

AMERICAN CONSULS.

Their Duties Are Misunderstood by Many of Our Citizens.

In almost every city and town in Europe—or all over the world, for that matter, if the city is of any size—there is an American consul or consul general. And, while the office of these functionaries is commercial in reality, looking after the imports and the exports between our country and others, still they take a friendly interest in American citizens traveling and are always ready to go out of their way even to be obliging in personal things.

There are always certain public reception days at the homes of our consuls and our ambassadors, to which it is not difficult to obtain invitations. In fact, it is often announced in the daily papers that Americans in general are welcome, say on days like Thanksgiving, Fourth of July, and so on. In this way it is possible for one to see something of the lives of one's compatriots away from home.

A CUSTOM HOUSE TALE.

The American Who Landed in Germany With a Box of Candy.

Germany is jealous of the foreign candy maker and exacts a rigorous toll upon anything in the shape of confectionery that comes across its borders. Ignorant of this, one of Uncle Sam's sons disembarked from a liner at a German port carrying in his hand a five pound box of candy bearing a New York trademark. At sight of the box the Teutonic customs officials exhibited marked activity and prepared to seize upon it.

"Not for mine," said the American. "I won't give up a sou. I'd rather eat the stuff here and now." He opened the box and commenced to dispose of its contents without delay. Everybody in sight was offered a handful. Nobody declined except the customs officer, who said blandly that he had not a sweet tooth. The traveler himself ate many pieces. It was not long before the last bit had been eaten.

As soon as the box was empty the official sent the traveler by the arm. "The gentleman," he announced, "will accompany me to the bureau, where we'll make out his bill for duty. Come. It is at the other end of the dock."

"Never!" said the American. "You have no right to charge me duty. I didn't bring it in. I'll see my consul right away, and he'll send a big fleet and bombard this blooming town."

"Softly," said the officer. "You'll pay duty, all right. There are fifteen witnesses to prove that that candy of yours was consumed on German soil."

The duty was paid, and the consul has not as yet been consulted.—Philadelphia Ledger.

Ancient Enamels.

It is certain that glazes having the composition of good enamels were manufactured at a very early date. Excellent glazes are still preserved, and some of the bricks which have been found among the ruins of Babylon have been ascribed to the seventh or eighth century B. C. The glaze on the Babylonian bricks was found upon examination to have a base of soda glass, or silicate of sodium. Glazes of a similar character were also manufactured by the Egyptians as early as the sixth dynasty. There can be little doubt that the Greeks and Etruscans were also acquainted with the art of enameling.—New York American.

The Living Present.

He that hath so many causes of joy, and so great, is very much in love with sorrow and peevishness who loses all these pleasures and chooses to sit down upon his little handful of thorns. Enjoy the blessings of this day if God sends them, and the evils if he bear patiently and sweetly, for this day only is ours. We are dead to yesterday, and we are not yet born to the morrow. But if we look abroad and bring into one day's thoughts the evil of many, certain and uncertain, what will be and what will never be, our load will be as intolerable as it is unreasonable.—Jeremy Taylor.

Fountain Pens.

It is a popular fancy that fountain pens are quite a modern invention. As a matter of fact, an old work of reference published in 1795 contains an illustration of a fountain pen, the appearance of which is very much like those sold at the present time. Its construction, however, was somewhat elaborate and clumsy, the pen consisting of various pieces of metal which had to be screwed and unscrewed before the pen could be used.

A Peasimist.

Agent—How long do you intend to remain in Washington? Reformer—Until congress passes a couple of necessary laws that— Agent—Gee! You don't want to rent a house. You'd better buy one.—Washington Herald.

An Undercut.

Ruby—Charlie took me in to dinner the other night. He and Fred tossed up, and Charlie—Beryl—Lost, as usual. Will he never learn better than to gamble?—Kansas City Newsbook.

FOUND ITS SOUL.

The Story of a Violin That Was Wrecked in a Fire.

After the Lucky Baldwin theater and hotel fire in San Francisco years ago there were nine feet of water in the basement, where the instruments of the orchestra were stored. When a little of it had been pumped out, August Hinrichs, leader of the orchestra, hired a man to swim in and get out his famous Amati violin.

It was wrecked—water soaked, warped, twisted and broken up into sixty-eight pieces. The hot water had soaked out all the old glue, and every piece had fallen away from its neighbor. Besides a good many patches of wood put in when repairs had been done. To all appearance the thing was smashed beyond recall.

Nevertheless Herman Muller, a local violin repairer, who knew and loved the old fiddle, took it in hand. Twice he carefully joined the time darkened pieces of wood. Twice he decided that the Amati would not do.

So once more he soaked the sixty-eight bits of wood apart. Then he carefully modeled out of clay an arch such as he remembered that of the old Amati to have had and for nine weeks kept the bits of wood bound to it until they had gained the proper shape.

Once more he put the bits of wood together. Then for five weeks more he patiently varnished and polished the more than 200 year old fiddle until it shone. Then Hinrichs once more drew his bow across the vibrating strings, and the violin spoke. It sank, wept, bubbled with life and joy.

The Amati had found its soul.—San Francisco Examiner.

JOHN AND HIS IDOLS.

The Chinaman is Utterly Devoted to Reverence in His Religion.

How the Chinaman regards his idol is told by the Rev. John MacGowan: "The Chinese is a person utterly devoid of reverence, sentiment or devotion in his religion. With him it is a matter either of fear or of business, but mainly the latter. A house is plagued with sickness, which is put down not to bad sanitation or other natural causes, but to the presence of evil spirits. This leads to a visit to the nearest temple to get the idol to drive them away. A new business is going to be commenced, but before doing so it is deemed essential to get the support of the idols. If one idol says it will not succeed another is appealed to for its opinion, and if it is favorable it is at once accepted as the correct one."

"Should the venture turn out a failure no reproach of any kind is uttered against the god whose prediction has been falsified. The man takes the blame upon himself. His character has not been pure, he says, or he was born under an evil star, or he was naturally unlucky and so was bound to fail in anything that he undertook."

"Men never dream of thinking about their idols as we do about God. No affection is shown for them. It is most amusing to watch the faces of the Chinese when you ask them if the idols love them. The eyes gleam, the face broadens into a wide grin, and soon hearty laughter is heard at this most facetious and side splitting joke.—Chicago News.

A Remarkable Church.

At Stivichall, near Coventry, England, there is a unique place of worship. In 1810 John Green, a stonemason of a strongly religious turn of mind, laid the first stone of the edifice, and seven years later he completed the building. In all that time he had assistance from no one, doing all the work with his own hands until the church was ready for its interior fittings. Wooden and even brick buildings erected by one or two men are not uncommon, but this is the only structure in England and probably in the world of which every stone was laid by one man. The building accommodates quite a large congregation, and the church derives a considerable revenue from the contributions of sightseers who are drawn to the place through curiosity.

The Equinox Storm Fable.

The United States weather bureau has denied that the coming of the equinox brings with it a storm. The belief, it says, that the old fashioned people put in this theory is all misplaced. Any big storm that happens to occur within a week or two of the time that the sun is crossing the line, say the weather men, is dignified by the name of "equinoctial storm," when, as a matter of fact, there is generally some atmospheric disturbance every week or two, and those that occur about the time of the equinox are just raking their turn and are not the result of the crossing of the sun.

A Fine Pair.

"What do you think of the two candidates?" asked one elector of another during a recent contest. "What do I think of them?" was the reply. "Well, when I look at them I'm thankful only one of them can get in."—London Telegraph.

Through Her Head.

"Buggy gets out of all patience with his wife. He says she can't get a thing through her head." "That's funny. He told me everything he said to her went in one ear and out of the other."

Hot Water.

Hyker—Troubled with indigestion, eh? You should drink a cup of hot water every morning. Pyker—I do, but they call it coffee at my boarding house.—London Express.

The collection of coins and medals in the British museum consists of over 250,000 specimens.

SENSE IN EXERCISE.

The Weakness That Comes With Great Muscular Exertion.

It is a curious fact that perfect health is not consistent with high muscular development. Professional athletes and all men who acquire phenomenal strength seem to lose in length of life and activity what they gain for a few years of record breaking powers. I was privileged to see on several occasions Louis Cyr, the Canadian giant, who broke all weight lifting records. He weighed 320 pounds and was all solid bone and muscle. I saw him hold his wife out at arm's length with one hand. I saw him raise a 350 pound barrel from the floor to his shoulder, using only one hand and arm. I saw him get down on all fours under a platform bearing 4,000 pounds of big men selected from the audience, and be raised the platform with his mighty back. Yet this remarkable man was muscle bound and crippled at thirty-seven, when he should have been at the height of his wonderful powers.

Kennedy, the oarsman, who won a clamour belt for lifting with his hands from the floor absolutely without apparatus a thousand pound weight, was used up and crippled before he was forty. David, professional strong man and teacher of athletics, wore himself out and died at forty-seven.—"Common Sense in Exercise," by Charles H. Cochrane, in Metropolitan Magazine.

NATURE CURES.

Medicine Helps, of Course, but Faith is a Powerful Factor.

There's a truth at the basis of all this discussion of disease and its cure which, despite the fact that it has been apparent for generations, is still too little understood by people in general. In fact, appearances would lead to the belief that it is not appreciated by all physicians. It is the truth that not the medicine, but nature, cures the ill. The most that medicine can do is to place the patient in a condition most favorable for the work of nature. Here comes in the value of this element of faith. It is the best possible help to nature—the firm belief that you'll get well. It may well take the place of many drugs. It may in instances displace the need of the physician. Even the surgeon can do no more. He simply cuts away debris, puts the body in the best trim he knows how, adjusts merely mechanical breaks or displacements and waits for nature to do the rest. The physician who pours in an inordinate amount of drugs thinks he is assisting nature. As a matter of fact, he is sometimes impeding her. The best physicians, in all except extreme cases, use few medicines, and those as mild as possible.—New Haven Register.

On Heaven.

"If I could be out of physical pain," said a lifelong invalid, "I would ask no other heaven." "If I could be in a place where I might know that my husband never could be killed on the train!" cried one of the gentle "worriers" whose capacity for suffering is neither understood nor respected by the sanguine. "If I could take my children to a world where every time I hear a croupy cough my heart did not stand still with terror," urged another. "that would be heaven for me." The nautico girl who burst into joyful tears at first sight of a marble bust of herself "because it was white" had a glimpse of her heaven before its time. "Heaven must be like any other form of happiness, only 'more so,'" said a thoughtful man. "And the conditions of happiness are three—a clean conscience, something to do and some one to love."—Elizabeth Stuart Phelps in Harper's Bazar.

They Go Together.

"Henry," said the young wife, who had taken up physical culture, "how do you think I am built?" "My dear," replied her husband fondly, "you are built like a watch."

"Thank you, Henry. And, Henry?" "Well."

"If I am built like a watch, don't you think I should have a few jewels?"

And then Henry frowned and said the man who compliments a woman is an idiot.

A Force Proportioned to Its Frame.

The war of 1812 has proved that our free government, like other free governments, though slow in its early movements, acquires in its progress a force proportioned to its frame and that the Union of these states, the guardian of the freedom and the safety of all and of each, is strengthened by every occasion that puts it to the test.—James Madison.

Net in Her Class.

Mrs. Spenders—I wonder how you'd like it if I ever got "new womanish" and insisted upon wearing men's clothes. Mr. Spenders—Oh, I haven't any fear of you ever doing that. Men's clothes are never very expensive.—London Opinion.

Good at Keeping.

"And you call yourself honest, do you?" "Sir, I keep the commandments." "That must be because you've got an idea that they belong to somebody else."—Cleveland Leader.

Resented.

"And how did you come to marry him?" "I didn't want to marry him," answered the womanly little woman in dignity; "he came to marry me."

First the thick cloud and then the rainbow's arc.—Bonar.

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