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The Nightingale.

The nightingale does not sing everywhere, yet it is as great a mistake to consider the bird shy as to imagine its song is chiefly reserved for the night. He will sing continually from one of the oaks bordering the wayside while the village folks pass and repass. The village couples may rest upon the foot stile or linger to listen beneath the very tree on which the bird is stationed, still the full burden of melody goes on unchecked, without pause or intermission. And what a glorious outburst it is! What a perfect cascade of trills and shakes and semiquavers! Suddenly it is pierced by a single note that shivers in the ear with the sharpness of a fife. Immediately after comes the wondrous water bubble, to be followed by a delicious warble, long drawn out and soft as could be breathed from the richest flute. Another prolonged trill, and then a faroff sound that almost seems to come from another songster half a mile away serves to throw into relief the passionate tremolo issuing from the same tiny throat, and all the time the wings are quivering with excitement and the whole coppice seems to vibrate.

The song is, indeed, a whole orchestra of bird music. Expressive of every shade of ecstasy, we are at times startled by a succession of deep, plaintive tones that thrill like sobs. No wonder the nightingale's singing season is brief—six weeks only of the entire year. Nay, it is doubtful whether any individual bird sings for so long a period. The redwing, another fine singer, is a similar instance of the limited period of song. Its voice in this country is confined to two notes and these by no means musical, yet the redwing is the nightingale of Norway, to which land he returns for breeding purposes each succeeding April. So with our nightingale. From the day the eggs are hatched he becomes gradually silent, until of the marvelous voice that stirred a mile of woodland naught is heard save a dismal croak, hardly to be distinguished from the hoarse cry of the bullfrog.—St. James Gazette.

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TROUT AND PICKEREL.

Something About Their Methods of Feeding, as Observed at the Aquarium.

It is easy to observe at the aquarium the habits of fish in feeding. Some are sluggish, some are fierce and some are sly. The trout are fed on live killies. The killies when thrown into the tank scatter in all directions, with the trout after them like chain lightning, twisting and turning with marvelous celerity. The killies double, the trout dart after them. Rising to a bunch of killies at the top, the trout fairly make the water fly. They jump almost, if not quite, clear out of it, as if they were turning somersaults, and down they go in again and on after the killies. It is a dashing, slashing, crashing pursuit, and in about half a minute the killies are all gone.

The pickerel—how different! How silent, and yet how sudden! The killie dropped in above darts downward through the water. Not pursued, it slow down and halts in the middle of the tank to rest and to recover its equanimity after its recent disturbing experience of being removed from its home in the live food tank, carried about in a galvanized iron tray, and finally dropped into another tank as food for other fishes.

At a little distance is observed the pickerel. It has come up silently, like a long, slender, little steamer moving dead slow. It comes to a halt so smoothly and quietly that the instant of its halt is not noticed. It is simply seen to be lying there, motionless, about six inches from the killie.

All is peace and quiet in the tank, and the killie still balances itself in the water and rests. Suddenly, with no apparent exertion of power, the pickerel darts forward. The movement is so sudden that it is not realized that the pickerel has moved until it is seen in its new position. The killie is gone. It is now in the pickerel's interior, and probably with only a very hazy notion, if any at all, of how it got there.

The methods of the trout and pickerel are very different; their results, however, are much the same.—New York Sun.

One Woman's Trials.

A resident of Staten Island has lately been very much annoyed by some of the urchins of the neighborhood. She is a great lover of nature and has on her front piazza a number of potted plants which have been cared for all winter. At night, when everything is quiet, the boys come and manage to steal one or two plants without discovery. One by one her choice flowers have disappeared, and although she has watched for the thieves they have never been caught.

The other day she conceived a plan by which she saved her remaining treasures. Tying a string to each flowerpot, she connected the ends with a bell in the hall. That night she waited patiently for the alarm. At last there was a tinkle and then a crash. Rushing out, she saw a boy, apparently frightened out of his senses, running down the path. When he found the pot tied and heard the bell ring, he dropped his booty and took to his heels. The boy escaped, but there has been no more trouble with flower thieves.

This woman is very fond of pets of all kinds and has a number about the house. One day, while marketing, she saw a beautiful gamecock and thought it would make a novel sort of pet. Paying $50 for her find, she had it sent home. The bird arrived before its mistress and was received by the cook, who chopped off its head and prepared it for dinner.—New York Times.

THE COURT JESTER.

A Practical Joke That Will Sommers Played on Cardinal Wolsey.

Amelia Wofford tells of "The Court Jesters of England" in St. Nicholas. The following is related of King Henry VIII's jester:

Sommers, like Scogan, liked a practical joke, and one that he played on Cardinal Wolsey is thus quaintly told by Armin:

"Of a time appointed the king dined at Windsor, in the chappel yard at Cardinall Wolsey's at the same time when he was building that admirable work of his tombe, at whose gate stood a number of poore people, to be served with alms when dinner was done within, and as Will passed by they saluted him, taking him for a worthy personage, which pleased him. In he comes, and finding the king at dinner and the cardinall by attending, to disgrace him that he never loved, Harry, sayes hee, lend me £10. What to doe? saies the king. To pay three or foure of the cardinall's creditors, quoth hee, to whom my word is past, and they are now come for the money. That thou shalt, Will, quoth hee. Creditors of mine? saies the cardinall. Ile give your grace my head if any man can justly aske me a penny. No, saies Will. Lend me £10. If I pay it not where thou owest it, Ile give thee £20 for it. Doe so, saies the king. That I will, my liege, saies thee cardinall, though I owe none. With that he lends Will £10. Will goes to the gate, distributes it to the poore and brought the empty bag. There is thy bag againe, saies hee. Thy creditors are satisfied, and my word out of danger. Who received, saies the king, the brewer or the baker? Neyther, Harry, saies Will Sommers. But, cardinall, answer me in one thing, to whom dost thou owe thy soule? To God, quoth hee. To whom thy wealth? To the poore, saies hee. Take thy forfeit, Harry, saies the foole. Open confession, open pennance. His head is thine, for to the poore at the gate I paid his debt, which hee yields is due, or if thy stony heart will not yield it so, save thy head by denying thy word and lend it mee. Thou knowest I am poore and have neyther wealth nor wit, and what thou lendest to the poore God will pay thee tenfold. * * * The king laught at the jest, and so did the cardinall for a shew, but it grieved him to jest away £10 so."

DON'T TALK OF YOUR ILLS.

People Are More Interested In the Pleasant Side of Life.

"Every one of us has his and her own ailments," writes Edward W. Bok in The Ladies' Home Journal, decrying the unpleasant habit many people have of discussing their bodily ills. "It is enough for us all to keep well ourselves. To be compelled to listen to the ailments of others does not make that task any easier. Besides all this, these unnecessary narratives of personal ailments are positively injurious to ourselves. Physicians all agree that many of the slight illnesses, of which some people make so much, could be cured if they would but take their minds from themselves. Too many people work themselves into illnesses or prevent themselves from getting well by talking about a petty ailment which, if forgotten, would right itself.

"I will not say that women, more than men, are prone to this evil, but as the majority of women have more leisure than the majority of men they are more likely to let their minds dwell upon every little ill that assails them and talk about it. It seems to me that one of the most important lessons we can all learn with the close of the year is to refrain from inflicting upon others what is purely personal to ourselves. Let us cease this tiresome, this inconsiderate, this unnecessary talk about our ailments. Cold and hard as it may seem, the fact is nevertheless true, and will ever remain so, that the vast majority of people are interested in what is pleasant in our lives, but not in what is unpleasant. Pains and sorrows are elements in our lives which are sacred and interesting only to ourselves."

Von Moltke.

Von Moltke was originally an officer in the Danish army. At the age of 9 years he was entered as a royal cadet—i. e., he was to be educated at the expense of the king, Frederick VI, in the Copenhagen Military academy—and, having taken his examinations, he wore the Danish uniform until he, as a sublieutenant at the age of 27, petitioned the king for three years' leave to proceed to the continent to study the military art, as he says in his petition, "to be able on his return to employ his acquirements for the good of his country." This petition was granted, but the count also asked to be allowed to retain his pay, and as the king refused this he took his discharge and entered the Prussian army, a recruit whom that organization has every reason to hold in enduring memory.

Papa Is Excused.

Here is the latest of an enfant terrible who lords it over the home of a politician in this city, says the Toledo Blade. The minister came to the house the other day and the kid entertained him for a short time.

"I say, I'm awful 'fraid of the dark," was his first remark.

"You should not be," admonished the visitor, "for God takes care of you everywhere."

"I know it, and I say my prayers every night, but pop he don't have to, as he don't get home till 'most morning."

Tablets said to contain the "concentrated essence of wine" find a ready sale in France. Two of them cost about 3 shillings and will produce three quarts of so called claret.

Cæsar did not say, "Et tu, Brute." Eyewitnesses of the assassination deposed that he died fighting, but silent, like a wolf.

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Vagabond Pioneers.

In The Century there is an article by the late Francis A. Walker on "The Causes of Poverty." General Walker says:

I will not inquire how many mute, inglorious Whitmans or Thoreaus there may be among the tramps of the United States, but it cannot be doubted that the outcasts of a highly sophisticated society embrace not a few who in a tribe of hunters or herdsmen or fishermen would have had a place and would perhaps have been not useless members of the body politic. Formerly in the United States we used largely to rid ourselves of this element by throwing men of that type out on to the frontier. While millions went west with undaunted resolution, boundless energy and strong ambition to make for themselves and their children homes in the lands newly opened to settlement, there went along with them no inconsiderable number who were simply uncomfortable under the requirements of an old society. They sometimes made excellent pioneers up to a certain point.

So long as all, the poorest and the best, had to live in huts, wear shabby clothes and live meanly while opening up the country and making the first hurried improvements upon the soil, these men felt at home. But when the mere camping out stage was passed, when public decency began to make its requirements and social distinctions rose into view, straightway they came to feel uneasy, uncomfortable, unhappy. Daily they cast more and more glances toward the setting sun, and before long they were again on the move, "seeking a country" where they could be as shiftless, irregular and shabby as they liked. The story of the reputable pioneer has been told in prose and in verse, but the story of the pioneer vagabond, sturdy, courageous, possibly good natured and honest, but intolerant of near neighbors and offensive to good society, has yet to be written.

Values of Autographs.

"The different values of different autographs seem astonishing at first. For example, a letter of the Duke of Wellington's can be had for 10 shillings, whereas a letter of Lord Nelson's will cost you £5."

"How is that?"

"Well, Nelson is, of course, the more popular hero. But the main reason is that Nelson, who was generally at sea, wrote few letters compared with Wellington, who was generally on land. And yet neither of these reasons holds good always. Here are a few prices that may puzzle you: A letter of Lord Beaconsfield is worth 2 guineas, but a letter of John Bright's is only worth 5 shillings, and letters of Palmerston, Sir Robert Peel and George Canning are all frequently priced under 5 shillings."

"What is a letter of Charles Dickens worth?"

"About 2 guineas."

"And one of Charles Lamb?"

"From £3 to £6."

"Byron?"

"A letter from Byron is worth fully £10, but a letter of Shelley is worth more than double that sum."

"And Burns?"

"Oh, £25 to £30 at least."—Academy.

Question of Headlines.

One who has done institutional work among the Italians for years wonders why the printed stories of affrays among those people always are headed "Stabbed by an Italian," etc. When the Irish or the Germans fight, attention is not called to their nationality in headlines, yet whenever a man with an Italian sounding name commits a crime this distinction invariably is drawn. Italians fail to see the justice in it. This particular man whose life has been spent among the Italians is sure that they do not have recourse to the stiletto as often as is represented. They are quick and sudden in quarrel, but so are the Irish. Why, then, should the Italian be singled out for obloquy?

Often, too, it is a Greek with a mutilated name who gets into a row and is credited with being an Italian. In the lower Italian quarter the Greeks and the Italians are hated rivals, and their similarity in names leads frequently to confounding their nationalities, when there is no need, according to this observer, of bringing the nationality into the question at all.—New York Press.

A Frenchwoman's Funeral.

The Paris correspondent of the London Telegraph, writing of a funeral recently held in an interior town of France, says the dead woman had been in easy circumstances and had long been beset by the odd ambition to be buried in pomp and splendor and with the accompaniment of a large crowd. With this end in view she bequeathed to her principal tenant, a steady going greengrocer, the greater part of her fortune, consisting of about $15,000, on the express condition that she should be interred in state, the hearse being drawn by six horses caparisoned in the trappings of woe, with all the usual adjuncts to match. Not content with this precaution, the worthy dame, when she perceived that her end was nigh, left legacies not only to a variety of charitable institutions, but also to the firemen of the place, to the local band and to the gymnastic clubs of the district.

All these societies were, of course, represented with becoming gratitude at the obsequies, which in scrupulous accordance with the wishes of the deceased benefactress of the lucky greengrocer and the charitable and other institutions, were on a magnificent and, indeed, colossal scale, seeing that upward of 6,000 persons belonging to all classes of society followed her mortal remains to their last resting place.

An Up Stairs Blacksmith Shop.

As is well known, the Baldwin Locomotive works are located in the heart of the city of Philadelphia, where real estate is valuable. This condition of things leads to a great many details in the construction of the works which would not be thought of under different circumstances, although, as very often happens after one has accommodated himself to circumstances in this way, the result is found to have no disadvantages, but, on the contrary, is found to be positively advantageous.

One of the features of the Baldwin works, which is a blacksmith shop, steam hammers and all, is located on the second floor. This shop does what the Baldwin works call the light work. It does not do the frame forging or other heavy work, although the work done is, as already intimated, sufficiently heavy to call for steam hammers. The entire shop contains 37 forges, served by two fans, which are driven by electric motors. A complete system of exhaust piping for carrying away the smoke is provided, which, together with the very liberal window and skylight area and elevated location, results in the cleanest and lightest shop, when the number of fires is considered, that we have ever seen.—American Machinist.

Dickens and Cruikshank.

The last time I saw Dickens was in 1863, at the funeral of William Makepeace Thackeray, to which I accompanied my father. Although December, it was as bright and sunny as a summer day. On getting out at the railway station we encountered George Cruikshank, with whom in early life Thackeray had studied etching and whose illustrations were a feature of Dickens' earlier works. Cruikshank was then in his seventieth year. He walked with us to Kensal Green cemetery, and the day being warm I carried his overcoat.

The great temperance artist was as quaint and odd in manner and appearance as any of his own caricatures. George, as his intimates called him, possessed histrionic tastes and used to appear as Macbeth and in other Shakespearean characters at Saddler's Wells. He was associated with Dickens, too, in the amateur performances in connection with the promotion of the Guild of Literature and Art. Cruikshank was also a volunteer officer, and on the occasion of some review a comic bard wrote in allusion to his temperance proclivities lines which I still recall:

Fancy Cruikshank, if you please,
On a horse with groggy knees!

—Chambers' Journal.

A Reflection.

"The deaf and dumb wonder is awfully ill tempered today," twittered the albino, by way of opening the conversation.

"What for?" inquired the dog faced man.

"Some visitor," continued the albino, "wrote on his slate that his photograph was a speaking likeness. Mad? Say!"—New York Post.