

## A MARVELOUS FENCE.

The Story of Australia's War Upon the Rabbit Pest.

The havoc that rabbits have wrought in Australia has cost the country millions of dollars. Until a few years ago, however, the western part of the continent, protected by a bulwark of seemingly impassable desert, was free from the pest. Then one day a solitary rider on the edge of the arid land saw something scuttling across his path. It was the advance scout of a vast invading army of rabbits. The government immediately determined to build a 1,200 mile fence to shut out the devastating horde.

This fence, says the Wide World Magazine, is the longest that has ever been constructed. It traverses an inhospitable country where for miles and miles there is no timber, where the rain may fall once a year, or perhaps not at all for three years. It was necessary to carry materials for the fence and supplies for the workmen hundreds of miles in carts and on camel back. The work had to be pushed with feverish haste, for countless thousands of rabbits, pressing westward steadily, were eating the country as bare as a city road.

When the workmen had nearly finished the barrier, the news came that the rabbits had rounded the end. Without hesitation they began a second fence 100 miles to the westward, and before the farming region was safely inclosed the two fences extended over 2,100 miles.

In appearance the barrier resembles the woven wire fences that are seen in all parts of the world. The netting is stretched between posts sunk deeply into the ground and treated with tar to make them less likely to be destroyed by the white ants. The lower edge of the netting is sunk into the ground to prevent the rabbits from burrowing under it, and along the top runs a heavy wire capable of withstanding the shock of charging kangaroos and emus.

Without constant attention and patrolling, however, the fences would be useless, for outside of them the rabbits keep ceaseless watch. A boundary rider patrols each section of the fence twice a week, and he carries enough material and tools to make ordinary repairs. In some parts the riders are on bicycles, in others they are horsemen, and in the arid districts the men use camels. There is a sort of "flying squad" assigned to each half dozen sections, and the boundary rider can call on them when the fence is badly broken or when the incursions of rabbits are especially threatening.

## The Boomerang and Its Inventors.

The boomerang is rather a puzzle. One might think that the highest laws of mathematics had been laid under contribution in the perfecting of it. The convexity on one side, the flatness on the other and the sharp, knife-like edge on the inside of the convexity have the air of having been carefully thought out. Yet the people who invented this singular weapon cannot count higher than five and are destitute of all the arts and amenities of life. There is perhaps the lowest plane of human life. Some people have assumed that the boomerang was the creation of an older and higher civilization, but for this there is no evidence. It must be the product of an age long empirical use of throwing weapons.—London Spectator.

## An Interesting Memory Test.

Ask any one to draw a representation of a watch face with Roman numbers and you will have plenty of evidence of the unreliability of incidental memory. Of 200 persons examined only eight omitted the VI from their drawing of the watch face, and only twenty-one put XIII instead of the more familiar notation, IV. From this it would appear that impeachment of a witness because of his inability to report some incidental feature of an event or scene is not psychologically justified.—Case and Comment.

## "Hoozit."

A Chicago lady had a Swedish cook, and she heard this conversation between her cook and the maid next door, also a Swede.

"How are you, Hilda?"

"I well. I like my job. We got cremated cellar, cemetery plumbing, elastic lights and a hoozit."

"What's a 'hoozit,' Hilda?"

"Oh, a bell rings. You put a thing to your ear and say, 'Hello,' and some says 'Hello,' and you say 'Hoozit.'"—Montreal Herald.

## Inside Information.

Mother—If you could have eaten that entire jar of jam without a single twinge of conscience, you must be thoroughly bad.

Willie—No, mother; I am confident there is something good in me.—Yale Record.

## AVERTED A DUEL.

An Apple of Peace That Confounded an Artist's Critics.

In the old dueling days critics were sometimes compelled, figuratively, to eat their words. Far more satisfactory was the vindication that one criticized person achieved when she ate the object of criticism.

The story recently retold in a Parisian journal relates that when the furor for modeling wax flowers and fruit was at its height a certain fair and fashionable countess attained so much skill in the art that the other women of her circle became envious. An admirer of the countess and a suitor of her most spiteful detractor were involved in the quarrel, and a challenge ensued. But the countess learned of the coming encounter and had no mind that her talent should be championed at the cost of blood letting.

The day before the duel in a company that included the prospective combatants and her envious rival she displayed a beautiful apple.

"Behold a chef d'oeuvre!" she cried proudly. "Ladies, you cannot criticize that! Nature herself never produced a finer."

It was examined and admired, but soon the envious discovered flaws. One complained of the texture, which did not really resemble the skin of a fruit; another, of the too precisely globular form; another, of the too evenly shaded colors. Finally the countess' enemy gave her verdict with a shrug and a smile.

"Indeed, my dear, a pretty fruit enough," she conceded, "but if you ask me, a palpable imitation, with nothing of the indescribable, illusive something by which art suggests the actual work of nature."

The countess then turned inquiringly to her critic's suitor, who declared that he was reluctantly compelled to agree with madam's opinion. Still smiling, the countess broke the apple in halves, offered half to her parrot squawking for it in his gilded cage, and daintily nibbled the other half herself. It was a real apple!

"Doubtless, monsieur," she remarked sweetly as the laughter subsided, "you will still feel obliged to agree with madam when she admits that her estimate of an artist's skill may sometimes be erroneous?"

As there was no excuse for a duel after the lady and her champion had both retracted, the seconds of the two impetuous gentlemen saw to it that they became reconciled. For once the apple of discord had proved also the apple of peace.

## He Had No Choice.

The wife of a dynamo tender went to a haberdasher's to buy a necktie for her husband. She selected a brilliant red one, ready made, whereupon the young and inexperienced salesman, with compassion for the future owner, was moved to remark:

"Excuse me, missus, is this tie for your husband?"

"It is," replied the woman.

"Don't you think he'd rather have some other color? I'm afraid he won't wear this red tie."

"Oh, yes, he will!" said the woman firmly. "He'll have to—he's dead."—London Answers.

## Ale For Breakfast.

Ale and bread were the chief items of the royal breakfast in olden times in England. The quantity of ale consumed by ladies at breakfast in those days was considerable, for in the reign of Henry VIII. the maids of honor were allowed for breakfast "one chet loafe, one manchet, two gallons of ale and a pitcher of wine." A Lady Lucy made a mighty tonic of the national brew. Her breakfast was a chine of beef, a loaf and a gallon of ale, and for her pillow meal a posset porridge, a generous cut of mutton, a loaf and a gallon of ale.—Westminster Gazette.

## Not His Usual Brand.

He was a waif from the slums, having his first experience of the country. They gave him a new laid egg at breakfast as a great treat, but after one spoonful he put it quietly aside and devoted himself to the bread and butter.

"Why, Pete," exclaimed the matron in charge, "don't you like your egg?"

"No, ma'am," he replied deprecatingly. "It don't seem to have no smell nor taste."—Pearson's Weekly.

## Origin of the Word Fibustier.

The name "buccaneer" was chiefly affected by the English adventurers on our coast, while the French members of the profession often preferred the name of "fibustier." This word, which has since been corrupted into our familiar "fibuster," is said to have been originally a corruption, being nothing more than the French method of pronouncing the word "freebooters," which title had long been used for independent robbers.

## DODGED A RAIN OF BULLETS.

Incident of the Italian Revolution of 1848 in Brescia.

The Count de Hubner tells in his memoirs a thrilling story of an adventure in the Italian city of Brescia during the days of the revolution of 1848. When the trouble began in the streets he contrived to get into a house, taking with him two or three other persons, including the wife of a minor official who had intrusted the lady for awhile to the count's care, but who was to have certain news of her as soon as possible.

The firing grew heavier, and the rebels soon had possession of almost every house in the street.

On the 19th of March Count de Hubner decided that he must do something toward bettering his position in case of an assault, and he forced his only remaining servant to make a dash across the street to the palace where the Austrian general, Raths, was quartered, two blocks away and on the other side. The man was merely to let the general know that De Hubner himself was coming and to ask that the gates be held ready for him.

"Myself, prudence and my honor had a long and heated argument," says Count de Hubner. "Finally I pulled myself together. I had to let Prince Metternich know about myself, to make a last report and to keep my word about poor Mme. M. I undid the door, drew a long breath and plunged down the street."

"The bullets flew all around me, spattering in leaden showers from the stone pavement. As I arrived at the gates of the palace they swung inward, and in a second I was inside, unscathed. But only half my journey was done. I had still to go back again."

"A letter—my last report—was soon completed for Metternich and my message to the husband of Mme. M. was given. I had to return."

"Again the gates were opened and I bounded forth. A veritable fusillade followed. From every window and housetop came the spurts of white smoke, and I tried to dodge forty bullets at once. In a minute I had reached my own door, and as I did so I turned to look back."

"Another man left the palace gates at full speed, but before he had half crossed the street a puff of smoke shot out of a window and he fell flat and was instantly lying like a log across the gutter. The fire stopped at once—what use would there be in shooting a dead man?"

"But on the second that all became quiet. To my great astonishment I saw this 'dead man' rise to his legs like a cat and dash across the street into the half open door waiting for him. The sharpshooters were taken by surprise, and he escaped."

## Talked Too Much.

Old John Bates, an upholsterer, was renowned for his silence. People who had been his customers for a generation had, many of them, never heard a word from him except "Good morning. Five dollars. Thank you. Good day." Old John, in fact, cultivated silence as a genius cultivates his art.

A patron one day said to John: "What's the best kind of mattress?"

"Hair," was the reply.

The patron some twenty years later had occasion to buy another mattress, and again he asked:

"What's the best kind, John?"

"Cotton,"

"Cotton?" the patron cried.

"Why, you told me twenty years ago that hair was the best."

The old man gave a quaint sigh.

"Talking has always been my ruin," he said.

## Man Wanted.

"Father," said little Ruth appealingly, "why don't you stay at home to work as other little girls' fathers do?"

Father, who, as business manager of a great corporation, has to travel extensively, smiled fondly at his little daughter. "I'd love to, Ruth," he answered, "but you see I have to earn a lot of money to take care of my little girl and her mother, and I can't get enough work to do here at home."

"Oh, father," cried Ruth reprovingly, "I don't believe you've ever tried hard enough! Why, I have seen a sign out, 'Man Wanted,' lots and lots of times. There was one over in front of our grocery store this very morning."—Youth's Companion.

## A Gigantic Breed.

A woman at a dog show noticed a pretty girl gazing around as if puzzled. She went over to her and said: "Pardon me, but can't you find the kennel you wish? If not, I shall be glad to assist you."

"Oh, thank you," she replied. "Would you mind showing me where they are exhibiting the ocean greyhounds?"—National Monthly.

## WHY DO WE SLEEP?

Not to Cure Fatigue, Says a Scientist, but to Prevent It.

Most of us suppose that we sleep because we are exhausted. But Claparede, the Swiss physiologist, has advanced a theory to the effect that we sleep in order to avoid being exhausted. Dr. Adolf Koelsch in Die Woche explains this theory by saying that sleep instead of being the result of fatigue is an impulsive self disinfection which the body conducts in order to get rid of the waste products before they have time to produce exhaustion.

Just as combustion of fuel for the production of heat and energy is always attended by ashes and slag, so the slow combustion which produces heat and energy in the body by means of metabolic changes is likewise attended by waste.

"Since the senses never voluntarily come to rest or shut themselves off from the outer world, a point would eventually be reached when the organism would perish as a victim of general nerve exhaustion. In order to hinder this nature arranges betimes—namely, before exhaustion can seriously injure the organism—to set in motion that opposition current which we term sleep."

Dr. Koelsch says that the sight endowed animal tends to take its sleep at night, since the stimuli which govern the animal's vital activities are then cut off. For animals endowed with other special senses, but not with sight, the night is not so great a factor. "These can only blockade stimuli to the senses either by creeping into some secluded spot or by the action of nature in causing an opportune production of a substance (a sort of hormone) which acts as an obstacle by entering the nerve path and deadening sensibility."

## Walt Whitman's Easy Job.

"I used to visit Walt Whitman in his old age in his little, two story, wooden house in Mickle street, Camden," said a Philadelphia editor. "One day—it's a pleasant souvenir, this, of old time Philadelphia—one day in December I said to him:

"Well, Walt, how are things going this winter? Any Christmas subscriptions needed?"

"No," said the old poet. "No, indeed. I'm working now. I'm working for George W. Childs. He pays me \$50 a month."

"Good!" said I. "And what's your job with Childs?"

"Riding in the horse cars," said Walt. "I ride about the city, I talk to the drivers and conductors. I find out which of them need winter overcoats, and, guessing their size, I notify Childs, who fits them out forthwith. It's easy, pleasant work, and it saves Childs a lot of trouble over measurements and so forth."

## Brought a Blush to Her Cheek.

There was a story told of one of the world's great vocalists singing as a young girl at a private house in London. She was overwhelmed with praise. By and by she came and sat by an elderly lady, who congratulated her on the way she had sung, but ventured to offer one or two suggestions. The young singer treated the hints with scorn and afterward asked the hostess who "the old lady" was who had dared to give her suggestions. "Oh, that was Mme. Goldschmidt," replied the lady. "And who is Mme. Goldschmidt?" was the next impatient query. "Well, she's better known as Jenny Lind," said the hostess. And then the singer blushed for shame at her disdainful reception of hints from the "Swedish Nightingale."

## Of Two Evils.

The little boy in this story from "Touche a Tout" was evidently a firm believer in the old adage, "Of two evils choose the less." Turning a corner at full speed he collided with the minister.

"Where are you running to, my little man?" asked the minister, when he had regained his breath.

"Home!" panted the boy. "Ma's going to spank me."

"What!" gasped the astonished minister. "Are you eager to have your mother spank you that you run home so fast?"

"No," shouted the boy over his shoulder as he resumed his homeward flight, "but if I don't get there before pa, he'll do it!"

## His Opinion.

"It seems to me," ventured skimp little Mr. Hennypeck, "that Professor Peekhead's article advising men to be very careful in their choice of wives lacks—er—well, verisimilitude, or—ah!—some such word. As far as I have ever known, the man had no more to do with choosing his wife than he has with getting his photograph taken—he just keeps still, looks as pleasant as he can and accepts whatever is given him."—Judge.

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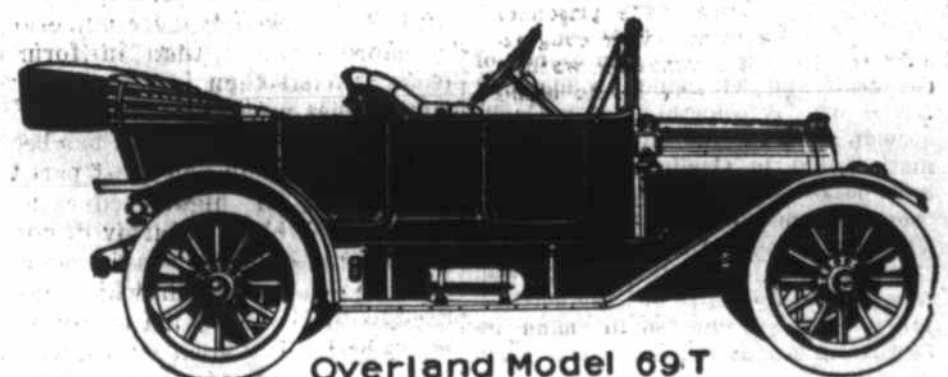
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