

THE UMPQUA WEEKLY GAZETTE.

D. J. LYONS, Editor.

DEVOTED TO LITERATURE, AGRICULTURE, MINING, GENERAL INTELLIGENCE, &c., &c.

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Poetry.

'Twas but a Dream.

'Twas but a dream! I called thee mine—
A fairy vision of the night;
And fancy, with her elfin wing,
Seemed wrapped in beams of radiant light.
Thy brow was crowned with orange flowers,
Embraced with glistening evergreen;
A smile of love was on thy lip—
'Twas but a dream—'twas but a dream.
I sang to thee of sunny hours,
Of joys too pure for other ear,
And listened to thy murmuring words,
Each silvery tone to me most dear.
We stood amid the festive throng,
And friends were there, with smiles serene;
Our hands were clasped—I called thee mine—
'Twas but a dream—'twas but a dream.
The past—the fairy dream is gone,
And fancy, like a drooping flower,
Inclines her head to earth again.
How sad the change, how strong the power!
But thoughts of thee hang round me yet,
Like garlands round a young May Queen;
Hope whispers you may still be mine;
'Tis not a dream—'tis not a dream!
—D. J. L.

Miscellaneous.

A Dainty Dish.

Among the variety of curious insects, which are common to tropical climates, the groogroo worms of the West Indies may be considered peculiarly interesting. From the peculiar manner in which they are produced, and from the circumstance of their constituting a choice article of food for man, they are entitled to some attention.

The groogroo worm—so called because it is found in a species of palm vulgarly called the groogroo—is the larva of a large-sized beetle, the *Prionus*, which is peculiar to the warm latitudes of America. With the exception of a slight similarity about the region of the head, the worm bears no resemblance to the parent beetle. When full grown, it is about three and a-half inches in length, having the body large and turgid, and increasing in circumference from the head towards the opposite extremity. The head is of a corneous, opaque substance. It has neither eyes nor the rudiments of the antennae which distinguish the beetle tribe. It is, however, provided with mandibles, and other oral apparatus of the mandibulate group of insects, and it is only in this feature that any connection with the beetle can be traced. The trunk is precisely that of a worm; it consists of many closely knitted segments, which are possessed of an extraordinary contractile power. It bears no mark which would indicate a future metamorphosis into a beetle. There is no sign of a future division into thorax and abdomen. There are no rudiments of wings or feet, as the under surface of the body presents exactly the same appearance as the upper. However, at the posterior extremity of the worm, there is a small horny termination, something like the hinder part of a leech. The organs are exceedingly simple, the digestive being the most developed. Albumen is the substance which composes its body, and its blood is of a greenish tint. With a motion similar to that of the earth-worm, it perforates with extraordinary rapidity into the substance of the tree in which it is found.

When the moon is at her full, the gatherer of worms enters a neighboring wood, and selects a young palmist tree. This is a tree of the palm order, exceedingly stately and graceful, growing sometimes to the extraordinary height of eighty feet. From the root upwards, it has not a single branch or shrubby excrescence, but grows beautifully smooth and straight, tapering towards the top. At its top an abundance of the richest and most beautiful leaves spread out in graceful symmetry, and bend down on all sides, forming a figure like an umbrella; while the young leaf, still firm and compact in its foliar envelope, is seen standing erect in the centre of this foliage, like a lightning-conductor.

When a promising palmist is found, the gatherer makes an incision in it with a cutlass or hatchet. This incision is generally in the figure of a half-moon, with the base of the semi-circle downward, and the wound increasing in depth in that direction, so as to expose effectually the flesh of the tree. When this is done, the gatherer marks the locality, and leaves the tree, which he does not revisit for a considerable time.

When the moon is in her wane, he returns and examines his palmist. If the young leaf, together with the others, begins to show a yellow tinge at its extremity, and if, on application of his ear to the trunk, a hollow, rumbling noise is heard within, he concludes that the worms have attacked the vital parts, and the tree is immediately cut down; but if these symptoms are absent, the tree is left standing until they appear. The gatherer, however, must now visit the tree frequently, because the transition of the insects is so rapid, that almost immediately after the appearance of the yellow tinge the whole would disappear.

When the tree is felled, a square portion of the bark is cut out longitudinally from the original incision upwards, and its fibrous texture laid open. Myriads of worms are then seen voraciously devouring their way through the substance. In capturing them some degree of dexterity is necessary, both to protect one's self from the mandibles of the insects, which inflict a painful bite, and also to save time, by preventing them from burrowing out of sight. When the worms are taken, they are put into a close vessel, where they continue to retain their activity and vigor.

The number that can be procured from a single tree depends altogether upon the season in which it is wounded. If the moon is at her full, they are generally numerous and good—many thousands being found in an ordinary tree of twenty-five feet in height. If a few succeed in eluding the gatherer, they do so only to become the prey of as voracious animals, for the wild hogs, or *quecos*, of the forest relish much the soft substance of the palmist when in a state of decomposition.

It never happens, therefore, that much as the worms are desired, any but as night comes, they flock in numbers to the spot and devour the whole substance. A gathering of worms, therefore, brings a hunt of quecos; and the gatherer, when his first business is over, chooses a convenient tree, where he places himself in ambush. Seated on a cross branch, he awaits the coming of the animals.

It is difficult to form an idea of the peculiar excitement of this midnight sport in the wild woods of a tropical country. The usual stillness of the night, and the solitude of the wilderness—the croaking of the melancholy night-birds, the movement of every leaf, animated as it is by the myriads of nocturnal insects that fill the atmosphere—the brilliant and flitting fire flies traversing the gloom—the strange animals wandering in their nightly prowlings—the approach of the grunting hogs, and the incidents of the hunt—all these things, combined with the idea of isolation when a man finds himself alone in the wilds of an almost impervious forest, create an inexpressible feeling of mingled fear, pleasure and anxiety.

Before the worms are cooked they are, each in its turn, pricked with an orange thorn, and thrown into a vessel containing a sauce of lime-juice and salt. This is for the purpose of cleansing them from the viscid fluids they may have imbibed from the palmist. Notwithstanding this discipline, the worms retain their vitality till they are deprived of it by the culinary process. The simpler mode of dressing them is to spit a number together on a piece of stick, or a long orange thorn, and roast them before the fire in their own fat. The general mode, however, is by frying them with or without a sauce, and when dressed in this manner they form a most savory dish.

Groogroo worms are considered great delicacies in some parts of the West Indies, chiefly in those whose inhabitants are of French or Spanish origin. The good old planter presents you at his table with a dish of worms, with as much pride as an epicure in England introduces you to cods, snails, eels, or high venison. Nor does it appear that there is any peculiarity in the taste of those who relish the insects; because it very frequently happens that the stranger, who manifested on his arrival the greatest disgust at the idea of eating worms, becomes immediately converted into an extravagant lover of them.

It may appear strange that in the tropics, especially, where nature provides so abundantly for the wants of man, such creatures should be resorted to as articles of consumption; but while we, on this side of the Atlantic, are shocked at the idea of eating worms, the West Indian consumer, in his turn, expresses surprise that human beings

can eat things which resemble snakes so much as eels, and pronounces it to be the height of uncleanness to eat frogs, as some of the continentals do. Indeed, the groogroo worm is no more repulsive in appearance than any of the other unprossessing creatures which are so highly prized.

It would be a difficult matter to decide on the merits of the many extraordinary things which the taste of man, in its morbid cravings, has discovered and converted into luxurious use; and the philosopher finds himself at last driven to take shelter from his own unanswerable inquiries, behind the concluding power of that most true but somewhat rusty proverb:—"De gustibus non est disputandum."—*Numbers' Journal.*

Horrible Adventure.

At the period when Murat was about to invade Sicily, the cavalier R—, Paymaster General of the Neapolitan forces, was travelling through Calabria for the purpose of joining the army, having been to make arrangements for the transmission of a quantity of specie. He had sent on his servant before him to prepare his quarters at the town of —, expecting to arrive there himself at nightfall; but the day being very sultry, he had loitered on the road, and at nine o'clock in the evening, found he was still a considerable distance from the proposed end of his journey. He was so much harassed and fatigued, that he determined to put up for the night at the first convenient house. He at length entered an old romantic building by the roadside, inhabited by an man and his wife, the former a stout, muscular figure, with a swarthy countenance, almost buried in a mask of bushy whiskers and mustachios. The traveler was received with civility, and after partaking of a hearty supper, was conducted up an elderly staircase, to his apartment for the night. Not much fancying the appearance of the place, and finding no lock on the door, he fixed a chair against it, and, after priming his pistols, put them carefully under his pillow. He had not been long in bed, when he heard a noise below, as if of persons entering the house, and, a few moments afterwards, was on the staircase. He then perceived a light through the crevice of the door, against which the man pressed gently for admittance, but finding some resistance, he thrust it open sufficiently to admit his hand, with extreme caution removed the chair, and entered the apartment. The cavalier then saw his host, with a lamp in one hand, and a huge knife in the other, approaching the bed on tiptoe. The cavalier cocked his pistols beneath the bed-clothes, that the noise of the spring might not be heard. When the man reached the side of the bed, he held the light to the cavalier's face, who pretended to be in a profound sleep, but contrived, nevertheless, to steal an occasional glance at his fearful host. The man soon turned from him, and after hanging the lamp on the bed-post, went to the other side of the room and brought to the bed-side a chair, on which he immediately mounted, with the tremendous knife still in his hand. At the very moment that the cavalier was about to start up and shoot him, the man in a hurried manner cut several large slices from a piece of bacon that was hanging over his bedstead, though it had been wholly unnoticed before by the agitated traveler. The host then passed the light before his eyes again, and left the room in the same cautious way in which he had entered it; and unconscious of the danger he had escaped, returned to a crowd of new and hungry guests below stairs, who were of course not very sorry to see that he had saved his bacon!

PAGINI'S HEIR.—Pagini has left to his only son, Achilles, a fortune of two millions of francs and a title of nobility. An anecdote of Monsieur Achilles shows that the proverb, "What the fathers add, the sons subtract," will not be likely to apply to him. While yet a boy, Achilles was one evening present with a couple of gentlemen at the house of the famous singer Lablanche. Four candles were burning on the table. This luxury of light troubled the boy's feelings; after a little while he silently got up, crept on tiptoe to the first light, and, while the gentlemen eagerly engaged in conversation, blew it out. Lablanche winked at it, and let him go on. Thinking himself unobserved, he presently blew out the second, and then the third light. But as he was about to pursue the same process with the fourth, Lablanche said to him in a friendly way: "Child, if you blow out that light we shall be unable to see." "We don't need light to talk by," was the answer of the boy, now the possessor of two millions.—*German paper.*

To prevent dogs going mad in August, cut their heads off in July.

The India Rubber Tree.

The tree (*Siphilla Elastica*) is quite peculiar in its appearance, and sometimes reaches the height of eighty, and even one hundred feet. The trunk is perfectly round, rather smooth, and protected by a bark of a light color. The leaves grow in clusters of three together, are thin, and of an ovate form, and are from ten to fourteen inches long. The centre leaf of the cluster is always the longest. This remarkable tree bears a curious fruit, of the size of a peach, which, although not very palatable, is easily sought after by different animals—it is separated into three lobes, which contain each a small nut. The tree is very precisely the same manner that the New Englanders tap maple trees. The trunk having been perforated, a yellowish liquid resembling cream flows out, which is caught in small clay cups, fastened to the tree. When these become full, their contents are emptied into large earthen jars, in which the liquid is kept until desired for use. The operation of making shoes is as simple as it is interesting. Imagine yourselves in one of the Seringa groves of Brazil. Around you are a number of good-looking natives, of low stature and olive complexions. All are variously engaged. One is stirring with a long wooden stick the contents of a cauldron, placed over a pile of blazing embers. This is the liquid as it was taken from the rubber tree. Into this a wooden last, covered with clay, and having a handle, is plunged. A coating of the liquid remains. You will perceive that another native then takes the last, and holds it in the smoke arising from the ignition of a species of palm fruit, for the purpose of causing the glutinous substance to assume a dark color. The last is then plunged again into the cauldron, and the process is repeated, as in dipping candles, until the coating is of the required thickness. You will, moreover, notice a number of Indian girls engaged in making various impressions, such as flowers, &c., upon the surface of the rubber, by means of their thumb nails, which are especially pared and cultivated for this purpose. After this final operation, the shoes are placed in the sun to harden, and large numbers of them may be seen laid out on mats of the rubber is cauchou, from which the formidable word *caoutchouc* is derived.

How to ACQUIRE HIGH HEALTH.—Walker, in his "Original," lays down the following rules for attaining high health. They are worth remembering, particularly his advice to wives and husbands.

"First, study to acquire a composure of mind and body. Avoid agitation of one or the other, especially before and after meals, and whilst the process of digestion is going on. To this end, govern your temper, endeavor to look at the bright side of things, keep down as much as possible the unruly passions, discard envy, hatred and malice, and lay your head upon your pillow in charity with all mankind. Let not your wants outrun your means. Whatever difficulties you have to encounter, be not perplexed, but only think what is right to do in the sight of Him who seeth all things, and bear without pining at the results. When your meals are solitary, let your thoughts be cheerful; when they are social, which is better, avoid disputes or serious argument, or unpleasant topics. "Unquiet meals," says Shakespeare, "make ill digestions," and the contrary is produced by easy conversation, a pleasant project, welcome news, or a lively companion. I advise wives not to entertain their husbands with domestic grievances about children or servants, nor to ask for money, nor propound unreasonable or provoking questions, and advise husbands to keep the cares and vexations of the world to themselves, but to be communicative of whatever is comfortable, cheerful and amusing."

SIZE OF OUR GREAT LAKES.—The latest measurements of our fresh water seas are these:

The greatest length of Lake Superior is 430 miles; its greatest breadth is 160 miles; mean depth, 988 feet; elevation, 627 feet; area, 32,000 square miles.

The greatest length of Lake Michigan is 300 miles; its greatest breadth, 198 miles; mean depth, 900 feet; elevation, 587 feet; area, 23,000 square miles.

The greatest length of Lake Huron is 200 miles; its greatest breadth is 160 miles; mean depth, 900 feet; elevation, 574 feet; area, 20,000 square miles.

The greatest length of Lake Erie is 250 miles; its greatest breadth is 80 miles; its mean depth is 84 feet; elevation, 555 feet; area 6,000 square miles.

The greatest length of Lake Ontario is 180 miles; greatest breadth, 65 miles; its mean depth is 500 feet; elevation 262 feet; area, 6,000 square miles.

The total length of all five is 1,585 miles, covering an area of 90,000 square miles.

THE HISTORY OF CREATION.—In a late lecture by Professor Doremus, he began by speaking of the probable commencement of the earth's foundation. By the continual shrinking and cooling of the crusts, cavities are formed as places of deposit for the waters of the ocean. Is the earth at this time capable of sustaining animal or vegetable life? This question is answered by determining what substances first entered into combination and what last. From geology we learn that granite was the primary stratum of the earth. By chemistry we discover that the gas evolved from the crust of the earth, at its formation, was silicic acid. It is likewise shown that carbonic acid was evolved from the earth's crust. Such an atmosphere was shown to be incapable of sustaining animal or vegetable life. The nature and functions of oxygen were described. A number of fine experiments were introduced, showing the formation of carbonic acid by the combustion of carbon and oxygen. The poisonous character of this gas was fully illustrated, and the fact proved that we inhale and exhale a large quantity of it daily. It was shown that combustion was continually going on in our bodies, changing them daily and hourly. The relation between plants and animals was shown, by placing leaves which had been exposed to the light of the sun in a glass jar. Owing to the great profusion of carbonic gas in the atmosphere, Professor Doremus argued that plants first, and then a very low kind of animal life, was the order of creation. The addition of light was necessary before man could inhabit the earth. When oxygen in sufficient quantities existed in the atmosphere, then and then only could man exist. The length of the days mentioned in the first chapter of Genesis were thought by the lecturer to be periods of indefinite duration. The lecturer concluded by an examination of the first chapter of Genesis, showing that the order of creation marked out by the geologist, and that given by the inspired volume coincided in every particular. Much enthusiasm was manifested by the audience.

WORKING GIRLS.—Happy are the girls who cannot love them! with their eyes and their hearts they go to work. Our country for it, such girls will make excellent wives. Blessed indeed will those men be who can secure such prizes. Contrast those who do nothing but sigh all day, and live to follow the fashions; who never earn the bread that they eat, or the shoes they wear; who are languid and lazy from one week's end to the other. Who but a simpleton or a poppinjay would prefer one of the latter, if he were looking for a companion. Give us the working girls. They are worth their weight in gold. You never see them minding along, or jump a dozen feet 'to steer clear of a spider or a fly; they have no affectation, or silly airs about them. When they meet you, they speak without putting on a dozen silly airs, or trying to show off to better advantage, and you feel as if you were talking to a human being, and not to a painted nor a fallen angel.

If girls knew how sadly they miss it, while they endeavor to show off their delicate hands and unsoiled skin, and put on a thousand airs, they would give worlds for the situation of the working ladies who are so far above them in intelligence, in honor, in everything, as the heavens are above the earth. Be wise, then; you have made fools of yourselves through life. Turn over a new leaf, and begin, though late, to live and act as human beings; as companions to immortal man; and not playthings and dolls. In no other way can you be happy and subserve the designs of your existence.

INSTINCTS OF THE TIGER.—In a work entitled "Brown's Anecdotes," we see it stated that on a certain occasion a party of gentlemen from Bombay, while visiting the stupendous cavern temple of elephants, discovered a tiger's whelp in one of the obscure recesses of the edifice. Desirous of kidnapping the cub, without encountering the fury of its dam, they took it up hastily and cautiously, and retreated. Being left entirely at liberty, and extremely well fed, the tiger grew rapidly, appeared tame and fondling as a dog, and in every respect entirely domesticated. At length, having attained a vast size, notwithstanding its apparent gentleness, it began to inspire terror by its tremendous powers of doing mischief to a piece of raw meat, dripping with blood, which fell in its way. It is to be observed that, up to that moment, it had been studiously kept from raw animal food. The instant, however, it dipped its tongue in blood, something like madness seemed to have seized the animal—a destructive principle, hitherto dormant, was awakened—it darted fiercely, and with glaring eyes upon its prey, tore it with fury to pieces, and, growling and roaring in the most fearful manner, rushed off towards the jungles.