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TO SWAMP THE LORDS.

A Threat That Always Brings England's Upper House to Terms.

To override the veto of the house of lords by a wholesale creation of peers is a plan that has been often threatened, but hardly ever put into practice. It certainly places the king in a very unenviable predicament—so much so that in 1719, after a crisis of the kind George I. caused to be introduced into the lords a bill for limiting the power of the sovereign to create peers, a sort of royal self-denying ordinance.

The measure was twice passed in the lords, but twice rejected by the commons, which was lucky, for had it been carried it would have made the house of lords an almost unchangeable body, entirely beyond the control of king or minister or commons.

The nearest approach that was ever made to "swamping the lords" was in 1832, when the fate of the great reform bill trembled in the balance. Over and over again the measure had been passed by the commons, only to be rejected by the lords. The country was furious. Payment of taxes was refused. Riots broke out everywhere.

The prime minister, Lord Grey, went to the king and begged him to create new peers to carry the bill. His majesty refused, and the ministry resigned. The king, however, presently changed his mind and, fearing a revolution, agreed to the creation of a hundred new peers, "or more if necessary." Then, very reluctantly, the upper house gave way, and the bill became law.—London Family Herald.

THE DEATH DICE.

A Murder Case in Which They Returned a Just Verdict.

The German emperor some time ago presented to the Hohenzollern museum the "death dice" with which one of his ancestors decided a difficult case in the seventeenth century. The history of these dice is generally given as follows:

A young girl had been murdered. Suspicion fell upon two young soldiers, Ralph and Alfred, who were suitors for her hand. They both denied their guilt, and even torture failed to extract a confession from either.

Then Elector Frederick William decided to cut the knot by means of the dice box. The two soldiers should throw for their lives and the loser should be executed as the murderer.

The event was celebrated with great solemnity. Ralph had the first chance and threw sixes, the highest possible number. The dice box was then given to Alfred. He fell on his knees and prayed. Then he rose to his feet and threw the dice with such force that one of them was broken. The whole one showed six, the broken one also

gave six on the larger portion, and the fragment split off showed one. This was a total of thirteen, one beyond Ralph's throw. The audience held its breath in amazement.

"God has spoken!" cried the prince. Ralph, appalled by what he regarded as a sign from heaven, confessed his guilt and was sentenced to death.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Got What She Wanted.

"I can stand for some things, but not for everything," said the clerk as he watched a stylishly dressed young woman leave the store.

"What is the matter?" asked the proprietor, who had walked up unobserved.

"That woman who just left bustled up to the counter and asked to see men's shirts. I showed her every style and color we carry. After inspecting the entire stock she rose and thanked me sweetly, adding: 'I didn't wish to purchase any. You see, I am making my husband some shirts, and I wanted to be sure I was doing them right. My husband is very particular about the finish of his shirts. And they say married women are so considerate.'"

The boss smiled and walked away.—Boston Traveler.

The Sun.

It is computed that the temperature of the sun would be expressed by 18,000 degrees of Fahrenheit's thermometer, or about ninety times the temperature of boiling water. This is about five times the temperature that man is able to produce by artificial means. The light given off from the surface of the sun is reckoned as being 5,300 times more intense than that of the molten metal in a Bessemer converter, though that is of an almost blinding brilliancy, or, if we compare it with the oxyhydrogen flame, the sun sheds a light equal in brilliancy to 146 times the intensity of the limelight.

Plant That Feigns Death.

In South America there is a plant, a species of mimosa, which resorts to death feigning, evidently for the purpose of preventing grass-eating animals from eating it. In its natural state this plant has a vivid green hue, but directly it is touched by a human finger or by any living animal it collapses into a tangle of apparently dead and withered stems. Among British wild plants the most sensitive to touch is the insectivorous sundew of English bogs.—London Globe.

Kind Critics.

"How did Jones get such a reputation both as a singer and an artist?" "He sang before the Painters' club and painted pictures for the Musicians' union."—Cleveland Leader.

THE STALEY STORK.

His Immense Power on the Wing and His Lack of Voice.

In Holland the nests of storks are generally on the summit of a tall post, put up on purpose for them, on which is fixed an old cart wheel. Says an English writer: "A Dutch gentleman of my acquaintance has one such post in his grounds within sight of his library window, but he improves on the cart wheel by having an iron framework for the reception of the nest. The first year it was put up, toward the end of June, a solitary young stork used to come daily and inspect this framework. I saw him there myself one day, standing in the empty receptacle exactly like a would-be benedict inspecting an empty house, contemplating the view and wondering if the drains are all right. The verdict was apparently favorable, for next season saw the nest occupied by the newly wedded pair. Their power of wing is very fine, and on hot days I have watched them ascending spiral circles, hardly moving their broad, black wings, till they have looked no bigger than flies. After the young are hatched they appear to be suspicious of one another and unwilling to leave the nest unguarded."

Storks have no voice. The only noise they make is "klapping" (snapping their great red mandibles rapidly and loudly). Thus they greet one another, generally by throwing back the head until the upper mandible rests on the back, but occasionally "klapping" is performed with the head and bill in the natural position.

GREENWICH MERIDIAN.

Its Relation to Standard Time in This Country.

Standard time is the time in common use regulating the ordinary affairs of life. It is derived from the sun. Leaving out of account small irregularities of the solar motion that are of no consequence for our present purpose, when that celestial body is on the meridian of any place we call the time of that place noon, or 12 o'clock. It follows that when it is noon at any given place it is similarly noon at all other places having the same meridian. As the sun rises in the east and sets in the west, it is evident that when it is crossing the meridian of any place it must have already passed that of places to the eastward and not yet reached that of places to the westward. In other words, when it is noon in the given place it is forenoon in places to the westward and afternoon in places to the eastward.

Now, 15 degrees of longitude correspond exactly to one hour of time difference, and therefore the local times of the several standard meridians dif-

fer from Greenwich by an even number of hours. In the United States the standard time meridians are those whose longitudes are west of Greenwich 60, 75, 90, 105 and 120 degrees. The time of these meridians is respectively four, five, six, seven and eight hours earlier than Greenwich time because the sun in traveling across the sky from east to west passes the Greenwich meridian before it reaches the American meridians.—New York American.

Laugh and Grow Fat.

"Laugh and grow fat" is an old saying, and there is more than a little truth in it, asserts a doctor. "The convulsive movements which we call laughter exert a very real effect upon the bodily framework. They cause the arteries to dilate, so that they carry more blood to the tissues of the body and the heart to beat more rapidly, so that the flow of the blood through the vessels is hastened. In other words, laughter promotes the very best conditions for an increase of the vital processes. The tissues take up more nutritive material and the waste products are more promptly removed. A good laugh sends an increased flow of blood to the brain. This immediately causes that instrument of thought to work better, with the result that gloomy forebodings are sent packing."

The Origin of the Mastiff.

Mastiff is a term applied to a very large and powerful species of the canine family, and there is considerable conflict of opinion regarding the origin of the word. Some claim that it is derived from the Italian mastino or the French mastin, both of which signify large limbed. This word, they say, was gradually corrupted into mastiff, a Lincolnshire expression meaning very large, muscular or big, until it gradually assumed its present form. Others again say its true origin is the old German masten, to fatten, because the mastiff is a large dog and so seems better fed than any other.—London Field.

Good Scheme.

"It's a shame," commented the friend of the restaurant proprietor.

"What's a shame?" asked the restaurant proprietor.

"Why, that you have to give that pretty waitress all the tough steaks for the patrons at her tables."

"Oh, I pay her extra for that. You see, she is so pretty not one man would kick if the steaks were so tough they pulled his teeth out."—Chicago News.

Reason Enough.

"Why does she think he has such a splendid future?" "Because she has promised to marry him, I guess."—Houston Post.

The Eternal Feminine.
"Myrtle has gone upon the vaudeville stage and has made an instant big hit because of her daring."
"What is her act?"
"She sings in a cage of mice."—Lippincott's.

Adversity is the first path to truth.
Byron.

Progress.
"How is your boy" getting on at school?"

"First rate," answered Farmer Corn-tassel. "He's going to be a great help on the farm. He knows the botanical names for cabbage and beans already, and all he has to do now is to learn to raise 'em."—Washington Star.



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