

FINE PRINTS.

Care With Which They Are Treated by Amateurs and Collectors.

How careful collectors and amateurs of fine engravings are of their treasures is illustrated by a written agreement that a local firm of dealers in such things had to sign recently when they wanted to borrow several particularly rare engravings for an exhibition they were to have in their galleries. The owner of the prints insisted that the prints were sent to the dealers in the shop no hands but those of the junior partner of the firm were to touch them. The owner stipulated expressly that the member of the firm was to take them out of the box, frame them himself, hang them on the walls and when the show was over follow the prints back through these various stages until a porter was ready to screw the cover of the packing box on again. The prints were so rare and fine that the junior partner cheerfully agreed to all of these conditions for the sake of showing the engravings.

That the prints were extremely rare may be appreciated from the fact that before two of them in particular came into the private collector's possession he made a special journey to Stuttgart, Germany, to see them, and when he looked at them he left an open order to a dealer in that city to buy them, no matter what they cost. He got them, but he paid the highest price ever known for such engravings to bring.—New York Press.

CRANKY METAL.

Moods and Mystery That Are Embodied in a Piece of Steel.

A cutlery company will make a hundred razors from the same piece of steel by the same process, and part of the razors will be good and part of them bad. It may be fifty of one kind or seventy-five or twenty-five—nobody knows. The maker doesn't know; the buyer doesn't know. Barbers say that even the price doesn't seem to make much difference. You may get a good razor for a quarter or a bad one for \$5. And the same razor will get a contrary edge today, so that you can hardly shave with it, and tomorrow, without additional sharpening, it will work like a charm.

One tap will go on a bolt easily and stay there. Another tap will hardly go on at all. A third may be screwed on tight and snug and yet keep coming off in spite of all that can be done.

Sometimes men that work with machines have a premonition of coming disaster, as do the men that sail on the seas or tread the winding paths of the big woods. Nature as well as pieces of mechanism seems able to communicate to man why they are in a calamitous and threatening mood.—Chicago Tribune.

Madrid and Its Climate.

Along the Mediterranean shore Spain presents a narrow ribbon of fertile, delightful country. The region is often called "the garden of Spain."

It is a great contrast to pass from these tropical shores to the wind swept plains of interior Spain. The level country inclosed by the Guadarrama and the Cantabrian mountains forms in the west an extensive wheat growing region. Toward the east as the rainfall decreases pasturage encroaches upon arable culture. In New Castle, on the south of the Guadarrama and in about the center of Spain, the political capital has been placed. The level country in which it has been dropped, as if by accident, is for the most part a waterless plain, swept in winter by the piercing winds from the naked mountains of the north, sweltering in summer under the effect of the sun's rays on bare rock and soil.

The climate of Madrid has been tersely described by its inhabitants as "three months of winter and nine of hades."

Honey Ants.

Certain Mexican ants are selected by their kindred as storehouses of honey. They are fed with honey until the abdomen speedily becomes smooth and round and so filled with honey that the skin is transparent. These ants are doomed to pass the remainder of their lives as mere honey cells, from which their kindred extract the honey when it is required. There are several specimens of these ants in the British museum with the honey still within their transparent bodies. The Mexicans raid the nests of these ants for the sake of the honey that their bodies contain, and the ants are eaten raw as sweets.

The Full Particulars.

The other day a lady who lives in our town entered a grocery store and asked to be shown a good kind of breakfast cereal.

The clerk took down a package and said:

"Madam, this is a predigested food."

"Oh, is that so?" she returned. "And by whom?"—Woman's Home Companion.

Good For an Appetite.

"You must have a good appetite," remarked the thin man enviously. "What do you take for it?"

"In all my experience," replied the plump one, "I have found nothing more suitable than food."—Philadelphia Press.

Easily Settled.

Nurse—Doctor, a sponge is missing. Possibly you sewed it up inside the patient. Eminent Surgeon—Thank you. Remind me to add \$10 to the bill for material.—Puck.

Talk is cheap, but silence costs you a great deal less.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

A Curious Cipher Code.

Prisoners confined in different parts of jail often use cipher codes in communicating with one another. In the Kansas City jail some years ago the officials came across a hard one. A fellow named Turner, in for forgery, invented the puzzle. The writing was on long narrow strips of paper, on the edge of which were letters and parts of letters that apparently had no connection and from which no words could be formed. One day a deputy who was passing the cell of a prisoner saw him passing a long strip of paper around an octagon lead pencil. He took the paper away, and on it were the mysterious scrawls that had worried the keepers. But the deputy got an idea from this, and going back to the office, he wrapped the strip around an octagon shaped lead pencil and after several trials adjusted it so that the parts of the letters fitted together and made a sentence, though the writing was very fine. The writer had adopted the simple but ingenious plan of covering the pencil with paper and had then written along one of the flat sides. On unrolling it the writing was as mystical as a cryptogram, but when put around the pencil as it was originally it could be easily understood.

Why.

There is something almost plaintive in the truly English word "why." It may be indefinitely prolonged upon the lips. "Why" is almost poetical in itself and fitly introduces the best hexameter in the language:

"Why do the heathen rage and the people imagine a vain thing?"

Its uses in poetry are almost infinite and one modern writer makes almost a line of it alone:

Why do the night winds sigh,  
The sea birds wildly cry,  
The summer clouds pass by,  
The lilies droop and die,  
The light fade from the sky?  
Why—oh, why?

To most of the whys there is not a good because. The inquiring mind is puzzled to account for many things besides its own existence. Hundreds of such questions occur to us at every step, and no satisfactory reply can be expected. Life is too short. Socrates was always saying "Why," and we have all heard of the man who called Pope the "little crooked thing that asked questions."—Exchange.

The Man Who Told the Tale.

It happened on a Pullman car between New York and Chicago. Dinner having been finished, the gentlemen assembled in the smoking room to enjoy their cigars.

"During the time I was in the war," said the quiet man, "I saw a very wonderful thing in the line of surgical operations. A friend of mine was shot through the right breast, the bullet passing clear through him. The presence of mind of his companion undoubtedly saved his life. He wrapped his handkerchief around the ramrod of his gun and, pushing it through the path made by the bullet, cleared the wound of all poisonous lead. I know it is hard to believe, but gentlemen, the man still lives to tell the tale."

"Which man?" inquired the slim passenger on the other seat quietly.

"The wounded one, of course," exclaimed the old soldier scornfully.

"Oh, I beg your pardon. I thought it might be the other."

The Mania For Shopping.

One phase of the feminine mania for shopping is illustrated in John Foster Fraser's "America at Work." Speaking of the C. O. D. method of shopping and of the way in which it appeals to the woman with the slender purse, he says:

"If she has no dollars, that does not deprive her of the pleasure of shopping. She will walk into a big store, look over a dozen gowns and try on several before deciding. Then she will get a C. O. D. card and, visiting other departments, will buy a hat, rich underwear and a parasol. She will give a fine order. When the goods are delivered at the address she mentioned,

it is found there is no such person as Mrs. Walker. True, she has put the store to a lot of trouble. Yet think of the morning of womanly delight she has had in her shopping."

The Right Place.

A dignified elderly gentleman riding on a train was annoyed by a boy sitting across the aisle. The boy had just finished his breakfast and was amusing himself by laughing at the old gentleman. Presently the latter leaned over and said to the boy's mother:

"Madam, that child should be spanked."

"I know it," said she, "but I don't believe in spanking a child on a full stomach."

"Neither do I," said he. "Turn him over."

Appropriate.

The Monument Man (after several abortive suggestions)—How would simply "Gone home" do? Mrs. Newwoods—I guess that would be all right. It was always the last place he ever thought of going.—Puck.

Winning Her Attention.

"My wife never pays any attention to what I say."

"Mine does—sometimes."

"How do you manage it?"

"I talk in my sleep."—London Opinion.

Got What He Liked.

Host—Why on earth did you put poor Jenkins between two such chatterboxes at the table? Hostess—Why, dear, you know he is so fond of tongue sandwiches!

Chiefly the mold of a man's fortunes is in his own hands.—Bacon.

A LESSON IN GERMAN.

Follow It Closely and You Will See How Really Simple It Is.

Among the Hottentots (Hottentot in German) the kangaroos (Beuteiratte) are found in great numbers. Many of them wander over the country free and unmolested; others, less fortunate, are taken by hunters and put into cages (Kotter) provided with covers (Lattengitter) to keep out the rain. These cages are called in German Lattengitterwetterkotter, and the kangaroo after his imprisonment takes the name of Lattengitterwetterkotterbeuteiratte. One day an assassin (Attentaeter) was arrested who had killed a Hottentot woman. Hottentotmutter, the mother of two stupid and stuttering children in Straettertrottel. This woman in the German language is entitled Hottentotstraettertrottelmutter, and her assassin takes the name Hottentotstraettermuttertaeter. The murderer was confined in a kangaroo's cage—Beuteiratlattengitterwetterkotter—when a few days later he escaped, but fortunately he was recaptured by a Hottentot, who presented himself at the mayor's office with beaming face.

"I have captured the Attentaeter," said he.

"Which one?" replied the mayor.

"We have several."

"The Attentaeterlattengitterwetterkotterbeuteiratte?"

"Which Attentaeter are you talking about?"

"About the Hottentotstraettertrottelmuttertaeter."

"Then why don't you say at once the Hottentotstrattellmuttertaeterlattengitterwetterkotterbeuteiratte?"

The Hottentot died in dismay.

THE AWKWARD "MRS."

Single as Well as Married Women Once Carried This Title.

A curiously awkward word, if it be a word, is "Mrs." It is not spelled as it is pronounced—no one but a Welshman or a Pole would be equal to pronouncing it as it is spelled—and its pronunciation is a clumsy contraction of the good old English designation "mistress."

In the days of old, when leisure had not become, as it is now, almost a forgotten luxury and people were less anxious to clip their speech, the full pronunciation was often used, and "mistress" was not altogether elbowed out of existence by the vulgar "missis."

But nowadays "mistress" has dropped out, and consequently the contracted pronunciation of "Mrs." has prevailed and holds the field.

Another point worth noting in the history of the designation is that about 150 years ago and earlier "Mrs." was applied quite impartially to unmarried as well as married ladies. Even children were sometimes styled "Mrs."

The burial of an infant daughter of John Milton, who died at the age of five months, is recorded in the parish register of St. Margaret, Westminster, and her name is entered as "Mrs. Katherine Milton," followed by a small "c," to indicate that a child is meant. But this may be regarded as an exceptional use of the title.—St. James' Gazette.

A Sabbatarian Dog.

"Tip was an Irish setter—his name was really Tipperary and Tip for short," said a New York clubman.

"He knew when it was Sunday, and he kept the day. He was the only Sabbatarian dog I ever knew. He used to sleep on a rug in my room. I had to keep early hours in those days, and every morning at 7 o'clock Tip would put his cold nose against my face and remind me that it was time to go to work. Then while I was dressing he would go to the village postoffice and bring home the mail. On Sunday morning he never stirred off his rug until I was good and ready to get up, which was usually quite late, and nothing could induce him to go to the post-office on that day. And the best part of the story is it is absolutely true."—New York Tribune.

No Plot.

The actor, rounded up in Russia with a bunch of others, retained his composure while his companions in misfortune were giving way to despair.

"I can prove my innocence of complicity in any conspiracy to the complete satisfaction of the authorities," he said.

"How can you do that?" one of his companions asked. "You will always be suspected of being connected with a plot."

He smiled confidently.

"Not when I tell them that for years I have been playing in musical comedies."—Baltimore American.

Golfing Sarcasm.

"Caddy, how many strokes is that for this hole?" asked the golfer with the plaid cap.

"I can't say, sir."

"Can't say?"

"No, sir; I can only count up to twelve, sir."—Pick-Me-Up.

Self Reliance.

It is easy in this world to live after the world's opinion. It is easy in solitude to live after our own, but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowds keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.—Emerson.

Ready For Business.

A tragedian playing Richard III, in a small town was waited on after the show by an honest farmer, who said that "if the gen'tm who wanted a horse was still of the same mind he would like to do business with him."

No better masters than poverty and want.—Dutch Proverb.

Fuses Are Made to Blow Out.

With everybody traveling more or less, usually more, in electrically driven cars and trains, the time has certainly come for general appreciation of the fact that the blowing out of fuses is nothing to excite alarm.

To be startled to "jump" as the saying is—when this happens is the privilege of all except the professional electricians. The latter are bound by professional pride to show perfect impassibility even when the sudden flash stings their fingers and it is delightful to see how many of them have at fault to see how many of them have at fault to this command of their tamed nerves. To jump is one thing, however, quite another.

To blow out is the duty and destiny of fuses, and when they have done it or such danger as there is all over nothing worse than delay can follow, unless the passengers proceed to make wild rushes for which there is no need whatever. Travelers should keep these facts carefully in mind.—New York Times.

It Was His Friend.

A little story in German and English, accompanied by an interpreter, drifted into the Indianapolis News office. Here it is: Two Germans stepped into an auction house where a sale of watches was going on. They occupied front seats and soon attracted the attention of the auctioneer. As he dwelt upon the merits of a watch he was offering for sale to the highest bidder the auctioneer turned to the Germans from time to time as the price mounted—\$6, \$6.50, \$7, \$7.50. As the auctioneer nodded at one of the Germans there came an answering nod, which he took to be a bid.

"That fellow knows me," said one German to the other.

"Yes, sure," said the other.

The nodding kept on. Finally the auctioneer extended the watch to the nodders. "It's yours," he said. "Ten dollars. You're the buyer."

"Ach, nein," said the German. "I'm the Schwob (Swabian); mein freund heir ist der Bayer (Bavarian)."

Talked to the Wrong Man.

One day an important looking gentleman took a seat beside a quiet man in an Arkansas railway carriage and began a conversation.

"I'm going up to Little Rock," he said, "to get a pardon for a convicted thief. I'm not personally acquainted with the governor, but he can't afford to refuse me."

"Is the fellow guilty?" asked the man.

"Of course he is. But that makes no difference. His friends have agreed to give me \$500 if I get him out, and the thermometer is very low when I can't put up a good talk. Where are you traveling?"

"Going to Little Rock."

"Do you live there?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps you might be of some service to me. What business are you in?"

"I am the governor."—St. Louis Republic.

Too Much For General Butler.

After the battle of Chickamauga an enthusiastic Confederate went about the streets of New Orleans accosting every man who wore the blue with.

"Didn't Stonewall Jackson give you blazes at Chickamauga?" General Butler called the exultant Confederate before him and told him he could either take the oath of allegiance or go to Ship Island for two years. The Confederate deliberated, but finally agreed to take the oath. When he had sworn to support the constitution, he turned to General Butler and exclaimed,

"Now we are both loyal citizens, ain't we, general?"

"Well, I trust so," said General Butler.

"Then," said the jubilant Confederate, "I want to ask you if Stonewall Jackson didn't give us blazes at Chickamauga?"—Argonaut.

Terrapin in London.

A smart American, one of the fresh kind, drifted into the Hotel Cecil in London with a party of five and ordered with pompousness a la dos arragatons Americans, a la Paris. "Say, waiter, I want six portions of Maryland terrapin, and I want 'em served with the bones. Do you understand?" In three or four minutes the waiter reported,

"Sir, we have the pleasure to serve terrapin with grand sherry, but not with the bones."

"What in the mischief did you do with the bones?"

"The bones? I will ask the cook if you wish."

"Never mind. We will have soras en brochette."—New York Press.

Extravagance.

I heard a story lately of a highlander who had been persuaded to buy a ticket for a raffle. He won the first prize, a bicycle, but on being told of his good fortune instead of bugging himself with delight he said: "Weel, there's just ma luck, buying two tickets when yin wad 'a' done. It's jist a saxpence wasted."—Dundee People's Journal.

Force of Habit.

"What are you in such a great hurry for?"

"I am going to the funeral of my chief, and there is nothing he hates like unpunctuality."—London Telegraph.

Prevent the Slips.

"A man who loves his kind forgives his brother's slips."

"A man who loves his kind doesn't have occasion to. He puts ashes on his pavement."—Baltimore American.

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