

**AN UNCERTAIN RIVER.**

The Indus Has a Bad Habit of Changing Its Channel.

The river Indus in width during the year may vary by miles. Traffic for long distances cannot be guaranteed because the ever shifting channel throws up mud flats and sand banks here and overflows good land there in a manner which defeats the wisdom of the ancient boatmen.

With the Indus, too, it is not merely a question of land or water. There is always a gamble as to the kind of land which the river will recede from. In one place it will leave magnificent soil ready at once to take a splendid crop of wheat even if the winter rains, as is too often the case, amount to nothing. In another the greater moisture will only allow leguminous plants of country peas and pulses. In the dampest ooze of depressions a plant called shamuke is produced, of little value save as fodder, but beautiful with its bright green color and excellent to the sportsman as an attraction to flocks of gray and bar headed geese. Other lands again will grow nothing but long reeds and low tamarisk scrub. These, if properly placed in the neighborhood of fields, have their value as preserves for black partridges and hare, but for utilitarian purposes can only provide materials for hunting or at best give employment to the makers of fan handles; but, alas, there is the possibility that in the place of soil—good, bad or indifferent—and only may be thrown up, and the Indus has a bad reputation for the amount of sand it carries. Native lore gives the river the title of "Bile de Jole."—Allahabad Pioneer.

**THE FIRST STEAMSHIPS.**

Screw Propellers Did Not Come into Use Until 1850.

"We are prone to smile at the archaic prototypes of our modern steamships," writes Gustav H. Schwab in Harper's Weekly, "at their diminutive size, their clumsy build, their huge paddle boxes and their single slender smoke pipe, but we do not stop to think of the few brave men of those days who, undaunted by the opposition and ridicule of most of their fellows, persisted in their efforts to supplant sail by steam and who finally by sheer pluck and perseverance succeeded in these efforts."

The Savannah, which crossed the Atlantic in 1819, was a full rigged packet ship to which had been added a small one cylinder steam engine turning two paddle wheels, which were set in motion in smooth water when the wind failed. For two-thirds of the way across the Savannah depended solely upon her sails. In 1833 the Royal William made the passage in twenty-five days, under steam the whole way. In 1837 the Great Western was constructed, but her unusual length of 230 feet gave rise to many apprehensions as to her safety. The first screw steamship was built in 1850, and eight years later the Bremen made the passage in fifteen days. In 1862 the Scotia cut down the time from Queenstown to less than nine days. From that time on the record has been gradually reduced.

**Pins.**

Queen Catherine obtained pins from France, and in 1543 an act was passed "That no person shall put to sale any pinnes but only such as shall be double headed and have the heads soldered fast to the shank of the pinnes, well smoothed, the shank well shapen, the points well round filed, cauted and sharpened."

At this time most pins were made of brass, but many were also made of iron, with a brass surface. France sent a large number of pins to England until about the year 1626. In this year one John Tilsby started pinmaking in Gloucestershire. So successful was his venture that he soon had 1,500 persons working. These pins made at Stroud were held in high repute. In 1636 pinmakers combined and founded a corporation. The industry was carried on at Bristol and Birmingham, the latter becoming the chief center.—London Standard.

**New Mandarins Rank.**

Mandarins in China may be distinguished by the birds which decorate their uniforms as well as by their buttons. Mandarins of the first rank have a bird known as the fang embrodered on their clothes. Mandarins of the second rank have their robes adorned by the figure of a cock. Mandarins of the third rank have a peacock. Mandarins of the fourth rank are adorned with a pelican. Those of the fifth rank are clearly distinguished by the silver pheasant, those of the sixth rank are favored by a stork, mandarins of the seventh rank have a partridge, mandarins of the eighth rank quail and mandarins of the ninth rank the humble sparrow.

**Enforced the Rules.**

Museum Attendant—You'll please leave your umbrella or cane at the door, sir. Visitor—Very proper regulation. But it happens I have neither. Attendant—Then go and get wan. No one is allowed to enter unless he leaves his umbrella or cane at the door. You may read the card for yourself, sir.—London Tit-Bits.

**Diplomacy.**

"You persuaded your husband to join a glee club?"  
"Yes," answered Mrs. Higgins; "when he starts to sing at home I can now advise him not to tire his voice, and when he sings in the club I can't hear him."—Washington Star.

The asp borrows poison from the viper.—Latin Proverb.

**A REAL ESTATE EXPERT.**

His Right to the Title Not Shaken by Cross Examination.

The late Mr. N. J. Bradlee was summoned to appear as an expert on real estate in Boston some years ago in a lawsuit over the value of certain property. The lawyer on the other side, not knowing Mr. Bradlee, undertook to counteract his testimony. In the cross examination the questions and answers were somewhat as follows:  
"What did you say your business was, Mr. Bradlee?" began the lawyer.  
"Well, I have charge of a good many trusts, mostly real estate," said Mr. Bradlee. "How much real estate have you ever had charge of at one time?"  
"Well, I don't think I can say exactly."  
"But how much should you guess?"  
"I couldn't even guess." "Well, sir, would you say it was \$5,000 worth?"  
"I should put it as high as that, certainly." "Would you put it as high as \$10,000?" "Yes." "Fifteen thousand?" "Yes." "Twenty-five thousand?" "Yes." "Fifty thousand?" "Yes." "A hundred thousand?" "Yes." "Five hundred thousand?" "Yes." "A million?" "Yes." "Well, how many millions?" roared the astonished lawyer, who only now began to discover that he had caught a tartar. "Well," said Mr. Bradlee very coolly, "I told you at the start I couldn't say, but since you insist on it I will roughly estimate it at say a hundred millions." "You may stand down," said the attorney, who was soon nonsuited.—Argonaut.

**DIMINUTIVE FARMS.**

Those in Portugal Have Been Cut Up into Very Small Portions.

The Portuguese are an extremely conservative people. Every one follows rigidly the methods employed by his father and forefathers. In very many parts of the country the old wooden plows are still used.

When a man dies, instead of one of the heirs taking the whole property and paying the remaining heirs for their parts, the whole property is divided into as many parts as there are heirs. More than this, each separate part of the property is thus divided.

Thus, if a property consisted of ten acres of pasture land, eighty of vineyard and ten of grain land and there were ten heirs, each heir would receive one acre each of grain and pasture land and eight acres of vineyard. This process has been going on for a very long time, so that now in the most fertile part of Portugal the land is divided into incredibly small portions.

The immediate result of this, according to the United States consular reports, is that the product of the land is barely sufficient at best to sustain its owners. South of the river Tagus, on the other hand, there are enormous tracts of excellent land lying unused, but it has been found impossible to induce the farmers of the north to move into this region and take up large holdings.

**Inherited.**

"I entertained some friends at dinner the other night at a well known hotel in Boston," said a New Yorker, just returned from the Hub. "and was served by an ebony giant on whom lamplack would make a white mark. It is the custom at that particular hostelry for the waiters to write their own orders. Upon receiving my bill I could scarcely check the items. The spelling bore no similarity to any other under the sun."

"Sam," I said, "this is the worst spelling I ever saw," and added facetiously, "where did you learn to spell?"  
"Without moving a muscle Sam replied courteously, 'I reckon, boss, I must have inherited it from my ancestors.'"

"The laugh being on me, Sam got an extra tip."—New York Times.

**General Washington on Looting.**

Headquarters, Sept. 6, 1776.—The Gen'l is Resolved to put a stop to Plundering or converting Publick or Private Property to their own Use when taken off or found by any Soldier, he therefore calls upon all the Men to exert themselves against it, and if the Coll. or other Officers of Reg'ts see or know of any Horses, furniture, Merchandize and such other Property in the hands of any Officer or Soldier and does not immediately take hold of it, giving immediate notice of it to their Brigadier Gen'l, such Officers will be deemed a Party, brought to Court Martial & broke with Infamy. For let it ever be Remembered that no Plundering Army was ever a Successful one.—From General Washington's Personal Order Book in Journal of American History.

**Too Public.**

The young lady, with her fiance, was awaiting a street car. After several cars had passed and they could not get aboard the young man became impatient. When the next car stopped at the corner he leaped upon the platform and said in pleading terms, "Come on Mary; we can manage to squeeze in here, can't we?" The young woman colored slightly, but bravely replied, "I suppose we can, dear, but don't you think we had better wait until we get home?"—Buffalo Commercial.

**A Protest.**

Dolly—We had to practice Chopin for three hours today, mamma.  
Mrs. Parvenoo—Really, my dear, shopping is all very well, but your papa sent you to the ladies' academy to learn music an' that sort o' thing.—London Mail.

The very act of life, so far as I have been able to observe, consists in fortitude and perseverance.—Sir Walter Scott.

**MAIDS OF HONOR.**

Their Position in the Royal Household of England.

Maids of honor are chosen by the queen herself from among the daughters of peers, who if not themselves connected with the royal household are personal friends of her majesty. A letter is always sent to the parents of the young lady requesting that as a personal favor to the queen she may be permitted to attend at court. As the position is undeniable and the salary is £300 a year, the request is invariably accepted, and then the newly chosen maid receives from the lord chamberlain the command for her first "wait."

The first thing brought to the maid of honor is her badge, which is a miniature picture of the queen set in brilliants and suspended to a ribbon. Just before the dinner hour the maid of honor in waiting has to stand in the corridor outside the queen's private apartments. She carries a bouquet, which on entering the dining room she lays at the right hand of the queen's plate.

The maid of honor sits at dinner next to the gentleman on the queen's right. This rule is relaxed when royal guests are present. After dinner, unless otherwise commanded, the maid of honor retires to her own room, whence, however, she is frequently fetched to read, sing, play the piano or take a hand at cards.—Cassel's Saturday Journal.

**CROWS ON GOLF LINKS.**

One Fastidious Bird That Would Steal Only New Balls.

The crow seems to be attracted to golf balls in a way wholly peculiar from the rest of the bird species. In parks, where the rook and the crow abound, one can notice them sitting in the trees or hopping about the putting greens in the distance watching the roll of the ball with a direct or sidelong glance expressive of the keenest interest and curiosity, which is soon translated into a desire to carry it off to the roost in the neighboring wood.

The Kew gardens adjoin the mid-Surrey course, and in the royal preserve there used to be a fairly large colony of crows nesting among the trees. Of this colony there was one particular crow that found his greatest amusement in mingling among the golfers and in disconcerting their play by indulging in repeated predatory campaigns against their golf balls.

His policy was to hover in attendance on those players who used new white balls only. Those on which the paint had been chipped or which had been used in play for several rounds by an economical player were always rejected by this particular bird as being beneath his fastidious attention.—London Field.

**The Normal Attitude Toward Death.**

The normal attitude of men toward death seems to be one of inattention or evasion. They do not trouble about it; they do not want to trouble about it; and they resent its being called to their notice. On this point the late Frederick Myers used to tell a story which I have always thought very illuminating. In conversation after dinner he was pressing on his host the unwelcome question what he thought would happen after death. After many evasions and much recalcitancy the reluctant admission was extorted, "Of course, if you press me I believe that we shall all enter into eternal bliss, but I wish you wouldn't talk about such disagreeable subjects." This I believe is typical of the normal mood of most men. They don't want to be worried, and though probably, if the question were pressed, they would object to the idea of extinction, they can hardly be said to desire immortality. Even at the point of death, it would seem, this attitude is often maintained.—G. Lowes Dickinson in Atlantic.

**Old Thoughts on April.**

Old Nicholas Breton, in those delightful "fantasies" (1626) of his, grew more lyrical over April than over any other month. One reads such a passage as this with delight: "The Larke and the Lambe look up at the Sun, and the labourer is abroad by the dawning of the day; Sheepee eyes in Lambs heads tell kid hearts strange tales, while faith and troth make the true Lovers knot; the aged halres find a fresh life, and the youthful cheeks are as red as a cherry. It were a world to set down the worth of this month; but in summe, I thus conclude, I hold it the Heavens blessing, and the Earths comfort."—London Chronicle.

**To Live Long.**

Virchow, the German scientist, said the way to live long is to "be born with a good constitution, take care of it when you are young, always have something to do and be resigned if you find you cannot accomplish all you wish." It is easier to live long with a poor constitution than to violate the other conditions and reach old age.

**A Bad Spell.**

"Poor Jack! He never could spell, and it ruined him."  
"How?"  
"He wrote a verse to an heiress he was in love with, and he wrote 'bonny' for 'bonny.'"  
—New York Journal.

**His Funny Look.**

"Say, Datsy, did yer see when I took hold of yer hand the funny look yer ma gave me?"  
"Go on, Tim, ma didn't give it to yer; you've always had it."—Life.

Let no man think he is loved by any man when he loves no man.—Epictetus.

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