

THE PICAYUNE.

What the Coin Used to Buy When It Was in Circulation.

The first time I ever saw a penny was at school in Yankeeeland in 1847. It was given me to pay the man for bringing me a letter from the postoffice—10 cents postage, 1 cent delivery in those days. People had to get their mail at the office. There was no free delivery. Certain neighborhoods of spinsters, however—the college town was full of such—secured the services of a lame, halt or blind man to bring their letters from the office to their door once a day for the stipend of a penny each.

There was no coin in circulation of less value than a picayune where was my home. A picayune represented so little value that a miser was called picayunish. At the same time it represented such a big value that we children felt rich when we had one tied in the corner of our handkerchief. Old Manette, who set up her table and urn for an hour or so every morning at the corner of Camp and Canal streets, served delicious hot coffee—a big cupful, too—for a picayune, but when I was out of bed early enough for that it was to go to market with John. Then we took our coffee at Palmyre's stand, for she supplemented a greasy cake the size of a cracker as lagniappe with the coffee. At the corner of Chartres and Canal streets was a tiny soda fountain where one could get a glass of soda for a picayune—or mead. We children liked mead. I never see it now, but as I recall it was a thick, honey, creamy drink. We must have preferred it because it seemed so much more for a picayune than the frothy, effervescent, palish soda water. It was a great lark to go with pa and take my glass of mead while he ordered ginger sirup (of all things!) with his soda. In the changes years bring, a penny now buys about what a picayune did in my day. One pays a penny for ever so big a newspaper today. A picayune was the price of a small sheet in my time.—Mrs. E. Ripley in *New Orleans Times-Democrat*.

A Pardonable Pun.

Most if not all of the deep sea sounding now done is done with steel wire. Professor Silvanus P. Thompson in his recent "Life of William Thomson," better known as Lord Kelvin, says that that scientist was one of the first to recommend the abandonment of the old hemp rope system.

In connection with this use of steel wire the story is told that Joulie, visiting White's shop, found Sir William surrounded by coils of wire which he was inspecting and on inquiring their use was told that they were pianoforte wire for sounding.

"For sounding what note?" inquired Joulie.

"The deep C," was Sir William's reply.

One Way to Create Peers.

Peerages have sometimes been acquired in curious ways. When the head of a well known west country family was raised to the upper house a good deal of surprise was expressed at such a distinction being conferred upon him, for he had not rendered any particular service to his party, having lost practically every election he had contested. Lord Beaconsfield furnished me with the key to this enigma. "Well," said he, "we really did not know what to do with him, for he was positively doing us harm. Wherever he stood he was beaten, so at last we thought the best way to get rid of him would be to send him to the upper house."—From "Under Five Reigns."

The Ironclad Vessel.

The famous naval battle in Hampton Roads was the first real test of the ironclad vessel. Before that memorable affair there had been one or two armored craft, but they had not been tried in battle. The Hampton Roads fight sounded the doom of the wooden warship. It was seen at once that such vessels were useless against craft like the Monitor or Merrimac, and the navies of the world were instantaneously revolutionized. Since 1862 no nation has had other than armored warships.—*New York American*.

Casey's Picture.

Casey decided to go into business, so he bought out a small livery stable and had a painter make a sign for him showing him astride a mule. He had this sign placed in front of the stable and was quite proud of it. His friend Finnigan happened along and stood gazing at the sign.

"That's a good picture of me, ain't it?" asked Casey.

"Sure; it looks something like you," said Finnigan, "but who the devil is the man on your back?"—*National Monthly*.

THE NEW RUBBER HOSE.

Natural Course of Events After Father Brought It Home.

"Don't you touch it," said the mother as the coil of nice new rubber hose was deposited with a thump on the back porch, radiating a smell unlike anything else on earth. "Wait till your father gets home."

The children met the father a block from home. They informed him with whoops that the hose had arrived, and the father beamed upon them.

After supper, and not before, the father removed his coat and went forth, bearing the hose and followed by the expectant children. He stretched it tenderly out on the grass, having heard that to drag a hose wore it out.

Then he went to the tap and turned on the water. The hose writhed in the middle, then spit fizzing and delightfully at the nozzle, and, turning about like a snake, sent a heavy stream of water squarely into the open parlor window.

"Here!" yelled the father. "Why didn't you children hold that nozzle?"

"You said not to touch it," they explained.

"Oh, papa, lemme sprinkle," pleaded the little girl.

"Lemme, papa," begged the little boy. "Me first." But the father continued to sprinkle, first the street, then the grass, and wound up by washing off the porch with refreshing jets.

"You can sprinkle tomorrow," he told the children as he unfastened the hose.

The next evening was marked by a fight in which the little girl received a black eye, the little boy a battered nose and both a thorough wetting.

A week later the father looked up from the evening paper.

"Heavens," he said, "how dry everything is! Why don't those children sprinkle the grass?"

"Children," said the mother, "go sprinkle the grass."

"Make sister do it," said the little boy. "I sprinkled last."

"He didn't, neither," said the little girl. "He never does want to do any work. Make him do it, mamma."—*Dallas News*.

A Turning Point in History.

On the morning of the 1st of May, 1637, there occurred an incident that, unnoticed at the time, afterward proved to be one of the turning points of history. Eight immigrant ships lay in the Thames ready to sail. A body of pilgrims were about to embark, and Oliver Cromwell and his famous cousin, John Hampden, were among them. But they were stopped at the landing by a guard of soldiers. The king had decreed that his subjects should not leave England. Cromwell stayed, and with him, as Macaulay wrote, "stayed the evil genius of the house of Stuart." Had Cromwell and his friends been allowed to carry out their project of emigration the whole history of the English civil war might have remained unwritten.

Just a Guess.

The eight-year-old son of a Baltimore physician, together with a friend, was playing in his father's office during the absence of the doctor when suddenly the first lad threw open a closet door and disclosed to the terrified gaze of his little friend an articulated skeleton.

When the visitor had sufficiently recovered from his shock to stand the announcement the doctor's son explained that his father was extremely proud of that skeleton.

"Is he?" asked the other. "Why?" "I don't know," was the answer. "Maybe it was his first patient."—*Harper's Magazine*.

A Roland For an Oliver.

Roland and Oliver were two of Charlemagne's generals. They were equally of giant strength and huge stature. To determine which was the superior man they engaged in a combat on a small island in the Rhine. The fight lasted for five successive days. At the end of this time the victory still hung in the balance. Every blow Roland delivered was returned by Oliver. Thus when we say a "Roland for an Oliver" it is the same as saying "tit for tat" or a "blow for a blow."

Not So Far Wrong.

James was halting and stammering through his Latin translation, and Miss Graham was deftly trying to stimulate that none too brilliant student's memory. "Sinister" was the word she wanted.

"Come, come, James," she urged. "Just think hard. You know the Latin for 'left.' Now what is it?"

James did as directed and thought hard for a moment. Then he looked up triumphantly.

"Spinster," he announced.—*Woman's Home Companion*.

DEEP SEA LIFE.

Fantastic Fishes That Are Found Near the Ocean's Bed.

The great Challenger expedition returned to Britain in 1876 after having spent over three years in the exploration of the great ocean basins of the world. Among its many results the one that riveted most of the attention of the public was the discovery that living organisms were to be found everywhere in the ocean, from the surface down to depths of three or four miles. Men were, indeed, surprised to learn that in these great depths, to which sunlight never penetrated, where the temperature approached the freezing point and where the pressure was four or five tons on the square inch, large and delicate animals belonging to nearly all marine types could flourish in great abundance. They were also surprised to learn that small particles such as fall to the bottom of a tumbler of water will also fall to the bottom of an ocean six miles in depth. Acquaintance was made with new species, genera and even orders of animals which recalled extinct forms found imbedded in rocks as fossils—the stalked crinoids, for example. New and extremely interesting instances were observed of the way in which organisms adapt themselves to remarkable and hitherto unimagined conditions of life.

The strange and fantastic fishes brought up from great depths were all dead when hauled on deck. Their eyes were often blown out of their heads by the expansion of their body gases as these fishes were hauled by the nets into shallower water. Large numbers of these strange fishes, crustaceans, cuttlefishes and zoophytes, emitted from special organs a blue-green phosphorescent light resembling in function searchlights—in this way the eternal darkness of the cold, motionless region at great depths was illuminated. Sometimes the trawl brought up an ooze made up of calcareous shells, sometimes of siliceous shells, sometimes a red clay containing cosmic spherules, dozens of ear bones of whales and hundreds of sharks' teeth, all covered by manganese oxide. Scientific men had evidently invaded a new weird field of research of surpassing importance to all who take an interest in the advance of natural knowledge.

The modern science of oceanography was practically founded by the Challenger expedition. In more recent years our knowledge of the ocean has been greatly extended by expeditions sent out by the governments of nearly all civilized countries, by cable ships and by private individuals like the late Alexander Agassiz and the Prince of Monaco. The development of this new science has also been greatly helped by the work carried on at the marine biological stations, which have been founded in many parts of the world.—*Harper's Magazine*.

One on Grandpa.

Little Grandson—Grandpa, you said last summer when you were here that if I took a cold bath every morning you would give me something nice.

"Yes, Henry, but you didn't do it."

"I'm taking them now, grandpa. I 'cluded you knew best."

"Glad to hear it, my boy. It will be the making of your health. Take this \$5 and get what you want with it. How long have you kept it up, Henry?"

"I commenced this morning."—*St. Louis Globe-Democrat*.

Caught at the First Trial.

Mr. Cleverly—I have a great joke on my wife. I've just bought her a hat for \$5 and had it sent home with a fifteen dollar mark on it. She'll never know the difference.

Mrs. Cleverly (later)—Harold, dear, I guess I would better buy my own hats after this. I could have done a good deal better for \$15. You've been awfully cheated. Why, I saw this very same hat in the window with a five dollar mark on it.—*Detroit Free Press*.

A Cool Sendoff.

A young couple appeared not long ago in a prayer meeting in a middle west town and requested the minister to marry them. The service was interrupted to oblige them, and after the ceremony they took a front seat while the regular meeting resumed. A hymn was then given out that had evidently not been selected with this incident in view. The opening line said, "Deluded souls that look for heaven."—*Lippincott's*.

Easy.

"Now, Arthur," said his father, "you've been going to school long enough to write decently. Don't you know how to make a figure 3?"

"Sure," said the boy. "You put your pencil on the paper and then you shiver."—*Exchange*.

BOTTLED LIGHT.

Brilliant Insects That Serve as Lamps in Tropical Regions.

There exists in the tropical countries of America and in the West Indies a curious species of insect which the natives call "cocuyos" or "Coleopterus noctilucid," meaning night light bug. This insect emits a brilliant green light from each eye and a green light from the under part of the stomach.

Some of the natives in Cuba, Mexico and South America use the bug light to read by, placing about fifty bugs in a long glass tube or bottle, called a "cocuyera." Another method is to hang the cocuyera over one's bed and then when you want to see the time at night strike the bottle gently with the hand, when the cocuyos will light up.

This bug is quite harmless and inoffensive and can be carried in the hand. If its stomach is gently pressed by forefinger and thumb the bug will give a light like a small electric torch. These peculiar animals vary in size, but the largest come from the province of Pinar del Rio, in Cuba, and measure two and a half inches in length by one-half to three-quarter inch in thickness. They give forth a very powerful light. They are black in color and feed on sweet potatoes, rotten wood and corn cane.

They are easily captured. A boy will light a cigar, and, whirling the same in his hand over his head, he makes a noise with his mouth sounding like r-r-r-r-r. In a few minutes his arm will be entirely covered with the cocuyos, taking on the aspect of an electric pole of green light. He then proceeds to take them off and places them in a basket where previously he has placed a few pieces of corn cane.

Care must always be taken to keep the cocuyos from eating sugar, for if they do their legs drop off, their brilliant light fades, and they will die. The cocuyos lay their eggs in rotten trees, and sometimes these trees assume a very beautiful aspect, for from a distance they look like a long pole full of glowing little green electric globes.

Senor Felipe Poe, the Cuban naturalist, whom the great German naturalist, Humboldt, came from China to confer with, has expressed his opinion that the light produced by *Coleopterus noctilucid* is due to an excess of electric phosphorescence. Sometimes they conceal their light, but by gently pressing the stomach the light will flare forth again with renewed strength.—*New York World*.

Plovers' Eggs.

Few people realize that there are other eggs besides those of hens which have enormous commercial value. In England so called "plover's eggs," which are really those of lapwings, are sent to the city markets from the rural districts by hundreds of thousands. They are esteemed a great delicacy and fetch a very high price, the use of them being for that reason confined almost exclusively to the aristocracy and other luxurious persons. Being only about the size of pigeons' eggs, a good many of them are required to make a dish. Men make a business of gathering them from the nests in marshes and wet fields.—*London Standard*.

Embryo Architect.

A popular conception of the architect's failing in completing a house within the estimate is illustrated in the story of the proud father who thought he discerned great architectural talent in his six-year-old son.

"Why," asked a neighbor, "does he draw well?"

"No," replied the father, "but he started a few days ago to build a hencoop at an estimated cost of 65 cents, and it has already cost me about \$3.50."—*Metropolitan Magazine*.

Food For Repentance.

A well known federal official was strolling down Philadelphia avenue one afternoon when he encountered a very small boy crying bitterly.

"What's the matter with that child?" demanded the official, somewhat peremptorily, of the woman who had him in charge. "Is he ill?"

"He ain't exactly ill," responded the unmoved woman, "but, between you and me, sir, no stomach ain't goin' to stand nine doughnuts!"—*Success Magazine*.

Safer and Surer.

"I want you for my very own," said the rich old gentleman when he had succeeded in getting the beautiful girl to listen to him.

"But how can I be your very own?"

"Why—why, you can marry me, can't you?"

"I suppose I could, but don't you think, if you really want me, it would be safer to adopt me?"—*Judge*.

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