

TOM THUMB AND THE QUEEN.

The Diminutive General Tried to Back Out of Her Presence, But Failed.

The American minister, Hon. Edward Everett, was very kind to his countrymen, and it was at his house that Mr. Barnum met a certain Mr. Murray, master of the queen's household, says St. Nicholas. On the day following one of the queen's life guards appeared before Mr. Barnum with a note containing an invitation from the queen to Gen. Tom Thumb and his guardian, Mr. Barnum, to appear at Buckingham palace on a specified evening.

In retiring from the royal presence, Mr. Barnum attempted to follow the example set by the lord in waiting by backing out. The gallery was of great length, and the gentlemen with long strides made rapid progress; but Tom Thumb's short legs left him far behind—or before. Seeing that he was losing ground, he turned and ran a few steps, then resumed the process of "backing." Again losing ground, he repeated the performance, to the great amusement of the royal spectators. The queen soon sent another summons, and the general, with his guardian, made a second visit to the palace, being received in the yellow drawing room.

ESCAPE GIVING TIPS.

There Are Many Men Who Show Their Regular Barbers in Christmas Season.

"Say, I want to tell you something that is dead straight," said Schneider, the calculating barber, according to the Philadelphia Record, as he hurried his razor over the face of one of his victims. "You notice this crowd here waiting to get shaved—well, you will be surprised when I tell you that there are only two of my regular customers among the entire men there. What does that mean? Well, not that there has been an influx into town or that the eight men have just moved into the neighborhood. It simply means that that double quartet is made up of men who are regular customers at other barber shops, but who have come here to get out of giving Christmas presents in those shops. Say, are you on?"

"Oh, you'd be surprised at the number of people who every year perform the change-of-barber-shop act. We don't do any more business here, as for every strange customer who comes to a regular customer goes to a strange shop at this season of present-giving. When they again get back to their regular shops after Christmas is over they carelessly remark that they have been out of town. 'Sh, don't talk so loud, for I don't want any of my once-a-year customers to hear you; they might go somewhere else next year. Next year, with emphasis on the gent, the individual being one of the strangers."

WINE FROM APPLES.

It is Made So Cleverly as to Deceive Even the Most Knowing Experts.

Science has lately made it possible to obtain good wine from the apple, which has always been devoted to sparkling cider. Experts have been deceived in sherry, madeira and sauterne which came from apple juice instead of grapes. Juice from the apple is fermented with yeasts of different kinds brought from the grape-growing districts of Europe to this country. For instance, the flavor of sherry is due not to the grape, but to the infinitesimal fungus germs that cause its fermentation. The American companies import these germs from the district in Spain where they flourish, inoculate the apple juice and obtain a fine wine. The same process is followed with other varieties of wine. These yeasts are obtained from the sediment in the vats of Europe. They are easily propagated, and the only difficulty is to separate the different kinds. As the quality of wine depends on these fungi winemakers have usually left to chance the kind of wine they produce, depending on the organisms which float in the air and attach themselves to the grapes. The yeasts are sold bottled, and are much in demand.

BOSTON'S BOHEMIA.

It is Several Times More Virtuous Than Boston Proper, Says This Writer.

"Here (in Pinckney street) is the freedom of the Latin quarter, with but a small amount of its license," writes Margaret Allston, in "Her Boston Experiences," in Ladies' Home Journal. "Human nature bears a close family resemblance all over the world when judged by communities with similar earmarks, but in America individuals merely pose as Bohemians; they seldom come up (or down) to the 'simon pure' article of foreign cities. America is eminently a respectable country, well washed morally, and with considerable respect for the neighbors' opinion. Americans become Bohemianized in Paris, but seldom in Boston, where the spook of Cotton Mather and other standards of respectability still hold sway with a groan and a ghostly shudder at a misdeed. In truth, this Boston Bohemia stands for good spirits and innocent times more virtuous than Boston society, no matter how pretentiously and flamboyantly the little country tries to disprove its virtue."

CHRYSANTHEMUMS TOO GAY.

Profuse Display of Big Red Flowers at a Funeral Shocks a Whole Town.

Chrysanthemums will no longer be used as a mourning flower at funerals to be held at Mankato, Minn., announces a traveler from that community. It appears that a popular young society man of that town recently died. He was a member of many social organizations. Each strove with the other in indicating at the ceremonies of his burial how much his loss was felt. The time of the year was the football season, also the period when the chrysanthemum defies all laws of color and flaunts its wanton shades in public view. The Isis society, to which this young man belonged, in an unhappy moment determined to attend the funeral ornamented with chrysanthemums. The deceased had always admired the flower and it would be a striking tribute to his extinct preferences. An order was sent to a florist in St. Paul to forward by first express 60 pure white chrysanthemums to the Isis members.

The morning the funeral was to take place they had not arrived, but there was a train due from St. Paul 20 minutes before the services would commence. One of the Isis members volunteered to meet that train, get the flowers, hurry with them to the church door and distribute them as the society marched in. This was agreed to and the members marched to the sacred edifice. The flowers arrived, were taken to the church door and there uncovered. The Isis was just coming in and quick action was needed. The organ was playing "Nearer, My God, to Thee," when the society marched up the center aisle, each decorated with a glaring red chrysanthemum. The florist, not having white, had forwarded red with apologies.

HIS WAY TO KEEP STRAIGHT.

A Philadelphia Coachman Tells His Employer Some Tricks of His Calling.

"John, I'd like to know what makes your back so straight," said a rich Philadelphia man to his coachman the other day, says the Press, of this city. "And how do you stand the fatigue of sitting so beautifully erect while you drive for hours and hours at a stretch?"

The coachman blushed with pleasure as he led his master to a light and airy corner of the carriage house. "I'll show you the kind of exercise I take every day, sir," he said, "so as to be a credit to your livery, and your equipage, and yourself and lady."

The man then lay down on his stomach and drew upward his body and his legs until he formed a V, the point of which—his abdomen—alone touched the ground. "I do this 200 times a day, sir," he said. "It gives correct carriage."

Then, on parallel bars, he dipped. "One hundred of these daily, sir, expand the chest and give a robust grace to the upper arms and shoulders." He put his arms, well stiffened, at his sides, and then slowly raised them till the hands met over his head. "I do about 500 of that movement for a chest broadener, also for straighteners."

EARTHQUAKE INSURANCE.

Owners of Vineyards Could Protect Themselves Against Damage by Storms.

Dr. Barrata has advocated in the Italian parliament a compulsory insurance against earthquakes, says the Scientific American. Owners of vineyards and others protect themselves in this way against hail and, therefore, why not against another calamity even more destructive, as they average about 750 shocks a year, and certain parts of Italy have occasionally suffered terribly. The idea of the insurance is a shrewd one from the point of view of public economy. It shifts the burden from the exchequer to private purses. The business would be of a peculiarly risky nature, for such an epidemic of earthquakes as has devastated Calabria between 1783 and 1786 might easily bring any ordinary company to bankruptcy. The risk would have to be widely spread, and actuaries would be puzzled to calculate the premiums for different places.

Some parts of the peninsula enjoy practical immunity. The great plain of Venetia has never suffered. Rome and Naples are occasionally shaken, although as a rule not seriously, but disaster frequently occurs in volcanic districts, as in Ischia in 1881 and 1883, when the loss both of life and property was serious. Calabria is far the worst as an earthquake region. Over 1,400 people perished in one locality in the period mentioned above.

Drawing a Fine Distinction. Laurence Gronlund, the socialist writer who died a few weeks ago in New York, was a thorough pessimist. One evening, after he had denounced the modern industrial system in savage terms, a friend remarked: "It is not so bad as Russian despotism, is it?" "Not quite; the former is the worst possible; the latter the worst conceivable."

Scarlet Fever in Tropical Regions. A medical paper directs attention to the curious fact that scarlet fever has never been observed in an epidemic form in the tropical or subtropical regions of Asia or Africa.

THE HINDU'S RELIGION.

It Seems to Fill All His Requirements and is Indeed a Part of Himself.

Why, the Hindu asks himself, should he accept this western religion? He has one of his own, ancient, potent, elastic; it embodies his instinctive genius, suits his special needs, is older than the Christian, rests on thought he has elaborated, and many western men have learned to admire, says the Contemporary Review. To surrender his religion would be to make a complete surrender of himself, his past, his separate mind and being, and to become a mere echo of the civilization he despises.

The Hindu reaction is thus a very real force, moved by reasons we cannot but respect. Patriotism lives behind and within it; in it the orient stands up against the occident, defies it, challenges its right to come east and impose itself on what is older, more congenial to the oriental nature and too deeply rooted to be plucked up by alien hands. And so we need not be surprised to find the reformer succeeded by the reactionary, though behind the veil of his reaction the spirit that would reform still lives.

For the Hindulism he defends is not the Hinduism of the multitude, the religion of the street and the temple, of Kali Ghat and the Durga puja, of the sacred river or caste; it is an idealized system, eclectic, clothed in garments which are heirlooms from the past, but quickened by a spirit which belongs to the present. Not all it finds in Hinduism is Indian, but some of it is very occidental indeed.

MINIMUM OF SLEEP.

University Students Experimenting to Find Out the Least Amount Necessary.

A very strange experiment is being tried by an organization of university students in Madison, Wis., to lengthen working hours. Upon the theory that sleep is, to a large extent, a matter of habit and can be lessened by proper care of the system, the members are trying to reduce sleeping hours to a minimum consistent with continued health.

The organization, says the Cincinnati Commercial Tribune, is not in the nature of a secret society, but it has been working quietly in order to get the best representatives among the students from the various courses of college work. The experiment was at first begun in the Iowa university, and while it does not appear to take on the character of an intercollegiate organization, the Wisconsin members have organized along the lines of the Iowa university club. The theory upon which the members are working is to get such control over the body as to keep part of the system at rest while the other part works; in other words, avoiding unnecessary waste of vital energies. Thomas A. Edison, the great inventor, is the expositor of this theory.

The method, as given out, is to lessen the sleeping hours gradually and so accustom the system to it by degrees. The extreme limit fixes rest at not more than four hours a night, thus lengthening the working day some three or four hours.

BONAPARTIST NOBILITY.

How a Number of Them Have Succeeded in Gilding Their Coronets.

The Bonapartist nobility have a talent for gilding their coronets through marriage, says London Truth. A Xey in 1830 secured the heiress of Lafitte, the banker. His nephew married the adopted daughter of Mme. Heine. Duc de Rivoli married the latter when she was Dowager Duchesse d'Elchingen. He and she are now prince and princess of Essling. Most of the Murats have married great heiresses. Prince de Wagram is husband of a Frankfort Rothschild. Fouché, Duc d'Oranste, is settled in Sweden, and has had matrimonial fortune there. Duc de Tarente has just married the widow of M. Camescasse, who was an eminent barrister, prefect of police, deputy and one of the most amiable Frenchmen I ever knew. The new Duchesse de Tarente is "boss" of the General Company of Omnibuses and has fortune from other sources. She has two daughters nearly grown up who attended the wedding. They give promise of beauty. The wedding took place at Douai. Marshal Macdonald, first Duc de Tarente, was not Scotch by birth, but the grandson of a Scotchman who was driven by the defect of the second pretender to take refuge in France. He settled at Auxerre. The marshal was not Bonapartist in feeling. But he was so cold-shouldered by restored royalty as to be glad of its disappearance in 1830.

A Faithful Dog.

Our Dumb Animals gives a touching story of the wonderful heroism of a dog last winter in the icy waters of Alaska. Two men and the dog started out from camp to find a trail leading away from the terrible Valdes glacier. For days they wandered in the snow till their provisions were well-nigh exhausted and the men could go no further. Then one of them wrote a message on a scrap of paper, tied it to the dog's neck, and told him to go back to camp. The dog disappeared in the snow and storm. Two days and nights passed; when, just as they were giving up in despair, "out from the blinding snow bounded the faithful dog, and close behind him came ready hands to minister to their wants."

Boycott Va. Boycott.

English business men in Paris are being boycotted because of England's talk of boycotting the exposition.

GERMAN BLOUNDES.

They Form the Largest Per Cent. of the Types of Germany's Population.

The German Anthropological society has been engaged in recent years in collecting statistics relative to the comparative frequency of the blonde and brunette types and their distribution through the German empire.

The results are of interest as giving evidence of the original sources of the population in various sections. The observations were confined to school children, 6,000,000 of whom have been examined.

For purposes of classification only those that had blue eyes and fair hair and skin were counted as blondes, and those whose eyes, hair and skin were all dark, as brunettes.

All others (for example, children with dark eyes and light hair or with blue eyes and dark hair and skin) were put in a third or "mixed" class. In the empire as a whole the blondes were found to number 31.8 per cent., the brunettes, 14 per cent., and the mixed types, 54.2 per cent. In some districts the preponderance of the blonde element was much more marked—especially in a part of the Grand Duchy of Oldenburg, where there were only four per cent. of pure brunettes.

The effect of the brunette, Roman element was distinctly marked in the southern and south-western parts of the empire. Near Worms and Speyer, indeed, one often sees faces which strongly suggest those of central Italy or Roman statues and paintings. Yet streaks of blonde preponderance, apparently marking the paths of Germanic migration, were traced up to the Italian frontiers.

IDEA TOO ORIGINAL.

The Mayor Suggested That the Town's Visitors Climb the New Standpipe for Entertainment.

In one of the towns of the upper peninsula they were preparing to entertain a delegation of eastern capitalists, many of them accompanied by wives and families, who were prospecting for investments in mining, railroad and other enterprises. At the meeting to make arrangements for the reception the new mayor presided. He had ideas of his own, says the Detroit Journal, and evidently thought that his official position entitled him to settle any disputed question. After several plans had been suggested, he took the floor.

"Gentlemen," said his honor, "what I insist upon is something original and something that these people will always recall as having happened right here. Our neighbors in the east dropped them a few thousand feet into a copper mine; our rival city to the north drove them six miles to see the water works; at that struggling little burg west of us they gave them a chance to blister their faces over the red sandstone quarries. We're no imitators. What I propose is that we let them climb, one at a time, to the top of that new standpipe of ours. They'll know we're up to date on our fire department and they'll get a splendid view of the surrounding country."

ORGANIST AN AUTOCRAT.

No One Must Dare to Criticize That Functionary's Part of the Church Service.

If there ever is any trouble in the congregation about the music, and if the minister ever worries himself, it is admitted at once that the congregation and the minister are alone to blame, writes Jan MacLaren in Ladies' Home Journal. But there are other difficulties, and they may be mentioned in a spirit of becoming humility. For one thing, the organist is an artist, and every artist has a nature of special refinement which cannot bear the rough-and-tumble ordinary methods of life. With a man of common play you deal in a practical, straight-forward and even brutal fashion, arguing with him, complaining to him, and putting him right when he is wrong. But no man must handle precious porcelain in such fashion, or the artist will be instantly wounded and will resign and carry his pathetic story to every quarter, for, as a rule, the organist thinks that he is lifted above criticism and public opinion. It is impossible to teach him anything; it is an insult to suppose that anything could be better than the music he provides.

The Stellar Universe.

In Knowledge for November, Dr. Roberts gives a photograph of a new nebula, in the midst of which a dark sinuous vacancy, or rift, appears, "through which we can see into the starless vacancy of space beyond." Some of those who argue that space is finite hold that it is filled with the infinitely distant stars in their aggregation would cover the face of the sky with light. This, however, assumes that stars are equally distributed throughout space, and such an assumption is contrary to all observable phenomena. Nothing warrants the idea that the infinity of space involves the assumption of its occupation by an infinite number of suns symmetrically arranged throughout.

War Fund from Soap.

A firm of English soapmakers which gives a halfpenny to the Transvaal war fund for every cake of soap sold, has already sent in £1,600 to the fund.

Central America Pyramid Builders.

Bartering the Egyptians, the ancient Mayas of Yucatan seem to have been the greatest pyramid builders the world ever saw.

WANT THE TERNS KILLED.

Why Women Prefer Their Plumage to the Decoration of Their Headgear.

As a result of causes too mysterious for the mind of man to comprehend, fashion claimed the terns for her own, says Bird Lore.

Up and down the coast went forth that sea swallows, or "summer gulls," were worth ten cents each, and the milliner's agent was there to confirm the report.

It was in June when the baymen were idle and, unrestrained by law, they hastened to the beaches in keen competition to destroy the birds which were nesting there.

Never, in this country, at least, has there been such a slaughter of birds. A Cobb's island (Va.) bayman, whose conscience, even at this late date, urged him to a confession of shame for his part in the proceedings, told me recently that in a single day of that memorable season 1,400 terns were killed on Cobb's island alone, and 40,000 are said to have been there shot during the summer. The destruction at other favorable places was proportionately great.

Two seasons of this work were sufficient to sweep the terns from all their more accessible resorts, the only survivors being residents of a few uninhabited islands.

What will be the result? Is there no appeal from fashion's decree. Woman alone can answer these questions, and the case is so clear she cannot shirk the responsibility of replying.

Aigrettes are decorative, quilts difficult to identify, neither bespeak death, and ignorance may lead the most humane woman into wearing either. But with the tern no such excuse exists, and the woman who places its always disgustingly mutilated body on her bonnet does so in deliberate defiance of the laws of humanity and good taste.

DISPATCH RIDER'S COOLNESS.

Captured by the Boers, He Saved His Precious Papers by a Shrewd Trick.

One of the most remarkable instances of self-possession on record is accorded to a gentleman who arrived here so late as October 29, writes a Transvaal correspondent of the London News. He rode a bicycle, and his dispatches were made up in a brown paper parcel, which he carried in his coat pocket, so that if he saw trouble ahead he could commend the safety of his parcel to the open field. He was riding swiftly, and on turning a treacherous corner found himself face to face with a party of about 20 Boers, who had been looting, or, in their more charitable phrasing, commandeering. He at once dismounted and said "good day," and as his "get up" was excellent one of the Boers shook hands with him.

This gave a little respite, and enabled him to collect himself. Yes, he said, he was coming from Kimberley, and was looking for work. He preferred looking for work to taking up arms. Before the Boers sought to search him he brought out two hard-boiled eggs, which he offered them. They refused, and then he produced his brown paper packet of dispatches, and said he had two sandwiches which they could have. His seeming kindness was his salvation, and the Boers were satisfied. They gave him plenty of advice, and told him to keep his sandwiches as they had a sulciency of blither.

VOTING PLACES IN PRUSSIA.

Beer Halls Are Generally Chosen for the Purpose of Holding Elections.

The practice in Prussian cities regarding the selection of voting places is in direct contradiction to American usage, says Municipal Affairs. Instead of closing all places where intoxicants are sold on election day, it is precisely the best-known and most popular beer lokals that are chosen for the purpose of holding elections. The lokals which are commonly maintained in such places to be used for all sorts of social gatherings are seldom occupied during the day, and as they are well known in the neighborhood they form ideal places for holding an election.

Liquors are not sold in the room in which the voting takes place, but may be freely drunk there. Indeed, it is a very exceptional election judge who does not have an capacious krug on the table before him, from which he occasionally quenches his thirst while the tedious process of balloting is going on. A very considerable economy is effected by holding elections in such places, as rent is either not charged at all or else is fixed at a nominal sum by the proprietor, who expects to be reimbursed through the purchases of those who visit the polls. Any unusual amount of drunkenness on election days, or at least during city elections, which are seldom attended by excitement of any sort, is unknown.

No Gentleman Would Take It.

A member of one of the great political clubs of London recently lost his umbrella and put up a notice in the hall requesting "the nobleman" who had taken it to return it when he had done with it. The committee, in due course, desired to be informed why he had ascribed its possession to a peer. The member blandly referred them to the rule which said that the club was composed of "noblemen and gentlemen" and added that no gentleman would have taken his umbrella.

Water Cycles.

A Canadian has designed a water cycle which offers little resistance to the water, the floats which support the propelling mechanism being composed of two long cylinders of small diameter, with the ends brought to a point to decrease the resistance.

A LEAPING SWORD.

Clever Trick Performed by a Spaniard with One of the Famous Toledo Blades.

"Of all the cities I have visited in Europe," said R. A. Stinson, of Boston, recently, reports the New York Tribune, "I found Madrid one of the most interesting. It has a number of out-of-the-way features that appeal to one."

"While I was in Madrid I tried to purchase one of the famous Toledo blades. The old-fashioned two-handed sword was what I wanted to get, one of those that were built to cut through armor and which fulfilled their mission completely, as many a bloody battlefield in its ancient days bore testimony. I had to give it up on account of the expense. They cost from \$150 up, but while I was looking for one a shopkeeper showed me a most scientific trick. His store was very lofty, running up two or three stories, and he was descending on the beauties of this particular sword, when, in order to prove the perfect temper of the metal, he drove the point into the floor and bent the blade until hilt and point met. He then suddenly released the hilt, and that six feet of gleaming sword sprang up into the air like a thing alive. Up and up it went, almost to the lofty ceiling itself, when it lost its impetus and began its descent hilt first. It returned almost to the place whence it started, the shopkeeper catching it by the hilt with practiced ease and returning it to its case. I was crazy to try it myself, but the owner refused to allow me, as he said I would probably not only wreck the store, but perhaps injure myself as well. He told me that if I wanted to learn the trick I had better practice it in a large open lot, and that a suit of armor would be a bad thing to wear until I got the hang of it."

CHARGE OF TWELVE MEN.

Brave Feat of American Scouts Under Gen. Lawton in the Philippines.

A medal of honor—the highest compliment which can be given to an American soldier—has been recommended for presentation to each of the ten surviving members of a band of 12 scouts who performed a brave feat near San Miguel de Mayague Ori, in the Philippines, on May 13, 1899, says Youth's Companion.

These scouts were under the lead of William H. Young, a civilian who had been a famous scout on the western plains in America, and whom Gen. Lawton made his chief of scouts in the San Ysidro campaign this year.

On the day mentioned, Gen. Lawton was advancing on San Miguel. A small body of Oregon volunteers came suddenly upon the enemy, drawn up in an advantageous position in front of San Miguel, the right flank resting on a stream, the left on an elevation made secure by a dense thicket. It was afterward ascertained that the Filipino force in this position numbered about 600 men.

Without waiting for the reinforcing battalion to support them, or to be in a position to do so, this squad of ten scouts, led by Mr. Young and by Private James Harrington, of the Oregon, an old frontiersman—12 men in all—charged the enemy's line, about 150 yards distant.

The line fired, then wavered, and then completely gave way, to be followed up by the reinforcing battalion, and driven from the city and environs of San Miguel, a place of great importance.

THE CHRYSANTHEMUM.

Golden Flower Was Thought Worthy of a Show All to Itself in 1836.

The National Chrysanthemum society was instituted just 53 years since, in 1846, says the Saturday Review. The flower which it has taken under its patronage, upon whose agrandizement it has bestowed so successfully such patient and ingenious care, has been established among us only a little over a century. The first time it was thought worthy of a "show" all to itself was in 1850. Fancy if one of those early patrons could have dropped in at the exhibition last week and seen what his favorites had attained to! Surely he would have thought himself translated. The very generic name of the plant, the "golden flower," at first so pertinent, has lost its distinctiveness. There are golden chrysanthemums still, it is true; yellow blossoms incomparable for purity and brilliance, but what of all these other colors not less brilliant and pure, these rich damasks, royal purples, flushed pinks, this dazzling white that puts a snowdrift to shame, at last actually a bloom that is just sea green?

Color, size, form, growth, all have undergone a change that half a century ago it entered into no man's heart to conceive. And the end is not yet, it may be; the last wonder has not yet been revealed for us; so limitless is its possibilities and potency is that "affectation" of men to gratify the Pleasure of their Eyes, inciting them to push on things to more and more Perfection."

Paper That Will Not Burn.

It has been found possible to make a thin, smooth and strong paper of asbestos, which can be employed in the manufacture of paper lanterns and other articles which need to be at the same time light and fireproof. The asbestos paper can also be made waterproof. It is prepared with the same machinery used for making ordinary paper.

The World's Railways.

The length of the world's railways is more than 17 times the circumference of the earth at the equator.

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