PRAYERS BEFORE BATTLE.

Curious Invocations by Famous Historical Personages.

One of the earliest records in history of a prayer before battle is that of Childeric, king of Gaul, a pagan, who before going into battle at Zuelpich, some 400 years after Christ, prayed to the God of the Christians to help him to victory. His foe was Attila, king of the Huns, and Childeric vowed if God would give him the victory he would embrace the Christian faith.

The prayer of a Hungarian officer before one of the battles fought for the independence of Hungary in 1849 was as follows: "I will not ask thee, Lord, to help us, and I know thou wilt not help the Austrians, but if thou wilt sit on yonder hill thou shalt not be ashamed of thy children." This was the prayer of the "Fighting Bishop" Leslie before one of the battles fought in Ireland: "O God, for our unworthiness we are not fit to claim thy help, but if we are bad our enemies are worse, and if thou seest not meet to help us we pray thee help them not, but stand thou neuter on this day and leave it to the arm of the flesh."

The one offered before the battle of Edgehill by Sir Jacob Astley was, "Thou knowest, O Lord, that I shall be very busy this day, and if I forget thee forget thou not me," and then the command followed, "March on, boys!" As King Edward advanced with his columns to Bannockburn he remarked to his aids, seeing the Scotch on their knees: "See, they kneel. The rebels are asking pardon." D'Umphraville was heard to remark: "Yes, but it is to the King of kings. These men conquer or die on this field."

Oliver Cromwell had public prayers before going to battle on several occasions, as, for instance, previous to the battle of Dunbar. It is a curious fact that the English prayer book contains prayers, or at least one prayer, to be said before going into action at sea, while nothing is provided for use before engagements on land.

OLD BIRDS' NESTS.

Many Feathered Creatures Use the Same Ones Year After Year.

"That common expression for worthlessness, 'It has no more value than a last year's bird's nest,'" said a bird fancier, "is often far from correct. The majority of our birds do leave their nests after raising a brood, but many do not, and their nests are used through a succession of years. I have known some birds to use their nests ten years in succession, and so persistent are they that many times the female will return even after the nest has been robbed and the mate killed. Among these users of perennial nests are the wrens, some of the swallow family, bluebirds, great crested flycatchers, some of the owls, eagles, chickadees and some woodpeckers.

"They repair to the nest each year and often build it over. A little wren has made its nest in a hole in a tree in my garden and has occupied it for the last eight years. Each year it has piled on new stuff till the hole is almost filled up. Some say that as soon as it becomes crowded the birds will clean it out. I know of a bluebird's nest that has been occupied for several years. It is the same female year after year, for she has two black wing feathers and is lame.

"Birds that build in exposed situations, like hangbirds, always build anew each season, and some others build anew for every brood. Some never build. They either lay in the nests of other birds or in the sand. The eagle and the owl make a framework of sticks and slight repairs are needed. Many birds' nests that you find have never been used. For instance, the marsh wren builds several with the idea that in the case of disturbance the male will attract attention to the nests other than that in which the female is brooding and so shield her from enemies."

An Ishmaelite of the Plains.

The dead thing, wherever it lies, still remains the coyote's choicest feast. A creature without a friend, an Ishmaelite whom men and animals have combined in despising, the ideal thief and vagabond of the animal world, this gray, gaunt figurehead of the western world still survives, as much the owner of his empire as he was in the days when his ancestors looked with cock eared astonishment and staccato exclamations upon the expedition of Lewis and Clark feeling its way slowly across that transmissouri wilderness whose future was then undreamed.—James W. Steele in Outing Magazine.

Merciful.

Towne—Look at that poor blind beggar playing the accordion.

Browne—Yes, I've been listening to him. Pity he isn't deaf too.—Philadelphia Press.

Steel Pens.

Something like 1,500,000 steel pens

He Heard of It.

Admiral Walker was a fine old sailor, and he was recognized as thorough. No personal friendship softened his manners to a delinquent. One day when he was sailing out from Hampton Roads with the international fleet that helped us to celebrate the centennial of Washington's first inauguration his orders about weighing anchor were disobeyed by his dearest friend in the service, who was in command of one of the ships, and as the old Chicago, the flagship, passed the trembling culprit the navies of the world heard "his whiskers" thundering out from the bridge objurgations and expressing wonder at his own moderation in not putting his old comrade under arrest. At another time when the white squadron was sailing out of a Mediterranean bay another old friend worked his ship so awkwardly that the admiral—then nearly a "trade dollar admiral"—suspended him by signal in the face of the whole fleet. The punished captain, coming aboard to protest against his public reprimand, puffed out indignantly, "Why, sir, I never heard of such a thing." "Well," said John, pulling at his big side whiskers, "you've heard of it now."—Harper's.

Guests Who Won't Order.

The business man returned to his office in a bad temper after the luncheon hour. "I wish people who haven't minds of their own would come to a realizing sense of the bother that they are to their friends and would develop a little initiative on their own account," he said. "Maybe it's only a mistaken idea of politeness, but anyhow it's a nuisance to be entertaining a person at the club and have him utterly without ideas as to what he wants to eat and drink. You ask him and he says he'll leave it to you, which is exactly what you don't want him to do. How can you divine his tastes, I'd like to know? What appeals to you very likely won't to him, and you know and he knows it. But your selections from the menu are always met with the comment 'That's very nice,' or 'You couldn't suit me better.' And so you go through the meal in a hit and miss fashion that certainly gets on the nerves of the host. The next time I run up against that kind of man I'm just going to sit back and let him do the entire ordering."—New York Press.

Where the Dog Is Valued.

In northern France and in Belgium especially the dog is indeed the friend of man. He is made to work. He gets little play except that small amount deemed sufficient to prevent canine dullness, yet he is so loved and so well cared for by his owner that he becomes a most important member of the family. The farmer, the tradesman, the householder, the guardsman of the frontier worships his dog—one of the first things he thinks of when founding his little home. He takes delight in rousing the dog's intelligence and loses no chance of pitting that intelligence against others. Local farmers vie with each other to improve a breed. Dog clubs take up the work, holding exhibitions in villages and towns. Cities challenge neighboring municipalities to contests on the grandest scale.—Wide World Magazine.

Wrecked by a Whale.

While cruising in the south seas the whaler Essex was furiously attacked by a cow sperm whale supposed to have been the mother of a calf which had just been harpooned. The whale had not been wounded herself, and her attack was very determined. At her first rush she passed under the Essex and carried away a great length of her false keel; then, coming to the surface a considerable distance away, she appeared to take bearings and deliberately charged the vessel again, ramming her with such violence that she stove in the bows, while the ship rolled so heavily that the captain thought she must be dismasted. The case is memorable because the crew had to abandon the vessel, and one boat was never heard of again.—Baily's Magazine.

Jingled His Wealth.

Young Scotch Precentor—Man Tammas, there's ae thing bothers me sair when I'm singin', an' I canna get ower't. I'm awfu' nervous.

Old Precentor—Aye, aye. I wis the same as you when I wis young, but I found oot a cure, an' I've aye kept tae't. I jist pit seeven or acht coopers in my pouch, an' when I feel the nervousness beginnin' I give them a bit rattle. It mak's me feel kin' o' whit I may ca' independent like. Try't, mon, try't.—Dundee Advertiser.

On the Big Jobs.

In New York city alone the great works of tunnels under city and river, railway terminals and depots, water supply and other similar enterprises now in progress aggregate the enormous sum of $625,000,000, or more than four Panama canals, says Popular Mechanics, while three of the un-