

THE BEST AND THE WORST.

It Depends Upon the Use to Which the Human Tongue is Put.

It is said by Æsop, the celebrated fabulist, that he was at one time the servant of a philosopher named Xanthus. One day Xanthus wished to give a grand dinner to some of his distinguished friends, and he instructed Æsop to buy for the occasion the very best things in the market. Æsop went to market, purchased a great number of tongues, and told the cook to serve them with different sauces.

When the dinner was ready there was tongue in all styles and not one thing else. Xanthus was enraged. He called Æsop to him and said:

"I ordered you to buy the very best things in the market. Why did you not obey me?"

"I did obey you, master," Æsop replied. "Is there anything better than tongue? Is not the tongue the bond of civil society, the key of science and the organ of truth and reason? Is it not by means of the tongue that cities are built and governments established and instructed? Do not men instruct, persuade and preside in assemblies by using their tongues?"

"I'll excuse you this time," said Xanthus, "for your reasoning is truly good; but these same friends will dine with me tomorrow, and as I wish to diversify my entertainment, go to the market again and buy the worst things you can find."

The dinner the next day consisted of nothing but tongue. Xanthus, violently angry, demanded an explanation of Æsop.

"Master," said the servant, "you told me to buy for this dinner the worst things I could find. Is there anything worse than tongue? Is not the tongue the instrument of strife and contention, the fomentor of lawsuits and the source of divisions and wars? Is not the tongue the organ of error, of falsehood, of calumny, of blasphemy?"

Æsop was not punished, for he convinced Xanthus that the tongue, when used aright, is the best of all things, and the very worst when put to a wrong use.

Warned in a Dream.

On the occasion of a fatal accident to a lift in a Paris hotel some years ago a lady who was just going up in it started back, saying, "Oh, there is that dreadful man again!" and tried to induce her husband to come off it, too, but he refused and was among the killed. The "dread-

ful man" to whom she referred she had seen in a dream, which the niece of the friend who told me the story had heard her relate a day or two before the accident. It was of a funeral drawn up at her door, so pompous as to produce a great impression on her, presided over by a big dark man in a strange sombrero hat. This man she saw, or believed she saw, in the lift and the coincidence terrified her from going up in it.—London Notes and Queries.

When Children Smoked.

In Anne's reign almost every one in England smoked. In Charles II.'s reign "children were sent to school with their pipes in their satchels, and the schoolmaster called a halt in their studies while they smoked."

In 1702 Jorevin spent an evening with his brother at Garraway's coffee house, Leeds, and writes: "I was surprised to see his sickly child of three years old fill its pipe of tobacco and smoke it as audaciously as a man of threescore. After that a second and third pipe without the least concern, as it is said to have done above a year ago."

But Yet a Man.

"I suppose I have about the most thoughtful, kind and considerate husband in the world," she was saying sadly. "When he comes home at about 2 of the morning, turns all the lights on and wakes me out of a sound sleep he always says in the most polite way imaginable:

"Don't let me disturb you, dear. But will you please help me unfasten this collar button?"—New York Press.

The Child's Advice.

Little Arthur stood peering down into the countenance of his baby sister, whom the nurse was singing to sleep.

"Say, nurse," he finally whispered, "it's nearly unconscious, isn't it?"

The nurse nodded in the affirmative and sang on.

"Then don't sing any more or you'll kill it!"—Lippincott's.

Frosty!

"Dora, would you be willing to marry a young man who has to make his own way in the world and who has nothing but his love for you to recommend him?"

"Certainly, Gerald, if I cared enough for him, but at present I don't know of any such young man. Frosty weather, isn't it?"—Chicago Tribune.

QUEER JUSTICE.

Abaya Couldn't Understand It, For He Did His Best to Kill.

A story that illustrates one of the extraordinary points of view with which American officials in the Philippines have to deal is told by former Commissioner Dean C. Worcester in the National Geographic Magazine.

A wild Tinguian named Abaya had a comisionado or agent who sold his products for him at the provincial capital of North Ilocos. The comisionado in turn had a Negro slave, whom he suspected of designing to escape. When Abaya came in with a black load of tobacco, the comisionado told him to take his head ax and kill the slave, who was cutting firewood in the neighboring grove. The comisionado further told Abaya that he himself would kill a big hog and give him half of it in payment for the service. Abaya cheerfully sought out the unsuspecting Negro, whom he attempted to decapitate with a terrific blow.

The Negro jumped in the nick of time, and the keen edge of the head ax struck his shoulder instead of his neck, inflicting a dreadful wound. Why he did not drop in his tracks and die no one can explain, but in point of fact he ran away so fast that his would be executioner could not catch him.

When Abaya returned from the unsuccessful pursuit he was immediately arrested on a charge of attempted murder and incarcerated in the provincial jail.

When he came before the judge and was asked whether he had tried to kill the Negro he replied that he had made an earnest attempt to carry out the instructions of his comisionado, since it was his custom to obey the "authorities." He insisted that he was not to blame for the Negro's escape; any ordinary man would have died promptly of the injury he had managed to inflict, and it was no fault of his that the Negro had displayed such extraordinary vitality. He added that he had done his best to run the Negro down and was guiltless of any intention to let him escape.

What was the judge to do in such a case? What he did do was to give Abaya the minimum penalty under the law for having inflicted lesions graves (serious injuries) on the Negro. When I got Abaya pardoned some time later he still believed that he had been in prison for failing to kill the Negro.

SHRAPNEL CASES.

Fearful Forces They Must Resist Before Time For Explosion.

The shrapnel is really a flying cannon which shoots its charge while in flight or explodes on impact. Its design involves many interesting features, as the case must be strong enough to withstand the bursting pressure and the stresses developed in firing. The smaller cases are now made from bar stock on automatic turret machines at less than the cost of the forgings previously used.

The design and making of a shrapnel case have more behind them than appears on the surface, for, in addition to being a piece of steel turned and bored to the right dimensions, the case must have special mechanical properties.

It must be able to withstand a pressure of from 30,000 to 35,000 pounds per square inch from the powder which drives it out of the gun, though it is tested to 40,000 pounds. In addition to this, it must resist the charge of explosive in the base of the case. This base charge drives the head and balls out of the case when a time or distance fuse is used or explodes it on impact with the earth or any other resisting substance.

This expelling or bursting charge exerts a pressure varying from 20,000 to 25,000 pounds per square inch. Further than this, the tensional stress when the case is started whirling through the rifling of the gun by the force behind it must be counted. This rotation starts the instant the shell begins its movement from the breech of the gun, and when we consider that by the time it leaves the muzzle it must have attained a velocity of 1,700 feet per second we can begin to see how an acceleration of 500,000 feet per second is attained.

These pressures explain why it is necessary to make the cases of such high quality material, a tensile strength of 135,000 pounds to the square inch, an elastic limit of 110,000 pounds per square inch, an elongation in two inches of 11 per cent and the contraction of area 25 per cent.—American Machinist.

Obesity Saved England's Liberty.

The mode in which that bulwark of England's constitution, the habeas corpus act, became a law is very remarkable. So grave a historian as Bishop Burnet relates that it was carried by an "odd artifice." Lords Grey and Norris were named to be tellers. Lord Norris, being a man subject to vapors, was not at all times attentive to what he was doing; so, a very fat lord coming in, Lord Grey counted him for ten, as a jest at first, but seeing that Lord Norris had not observed it he went on with his misreckoning of ten, so it was reported to the house and declared that they who were for the bill were in the majority.—London Chronicle.

Ancient Enamels.

It is certain that glazes having the composition of good enamels were manufactured at a very early date. Excellent glazes are still preserved, and some of the bricks which have been found among the ruins of Babylon have been ascribed to the seventh or eighth century B. C. The glaze on the Babylonian bricks was found upon examination to have a base of soda glass or silicate of sodium. Glazes of a similar character were also manufactured by the Egyptians as early as the sixth dynasty. There can be little doubt that the Greeks and Etruscans were also acquainted with the art of enameling.

No Need to Call Him.

A curious person of a certain town, who loved to find out everything about the new residents, espied the son of a new neighbor one morning in a doctor's office.

"Good morning," he said. "Little boy, what is your name?"

"Same as dad's," was the quick reply.

"Of course, I know, little boy, but what is your dad's name, dear?"

"Same as mine, sir."

Still he persisted. "I mean what do they say when they call you to breakfast?"

"They don't never call me; I allus gets there first."—Exchange.

The Word "Execute."

To "execute" means "to carry out or to perform." The law, for example, may be "executed" on a prisoner. But to say that the prisoner is "executed" is a blunder as inexcusable as it is frequent. The sentence is executed. But the man himself is killed, not "executed."

SCALES OF FISHES.

Some Too Tiny to Be Seen, Others as Big as Silver Dollars.

All true fishes have scales, but in some they are so minute or so deeply imbedded in the skin as to be imperceptible. In most kinds, however, they are distinct enough, and in the pompano and the kingfish of the gulf of Mexico, which affords magnificent sport to anglers, they are sometimes almost as big as silver dollars and are used to make ornaments.

Scales vary greatly in thickness and strength as well as in size. They serve as an armor for the fish, not only against the attacks of enemies, but against parasites and infections of all kinds. When a fish's scales are torn by wounds or accident a fungus is almost certain to take root, develop and finally kill the fish. It is to protect the animal still further that a sort of slime oozes continually from pores in the skin and spreads over the surface of the scales.

The size and strength of the scales of a fish are in direct relation to its habits of life. The eel and catfish, which have no external armor, lurk near the bottom and among weeds and escape assault by floundering in the mud. Perch and trout, which live in clear water, have stronger and bigger scales, and the best armor belongs to those fishes which are themselves predatory. Most scales show lines of growth on the upper surface, and the number of spawning periods it has passed through and the injuries it has suffered can be read by those who understand the markings.

The most complete and effective armor among fishes is that of the gars or billfish of our American and some African rivers. Here the scales do not overlap, but are lozenge shaped and joined at the edges, like the pieces of a mosaic. Instead of being rounded and horny, they are composed of an ivory-like enamel. This was characteristic of the fishes of that very primitive age called silurian. The seas were then filled with fish, some of great size and ferocity, which had solid, pavement-like armor of this kind and are known as ganoids. A few small species of this primitive type have survived to the present. One reason may be that, except in infancy, they are safe from ordinary enemies.—Youth's Companion.

Men and Earrings.

Earrings were largely affected in England by the male courtiers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—a fashion which seems to have been imported from Spain and which mightily shocked the Puritans. Usually only one ear was ornamented, as in the portrait of the Earl of Somerset in the National gallery. The Duke of Buckingham was famous for his diamond earrings, while other great men who followed this mode were Shakespeare and Sir Walter Raleigh.

The last notable example of men wearing earrings seems to have been Charles I. himself, who hung a large pearl in his left ear, which he presented upon the scaffold to a faithful follower.

London and Paris.

There is evidence to show that London was a considerable town before the Roman invasion. Its Celtic name was Lyndin (lake fort). Tacitus, in the first century, calls it Londinium and describes it as a flourishing place. The earliest notice of Paris is in Caesar's "Commentaries." Caesar called it Lutetia and described it as a collection of mud huts. Lutetia began in the fourth century to be known as Parisia or Paris, and in the sixth century was selected by Clovis as the seat of government. Of the two cities London is undoubtedly the more ancient, though how much older it is impossible to say.

Real Rattler.

Jimmy—I was walking in the woods when all at once I came on the biggest kind of a rattlesnake. Pa—How do you know it was a rattlesnake, Jimmy? Jimmy—By the way my teeth rattled as soon as I saw him.—Exchange.

Brutal

"Why are you always saying that I am so changeable?" complained Mrs. Gabb.

"You never wear the same complexion twice," returned Mr. Gabb.

A Facer.

Alice—My face is my fortune. Ethel—You'll have no income tax to pay, dear.

OVER AN ABYSS.

A Narrow Escape From a Broken Snow Bridge in the Arctic.

The perils of travel over the ice cap of Greenland are often mentioned in "Lost In the Arctic" by Captain Einar Mikkelsen. Whichever he and his companions made a ledge journey they met again and again with uncomfortably narrow escapes. Often the treacherous snow collapsed beneath their feet and left them gasping on the edge of a deep ice fissure. Some of the snow bridges over wide crevasses are safe; others suddenly and unexpectedly break. Naturally it was not pleasant to crawl out on these bridges to test their strength before sending the dog team over. But it had to be done. Captain Mikkelsen tells the story of one such crossing:

I pull myself together, tie a rope round my waist and give Iverson the other end. He sits down on the edge of the crevasse with his feet braced hard against the solid snow and hangs on to the rope, while I creep out slowly and cautiously distributing my weight over as large an area as possible. Every time I drive the ice spear in I can hear the hollow sound beneath me. It means a fall of perhaps a thousand feet if the snow gives way. If the bridge holds up to the middle we reckon that it is safe, and if it bears me as I walk back we reckon that we can take the sledges over. Slowly and cautiously I get up, stand a moment balancing on my feet, and then back I go, while Iverson hauls in on the rope. I tread as heavily, as I dare and try not to think about what will happen if it does not bear.

We get the sledges over somewhat to our surprise. We drive over other fissures and, growing bolder, cease to think of danger. There is a very broad one ahead, which I get over all right with my sledge, but just as I am turning round to see how the other sledge is getting on I hear a shout from Iverson.

As I look round he is hanging down halfway through the snow of the bridge, a good ten feet of it has fallen away behind him. He clutches the sledge, which is still hanging over the abyss, but the dogs do not seem to notice anything, they simply keep on pulling, and soon Iverson and the sledge are once more on firm ground.

"See that?" said Iverson, glancing back at the hole and looking quite pleased with himself. "Near go, wasn't it?"

Sleep Talkers.

It is a curious fact that people when talking in their sleep are always truthful and never evasive, but if their feelings are played upon by their questioner they will betray great anger. Their eyes are always tightly closed, and the intonation of the voice is very different from the tones used when the person is fully awake. Sleep talkers may by conversation be brought to remember a dream within a dream, and they will recollect what happened in preceding dreams. Very often mental anxiety will make people talk in their sleep when under other conditions they would never do it.—

Willing to Advise Him.

Excited Individual—See here, Mr. Bangs, you are a scoundrel of the first water. When I bought that hoss I supposed I was getting a good sound animal, but he's spavined and blind and got the heaves. Now, I want to know what you're going to do about it?

Bangs—Something ought to be done, that's a fact.

Excited Individual—Well, I should say there had.

Bangs—Well, tomorrow I'll give you the name of a good veterinary surgeon. It's a shame to have that horse suffer in that way.—New York Globe.

A Trick of the Trade.

"Stop!" thundered the client at the barber, who was cutting his hair. Then, says the New York Staats Zeitung, he continued, in somewhat milder tones:

"Why do you insist upon telling me these horrible, blood curdling stories of ghosts and robbers while you are cutting my hair?"

"I'm very sorry, sir," replied the barber, "but, you see, when I tell stories like that to my clients their hair stands on end, and it makes it ever so much easier to cut."

Paw Knows Everything.

Willie—Paw, what is the mother tongue?

Paw—The language of Mars, my son.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

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