

## The Fan as a Military Defence.

Who invented the fan? Eve, said the essayist, when she fanned herself with a palm leaf; Venus, declared the poet, Oliver Wendell Holmes, when she denuded one of her doves, a fan-tailed pigeon, of his plumes:

"My bird, I want your train," she cried.

"Come, don't let's have a fuss about it; I'll make it beauty's pet and pride, And you'll be better off without it."

He determined to yield to an impulse. The goddess spoke, and gently striped Her bird of every caudal feather:

A strand of gold-bright hair she clipped And bound the glossy plumes together.

A pretty fancy and a charming fan, even if we cannot accept Venus's off-hand assurance that he poor, subservient dove would be better off without his tail. But, whatever its origin, the fan in the Orient, an attribute of both sexes, has belonged, down all the ages of Occidental civilization, to woman alone.

"Woman's weapon," it has been often called—a dainty weapon, wielded only in wars of gallantry between the sexes, to be sure. It has taken the great war to reveal the fan as a thing of an aggressive military value, although not as an aggressive weapon, but as an important means of defence against one of the most subtle and hideous perils of the newer warfare.

This fan, so different from the pretty plaything of elegant ladies, was in no poet's fancy, but in sober fact, the invention of a woman. Her name is Hertha Ayrtton, and she is English.

Mrs. Ayrtton, the widow of a man of science, and scientific herself, was interested during the war in the problem of expelling poisonous gas from the trenches, from dugouts and from hollows in uneven ground, where it lay long after the attacking wave had passed over. She discovered that the proper way to use a fan is not to wave it about, making the air undulate over a wide space, but to bring it down sharply from the perpendicular

The horizontal, driving the air before it in steady puffs and setting up a fresh current from behind. On this simple principle she constructed the antigas fan.

The Ayrtton antigas fan is not more than twenty inches square, is constructed of light material, and works on the hinge-and-spring principle. It was used by the British troops during the last months of the war, and the soldiers gladly testify to its effectiveness.

The inventor has given public demonstrations in London with glass models of dugouts and tunnels, from which smoke, which was employed instead of gas, was quickly expelled.

At one of these demonstrations, Mrs. Ayrtton, with a three-inch fan, sat at one end of a six-foot table while smoke was poured down from a funnel at the other end. The action of the miniature fan not only dispelled the fumes but quickly gained such control over them that the current of air set up prevented the smoke from coming out of the funnel. The use of this antigas fan in cases of accumulated sewer gas has also been crowned with success.

The fan in this case being applied at the manhole. Her ideas are being applied in factories, motion-picture theatres, mines, and wherever noxious gases are generated, and they may even revolutionize our whole theory of ventilation.

### To His Mother.

It was at Rouen that he decided to do it. Sitting in the quiet and comfort of the Y.M.C.A., but, he reviewed the possibilities of death. His outfit was to go straight into action, and that until now he had always resisted. He would write a farewell letter to his mother in case he should fall.

His mother was a widow, and he was her only son. It seemed like giving up to death to write this letter—like signing his own death warrant. Yet if he should fall, there was one thing he wanted his mother to know. Slowly, and with infinite difficulty, he wrote his message.

Only one passage concerns us, and its glory is such that all motherhood should know it.

"Dear Mother. One thing especially I want you to know. Yours has been an unhappy life. Let this be your prayer. Your wish has always been my law. When I left home for business seven years ago, you told me that you wished me never to drink, gamble or swear. It was wise of you to use that word 'wish.' Just because it was not a command, but the anxiety of your great love to me, have always respected it. From that day to this, I have never tasted strong drink, gambled, or sworn, or done anything else I felt you would be ashamed of. Dear mother, don't grieve if I fall. I believe in Christ, and I shall go with a clean soul to God."

The letter was closed and sealed and dispatched to a friend, to be sent to his mother, if necessary. Before he slept that night he determined, on his knees, to resist all gloomy forebodings.

A week later orders came to his battalion that a strong German machine-gun post must be captured. A Company was given the task, and failed. C. Company, our young hero in command, was ordered to take the gun. Through a hail of bullets they swept to victory.

A month went by, and the young officer was standing one day in the trenches. Snipers were busy, and he had been seeing that his men were not carelessly exposed at any point. Wearily he leaned against the back wall of the trench. Suddenly came an impulse to move his position. He could not explain it; nevertheless he obeyed and swung around on his elbow. Pinged! A German bullet sank into the wall in the very spot against which his head had rested. So the days and nights went by with escape after escape. Still he struggled to maintain his confidence in life.

Soon after the armistice he returned home. Never will he or his mother forget the night when—after much thought—he handed his mother that letter. She had shed many tears in life—but never such tears of perfect joy and pride. When they knelt together in overwhelming gratitude it was as if they heard a Voice saying: "Woman, behold thy son! Son, behold thy mother!"

Said to be the largest in the world, and 400 miles in width, a new oilfield has been discovered in Western Canada.

German lace manufacturers are copying English patterns, and sending lace to Great Britain to sell at twenty per cent. less than the home production.

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## Solving the Secrets of the Sea.

No more distinctly scientific body than the British Association exists anywhere in the world, yet among the papers that fill the program of its annual meetings there are always some that have a wide popular and practical interest. At the latest meeting the address of the president, Prof. W. A. Herdman of the University of Liverpool, was devoted to oceanography, a subject on which he is an authority; and although the paper touched the scientific imagination in pointing out the immense field for study in the chemical, geological and biological story of the oceans and ocean life, it also dwelt upon the very practical matter of the food that we get or could get from the sea.

One of the things that President Herdman would do is to make some kind of census of the ocean, as a basis for calculating how much food there can be made to yield and what laws can be agreed upon for the protection of fish. It is evident from history and geology and archaeology that man has always got a considerable part of his food from the sea, yet it is the one field in which, with the important exceptions, he has established no individual rights and done no productive work. On land he has multiplied the gifts of nature a hundredfold and improved them in quality as well as in quantity; but what nature gives him from the sea he has taken in its casual form and quantity, and been content.

The future is likely to see a great change. It has been proved that an area of the sea can be made to yield

a greater income than an equal area of good farming land, and only a beginning has been made as yet. The oyster business, the lobster business and the salmon business are almost the only departments of the great industry of fishing in which anything has been done to make the supply permanent. All the other important fisheries of the world—the cod, the sturgeon, the mackerel, the herring, the halibut, the swordfish—have been content to trust to luck and to go on depleting a natural supply that they have done nothing to increase or even to maintain.

As an illustration of the important secrets that the sea may hold, the story of the tilfish is worth recalling. The first of the species to be caught were taken south of Nantucket in 1879 and were at once declared by the United States Fish Commission to be an excellent food fish. For two years or so they came to market in considerable quantity. Then, in 1882, the schooner Navarino sailed for two days and a night through water the surface of which was covered with dead tilfish to the estimated number of 250,000 to the square mile. For a long time no tilfish were caught; then, a few years ago they began to reappear and are now plenty again. Men of science believe that the cause of the disaster was a sudden shifting of the Gulf Stream and a replacing inflow of cold water from the Labrador coast, but entered into the springs of the sea? or hast thou walked in the search of the depth?

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The power of the mind over contagious disease is well illustrated by Charles L. Leland in his "Have You a Strong Will?" He cites the case of the celebrated physician, Hufeland, who recalls a personal experience, as follows:

"I, myself, am an example that an established case of contagious illness can be cured by a glad exhilaration of spirits. It happened in the year of the war, 1807, when a pestilential fever broke out, that I had to attend many who were ill with it. And one morning I felt that I had every symptom of the disorder—giddiness, mental dullness, weakness of the limbs—every sign that I must suffer for many days before the malady would break out. But duty commanded, and others suffered more than I. I determined to go through all the morning's work as usual, and to enjoy a midday dinner to which I was invited. At this dinner I gave myself up as much as I could to merriment, drank intentionally more wine than usual, went with an artificially excited fever to my home, went to bed, had a profuse perspiration, and rose in the morning cured."

"That is my name."

It was a shock to the inspectors, but they proceeded quickly with their questions. Indignant denial was the first attitude. Then slowly came the admissions. She had cashed the check for a young man with whom she had attended a country school many years before. She led the way to a lodging house in a nearby street, where the inspectors captured two men and seized the rest of the stolen goods. One of the men a year previous had been a station master at the place that was robbed.

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