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JOHN M. SCOTT

General Passenger Agent, Portland, Oregon

WONDERS OF CELLULOSE.

Many Uses to Which This Little Understood Substance is Put.

Perhaps the most wonderful product of the vegetable world is cellulose, which is at the same time about the commonest thing in that world, being the material of which the cell walls of every plant are constructed. So eminent an authority as Duncan has estimated that cellulose constitutes one-third of the plant life of the globe.

One of the most wonderful qualities of cellulose is that, like gold and silver, it is capable of resisting the effects of time. When pure it neither rusts nor decays, but endures through generation after generation.

It is a curious fact that, as common as it is, cellulose is one of the least understood of substances. Every bit of knowledge that we add to our store of information concerning cellulose generally leads to the establishment of some new industry. The uses to which it has already been put have resulted in enormous benefits to man.

Linen is almost pure cellulose; so is cotton; so is silk. Yet, though the chemical substances are the same, their structure differs widely, and their qualities vary with the structure.

A great deal of paper employed for printing purposes is made from cellulose, whether this be linen or cotton or wood pulp paper. It may be extracted mechanically or chemically from the wood. Wood cellulose is not so good nor so lasting as cotton cellulose.

In a hot solution of zinc chloride cellulose dissolves and makes a sticky sirup. This sirup when forced through a tiny orifice into alcohol precipitates a fine thread, and this when carbonized furnishes fine filament for incandescent lamps. Paper soaked in the solution and worked up forms vulcanized fiber.

Dissolved in another sort of solution, cellulose gives a material that renders goods dipped in it waterproof, and such goods when subjected to certain pressures form bullet proof sheets, such as have been used for barricades in time of war.

Dissolved in nitric acid, cellulose forms gun cotton, a high explosive, but by slightly different treatment we get celluloid and, by another, collodion.

One of the most wonderful of the uses to which cellulose has been put is that of the manufacture of artificial silk. This comes from viscose, or cellulose mercerized and dissolved in carbon disulphide. Forced through tiny holes by tremendous pressure, it issues in threads which solidify and are led to bobbins, eventually passing through the spinning and weaving processes to emerge as lustrous silken goods.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Thumbs in Social Customs.

Few persons realize how important a role the thumb has played in the social customs of the people. Erskine records that among certain classes of people in Scotland the final settlement of a bargain was always signified by the licking and joining of thumbs. Selden says that kissing the thumb was a characteristic of servility. The clergy, the rich and the great were in receipt of this honor from tradesmen. From remote times the practice of licking the thumb has been regarded as a solemn pledge or promise, existing, according to Tacitus and others, among the Goths, the Iberians and the Moors, and it may also be traced through successive periods down to the present time.

Shoe Heels.

Shoe heels are thought to have

originated in the east, where they were first used in the shape of small wooden blocks, which the people fastened to their sandals in order that the feet might be kept as much above the level of the burning sands as possible. At first they were for both men and women of the same height. Soon, however, the women favored the higher forms until finally there was evolved the "French heel."—Harper's.

Many Uses of Honey.

For centuries Hindus have used new honey as a laxative and old honey as an antiseptic. Aborigines of Persia offered honey to the sun. Greeks still mix it with milk or water and use it as a libation to the dead. In one section of India milk and honey are handed to a bridegroom as he arrives at the door of the bride's father. In ancient Egypt honey was long a chief ingredient of embalming fluid.

Always.

"What is the proper thing for a man to do when his wife asks him for money and he hasn't any?" queried Newed.

"Oh, there isn't any proper thing to do in those circumstances," replied Oldwed. "Anything he does will be wrong."—Milwaukee Sentinel.

NAPOLEON'S ESCAPES.

Reckless of Danger, the Great General Was Often Wounded.

In reply to the question in what engagements he considered himself to have been in the greatest danger of losing his life, Napoleon once said, "In the commencement of my campaigns." Indeed, if further proof were demanded to show that he did not spare himself at Toulon it is only necessary to add that during the ten weeks of his siege Napoleon, in addition to a bayonet wound in his thigh, had three horses shot under him, while at the siege of Acre, during the expedition to Egypt, he lost no fewer than four in the same manner.

During the last days of his life, when captivity, disappointment and sickness had well nigh completed their work, it is said that the agony of his fatal disease drew from him on many occasions the piteous cry, "Why did the cannon balls spare me?"

During his long military career Napoleon fought sixty battles, while Caesar fought but fifty. In the early part of his career he was utterly reckless of danger while on the battlefield, and this spirit of fearlessness contributed largely to the love and esteem in which he was held by his armies. There was a curious belief among the English in Napoleon's time that he had never been wounded, and indeed the report was current that he carefully if not in a cowardly manner refrained from exposing himself.

Nothing could be more contrary to the truth, for he was in reality several times severely wounded, but as he wished to impress upon his troops the belief that good fortune never deserted him and that, like Achilles, he was well nigh invulnerable he always made a secret of his many dangers. He therefore enjoined once for all upon the part of his immediate staff the most absolute silence regarding all circumstances of this nature, for it is almost impossible to calculate the confusion and disorder which would have resulted from the slightest report or the smallest doubt relative to his existence.

Upon the single thread of this man's life depended not only the fate and government of a great empire, but the whole policy and destiny of Europe as well.

SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR.

Life in a Big Apartment House in New York City.

This is the story of the mystery of a New York apartment house, or the unexpected meeting of Jennie Smith and Jennie Brown. Jennie Smith, who tells the story, says, "If you saw it in the paper you would never believe it," but here it is in the paper, and it is absolutely true. This is the way it all happened, as Jennie Smith tells it.

Jennie Smith and Jennie Brown went to the same school, where they became warm friends. They lived in nearby cities. Jennie Brown was the first of the two girls to be married. Jennie Smith was one of her bridesmaids, and then she went immediately abroad to remain an indefinite period. During the latter part of that period correspondence languished, as correspondences have a way of doing. Meanwhile Jennie Smith was married and after a time came to live in New York.

"Do you know," wrote an upstate friend to her recently, "I hear that Jennie Brown has returned from abroad and is living in New York. You may run across her."

Thus prepared, Jennie Smith was not so much surprised the other day, entering the elevator of the handsome apartment house in which she lived, to meet her old friend Jennie Brown. The two women greeted each other warmly.

"You were coming to see me?" cried Jennie Smith with delight.

"You mean you were coming to see me!" said Jennie Brown, equally pleased, and the elevator, going on its upward course, stopped at the third floor, and she turned toward the door.

"Oh, not on this floor!" cried Jennie Smith. "I'm two floors above."

"But I live here," said Jennie Brown, in amazement.

Then the unbelievable part of the story came out. Jennie Brown had lived in the apartment house for six years, and her friend, moving in after her, had lived there, two floors above her, for three of that six, and the two had never met.

When there was a general reunion it was found that the two husbands knew each other well, as apartment house acquaintances go, met almost daily in the elevator and exchanged confidences in regard to politics or the weather, according as the one or the other was the most important topic of the hour. Each of the women had seen the other woman's husband often enough to recognize him as a resident of the house, but they had never chanced to meet each other.—New York Times.

The Joke That Failed.

A farmer drove along the streets of Conway Springs. He had a top box on his wagon, and over the edge could be seen the heads of several sheep and young stock. As he drove on his way he was accosted by a dude, who, on seeing the "hayseed," sang out, "Say, Noah, your ark seems to be pretty well crowded today."

The farmer looked around and, unconcerned-like, replied: "Don't worry. I have saved a place for a jackass, and you can get right in." The city upstart looked sheepish, and the farmer drove on.—Kansas City Journal.

An Eye For Business.

A life insurance agent was standing on the rear platform of a crowded car and was given the squeeze by a bunch of pickpockets. He felt himself jostled, but did not know that he had been touched until the thieves had left the car. Then another passenger remarked:

"I think those fellows got the purse out of your hip pocket."

"No," said the insurance man, with a sigh of gratitude. "If they only got to my hip pocket they got a rate book, and perhaps they'll take out some insurance."—Chicago Post.

Long Winded.

There have been many terms of reproach and ridicule applied to interminable and wearisome talkers, but here are two that seem to be particularly apt:

One is the comment of a politician on a Washington orator. "He has a good train of thought, but it lacks terminal facilities."

The other comes from the village humorist, who said of the village orator, "He's the only fellow I ever knew who could set his face talking an' then go off an' leave it."

A Good Start.

"Now, Johnny," said the arithmetic teacher, "suppose that one man were to put a stone two feet thick on top of another like stone, and the next day another on top of that, and keep on thus for seventy years, what would be the result?"

"I dunno," replied the student. "But I guess he'd have a pretty good start for a new postoffice."—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

WRESTLERS OF JAPAN.

Although They Don't Bite, They Frequently Wash Their Mouths.

The Japanese claim that the art of wrestling originated in Japan before the Christian era. There are forty-eight formulas by which wrestlers try to bring opponents to earth—a sort of catch-as-catch-can with forty-eight Queensberry rules added. Wrestlers are naked, except for a narrow girdle, and consequently it is not easy to get a "hold."

The Japanese have about 600 trained wrestlers in the service of the Wrestling association, and in June and January of every year there are great displays at the hall in Tokyo. Beginning at sunrise, the matches continue until the evening, and it is not necessary for a fall to take place before a victory can be claimed.

On the floor of the amphitheater is a square heap of earth three feet high, and in that square is the wrestling ring, twelve feet in circumference, surrounded by twelve straw bags. Let a wrestler's knee touch the ground or the tip of his little finger go outside that ring and he has lost the match.

There are rigidly observed ranks among the wrestlers. All of them go under nicknames, which are bestowed on them by their patrons or chosen by themselves. The highest class is what may be interpreted as the "rope" men. To be raised to this dazzling dignity is a rare event.

For 200 years there were only fifteen men who enjoyed the distinction, and the power to confer the title is held by an old Japanese family which is said to have been that which initiated the art. Altogether there are five grades of wrestlers, all gladiators, who are eager to try their skill with men trained like themselves.

They begin the matches by first washing their mouths in a bucketful of water by the side of the ring. No suggestion is made that they bite each other. It is simply a peculiar rule. Then they sit on their haunches, hands on the ground, and watch each other. If they feel confident they spring at each other suddenly and hold on to girdle or body. But if one does not wish to start the match and sees his opponent ready for the spring he may call "Not yet," and they both go and wash their mouths again. There are therefore not many "not yet's."—London Standard.

Laughed Out of His Name.

Charles Dickens unwittingly laughed a man out of his surname, according to the London Chronicle.

After the publication of Dickens' most famous novel an inoffensive gentleman, Charles Sainsbury Pickwick, Esq., felt constrained to inform the world through an advertisement in the London Times that he intended to abandon his name forever owing to its having been brought into ridicule and made a byword by the novelist. This was all the harder in his case because he proudly traced his name to a knightly source—piquez vite—"spur fast."

Public Employees in Austria.

The fact that strikes are not resorted to by public employees in Austria is largely due to the fact that after some years of service all government employees are entitled to pensions, which are so graduated as to attain to the maximum at the approximate age of retirement, entitling an employee to retire after thirty-five years of service on full pension. This makes it to the interest of state employees in whatever line to avoid such conduct as might lead to dismissal before the pension in view has reached a satisfactory figure.—New York Post.

Military Discipline.

During the early conquests of the French in Algeria the quick tempered General P., thinking that one of his adjutants had displayed want of skill in carrying out his orders, so far forgot himself as to strike him with his riding whip. The officer seized his pistol, took aim at the general and was about to fire, but the pistol would not go off. Then the general immediately called out, "Eight days' arrest for not keeping your weapon in order."

A Queer Duel.

M. Lefant and M. Melfant in September, 1843, quarreled over billiards and forthwith selected the balls of that game for a duel. They drew lots for the first throw. Melfant won, and so accurate was his aim that his missile struck Lefant in the forehead, killing him instantly.

Foolish to Close.

"Why do you wish to close this show?" demanded the beautiful actress.

"It's losing money," replied the manager.

"What of that? The critics all say I look lovely in my part."—Chicago Record-Herald.

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