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A CLEVER RUSE.

The Proposal Seemed Innocent, but It Yielded Results.

Some years ago a wealthy merchant in Paris who did an extensive business with Japan was informed that a prominent firm in Yokohama had failed, but the name of the firm he could not learn, though he was most anxious to ascertain whether it was the one with which he did most business in that city.

He could have learned the truth by cabling, but instead he went to the man, a well known banker, who had received the news, and requested him to reveal the name of the firm to him.

"That's a very delicate thing to do," replied the banker, "for the news is not official, and if I gave you the name I might incur some responsibility."

The merchant argued, but in vain, and finally he made a proposition. "I will give you," he said, "a list of ten firms in Yokohama, and I will ask you to look through it and then to tell me without mentioning any name whether or not the name of the firm which has failed appears in it. Surely you will do that for me?"

"Yes," said the banker, "for if I do not mention any name I cannot be held responsible in any way."

The list was made. The banker looked through it and as he handed it back to the merchant said, "The name of the firm which has failed is there."

"Then I've lost heavily," replied the merchant, "for that is the firm with which I did business," showing him a name on the list.

"But how do you know that is the firm which has failed?" asked the banker in surprise.

"Very easily," replied the merchant. "Of the ten names on the list only one is genuine—that of the firm with which I did business. All the others are fictitious."

Spider Republics.

The spider has usually been regarded as a type of the solitary among animals, each individual preferring to live alone. But naturalists have discovered exceptions to this rule, and among the most remarkable are three species of spiders in Venezuela. The most interesting of these, the Uloborus republicanus, seems to be truly republican in its instincts, several hundreds of individuals dwelling together in huge webs made up of smaller webs linked together by strong threads and fastened among the branches of trees. On these webs the spiders can be seen moving freely about, meeting and exchanging greetings with their antennae like so many ants. In the center of the main web is a space where the eggs of the entire republic are laid and where at the proper season the female spiders can be seen assembled, each guarding her own.—Harper's Weekly.

Racing in Queen Anne's Time.

Racing is a very different affair from what it was when Queen Anne, most sporting of English queens, instituted Ascot races, and ran her famous horses, Mustard, Pepper and Star. Horses intended for racing were always kept tightly girt, with the idea that it rendered them more swift, and, as for feeding, the old time trainer believed in giving them a liberal amount of soaked bread, supplemented a day or two before the race with fresh eggs. And the jockeys instead of sporting light silk jackets were incased in full suits of the stiffest taffeta, while, as if the applause of the crowd were not considered sufficient, drums and trumpets greeted the winner.—London Chronicle.

Lives of Animals.

Animals vary greatly in the length of their lives. Elephants, eagles and parrots may celebrate their hundredth birthday, but our domesticated beasts are thought to be aged when they have reached a quarter of a hundred. A horse is old at twenty, a donkey at twenty-five and a cat or dog at fifteen. The span of existence allotted to insects is shorter still, the fly and the butterfly commonly enjoying but one summer of vigorous life and then being taken off by the cold if they are not previously snapped up by a bird.

The Exploit That Counted.

Two Staten Island youngsters came home sopping wet.

"We jumped in after a lady," they said.

Then one of the pair showed his mother a five dollar bill that the woman had given him.

"She gimme that," said he, "because I saved her pocketbook."

"And didn't she give you anything?" said their mother to the other boy. "I thought you helped."

"I did," said he, "but I didn't save anything but the lady."—New York Press.

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