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THE DEAREST GIFT.

A Pathetic Incident in the Life of Robert Browning.

A young American woman was traveling one day in an Italian railway coach, the only other occupant of the compartment being an elderly gentleman. Observing the interest of the young woman in the country through which they were passing and seeing also that it was new to her, the more experienced traveler pointed out objects and places of note.

From scenery the conversation drifted to books and authors, until something suggested to the young American one of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's sonnets, which she quoted.

She was astonished and amazed because the gentleman made no reply, but during the rest of the ride sat looking intently out of the window, having apparently forgotten the very existence of his traveling companion.

As they neared the station where the young lady was to leave the car she said timidly:

"I fear, sir, that I have offended you. Perhaps you do not like Mrs. Browning's poetry."

The man slowly turned upon her tear dimmed eyes, and in a voice full of emotion he said:

"Madam, that sonnet is the sweetest, as its singer was the dearest, gift God ever gave to me."

Her traveling companion was Robert Browning.—Youth's Companion.

A CURIOUS ANIMAL.

The Sea Cucumber Can Part With and Replace Its Organs.

Among the curious animals which inhabit the sea we may take the holothuria, or sea cucumber, so called from its resemblance to the cucumber.

When this animal is attacked by an enemy it does not stand up and fight, but by a sudden movement it ejects its teeth, stomach, digestive apparatus and nearly all its intestines and then shrivels its body up to almost nothing. When, however, the danger is past the animal commences to replace the organs which it has voluntarily parted with, and in a short time the animal is as perfect as ever it was.

Dr. Johnstone kept one in water for a long time, and one day he forgot to change the water. The creature in consequence ejected its intestines and shriveled up, but when the water was changed all its organs were reproduced. Although the animal is not eaten in Europe, it is a favorite with the Chinese, and the fishing forms an important part of the industry of the east. Thousands of junks are annually used in fishing for trepang, as the animals are called.—London Tit-Bits.

Cows That Never Drink.

The "wild cow" of Arabia, in reality an antelope, the Beatrix oryx, is said never to drink, which is probably correct, for unless these animals can descend the wells they can find no drinking water for ten months in the year. There is no surface water, and rain falls but precariously during the winter. Only once during my journey did I find a pool of rainwater, caught in a hollow rock, and even this I should have passed by without knowing of its existence had not my camels sniffed it from a distance and obstinately refused to be turned from going in that direction. These antelope, however, are provided by nature with a curious food supply, especially designed as a thirst quencher. This is a parasite which grows on the roots of the desert bushes and forms a long spidrix full of water and juice. The antelope dig deep holes in the sand in order to get at these.—Wide World Magazine.

Easily Explained.

"They have to admit in the old world," said a New York theatrical man, "that we've got them beaten on every count. Talk to them about the matter and they can only quibble."

"Oh, yes," said an English banker to me the other day, "you've got a great country, the greatest country in the world, there's no denying that."

"Then he gave a nasty laugh."

"But look at your fires," he said. "Your terrible fires are a disgrace to mankind."

"Oh, our fires," said I, "are due to the friction caused by our rapid growth."

Man's Early Building.

The ruins of successive human habitations unearthed in Asia show how man advanced from primeval savagery to the pomp of Babylon and Nineveh. First he improved the caves in which he dwelt by leveling the floors and cutting windows to give him light. Afterward he constructed entirely artificial habitations for himself, at first roughly made tents of boughs and leaves, then huts of mud and finally dwellings of wood and stone.

Spiteful.

"Yes," said the engaged girl, "Dick is very methodical. He gives me one kiss when he comes and two when he goes away."

"That's always been his way," returned her dearest friend. "I've heard lots of girls comment on it."

"Thus it happens that they cease to speak to each other."

Fell In With the Argument.

"The leading question," said the colonel, "is the financial one."

"Right," replied the major, "and I was just about to ask you to add \$5 to that \$10 I borrowed from you yesterday."—Uncle Remus Magazine.

"The easiest thing I know of," says the philosopher of folly, "is to begin to save up some money next month."—Cleveland Leader.

A DEED OF DARING.

Twenty-seven Lives Saved by One Man in a Shipwreck.

A historic case of daring and endurance rarely equaled in life saving annals was that of the rescue of twenty-seven souls by one man in 1867. The fishing schooner Sea Clipper was driven by the tempest against a reef near the Spotted Islands on that coast and speedily went to pieces. Captain William Jackman, in charge of a fishing crew at these islands, had wandered in a direction he had never been before as if by inspiration and suddenly saw the whole tragedy enacted before his eyes. Hurrying his one companion back to the fishing station to summon help, he plunged into the howling swirl himself and eleven times swam to the ship. Each time he took back a human being to safety, battling splendidly against wind and tide.

Then help arrived, but no means was available of communicating with the vessel, so Jackman fastened a rope around his waist and made fifteen more trips, returning with a castaway on each occasion. It was then discovered that a woman had been overlooked and left on board, and the belief was expressed that she was dead, but he declared that he would not leave her there, living or dead. Accordingly he plunged into the surf again and soon bore the hapless creature to the shore, where, divesting himself of his flannels, he wrapped her round her, as she was almost at death's door. She expired a few hours later, but lived long enough to thank her preserver for his noble efforts in her behalf.—Wide World Magazine.

BROUGHT UP HOT WATER.

The Friction of the Boat Made the Ocean Almost Boil.

The steamship was speeding over seas with a record breaking list of passengers when one of the gay, young and inquiring girls who are found on every trip skipped up to the captain and asked:

"Captain, are we really going fast? It seems as if we were just crawling."

"Fast," answered the captain gruffly, "of course we're going fast. With nothing to see but water and sky you can't judge our speed, but my dear young lady, the friction of the boat is so great it makes the water hot aft."

"I don't believe it," giggled the girl, and the captain, with a great show of indignation, called for a rope and bucket to prove his words. These brought, he slung the pail down aft of the vessel directly under the drainpipe of the galley, where hot water runs all day, and brought it up smoking, to the astonishment of the awestruck girl.

A long lean Yankee who had been watching the performance then came forward and drawled, "Say, cap, that must make you change your course mighty often."

"Change my course?" blustered the captain. "What would I change my course for?"

"Well," said the Yankee slowly, "so darn much friction as that must wear the ocean out mighty quick."—Philadelphia Times.

Sugar.

Our word "sugar" is said to be derived from the Arabic "sukkar," the article itself having got into Europe through the Arabian Mohammedans, who overran a great part of the world in the seventh, eighth and ninth centuries. According to Dr. Van Lippman, a Dutch writer, as a result of the Arab invasion of Persia sugar found its way into Arabia, whence again its culture was carried to Cyprus, Rhodes, Sicily and Egypt. In the last named country the preparation of sugar was greatly improved, and the Egyptian product became widely famous. From Egypt the industry spread along the northern coasts of Africa and so entered Spain, where, about the year 1150, some fourteen refineries were in operation. Columbus introduced sugar cane into the new world.—Argonaut.

His Bad Dream.

Truly oriental was the defense put forward by a prisoner at Alipore. Charged with stealing a Hindu idol with its ornaments, he stated that the goddess told him in a dream the night before that, as she was not properly worshiped by the Hindu priest, she would be better taken care of by him, a Mohammedan, and that unless he took charge of her worship she would in her wrath destroy his whole family. The magistrate, however, was not satisfied with the story and sentenced the accused to two months' rigorous imprisonment and to pay a fine.—Bombay Gazette.

When the Loss Was Felt.

Wife (on returning home after a long visit)—Have you noticed that my husband missed me much while I was away, Mary? Maid—Well, mum, I didn't notice that he felt your absence much at first, but this last day or two he has certainly seemed very down-hearted, mum.

He Promised.

Sutton—No, can't spare the money very well, but I'll lend it to you if you promise not to keep it too long. Gay-boy—I'll undertake to spend every penny of it before tomorrow.—Washingtonian.

Feeding the Fish.

Disgusted Fisherman (emptying his bait into the stream)—Hanged if I'll wait on you any longer! Here, help yourselves.—Life.

Sorrow is an evil with many feet.—Simouides.

TAR AND FEATHERS.

A Coat of These Means Excruciating Torture to the Victim.

People who read of tarring and feathering know that the punishment is a very unpleasant one, but few imagine how terribly painful and dangerous it is. Hardened tar is very hard to remove from the skin, and when feathers are added it forms a kind of cement that sticks closer than a brother. As soon as the tar sets the victim's suffering begins. It contracts as it cools, and every one of the little veins on the body is pulled, causing the most exquisite agony. The perspiration is entirely stopped, and unless the tar is removed death is certain to ensue.

But the removal is no easy task and requires several days. The tar cannot be softened by the application of heat and must be peeled off bit by bit, sweet oil being used to make the process less painful. The irritation to the skin is very great, as the hairs cannot be disengaged, but must be pulled out or cut off. No man can be cleaned of tar in a single day, as the pain of the operation would be too excruciating for endurance, and until this is done he has to suffer from a pain like that of 10,000 pin pricks. Numbers of men have died under the torture, and none who have gone through it regard tar and feathering as anything but a most fearful infliction.

TOBACCO IN THE ARCTIC.

Resource of Miners When They Can Neither Chew Nor Smoke.

"When the wind is blowing thirty miles an hour and the temperature is 40 below it is some cold," said a man from Alaska. "If a man used tobacco in the ordinary way out of doors during such weather and got his lips wet through smoking a pipe or chewing he would be apt to get into trouble. First thing he knew he'd have his lips cracked, and they would be raw all winter long."

"The regulars stationed at the military posts up in Alaska found that if they tied a tobacco leaf in their armpit previous to undesired duty they would become very sick and could pass the post surgeon for hospital, getting rid of detail work they wanted to avoid."

"The miners up there learned something of this and found that the tobacco craving could be satisfied by binding a quantity of the leaf either in the armpit or against the solar plexus. This avoided broken and bleeding lips during the winter, and they weren't prevented from smoking indoors as well if they wanted to. It was the outdoor smoking or chewing that made all the trouble."—New York Sun.

Way to Treat Venison.

The sportsman was explaining to a few of his uninitiated friends.

"If you don't like venison," he said, "it is because it has not been prepared properly. I think I know the kind you have tried to eat, and I agree with you it is not fit. After the deer has been shot the carcass probably has been allowed to lie around until the blood has discolored the meat and really has almost tainted it. Few hunters dress their game carefully enough. As soon as a deer is killed the carcass should be thoroughly bled, skinned, the entrails removed and the meat hung up in the dry air for some hours. Thorough and prompt bleeding is of the utmost importance. Venison prepared in this way is comparatively light in color—that is, it is a clear, bright red, and the fat is white and clean. There is no strong, rank taste."—New York Press.

Revenge.

"Stop!" The brakes of the motor were suddenly applied, a pandemonium of whirling wheels ensued, and the motorist came face to face with Constable Copein, who had been hiding in the hedge.

"Excuse me, sir," said the portly policeman, taking out his notebook and pencil, "but you exceeded the speed limit by two miles over a measured piece of road."

"I have done nothing of the kind," retorted the motorist, "and, besides—"

"Well, if you don't believe me I'll call the sergeant, bein' as it was 'im as took the time. He's in the pigsty yonder."

"Don't trouble, Robert," the other returned to reply. "I would sooner pay fifty fines than disturb the sergeant at his meals!"—London Answers.

Faithful Woman.

I tell you that women, as a rule, are more faithful than men—ten times more faithful. I never saw a man pursue his wife into the very ditch and dust of degradation and take her in his arms. I never saw a man stand at the shore where she was wrecked, waiting for the waves to bring back her corpse to his arms, but I have seen a woman with her white arms lift a man from the mire of degradation and hold him to her bosom as if he were an angel.—Ingersoll.

His Way of Doing.

"Could the cashier of that company explain the muddle in the books?" "He said he would clear it all up." "Did he?" "No, he didn't clear it up. He cleared out."—Baltimore American.

Ungallant.

Henderson—Ever met with any serious accident while traveling? Hendrick—Did I? I met my wife while traveling abroad.

Trouble springs from idleness and grievous toll from needless ease.—Franklin.

PICKING HUSBANDS.

A Woman's Cynical View of the German Marriage Market.

The men in Germany do not marry. They are married. They are more or less passive articles of sale, which stand in rows in the matrimonial shop window with their price labeled in large letters in their buttonhole, waiting patiently for a purchaser. They are perfectly willing, even eager, victims. They want to be bought, but their position does not allow them to grasp the initiative, and they are thankful when at last some one comes along and declares herself capable and willing to pay the price.

The girl and her mother, with their purse in hand, pass the articles in review and choose out the one which best suits their means and fancy.

"I shall marry an officer" one girl told me some time ago with the easy confidence of a person about to order a new dress, and, lo and behold, before the year was out she was walking proudly on the arm of a dragoon lieutenant! I even knew of three women who swore to each other that they would marry only geniuses, and here also they had their will. One married a great painter, one a poet and another a famous diplomatist. That they were all three peculiarly unhappy is not a witness against the system, but a proof that geniuses may occasionally be very uncomfortable partners. In this case the purchasers were rich and popular and could therefore make their choice. Others of lesser means would have had to content themselves with an officer, cavalry or infantry, according to the "dot," or a lawyer, or a doctor, or a merchant, and so on down the scale.—Miss Wylie's "My German Year."

ODDLY EXPRESSED.

Queer Ways in Which Ideas Are Sometimes Put into Words.

Curious ways of expressing ideas in English may be expected from foreigners, as, for instance, when the Frenchman, who made a call in the country and was about to be introduced to the family, said: "Ah, ze ladies! Zen I would before, if you please, wish to purify mine hands and to sweep mine hair."

A Scotch publican was complaining of his servant maid. He said that she could never be found when wanted. "She'll gang out o' the house," he said, "twenty times for once she'll come in."

A countryman went to a menagerie to examine the wild beasts. Several gentlemen expressed the opinion that the orang outang was a lower order of the human species. Hodge did not like this idea and, striding up to the gentleman, expressed his contempt for it in these words: "Pooh! He's no more of the human species than I be."

"Mamma, is that a spoiled child?" asked a little boy on seeing a negro baby for the first time.

A shop exhibits a card warning everybody against unscrupulous persons "who infringe our title to deceive the public." The shopman does not quite say what he means any more than the proprietor of an eating house near the dock, on the door of which may be read the following announcement conveying fearful intelligence to the galleant tars who frequent this port: "Sailors' vitals cooked here."—Philadelphia North American.

Definition of True Humor.

The sense of humor is the "saving sense" principally because it saves us from ourselves. The person who cannot laugh at himself now and then is to be pitied. Moreover, the person who cannot take good naturedly the occasional bantering of others is in the same class of disagreeables. A well directed shaft of raillery will often find the vulnerable point in our armor of self complacency and show us where our self satisfaction is all wrong. True humor, however, must spring as much from the heart as from the head. Its essence must be truth and friendliness, not contempt. There never was a good joke yet that told a lie or besmirched a reputation. Humor which carries with it a sting to wound the sensitiveness or delicacy of one who does not deserve to suffer is not true humor.—San Francisco Chronicle.

Professional Instinct.

"Romeo and Juliet," with the original company, had reached its crucial moment.

Juliet was staggering about the stage, regarding her afflicted lover.

"Oh, cruel poison!" she wailed.

She raised her lover for a moment in her arms.

A wildly excited medical student in the gallery sprang to his feet.

"Keep him up, Juliet—keep him up!" he bellowed. "I'll run out and fetch the stomach pump!"

A Run of Luck.

Violet—I never had such a streak of luck. He fell in love in Paris, proposed in Rome and bought the ring in Naples. Pierrot—Did your luck end there?

Violet—Oh, no! While we were at Monte Carlo he won enough from papa for us to get married on.—London Illustrated Bits.

The Silver Lining.

In life troubles will come which look as if they would never pass away. The night and the storm look as if they would last forever, but the coming of the calm and the morning cannot be stayed.

The reward of one duty is the power to fulfill another.