

GETTING CLOSE TO NATURE

As One Who Understands It, John Burroughs Writes of the Beauty of the Country.

To take the birds out of my life were the lopping off so many branches from the tree; there is that less surface of leafage to absorb the sunlight and bring my spirits in contact with the vital currents.

Plague and pestilence attest the constancy of natural law. They set us to cleaning our relations to outward nature. Only in a live universe could disease and death prevail.

CURIOSITY OF MODERN SLANG

English Journal Comments With Some Sharpness, and Admiration, of American Slang.

Time was—and not so very long ago, either—when the only distinctive American expression known in this country was "I guess."

Her Grace Effective. An English woman of rank, a duchess, was very apt to forget to pay her bills.

When, after long waiting, she was ushered into the presence of her grace, the little girl dropped her bow of courtesy, and then, folding her hands and closing her eyes, she said, softly:

As she opened her eyes and turned her wistful gaze on the duchess, that person turned very red, and without delay, made out a check for the amount due her milliner.

Good Taste. Good taste is the most delicate and refined philosophy of action and manners, and comes from a high noble mind being acted upon by good breeding in the home, in the first place, and in early good, kind, gentle surroundings.

A Washington man called upon a charming but homely woman, who had not long before had her portrait painted. The artist had done his work well, from a friendly point of view, and the lady was correspondingly pleased.

POOR AS A CHURCH MOUSE

Since Confetti Came into Use, the Saying Has More Meaning Than at Former Times.

The sexton of a fashionable New York church was sweeping into a large mound the bright purple, red and yellow discs of confetti which littered the church entrance and steps.

"Now that rice has been abandoned for paper confetti, these mice have all disappeared. They were starved out. They couldn't live on paper."

HER SHARE OF THE BUREAU

Girl Visitor's Idea of a Division Seemed to Be to Take All the Space You Could Get.

"A friend came to visit me last week," said the Girl Flapper, "and as there is only one bureau I told her I would have to share it with her. So I pushed my things out of the way and she began to unpack. This is what she put out:

"A bottle of spirits of camphor, a bottle of camphor water and boracic acid that she uses for her eyes, a bottle of witch hazel, another of benzoin, a box of face powder and a tin of talcum powder, a make-up box, six cream ivory toilet things, four Stevenson texts in frames, an atomizer, a bottle of ammonia, another of oil of pennyroyal for mosquitoes, nine catkins, a sewing bag, a jewelry box, some perfume and an alcohol lamp."

Surprise Boxes in Shark Stomachs.

Fishermen in the Caribbean sea recently found in the stomach of a shark which they had killed a good sized bottle in which was a half-decipherable letter from a shipwrecked sailor. Many such relics have been found.

Suspended Animation.

As we descend in the scale of animal life we find that what kills the higher animals does not injure the lower. Cut a poly in two, and you have two living polyps instead of one dead polyp.

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WANTS PICTURES OF KITCHEN

Present Day Cooks Like to See Future Working Place Before They Engage Themselves.

"A phase of the servant girl question that was new to me was sprung the other day when I called at an employment agency to hire a cook," said the nervous woman.

"While I was adjusting my mind to that phase of the proposition another woman with a wider experience than mine piped up that she had brought views of her kitchen. From that minute I was out of it as far as that particular cook was concerned."

"The custom is not yet universal," he said, "but it is growing. In one sense the girl is right; it does save time and trouble."

HITHERTO STRANGER TO FEAR

But Now He Had Run Against Something That Caused Him Nerve to Forsake Him.

"I came, sir, in answer to your advertisement. You said you wanted to employ a man who was a total stranger to fear."

"I am, sir, I have given proof of my courage in many parts of the world." "Yes?" "I have faced bullets in Mexico and machetes in Cuba."

"I helped to defend the missionaries against the Boxers, and I was present at the siege of Port Arthur." "Fine."

"I have fought the infuriated walrus of Baffin bay and the maddened bull of elephants of Central Africa, and I went through an Armenian massacre without losing my nerve."

"So that's the job, is it?" replied the man of courage, and broke into a cold perspiration and a run for the door simultaneously.

Clever Fat Men.

It is frequently averred that fat is deadening to the brain, and consequently a foe to intellectual activity. But is this so? Some of the greatest men the world has ever known were plump even to obesity.

Napoleon was decidedly embonpoint. Dr. Johnson was fleshy even to fatness. So was his biographical shade-box, Boewell. Balzac, the great French novelist, was so stout that it was a day's exercise to walk around him, and he was encircled with bandages as if he were a hoghead.

Blow at Suicide.

"A pet monkey that I shipped up-town this morning was bound on a most unusual mission for a monkey," said an animal dealer.

"He was bought by a woman who runs a furnished room house in which three persons have killed themselves with gas recently. Those suicides have upset her nerves. Now she is going to try the same preventive means adopted by three of her friends."

"They too, keep roomers. Also they keep monkeys. There have been several attempts at suicide in their houses, but they have always been frustrated by the monkeys, who have smelled gas and set up such a chattering that they woke everybody up."

"Monkeys are extremely sensitive to the odor of gas. This customer of mine hopes to utilize hers as a new kind of life preserver."—Philadelphia Record.

Insuring Identification.

"Persons who expect to receive money orders in a strange town take infinite precautions to identify themselves," said a postal clerk. "One way that particularly commends itself is for the stranger to call on the paying teller in the money order department before his own order arrives and present a bunch of correspondence showing pretty clearly who he is. He then explains that he is expecting a money order from a certain person; can the clerk remember him when he presents it for payment?"

CLING TO OLD DESIGNATIONS

Sporting Language That Was Used in the Middle Ages Is Still Good Form Today.

Much of the language used in various sports is our inheritance from the middle ages. Different kinds of beasts when in companies were distinguished by their own particular epithets, which was supposed to be in some manner descriptive of the habits of the animals.

Many of these terms have passed away, but some of them are still retained. This list from the middle ages is still good usage today. A "pride of lions," a "loope" of leopards, a "herd" of harts and of all sorts of deer; a "bevy" of roses, a "sloth" of bears, a "singular" of boars, a "sunder" of wild swine, a "route" of wolves, a "harras" of horses, a "ray" of colts, a "stud" of mares, a "pace" of asses, a "barren" of mules, a "team" of oxen, a "drove" of kine, a "flock" of sheep, a "trite" of goats, a "skulk" of foxes, a "down" of hares, a "next" of rabbits, a "clowder" of cats, a "shredness" of apes and a "labor" of moles.

Also of animals when they retired to rest, a hart was said to be "harbored," a roebuck "bedded," a hare "formed," a rabbit "set." Two greyhounds were called a "brace," but two harrers were called a "couple." There was also a "mute" of hounds for a number, a "kennel" of raches, a "litter" of whelps and a "cowardice" of curs.

This kind of descriptive phraseology was not confined to birds and beasts, but was extended to the human species and the various propensities, natures and callings.

SALT PUT TO VARIED USES

Invaluable to Mankind Though as a Condiment It Should Be Employed Sparingly.

If food is tasteless without salt, it is ruined with too much. Unappetizing cooking is often due to gussification. A level teaspoonful of salt is sufficient for a quart of soup, sauce, or vegetable.

Salt used once a day is an excellent dentifrice, tending to keep off tartar. It is said to retard receding gums.

A half teaspoonful of salt added to a cup of hot water—which many persons take each morning—will make it palatable.

Do not gargle with salt water. Throat specialists consider it injurious to the tender mucous membrane of the nose.

Salt water rots the hair, so never fall to rinse with fresh water after sea bathing.

To set color in wash materials and embroidery cottons soak them in strong salt water.

An excellent tonic for nervous people is to take salt rubs twice a day. As sea salt dissolves slowly, some of it can be kept in solution in a glass jar to be ready when needed.

When a child is inclined to bow legs or to have a weak back, rub it night and morning with strong salt water.

A faded carpet is refreshed if wiped off with a wet cloth wrung from strong salt water. Sprinkle floor with dampened salt and sweep well.

Bad dyspepsia can be helped by dissolving pinches of salt on the tongue after eating, or when there is a sense of oppression.

Dental Training.

Fifteen years from now if I have any teeth left for anybody to fool with I shall hire a certain Chinese boy to do the fooling," a New York salesman said. "He will be grown up then. I saw him the other day down in Chinatown. He was pulling pegs out of a board with his fingers. The pegs had been driven pretty tight into holes in the board, and it took a good deal of strength to get them out."

Dog Policeman Travels Best.

An Irish terrier named Jerry, which has developed a wonderful capacity for police work, is now stationed at Burlington, England. The terrier, owned by a sergeant of the Metropolitan police, knows all the "beats" in the district, and always accompanies his master when making patrol by cycle. Jerry's "specialty" is in the capturing of stray dogs. These he lures in a friendly manner to the police station, and then mounts guard at the gate until the derelict receives official attention.

CHEER OF THE OLD HOME

Something Which Every Man and Woman Should Be Able to Look Back Upon.

It would be a blessing if we parents could just reflect that it may be that the only cheer in life which our children will get is the cheer of the old home, writes Frank W. Gunsaulus. They are hurrying out into the world which has no time to make them happy. If they are fortunate, as the world says, they will probably have homes, where old-fashioned and romping cheerfulness would skin its shins against the furniture or break the Louis XIV. chair."

Blessed old days, and most wholesome to look back upon, are those when the hearty laugh of father would not split the lace curtains, and when mother could have two big, healthy children upon her lap while she was sitting down, with safety to all parties, in her rocker. No coin on earth costs so little to mint and goes so far in paying life's heavy expenses as Good Cheer. Pessimists are made before children are ten years of age, and pessimism comes when a child cannot turn a golden laugh into ready cash for life's poverty and its relief.

No child is prepared for the supremely serious things of life who cannot laugh away all the goblines and ghosts and break with the shining wand of Good Cheer. The circle draws around him by any giant.

LETTING THEIR LIGHT SHINE

But College Girls as Expert Launderesses Do Not Appeal to One New York Housewife.

College girls who have studied laundering in their domestic science course may some time find an opportunity to apply their knowledge without inconveniencing anybody, but they have not yet reached that idyllic stage.

"Just at present they are an intolerable nuisance," said a woman who has had indirect dealings with the young graduates. "Since they have undertaken to uplift the world through the medium of the washtub I haven't had a stitch of clothes fit to put on."

"That is because they are trying to teach my laundress how to wash and iron. The poor soul has made a living at the washtub for 13 years and has brought up four children, yet those scientific laundresses have concluded that she doesn't know her business."

"There isn't a laundress in town that is safe from intrusion. Some women with Irish tempers won't be bothered, but my washerwoman is too gentle-minded to refuse instruction, so for the last month she has been turning out her weekly wash with some sweet thing just out of college pottering around bossing the job."

"The poor woman is nearly crazy, and so are her customers. Maybe if left to themselves the girls can do a decent job at laundering; I know my washerwoman can, but when their methods clash both make a botch of the job and linen comes home buttonless, scorched, and torn."—New York Times.

Wycliffe's Prayers.

Among recent sales of relics and curios in London was that of Wycliffe's "Prayers of the Bible," of the date of 1527 or thereabout. The rare old black letter of this work puts it," says the noted authority on curios, J. F. Blacker, "at once among the scarcest examples of old 'Flete Street' printing. The noble old divine died in 1384, shortly after he had completed his translation of the Bible into English. These prayers were 'imprinted' just about the time when the first English Bible was published by Tyndale in the years 1526-1532. The six parts realized £250, though a copy of each of the first four parts sold some time ago for £400."

Destroying Weeds in Ponds.

Copper sulphate is often used for destroying the scum-like weeds in ponds. But precautions must be taken, for unless the right proportion of sulphate is used any fish which may be in the pond will be injured. The proportion of copper sulphate used in the ponds at Kew Gardens is one part to from 750,000 to 1,000,000 parts of water. Sulphate of copper in a pulverized state is placed in a porous bag and dragged through the water until dissolved. The water in St. James's Park, London, it might be mentioned, has for two summers been kept free from scum by this method.—London Mail.

No Steel Pens in Tropics.

The ordinary steel pens used in temperate climates, particularly those used in the United States, are not adaptable to the tropics on account of rusting. This is especially true during the rainy season and at seaports. Bronze or brass pens, or those coated with bronzo, do not seem to be thus affected. Ink deteriorates very quickly in tropical climates and often has the consistency of gum. On the ordinary steel pens this aids the rust and is hard to wipe off if left for a short time. With the bronze or brass pen or with a pen coated with bronzo the coated ink is easily wiped or burnt off.

FINE TEST OF CLEAR SPEECH

Conversation with the Blind Will Test One's Power of Making Listeners Understand You.

Let no one boast of his descriptive powers until he has tested them in conversation with a blind person," said the city missionary. "I used to think that I had the knack of making things pretty clear, but after I began to escort the blind on their walks I found that I had not the slightest conception of concise, comprehensive speech. My first experience of the kind was at a naval parade. I guided two blind men down to Riverside to see the ships. I described to the best of my ability what was going on, but I soon found from the questions they asked that I had given them no idea of what the pageant looked like. I reasoned that the fault must be mine. The men had been blind a good while, but they had retentive memories and an active imagination, and with that material to work on I should have achieved better results."

"From that day I began to cultivate the gift of accurate description. Even when out alone I talked to myself trying to put into words the pictures I saw. By degrees I acquired the art of seeing my blind charges see through my eyes. My biggest stumbling block was women's clothes. No woman I met anywhere show a keener avidity to keep up with the fashions than those I take out from the blind asylum, and it requires every one of my newly acquired gifts to convey an adequate idea of the season's styles."

TAVERN ALSO A PAWNSHOP

Establishment in the City of London, England, is in Enjoyment of Unique Privilege.

A time-honored London (Eng.) city tavern, the Castle, at the corner of Cowcross street, facing Farringdon street, enjoys the unique distinction of being also a fully licensed pledge shop. Over the door in the bar, which gives access to the landlord's private room, and thrown into bold relief by the official document behind it, the historic three-sphered symbol is discernible. Any one may here negotiate a loan upon his personal belongings without being under the necessity of first calling for refreshment. Formerly the house had a special pledge counter resembling the modern "Bottle and Jug" department, but this is no longer in evidence.

This strange combination of business dates from the reign of George IV, who, after attending a cock fight at Hockley-in-the-Hole, applied to the landlord of the Castle for a temporary accommodation on the security of his watch and chain. By royal warrant a few days later he invented that obliging boniface with the right of advancing money on pledges, and from that time down to the present a pawnbroker's license has been annually granted to the Castle. This history is mentioned once or twice by Dickens in his novels.

Testimony of the Blind.

Before the trial was half ended it was apparent that most credence was placed in the testimony for the defendant. "That is because he has two blind men testifying for him," said a man who has served on many juries. "When it comes to a question of memory the word of a blind man goes further in a courtroom than that of a person with good eyes. It is with the jurymen that his testimony really counts, but the judge and lawyers are also impressed. This is taking into consideration, of course, that the blind man has a reputation for veracity. We assume that with the loss of one faculty others have developed. What a man cannot see he hears, and his mind stores up. Our faith in the retentiveness of a blind man's memory has been frequently justified. Where a person with all his senses would become confused and testify vaguely, the blind man can repeat a conversation verbatim."

Aid to the Unemployed.

"I try to be an efficient city directory," said the hotel clerk, "but balk of recommending a beauty doctor to women guests."

"That is one of the first things they want to know. Churches, theaters, even dressmakers can wait a few days, but the beauty doctor is an immediate necessity. Unfortunately, they do not get much satisfaction out of me. Any number of beauty specialists leave cards for distribution, but so many of them have been mixed up in lawsuits that I feel squeamish about delivering their cards. To satisfy my own conscience and the women at the same time I hand out a bunch of advertisements with the remark that I guess they are about all alike. "Then they can pay their money and take their choice, and if they lose their hair and complexion they can't come back on me for damages."

Latest in House Building.

Spanners and screwdrivers are the only tools required in up-to-date house building. This latest development in an important craft comes, as might be expected, from the United States, says London The-Building. Blocks of concrete cement are cast according to the desired pattern, with a wire spiral passage through the center. When ready for erection steel pins are passed through the whole of the castings, and the whole bolted together over a wooden frame. The work of building or dismantling a house so constructed is stated to be simple in the extreme.