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FREAKS OF THE TRADE RAT.

Ho May Steal, but is Very Careful to Leave Something in Exchange.
 One of the oddest little animals in existence is the California wood rat, better known as the "trade rat." It owes the latter name, says the Strand, to the fact that, though it is a great thief, it never steals anything without putting something else in its place.

The story is told of a paste pot which had been left over night in the assay office at the Silver Queen Mine, and which was found in the morning filled with the oddest collection of rubbish.
 A description is given of a trade rat's nest found in an unoccupied house. The outside was composed entirely of iron spikes laid in perfect symmetry, with the points outward. Interlaced with the spikes were about two dozen forks and spoons and three large butcher knives.
 There were also a large carrying fork, knife and steel, several plugs of tobacco, an old purse, a quantity of small carpenter tools, including several augurs and a watch, of which the outside casing, the glass, and the works were all distributed separately so as to make the best show possible. Altogether the oddest collection. None of these things was of any earthly use to the rats. They must have collected them just in the same way that a child hoards up odds and ends to play with.

Largest Cabbage Grower in Britain.
 John Gillies of Prestonpans may fairly be termed the king of cabbage growers. He sometimes turns out 2,500,000 cabbage plants in one day, about 150 workpeople being engaged. The ground cleared was between six and seven acres, and seventeen work horses were employed in carting, ploughing, and rearing the land as fast as the plants were cleared off. The wages paid range from 10s to £2 10s per week. The North British Railway Company run a special train daily for the conveyance of that portion of his plant traffic which is distributed, per the various passenger trains, to different parts of the country. The heaviest part of the cabbage plant traffic is, of course, sent per ordinary goods train. As to the turnout of full grown cabbages, a recent day's output was 3,100 dozens, and that quantity is often exceeded. Last year Mr Gillies put on rail 3,800 dozen in one day. His turnout of leek plants on one day recently was upward of 300,000.—London Tit-Bits.

New Use for Electricity.
 The latest and, it will be thought by man, one of the best uses to which electricity has been put, is the destruction of the mosquito. Maurice Chaulin de Paris is the man who has thought of electrocuting this most obnoxious disturber of summer peace. He has devised and patented an apparatus with a cylindrical lantern with two rings, suspended one above the other and joined by parallel and vertical chains. They are connected with the source of electricity, which may be provided by a small accumulator in such a fashion that each of these little chains is always alive. In the center is some sort of a lamp that attracts those ardent lovers of luminosity, the mosquitoes and gnats. They touch the chains, and that instant is fatal to them. They are neatly "short-circuited," and they buzz no more. They even forget what they meant by all their buzzing, or what occult reason they had for seeking the luminary. They are dead and done for. This apparatus can be placed in a room and the proper owner of the chamber be insured a comfortable night.—The Reader.

Fish That Cannot Swim.
 More than one species of fish is met with that cannot swim, the most singular of which, perhaps, is the maltha, a Brazilian fish, whose organs of locomotion only enable it to crawl or walk or hop, after the manner of a toad, to which animal this fish to some extent bears a resemblance, and it is provided with a long, unturned snout. Other examples of non-swimming fishes include the sea horse, another most peculiarly shaped inhabitant of the sea, and the starfish, of which there are many specimens which walk and crawl on the shore and rocks, both being unable to swim.—Exchange.

Porcelain's Fondness for Gold.
 Attention has been called to the fact that in evaporating gold or silver solution in a porcelain basin, a considerable amount of gold or silver may be absorbed by the porcelain itself. In the manufacture of chloride of gold it is customary to grind up all of the porcelain evaporating basins, from which some of the deficiency is recovered.

Coal Deposits of North America.
 According to the American Manufacturer, the coal deposits of North America are estimated to contain nearly as much as those of Europe, or 681,000,000 tons, but even this gigantic figure is completely dwarfed by Asia's wealth of coal, as to which it is at present impossible to make an even approximate estimate.

Will Buy Rails from Us.
 The Toronto Street Railway administration has decided not to procure any more steel rails in England, owing to the delay in filling orders, caused by the use of a type of rails differing from those manufactured for the English market. Hereafter they will send orders to the United States.

RACE QUESTION IN AFRICA.

A Prophecy of Coming Struggle Between Black and White.
 The struggle which produced the territorial unity of South Africa is going to be supplemented by one which will end in the establishment of an identity of interests between the two white races south of Zambesi, says the Pall Mall Gazette. The dominant question in the south of the Dark continent is no longer the predominance of Boer or Briton, but of white or black, and whether it materializes in the form of a vast armed or political struggle the outlook is almost equally serious.

To begin with, there is south of the Zambesi to-day a native population of 10,000,000 and a white population of under 1,000,000. Moreover, the blacks not only show no signs of diminution, but are steadily increasing and at a much faster rate than the whites. Probably for all time the natives in South Africa must enormously preponderate, a result which the white man himself has and is still doing much to promote. For in the olden days tribal wars, to say nothing of pestilence and famine, served largely to counterbalance native profligacy. These checks to native increase are now removed. War no longer periodically decimates the populations, while the white man's arts of civilization have deprived both famine and pestilence of their former power.
 Consequently, the native in an environment of peace and plenty has paid a cordial obedience to the divine admonition to increase and multiply, while the white, whether by natural increase or immigration, has added to his numbers but slowly. Thus we are faced to-day by the broad fact that pitted against a limited white population is a practically unlimited and virile black population, which, under the influence of civilization and education is becoming each year a more formidable element, and, if unrestrained, must inevitably undermine the very foundations of white supremacy.

There are two great factors at work among the natives of South Africa to-day, the one political, and at present, although growing, limited in its expression, the other quasi-religious, that is to say, frankly nationalist, and operating throughout the country. This last is essentially anti-white, and, as evinced by its most recent ebullition in Natal, may yet be responsible for deluging South Africa in blood. The outlook is gloomy and depressing enough, but in direct proportion to its menace is the hope for the future good relations of British and Dutch.

There is one gleam of sunlight through the blackness of the horizon. For, bitter as is the feud between the two white races to-day, rivalries, jealousies, and differences of all kinds will be swept away by the growing realization that only by presenting a solid and united front to the oncoming hordes of superficially civilized blacks can they hope to escape annihilation.
 Of the two ways in which this struggle may be carried on, open war, in spite of the suffering it would entail, would be fraught with less peril to the white man than the political pressure of black power upon the machinery of government. Something of the serious nature of this question may be gathered from the present state of things in the Southern States of North America. But the difficulty presented by the relatively insignificant number of negroes in the United States will be as nothing compared with that which will face the white races of South Africa when confronted with the enormous black population south of the Zambesi.

To-day the majority of these natives are in a semi-savage condition. But we must accept the fact that a day will come when they will have emerged from that condition and have attained the degree of civilization which prevails among the negro kindred in the United States. Indeed, the process of evolution is already in operation. The native peoples are awakening from their slumber of centuries, and there is no more remarkable feature of their awakening than the almost insatiable thirst for knowledge which consumes them. It is a significant fact that during the last decade 60 per cent of the children annually attending school in Cape Colony have been colored, and only 40 per cent white; while in a recent Cape Government Education Report the actual number of children receiving education in the public schools of the colony were 91,313 colored and 60,849 white. Cape Colony and the territories are literally peppered with native schools, the territories alone having several hundreds, while the cry of every native petition to government is "Give us more education."

The native schools are manned by aboriginal teachers, men who have passed one or other of the Cape University qualifying examinations, and who display no lack of intelligence in their work, but who have undoubtedly become infected with that politico-religious movement known as Ethnism, which has done, and is still doing, more than any other influence to inspire the native with a nationalistic spirit of covert hostility to the white man as an intruder upon the soil of the black races.

The question, therefore, which every thinking African is asking himself at the present time is, "What will be the relative positions of the black and white populations in South Africa when this educational process is completed?" The United States supplies us with some hint of the answer. There the two races are at each other's throat.

MAN'S WILLING SLAVE.

With a Nod the Elephant Will Tusk a Convict or Fondle a Babe.
 It makes one marvel to see the things a wild elephant can be trained to do in from three to six months, and how tractable the monster becomes, says a writer in the New York World. I have seen a little European child, apparently four years old, go up confidently to one, which saw what she wanted and, lifting her up with its trunk, placed her gently on its back. Under the old Hindoo Rajas, when elephants were made to put criminals to death, an elephant would be standing still among a number of people, when a criminal would be brought up and the order given. In a moment, without hesitation, the elephant would throw him "p into the air or rend him in pieces or tread him under foot or thrash" his tusk through him, according to the order given.

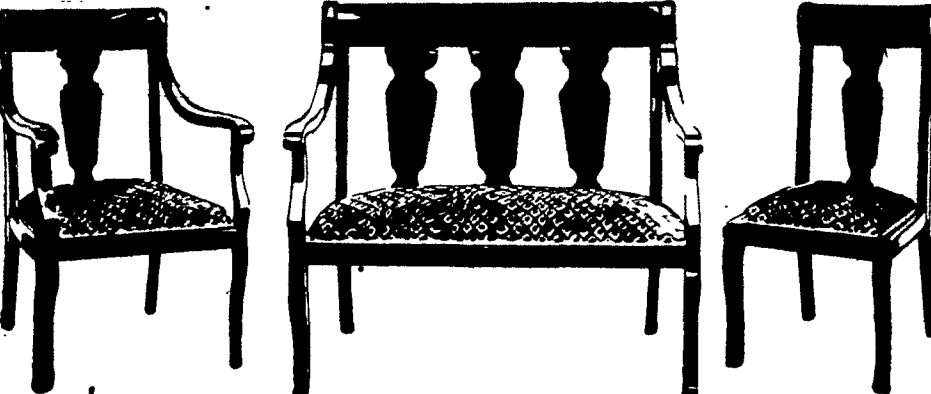
Yet these tremendously powerful creatures will take punishment from their keepers as patiently as a dog will from its master. Every driver carries a heavy, pointed iron hook, with which he will strike his elephant on the head till the thick hide breaks if it is disobedient. When an elephant is utterly refractory a spear is thrust into tender parts of its skin. But one of the commonest, most advantageous uses of the giant animals is to set them stacking heavy timber. They not only go to and to carry logs to a pile, but push each log up and down till it lies even with the rest. A wag, noting how perfectly straight logs were laid on log, declared that he saw the elephant close one eye and look along the line.
 The obedience of elephants to spoken orders is instantaneous. I have been on the back of an elephant going through a jungle when a small horn which some deer had shed lay on the path. The native driver, who, as usual, sat on the elephant's neck, without making any sign, simply said: "Give me that!" The elephant heard him, saw the unusual object and, without stopping, picked it up and threw it over its head into my hands.
 Elephants have been employed for war, for labor, for ceremony, for hunting and for show. The first use passed away with the introduction of firearms, and the improvement of roads in India is doing away with the use of elephants for labor. When roads were bad, as they always were under former governments, heavy baggage could not be carried nor heavy guns dragged without elephants.

Tiger shooting will always be safer with elephants, and in some places could not well be done except on an elephant, which enables the hunter to see over the tall bushes and rank grass that densely cover the ground.
 Most native chiefs and nobles still consider it necessary for their dignity to keep one or more elephants, but they do not use them habitually, as they did, for ancient customs and fashions are fast dying out in India, and those of Europe are being adopted instead. Elephants are still ridden in procession on great occasions, however, and are often obligingly lent to foreign tourists who want the novelty of an elephant ride.
 Elephants used to be common in all the wild forests of India, but the spread of cultivation has caused them to disappear from all parts except Nepal, Assam, Bengal and certain forests of the south.

I predict a day when tourist agencies will keep an elephant or two for the gratification of their patrons, as an elephant ride will not be otherwise obtainable. In the places I have mentioned their destruction is strictly forbidden, and their capture is a government monopoly—of the British government in British India and the native government in independent states.

Although elephants would soon be exterminated but for this law, their freedom is occasionally a sore vexation to farmers, planters and cultivators, and even to owners of flower gardens. The proprietor is awakened from sleep by the crashing of branches, and though he may scare the depredators off (which is easily done) by shouting, waving a light or firing a gun, he finds in the morning that his crops have been wasted, his fruit trees broken, his garden trampled down and perhaps his outhouses wrecked.
 The old-fashioned method of catching elephants was to dig pitfalls in their way, the top being loosely covered with bamboos and grass or leaves. When an elephant fell into one of these it was left without food for two or three days. Loops of stout rope were then put around its neck and feet from above, and the other ends of the ropes were fastened to trees. Wood and stones were next thrown into the pit, the elephant rising as the bottom was raised and the ropes being drawn tighter, until the pit was full enough to permit the elephant to step out.
 This method with pitfalls was very cruel and sometimes resulted in the death of one elephant out of two. Even if the bottom of the pit were covered with a deep layer of brushwood, to break the fall, the losses amounted to one-third of all the animals taken.
 An animal weighing several tons cannot fall ten feet without suffering injury. Bones were broken and joints dislocated; a fall on a tusk would split the upper jaw. Worst of all were interior injuries.
 So when India came into possession of the English the use of pitfalls was given up.

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