Quieting Suspicion.

"My dear," said the Suspicious Wife, "this sealskin jacket you gave me for Christmas has the odor of gasoline."

"Very likey," answered the Crafty Husband. "But you know Santa Claus is using an automobile now."

Nevertheless, she had her doubts about it, fearing he had purchased the garment second-handed of a cleaner.—Baltimore American.

Sure Sign.

Jester—Dobster has in him the making of a great artist.

Jimson—What makes you think so?

Jester—Because he painted a picture recently, and when he looked at it, later, he couldn't tell what the subject was.—Ohio State Journal.

At the Pecks.

"Humph!" said Mrs. Henry Peck, "this paper has a lot of alleged jokes about women giving their husbands cigars for Christmas presents. I think that any woman who is fool enough to give her husband a box of those vile things ought to—why, where has Henry gone?"

But Henry was out in the hall shaking hands with himself.—Baltimore American.

France Lowers Rates for 'Phones.

The minister of police and telegraphs, M. Millerand, announces a general reduction in the price of telephone service throughout France. In Paris the rates are reduced from $80 to $60 per year.

Another reform is the reducing of the charge for pneumatic transmitted messages from 10 to 6 cents.

The Red Paint.

"Scuh a joke on Mr. Gayboy! We were out on the balcony between the dances, and he got the sleeve of his coat all over red paint from one of the posts that were just painted."

Maud—And did you go near the post?

"No. Why?"

"Because you have red paint all over the back of your waist."—Harlem Life.

Needed Invention.

The man who had reached the pinacle of wealth by a sudden spurt drew the typewriter salesman aside and said: "Er—haven't you some kind of a machine that will help a man who has been careless with his spelling?"

"Oh, yes," responded the salesman; "here is one that will blur any word when it is doubtful; all you have to do is to press the key."—Chicago Daily News.

A Kansas Obituary.

A Kansas editor wrote this obituary notice: "He was born May 3, 1875, and therefore escaped this earth in time to celebrate his 27th birthday in the house of his eternal abode beyond the archin skies, leaving terrestrial land on Friday, March 19, 1902, at 9:30 p. m., central time.

OMENS ABOUT BREAD.

WHAT HOUSEWIVES HAVE BELIEVED FOR CENTURIES.

They Make the Dough Nowadays with the Sign of the Cross, Just as the Ancient Romans Did—Superstitions that Die Slowly.

It would be surprising, indeed, if there were not many superstitions about bread. The one indispensable article of food is naturally in every nation a favorite subject of folk lore. No French peasant begins a new loaf without crossing it with the knife. The English superstition that bread cracked in the baking portends misfortunes in the family has taken root in America. In Germany, too, the housewife still believes that cracks on the top of the loaf of bread indicate the death of some one in the household, or, perhaps, misfortune to a dear friend, while cracks on the lower side of the bread are taken to indicate a birth.

As many of us know, our bakers mark the sign of a cross upon the dough before placing it in the oven. The reason for making this sign becomes plain when we know the origin of the custom. Almost all our superstitions about bread date back to old pagan days, though they have been greatly modified so as to conform to Christian beliefs. With the ancient Romans, the baking of bread and cakes was often invested with a religious significance, especially the cakes offered to the gods and goddesses. These cakes were prepared in a particular way, and after being marked with the symbol of the deity in whose honor they were offered, they were supposed to possess supernatural virtues.

The old domestic practice was modified when Christianity became triumphant, and, in place of a pagan symbol, the early Christian housewife not only used to make the sign of the cross when she began to knead the dough, but she marked that sign upon her loaf before placing it in the oven. Why? Simply because the sign of the cross is the recognized Christian protecting mark against the attacks of evil spirits, witches and the like. Hence, bread marked with the cross is supposed to be witch proof, will bake all right, not crack across the top, etc.

Just as the Jews have Passover cakes, and other peoples have had specially prepared food for their religious festivals, so Christians have cakes for certain seasons. Our hot cross buns on Good Friday are simply modern representatives of the cakes used at some old pagan festival. In days gone by, the cakes and buns baked at Easter were supposed to possess great virtue. Thus, it is an old belief that the observance of eating cross buns on Good Friday insures, so to speak, the house from fire for the coming year. We still eat a certain kind of pancake on Shrove Tuesday. The practice is referred to in "All's Well That Ends Well," where the clown speaks of a "pancake for Shrove Tuesday." In "Pericles" they are called "flapjacks"—a term still used in country districts.

In truth, to study the superstitions about bread is to take a wide lesson in folk lore. These superstitions relate to the kneading trough, the oven, bakers and bread. For instance, in many parts of France the "arche" or kneading trough, is more than a rude kitchen utensil; it is often a pretty bit of furniture. M. Sebillot, who has collected many of the superstitions of the French folk relative to bread, quotes the story of a thief who entered the window of a house with intent to commit burglary, but refused to step on the trough still containing the dough, believing that to do so would be an implety. This is similar to the American story of two hungry burglars who refused to satisfy their hunger with the meat which they found in a well-stocked larder because it was Friday.

A writer in one of our magazines says that in Gottland the cross is still signed before the oven fire is lighted or the dough kneaded. This practice is very common in the country districts all over Europe. In Brittany the housewife makes the sign of the cross with the right hand while she places the left hand in the trough. After the dough is kneaded the lid of the trough is shut, and so is the door; for if a cat should enter the room the bread would not rise. Certain charms of invocations are used to cause the bread to multiply itself. Thus, the peasant housewife adjures the dough to imitate the leaven, the wheat, the miller, and to rise. She would be very angry if any one should sing or whistle in the room while she is making the loaf.

In some parts of Europe the bake oven is almost a sacred object. In certain places of Brittany, for example, it is dedicated with ceremonies; the wood is sprinkled with blessed water; the proper heat is attested by the melting of a bottle, and, finally, an egg is broken for luck. Besides, there are certain days on which bread must not be baked, as on Good Friday or during the night of All Saints, when the ghosts would be sure to eat it.—Household Words.

HAD TO NAME HIMSELF.

How Mr. Payne Managed to Get on a Committee.

How much embarrassment a very small deviation from the customary paths of procedure can cause the one who makes it on the floor of the House of Representatives was illustrated one morning when Mr. Payne of New York, Republican floor leader and chairman of the Ways and Means Committee, undertook to secure the appointment of a conference committee on a bill which the Senate had passed with slight amendments over the provision as it passed the House.

To those who do not know the method pursued in the appointment of conference committees, the versatility of the speaker in selecting such committees is usually surprising. All is easy, however, when the chairman of the committee from which the bill comes complies with the practice. He simply pins a little slip of paper to the document on which is written the names of the members he desires appointed and the speaker in announcing the committee reads these names, of which the chairman himself heads the list.

In the case in question Mr. Payne forgot to prepare his little slip, and after he had secured the unanimous consent the speaker suddenly noticed the lapse on the part of the "gentleman from New York," and with a twinkle in his eye he very distinctly questioned, "who would the gentleman from New York like appointed on that committee?"

A profuse blush mounted Chairman Payne's broad countenance. He glanced hurriedly around at his colleagues and the merriment he saw on their faces only produced another blush. It was "up to" Mr. Payne to name himself as the head of the conference committee. He uttered an audible "ah" and stopped again. By this time all the old hands at legislation on the floor were enjoying Mr. Payne's dilemma, and a hush spread over the chamber. Mr. Payne made a bold plunge to have it over and haltingly and blushingly pronounced the words: "I suppose it ought to be the chairman of the committee and Mr. Dalzell and Mr. Richardson."

At this point, says the Washington Star, the smile became audible around Mr. Payne and the speaker, who was also enjoying the joke, announced in a ringing voice, "The chair appoints Mr. Payne, Mr. Dalzell and Mr. Richardson." After Mr. Payne had received the mock congratulations of a dozen or so members he hastened to the official stenographer and whispered instructions that nothing unusual be made to appear in the Record.

NOTHING LIKE THE FRESH AIR.

It Won't Hurt Woman's Complexion in Any Weather.

"New York women will continue to have to run to the complexion specialists," said a physician, "until they learn to appreciate fresh air better. The air need not necessarily be cold, but it must be fresh. It should be remembered that catching cold depends a great deal more on stale air and draughts than upon cold air, and the very worst colds are caught when one is tired and goes out into the air feeling fagged. To avoid colds and keep one's health be sure that the air is good. Let there be free ventilation. With care this can be secured without draughts or an oversupply of cold air.

"I went into a living-room a few days ago. The walls were hung with pictures and the door with tapestries. The windows were richly decorated with hangings and on the panes hung costly transparencies. But they were tightly closed, and though the room was neither too hot nor too cold, it was intolerably close. When I escaped into the air I remembered having noticed a large swelling upon the chin of one of the two daughters. The mother was nursing a cold sore. The other daughter had simply a wretched complexion. I thought it doubtful if merely opening the window would have cured these women, but I am sure that they would have had infinitely better health could they have had better air in which to sit and work.

"No danger to the complexion need be feared, even from the freezing air of winter, if proper precautions are taken. If I were a woman with a delicate skin before I went out on a very cold day I would rub a little cream into my skin, and I would wear a veil without dots, at least without dots where the eyes came, and I would get one as thin as possible, so as not to interfere with my enjoyment of the air. Then I would go out into the weather, sure that I would not be roughly used. A healthy woman, taking such care of herself, may chap a little and redden much, but the clear pink and white or olive and red of her complexion will always show to advantage.—New York Sun.

DAMAGES FOR MORPHINE HABIT

Curious Lawsuit Recently Tried in the English Courts.

The English medical journals contain reports of a curious law suit which has just been on trial in an English court. A nurse brought action against her physician for alleged malpractice in prescribing morphine for her in therapeutic doses, and thereby inducing in her the morphine habit. The doctor was accused of negligence and a desire to get rid of a troublesome patient. It is to the credit of the jury that, having heard the plaintiff's side of the case, they stopped the trial, and expressed the opinion that the action ought never to have been brought.

The case suggests some rather curious reflections. We do not doubt that some physicians are sometimes rather careless in prescribing such drugs as morphine and cocaine; but it would be difficult to apportion the exact degree of responsibility and the exact amount of damages, if every morphine fiend were to have redress in court from every physician who had ever prescribed a dose of such drugs for him or her. The precedent established by one such case would be rather disquieting to every doctor in active practice. In this English case the fact that the plaintiff was a nurse, and knew well the dangerous effects of the drug which she continued taking of her own accord, should have been enough to satisfy her lawyers that she had no claims either in justice or in law. Such remote consequences are hardly to be appraised at a money value, or to be ascribed to the fault of a physician who had merely given the drug in therapeutic doses.—Philadelphia Medical Journal.

Great Droughts in England.

The first great drought on record happened in 678 and the two succeeding years, when, according to the records, there was practically no rainfall in England. In 879 the springs in England were dried up and it was impossible for men to work in the open air. In 993 and 994 the nuts on the trees were "roasted as if in an oven."

After a man weighs 170 pounds, a day never passes that someone does not tell him that he is getting fat. This is the experience of a man who has not gained two pounds in ten years.

In going into a store to file a kick, say, "There was a mistake made," instead of "You made a mistake."

Another Reason.

"I thought Biffkins said he was going to church this morning."

"No. The minister asked him to give his reasons for not going, and he is staying at home to write them."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

What He May Have Meant.

Miss Smith—The doctor told mother that I'll never see forty. Do you think that he means that I have a fat malady?

Miss Judson—Not at all; he means that you'll never get through being thirty-nine.

Close Call.

Clara—I had an awful time when I refused him.

Maude—How do you mean?

Clara—Why, he took it in earnest, and I had to explain that I didn't mean it.—Town Topics.

The Neighborly Quality.

Mrs. Ascum—She is a very neighborly woman, isn't she?

Mrs. Snappe—Yes; she's forever poking into other people's business.—Philadelphia Press.

A Pecuniary Fatigue.

"Don't forget," said the willing worker, "that money talks."

"Yes," answered Senator Sorghum, a little gloomy, "but I can't help wishing you boys would select another phonograph occasionally." — Washington Star.

As Mr. C. Understands.

Mrs. Crimsonbeak—Before she was married, I understand, she used to dance for money.

Mr. Crimsonbeak—And now, I understand, if she don't get money, she makes her husband dance.—Yonkers Statesman.

A Stretch.

Broncho Bill—So you've lynched th' wrong feller?

Rough Rube—Yes. We imagined he was th' feller that stole th' hoss, but he wasn't.

Broncho Bill—Huh! You should be careful how you stretch your imagination.—Life.

She Did.

"I'll get even wid 'em, for dischargin' me!" mumbled the cook lady, lifting up the register and dropping a pair of her old shoes down the hot air pipe, just before she went away.

And those old shoes avenged her for nearly a week before the family found out what was the matter.—Chicago Tribune.

Twice Rejected.

Wederly—Was that your sister I saw you with last evening?

Singleton—Yes; one of them.

Wederly—Why, I wasn't aware that you had more than one of them.

Singleton—I have three. One by birth and two by annexation.—Chicago Daily News.

His Market Was Brooklyn.

"No sir!" exclaimed the loud mouthed drummer in the smoker. "I'm proud to say that no house in the country has more men pushing its line of goods than ours."

"What do you sell?" asked a curious one.

"Baby carriages."—Syracuse Herald.

Wanted to Try It.

Farmer—Yes; I work from daylight to dark.

City Man—You're not troubled with ennui, are you?

Farmer—No; I've heard of the blamed thing, and sometimes I feel as if I'd like to have a little of it, for a change.—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

His Turn Next.

Kind Gentleman—Why are you crying, my little man?

Little Boy—Because my ma is lickin' my little brother for something wot I done.

Kind Gentleman—What a conscientious little gentleman.

Little Boy—But my brother'll tell her it wuz me, and then I'll ketch it. Boo-hoo.—Ohio State Journal.

The Ones to Avoid.

Old Man—If you would select a good wife, my young friend, you must avoid the descendants of a ceratin famous woman.

Young Man—I shall certainly heed your advice. Who was she?

Old Man—Eve.—N. Y. Weekly.

Out of a Knothole.

He (just introduced)—What a homely person that gentleman is near the piano, Mrs. Black.

She—Isn't he. That's Mr. Black.

"How true it is, Mrs. Black, that the homeliest men always get the prettiest wives."—Tit-Bits.

GIFT FROM QUEEN NATHALIE.

Gold Cross One of Miss Clara Barton's Most Valued Souvenirs.

One of the most beautiful of Miss Clara Barton's foreign souvenirs is a testimonial she received on the eve of her departure for Geneva as delegate to the Red Cross International Convention in 1884 from Nathalie, then Queen of Servia. It is a massive gold cross, the body of which is red enamel, with the Servian coat-of-arms in gold on one side and the date of their accession to the brotherhood, 1876, on the other. But the most delicate part of this compliment resides in the fact that the cross is mounted on our own red, white, and blue ribbon, thus enabling Miss Barton to wear the colors of her country even when donning the badge of Servia.

A diploma creating her a member of the Servian Society came with this cross from the president of that association, together with a letter declaring them a recognition of her services to the brotherhood and the Servian wounded during the Franco-Prussian war. Miss Barton's reply to the queen is so very symbolical of the truest republican dignity that it is transcribed here:

Her Most Execellent Majesty Nathalie, Queen of Servia.

Madam: I hasten to acknowledge the very unexpected honor conferred by your majesty in transmitting through the Servian Red Cross Society the diploma and beautiful decoration of that association.

This recognition of the interest I have taken in measures tending to mitigate the calamities of war is peculiarly gratifying as coming from a country that, although old in history, is still young in the freshness of its natural resources and the brave, hopeful hearts of its people. That their hopes may be realized in a long career of liberty and prosperity must be the sincere wish of every American.

I am on the point of sailing for Europe to attend the Red Cross and peace conventions, which assemble at Geneva, in the beginning of September, when I hope to have the pleasure of meeting the representatives of Servia.

That your majesty and royal consort may long continue to promote the happiness and welfare of your beautiful country is the hope and desire of your majesty's most obedient servant,

CLARA BARTON,

President American Red Cross Association.

The address "Madam" at the beginning of the above epistle, the sonorous title that belongs to every American queen, is in perfectly good form according to the authorities, and also a most concise and dignified declaration of stalwart independence.

Monkey and Pot of Jam.

A sweet little story concerning a pet monkey and a pot of jam is vouched for by a Johns Hopkins University man:

It was in the country and all on a summer's day the family monkey was seen scudding homeward literally drenched in raspberry jam. He was pursued by an irate neighbor with uplifted broom, but once safe on to the home plat he swung himself lightly into the nearest tree and peacefully listened to her tale of wrong.

It seems the neighbor had some hours before been making jam, a great bowl of which sat cooling on a table beneath the trees. This the monkey spied, but had scarcely started liberally helping himself to it when he was discovered. With loud outcry and the broom the lady started toward him, when the mischievous beast, knowing his minutes were numbered, hastily overturned the bowl on the table. Then rolling himself joyously in it several times from head to heels he scampered beyond her reach. During the recital of her woe, and, in fact, for the remainder of the day, the monkey sat scooping the sweetmeat from his body and licking his paws with glee.

A Curious Tip.

A certain little Flemish watering place, which is much frequented by English and American visitors in the summer, possesses two attractions in the shape of a Presbyterian place of worship and a roulette table. One of the "faithful" had quite recently a most ingenious idea, says the London Times. After the number of the hymn succeeding the sermon was given he stole away, made his way to the table, and invested all he was worth on the number of the hymn. Needless to say the number turned up, and the lucky coup became the talk of the village for the rest of the week. Next Sunday the church was crammed to the door. The pious pastor was rejoiced in heart. After a powerful address he gave out "Hymn No. 27." The moment the words left his lips, to his consternation there was a rush to the door, and he was left with a faithful handful to upraise their agitated strain of praise. As for the rest, they made a bee line from the house of prayer to the house of play. We are happy to relate that their little adventure cost them very dear.

No Offense Intended.

A regular customer of a certain coal company dropped into the office of the firm one morning to make a complaint. "That coal you sold me for my furnace a few weeks ago," he said, "is the worst I have had in ten years. There's a great quantity of slate in it, and what isn't slate runs to clinkers."

"Sorry to hear it, Mr. Williams," said the man inside the railing. "I'll make a memorandum of it. Perhaps the company will give you a rebate on it."

Taking a slip of paper, he wrote a few words on it and hung it on a hook.

The customer, happening to glance at the slip of paper, saw this: "G. G. Williams. Bad egg."

"So I'm a bad egg, am I?" he asked, reddening with indignation.

"Oh, not at all, Mr. Williams," hastily explained the clerk. "That means the egg coal we sold you turns out to be bad."

And the customer reddened again, but not from indignation.

Some men are so mean that when they attend a ball game, they want to see the home team beaten.

Some people go to great trouble to acquire foolishness.

A Keeper of Secrets.

Lady—(to the dressmaker)—Did you tell Mrs. De Peyster Burlingame what my costume for the ball was to be?

Modiste—Oh, no, madam! I never divulge professional secrets.

Lady—What is hers like?

Modiste—It's in colonial style, madam.—Boston Herald.

His Stories.

"Bunkins takes life very easily."

"But he is always telling hard luck stories."

"Yes; but that shows his shreewness. If he put in all the time telling funny stories people would say he was loafing.—Washintgon Star.