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LITERARY LITTLE BITS

Professor Ernst Haeckel's important work, "The Riddle of the Universe," has recently been translated into Japanese, Chinese and Hebrew. At different times the volume has appeared in twelve other languages, while more than 200,000 copies of the German original have been sold.

Rev. John Francis Lee, pastor of the Metropolitan African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, of Norfolk, Va., is attracting much attention in the South as a poet, many believing that he is the coming negro poet of America, taking up the minstrel harp dropped by the late Paul Laurence Dunbar.

The Russian military commander, Gen. Kuropatkin, has finished his historical work in relation to the causes of the Russian defeat in the far east and the English translation will doubtless soon be got under way. Gen. Kuropatkin undertakes to prove that his plans were repeatedly upset by orders from St. Petersburg.

The astonishing fact has just come to light that Professor Richard Garnett, librarian of the British Museum, who died recently, for years had devoted much time to the "black art" of astrology. Even more extraordinary is the circumstance that the business men of New York and other cities regularly consulted him regarding contemplated ventures.

The novel-reader who fondly believes that his favorite "refreshers" are of imagination and compact is much deceived. The novelist of genius is even more given to the taking of notes than is the lesser writer who turns out stories "in the way of trade." Balzac, his sister has told us, wherever he went studied what he saw, setting down everything which revealed a character or painted a situation. His "meat-sauce" was the odd name he gave to the book which held these notes. Dickens recorded diligently his observations of peculiarity in person as well as strange incidents, suggestive names, available scenery and the like. Even one so little given to "realism" in the modern sense as Hawthorne had an ample store of useful notes. Wilkie Collins is quoted by an old acquaintance, in Chambers' Journal, as declaring that he founded nearly all his plots on facts, on incidents he had heard of or read, or on a desire to expose or correct some abuse of his time. Great was his wrath when he was accused of introducing sensational and improbable episodes in his book, "The Woman in White." He knew, he said, of very few instances in which fiction exceeded the probability of reality; and then he revealed the source of many of his plots in the shape of a dilapidated collection of records of French crime picked up on an old bookstall in Paris. "Here is a prize!" he exclaimed, and so it turned out to be. "The Woman in White" was derived from those mouldering records. "The plot of that," said Collins, "has been called outrageous; the substitution and burial of the mad girl for Lady Glyde, and the incarceration of Lady Glyde as the mad girl. It was true, and it was from the trial of the villain of the plot—Count Fosco of the novel—I got my story."

SEARCH GLOBE FOR RUBBER. Many Perils Are Encountered in Gathering the Gum. From Southern Mexico in the north to Northern Paraguay in the south; from the Atlantic on the east, right through the devious wandering of the many branches and tributaries of the mighty Amazon and right on, out to the Pacific, on the west; through the mysterious, trackless and utterly unknown solitudes of the Paraguayan and Bolivian Choccos out into Peru, the rubber hunters are at work on the plants and trees put ready to their use by the bounteous hand of nature. Where they go on their journeys or precisely what they do, no white man knows to this day, or is ever likely to know, says the Philadelphia Ledger.

Less than a year ago I met with and spoke in English to an Italian merchant in the wilds of Matto Grosso, the northwestern province of Brazil, whose capital city is five weeks' journey from the seat of government at Rio de Janeiro. For twenty years he had not heard the sound of English voice and during all those years rubber has been flowing through his hands, down the giant River Paraguay, on its way to the markets of the world, via Buenos Ayres or Montevideo. Yet of its actual production he knows little.

To skip, in spirit, from the northeast coast of South America across the south Atlantic to tropical Africa, the Congo, the Gold Coast, the Zambesi, Uganda and other parts, is not a difficult undertaking. But here all is changed, and instead of having noble forest trees at his disposal, the rubberhunter finds himself dependent on snaky, climbing, twisting vines for his rubber supplies, vines which usurp every inch of territory they can invade, and render a passage through the forests a matter of great difficulty and some danger.

These vines, known as "landolphas," of which there are several species, are members of the natural order apocynaceae and are common to the whole of tropical Africa. They differ from the American trees, in that they produce rubber in the center of the stem, as well as from the cells underlying the inner cambium, but what quantity

each plant will produce there are no data to base an estimate upon.

Although the landolphas form the main source of the African rubber supply, yet there is at least one family of trees which yields a supplementary contribution to the sum total. The funtunia or kikkala, of which there are two species, elastica and africana, was worked to a considerable extent a quarter of a century ago, but it does not now seem to be a fashionable plant to cultivate a close association with. It resembles the hevea to some degree, but is smaller, of softer growth, and requires a little less rainfall to luxuriate.

Turning to India, and to Asia generally, it will not be found that the continent is rich in indigenous rubber-bearing plants. The ficus elastica, the Indian rubber plant of the window gardener, is found in Assam and Burma and the federated Malay states, but its produce is of very inferior quality. Certain climbers also yield rubber, the three chief ones being the urceola, chonemorpha, and the Willoughbia. The fact that Para and other rubbers are being cultivated in India, etc., is sufficient proof of the poorness of the continent of Asia in indigenous rubber-bearing plants.

Ceara rubber is collected by stabbing the tree in a number of places close together, and as the juice exudes it congeals in the air, and is rolled up into balls by the collectors. It is usually in a dirty state when it comes to the market.

The product of the ficus elastica and the other Asiatic plants is usually simply sun-dried; the rubber from the former can be identified at a glance by its peculiar red color.

MINE FOUND BY A BADGER.

Prospectors Digging Him Out Discovered a Rich Claim.

N. H. George, Santa Fe yardmaster, has taken a layoff of three weeks and gone to Nevada to develop a gold mining claim which he has there. There is quite a story back of his going.

Mr. George grubstaked an old miner who had struck a streak of bad luck. This miner finally found some excellent surface indications in the Nevada mountains and staked his claim. The prospects were so good that Mr. George, his brother and his brother-in-law took three adjoining claims. The old grizzled miner worked away all winter on the funds supplied him by Mr. George. His developments were encouraging, but did not pan out large quantities of the yellow metal.

A short time since another old miner in hard luck came past the first miner's claim carrying his kit of tools with him. Mr. George's friend was naturally lonesome and invited the stranger to take a claim. After looking over the situation this stranger decided to do so. An evening or two later the two miners sat on a ledge of rock talking when a badger came into sight. The miners gave chase and the badger ran into a hole on the stranger's claim.

They went to work with their picks and soon dug the badger out, and in so doing they made a remarkable discovery. His bed in the bottom of the hole was made on a big chunk of the very richest of gold ore. The gold in the stone on which he lay was worth \$10,000. In this way they discovered a rich vein of gold bearing quartz which runs through both their mines as well as those belonging to Mr. George, his brother and the brother-in-law. Mr. George's trip to Nevada is for the purpose of fully investigating his new gold mine.—Wellington Mail.

"The American Lady."

The home life of a typical American lady is the sincerest index of her ego. In it she indelibly expresses herself. Here it is that she exercises to the maximum her potentiality and that her personality scores. Presumably she is a wife and mother. Her age? Puff! A lady of cleverness nonpluses Time.

She is her son's best girl, her daughter's chum, a hostess sans reproche. She rules her home with thrift and skill. Her husband safely trusts in her, and her price is above her birthstone. Her house is beautiful, its atmosphere fine and clear. She is never too busy to listen to her "boy" or advise her "girl" or read to their father. Young people en masse delight in her. She is their ideal mother and friend. Laughter is never hushed in her home. Music is welcomed and budding merit of whatever sort finds in her an earnest and sympathetic ear.—Thomas Austin, in Lippincott's.

Ants Are Tough Ones.

Ants are really very long lived, considering their minuteness. Janet had two queens under observation for ten years, and one of Sir John Lubbock's ant pets lived into her eighteenth year.

Ants are very tenacious of life after severe injury. Following loss of the entire abdomen they sometimes live two weeks, and in one case a headless ant, carefully decapitated by antiseptic surgery, lived for forty-one days. A carpenter ant after being submerged eight days in distilled water came to life upon being dried, so that they are practically proof against drowning.

They can live for long periods without food; in one case the fast lasted nearly nine months before the ant starved to death.—Scientific American.

Mystery No Longer.

"I see Prof. Reid says the earth has a big hole in its center." "Ah, perhaps that explains why the world is such a hollow mockery."

It is very hard for a man to pay a doctor bill after he once gets the germ into his mind that he would have gotten well anyway.

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