

HARD ON THE POETS.

Prof. Guthrie Doubts Immortality of Homer and Shakespeare.

Predicts New Literary Era Which Will Cast Into the Background the Classics of the Past.

Homer and Shakespeare were chosen from their high and lofty pedestals in the immortal row of classic poets and writers by William Norman Guthrie, director of the classical conferences of art and literature the other afternoon in a public lecture at the University of Chicago.

According to Mr. Guthrie, who delivered two lectures the other afternoon at crowded houses, there is a bright day coming for the future man and woman. They will be so far above and beyond the tastes, feelings and intellectual horizons of the present-day reader that Homer, Shakespeare and other literary lights, dear to many generations, will no longer be fit to read.

The penny novel came in for praise when he said that he had a certain amount of respect for people who read the "penny dreadful" because it is the beginning of imagination. It is the lack of imagination in many books that called forth criticism from the lecturer.

The lecturer caused quite a stir among the women in the audience when, in presenting the idea that literature is to be understood must be practiced, he said "the proper understanding of this idea will kill the idea that literature is a diversion for a certain class of idle ladies."

PING-PONG FOR ESKIMOS.

Miss Peary, Daughter of the Arctic Explorer, Takes the Game Along on Trip Towards Pole.

The Peary relief ship Windward has come down the Hudson from Newburg, where it has been refitted with new boilers, and docked at Jersey City for supplies to take north. Thirty tons of food supplies, consisting principally of canned goods and cereals, were taken on board and the boat started immediately on the voyage to the north.

AUTOMOBILE LAWN-MOWER.

New Machine Which Cuts the Grass Sward on Capitol Hill at Washington.

An automobile lawn mower has been set to work on the greenward of Capitol Hill at Washington. The new machine resembles both a steam road roller and a steamboat whistle.

When Professors Should Talk.

President Harper does not propose to muzzle his professors, but he insists that they shall not talk hereafter unless they have something to say. This seems harsh, says the Chicago Daily News.

SIGNS IN PORTO RICO.

Popularity of a New Industry That Was Introduced There by an American Bootblack.

The American occupation of Porto Rico has resulted in the introduction of one Anglo-Saxon institution among the Latin peoples of the West Indies, that has already become fast and permanent.

The first American troops that landed on the island were accompanied by a colored bootblack; a boy about 11 or 12 years of age, from New York, who drove a thriving business shing the shoes of the officers.

To-day every city and town in Porto Rico is full of little bootblacks; for the natives having noticed that properly polished shoes constituted part of the make-up of well-dressed Americans, and anxious not to be outdone in the matter of style, adopted the custom of keeping their shoes shined.

The American occupation and influence is being felt in other ways throughout the island, and is more especially noticeable in the schools. The people are anxious to learn, and education is looking up all over the island.

"Another thing I noticed is that everybody on the island is anxious to learn English, which is coming into use more and more every day. It is now being taught in all the schools, and the generation now growing up will be able to speak and read the language as well as their native Spanish."

THEY LIKE ERUPTIONS.

Hawaiians Welcome the Activity of Kilauea as a Great Attraction to Visitors.

"In Hawaii we pray for Mount Kilauea to become active, and the more eruptions there are the better we like it," said Philip Peck, a banker of Hilo, recently, according to the Washington Times.

"That was a different kind of activity from Kilauea. In Hawaii where Mount Kilauea has not been disturbed for two years, the eruption is of slight consequence. But it is a great sight to see the great lake of lava boil over the sides of the crater and push its way down into the bowl-like valley which has been formed by eruptions more violent in the ages past."

"In 1882 this threatened a great eruption, and the natives were afraid that the town of Hilo would be injured. The Princess Ruth, of the royal family of Kamahameha, went to the mountain down which the lava had begun to run. With her she carried several chickens and one or two other animals. Standing by the edge of the crater she threw up her head—she was one of those imperial looking women and weighed about 400 pounds. She called out addressing the Hawaiians:

"The seeds were there. First Neighbor—Hello, you look busy; what are you doing? Second Neighbor—Planting some of my seeds, that's all. First Neighbor (suspiciously)—H'm, thought it looked as if you were planting one of my hens. Second Neighbor—Well, that's all right; the seeds are inside—Moonshine."

SOME THUMB-RING LORE.

Points of Interest Concerning Famous Specimens and Wearers in Ancient History.

The custom of rings upon the thumb prevailed in England until the close of the eighteenth century, and is of very ancient origin. There is a mummy case in the British museum which represents an Egyptian lady wearing rings upon the thumbs of both her hands.

During his visit to Rome, Addison saw some of these old rings, and comments thus upon them: "So very thick about, and with such large stones in them, that 'tis no wonder a fop should reckon them a little cumbersome in the summer season of so hot a climate."

Thomas a Becket possessed a thumb ring set with a valuable ruby, which was about the size of a hen's egg. This ring was a gift from Louis VII. of France. At the archbishop's ring from his despoiled shrine and took it for his own personal adornment, thus bringing thumb rings back into fashion for awhile.

The crampstone, or toadstone, was also used in this way, as it was supposed to possess various mystic virtues, one of which being the power of warning its wearer of the presence of poison in his food or drink by changing its color.

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FALSE TAILS FOR HORSES.

The Cost of One of High-Grade Is Equal to That of an Ordinary Horse.

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"The least expensive of them would cost \$27.50 and they would run from that up to as high as \$50. "What? Why, certainly. You could buy a whole horse of some sort, for what such a tail would cost, but the cost of these tails is not disproportionate to the value of the horses upon which they are used."

"False tails for horses are made in England, and while in some cases it might be possible to supply demands from tails in stock here, they are commonly made to order, for the individual horses for which they are required. It takes about two months from their receipt to fill orders for false tails."

Evicted by Bees. An English writer says: "Some of the smaller birds are deliberately turned out of their nests at times by bees. I remember watching for the completion of a hedge sparrow's nest a few years ago, but before the birds had laid any eggs the nest was usurped by a small species of bumble bee and the rightful owners deserted. A friend of mine had two wren's nests in his garden taken possession of by bees in a similar manner, and I once knew of a tawny owl being turned out of her nesting hole in a hollow tree by a swarm of honey bees which took possession."—Chicago Daily News.

OIL IN THE PHILIPPINES.

The Islands Are Claimed to Be in the Oil Belt That Is Supposed to Girdle the Globe.

There are many undeveloped resources in these islands which have been the basis for much speculation during the past few years, but what may turn out to be the most important of all has hitherto been entirely overlooked. It seems that the Spanish regime failed to take it into consideration and as a result there are no exclusive franchises on this particular field.

These islands are claimed to be in the oil belt that is supposed to girdle the globe, and the indications are said to be as good, if not better, than in most of the countries where oil has heretofore been found in large quantities.

VOLCANO KILLS ALL FISH.

The Sea Near Hawaii Is So Disturbed That the Waters Are Barren of Sea Food.

The volcano at Kilauea is still moderately active, though the expected eruption has not as yet materialized, says a recent Honolulu report. The volcanic action upon Hawaii has had a curious effect upon the fish about the islands.

One of the old natives says that ever since he has known the crater of Mauna Loa to show activity the waters of the sea have had a curious up and down and backward and forward motion. Fishermen are so tossed about that it is almost impossible to retain any fish in their nets, and the waters are so constantly in motion by the unusual disturbances that fishing with hook and line is well-nigh impossible.

FILIPINO FATALISM.

Cruelty and Indifference to Suffering the Result of Poor Religious Teaching.

There is cruelty and indifference to suffering, often to a shocking degree, among the Filipinos, says James LeRoy in Atlantic. This is due to an ever-present fatalism, which the little real religious teaching the people has received has built upon rather than sought to eliminate, and to the absolute lack of an appeal to, or of an attempt to educate, higher feelings. If it is to be assumed that the outlook that these people are forever incapable of such higher feelings, then it ought also to have been assumed that they were incapable of Christianity.

"Out in my district," says Representative Biedler, of Ohio, "there is a very clever preacher. One day a man who does not think much of religion thought he would stump the preacher. 'Pardon,' he said, 'what is the best way to heaven?' 'Turn to the right and then keep straight ahead,' replied the preacher without an instant's hesitation.—Washington Post.

GIRLS ARE OVEREDUCATED.

Complaints from Many Parts That Women Know Everything But What They Ought To.

In the advanced American view woman's education is diametrically opposed to the view held by European educators. A German woman of extreme culture is almost unknown. The high-bred French woman is born to what her sisters on either continent can by no training aspire, says the Chicago Record-Herald.

"Without casting reflections," said a French woman of American blood on the mother's side, "on the splendid educational work done and doing by such institutions as Vassar, Bryn Mawr, Wellesley and Welles, or Girton in England, I must say that I fail to find in my second visit here since my marriage an added tinge to that attractive feature of American womanhood which a generation ago individualized her."

"It isn't the facts you imprint in a boy's brains that makes him a useful citizen. Some of the best generalists graduated from West Point have been very poor in mathematics, the test of ability there."

ANALYSIS OF VOLCANIC DUST.

That from Mount Pelee Found to Be Wholly Lacking in Fertilizing Properties.

It has been a matter of curious speculation since the terrible volcanic eruptions covering the islands adjacent to Martinique with millions of tons of dust as to what effect this enormous deposit would have upon the fertility of the soil. There is a tradition that the similar dispersion of volcanic dust in the eruption of 1812 was wonderfully beneficial as a fertilizer, says the Philadelphia Record.

Table with 2 columns: Substance, Weight. Includes Moisture, Ash in ignition, Alumina, Titanium oxide, Iron oxide, Lime, Magnesia, Soda, Potash, Phosphoric anhydride, Sulphuric anhydride, Silica.

By comparison with a sample of the dust ejected in 1812 obtained from the Barbados laboratory museum it was shown that a striking difference existed. The dust of 1812 was much finer, and composed almost wholly of volcanic glass. The finding of larger particles of mineral matter at Barbados, 90 miles from Martinique, is significant of the violence of the latter explosion and of the prodigious height to which the ejected material must have been lifted.

Wife Suicide Once a Year.

In Sharenton, France, lives a woman who on April 30, 1894, was left a widow. Her grief for her dear departed was so strong and it has continued unabated to such an extent that every year, when the anniversary of her husband's death comes round, she attempts to commit suicide.

An Idiotic Practice.

The tipping habit oversteps the limit when a man grows all through a meal at the inattention of the waiter, and then "turns to" and fees him as a reward for his abominable service.

Easy Diagnosis.

Mrs. Fondma—Sorry to disturb you at this hour, doctor, but we can't imagine what ails the child.

Only Thing He Had Red.

An unlettered immigrant applied to the Philadelphia court of naturalization the other day, when he was asked: "Have you read the declaration of independence?"

A Question of Time.

A man never gets so old that he does not think if he had just had a little more time he could have got well off.—Washington (La.) Democrat.

WOMEN AND MACHINERY.

More Than a Few Feminine Minds in This Country Have a Head for Mechanics.

Looking at a small engine in a window of a downtown machinery establishment was a woman; and seemingly she was regarding the engine not with a merely idle curiosity, but with an intelligent interest.

It seemed odd to see a woman thus looking over a piece of machinery; but a man who ought to know whether women are interested in mechanical things or not said in response to an inquiry on the subject that undoubtedly they were.

He had known, for instance, of a woman who could run an automobile with ease and skill and bring it in always in perfect condition, while her husband could never run the same machine without getting something out of kilter about it.

He had known likewise the wife of a man owning a power launch to be able to handle the boat better than her husband. In America, at least, there were plenty of women of more or less mechanical talent.

In this country, whatever mechanical instinct women might have was fostered by the presence in almost every household of labor-saving mechanical contrivances of some sort or other, perhaps of many sorts.

Women beat eggs in these days with machines and so on; so that in this country, at least, women have long been familiar with machinery in some form, and they are by no means so ignorant of it, or so helpless in the face of it as might be imagined, and they might even come to have a handiness with tools.

And she would keep the carpet sweeper in order; and there are many households in which the woman looks after the clocks, and keeps them going. And he would venture to say that there was at least one household which would instantly suggest itself to the mind in which it was the mother and not the father who always got the nails out of the children's shoes; an operation easy as it might seem till tried, involving no mean skill in the use of tools.

But leaving out of view these simpler, narrower, domestic channels, in which however, she might nevertheless get more or less training, there were other and wider fields in which the woman of mechanical bent could exercise her talent or skill; as in these days in the operating of power-driven vehicles or boats.

But whatever there was about it that had caught her eye, it was altogether probable that she was looking this engine over precisely as she seemed to be, not with a mere idle curiosity, but with the eyes of one having an intelligent interest in such things.

Odd Wedding Customs.

Giving wedding presents is an old custom, but it differs in various countries. Scotland's penny weddings were peculiar. They were called penny affairs, but the invited guests contributed a shilling and occasionally a half crown, and out of this sum thus collected the expenses of the wedding feast were paid.

In some parts of Germany the rule is that the expense of the marriage feast shall be met by each guest paying for what he eats or drinks. The prices paid for viands and drinks are high, and the young couple often make a handsome profit out of their wedding, often realizing a sum quite sufficient to start them nicely in life. Often as many as 300 guests are present at such a wedding.—Chicago Record-Herald.

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