

ODDS AND ENDS.

How Balloons Are Made.

Balloons are manufactured of gold beater's skin, which, though small toy ones had been made of it, could not be produced in sufficient quantities for the large balloons until Colonel Temple invented and perfected the process, which is briefly as follows:

The gold beater's skin is made up of quantities of a certain thin animal membrane (30,000 of these are required for a balloon of 10,000 cubic feet capacity), which is first freed from all fatty substances and then soaked in a solution of glycerin and water. They are then applied to boards cut in the form and to the size of the goro of the balloon required. Others are then superposed, until a thickness of four layers has been reached, great care being taken that no air bubbles remain between the skins. After this fourth layer a method of strengthening is resorted to in the shape of a net manufactured of skin. After this net two or three more layers of membranes are applied.

The whole is then allowed to dry, and a solution of boiled linseed oil is used as a varnish. The fabric is then quite indissoluble, and the membranes cannot by any possible means be separated from one another, but sometimes, to render this homogeneity of the more perfect, a solution of bicarbonate of potash is sponged over the fabric.—*Pull Mail Magazine.*

Beautiful Viennese Women.

Vienna, the capital of Austria, is chiefly noted for producing three things—coffee, music and women. The word "jolly" describes the temper of the Viennese woman most aptly. She lives only for today and lets the morrow take care of itself. She is as good a housekeeper as her German sister, but not quite so particular. She is quite as economical, but dresses herself more artistically. She is just as good a mother, but a more loving wife. She is somewhat nervous, and the quarrel with her husband is as regular as the amen in her prayer. The truest and prettiest type of the beautiful Viennese woman is that which comes from the south. In common with the majority of her European sisters, the Viennese makes marriage her goal, but retains her girlish ways, her jolly spirit and much of her beauty, and even to guess at her age is not only a crime, but an absurdity.—*Edward A. Steiner in Woman's Home Companion.*

Blankets of Bark.

In Ecuador, one of the South American republics, the bark of a tree which grows on the slopes of the Andes is utilized for the making of blankets. The blanket is over six feet long and over five feet wide and is as soft and pliable as though it were made of flannel. It is about the thickness of a good flannel blanket and can be rolled up and put in a strap without hurting or injuring it.

This tree or bark blanket is merely a strip of bark cut from a section of the trunk of the blaplet or domagajun tree. The Indians make a cutting around the trunk to get it, and they prepare it by soaking it in water until it is soft. It is then pounded so that the rough outside can be stripped off and the inside alone left. The inside is of fine fibers so joined together by nature that it makes a beautiful blanket, warm enough to be used as a cover and soft enough for a mattress.

Poison Hemlock.

Water hemlock is a deadly plant common in most country neighborhoods. Its roots are eaten often in spring by mistake for some edible root, and death frequently results. Cattle are often poisoned by drinking water in marshes where it grows.

The poison hemlock from which the Greeks made poisons is a near relative to the water hemlock. It stands from two to seven feet high and has clusters of small white flowers and large, parsleylike leaves. The stalk, being hollow, is often made into whistles by country boys, and many children are poisoned in this fashion.

Mixed Berries.

A young tailor named Berry, lately succeeded to his father's business, once sent in his account to Charles Matthews somewhat ahead of time, whereupon Matthews, with virtuous rage, wrote him the following note:

"You must be a goose—Berry to send me your bill—Berry, before it is due—Berry. Your father, the elder—Berry, would have had more sense. You may look very black—Berry, and feel very blue—Berry, but I don't care a straw—Berry for you and your bill.—Berry."—*Cyclopaedia of Anecdotes.*

Salt For Small Change.

Besides the Marie Theresa 1780 dollars the people of Abyssinia for small change use a bar of hard crystallized salt, about 10 inches long and 2 1/4 inches broad and thick, slightly tapering toward the end, five of which go to the dollar at the capital. It is a token of affection among the natives when friends meet to give to each other a lick of their respective bars, and in this way the material value of the salt is also decreased.

Didn't Stammer All the Time.

An electrical engineer who stutters once endeavored to be cured of the habit, and for that purpose went to an institution near Boston. The manager, questioning him, asked:

"Do you stammer all the time?"

"Nun-nun-nun-no, sir; o-o-o-only w-h-u-when-when I t-t-t-talk, sir."

—*Electrical Review.*

Diamonds may be black as well as white, and some are blue, red, yellow, green, pink and orange, but there is no violet diamond, although, in addition to amethysts, there are sapphires, rubies and garnets of that color.

A man endowed with great perfection without good breeding is like one who has his pockets full of gold, but always wants change for his ordinary occasions.—*Steel.*

ANOTHER.

Ten thousand men obeyed his slightest word. He pressed a button at his desk, and lo! ten who for years had struggled on and on Avenue to find their dreams of riches gone. And bowing servants saw him come and go. He spoke, and markets rose forthwith or fell. He governed all that mighty wealth with a word! Fame, honor, power, homage, he possessed. And yesterday you would have called him blessed!—*But millionaires and paupers have to die!*

The shouting in the market still goes on, Though whispering servants tiptoe through his hall. How poor was I beside him yesterday! How rich today beside his palatial place!—*Mark that the lid and let the curtains fall.*—*S. E. Kiser in Cleveland Leader.*

VINDICATED.

When M. de Bossue returned to the court in France he was most coldly received. The king refused to see him, and the king's courtiers were quite unkind. At his sweetest's house, in the Rue des Saints Peres, the door was closed in his face. He was filled with astonishment and grief, both of which were increased when he went to see his friends. All looked askance at him, few deigned even to speak to him, and none accorded him the explanation he sought.

Too proud to question strangers and yet sensitive enough to suffer keenly under the treatment he had received, he went to his room to brood alone.

There was a mirror here, and in this he surveyed himself. The hardships of war had deprived him of his good looks. His face was drawn and haggard, his skin wrinkled, his eyes were dim, and while across his left cheek a long, disfiguring scar told where a saber had cut deep.

He left the mirror and set down dejectedly. "I am grown ugly," he said, "and poor, and therefore they shun me." He thought of his life, offered to his country and to glory, of his hard campaigns in America and the Indies, of the famous battles in which he had done his part under Montcalm and Vandreuil. "But all this," he told himself, "has been in vain. The king, my love, my friends, they are none of them left to me. The only faithful one of them all—my horse, who used to lick my hand and neigh gladly at my coming—no, too, is gone, for I have sold him. No one—nothing is left to me!"

One black thought was succeeded by another, and his gloom and melancholy increased till life seemed but a burden to be got rid of. He was a man of promptitude and decision, and, having come to this conclusion, he did not procrastinate. His pistol lay ready to his hand—one shot and the deed was done. At court they said, "M. de Bossue had the fever." Weeks and months passed, and they spoke of him no more.

But there remained to Bossue an old time friend. After serving in Spain for some ten years and growing discontented with his work M. de Comte de la Puyssaye returned to France and to the court. He gained prestige at Mmes. de Bonifant, de Chauvelin's, de Sturgis's and Luxemburg's, asked now service of the king, and solicited a regiment. He called himself a friend of Bossue. "Poor fellow!" he said, "Only 30 years old! What could have made him leave us in that way?"

His face clouded when he heard the story, for he was a brave man himself. "A coward!" he cried. "Impossible!" "But, yes," said his informant. "We repeat only what the reports said—reports which were sent to the king direct. M. de Bossue, it seems, disliked the enemy too greatly—so much so, in fact, that he could never bring himself to approach him."

"Bossue a coward!" cried the count. "He must have changed greatly, then. May not those reports have been false?" "Well, the marshal himself"—and so on. La Puyssaye heard the story repeated a score of times, and found that the mention of Bossue's name brought forth only curses or reproaches. He ended by renouncing him.

"But," he said to himself one day, "I can't forget him. I loved him well, and I believe I love him still. Very well, I shall allow myself this little eccentricity—that of loving a dishonored wretch. Bossue remains my friend, and of all the world I alone shall recall him with something other than disdain."

He hung the dead man's portrait on his wall once more. But the portrait was an old one and no longer resembled anything. La Puyssaye, discontented, wished for some other souvenir—something which Bossue had used. He thought of the horse. "Where is he now? They tell me that he sold him. That horse carried poor Bossue for ten years. I must find him."

Once, while his friend still served with him, he had seen the horse—a curious beast, of a dark yellowish color, the product of a cross between a Spanish barb and an Indian pony. He was able to furnish descriptions of the animal to certain men whom he sent in search of it.

The men were away three months. One day La Puyssaye received notice that a horse answering to the description given had been found in a field in Artois. He went to the place and bought the animal at once. It was, indeed, Bossue's extraordinary beast, the friend of his friend, old and thin, worn by the hard service before the plow and the ill treatment of the farm hands. There were the white legs, still fine as those of a racer, the long, black tail and mane and those eyes, dark, cold, clear and fixed, that made one uneasy. "Strange animal!" thought La Puyssaye.

He had it fed, groomed and saddled and set out for Paris at a rather halting gait. Much fatigued, he arrived at length. But tired as he was there was to be little rest for him. A note from the bureau of war awaited him, informing him that his request for a regiment had been granted; that it was to be known as the Grenadiers Puyssaye, and that he must join it near Fri-

bourg as soon as possible. Taking hardly time for the writing of a letter and the saying of an adieu, he departed for that place, and gratifying his own wish he went there on Bossue's horse.

His new grenadiers grumbled among themselves. "Is it with that plug," they said, "that he means to lead us?" La Puyssaye's friends looked at the beast critically. An ensign lifted his lip. "No use," said the count; "he's an old horse, and his teeth no longer mark his age."

"But why didn't you come on your Mack fellow?"

"Oh, Constantine broke his leg, and—"

—but do not laugh, messieurs—poor and old as is this charger he is good enough for the campaign. I judged that we should be only amusing ourselves here, and I did not wish to honor the enemy by riding too fast a horse."

The officers saluted smilingly, and the colonel, wishing to see the marshal, M. de Caigny, inquired the way to his quarters. Before going thither he left his horse with his orderly, who was going toward the trenches. "Bring him back to me tonight," said the count, and the man departed with the horse.

But not more than an hour had passed, and La Puyssaye was just leaving the marshal's quarters, when an attack was ordered on a strong point where 1,800 men had been killed the night before. The trumpets sounded, and the army moved to respond. All other ranks were abandoned and, with the others, their uniforms in order, their arms in readiness, the grenadiers fell into line.

Being ordered to hold his regiment in reserve, M. de la Puyssaye conducted it behind a certain embankment, then sought to go after his horse. But his friends stopped him. "Not now," they said. "The place is exposed. You would be risking your life needlessly."

La Puyssaye returned to his place and gave vent to his vexation. "Misérable orderly!" he cried. "My horse! See what he has done with my horse!"

"Gid!" exclaimed a captain in astonishment. "Why are you so concerned about the beast? From whom did you get him?"

La Puyssaye, tired of keeping his secret, revealed it. "From De Bossue. He was, alas, one of my old friends."

The news was murmured through the ranks, while the officers marveled audibly. "What an idea!" they said. "Where is he, that we may observe him again?"

"In that trench over there, which is so exposed. My orderly must have been drunk to leave him in such a place."

"Oh," cried an officer. "I have no fear! Bossue's horse! The horse of a coward! He'll crouch when the bullets fly. You'll find him again safe and sound."

"After all," said the other, "the trench covers him. He's satisfied to stay in it. He won't come out. At that moment a bomb came sailing through the air, and from the trench calmly, proudly, defiantly, the horse emerged. He stood alone in the middle of the field, in a great open place—alone. The saddle was on his back, the bit in his mouth, and, though he lowered his neck in the silence following the first bomb, he seemed waiting only for a signal on his bridle.

"The coward's horse!" thought the army.

Just then the place seemed to fill with smoke, while the city beyond trembled as with an earthquake shock—three more bombs in the ranks of France, and 15 files were cut down like so much grain.

The trumpets sounded the attack, and at that moment suddenly, magnificently, the last rays of the setting sun clothed the horse in gold. He raised his head, as the brave steed does when the battle is on, and the rider encouraged him to advance; then boldly, eagerly, joyously, he charged on the city at a gallop. Deaf to the thunder of the cannon, indifferent to the shot that whistled about him, glad to sniff again the smoke of powder, to feel once more the excitement of the combat, the gallant horse dashed on and on—a sublime spectacle for a whole army to witness.

What moved him to rush on the enemy so madly, to affront death so grandly? Was it the memory of Bossue's glorious battles? Was it the force of a habit acquired after a score of engagements—the result of a lesson learned on many fields?

They who followed swiftly after him did not know, but they swore afterward that they had seen a hand on his bridle, feet pressing his sides, a shadowy form on his back, and for one brief instant a face, with a long scar on its left cheek and a look such as no coward ever wore.

The poor beast at length fell, bleeding from a score of wounds, but he had done enough. In the eyes of the army he whose horse this had been was vindicated. Bossue was not a coward.—*From the French For Argonne.*

Coal Used by Romans. It is believed by some historians that coal was used by the Romans on the island before the arrival of Cleopatra. As early as 134 Henry III granted a license to dig coal near Newcastle, but a few years later the use of coal was forbidden in London, the smoke being deemed prejudicial to public health. In 1806 the London gentry petitioned the king against its use, declaring that, in spite of his royal order, certain malicious persons persisted in burning it. Coals began to be brought from Newcastle to London in 1831, during the reign of Richard II. By the year 1400 coal was commonly burned in London as a fuel, though 200 years later, in the reign of Charles I, its use was far from being general throughout England.

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