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Eating a Prickly Pear.

My first sad experience of the African prickly pear was gained on a visit to the market place of Algiers. The fruit was handed to us, politely peeled by the Arab dealer, and thus as we made acquaintance with its delightful coolness no suspicion of its evil qualities entered our minds.

A few days later, adding the excitement of a little trespassing to the more legitimate pleasures of a country ramble, we came upon a well laden group of prickly pear bushes and could not resist the temptation to help ourselves to some of the fruit. The result was woeful.

Concentrated essence of stinging nettle seemed all at once to be assailing hands, lips and tongue, and our skin, wherever it had come in contact with the ill natured fruit, was covered with a thick crop of minute, bristly hairs, apparently growing from it, and venomous and irritating to the last degree.

Our silk gloves, transformed suddenly into miniature robes of Nessus, had to be thrown away, perfectly unwearable, and the inadvertent use of our pocket handkerchiefs before we had fully realized the extent of our misfortune caused fresh agonies, in which nose as well as lips participated. For many a day did the retribution of that theft haunt us in the form of myriads of tiny stings.—"Home Life on an Ostrich Farm."

The Invention of the Piano.

The honor of inventing the piano is claimed by the English, the French and the Germans. Father Wood, an English monk at Rome, is said to have been the real inventor in 1711 and to have manufactured one, which he sold to Samuel Crispi, the author of "Virginia," from whom it was purchased by Falke Greville, though Count Carl claims the credit for Bartolomeo Christoforic of Padua during his stay in Florence some three years later (1714). The French attribute the invention to a Parisian named Marius, who, they alleged, produced in 1716 a harpsichord in which hammers had been substituted for the old plectrums or quills. The Germans are the last in the field with J. C. Schroder of Dresden, who claimed (1717), when eighteen years of age, to have "constructed after much consideration the model of a new clavier with hammers, upon which he could play loudly or softly."

The Most Remarkable Suicide.

The most curious suicide in the annals of self destruction occurred at Chiquete, N. B., in the spring of 1890. Before committing the deed the self murderer, who was named W. R. T. Jones, dug his own grave and placed a rough coffin of his own handiwork at the bottom. The dirt from the opening was kept from rolling back into the excavation by boards held in place by a trigger to which a string was attached. Everything in readiness, the deliberate Mr. Jones, as subsequent developments revealed, got in the coffin, took a dose of poison and then pulled the string, burying himself beneath tons of earth. This has been put down as one of the most unique and successful cases of self destruction on record.

The Persian Army.

The Persian army, according to Henry Savage Landor, the traveler, is a "painful sight," although there are some good Cossack cavalry which has been drilled by Russian officers. The infantry, however, is a ragged, lazy, shiftless lot. He asked permission to see the army drill. "We do not drill in summer; it's too hot," said the general. "Do you drill in winter?" "No; it's too cold." "Are the troops, then, only drilled in the autumn and spring?" "Sometimes. They are principally drilled a few days before the shah's birthday, so that they may look well on the parade day before his majesty."

Where Horse Destinies Are Shuffled.

A sales stable is a place where horse destinies are shuffled by reckless and unthinking hands; also its doors open on the four corners of the world's crossed highways. You might go from there to find your work waiting between the shafts of a baker's cart just around the corner, or you might be sent across seas to die miserably of tsetse stings on the South African veldt.—Sewell Ford in "Horses Nine."

She Thought of Him.

Coamley—I didn't know you were acquainted with Miss Lovett. She asked me last night if I knew you. Hoamley—That was nice of her. What led her to ask you that, I wonder? Coamley—Why—er—I had just asked her if she could imagine any one uglier than Bill Thompson.

Analogy.

The Investigator—When a man is going to do a mean thing and knows he is going to do it, why does he approach it by degrees? The Casuist—On the same principle, I suppose, by which a singer slides down the whole gamut before he attacks his lowest note.

A Shock.

Chollie—I went down to a rather informal affair last evening, dear boy, and, gwaacious, I was compelled to witness a dreadful sight! "Horrors! What was it?" "A fellow without evening dress eating breakfast food for supper!"

Better Than a Hen.

Customer (in grocery)—Are those eggs fresh? Grocer's Boy—Yes, ma'am. 'Tain't been a hour since I laid 'em in that box. People differ as to jokes, but here is a rule that may be depended upon: A joke you tell yourself is always a good one.—Atchison Globe.

THE KIANGS OF INDIA.

These Wild Horses Are Vicious and Said to Be Untamable.

Writing of the kiangs, or wild horses, of India, found near the land of Tibet, Thomas W. Weber in "The Forests of Upper India and Their Inhabitants" says:

Here for the first time we saw the kiang, or wild horse. Several herds came to look at us as we marched and galloped around, neighing and kicking up, but kept at a respectful distance. They have big, ugly heads and tails and ears like a mule's and a black stripe down the back; color, light bay, with white noses. They have fine free action in trot and gallop and are fourteen to fifteen hands high, strong in the legs and heavy in the body. We were welcomed by the neighing of numerous wild horses to the land of the kiang. Several herds kept circling round, the old stallions approaching in a quite threatening manner, snorting, squealing and kicking up their heels, while the mares and foals galloped off at a more respectful distance. There was a herd of kiangs which careered about our camp in a most objectionable way, making the most fearful disturbances. We witnessed a battle royal between two stallions, which for ferocity and wicked fury surpassed any fight I have seen. Again and again the pair went at one another like tigers, biting and kicking and mauling, the blood flowing freely, while the fearful yells and roars they kept up were terrifying to hear. This went on for hours. The horrible roars and shriekings made by the wild horse when fighting sound something like a noise between a donkey's bray and the squealing of a jackal, but far more ear piercing and discordant. Here the kiang is found in considerable numbers. He is, according to the Hunia accounts, untamable. There was a young one purchased at Bagesar fair from some Hunias for a small price. The purchaser thought he had a good bargain and proposed to send the animal to England, but when his men went to bring away the purchase no power could induce it to leave its foster mother, an old Ahet pony, which the clever Hunias refused to sell except for an exorbitant sum.

EXPERTS IN WOOD.

The Old Violin Makers and the Material They Used.

The great violin makers all lived within the compass of 150 years. They chose their wood from a few great timbers felled in the south Tyrol and floated down in rafts—pine and maple, sycamore, pear and ash. They examined these to find streaks and veins and freckles, valuable superficially when brought out by varnishing.

They learned to tell the dynasty of the pieces of wood by touching them. They weighed them, they struck them and listened to judge how fast or how slow or how resonantly they would vibrate in answer to strings. Some portions of the wood must be porous and soft, some close of fiber. Just the right beam was hard to find. When found, it can be traced all through the violins of some great master and after his death in some of his pupils. The piece of wood was taken home and seasoned, dried in the hot Brescia and Cremona sun. The house of Stradivarius, the great master of all, is described as having been as hot as an oven. The wood was there soaked through and through with sunshine. In this great heat the oils thinned and simmered slowly and penetrated far into the wood until the varnish became a part of the wood itself.

The old violin makers used to save every bit of the wood when they found what they liked to mend and patch and inlay with it. So vibrant and so resonant is the wood of good old violins that they murmur and echo and sing in answer to any sound where a number of them hang together on the wall, as if rehearsing the old music that they once knew.

Hard on the Ladies.

Very few remember the existence of a certain remarkable statute which was passed in the early days of George III. If indeed they ever heard of it. It runs to the effect that if any woman "entices any of his majesty's male subjects into marriage by the use of any powders or paints or false hair or wool on the cheeks she shall be prosecuted for sorecery." What a cause celebre it would be if any of his present majesty's male subjects were to endeavor to put the law into action. What a rush there would be of fashionable ladies to secure front seats in court for the hearing.—London Tatler.

From the Father's Side.

Senator Grapher—Well, did Sterling say he'd vote for our bill? Senator Mainchantz—No; he said he couldn't imagine a bill of a more crooked and odious character. Senator Grapher—Did you tell him I was fathering the measure? Senator Mainchantz—Yes, and he said he fancied the bill's characteristics had been inherited.

Hyphen Succeeds Hymen.

The Professor—They have traveled safely along the happy journey until now their hopes are about to be realized. Mrs. Malaprop—Yes, Cupid, the god of love, must now give way to Hyphen, the god of matrimony.

Humility is the virtue all preach, none practices, and yet everybody is content to hear.—Selden.

Mind is that which perceives, feels, remembers, acts and is conscious of continued existence.

Historic Conflagrations.

A list of great cities burned would be a list of nearly all the great capitals of the world. Persepolis, the splendid residence of a long series of rulers whose tributary provinces extended from the Indus to the Hellespont, was burned, with all its palaces and temples; Babylon and Carthage were so utterly destroyed that their very location has become a matter of doubt. Rome was burned eight times, Jerusalem four times, and, though they rose from their ashes,

The second temple is not like the first. Athens, Syracuse, Bagdad, Alexandria and Antioch now exhibit only a shadow of their former grandeur. The Phoenicians, like the Spartans and Assyrians, disappeared with the ruin of their capitals, but the most fateful conflagration recorded in the history of the world is perhaps that of Moscow.

"They talk as if the fate of Europe had been decided at Waterloo," says De Bourienne in his memoirs of the first empire. "If Napoleon had beaten Wellington and Blucher a dozen times, it could not have retrieved the reverses of the three preceding years. The truth is that the French Caesar and his fortune were ruined by the burning of Moscow. That city was the funeral pile of the great nation."

Man More Liquid Than Solid.

Every fiber and every cell that enters into the formation of a living body is bathed in moisture, by which means alone these ultimate elements are kept alive and are enabled to carry out their duties. Even the bones, which appear to be the most solid of all, owe more than half their weight to the presence of fluid.

That our bodies contain a large amount of fluid is proved in a striking manner by the blisters which rise after the infliction of a burn. Water, in fact, plays a very important part in the human anatomy, for it is through its agency that the vital processes of digestion, absorption and the excretion of waste products are carried out.

To reduce the whole matter to figures and taking 154 pounds to be the total weight of an average full grown man, it is said that water alone accounts for 100 pounds of the whole.

Wanted a Chinese Song.

Most of the policemen in Australia are Irishmen, whose genius for humorous blundering loses nothing of its quality under the Southern Cross. Here is an instance: Many Chinese names are reminiscent of a burlesque and are probably merely barbarian caricatures of the originals. Of these Fong Fat Ah Su and Ah Foo are the most common.

A newly appointed crier in a county court was ordered by the judge in a case in which a Chinese was witness to call for Ah Song. The son of Erin looked puzzled and darted a look at the bench to try to discover if this was a colonial joke; but, seeing the judge as grave as an undertaker, he turned to the audience and blandly inquired, "Gentlemen, will any of you favor his honor with a song?"

Why Grass Grows Hollow.

The stems of grass and oats are usually hollow, and the knots of nodes which occur at intervals and which have a peculiar degree of firmness, derived from the interlacing of fibers, give them a firmness and strength which they would otherwise lack. If the material of wheat straw were in a solid form, it would make but a thin wiry stem, which would snap with great ease, but in the hollow form, with the intervening knots, the necessary support is afforded.

Blessed With a Wife.

A former vicar of a country parish not far from Sheffield was a gentleman distinguished for his learning and for the position he took at Cambridge. One day a visitor to the village got into conversation with one of the parishioners, and the talk turned to the vicar. "Your clergyman," said the visitor, "is a very able man. Why, he is a wrangler." "I never heard that," was the reply of the villager, "but his missis is."—London Tit-Bits.

The Law of Falling Bodies.

All falling bodies, whether they be crystal raindrops or meteorites, fall with what philosophers term "a uniform accelerated motion"—in other words, if a body be moving at a certain velocity at the expiration of one second from the beginning of its fall it will be moving with twice that velocity at the expiration of two seconds, gaining in speed at a uniform rate throughout the course of its fall.

Unappreciated.

"He's not what you would call strictly handsome," said the major, beaming through his glasses on a baby as he lay howling in his mother's arms. "but it's the kind of face that grows on you." "It's not the kind of face that grew on you!" was the indignant and unexpected reply of the fond mother. "You'd be better looking if it had!"

A Full Hand.

"John," said Mrs. Norton as she seated herself at the hotel breakfast table, "did you call a waiter?" "Yes," said Norton, looking up from his paper. "I called him, and he had a tray full."

Feminine Conversation.

Blobbs—Women talk about nothing but their dress. Slabbs—Oh, I don't know. It seems to me I've heard some of them talk about their hats.

If He Only Could.

Mrs. Noorich—Isn't it grand to ride in your own carriage? Mr. Noorich—Yes, but I'd enjoy it more if I could stand on the sidewalk and see myself ride by.—Brooklyn Life

TO CONSUMPTIVES.

The undersigned having been restored to health by simple means, after suffering for several years with a severe lung affection, and that dread disease Consumption, is anxious to make known to his fellow sufferers the means of cure. To those who desire it, he will cheerfully send (free of charge) a copy of the prescription used, which they will find a sure cure for Consumption, Asthma, Catarrh, Bronchitis and all throat and lung troubles. He hopes all sufferers will try his remedy, as it is invaluable. Those desiring the prescription, which will cost them nothing, and may prove a blessing, will please address,

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