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NOTES AND COMMENTS

Great Britain has begun to extend still further a form of protection for its waters, particularly against torpedo boats. The basis of this form of protection is the boom, to be accompanied by batteries for covering it against an enemy's attack. It is really, as English papers have pointed out, a reversal to a method in vogue generations and even centuries ago, as the most natural defence against ships trying to force a way through a channel. One of its earlier forms was to stretch a chain across a waterway narrow enough to allow it, between two forts. This could be raised against hostile vessels, and let fall for allowing egress. The modern systems are more complicated, and those which are used at various British Channel ports are of two sorts. In one, pontoons or rafts of heavy timber are "bound together with wire cables and spiked." These pontoons are in sections, so as to be easily detached, and gunboats are added to help operate and protect them. On one occasion a gunboat was sent against a boom to try to break it, but was itself perforated by the spikes, and the crew barely saved themselves in boats before it sank.

Another form of boom described by the St. James's Gazette consists of several thick wire cables, stretched across the harbor in three sections, "with the central sections and the outer ends of the land sections fastened to gunboats. These cables will be stretched above and below the water line at intervals, and will be interlaced with smaller cables, network fashion, so as to provide a small but flexible obstruction." It can be more readily placed in position than the pontoon boom, and, by the aid of winches on the gunboats, can be tightened or slackened, according to the purpose of closing or opening the harbor. The ports already provided with defences of one or the other kind are Devonport, Portland, Portsmouth, Plymouth, Sheerness, and Southampton; while now the system is to be extended to Falmouth, Berehaven, Lough Swilly, and the Scilly Isles. Of course the prime purpose of these obstructions is to keep out torpedo boats. The main defences against battle ships are the heavy guns mounted in forts and the submarine mines, together with torpedo boats and fleets of powerful vessels.

The French bicyclists are looking for a patron saint, and they can't tell whom to choose. The most prominent candidates are Saint Catherine and Saint Germain, with the odds for Catherine. Some medical men have declared that the use of the wheel robs a man of the taste for matrimony, and the wags insist that Saint Catherine ought to be selected by the bicyclists, because she is the patron of old maids. The saint was condemned to the wheel and died on it, but the legend tells us that she escaped the torture; that an angel came down and set her free. At Bourges, some time ago, tourists could see Saint Catherine's wheel, upon which the following legend was written:

"Quand cette roue tournera,
Celle que j'aime m'aînera."

The suggestion of Saint Germain as the patron saint of wheelers is due to the old legend of the huge dragon that devastated Normandy, and had its abode in the cavern of Balignant, on the shores of Flamanville. It is related of him that he demanded a child for his food at least once a week. One morning the inhabitants of Dielette, a little seaport about twenty kilometres from Cherbourg, were astonished to see a Bishop, with a mitre on his head and a crozier in his hand riding over the waves upon a cartwheel. He had come to fight the dragon, and kill it he did. The intruded Bishop was Saint Germain still called "Saint Germain of the Wheel." When the sea is calm, the fishermen of Dielette are still confident that they see on the water the track of Saint Germain's wheel.

FUNNIGRAMS.

Ethel—"Do you believe in palmistry?"
Mabel—"Oh, it's all right for a starter, if the fellow's shy."
She—"Did you run across any of your friends in town to-day?" He—"No; I wasn't on my wheel."
"Has the unpardonable sin ever been discovered?" "Yes; it is the act of sprinkling tracks on a bicycle path."
"I noticed you weren't in church on Sunday. I hope you were not indisposed?" "Well, I was averse to going, if that's what you mean?"
"Yes," said the young man just out of college. "I am willing to do anything to make a living—that is, of course," he added, "in any position that brings in at least \$2,500 salary."
"Gibbs at last has got his wife to ride a wheel." "How did he manage it?" "Had somebody start a report that he didn't want her to ride."
Sean will the merry ice-man come
And thus philosophize:
"It's wrong to try to estimate
The value by the size."
"It looks fresh." "Are you talking about me, sir?" "Certainly not. I am talking about the paint on the bench you are sitting on."
Jennie—"How did you enjoy your trip across the ocean?" Clara—"Immensely. Of course there was nothing to see but sky and water, but the landscape was sublime."
"And do you think you can make my daughter a happy woman?" asked the father. "I guess so," replied the young man. "What make wheel does she prefer?"

PRACTICAL FARMING.

CARE OF BEARING ORCHARDS.

At the proper season one should go over the orchard, tree by tree, and cut out all branches that cross each other and are liable to bruise or wear through the bark by friction. Furthermore, says a writer, if it be a young orchard, all branches that are growing toward the center of the tree should be removed, provided they are not too large. This will tend to give an open head to the tree when grown. And, by the way, when one has to prune, the best time to do it is either in spring or in summer; the former gives growth; the latter, fruit. Pruning in June will check the growth, but has a tendency to develop fruit buds for the next season. The correct way to do, however, is to rub off the sprouts through the summer while it can be done with the fingers, for then one will soon have his orchard where little if any pruning with knife or shears will be needed. Indeed, this method not only saves less hard labor, but it is by far more beneficial to the trees. In case large branches have to be removed, the stub should be left four or five inches long, and the end covered with grafting wax or something to exclude the air and moisture. This is a precaution that should never be omitted in the pruning of young trees. Judgment, also, should be exercised in other directions. If the tree, for instance, leaned toward the north, it should be pruned most on the north side, for this will aid it in counterbalancing itself by encouraging the branches to grow southward, and so give it a more perfect equilibrium, not to mention that the body of the tree will thereby be better protected from the hot summer sun. Of course, if the ground is naturally wet, enough tiling should be put down to drain thoroughly, for wet feet are just as detrimental to apple trees as to human beings. The fact is, few trees will live long enough in wet ground to be of profit to the owner. They may live for a while, to be sure, but it will be only to eke out a wretched existence, while as to the fruit borne, it is apt to be few and far between, and of the most part of a very inferior quality. Another thing, the richer the ground is the shorter-lived the trees will usually be, provided it is not poor enough to starve them to death. Ground that is rich enough to grow good corn generally needs, in the way of fertilization, only a little bone dust and ash. A medium is what should be sought after, especially in the case of young trees, for if young trees are too thrifty, they will seldom bear any, and if the soil is too poor, not at all. It is important, as with other growing plants of like nature, that young apple trees be kept in cultivation. In other words, neither grass nor clover should be sowed unless one is going to use it as a fertilizer. Besides, cattle and horses should never be allowed to run in the orchard, nor should sheep, unless the trees are protected by a band of screen wire around them. For a good orchard, it is occasionally a good plan to sow oats in the spring and pasture with it, or in the case of a pretty nearly old orchard, understand—don't be afraid to prune thoroughly at the proper time, preferably in June. Amputate without mercy all limbs that are diseased or in the way, for at best an old, old orchard has not got long to stay, any- way. This accomplished, fertilize with ashes in abundance, the more the better. If ashes are not to be had, then use lime and bone dust, or else good stable manure. At least fertilize with something and cultivate thoroughly, with or without any growing crop, and, if the season is at all favorable, you will have as fine fruit as the orchard ever produced. Of course there will be some immature apples. These cannot be helped. Such fruit, however, should be promptly looked after, and either fed up or destroyed. In this way insect pests would greatly be diminished in number, and the spraying business become, perhaps, a thing of the past. The truth is, in new countries, when fruit is first introduced, the orchardist has little or no occasion at all for spraying.

TRANSPLANTING FOREST TREES.

When a farmer wants some forest trees to plant by the roadside or around his house he is more apt to go to the forest and select tall, straight specimens, usually pulling them up with only such roots as will come with the tree out of the loose leaf mold soil in which they are grown, says Michigan Farmer. Quite often trees thus taken from their native soil are planted just as they come from the forest. Owing to their crowded condition there is but little top growth, though that little is far too much for the mutilated roots to sustain. Usually in late years tree planters cut off all the small branches, sometimes merely by sawing or chopping the trunk just below the lowest branch, leaving nothing apparently but a bare pole. But though these poles look not very promising, dormant buds start out near the top as the roots get hold on the soil. From these shoots start, which in two or three years grow to a bushy and really handsome top. On the other hand, the treetops left unpruned are usually half dead the same year, and this dead part interferes with making a handsome or thrifty tree until it is removed. It is a mistake to prune these forest seedlings down to bare poles. Leave on three or four of the lower limbs one bud on each, and have them occupy each side of the trunk as much as possible. These will be ready to start as soon as the roots begin to take hold of the soil and supply moisture. The buds are formed, while if left to be developed from the trunk they are at first only the germs of buds, and need time and a supply of sap to be developed into buds.

CAUGHT.

I want to be sure I understand you rightly, said the lawyer, who was cross-examining the locomotive engineer. At the time the accident happened to the plaintiff at what rate were you running? Please repeat your statement as to the particular.
I had slowed down to about six miles an hour, replied the engineer.
Yes, sir.
You are positive as to that, are you?
Yes, sir.
You want the jury to understand that you had slowed down to six miles an hour, do you?
Yes, sir.
Once again, you had slowed down to six miles an hour, had you?
Yes.
Now, sir! thundered the lawyer, rising to his feet and glaring at the witness, did you not testify in your direct examination that you had slowed up?
Of course, but, sir! Gentlemen of the jury, that's our case!
And the jurymen without leaving their seats, brought in a verdict against the railway company.

ABOUT THE UNION JACK

THE STORY OF GREAT BRITAIN'S GLORIOUS FLAG.

The Flag That Braved a Thousand Years the Battle and the Breeze—Its Composition and How It Developed.
Many nations—yet one—and still proud to be the daughter of Britain and sit at the feet of the matron motherland—such is Canada. The strong hearts of our English, Irish and Scotch ancestors brought them over the sea to face fortune in the unknown West. Their strong hands hewed out homes in the forests and guided the plough over the one-time domain of the red Indian. Shoulder to shoulder they stood to build up a nation. With sword and bayonet they drove back invaders who would despoil the broad acres they had tilled.
What wonder that in this new land our ancestors' common purpose and common needs brought them so close together that the lines between Celt and Saxon were erased and the three races merged into a great nation.
Britain the world over is Britain. Everywhere these three masterful races have joined in one. The history of Canada is in some measure, repeated by the successes of the English, Irish and Scotch colonists, who hold British possessions in every corner of the world. Thus it happens that the Union Jack that is to-day flying all round the world is emblematic of these three races.
Mr. W. H. Holmes, of Truro, Nova Scotia, has written a most interesting history of the Union Jack and from it the following interesting facts are gleaned:
The foundation of the flag was the shield device of the Red Cross Knight (red on white ground, heraldically described as an argent, cross gules.) In the 13th century England adopted this as

HER NATIONAL FLAG

and the Red Cross of St. George is known wherever British ships have sailed or British troops have marched. To-day it is the only one of the flags of the United Kingdom that is still in use, being flown at the masthead of an admiral's ship.
St. Andrew is Scotland's patron saint and the banner of Scotland was a diagonal cross or saltire of white on a blue ground, or in heraldry "Azure, a saltire argent."
St. Patrick's banner was a red saltire on a white ground, being exactly the same as St. Andrew's cross, with red instead of white, and white instead of blue.
The combination of these three flags forms the present Union Jack.
Under the Red Cross flag of England were fought the battles of Sluys, June 13, 1340; Cressy, August 26, 1346; Poitiers, September 19, 1356; Agincourt, October 25, 1415; The Armada, August 8, 1588; La Hague, May 19, 1692; Gibraltar, July 23, 1704; Blenheim, August 13, 1704; and Milverton, May 23, 1705.
In 1707 the treaty of union between England and Scotland passed the Scottish Parliament by a majority of 110 votes. On January 23, 1708, it passed the English Parliament, and by a clause in the treaty, which thus became an act in each country, it went into force on May 1st, and England and Scotland entered into legislative union.
James I. had prepared a flag for this union, and it was made by setting the red cross of St. George upon the white cross of St. Andrew.

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Under the Union Jack of Scotland and England were added to history the following glorious battles:—Oudenarde, July 11th, 1708; Malplaquet, Sept. 11th, 1709; Dettingen, June 27th, 1743; Plassey, June 23rd, 1757; Monmouth and Foudreant Feb. 29th, 1758; Louisbourg, July 26th, 1758; Minden, Aug. 1st, 1759; Quebec, Sept. 13th, 1759; Culbertson, Nov. 20th, 1759; "The Glorious First of June," June 1st, 1791; St. Vincent, Feb. 14th, 1797; Camperdown, Oct. 11th, 1797; Nile, Aug. 1st, 1798.
These two stages in the development of our flag lead up to the third, when Pitt carried into execution his plan for the settlement of Irish affairs, and united Ireland to Great Britain on January 1st, 1801. For eighteen years previous to that Ireland had a Parliament of her own, but since then her representatives have sat in the Commons at Westminster. With the union of Ireland came the addition of the red diagonal cross of St. Patrick to the Union Jack. This was done by inserting it into the broad white diagonal cross of St. Andrew. The first Union Jack upon comparison with this shows the difference. It had only one red cross, the rectangular Cross of St. George. In the Union Jack as we have it now, there are two red crosses, the Irish one running diagonally.
Under this universal flag of Great Britain we have enrolled the following famous battles:—Alexandria, March 21, 1801; Copenhagen, April 2, 1801; Assaye, September 3, 1803; Trafalgar, October 12, 1805; Vimiera, August 21, 1808; Corunna, January 16, 1809; Talavera, July 22, 1809; Busaco, August 27, 1810; Fuentes d'Onow, May 5, 1811; Albuera May 16, 1811; Ciudad Rodrigo, January 19, 1812; Badajos, April 6, 1812.
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SOME NOTABLE EVENTS.

In the history of our own Dominion. In the eventful years 1812-1813 the United States made an attempt to acquire Canada, by force of arms. On June 18th, 1812, President Madison declared war against Canada. Major-General Ross had formed the war,

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MEDICINE PRACTISED BY ANIMALS.

How Beasts Cure Themselves of Sickness and Hurt—Their Knowledge of Curative Herb and Leaves.

The lower animals, with few exceptions, practise a very well-developed system of materia medica. Most of the beasts can diagnose and prescribe for their ills more successfully than many men holding physicians' degrees. These animal doctors are, of course, self-taught, and practise entirely without fees.
Dogs are the most remarkable doctors among domestic animals. This is probably accounted for by the fact that of all animals the dog is most left to care for itself. A dog suffering from loss of appetite or a like ill will refuse human remedies and run, or if necessary drag itself for miles to find a particular herb that is a specific for its complaint. Dogs may often be seen in suburban fields chewing at a species of wiry grass, known as dog's grass, or chicentid. This, they know, will cleanse the system and restore appetite in a way that would bring envy to the heart of patent medicine men. Similarly when other ailments attack them their canine natures crave oily or fatty substances, and they will eat these greedily, turning from the most tempting morsels of any other sort.

BRUTE KNOWLEDGE OF ANTITOXINS.

The common ant, when one of its horns is torn off in battle or otherwise seeks out a companion, who bathes the wounded part with an ointment, also home-made—which heals it. The mongoose is noted for its enmity to the deadly cobra snake. When the mongoose is bitten by a cobra it plunges into the nearest thicket or jungle, bites off and swallows an herb, known only to itself, and having thus taken an antidote goes back to renew the combat. The chimpanzee, following a like course, when wounded, staunches the blood with its hand and quickly seeks a certain sort of grass and leaves. Mixing them, it makes a poultice, which is clapped over the wound, and, unless a vital spot is touched, soon effects a cure. Should the spe be too badly hurt to dress its own wound, its mate will do it, working as carefully and with probably as good effect as any human doctor. However long the invalid's convalescence, the mate prepares fresh plasters as often as necessary, and by instinct knows just when the poultice on the hurt should be replaced. It also serves its patient with a proper cooling diet, suited to a convalescent's needs.

THE SURGEON SQUIRREL.

A far more clever feat of surgery is performed by the ordinary red squirrel. When the squirrel's paw is torn off in a trap or its leg broken by a gunshot, the suffering animal drags itself to the nearest safe place, and, after braising itself on some broad branch, or in its own nest, begins the work of amputation. The broken or torn paw is neatly bitten off. The sufferer seems to think that for the time the work is ended, and that the skin will cover the end of the broken stump. But instead the flesh shrinks back, leaving the sensitive, jagged bone protruding. The squirrel goes the three-legged animal to its dissecting-room. The bone is carefully gnawed, not only until it is even with the flesh, but much farther down. The bits of flesh and skin thus hang far beyond the bone, and in time heal over, covering it completely. It took the human race some centuries to learn that simple trick in surgery which the very stupid squirrel understands from the time he is born.

USELESS KNOWLEDGE.

Cookery School Projector—I have called, Mrs. Slindiet, to ask you if you would not like to join our cookery class just forming.
Mrs. Slindiet, boarding-house keeper.—Oh, I don't care to spend money learnin' how to git up a lot o' Frenchified dishes.
Ah, but you do not understand. Our lessons are devoted to the preparation of all sorts of nice and palatable dishes, just from things left over, you know.
No use to me. We never have anything left over.

HOW SHE ENTRAPPED HIM.

Ethel—You say Algy has been heartlessly deceived by a young woman. Did she lead him on to think that she loved him?
May—Oh, no; she led him on to believe that she didn't care a rap for him, and then when he paroxysmally proposed, accepted him on the spot.