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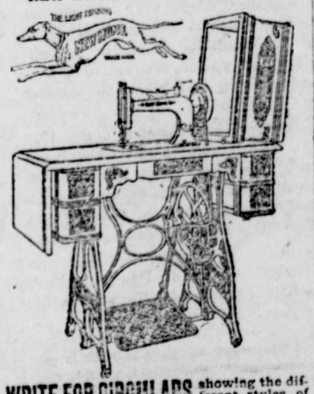

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Mercury and Venus.

Astronomers generally now admit that the more recent studies of the planets Mercury and Venus tend to confirm Schiaparelli's opinion, advanced some years ago, that both of them turn on their axes once while revolving about the sun. This, however, is a very difficult point to settle with certainty, the reason given for this being, and very plausibly, that the evidence rests upon observation of the exceedingly faint markings upon the disks of the planets, the fact being that very few astronomers have ever seen them at all with distinctness, and only those who have made a most persistent study of them and are favored with vision especially sensitive to such details are competent to express an opinion as to their correct interpretation.

It is argued that if, as held by some, the rotation and revolution periods are the same be a correct opinion, then the climatic conditions of the two planets must be most remarkable. Furthermore, our moon always shows the same face to the earth and no knowledge exists of the hidden part, nor have the supposed inhabitants of that concealed hemisphere ever seen the earth. This, however, is of no importance to them, as the earth is not the source of light, heat and life on the moon. All parts of the moon are brought under the sun's influence just as all parts of the earth, though the day and night are 14 times as long as on the earth. But how it must be on a planet which has one side only exposed to the sun, astronomers can give no answer.—Exchange.

Prevention of Disease.

Mr. Miles Menander Dawson, a consulting actuary and author of standard works on life insurance, says in an interview: "From one-fifth to one-half of the deaths that occur in youth and middle age could be prevented by a decent regard for sanitary conditions and by common action of society for the benefit of all. It is not enough that a man should take care of himself. Disease is communicable, and protecting man against it is a social function.

"Fully one-fifth of the total number of deaths are caused by zymotic diseases which are as purely accidental as falling and breaking a leg. And one-fourth of the deaths in addition are from digestive and respiratory diseases, almost all of which are preventable. About 17 per cent of the deaths among insured lives is from consumption and 5 per cent from nervous diseases, all of which are now believed to be preventable.

"This means that fully one-half of the deaths among young and middle aged persons could be prevented and the proportion could no doubt be greatly increased if parents paid a proper respect to the laws of heredity. It would certainly be a most important achievement for the human race if united action could be taken to secure that a larger proportion of persons would attain old age than at present."—Ainslee's Magazine.

He Did Not Have It.

William Lightfoot Visscher in The Woman's Home Companion tells this characteristic story of the Hon. Isaac Parker, famous as the terrible judge at Fort Smith, Ark., who probably sentenced more men to be executed than any other judge that ever lived. This was not, however, because he was so unrelentingly severe, but because he had the hardest and most numerous lot of criminals to deal with that ever came within the jurisdiction of such an official. One day when there was an unusually large batch of culprits to be sentenced the judge looked compassionately over his spectacles at one young scamp and said:

"In consideration of the youth and inexperience of this prisoner I shall let him off with a fine of $50"—

Before the judge had done speaking the very fresh young man coolly stretched his right leg and ran his hand into his trousers' pocket on the side, remarking nonchalantly as he did so:

"That's all hunky, judge. I've got that much right here in my jeans."

"And one year in the penitentiary," continued the judge. Then, looking over at the convict in a quizzical sort of way, he added. "Do you happen to have that in your jeans?"

Queer Thing, Chance.

"I was at Monte Carlo last year," said a New York turfman, "and was amused watching the gamblers in the casino playing systems. If red would win, say, four times hand running, everybody would double up on black. The more times one color showed in succession the bigger were the bets on the other, which was mathematically an error, although you couldn't convince a gambler of it. Once while I was there red won 12 times, and over 40,000 francs were staked on black. One lone player had the nerve to put 50 francs on red. It won, and he let the bet lay, and it won again. Then everybody got a sudden idea it would win once more, and it was played to the limit. That time black showed."

"Did you ever hear about runs of color?" asked somebody.

"I did over there," replied the man who had been to Monte Carlo. "It is generally believed that when one color wins the odds are in favor of it winning twice more. There's no sense in it, but the records of the game do a good deal to confirm the superstition. Queer thing, chance."

Couldn't Chill His Wit.

Mme. Modjeska and her company were playing one winter in the extreme north, much to the discomfort of Count Bozenta, the Polish star's husband, who hates the chilly northern climate. But at that time the show business was at a very low ebb in the south. One particularly cold day Mme. Modjeska found the count shivering from head to foot in spite of the steam heat in the hotel.

"Oh, my dear, my dear!" he implored. "Let us go south for the rest of the season. This climate will kill us."

"But, my dear," replied madame, "the south is dead."

"Yes," said the count, "but she is such a be-autiful corpse."

Time to Wake.

Judge Wheaton A. Gray was hearing a criminal case in Fresno, and on a warm day, at the end of a long harangue by the prosecuting counsel, he noticed one of the jurymen asleep. As soon as the argument was completed, the judge addressed the jury in this peculiar manner: "Gentlemen of the jury, the prosecuting attorney has completed his argument. Wake up and listen to the instructions of the court."—Argonaut.

A New One or None.

Mrs. Proudfoot—Yes, Mrs. Malaprop, that's an heirloom. It's been in Mr. Proudfoot's family over 100 years.

Mrs. Malaprop—Do tell! I've been nagging at John Henry to get an heirloom ever since we moved to the city, but he can't find any, except second-hand ones, and I won't have them.—Jewelers' Weekly.

The Chinese government does all in its power to check the opium habit, the punishments common in the Chinese army for this habit being extreme. For the first offense a man may have his upper lip cut; for the second he may be decapitated.

In regard to longevity the clergy stand at the head of the professions and physicians near the bottom, below coal merchants, milkmen and grocers.

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Had Nerve as Well as Weight.

In one of the newspaper composing rooms in this city there is a typesetting machine operator who is a great lover of horse racing. A good share of his wages goes to the bookmakers at the local tracks during the racing season, although for some reason he never acquired the poolroom habit and has always refused to put down a bet unless he was "there to see how the dogs ran." He is fully six feet tall and weighs about 200 pounds. His size suggested a joke to one of his friends during the racing season last summer.

"Going to Sheepshead Bay today?" the friend asked.

"I'd like to, but if I go I won't have much left to bet with."

"I can give you a jockey's badge," said the friend.

"Gimme it," replied the printer, eagerly, never realizing the ridiculous contrast between his size and that of even the heavyweight jockeys. Armed with the jockey's badge, he presented himself at the race track gate and showed his badge. The ticket taker looked at him in astonishment.

"Great Scott!" he finally blurted out, "wot do you ride—the elephant?"

"There's one entered in the fifth race," was the reply. And his nerve so paralyzed the gatekeeper that he was admitted.—New York Sun.

Hot Times.

"I can remember a good many years back," said a Detroit veteran in politics, "and, whatever may be said as to the integrity of our present statesmen, campaigns are conducted in a great deal more moderate tone than they used to be. Then it was the usual thing to indulge in the strongest possible abuse of men and parties.

"I once heard a joint debate between a couple of candidates for our legislature that will serve to illustrate. They taunted and berated each other till all other questions were lost sight of in the popular anxiety to see which excelled in this style of warfare.

"Finally the hotter headed of the two burst out in an announcement that he could whip his rival or any of his friends.

"'That reminds me,' said the other coolly, 'of a dog my father used to have that could whip any dog in the neighborhood or any that came that way with the teamsters.'

"'What's the application, sir?' roared the other. 'I'll stand no innuendoes, sir. Make your application, if you dare.

"'It is simply this, my pugnacious friend—no one ever thought of sending father's dog to the legislature.'"

The fire eater remained at home.—Detroit Free Press.

A Beetle That Cuts Metal.

There is no use trying to keep in confinement a curious little creature known as the metal cutting beetle.

Not long ago an entomologist caught one of these beetles and, unaware of its peculiar ability for sawing through anything in its way, put it in a cardboard box. Soon tiring of solitary confinement, or probably thinking its captor had forgotten to provide it with a door, the beetle cut one for itself and crawled out.

It was captured and put in a wooden box, and as soon as the novelty of its new home wore off, again the persevering insect cut a hole in the box and escaped.

The next time the escaped prisoner was caught it was put in a small glass jar with a tight fitting pewter cover. punctured to let in air. But the metal cutting beetle from Mexico scorned to live in a pepper box and gnawed a hole big enough to allow it to creep out into the big world again. And this time it was not caught.

Let It Leak.

Mrs. Rousem (early in the morning)—John, John! Don't you smell escaping gas?

John (sleepily)—I don't care if I do. It's the hotel's gas. I don't have to pay for it.—Philadelphia North American.

Primitive Pipes.

The earliest Indian pipes were simply tubes, in one end of which the tobacco or dried leaves were put. It has been found that the pipes used by the ancient Romans were made on the same plan, the bowl being an invention reserved for a comparatively recent day. It is worthy mentioning incidentally that the cigarette is really an invention of the Indians. They made cigarettes just like those now in use, with wrappers of the thinnest corn husks.

There is a popular notion, by the way, that paper used for modern cigarettes is destructive to health and apt to be saturated with drugs. Facts do not warrant this idea, inasmuch as the best cigarette paper is quite harmless, being made out of new linen rags, from the refuse left over in the manufacture of shirts and other linen garments.

There is no such thing as rice paper. What is known as such is the pith of a plant cut in thin slices used by the Chinese for painting pictures.—Science Siftings.

Ireland Called Many Names.

Few countries have suffered so many changes of name as Ireland. In the time of Ptolemy the island was known as Scotia. Diodorus Siculus calls the island Irs, or Irisi; in the "De Mundo," credited by some scholars to Aristotle, it is called Irenne; in the "Argonautica of Orpheus" it appears as Irinus; Strabo calls it Irene; Cæsar, Tacitus and Pliny mention it as Hibernia; Mela called it Juverna. The native names in Celtic are Ir, Eri, or Erin. Plutarch mentions it under the name of Ogygia. The name Ireland is no doubt derived from the native Ir or Eri, but when it came into general use is a question concerning which scholars are much at variance.

Judicial Levity.

The police justice, who had the reputation of being a strictly upright and honest officer of the law and had little business in consequence, looked lugubriously at the frayed edges of the judicial coat.

"I am sorry," he said, "but I shall have to bind you over."—Chicago Tribune.

From the day that a young man starts out to seek his first position to the end of his business life, his health has a world to do with his success. When a young man applies to a business man for a position, his personal appearance has a deal to do with the outcome. "Personal appearance" does not mean dress alone. It does not mean exterior cleanliness alone. A young man may be clean, so far as soap and water will make him, but be disfigured by unsightly pimples, eruptions and ulcerations on the skin. These are due to impurities in the blood. The blood becomes impure because it is improperly nourished. Instead of receiving the life-giving elements of the food, it receives the foul emanations of indigestion, biliousness and costiveness.

The reason that Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery is the best remedy for disorders of this description is that it goes right to first causes. It gives a man an appetite "like a horse." It facilitates the flow of digestive juices. It corrects all disorders of the digestion, and makes the assimilation of the life-giving elements of the food perfect. It invigorates the liver. It purifies and enriches the blood. It makes the muscles strong and active. It tones and steadies the nerves. It makes a young man look as he should—strong of body, alert of brain and clean and wholesome of skin. Medicine dealers sell it, and have nothing "just as good."

"I had eczema in its worst form," writes Austin Ramsey, Esq., of Saltillo, Huntingdon Co., Pa. "I tried three doctors but got no relief. I thought it would set me wild. It itched and burned so badly. The neighbors thought I would never be cured. I took your 'Golden Medical Discovery' and am now well."