

OLD FORT COLTON

Now New York's Famous Aquarium at the Battery.

ONCE NAMED CASTLE GARDEN.

The Historic Building in Its Day Has Heard the Eloquence of Daniel Webster, the Flery Oratory of Kossuth and the Divine Voice of Jenny Lind.

Before New York's famous old building at the Battery became the Aquarium it had changed from fort to reception hall, from chief amusement place of the city to gateway of the promised land. Long before it became the home of the fanny tribe the building resounded with shouts for Lafayette, Andrew Jackson, Tyler, Van Buren. It heard the eloquence of Daniel Webster, the fiery oratory of Louis Kossuth, the Hungarian patriot, and the divine voice of Jenny Lind, the Swedish Nightingale.

When the building was new it stood on a little island separated from the mainland by some 200 feet of water, and was reached by crossing a draw-bridge. A great part of Battery park was then water, and it was the filling in of this stretch that made the aquarium a part of the mainland. The reason for building it on an island away from the main shore was disclosed in a government order to Colonel Jonathan Williams, who had charge of the construction of the proposed fort. This order said to construct the fortification so that the guns could be trained on both the North and East rivers.

"A foundation should be made around the bastion of the old Battery, where the flagstaff is placed, extending forty or fifty feet from the present, and upon this foundation a battery should be constructed in such manner that the run on the right will take in the North river, while that upon the left will range along the coastline of the old Battery."

Such were the orders the government gave Colonel Williams. But Colonel Williams said it was impossible for guns to command the entrance to the North and East rivers if they were placed at the old Battery. Two hundred feet out from the shore was the least distance at which that result could be accomplished, and some time afterward the secretary of war authorized the colonel's plan for the fort's construction.

In 1822, eleven years after its erection, when the military headquarters was transferred to Governor's island, the federal authorities ceded Fort Colton—as the present aquarium was then called—back to the city. Throughout the war of 1812 not one shot had been fired at an enemy from this fort, nor has one been fired since. The embrasures for the thirty and thirty-two pounders that were never used against an enemy can still be seen in the nine foot outer wall.

It was then that the former fort became a place of amusement and received the name of Castle Garden, a name which it retained for three quarters of a century. Two years after the shifting of soldiers to Governor's island and Castle Garden was the scene of a great reception given to General Lafayette when he visited America in 1824. It was also the scene of a great memorial service when he died ten years later.

It was there that Samuel F. B. Morse, inventor of the telegraph, first demonstrated the possibility of controlling an electric current in 1835. During those early years, too, it was the scene of the receptions given to American presidents when they visited New York. Jackson, Tyler and Van Buren were received there, and later on the Prince of Wales. There also many great political meetings were held. Some of Daniel Webster's greatest orations were delivered there.

Castle Garden was widely proclaimed as the first real home of opera in America. The great auditorium, now occupied by fish, ordinary and extraordinary, was then packed nightly with people who gathered to hear those famous artists of the middle nineteenth century: Mailbran, Sontag, Mario, Grist, the members of Julien's orchestra and—best known of all—Jenny Lind, whom all the theatergoing public of the United States and Europe worshipped. The first night in 1850 that the Swedish Nightingale appeared at Castle Garden, under the management of P. T. Barnum, the choice seats sold for several hundred dollars. Her tremendous popularity was made even greater when she gave to local charities the \$10,000 which composed her share of the box office receipts.

The next year Louis Kossuth, the famous Hungarian patriot, came from England to the United States and made an address to a vast and enthusiastic throng in Castle Garden.

This was one of the last great receptions held in the historic old building. Four years later it was converted into an immigrant station for the port of New York and from then until 1890, when the immigration office was removed to Ellis island, it served as the gateway through which 8,000,000 of people entered to work out their destinies in the new world. In 1896 it became the aquarium.—New York Sun.

The Far Horizon.

Little Arthur, taking part in a geography examination, should be awarded a prize for his definition of "horizon," which ran as follows: "The horizon is where the sky and water meet—only they don't."—Woman's Home Companion.

It is well to think well. It is divine to act well.—Horace Mann.

A SARTORIAL NIGHTMARE.

The "College Toga" Sported by Harvard Students in 1836.

The old time "college toga" worn by the Harvard students back in 1836 was an amusing sartorial creation, or maybe it would more properly be classified as the result of the dressmaker's art. Of course, no one now living remembers it, but the ancient "toga" is described in the annals of the college, and the present Oxford cap and gown are very simple and sober things in comparison.

As described by a writer whose curiosity had been aroused by stories concerning the gay festive "college toga," even the togas worn by the old Roman senators were negligible quantities. In 1836, when Harvard celebrated her two hundredth anniversary, this fanciful summer garment was much in vogue, and for at least two seasons it was in high fashion with the undergraduates.

It was made of gingham and of a color and pattern to suit the taste of the wearer. It was a loose fitting garment reaching to the knees, was gathered at the neck and also at the waist, behind. It had a turned over collar, a small cape rounded in front and a belt of the material of the dress. The sleeves were either hooked or buttoned at the wrist. It was trimmed with a long tasseled white fringe. The accompaniments of this dress were a low crowned, broad brimmed straw hat, secured by a broad ribbon under the chin; trousers and silk or thread gloves of a color in harmony with that of the toga, and usually a heavy cane.

It is not known to whom the distinction belongs of having first conceived the "college toga." Like Jupiter, it came into being complete in its matchless-grace and adornments. It was probably due to the creative genius and skillful fingers of "Ma'am" Dana, the college tailoress of that day, who was probably the sole manufacturer of the strange garment.

This estimable woman presided over a bevy of sewing girls, and says carefully curtailed from the public gaze. In the lower story of a small wooden building opposite Wadsworth house, at that time the official residence of President Quincy.—Exchange.

SATURDAY BATHING.

A Custom the Occident Borrowed From the Orient.

Most barbarians, judged by modern standards, were anything but cleanly in their personal habits. In England, France and Germany bathing was an almost unknown custom until after the Crusades. The pilgrims from the east brought home with them ideas of the bath as help in the treatment of disease, and bathrooms were gradually introduced into the hospitals. From the hospitals the ideas of bathing spread generally. People who had been treated there saw the value of keeping the body clean in order to resist disease. The great plague that swept over Europe in the early years of the fourteenth century helped to teach this lesson.

By the fifteenth century there was scarcely a large city that did not possess well patronized public bathing establishments, although it was not until the seventeenth century that the Turkish bath was introduced, and not until the eighteenth century that sea bathing, so common among the American Indians, was tried experimentally.

Saturday was chosen as bathing time and the reason is not difficult to imagine. On Sunday everybody was compelled to go to church, whether he would or not. As the Moslem in the east bathed before entering the mosque so did the medieval man before entering his church, only he must take his bath on Saturday afternoon in order to be clean the following day. There was even a distribution of bath money to the children whose parents were unable to pay for their baths.—New York Post.

Deep and Shallow Diamonds.

In buying a diamond see to it that your stone is neither too deep nor too shallow. If it be too deep the "table" at the top of the stone will have a dead look instead of showing as much color and light as at the edge, where the diamond is cut thin to receive the light. You are simply paying for extra weight that adds nothing to, but rather detracts from the appearance of the gem. The shallow stone, on the other hand—which is technically known as a fish eye—has a glassy look. Some people buy them because they appear bigger than they really are, but the bargain is a poor one and to be avoided.

Optimism.

Cheer up, old boy, don't dump your joy because the day is grim; pick out the best and dump the rest, let's hear you start to grin! When in a jam don't cuss and slam, but grin and wait it out; the joys love hope, it's powerful dope and puts the glooms to rout. So don't despair, turn down dull care and leave him to the mob. The sun ain't dead, he'll leave his bed and soon be on the job.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Another Illusion.

"Had an interview with a farmer just now," said the poet, "which gave me quite a shock."

"How was that?"

"He told me that new mown hay had no points of superiority whatever over hay a year old."—Pittsburgh Post.

A Proof.

"Does Emily date so on that young man of hers?"

"Does she? At this moment she is changing her brown hair to golden because he likes blonds best."

"Oh, I see! She's positively dyeing for him."—Baltimore American.

DIAMOND MINING.

How They Treat the Blue Dirt in the Kimberly Region.

Writing to his monthly from Johannesburg, E. W. Howe tells how the diamonds are taken from the mines in South Africa. Briefly, the process of finding the diamonds is as follows:

The blue dirt in which the diamonds are found is brought to the surface precisely as coal is hoisted and mined in about the same way. It is then placed in little iron cars and hauled to a level field, where it is spread over the surface to a depth of two feet. This is done to permit the weather to disintegrate the dirt and render its washing easier. Today I saw a field of 4,000 acres covered with this blue dirt. It will remain out in the weather a year before it is treated in the washing mills.

You might pause a moment and think of that 4,000 acre field, covered to a depth of two feet with the blue dirt in which diamonds are found. The 4,000 acre field I saw represented the output of only one mine; there are eight in the Kimberly district, only two of which are known to be duffers, as they say here—that is, of little value.

And you may rest assured that this 4,000 acre field is carefully guarded. It is surrounded with a barbed wire fence fourteen feet high, and on the top of the fence are four wires spread out in such a way that no one could possibly climb over. At night the fence is illuminated with electric lights, and there is a patrol of armed guards day and night. But you might be turned loose in the 4,000 acre field and not find a diamond in a year. The process of finding them is very intricate, expensive and difficult. Many of the natives who work in the diamond mines have never seen a diamond; they see only the blue dirt.

After the blue dirt has lain out in the weather a year and been plowed up at intervals with steam plows that all portions of it may have a chance at the sun, it is washed in enormous mills and reduced in the proportion of 1 to 4,000,000—that is, for every pound of diamonds found 4,000,000 pounds of blue dirt are mined, hoisted, exposed in the field a year and then run through the washing mills.

In these washing mills the blue dirt is first crushed between rollers and then run through shaking washing pans three different times. What is left is then taken in cars to another mill called the pulsator, and here the precious dirt is again washed three times. Finally the diamonds and the heavier pebbles remaining after six washings go in a stream of water over a shaking pan, the bottom of which is covered with vaseline. The diamonds stick to the vaseline for some reason yet unexplained, while the pebbles roll away with the water. The diamonds on the screen are then easily collected and sorted.

Suicide as a Luxury.

Suicide has often been regarded as a luxury, and Marseilles, France, colonized from Miletus in ancient days, preserved a custom and a prison for many years under Roman rule. A dose of hemlock and acornite was allowed to any one who could show sufficient reason why he should deserve death. "This custom," says Valerius Maximus, "comes from Greece, particularly from the island of Ceos, where I saw an example. It was a woman of great quality, who having lived very happily ninety years, obtained leave to die this way, lest by living longer she should happen to see a change of her good fortune."

More Important.

Mr. Dustin did not approve of his son's choice of a wife and was trying to persuade him to see things as he did.

"Yes, you are quite right, father," said the son. "Mabel has her defects, she is vain, full of pretensions and grand ideas, with a very difficult character. But, father, in spite of all, I simply adore her. I can't live without her."

"But that is not the question, my boy," said the father. "Can you live with her?"—Lippincott's.

Not a Case of Sympathy.

Teacher—Willie, did your father whip you for what you did in school yesterday?

Willie—No, ma'am; he said the licking would hurt him more than me.

Teacher—What nonsense! Your father is too sympathetic.

Willie—No, ma'am; but he's got rheumatism in both arms.

Accidentally.

"I wonder how so many forest fires catch?" said Mrs. McBride.

"Perhaps they catch accidentally from the mountain ranges," suggested Mr. McBride.—Christian Register.

OLD ROMAN HOTELS.

Where One Could Get Tiger or Lion Stew, but No Credit.

The traveler who is prone to complain of sleepless nights spent in uncomfortable hotels in this country may find some solace in this account of the Roman hotels in the days of the late republic and the empire:

Most of the hosteries and taverns of Rome, says Humbert de Gallier in "Usages et Moeurs d'Aufretrefois," were situated along the Appian way. Some of them were passable. It was at one of the better ones that Cicero used frequently to stop and write his letters.

The most interesting hosteries, however, were near the circuses and amphitheaters. The shrewd and generally dishonest owners had a double purpose in selecting that situation. It was well chosen for the patronage of the huge crowds that went to the circuses on holidays to see the fights between wild animals and the gladiatorial combats, and the landlords could buy conveniently and reasonably those animals that had been slaughtered during the day, to be served on their tables.

Thus a merry-maker might witness a battle between a lion and a tiger in the amphitheater in the afternoon, and if he went to a nearby hotel might find parts of the same lion or tiger in his stew for dinner. A bear's steak was considered a great delicacy in Rome.

The furnishings of the common room, which in these hotels served as dining room, parlor and taproom were severely simple. A few wooden tables, a few wooden benches and a sort of elevated throne were the only pieces of furniture. On the raised chair or throne sat the owner of the inn and watched over his guests and probably his belongings.

A large number of the hosteries displayed upon the ceilings of their common rooms a painting representing a rooster. The painting bore an inscription, the spirit of which will never grow old: "When this cock crows, then we will give credit."

That is the one link that binds the crude, uncomfortable tavern of ancient Rome to the elaborate hotel of the present day.

Names of Dances.

The position taken by the dancers gives the name to the "quadrille"—literal English for "a little square" in the French tongue. From the French we get also "country dance," which, as a matter of fact, has no reference to rural frolics. "Contredanse," which has reference to the position of the couples, opposite each other, is readily corrupted into "country dance." The "polka" is a Polish dance, the name being derived from the Bohemian word "půlka," meaning half, and refers to the half step which occurs in this measure. The "waltz" is German-waltzen, meaning to revolve—the circular motion of the couples easily explaining the connection. The "reel" is suggestively obvious. "Jig" is of course from the French gigue.

Glaciers of the Alaskan Coast.

It is very probable that more American travelers are familiar with the picturesque fjords and glaciers of Scandinavia than have viewed the incomparable scenery afforded by the coast of their own Alaska, where the somber inlets are bounded by sheer and towering cliffs and where the great fields of slow moving snow ice lose themselves in some bay or inlet or pitch off suddenly into the ocean itself. The stream of visitors to this splendid Alaskan scenery is annually increasing in numbers, and to those who inquire the "See America First" program Alaska offers a magnificent field.

A Perilous Pet.

An English major with a penchant for entomology asserts that the hornet is "a gentle, inoffensive creature, very suitable for a pet." This reminds one of an incident in the life of the late Lord Avebury. Traveling one day on a railway train with a pet wasp in his pocket, he hurriedly thrust his hand into his pocket to get his ticket, and the wasp stung him. He did not blame the wasp, however, as his hurried action had frightened the creature. Wasps have frequently become pets, but the major is said to be the first to turn the hornet into one.

A Welsh Verdict.

Welsh juries were formerly accused of giving their verdict in accordance with their liking for the rival counsel rather than on the merits of the case. Sir Francis Palgrave tells of a Merioneth jury whose foreman, when asked for a verdict, replied: "My lord, we do not know who is plaintiff or defendant, but we find for whoever is Mr. Jones' man."

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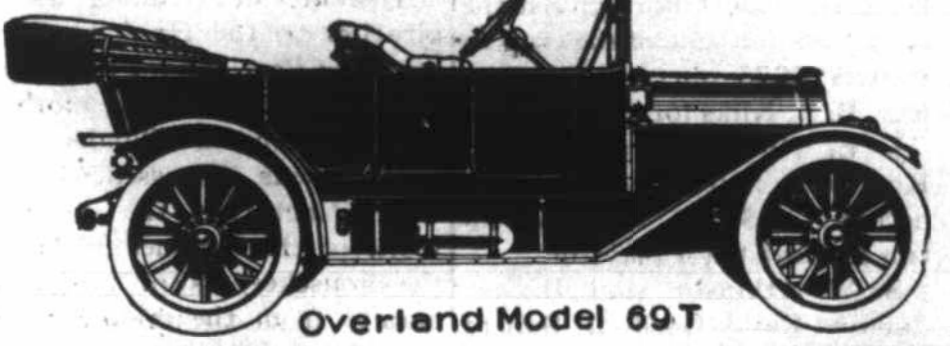
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