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Veteran Waiter Finds Modern Appetite Weak

An American, visiting Manchester, England, not long ago, was brought in contact with a waiter who has served at every oyster feast there since 1902 and who complained of the degeneracy of the contemporary appetite.

"The capacity of the guests is not what it used to be," said this waiter. "I have often served fourteen dozen oysters to one man, and many guests would eat five or six dozen at the feast. Today few persons eat more than two and a half dozen."

Now this disconsolate waiter might brighten up if he had the opportunity of serving a customer like the man whom Brillat-Savarin celebrates in his "Physiologie du Gout." It is therein stated that when Brillat-Savarin lived at Versailles he frequently met a M. Laperte, who was very fond of oysters, but who complained that he could never get his fill of them. The famous gastronomist determined to satisfy this man once for all and invited him to dinner. He kept pace with Laperte up to the third dozen and then allowed him to proceed alone. He swallowed oysters steadily for more than an hour, and Brillat-Savarin had to stop him after the thirty-second dozen, just as he had remarked that he was beginning to enjoy his treat. The two men then dined and Laperte acquitted himself with the vigor and appetite of a man who had been long fasting.

Sweden's Ingenious Way of Saving Electricity

Sweden is one of the most prolific users of electricity. Her streams and waterfalls have been so successfully harnessed that electric power is cheap. The average housekeeper probably uses a greater variety of electric stoves, heaters and labor-saving devices than her sister in America. Even the farmers use electric power to an extent unknown in other countries.

There are said to be more electric bulbs used per capita in Sweden than in other countries, not excepting America, but certainly far less current is used. Economy practiced in lighting flats and apartments in Swedish cities is a surprise to the American traveler. At an early hour in the evening the halls and staircases are dark, except when the lights are turned on automatically from the front door. The scheme is highly ingenious. When a tenant reaches home and turns his key in the front door, the halls are instantly aglare with light. These continue to burn, however, only long enough to enable the tenant to reach the top floor, when they are automatically shut off. The length of time they burn has been carefully calculated to allow the tenant to reach the top floor and no more. If he lingers on the way he must grope his way in the dark.

Early English Journalism

J. G. Muddiman has written the life of his ancestor, Henry Muddiman, who founded the London Gazette in 1665 under the title "The King's Journalist," 1659-1689. The book throws fascinating sidelights upon a period of English history which has never yet been fully explored, and upon the real beginnings of English journalism. Muddiman's "News Letters," from 1687 to 1689, the manuscripts of which have been at Longleat, Wiltshire, since 1704, have been carefully examined. Mr. Muddiman compares the life of a journalist of those far-off days with that of the present. "A remarkable contrast," he writes, "to a modern editor journeying to his daily work by the underground railway was presented by the bewigged Seventeenth century news writer, mounted on horseback and traveling to Whitehall or the 'Seven Stars' in the Strand, armed with a sword and a brace of pistols in his holster, 'because of the footpads of Knightsbridge.'"

Radio Lullabies

The pleasure of being sung to sleep is no longer a monopoly of the baby. The whole household can now retire and fall asleep to music by radio. Circuits running from a central receiving set in the living room run to loudspeakers or headsets in every room in a New York editor's house. By means of a clock switch, the whole system can be left running for any predetermined time.

Stringless Bean Deviser

Few know that the man who took the string out of string beans was Calvin N. Keeney of Le Roy, N. Y. Mr. Keeney went through the bean patch and picked out the beans that were minus the strings. Whenever he found one he would save the beans and repeated this year after year, and eventually secured a supply of genuine stringless beans.

Mixed Pleasures

"How did you enjoy the week-end festivities?"
"Splendidly. We danced all night. When we went home in the morning we had a radio service from the church (with bell-ringing), and breakfast in bed!"—Stockholm Sonnets.

How Difficult

"Do you know what that girl at the sweetmeat counter weighs?"
"No."
"Why, sweetmeats, of course."—Kasper, Stockholm.

Taking Chances

"A bootlegger takes a great many chances."
"Not as many," rejoined Uncle Bill Bottletop, "as his customer."

Freak Shadows Appear in Crude Oil Pools

In the great oil regions of California pools of crude petroleum are quite commonly seen, says S. Leonard Bastin in St. Nicholas. Here the oil is allowed to remain until it is stored away in barrels. One of the curiosities of the district is the freak shadow which these ponds of crude oil produce. If, when the sun is shining brightly, a person stands so that his shadow falls across the surface of the petroleum, a very remarkable thing happens. Should the individual change his place, strange to say, the first shadow remains on the oil, while the person casts a second shadow from his new position. The longer the individual has been standing by the oil pond, the longer will the original shadow remain.

The explanation of the mystery is simple:

Under the influence of the hot sun, gas is freely produced in the crude oil. This rises to the surface in the form of millions of bubbles far too minute to be noticed by the human eye. When a shadow is cast over the surface of the petroleum the temperature is reduced, and this has the effect of checking the production of bubbles. The result is that the shaded area looks different from the part which is exposed to the sun. Now, when the person moves, the temperature of the oil which has been shielded from the sun does not at once get back to its former warmth. It takes a little time to heat and, until this actually happens, the shadow effect persists, giving the curious appearance which has been described.

Chromium's Great Value As an Alloy of Steel

Chromium, a metal almost unknown 40 years ago, is now declared to be one of the indispensable elements in modern industry by Clifford B. Bellis in a report on the present uses of the metal published in Chemical and Metallurgical Engineering. Stainless steel and high-speed steel are two of its many useful applications.

For chromium is a sociable sort of element. It is of little value alone, while as an alloy or companion of other metals it does indispensable work. Alloyed with iron it makes a steel that is both hard and tough, and so has made possible the development of many characteristic modern appliances.

It is estimated that without chromium high-speed steel tools, the works of the Ford company at Detroit would have to be seven times their present size, and it is certain that without the use of chrome steel in automobile engines the motorcar would be a very heavy and cumbersome contrivance. Airplanes such as we know them would be impossible.

Stainless steel is produced by alloying steel with about 15 per cent of chromium; and rustproof iron contains about the same proportion, although with a less amount of carbon.

Damage by Porcupines

Many of the trees on the sample plots in the Coconino National forest which have been studied for a number of years by the Fort Valley forest experiment station have been entirely destroyed by porcupines and many more are reported injured, announces the forest service, United States Department of Agriculture. It is believed that porcupines are making the establishment of Western yellow pine throughout the forests of the Southwest considerably more difficult.

Because of the moisture content of the bark, porcupines are very fond of this succulent growth and appear to take great delight in stripping the bark from young trees in their search for food and moisture.

Radio on Delivery Trucks

A Philadelphia bakery has installed receiving sets on its delivery trucks. The driver wears his phones at stated intervals and picks up instructions from his manager, and thus makes calls that he otherwise would not be able to make without telephoning and taking extra time. Each truck owned by the company is outfitted with an aerial and receiving set and with a little knowledge of conditions in the city and routes of the various trucks the manager has no difficulty in getting into constant touch with his drivers.

New Aerial Bomb Powerful

Capable of making a crater 150 feet in diameter where it strikes, a new aerial bomb, ten times as large as any used in the World war, has been perfected by the United States ordnance department and was recently placed on exhibition as showing the aerial war devices used in 1917 and 1918 are already obsolete. It weighs 4,000 pounds and is designed to be carried in a bombing plane.

Millions of Coins Defaced

Millions of 1-cent and 5-cent pieces are defaced in the United States annually, and the number of nickels and pennies returned to be remelted at the Philadelphia mint in five years would fill five trains of 56 cars each, holding 50,000 pounds to the car. This estimate is made by H. D. Coleman, superintendent of melting and refining at this particular mint.

Salmon Grow Scarce

Three years more, under present conditions, and there will be no more salmon for the canneries. Ruthless competition and piratic methods of canners and fishermen have caused this condition.

People to Get Acquainted With

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