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"That friend of yours, Skilliven, is  
 certainly one of the most charitable  
 men I ever met," remarked the passen-  
 ger with the fur-lined overcoat.  
 "I haven't noticed him giving away  
 anything," said the passenger with the  
 leatherine suitcase, folding his news-  
 paper and pocketing it. "What hap-  
 pened to touch his heart?"  
 "I don't mean that exactly," said the  
 passenger in the fur-lined overcoat. "I  
 don't know whether he's easy or tight,  
 but I know he takes charitable views."  
 "That's easy," commented the man  
 with the leatherine suitcase. "His  
 ideas may be liberal, but he isn't—not  
 to speak of. Borrowed his wheelbar-  
 row last spring and I happened to  
 break one of the handles. At least, I  
 didn't break it; it was broken already,  
 or splintered. Well, I offered to pay to  
 have it repaired, of course, and darned  
 if he didn't take me up on it!"  
 "That was pretty small," agreed the  
 man with the fur-lined overcoat. "I  
 don't wonder you're sore on him."  
 "I don't know that I'm sore, particu-  
 larly. It was only 25 cents, but it  
 didn't seem to me very neighborly.  
 Kind of a cranky disposition, too."  
 "Well, of course, I don't know any-  
 thing about that, but I was talking  
 with him about old Brackenbury. Talk  
 about a crank, Brackenbury is one for  
 your whiskers. He's got a grudge  
 against humanity. Hanged if I ever  
 knew such a mean old rooster. I was  
 telling this Skilliven about the way he  
 acted up all the time in his office. I  
 guess there isn't one of his clerks who  
 wouldn't poison him if he got a good  
 chance. Skilliven, it seems, knew him."  
 "I believe all that is greatly exag-  
 gerated," he says. "Of course, he's a  
 little irritable at times, but he's suf-  
 fered with dyspepsia—a good deal to  
 my certain knowledge. We must make  
 allowances. He's a pretty nice old man,  
 when you know him."  
 "I know him pretty well by reputa-  
 tion," I said. "He's got the reputation  
 of being the meanest old skinflint that

ever pared cheese with a razor. They  
 tell me he won't have his shoes pol-  
 ished because the friction might wear  
 them out and that he's had the barber  
 save the hair he cuts off him for the  
 last thirty years to stuff a mattress."  
 "That's nonsense," he says. "The  
 poor old gentleman has been bald for  
 the last thirty years. He's frugal, I  
 know, but don't consider that a vice."  
 "Well, then I mentioned the old rat's  
 love of money and he excused that by  
 saying that most old men were more or  
 less avaricious."  
 "Not to the extent of dishonesty," I  
 says. "I've heard of things he's done  
 that ought to have landed him in the  
 penitentiary."  
 "Well," says Skilliven, "we're all hu-  
 man and we've got our little faults. If  
 it isn't one thing it's another, and we  
 don't want to be too hard on people,  
 especially old people. I don't suppose  
 Mr. Brackenbury has a great many  
 more years to live, and I'm sorry for  
 that, because he really is, when you get  
 to know him, a very nice old gentle-  
 man. He has some excellent qualities  
 and my family thinks the world of  
 him." Now, I don't care what you say,  
 when a man can talk that way about  
 a hoary old scoundrel like W. D. Brack-  
 enbury, he's mighty charitable."  
 "Huh!" ejaculated the man with the  
 leatherine suitcase contemptuously. "I  
 don't suppose he told you that his wife  
 is Brack's next of kin and that they  
 expect to come in for the bulk of his  
 money when he dies. Oh, he's a charit-  
 able duck, all right, and when it comes  
 to wheelbarrows with broken han-  
 dles—"  
 "Well, that wasn't the only thing,"  
 said the man with the fur-lined over-  
 coat. "We talked about other people  
 too—you among them—and he spoke  
 pretty well of you."  
 "I don't see any particular reason  
 why he shouldn't," said the man with  
 the leatherine suitcase. "I never blicked  
 him out of 25 cents."—Chicago Daily  
 News.

**Topics & Times**

A process for making rubber from  
 wheat has been invented.  
 There were 1,234,278 Odd Fellows in  
 the United States January 1.  
 The total number of immigrants to  
 the United States, 1906, was 1,100,735.  
 Earl Gray, Governor-General of Can-  
 ada, receives a salary of \$50,000 a  
 year.

The lower peninsula of Michigan is  
 said to be entirely underlaid with rock  
 salt.

The churches are the Portuguese  
 polling places and votes in Portugal  
 are cast nowhere else.

There are 363 stock and 234 mutual  
 fire insurance companies in the United  
 States January 1, 1907.

Workmen in one of the streets of  
 Madrid dug up an old walnut-wood  
 chest containing 300 gold doubloons.

Medals of honor for distinguished  
 gallantry in war in which the United  
 States was engaged are held by 458  
 Americans.

The result of the first six months'  
 working of the Simpson tunnel have  
 been tabulated, and show that an av-  
 erage of 8,000 passengers were carried a  
 day.

If not absolutely the oldest, the Stora  
 Kopparberget in Sweden is the oldest  
 copper mine of which there are any of-  
 ficial figures. It has been worked con-  
 tinuously for nearly 800 years.

The dreaded nun butterfly is appear-  
 ing everywhere in Bohemia, threaten-  
 ing the devastation of the forests. The  
 neighboring woods of Saxony and Sil-  
 esia are also threatened. The Minis-  
 try of Agriculture has named a com-  
 mission to investigate.

Andrew Carnegie's "hero fund" was  
 established in 1904 with \$5,000,000 at  
 its disposal. The commission had  
 awarded sixty-three medals up to Jan.  
 1, 1907, and disbursed about \$40,000,  
 aside from about \$85,000 given San  
 Francisco and other sufferers from dis-  
 asters.

Perhaps for concentrated inaccuracy  
 of statement nothing can surpass the  
 following sentence, which occurred in  
 an account of a burglary given a short  
 time back in a paper: "After a fruit-  
 less search all the money was recover-  
 ed, except one pair of boots."—Tit-  
 Bits.

One of the princesses of the Bur-  
 mese court, a young woman not yet 20,  
 is said to be the possessor of the cost-  
 liest dress in the world. It is a court  
 costume and worn only on rare occa-  
 sions. It is studded with jewels re-  
 puted to be worth in the aggregate not  
 less than one million four hundred  
 thousand dollars.—Leslie's Weekly.

Several New York postmen, accord-  
 ing to the World, have made fortunes  
 of more than \$200,000. These men, al-  
 though independently wealthy, through  
 extra effort during leisure hours, still  
 scurged from house to house daily with  
 mailbag and whistle, content to ac-  
 cept a salary of \$1,000 a year which

Uncle Sam provides for his postmen.  
 In every case the fortunes were made  
 through shrewd investments in real es-  
 tate.

London now has six underground  
 electric railways (tubes) in operation,  
 and five more are under construction  
 or projected. The railways of London,  
 underground and surface, carry more  
 than 600,000,000 persons each year, of  
 which underground lines accommodate  
 258,000,000. There are nearly 600 rail-  
 way stations in Greater London, and  
 into the trunk line stations alone there  
 pour annually more than 300,000 pas-  
 sengers.

A dip into an official return showed  
 that there are 1,204 London cabmen  
 between the ages of 70 and 75, 249 be-  
 tween the ages of 75 and 80, while 7  
 return their age between 80 and 90.  
 One almost suspects these seven old  
 patriarchs of having carried old sedan  
 chairs in the prewar days. At all  
 events, they are a living advertisement  
 of London as a health resort, with beef-  
 steak, overcoat and muffler.—London  
 Chronicle.

The name "Polly," applied to the  
 parrot, is said to have been brought  
 to the North in an early day by flat-  
 boatmen, who took grain and provision-  
 s down the Ohio and Mississippi  
 rivers to New Orleans. Parrots were  
 in cages at the doors of many French  
 shops and the Westerners heard the  
 French say to the bird, "Parlez, par-  
 lez," pronounced parley, and meaning  
 "speak! speak!" This word, as they  
 brought it back, came to be polly.

**DUCKS 1,800 MILES AT SEA.**

Birds Circle Around Steamship, Tak-  
 ing It for an Island.

The Oceanic Steamship Company's  
 liner Mariposa, Captain Lawson, ar-  
 rived from Tahiti with twenty-three  
 passengers and a cargo of tropical  
 products. Among the passengers was  
 W. F. Doty, former American consul  
 at Papeete and recently promoted to  
 represent Uncle Sam in Persia as United  
 States consul.

The interests of America in Persia  
 have been represented hitherto by the  
 secretary of the British legation at Te-  
 heran, who acted as United States vice  
 consul whenever necessity arose. This  
 government, however, recently appoint-  
 ed three consuls for Persia, among  
 them Mr. Doty, whose post will be at  
 Fabria. This is in the same latitude as  
 San Francisco and is one of the most  
 inaccessible consular posts in the world.  
 In journeying to his new station Con-  
 sul Doty will have to travel camel  
 back for 1,500 miles.

On the afternoon of Nov. 9 Captain  
 Lawson was surprised to see twelve  
 black and white ducks flying overhead.  
 They came from the eastward. After  
 circling around the Mariposa a num-  
 ber of times, as if they were wondering  
 what kind of an island the liner was,  
 the ducks wheeled into line and re-  
 sumed their flight, heading due west.  
 The ducks were 1,800 miles from San  
 Francisco and 1,500 miles from Ha-  
 wall, the nearest land.—San Francisco  
 Call.

Oil Painting of Ancient Days.

Oil painting was an art thoroughly  
 understood by the ancients, but was  
 lost sight of and only revived about the  
 end of the thirteenth century. A. D.

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