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### THE PARROT AND HIS FOOD.

No Better Nut Cracker Can Be Found Than His Stroung Bill

Parrots and toucans have no knives and forks to cut off the rinds of tropical fruits; but as monkeys use their fingers, so the birds use for the same purpose their sharp and powerful bills. No better nut-cracker and fruit parer could possibly be found. The parrot in particular has developed for the purpose his curved and inflated beak—a wonderful weapon, keen as a tailor's scissors and moved by powerful muscles on either side of the face which bring together the cutting edges with extraordinary energy.

The way the bird holds a fruit gingerly in one claw, while he strips off the rind dexterously with his under-tongue mandible and seeps a sharp lookout meanwhile on either side with those sly and stealthy eyes of his for a possible intruder suggests to the observing mind the whole living drama of a native forest. One sees in that vivid world the watchful monkey ever ready to swoop down upon the tempting fall feathers of his hereditary foe, one sees the canny parrot ever prepared for his rapid attack and ever eager to make him pay with five points of his tail for his impudent interference with an unoffending fellow citizen of the arboreal community.

### Gambling Part of Religion.

A missionary lay beside a campfire of birch logs in the Maine woods, smoking a black cigar and watching his guide grill trout.

"Speaking of gambling," the missionary said, "I know of a sect that regards it as a religious duty, like fasting or prayer."

"This sect is the Hindus. They one day in each year gamble like mad from sunrise till sunset. The day is the festival of the lamps, a day sacred to Lakshun, the goddess of wealth. A tremendous lot of money changes hands in Lakshun's honor."

"All the gambling is done to test the financial success that will attend on each person throughout the year. If a gambler loses he knows a year of hard luck is ahead of him. If he wins he knows he may expect a twelvemonth of prosperity."

"Strange to say, a good deal of cheating accompanies this religious gambling."

### Strikes in Germany.

Strikes increase in number every year in Germany. As shown by the published statistics, the average number of strikes for the years 1898 to 1903, inclusive, was 1,242. In 1904 it rose to 1,870, and in 1905 to 2,057. Of much significance is the increasing number of lockouts, which show that combination among employers is also developing. The number of lockouts, which averaged only forty-two for the period 1899 to 1903, rose in 1904 to 120, and in 1905 to 200. It is expected that the figures for 1906 will show a further considerable increase. The industry most seriously affected by the movement at the present time is that of the metal workers. The United Association of German Metal Industrialists has been considering the advisability of a general lockout of all the metal workers.

### Beginning of Rhyming.

Dr. Douglas Hyde, the famous Celtic scholar, in the course of a recent address at the University of California, claimed, on the authority of eminent German and Italian scholars, that "Ireland taught Europe the art of rhyming." He said further: "The earliest recorded rhymes in Europe are those in Latin, written by Augustine. He composed them while surrounded by a Celtic-speaking people in the south of Gaul. In the year 750 A. D. we find the Irish people making perfect and elaborate rhymes. It was not done in other countries for two centuries later."

### Sunshine and Sugar Growth.

The effect of sunshine on sugar growing is said by the New Orleans Playmate to make the crop more productive. Thus Spain has become as successful with beet sugar growing as with her established cane sugar industry, notwithstanding an arid climate. On the other hand the storms and fogs that envelop the British Islands are said to have prevented the development of the beet sugar industry there. England's annual average hours of sunshine are only 1,400, while Spain has 3,000 hours.

### King Edward's Trades.

King Edward has played many parts in his time, one of them being that of a brickmaker and builder. At Osborne there still stands a small fort which was erected by the king and his brothers many years ago, even the bricks being manufactured by the young princes. At Balmoral there is a tool shed which was entirely constructed by Prince Albert and his sons.

### The Amount of Germs.

Lecturing before a London audience on the importance of house cleaning an English scientist asserted that as much dust as can be placed on a pin point yields no fewer than 3,000 colonies of living germs. The majority of these germs are representative of disease.

### While He Works.

Sir Gilbert Parker, the novelist, likes to go from one room to another writing a little in this and a little in that. He also has a weakness for changing chairs while composing.

### WHEN BEARDS WERE BARRED.

The Wearer of One Resorted to Violence to Protect Himself.

In the early part of the last century a social tyranny prevailed which regarded the beard as an outrage, says an English writer. At one time only four men in Birmingham had courage to wear beards. They were followers of Joanna Southcott. They did it in imitation of the apostles and were jeered at in the streets. George Frederick Muntz, one of the first two members elected in Birmingham, was the first member who ventured to wear a beard in the House of Commons, and he would have been insulted had he not been a powerful man and carried a heavy Malacca cane, which he was known to apply to any one who offered him personal affront. The Rev. Edmund R. Larken, of Burton rectory, near Lincoln, was the first clergyman (that was as late as 1852) who appeared in the pulpit with a beard, but he shaved the upper lip as an apology for the avicinity of his chin. George Dawson was the first nonconformist preacher who delivered a sermon in a full blown mustache and beard, which was taken in both cases as an unmistakable sign of latitudinarianism. In doctrine in the bank clerk or the workman it was worse. It was flat insubordination not to shave.

### Famous Newsboys.

As illustrating the chances of success in America, Rudolph Heig, superintendent of the Newsboys' Lodging House, New York, took haphazard a list of 1,000 boys who used the lodging house some twenty years ago. Mr. Heig has traced their subsequent careers. One has been elected governor of a State, one is governor of a territory, two are members of Congress, two are sheriffs, two district attorneys, one is a city attorney, four are members of State legislatures, three county commissioners, one judge, twenty-seven bankers, twenty-two merchants, one civil engineer, 460 clerks, 34 lawyers, one physician, eight postmasters, three railroad officials in high office, thirty-six railroad men, ten estate agents, fifteen journalists, eighty-two teachers, four high school principals, one superintendent and twenty-one clergymen.

### Royalties Pecuniary Worries.

There are still people in the world apparently, who imagine that actual royal personages have wealth at disposal which equals that of their prototypes in fairy tales, the kings, queens, princes and princesses who wear their crowns every day, dress in cloth of gold, and live regardless of expense. Yet pecuniary trouble is a not uncommon complaint in exalted circles, where the leading branch of a family will take most of the money and the others have to manage on limited allowances. Add to this that each generation of a great house usually produces a highness who seems born to worry or disgrace the rest by extravagance, irresponsibility, or utter indifference to public opinion and it will be seen that crowned heads have their worries the same as minor mortals.

### White Animals Can't Smell.

"Pure white animals," said a pet stock dealer, "have no sense of smell, hence they are continually eating things that disagree with them, and in eight cases out of ten poison themselves and die."

"Pure white pigs should never be allowed to run loose in the fields and woods. For without the protection of a sense of smell such pigs, when they get out, eat all sorts of poison, out roots and berries and die off rapidly."

"In Africa the white rhinoceros poisons itself by eating the euphorbia, and pure white sheep are difficult to rear because they are continually munching shrubs and grasses that don't agree with them."

### Took Her at Her Word.

In the course of recent conversation at Potsdam, the Princess von Buelow, wife of the German Chancellor, remarked to the Kaiser that her mansion needed cleaning. The Kaiser was amused. "May I help you to clean it?" he asked, and, taking the remark as a joke, she assented. The next day several large crates were delivered at the Princess's house, and an autograph letter from the Kaiser saying that he was doing his share in the cleaning by sending her a ton of soap.

**Money From Violets and Fruit.** Roses, carnations and violets have seen the greatest advance in flower culture. The annual sale in this country is from \$6,000,000 to \$7,000,000 worth of cut roses, which represents from 100,000,000 to 125,000,000 flowers.

### Vegetarian Restaurants.

There are about thirty vegetarian restaurants in Berlin, which are much frequented in the last week or two of each month by students whose monthly allowance is nearly exhausted.

### Heavy Punishment.

A radical censorship is enforced in China. The person who writes an objectionable book is punished with 100 blows of a heavy bamboo and banished for life. Those who read the book are also punished.

### Reward of Labor.

A French artist, after eight years of labor, has completed the largest picture ever painted. The canvas measures 150 square yards and the subject is the funeral of M. Carnot.

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