

### SPANISH HOTELS.

Plenty of Show and Promise, but Not Much of Anything Else.

Some idea of life in a large Spanish hotel may be gathered from Mr. W. D. Howells' book, "Familiar Spanish Travels." The author says that in most cases the hotels were hospitable, but bad. At a Granada hotel the door refused to latch, and Mr. Howells tells us that the infirmity of the door latch was emblematic of a temperamental infirmity in the whole hotel. There was a glitter, almost a glare, of Ritzlike splendor, and the rates were Ritzlike, but there the resemblance ceased.

"The porter followed us to our rooms on our arrival and told us in excellent English—which excelled less and less throughout our stay—that he was the hall porter and that we could confidently refer all our wants to him, but their reference seemed always to close the incident. There was a secretary who assured us that our rooms were not dear, and who could not, out of regard to our honor and comfort, consider cheaper ones, and then ceased to appear until he receipted our bill when we went away.

"There was a splendid dining room with waiters of such beauty and dignity, and so purple from clean shaving that we scarcely dared to face them, and there were luncheons and dinners of rich and delicate superabundance in the menu, but of an exquisite insipidity on the palate and of a swiftly vanishing Barmecide insubstantiality, as if they were banquets from the Arabian Nights imagined under the rule of the Moors.

"Everywhere shone silver bright radiators, such as we had not seen since we left their like freezing in Burgos; but, though the weather presently changed from an Andalusian softness to a Castilian severity after a snowfall in the sierra, the radiators remained insensible to the difference, and the air nipped the nose and fingers wherever one went in the hotel. The hall porter, who knew everything, said the boilers were out of order, and a traveler who had been there the winter before confirmed him with the testimony that they were out of order even in January. There may not have been any fire under them then, as there was none now, but if they needed repairing now it was clearly because they needed repairing then.

"In the corner of one of our rooms the frescoed plastering had scaled off, and we knew that if we came back a year later the same spot would offer us a familiar welcome."

### Her Command of English.

A woman visitor at a smart girls' finishing school in a New York suburb was much interested in a Japanese pupil who was in her second year at the school. "Does she pick up our language at all readily?" she inquired of one of the teachers with whom she was talking.

"I think you may say fairly well," replied the teacher. "For instance, she has been trying to make her straight black hair wave like that of our girls. It was only this morning that she came and told me that last night she had put up her hair in curls, and she added that when she took it down this morning there was nothing doing."—New York Press.

### A Venturesome Journey.

On his perilous expedition through Tibet Dr. Sven Hedin stained his hands and face like a native's and, disguised as a common Ladakhi, made his way through the country, exploring and collecting information of great value. When the party met strangers the doctor would get down and walk with the attendants driving the baggage and sheep and going by the name of Hadji Baba. Even so, more than once the real business of the party was suspected, and the venturesome doctor had more than one narrow escape.

### Principal Cause of Cholera.

The principal cause for an outbreak of cholera is the presence of cholera bacilli in the drinking water supply of a city. Its descent is sudden and widespread. Almost an entire population can be stricken at once. The stricken person usually is dead or on the road to recovery within twenty-four hours. Sometimes, however, a fever hangs on for several days, in some instances resulting in death. It is not believed that the disease can be communicated by contagion.

### Some Hints.

"Hello, Blank! Where are you going in such a hurry?"  
"To the postoffice to put up a kick about the wretched delivery service."  
"What's the trouble?"  
"Why, that check you promised to send me ten days ago hasn't reached me yet."—Boston Transcript.

### THE FIRST SEWING MACHINE.

It Was Made by a Poor Tailor Who Had Mighty Hard Luck.

As early as 1790 there was a rude machine used by shoemakers for sewing the leather for boots and shoes. That was the first step in the progress of mechanical sewing, but the machine was too crude to be used on anything finer than leather.

The first really practical sewing machine was made by a poor tailor, Barthelemy Thimmonier of St. Etienne, France, in 1830. In Thimmonier's apparatus the needle was hooked at the end, and descending through the cloth it brought up with it a loop of thread that it carried through the previously made loop, and thus formed a chain on the upper surface of the fabric.

Although the machine was made of wood and very clumsy, it appeared at an opportune time, for there was a great demand just then for thousands of extra army garments that could not be supplied through the regular sources. As many as eighty machines were made and used for the government. But the occasion that made the invention successful was also the means of its downfall, for shortly afterward an ignorant and furious mob wrecked the establishment and nearly murdered the unfortunate inventor.

Thimmonier, however, was not discouraged. He went to Paris, traveling the entire distance on foot, without a penny in his pocket. In that city he had the good fortune to interest a firm in his invention, and preparations were made to begin manufacturing the machines. But scarcely was the enterprise started when the revolution of 1848 turned the country upside down and blasted the prospects of the resolute inventor. Still he hoped to get recognition in the great exhibition at London in 1851, but here his machine failed absolutely to attract any attention, so, downhearted and discouraged, he journeyed sadly back to St. Etienne and died there in 1857.

Elias Howe was more fortunate. His machine, too, was more ingeniously made and did better work, but there is no doubt that Thimmonier, the poor French tailor, deserves the credit of making the first practical sewing machine.—Youth's Companion.

### Origin of Myths.

The human mind, whether that of the savage or the civilized man, is naturally a thinking machine. In early times, before science was born, the phenomena of nature required an explanation, and the savage beholder shaped the myth, which satisfied his untutored mind. It is out of man's natural craving to know the "reason why" that all myths are born. As the distinguished anthropologist Tylor puts it, "When the attention of a man in the myth making stage of intellect is drawn to any phenomenon which has to him an obvious reason he invents and tells a story to account for it." In such way all mythology originated.

### A Snake That Crows.

There exists in Venezuela a species of snake of an exceedingly venomous and crafty character. This snake utters a cry that is the almost exact imitation of a cock crow. The unwary traveler when walking through the bush will be astonished to hear near at hand this extraordinary crowing. He proceeds toward the spot, when the snake darts out and stings the unfortunate man with its terrible forked tongue. If not taken promptly in hand the sting will in nine cases out of ten turn out to be fatal.

### Enticing Lobsters to Death.

In the neighborhood of the Bermudas the sea is extremely transparent, so that the fisherman can readily see the horns of lobsters protruding from their hiding places in the rocks at considerable depths. To entice the crustaceans from these crannies they tie a lot of snails in a ball and dangle them in front of the cautious lobster. When he grabs the ball they haul him up.

### They Changed.

A Vienna paper relates an anecdote of the painter Makart, who was sometimes as taciturn as Von Moltke. One evening at a dinner he sat for an hour next to the sourette Josephine Gallmeyer without volunteering a word. Finally she lost patience and exclaimed, "Well, dear master, suppose we change the subject."

### Accounting For the Jumps.

Mollie—I see the sinews of the kangaroo are specially desirable for use in surgery, for sewing wounds and binding broken bones together.  
Dollie—That accounts for Joe jumping from one thing to another. I always thought he had some of the kangaroo in him.—Yonkers Statesman.

### ONE DANGER OF AMMONIA.

This Substance May Bring About the End of the World.

The continuous decay of vegetation generates ammonia. As many scientists have said, there is more ammonia in the atmosphere now than there was 10,000 years ago, and considerable more than there was 1,000,000 years ago. Fresh supplies are added year after year, so that in a future day there will be an exceedingly great quantity of it.

Now, ammonia has a combustive property. If the atmosphere should get laden with it a universal conflagration would be inevitable. The outbreak of a volcano or a flash of lightning would be sufficient to cause the circumambient air to ignite—all space would become a mass of raging flame which would boil the rivers and seas, converting them into hot vapors, which would devour all living creatures, all forms of vegetable life, would bake the earth and perhaps burn it to cinders.

The earth could be converted into smoke within a second. It could be hurled out of its course and made to come into dreadful collision with another planet, or, thrown dangerously near the sun, it would be drawn by the wonderful solar attraction into the fiery bosom of that bright monarch of the universe.

The horror of such a catastrophe appears unspeakably great—something from which the startled imagination recoils and staggers. And yet, after due reflection, we must admit that the prospect is sublime rather than horrible. Anticipation of an intolerable pain is worse than the pain itself. A human being is capable of pain up to a certain degree only, as also of pleasure up to a correspondingly high degree, and no more. Nay, one person is capable of more suffering and more enjoyment than another, and it is altogether a fallacious notion that there is as much agony when a fly is crushed "as when a giant dies."

How often, after long and dismal anticipation of a tragic event, we have found at the last that the anticipation of a tragic event outran the reality. This is caused not only by the quickness and resourcefulness of mind, but also by the circumstance that we cannot bear more than a certain measure of pain and affliction.

Then, too, it must be remembered that as every extreme causes its opposite, as a white heat gives a sensation of cold, as frost can burn like fire, as laughter can end in tears and tears in laughter, as wisdom sometimes subsides into folly, and the jester will utter the sayings of a sage, so excess of pain may end in a sort of thrilling pleasure, and this may account for the sudden ecstasies of martyrs under torture.

The passing of earth, then, would not cause so much human pain as is generally believed. It would probably be nothing more than the sudden awakening into a new world from an outgrown condition of being.—New York American.

### The Domestic Machine.

Mr. Meek was laboriously hooking up the back of his wife's evening dress just as the clock was striking their dinner hour and their dinner guests were ringing the doorbell. Mr. Meek breathed hard; his forehead was damp, and his hands shook.

"I do wish some one would invent a machine to do this kind of work!" he muttered miserably.  
"Why, they have!" replied his wife brightly, as she applied some powder nonchalantly to her nose.  
"They have, and you are it!"—Youth's Companion.

### For Harmony.

"I hear," said Mrs. Nextdoor, "that that stubborn candidate for president of your club has finally been induced to withdraw in the interest of harmony."  
"Yes," replied Mrs. Peppery. "By the way, it's a wonder you couldn't induce your daughter to withdraw from the piano occasionally for the same reason."—Exchange.

### Satisfaction.

A barefooted dandy while hoeing cotton one day saw his big toe under a clod, and, thinking it was a mole's head, hit it and hurt himself. After working with it for awhile he got tired, set his foot on a stump and said, "Well, jes pain away now, I doesn't care; you hurts reself wusin ye do me."—Argonaut.

### STORY OF A LOAN.

A Case Where the Statute of Limitations Was Not Considered.

A well known Kansas banker some years ago told a story about the statute of limitations. There is a simile in it, plus some good philosophy.

One day an old southerner walked into the banker's office. The southerner was a typical gentleman of the old school, suave, courteous to the point of punctiliousness and honorable to a degree of martyrdom.

"What can I do for you?" asked the banker.  
"Well," replied the southerner, "about thirty-five years ago I loaned a man down south some money—not a very big sum. I told him that whenever I should need it I would let him know and he could pay me the money. I need some money now, so I shall let him know, and I would like to have you transact the business for me."

"My good friend," replied the banker, "you have no claim on that money. You can't hold that man to that loan. You say it has been thirty-five years since you loaned it to him? The statute of limitations has run against that loan years and years ago."

"Sir," replied the southerner, "the man to whom I loaned that money is a gentleman. The statute of limitations never runs against a gentleman."

So the banker sent for the money, and within a reasonable time thereafter the money came. There was a courtly gentleman at the other end of the transaction also.—Kansas City Journal.

### Origin of Humbug.

It is not generally known that the word "humbug" long so much in vogue, is of Scottish origin. There was in olden time a race called Bogue or Boog of that ilk in Berwickshire. A daughter of the family married a son of Hume. In process of time, by default of male issue, the Bogue estate devolved on one George Hume of the Bogue, or rather "Hum o' the Bug." He was inclined to the marvelous and had a vast inclination to exalt himself, his wife, family, brother and all his ancestors on both sides. His tales, however, did not pass current, and at last, when any one made an extraordinary statement in the News, the hearer would shrug up his shoulders and style it just "a hum o' the bug." This was shortened into humbug, and the word soon spread over the whole kingdom.—Philadelphia Inquirer.

### A Rattlesnake Superstition.

The black inhabitants of Venezuela are, like all other dark races, very superstitious. And as regards the rattlesnake they have a curious belief. They affirm that if a rattlesnake is captured and the bones in its tail which form the rattle are removed the snake will never rest until it has sought out the man that committed the theft and exacted vengeance for the robbery. They cite instances of men who have taken the rattles and gone far journeys only to be followed by the infuriated snake and killed. Whether there is any truth in this is a matter of conjecture. If half the tales that are told have any truth in them it would seem superfluous to gainsay the superstition.

### Explained.

It was a New York schoolteacher who received this message from a mother who was advised to punish her wayward son, "You lick him, teacher—I ain't mad at him."

It was a Cleveland teacher who wrote to the mother of a mischievous boy asking her assistance in making the boy behave. This was the answer she received:  
"If you ain't able to control your school without assistance, you better git another job. P. S.—I ain't his mother—I'm his stepmother."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

### What Fuller's Earth Is.

Fuller's earth is so called because of its general use formerly by fullers or bleachers of cloth to absorb the grease and oil collected during the weaving process. It is an earthy hydrated silicate of aluminum, greenish in color generally, though sometimes bluish, white or even brown. It is found in the oolitic or jurassic series of rocks—that is, in the third of the five divisions into which geologists divide the earth's crust. The maximum depth of a deposit of fuller's earth is 400 feet.

### Words Failed.

"You've met Mrs. Chatters, haven't you?" asked Nan.  
"Yes," said Fan.  
"Tell me all about her."  
"Do you know any stronger words than 'talkative' or 'loquacious' that mean the same thing?"  
"I can't think of any just now."  
"Well, then, I can't describe her to you."—Chicago Tribune.

### Food Adulteration.

Food adulteration is practically as old as human selfishness and greed. For the custom of adulterating foodstuffs the moderns are by no means responsible. It is impossible to say when the vile practice did not exist. The annals of Greece, Rome and Egypt, Chaldea and Assyria all reveal the fact that away back in those early times men were addicted to the practice of adulteration. To come to English history, we find that as far back as the reign of John (1203) there were proclamations regulating the quality of bread, cakes, etc., and contemporary laws of other European countries deal with the adulteration of wines, bakers' goods and other articles of food and drink.—New York American.

### Curious Insurance.

In France there is a curious form of life insurance, the peculiarity being that the longer a man lives the less his heirs become entitled to. The idea is that if a man dies young his children will require help, but that by the time he is fifty they will be old enough to earn their own living.—Liverpool Post.

### Know the Ropes.

"What do you say to a young lady at a dance?" queried the youth who was about to attend his first ball.

"Oh," replied the society man, "talk to her about her beauty."

"But suppose she hasn't any?" said the youth.

"In that case," rejoined the society man, "talk to her about the ugliness of the other girls present."—London Tatler.

### Mexico's Rainy Season.

What they call the rainy season in Mexico comes only in the form of showers, which fall in the afternoon. These showers usually occur every day, but sometimes there will be two or three days of perfectly clear weather. There is no steady downpour, however, as in most tropical countries, and in Mexico the rainy season is regarded as the finest season of the year.

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