of the millions that daily use the alphabet ever stop to think of its origin and long history? Isaac Taylor has recently written and published, in London, two stout volumes under the title "The Alphabet, an Account of the Origin and Development of Letters." By careful study of the learned essays and scientific investigations of the latest philologists, Taylor has set forth in language within easy comprehension the origin of the alphabet, showing that our own "Roman" letters may be followed back to their very beginning, some twenty or more centuries ago, as he asserts. We have no better letters, according to the account, than those of the fifteenth century. These were imitated from the beautiful manuscripts of the tenth and eleventh centuries, the lettering of these being derived from the Roman of the Augustan age. The Roman letters, in turn, are traced to those employed at Rome in the third century B. C., and these do not differ greatly from forms used in the earliest existing specimens of Latin writing, dating from the fifth century B. C. This primitive alphabet of Rome was derived from a local form of the Greek alphabet, in use about the sixth century B. C., and that was a variety of the earliest Greek alphabet belonging to the eighth, or even the ninth century B. C. The Greeks got their letters from the Phoeni-

cians, and theirs are clearly traceable in the most ancient-known form of the Semitic. The most ancient of books, a papyrus found at Thebes, and now preserved in the French National Library, supplies the earliest forms of the letters used in the Semitic alphabet. The Stone Tables of the Law could have been possible to the Jews only because of their possession of an alphabet, and thus the Bible and modern philological science unite in ascribing a common origin to the alphabet which is in daily use throughout the world. The nineteenth century B. C. is held by Taylor to be the approximate date of the origin of alphabetic writing, and from that time it grew by slow degrees, while from Egypt, the home of the Jews during their long captivity, the knowledge of the alphabet was carried in all directions where alphabets are now found. The Aryans are thought to have been the first to bring the primitive alphabet to perfection, and each letter and each sound may be traced, by Taylor's careful analysis, through all the changes that have marked the growth, progress, and, in some instances, the decay of different letters of various alphabets. It is an interesting fact that the oldest known "A B C" in existence is a child's alphabet, scratched on a little ink bottle of black ware, found in one of the oldest Greek settlements in Italy, attributed to the fifth century B. C. From the common mother of many alphabets, the Phœnician, are descended the Greek and other European systems on the one side, including that which we use and have the greatest interest in; and on the other, the alphabets of Asia, from which have sprung those of the East, Syriac, Arabic, and Hebrew.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Another Royal Pensioner.

Prince Albert Victor of Wales has just entered upon his 21st year, so that it is possible that parliament may before long have to consider the question of a separate establishment for his royal highness. In such a case the legislature would be wholly unassisted by precedents directly in point. Never before in our history has the eldest son of a prince of Wales come of age during his father's lifetime and before his father's accession to the throne. Frederic, son of George II., who went nearest to doing so, was 20 years and a few months old when, in 1727, the latter became king. It would, however, be misleading to compare the status of Prince Albert Victor with that of his ancestor, who never set foot in England till a year and a half after he had succeeded to the position of heir-apparent to the crown. Prince Frederic, indeed, received the garter in his 15th year and a peerage (with the title of the Duke of Edinburgh) in his 20th; but scarcely any other official cognizance was taken of his existence as an English prince. No eldest son of a prince of Wales, being such, has married; and there is only one instance of a marriage being contracted by the daughter of a prince of Wales. *Mutatis mutandis*, it is to be presumed that the case of the Princess Charlotte would have most weight with parliament in the event of its being applied to for a provision for Prince Albert Victor. It may be added that annuities have been granted more than once in the present reign to the children of a younger son of an English sovereign.—St. James' Gazette.

The Bible on Business.

Buy the truth and sell it not.

He that is surety for a stranger shall smart for it.

A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.

But where shall wisdom be found? It cannot be gotten for gold.

The rich and poor meet together; the Lord is the maker of them all.

In all labor there is profit; but the talk of the lips tendeth only to penury.

He that loveth wine shall not be rich. Who hath love? They that seek mixed wine.

The prosperity of fools shall destroy them, but whose hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely.

He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich.

Happy is the man that findeth wisdom; for the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver.

There is that scattereth and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet but tendeth to poverty.

A perfect and just measure shalt thou have, that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Though he (the unjust man) heap up silver as the dust, and prepare raiment as the clay; he may prepare it, but the just shall put it on, and the innocent shall divide the silver.

Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in mete-yard, in weight or in measure, just balances, just weights, a just ephah (a dry measure) and a just hin (a liquid measure) shall ye have.

A Remarkable Steam Engine.

An English firm have recently completed a small, light compound engine, which, in point of weight, eclipses anything heretofore built. This engine is made of steel and phosphor-bronze; all parts are built as light as possible, the rods and shafting and all parts possible being bored out to reduce weight. At a speed of only 300 revolutions a minute they indicate over 20 horse power, and weigh but 105 pounds all told. This engine would give fully 30 horse power actual at a piston-speed of 500 feet a minute! The size is three and three-quarters high pressure, seven and a half low pressure, and five stroke. That thirty horse power can be had from a proper utilization of steam and proper distribution of 105 pounds of metal is certainly most astonishing, especially so considering that the engine is compound. A ship of 2,500 tons displacement was almost unknown fifty years ago; today the transatlantic steamer, the highest class of the mercantile marine, has from 8,000 to 13,000 tons displacement, and engines of 5,000 to 10,000 one-horse power. Several of the transatlantic liners have shown a mean ocean speed of twenty miles an hour, and make the passage in less than seven days.

NOT PARTED BY DEATH.

A Scene at the Wreck of the "Columbus."

Among the confused mass who were struggling and screaming were noticed a middle-aged man and his wife. Their conduct was in marked contrast with that of the other passengers. The panic which had seized the others was not shared by them, but their blanched faces told that they realized the peril which surrounded them. The only movement of muscles or nerves was that produced by the chilling atmosphere. They stood close together, their hands clasped in each other, as if about to commit suicide together, and thus fulfil the marital vow of standing by each other in the varying tide of life's fortunes and misfortunes. As the wreck careened with the gale from one side to the other, and while the spray and waves were drenching them at every moment, the husband turned and imprinted a kiss upon the companion of his life, and while thus embraced a heavy sea broke over the wreck and both were washed away and not seen afterward. Mr. Cook says the scene was one which will remain indelibly impressed upon his memory until his dying day.

New Chinese War Ships.

A Berlin telegram to the London Times says: Another ironclad corvette, built for the Chinese government, has just been launched at Kiel, though with less pomp and circumstance than attended the baptism of its sister vessels at Stettin. The new war ship, which is the second of the kind that has been built at Kiel (three, I think, have been constructed at Stettin), rejoices in the name of the Nan Shuin, or "Blessing of the South," as its twin sister from the same stocks is called the Nan Thin, or "Ornament of the South." Its water-line length is 77 meters (total ditto being 84), its greatest breadth 11.5 meters, depth of hold 7.125, displacement 2,200 tons, and draught 5.5 meters.

The ship in all its parts has been made of German steel, according to the rules of the German Lloyd's, rigged as a bark, and armed with two Armstrong guns of 21 centimeter, and eight of 12 centimeter calibre. It is also provided with several mitrailleuses to ward off torpedo-boats, while on deck it carries eight boats, including one torpedo-boat and two launches driven by two horizontal compound engines. It has an indicated horse-power of 2,400, and is expected to make from 14 to 15 knots. Both the Blessing and the Ornament of the South must be completely ready by the middle of March, though what is to be done with them and their Stettin sisters, after that heaven only knows. By some it is shrewdly suspected that in the matter of ironclads the Chinese government is like the hale old lady who had an insuperable weakness for bargains of all kinds, and could not resist the purchase of a wooden leg if she got it cheap.

A Russian Fable.

A peasant was one day driving some geese to a neighboring town, where he hoped to sell them. He had a long stick in his hand, and, to tell the truth, he did not treat his flock of geese with much consideration. I do not blame him, however; he was anxious to get to the market in time to make a profit, and not only geese but men must expect to suffer if they hinder gain in the least.

The geese, however, did not look at the matter in this light, and happening to meet a traveller walking along the road, they poured forth their complaints against the peasant who was driving them, after this fashion:—

"Where can you find geese more unhappy than we are? See how this peasant is hurrying on this way and that, and driving us as though we were only common geese. Ignorant fellow as he is, he never thinks he is bound to honor and respect us; for we are the distinguished descendants of those very geese to whom Rome once owed its salvation, so that a festival was established in their honor."

"But for what do you expect to be distinguished yourselves?" asked the traveller.

"Because our ancestors—"

"Yes, I know; I have read all about it. What I want to know is, what good have you yourselves done?"

"Why, our ancestors saved Rome."

"Yes, yes, I understand that; but what have you done of the kind?"

"We? Nothing."

"Oh, what good are you, then? Do leave your ancestors at peace! They were honored for their deeds, but you, my friends, are only fit for roasting."

The Last of Ten Millions.

An order was made in the United States district court, recently, directing the sale of the uncollectable assets of Peter Herdic, the bankrupt, who was at one time worth \$10,000,000. The assets that his assignee was directed to sell yesterday are fair samples of the rocks upon which his fortune was wrecked. They include a claim against Mahlen Fisher's estate for one-sixth of the whole capital stock of the South Williamsport Land company, 168 shares of the Susquehanna Boom company's stock, which were deposited with Fisher during his lifetime as collateral security for loans; 2,032 shares of the stock of the Susquehanna Boom company that were deposited with John G. Reading as security for notes, are also among the claims. The assignee classifies under the head of uncollectable assets the further items of four shares of the Williamsport Passenger Railway company's stock now on the books in the name of Henry C. Parsons; \$25,000 worth of the stock of the same company deposited with Samuel Filbert as security for a loan of \$17,500; \$600 secured to Herdic from Geo. Rose by a mortgage; a mortgage given Herdic by John Ardell for an amount not named; various unsettled accounts against the Lumberman's National Bank, 2,210 shares of the capital stock of the defunct Mutual Life and Accident Insurance company, a claim of \$1,000 against the same, 27 shares of stock of the West Branch Lumber company, and various claims against William Weightman. The assignee has been unable to collect or dispose of any of these claims, and was authorized to put them up at public sale.—Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette.