

**EDISON THE VICTOR.**

**He Humbled the Pride of the Fast Telegraph Operator.**

Edison made his first record as a telegraph operator in Memphis. A contemporary says he came walking into the office one morning looking like a veritable hayseed. He wanted a job, and, although his appearance was not prepossessing, the office was short handed, and he was assigned a desk at the St. Louis wire, the hardest in the office. "At the end of the line was an operator who was chain lightning and knew it," says Francis Arthur Jones' "Life of Edison."

"Edison had hardly got seated before St. Louis called. The newcomer responded, and St. Louis started on a long report which he pumped in like a house afire. Edison threw his leg over the arm of his chair, leisurely transferred a wad of spruce gum from his pocket to his mouth, took up a pen, examined it critically and started in about fifty words behind. He didn't stay there long, though. St. Louis let out another link of speed, and still another, and the instrument on Edison's table hummed like an old style Singer sewing machine. Every man in the office left his desk and gathered around the joy to see what he was doing with that electric cyclone.

"Well, sir, he was right on the word and taking it down in the prettiest copperplate hand you ever saw, even crossing his 't's' and dotting his 'f's' and punctuating with as much care as a man editing telegraph for printers. St. Louis got tired by and by and began to slow down. Then Edison opened the key and said:

"Hello, there! When are you going to get a hustle on? This is no primer class."

"Well, sir," said the gentleman in conclusion, "that broke St. Louis all up. He had been rawhiding Memphis for a long time, and we were terribly sore, and to have a man in our office who could walk all over him made us feel like a man whose horse had won the Derby."

**THRILLING SPORT.**

**Rafting Down the Canyons of an Unmapped Glacial River.**

With provisions for only ten days a party of explorers in Alaska found one September that they must build rafts and take their chances of letting the swift river carry them to settlements where food could be obtained; otherwise ice and snow would shut them in from all hope of rescue. In "The Shameless Diary of an Explorer" Robert Dunn tells of the journey on the roughly made rafts.

"At 11 o'clock today began the most thrilling sport I know, rafting down the snaky canyons of an unmapped glacial river.

"Fred and I captured the Mary Ann II, the other three the Ethel May. We rasped and hauled them over the gravel shadows of our tributary, shot out between the main walls of the stream and seized upon that boiling current.

"We reached silently from cliff to cliff, jammed pike poles into the slate shelf overhead, twirled out of eddies. We bumped and grounded. We might or might not hang on them for a perpendicular minute.

"Bowlders rose through white ruffs of water in midchannel. We might or might not hang on them for a perpendicular minute.

"You must be very handy with a pole. You must have a hair fine eye for moving angles, the strength of an eddy, the depth of foam ruffling over a stump. You must be surer of the length of your pole than a polo player of the reach of his mallet. You must be quicker than a Siwash dog. You must know the different weight of each log down to ounces, the balance of the duffel piled high like a dale, covered with the tent and the bean pot, the mackinaws and the ax lashed to all the lashings. It's a pretty game."

**A Risky Subject.**

"Do you think, sweetheart," queried the young man with the evenly divided hair, "that your father will consent to our marriage?"

"Well," replied the fair one, "of course papa will be sorry to lose me, but—"

"But," interrupted the rash youth, "I will remind him that instead of losing a daughter he will gain a son."

"Dearest," rejoined the wise maid, "if you really want me you mustn't say anything of the kind. Papa has three such sons boarding with him now, and he's a little touchy on the subject."

**Queer Milk.**

Many specimens of unconscious humor are received by the editors of that monumental work, the "Imperial Gazetteer of India." A district was said to be "an extensive rolling plain, consisting of alternate ridges of bare stony hills and narrow fertile valleys." An interesting item of natural history was afforded by the remark, "The buffalo differs from the cow in giving milk which is richer in butter fat, in voice and in having no hump."—London Globe.

**Poured.**

"I have poured every day this week at some function or other," remarked the vivacious girl.

"Well, well!" murmured the old gentleman who overheard her. "Now I know what is meant by the term 'a reigning belle.'"—St. Louis Republic.

No man prospers in this world by luck unless it be the luck of getting up early, working hard and maintaining honor and integrity.—Beecher.

**SHEFFIELD PLATE.**

**History of This Now Very Rare and Valuable Ware.**

Sheffield plate differs from all other plated ware in that the plating was done on the sheet metal before the article was shaped. Before and since then plating of various sorts has been applied only to the finished piece, as in our electroplating process. Moreover, the plating was done on copper, while modern base metal is usually composed of an amalgam of copper, nickel and zinc.

Furthermore, it is possible for the collector to secure examples of early Georgian and so called Queen Anne work in Sheffield plate, while the rarity and high money value of silverware of that period make its acquisition extremely difficult. Sheffield plate historically and artistically is as worthy of a place beside old china and old mahogany as is old silverware.

In 1742 one Thomas Bolover of Sheffield, England, described in the histories as an "ingenious mechanic," accidentally fused some silver and copper while repairing a knife. He began experimenting, seeking for a method of plating copper with silver for the manufacture of small articles. In 1743, together with Joseph Wilson, he set up a factory for the manufacture of buckles, snuffboxes and knife handles.

Joseph Hancock soon got hold of the secret and, perfecting it, demonstrated that it was possible to manufacture the finest and most richly embossed silverware. Settling in Sheffield, he started the manufacture of all sorts of domestic pieces. Beginning modestly with horsepower, he later added water power for the rolling process. Other manufacturers followed his example, and Sheffield plate soon began to replace pewter on the tables of the English middle classes. Altogether we know of twenty-three important manufacturers of this ware.

The industry flourished until the middle of the nineteenth century, and so few pieces of copper rolled plate were made after that time that they need not concern the collector. Electroplating was discovered or invented by a medical student of Rotherham, near Sheffield, and the new process was patented on March 25, 1840. By 1850 the new ware was on the market everywhere, and the industry had been revolutionized.—Country Life in America.

**BISMARCK'S ANGER.**

**The Incident That Made Certain the Franco-German War.**

The Princess Bismarck, so the story goes, changed the political history of France unwittingly, and but for her the Franco-Prussian war might never have been waged.

Bismarck was unfriendly to France, but the Empress Eugenie hoped with her beauty to influence him so that the little trouble with France and Germany might be smoothed over. She therefore invited the German prince and his wife to visit the court of France, and the Prince and Princess Bismarck arrived in great state at the Tuilleries.

That evening there was a grand reception, and Eugenie received the guests in a gown which made her so ravishingly lovely that even Prince Bismarck, German, stolid and in love with his wife, stood and gazed upon her with admiration. And Eugenie was not slow to observe the effect of her beauty upon him. She called him to her side, and Bismarck came, with his wife upon his arm.

Now, the Princess Bismarck was tall and giant, and her feet were generous. As she walked she showed a great deal of sole.

While Bismarck stood talking with Eugenie an audible titter was heard along the line of ladies. Bismarck, who was quick as a flash, followed the glance of their eyes and saw them rest upon the feet of his wife.

That settled the matter. The political history of France was altered from that moment.

A year later, when Paris was besieged, Bismarck himself fired a cannon over the ramparts, and those who were near him heard him shout:

"Take that for the feet of the Princess Bismarck!"

The slight was avenged.

**The Mayflower.**

Never did a ship sail with such momentous results as the little west country clipper schooner the Mayflower, but few people have bothered to ask what was her fate after she had lauded the heroic band of Englishmen on Plymouth rock. As a matter of fact, she drifted into the cotton trade and sank after many years of service for the East India company at Masulipatam, on the coast of India.—London Standard.

**A Third Need.**

"You need," said the expert to the sufferer, "two pairs of glasses, one for reading and one for long distance."

"Can't you make it three pairs?" asked the man who had made a study of his own case. "I'd like some short sighted ones to use on bill collectors."—Nashville American.

**Agreed With Him.**

Father (calling from head of stairs at 11:30 p. m.): "Jennie, don't you think it's about time to go to bed?" Jennie: "Yes, papa dear. What on earth keeps you up so late?"—Pathfinder.

**Not Unusual.**

"Sometimes," said Uncle Eben, "I ketches mysef lambastin' a mule fob doin' purty much de same as I would do if I was in de mule's place!"—Washington Star.

Nature creates merit; fortune brings it into play.—Rochefoucauld.

**EXPERIMENTAL MATRIMONY.**

**Trial Marriage Is the Rule Among Many Peoples.**

Among many people of the world trial marriages are the accepted custom. Among the Greeks "marriage is considered only as a temporary convenience, not binding on the parties more than one year," the consequence being that "a large proportion of the old and middle aged men by frequent changing have had many wives, and their children, scattered around the country, are unknown to them." Evidences of similar practices of experimental matrimony and connubial variety are found among many of the American Indian tribes on both continents.

In parts of Greenland six months is the trial dead line, husband and wife separating if the "two-hearts-two-minds" theory develops discord instead of harmony.

Marriage among the Botocondos, according to Keane, is of a purely temporary nature, "dissolved on the slightest pretext or without any pretext at all merely through love of change or caprice."

"In Tasmania," says Dr Milligan, "trial marriages result in a succession of wives."

In Samoa the wife's tenure of office is frequently limited to a few days or weeks, and marriage is sometimes only an excuse for the feasts and festivals so dear to the hearts of the pleasure loving natives.

In the Indian archipelago it is a common practice for formal marriages to be limited, sometimes for only a month and at others for a period of several years.—Schoolcraft.

**IT WAS GENUINE.**

**The William Shakespeare Signature That Admiral Luce Had.**

Admiral Luce was in command of the north Atlantic squadron in 1885, and his flagship for a time was anchored in New York bay, where it was visited by many people. One day a party came aboard which included, among others, a very pretty girl and a very dignified and learned Englishman. As Admiral Luce was entertaining them in his cabin he asked the pretty girl if she would like to see an original autograph of William Shakespeare.

At this the dignified and learned Englishman pricked up his ears and remarked that he had made a study of the autographs of Shakespeare and was positive there was no authentic example in America. Admiral Luce replied that he was very positive his was authentic and that its genuineness had never been questioned. This made the Britisher quite mad, and he delivered a lecture on the fraudulent autographs and manuscripts that were brought over to America and exhibited as originals.

"Well," replied the admiral, "I am convinced that my autograph of William Shakespeare is genuine, and I am going to have the pleasure of showing it to this young lady," whereupon he went to his desk, took out his visitor's book, turned back a few pages and then pointed out the signature, "William Shakespeare, mayor of New Orleans, Jan. 12, 1885." The Englishman gave a painful gasp and retired.

**A Welsh College Yell.**

The sooner the college yell is introduced into England the better it will be for the youth of the land. In Wales they have it, and see how Wales always beats all opponents at football! This is the cheery shout of the Aberystwyth students when their men are engaged in any athletic contest: "Hip, hip, hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah! Hip, hip, hurrah! Boom! Warra! Ishmab! Ishmab! Keezle, keezle, wagga, wagga! Keezle, keezle, wagga, wagga! Ishmab! Keezle, wagga! Boom! Wa! Ra! Tschel!" Now, that is something like a yell. One can see at a glance that it contains, at any rate, some of the elements which go to make up a yell. It would inspire a caterpillar. A pew opener who had that shouted in his ear would sprint out and die for his country.—London Globe.

**The Birth of Christ.**

The exact date of the birth of Christ is unknown. Among the early churches there was no agreement as to the date of the Nativity, some celebrating it in April or May, others in January. Dec. 25 can hardly be exact, for it falls in the rainy season of Judea, when shepherds would not have been watching their flocks by night in the open. The December date came into general observance naturally, but gradually. When the heathen races of the north were Christianized they simply substituted for their Yule celebration in December the observance of the birth of Christ.

**Looking Backward.**

A Mississippi official tells of a colored citizen of that state who gave a justice of the peace a big fat possum as a wedding fee.

A year after the justice on meeting the dork asked: "Joe, how do you like married life?" "Well, sah," answered Joe ruefully, "all I kin say is I wish I'd eat dat possum."

**The Best Authority.**

Hettie—Harry is a man always to be trusted. He has never deceived me. Clara—But how do you know that? Hettie—Know it? Why, he told me so himself only last evening.—Boston Transcript.

**Vindication.**

The lady (to hastily retreating burglars)—Pardon me, but won't you please wait till my husband sees you? I told him there was some one in the house, and he said "Rubbish!"—Harper's Bazar.

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