

HE PRAYED CRITIC.

The Composer Tried to Be Funny and Got a Surprise.

Signor Leoncavallo, the composer, recounted an amusing experience that befell him in a theater where he occupied a stall one evening to hear the performance of his "Pagliacci."

At the finale a stranger sitting next him kept exclaiming enthusiastically: "What a masterpiece! What a perfect masterpiece!"

STEALING A DOG.

Sir Edwin Landseer's Experience With a London Fancier.

Sir Edwin Landseer, the animal painter, one time was about to put the finishing touches to the portrait of a dog belonging to a nobleman and was expecting a visit from his model when the owner arrived in a state of great perturbation without the dog.

Sir Edwin's acquaintance with the dog fanciers was large, and he succeeded to his aid one Jim Smith, who he thought might put him on the right track.

After a moment of hesitation the man confessed that he himself was the thief. "You, you thundering rascal!" exclaimed Sir Edwin. "Then why on earth have you kept us in suspense all this time?"

BIRDS AS ORACLES.

A most remarkable superstition of the Kenyahs of Borneo is the consultation of birds. If, for example, a Kenyah has to undertake a long journey he will not risk it without having first consulted the "dakkil," a kind of hawk.

Prodigality of Life in Ancient Egypt.

The reckless prodigality with which in ancient Egypt the upper classes squandered away the labor and lives of the people is perfectly startling. In this respect, as the monuments yet remaining abundantly prove, they stand alone and without a rival.

An Infamy.

Some years ago we remember meeting at the door of a second-hand bookshop an excited Irishman. He had just bought the "Irish Melodies" for a shilling when he turned round on the bookseller and burst out, "But I could kill ye for selling these immortal gems so cheap!"—London Athenaeum.

The Handwriting.

"If you look about you," said the cautious acquaintance, "you will see the handwriting on the wall."

A Harshware Talk.

"Yes," said the nut to the nail, "I gave me a terrible wrench to part from him, but I knew it would be only a matter of a few days before he would bolt anyway."

TO SWAMP THE LORDS.

A Threat That Always Brings England's Upper House to Terms.

To override the veto of the house of lords by a wholesale creation of peers is a plan that has been often threatened, but hardly ever put into practice. It certainly places the king in a very unenviable predicament—so much so that in 1719, after a crisis of the kind, George I. caused to be introduced into the lords a bill for limiting the power of the sovereign to create peers, a sort of royal self-denying ordinance.

The Coffee Cup in Persia.

The expression "to give a cup of coffee" has in Persia a somewhat ominous significance. This is due to the fact that the coffee cup is one recognized medium for conveying poison.

Salad of the Shoes.

Freshmen have troubles the world over. The "concoct," as they are called at the famous Ecole Polytechnique in Paris, are subjected to an amusing initiation called the salad of shoes. The freshmen report some days before the upper class men so that they can receive their uniforms and become familiar with the routine of the school.

Tennyson Disturbed.

This story is told in Robert H. Sherard's book "My Friends the French."

Currency in China.

Writing from the interior of China, a traveler says: "Currency is primitive to a degree. Lump silver is used and copper 'cash.' Colored money is not current. Even in Honan city, which is distant only two days by rail from Peking, lump silver, the same currency that has been used for centuries, is still employed. It is cut into small pieces by hammer and chisel. Every town and village has its own weights and scales and there is no pretense at uniformity."

The Man and the Parrot.

Exasperated Purchaser—Didn't you guarantee that this parrot would repeat every word he heard?

Life's Percentages.

It sometimes happens that a man plays an errorless game because he accepts mighty few chances. The man in the night garden is pretty sure to have a better fielding record than the shortstop.—Acheson Globe.

Outdoors.

"He doted on Alice and would have married her but for her mother."

Missed Fire.

Putton-Ayres—I am cavare to the general, you know. Miss Innocent—Oh, are you really? My brother is in the military too.—Boston Transcript.

Grief is crowned with consolation.

Shakespeare.

TORTURE MACHINES.

Curious Instruments That Were Used in the Middle Ages.

In an old tower in Nuremberg there is a room set apart especially for the preservation of the curious instruments of torture used during the uncertain period historically referred to as the middle ages.

In that room you can see thumb-screws of the most approved pattern closely arranged along shelves filled with "lar helmets" and "bridles" for gasping women. One horrid relic, called the "spike wheel," is a heavy cylinder on one side of which stand two or more score of sharp iron spikes. In days of old when an offender had been sentenced to undergo a "rolling" he was stripped naked and firmly bound on a plank, face down.

GIANT BUTTERFLIES.

Have a Wing Spread Greater Than That of Many Small Birds.

The largest butterfly known to naturalists is found only in British New Guinea, and specimens are worth anything from \$100 upward. The male measures eight inches across the wings and the female not less than eleven inches, a wing spread exceeding that of many small birds.

THE DEATH DICE.

A Murder Case in Which They Returned a Just Verdict.

The German emperor some time ago presented to the Hohenzollern museum the "death dice" with which one of his ancestors decided a difficult case in the seventeenth century. The history of these dice is generally given as follows:

A young girl had been murdered. Suspicion fell upon two young soldiers, Ralph and Alfred, who were suitors for her hand. They both denied their guilt, and even torture failed to extract a confession from either.

Then Elector Frederick-William decided to cut the knot by means of the dice box. The two soldiers should throw for their lives and the loser should be executed as the murderer.

The event was celebrated with great solemnity. Ralph had the first chance and threw sixes, the highest possible number. The dice box was then given to Alfred. He fell on his knees and prayed. Then he rose to his feet and threw the dice with such force that one of them was broken. The other five showed six, the broken one also gave six on the larger portion, and the fragment split off showed one.

This was a total of thirteen one beyond Ralph's throw. The audience held its breath in amazement.

"God has spoken," cried the prince. Ralph, appalled by what he regarded as a sign from heaven, confessed his guilt and was sentenced to death.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Got What She Wanted.

"I can stand for some things, but not for everything," said the clerk as he watched a stylishly dressed young woman leave the store.

"What is the matter?" asked the proprietor, who had walked up unnoticed.

"That woman who just left bustled up to the counter and asked to see my shirts. I showed her every style and color we carry. After inspecting the entire stock she rose and thanked me sweetly, adding I didn't wish to purchase any. You see, I am wearing my husband's some shirts, and I wanted to be sure I was doing them right. My husband is very particular about the finish of his shirts. And they say married women are so considerate."

The Sun.

It is computed that the temperature of the sun would be expressed by 1,000 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer, or about ninety times the temperature of boiling water. This is about five times the temperature that man is able to produce by artificial means. The light given off from the surface of the sun is reckoned as being 5,300 times more intense than that of the molten metal in a Bessemer converter though that is of an almost blinding brilliancy, or, if we compare it with the oxyhydrogen flame, the sun shines a light equal in brilliancy to 146 times the intensity of the limelight.

Plant That Feigns Death.

In South America there is a plant, a species of mimosa, which resorts to death feigning, evidently for the purpose of preventing grass-eating animals from eating it. In its natural state this plant has a vivid green hue, but directly it is touched by a human finger or by any living animal it collapses into a tangle of apparently dead and withered stems. Among British wild plants the most sensitive to touch is the insectivorous sundew of English bogs.—London Globe.

Kind Critics.

"How did Jones get such a reputation both as a singer and an artist?"

Reason Enough.

"Why does she think he has such a splendid future?"

"Because she has promised to marry him, I guess."—Houston Post.

TO SWAMP THE LORDS.

The measure was twice passed in the lords, but twice rejected by the commons, which was lucky, for had it been carried it would have made the house of lords an almost unchangeable body, entirely beyond the control of king or minister or commons.

The nearest approach that was ever made to "swamping the lords" was in 1832, when the fate of the great reform bill trembled in the balance. Over and over again the measure had been passed by the commons, only to be rejected by the lords. The country was furious. Payment of taxes was refused. Riots broke out everywhere.

The prime minister, Lord Grey, went to the king and begged him to create new peers to carry the bill. His majesty refused, and the ministry resigned. The king, however, presently changed his mind and, fearing a revolution, agreed to the creation of a hundred new peers, "or more if necessary." Then, very reluctantly, the upper house gave way, and the bill became law.—London Family Herald.

Origin of the Letter V.

The letter V may be regarded as the mutilated remains of one of the symbols used by the ancient Egyptians in their hieroglyphic or picture writing. A common animal in their country was the two horned sand viper, a representation of which stood for V. The priests ultimately found that for the practical purposes of everyday life it was a waste of time to use elaborate hieroglyphics and invented a kind of shorthand to meet the occasion. In this the snake was reduced to a V with a dash (v) to represent horns and body. The Phoenicians adopted this letter, and from them we get our V by loss of the dash, leaving only the two little horns of the original picture. This snake is still common in Egypt and is probably the one mentioned in Genesis xiv, 17, "Dan shall be a serpent by the way, an adder in the path, that biteth the horse heels, so that his rider shall fall backward." Travelers tell us that it is still addicted to this unpleasant habit.

Wet Weather and Camels.

Camels are very sensitive to moisture. In the region of tropical rains they are usually absent, and if they come into such with caravans the results of the rainy season are greatly feared. The great humidity of the air explains the absence of the camel from the northern slopes of the Atlas and from well wooded Abyssinia. This sensitiveness expresses itself in the character of different races. The finest, most noble looking camels, with short silk-like hair, are found in the interior of deserts, as in the Taureg region in north Africa, and they cannot be used for journeys to moist regions. Even in Fesnan, south of Tripoli, the animals are shorter and fatter, with long coarse hair, and in Nile lands and on coasts it is the same. These animals, too, are less serviceable as regards speed and endurance.

The Eyes of the Musk Ox.

The skull of the bull-musk ox is remarkable for the development of 9 eyes, orbits, which project sufficiently beyond the plane of the frontal bones to compensate for the interruptions of the horns would otherwise make in the range of vision. The musk ox, however, does not seem to rely greatly on keenness of sight, far less on acuteness of hearing, for the ears are of small dimensions and are completely covered by the heavy growth of fur about them. The organs of scent are evidently more highly developed, and they exact of the hunter his greatest cunning.

Just Imagined.

"Why don't they have women on juries?" she asked.

"Imagine a woman sitting through a long argument by a lawyer and not interrupting," was the answer she received.—Buffalo Express.

Wit is brushwood, judgment is timber.

The first makes the brightest flames, but the other gives the most lasting heat.

Advertisement for Uneeda Biscuit. Features a large 'So' in a circle, the text 'whether you buy Uneeda Biscuit at your own grocer's or at an unknown shop a thousand miles away—you know the contents of the package are just as they left the oven—fresh, crisp, untainted, unsullied. You always know', and 'NATIONAL BISCUIT COMPANY'. Includes an image of a train and a fare table: 'CLEVELAND AND BUFFALO "City of Erie" "City of Buffalo" FARE \$2.50 DAILY BETWEEN'. Also mentions 'Giant Butterflies' and 'Torture Machines'.

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