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WHERE CHESS RULES.

All the People, Young and Old, Play the Game in Strohbeck.

Chess is king in the German town of Strohbeck. All the inhabitants, young and old, men and women, boys and girls, play at the ancient game with a skill and assiduity that are more than remarkable. Youngsters absorb the intricacies of the royal game just as they learn their A B C, and the Strohbeck child is ever a match for the average player elsewhere.

Chess is taught in the schools of Strohbeck, and the pupils carry chessboards as the American school child carries his satchel of books. The whole town breathes an atmosphere of chess.

Visit any local shop and the shopman will lay aside his chessboard in order to attend to your wants and pick it up the moment these are satisfied, to renew his attention upon some problem or to continue an exciting game with his assistant. At the cafes and other places of refreshment chessboards and chessmen are provided for the entertainment of visitors.

Should you visit one of the old inns of the place called "The Chessboard" the genial landlord will show you, should you appear worthy of the honor, a set of chessmen presented to it in 1650. Two princes, the story runs, played upon this board and with these chessmen. The inscription on the board itself confirms all the town's privileges, so that in a way it may be said that the charter of the place is engrossed upon a chessboard.

The extraordinary popularity of chess in Strohbeck is accounted for by a tradition concerning a certain Graf Gummelin, who was imprisoned in the tower there in the year A. D. 1011. He chalked out a chessboard on his dungeon floor and made some rough pieces. In time the jailer became interested in the Graf's maneuvers on the checkered field, and the two played together. The jailer ultimately taught the game to others, and it won a popularity which it has never lost in the quaint German town.

On to His Job.
Railroad men are telling this incident as having occurred on a Kansas train some time ago: The rails spread and the engine, tender and baggage car left the track, but the jar was not hard enough to disturb the sleepers in the rear Pullmans. In the last Pullman the porter was shining shoes and, thinking the train was stopping at an unusual place, he went ahead to see about the difficulty. He was told that within a couple of hours the engine could be put back and the track repaired. So he got busy with his shoes again.

Suddenly a head popped out of one of the berths, and a man shouted:
"Say, porter, what are we stopping here for?"
"Oh," answered the porter, "we had a wreck!"
"A wreck? Wow! Oh-oh-oh-wow! My neck! My chest! My back! Oh-oh-oh!"—Kansas City Journal.

The Scottish Thistle.
The origin of the thistle as the national badge of Scotland is thus given by tradition. When the Danes invaded Scotland it was deemed unwarlike to attack the enemy by night instead of in pitched battle by day, but on one occasion the invaders tried a night attack. In order to prevent their tramp being heard they marched barefooted, and they had succeeded in creeping close up to the Scottish forces unobserved when one of them stepped on a thistle and uttered a cry of pain. The alarm was given, and the attack was beaten off. Out of gratitude the thistle was adopted as the insignia of Scotland.—London Chronicle.

Silence.
Silence is the element in which great things fashion themselves together, that at length they may emerge full formed and majestic into the daylight of life, which they are henceforth to rule. All the considerable men I have known forebore to babble of what they were creating and projecting. Nay, in their own perplexities do thou thyself but hold thy tongue for one day; on the morrow how much clearer are thy purposes and duties; what wreck and rubbish have these mute workmen within thee swept away when intrusive noises were shut out!—Maurice Maeterlinck.

Enjoying Bad Health.
"There goes Mrs. Whinger. She enjoys bad health."
"Did I understand you to say she 'enjoys' bad health?"
"Exactly. Nothing gives her more pleasure than describing her symptoms." — Birmingham Age-Herald.

A PRAIRIE AND A LAKE.

Sometimes It is the One and Sometimes the Other.

Among the strange things to be met with in Florida is a section of country which changes with the seasons and is alternately a prairie and a lake. It is two miles south of Gainesville, and at certain times strangers wonder why it is called a "prairie," for they look out upon a broad stretch of water so deep that a storm churns its surface into rolling whitecapped billows. At times the commerce of the lake is done by steamer, while at other times you can go over the same route in a stage, from the wheels of which clouds of dust roll.

On the edge of the prairie, half walled in by rock and dense with immense trees draped in long festoons of moss, is a pool of water called "The Sink." Its depth has never been sounded.

From it an underground river flows and makes its way no one knows where. Some time an acre of land, trees and all, will fall into the underground river, and then the drainage of the prairie becomes obstructed and the prairie goes dry. In a year or two the river will sweep around the obstruction and the prairie becomes wet.

There are a number of these sinks in the neighborhood of Gainesville, all of them as round as a dollar and averaging from a quarter to a half acre in extent.

A little way north of Gainesville is a pretty and mysterious spot called the "Devil's Millhopper." A large stream of water comes down hill with considerable force and disappears in a pool that has no visible outlet.

Near Brooksville there is another pool very similar to the Devil's Millhopper. A stream of water pours into it and is swallowed up in a whirlpool in the center. Throw a log in it and it will be carried around the pool many times, gradually drawing nearer to the center. When it reaches the center it suddenly disappears. The people in the neighborhood do not dare to go too near the Brooksville pool, and it would be a very bold man who would launch a boat and trust himself upon it.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Hidden Warning.
It is recorded in history that when Darius, king of Persia, invaded Scythia the ruler of the latter country, Idanthuras, sent him a message consisting of a mouse, a frog, a bird, an arrow and a plow. The wisest men of the army puzzled over the meaning of it, which was conjectured to be that the empire was surrendered. It was supposed that the mouse signified the dwellings, the frog the waters, the bird the air, the arrow the arms and the plow the land. But it turned out eventually that the interpretation intended was that unless Darius and his soldiers could fly like birds, burrow like mice or betake themselves like frogs to the water they would never escape the weapons of the Scythians and make their way out of the country.

The Wickedest Bit of Sea.
Nine out of ten travelers would tell inquirers that the roughest piece of water is that cruel stretch in the English channel, and nine out of ten travelers would say what was not true. As a matter of fact, "the wickedest bit of sea," says a shipping journal, is not in the Dover strait or in yachting, for example, from St. Jean de Luix up to Pauillac or across the Mediterranean "race" from Cadiz to Tangier, nor is it in rounding Cape Horn, where there is what sailors call a "true sea." The "wickedest sea" is encountered in rounding the Cape of Good Hope for the eastern ports of Cape Colony.

Cheerless Palaces.
Palaces lacked what are now ordinary comforts even in modern times and especially for a period prior to the reign of Louis XIV. in France. They were magnificently decorated, but the windows were small and not well placed, and the rooms were filled with magnificent but not particularly comfortable furniture. Fires were seldom lighted in the immense, beautifully sculptured marble fireplaces. Usually the only fire was to be found in the bedchamber at the end of a suite of rooms. At Versailles in 1695, it is reported, the water and wine froze in the king's glasses at table.

Got 'Em Mixed.
A nervous looking man walked into a grocery with his baby on one arm and a kerosene can on the other, placed the can on the counter and said, "Sit there a moment, dear." Then, holding the baby up to the dazed clerk, he added, "Fill this thing up with kerosene."—San Francisco Argonaut.

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