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Liked Free Things.

In the American Magazine a United States senator writes about the remarkable mail that he receives. Following is an account of one of the most amusing requests that he ever received:

"The American people are at all times anxious to secure anything, no matter how worthless, provided it will cost them nothing. Every day's mail brings requests for seeds and government publications. I have long admired the frankness of the man who wrote to me: 'Please put my name on the mailing list for anything that the government gives away free.'"

All His Fortune.

One day before his marriage the Rev. Sydney Smith ran into the room where his fiancée was, dressed in her lap six small teaspoons which "from such wear had become the ghosts of their former selves" and said: "There, Kate, you lucky girl, I give you all my fortune." He gave her, however, what he did not mention, his fine character and great talent and in every way proved himself an excellent husband.

A Woman Rat Catcher.

At least once a woman has held the position of rat catcher to the king of England. A warrant issued in 1672 by the master of the ordinance stated that "whereas Elizabeth Wickley is employed to killing of Rattes and other vermin, in and about His Ma'ty's stores and Houses in ye Tower of London, I have therefore thought fit to allow her ye sum of Eight Pounds per annum."

Knowledge Gained by Experience.

During the last school year a teacher in the Indianapolis schools asked her pupils to tell her which was most important, to keep the face or the teeth clean and why. One of her small boys replied without a moment's hesitation: "Four teeth, 'cause they'll rot off, and your face won't."—Indianapolis News.

Ships can be recognized when they are thirty miles out at sea if searchlights are directed upon them, the silhouette of the ship which is thrown up by this light being sufficient guide for naval experts, who by the mere outline of the vessel can tell her name.—London Telegraph.

The Iron Crown of Italy.

Napoleon in 1805 was crowned king of Italy at Milan, and with his own hands placed the ancient iron crown of Lombardy on his head. This most famous crown of Europe is so called from a narrow band of iron, miraculously preserved from rust, attached to the inner circumference of the circle. It is composed of jewels and embossed gold, the workmanship of which bears strange resemblance to that on the enameled gold ornament belonging to King Alfred which was found in Somerset and is now preserved in the Ashmolean museum at Oxford.—Westminster Gazette.

New York's First Tavern.

In 1642 New York's first city tavern was opened. It soon became the headquarters of much of the public business of the little town until 1653, when, to supply the needs of a regular municipal building, the tavern was purchased from the authorities in Amsterdam and became the first city hall, remaining as such until 1790, when the new city hall was erected at the head of Broad street, the site now occupied by the subway building.—New York Times.

His Mission.

"That man who was waiting for opportunity to knock said, when it knocked, that it was a mighty poor opportunity."—Houston Post.

"He was not waiting for opportunity to knock. He was waiting to knock opportunity."—Houston Post.

His Intent.

"Ah!" said the friend. "You expect to drain this swamp and sell the land to the public?"

"No," confessed the cheerful promoter. "I expect to sell the swamp as it now is and drain the public."—Boston Journal.

A Cruel Comparison.

"I don't make much," said the food auditor. "My salary is \$30 a week. Could we live on that, dear?"

"Ah," sighed the maiden dreamily. "Just the price of a tire for father's motorcar."

Then something told the f. a. that he was wasting time.—Birmingham Age-Herald.

A BIT TOO EFFICIENT.

It Was an Impressive Letter, but It Didn't Win the Position.

We assure our readers; gentle and otherwise, that the subjoined letter applying for a job as private secretary or stenographer to a railroad president is genuine in every respect:

Dear Sir—I wish to say before you my application for a secretarial position, to be given consideration at such time as you may require the services of one with the qualifications as touched upon in this letter.

A competent and qualified stenographer, experienced in charting statistics, possessed of the tactfulness and discretion necessary to association with executives, broadly read on matters germane to railroad operation, a student of unity and clearness in composition, with an acquisition of that uncommon knowledge of English—acquiring the study of word differentiation—essential to the highest grade stenographic work, an omnivorous though active reader with a vocabulary sufficiently large to meet the requirements of both your routine and evocative correspondence, I am fitted to give such service as would be demanded by one in your capacity.

I shall be glad to give to any designated subordinate an oral exhibition of my fitness and experience. Respectfully yours,

The railway president must have read this impressive document with awe and some apprehension. Here was a vocabulary so large that it would undoubtedly have to be checked whenever the gentleman in the secretarial position traveled by rail. Perhaps that is why the student of unity and clearness, although equipped with the tactfulness and discretion necessary to association with executives, was not invited to meet the requirements of this particular executive's vocative and avocative correspondence.

Here is a fearful example of the consequences of too much efficiency training.—New York Sun.

Photographic Art.

Softness of focus, to prevent masses being bounded by hard lines, complete control of light and shade, a trained wit to conjure that expression and arrange that pose most suggestive of the person as a whole, simplicity, sincerity, absence of dramatic, striking and bold use of too great contrast, restraint both in pose and expression and correct rendition of color in monochrome—these and a greater and greater appreciation of the value of the camera's power for telling the truth are the factors which have raised the modern idea in photographic portraiture, if not yet among the arts, at least to a highly honored place among the crafts.—O. H. Clancy in Art and Progress.

An Approach to Perpetual Motion.

A clock is to be seen at Brussels which comes about as near being a perpetual motion machine as can be invented, for the sun does the winding. The following is the method by which it works: A shaft exposed to the solar rays causes an up draft of air, which sets the fan in motion. The fan actuates mechanism which raises the weight of the clock until it reaches the top and then puts a brake on the fan till the weight has gone down a little, when the fan is again liberated and proceeds to act as before. As long as the sun shines frequently enough and the machinery does not wear out the clock will keep in motion.—Pearson's Weekly.

Points About a Good Horse.

There are some points which are valuable in horses of every description. The head should be proportionately large and well set on. The lower jawbones should be sufficiently far apart to enable the head to form an angle with the neck, which gives it free motion and a graceful carriage and prevents it bearing too heavily on the hand. The eye should be large, a little prominent, and the eyelids fine and thin. The ear should be small and erect and quick in motion. The lop ear indicates dullness and stubbornness. When too far back there is a disposition to mischief.

When Time Didn't Fly.

Little Helen during the three years of her life had never been separated from her elder sister night or day for more than a few minutes at a time, but at last the time came when the sister went away for a whole day. The child tried every game and occupation that she knew of and a new one or two suggested by her mother, but they all palled. Finally she gave up and stood and looked sadly out of the window; then she sighed deeply and said: "It's still the same old day, isn't it, mother?"—Woman's Home Companion.

Fallacies About the Hair.

According to Dr. John A. Wyeth of New York, the ancient idea that the hair upon a freshly shaven face will grow after death is a fallacy, because death is the cessation of all growth.

For the same reason no one's hair ever turned white in a single night, nor in a dozen, for hair turns white through the stoppage of the supply of coloring matter.

TRICKS OF GUNCOTTON.

When Dry the Explosive May Be Burned in the Hand Without Harm.

If some one should place a wad of guncotton on the palm of your hand and threaten to touch it off with a lighted match you would be frightened. Yet you need not be, for, although guncotton is one of the most powerful of ordinary explosives, it would not hurt you.

When dry guncotton is exposed to the air it does not explode when ignited, but burns with great rapidity. So rapidly does the burning take place that if a loose wad of the material be held in the hand and touched with fire there is a sudden flash, and an instant later not a trace of smoke or a mark on the hand remains to indicate what has taken place. Guncotton does not detonate unless it is confined, as in the barrel of a gun.

When dry, however, guncotton can be made to explode with great violence by being struck sharply between two hard surfaces. Detonation, as such an explosion is called, is quite a different phenomenon from burning. It seems to consist in the instantaneous disintegration of the molecules of the exploding substance. It is as though all the bricks in a great building were in a fraction of a second to be scattered about the city.

When moistened sufficiently with water guncotton is not affected either by fire or blows. In this state it can be compressed, mashed to a pulp or worked into various shapes without danger. Only the explosion of a piece of the dry material or priming with fulminate of mercury can make wet guncotton detonate. On this account wet guncotton has been made use of in blasting.

Guncotton is a mixture of various nitrates formed when clean dry cotton is treated with strong nitric acid (and, for most purposes, with sulphuric acid also). If the product has a low degree of nitration—that is to say, if little nitric acid be used in the making—it may be partially dissolved by certain esters, such as acetone, ethylacetate or a mixture of ether and alcohol. It forms a colloidal solution, and the resulting jelly is particularly well fitted to use in a gun on account of the saving of space.—New York World.

Golden Precepts.

The late Robert C. Ogden, merchant, philanthropist and millionaire, whose life was notably successful from every point of view, left behind him in writing this set of good and tried rules:

Do not mistake a prejudice for a principle.

Be energetic, wide awake, pushing, but be patient.

Use the book of Proverbs as a guide in business.

Honor womanhood.

Believe in yourself, then other people will believe in you.

A vigorous, healthy man has really only one right in the world, only one thing to demand, and that is a chance to work.—Boston Globe.

The Bold Major.

It was the custom 100 years ago to purchase British army commissions for newly born babies, their rank progressing as opportunity occurred. One of these fortunate infants was the son of Sir William Honeyman. One day a caller heard Lady Honeyman about from her bedroom door: "Jean, what's the matter? What's all that crying in the nursery?" And Jean answered: "Oh, my lady, there's naething the matter! It's only the major (still an infant) crying for his parrich."—London Tatler.

Discovery of Mahogany.

In the year 1597 one of Sir Walter Raleigh's ships in an expedition against the Azores put in at Trinidad for repairs. The workmen used the first wood that came to hand, and it happened to be the now famous mahogany. By this accident it was first introduced into England, where it was much admired, but it did not become an article of commerce until a century later.

Trials of the Great.

Right Honorable Secretary of State—You have long been a leading supporter of mine, Colonel Butler, and I shall be glad to do what I can for your son, but—er—what can he do?

Fond Parent—My dear sir, if he could do anything I should not think of troubling you!—Passing Show.

Varieties of Finance.

Mrs. Touchley—I hated to do it, but I had to take some money out of my husband's pockets while he was asleep last night to pay for his birthday present.

Mrs. Chagely—Mercy! I wouldn't dare do such a thing! I used the market money and then had things charged to him.—Kansas City Star.

Fresh Prunes.

The prune in its fresh state is a beautiful bluish plum, either lusciously sweet or tartly sweet, according to the variety. The very sweet are the French and the tart the Italian and German. While any variety of plum having the requisite amount of sugar and solids will make a prune, the great mass of production is confined to the varieties above named. California is the home of the prune in America, although large quantities are now produced in Oregon and Washington. But it is the climate of California, with its dry, rainless summers, warm days and cool nights, that makes it ideal both for producing and drying.—Leslie's.

Searching the Lion.

In his volume "The New France" W. S. Lilly notes that Fouché was the only man who had the courage to stand up to his imperial master. Napoleon, who, perhaps, was less of a gentleman than any man that has ever achieved greatness, took pleasure in brutally reminding him of his vote for the murder of Louis XVI. "Yes, sire," Fouché imperiously replied, "that was the first service which I had the happiness of rendering to your majesty." On another occasion, "Duke of Otranto," the sovereign said, "I ought to have you beheaded." "Sire, that is not my opinion," was the minister's calm reply.

How the Dutch Eat.

A Dutch meal is always reminiscent of a game of cards, for the mother deals out all around the table, and when that first hand is played out she deals afresh, and so on until the dish is empty. There is no promiscuous serving, as with us, and the quick feeder (if such a person could exist in leisurely Holland) reaps no advantage. If meals are to be likened to games of cards our meals in Dutch eyes must look like games of "grab."—London Mail.

The Scientific Child.

Robert, the four-year-old son of a scientific man, had lived in the country most of his short life. One day a caller, wishing to make friends with the little fellow, took him on his knee and asked, "Are there any fairies in your woods here, Robert?"

"No," replied Robert promptly, "but there are plenty of edible fungi."—Youth's Companion.

A Clash of Wits.

He—I love you.
She—But I haven't a cent in the world.

He—Excuse me, you didn't allow me to finish. I love you not.

She—So! I only wanted to try you. I have a fortune of \$50,000.

He—Yes, but you interrupted me again. I love you not for your money's sake.

She—Well, I'm so glad, for that was only a joke about the \$50,000.—Boston Transcript.

OHIO'S COONSKIN LIBRARY.

How the Early Settlers Got Their First Supply of Books.

In the autumn of 1803 there was a meeting of the settlers in Dover, Sunday Creek and Ames, Athens county, O., called primarily to consider the making of roads, but before it ended it took up a side issue that, seen from this point of view, seems to be the most important part of the meeting. What they did about roads was of but passing interest. The other matter produced far-reaching results.

It is recorded that Josiah True called attention to the need of books. Probably most of those present had enjoyed the advantages of libraries back in their New England homes and their isolation in their new homes in the west emphasized the lack of them here. He proposed a public library.

The idea was warmly welcomed, but how could it be secured without funds? The colonists were mostly poor and what they had was not in the form of money. There was but little money in circulation and business was most easily carried on in the form of barter. Finally some one suggested that all present engage in hunting for beaver animals during the approaching winter, and with the proceeds of the hunt buy necessary books.

Agents of John Jacob Astor had visited the settlements promoting that industry, and the young men had become skilled in the chase. They entered into the work with enthusiasm and by spring a large store of skins, mostly coonskins, had been collected. Samuel Brown was to make a visit to Boston, going by wagon, and it was arranged that he should take the store of skins east with him, stopping at Astor's place in New York to dispose of them.

Dr. Manasseh Cutler went along with him to make the selection of books. These were brought in Boston with the product of the sale of the skins. The name adopted was "the Western Library association," and it was located at Ames. It was incorporated Feb. 2, 1804. On Dec. 17, 1804, the members of the association met at Ames and elected Ephraim Cutler librarian. Mr. Brown had evidently returned with the books, for it was voted at this meeting to "accept fifty-one books purchased by Samuel Brown." This was the beginning of the Coonskin library.

It is said that sixty of the youth in that vicinity came at once under the influence of that library, of whom ten graduated at Ohio university, two becoming professors, three preachers and five lawyers. Thomas Erving was one of these, and he testifies in his autobiography to its influence upon him. Ten coonskins that he got went into it. It has been referred to as the first library on Ohio soil, but Howe says this is an error. The Public Library of Cincinnati was established in 1802, and there was a Farmers' library at Beloe in 1794.—Columbus Dispatch.

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