

**Dickens and Diet.**

Dickens is the novelist of the meal. No other writer, pile he up never such lists of delicacies fit for Lucullus, has the gusto in describing humble feasts which gives the very reader an appetite. Thackeray, for all his "Ballad of Bouillabaisse," never touched the hem of his garments in the recording of meals. Who that has read them can ever forget, for instance, Mrs. Gamp's directions to the chambermaid for her nocturnal refectory, or the tea which awaited Joe Willest and Dolly on their return to the locksmith's dwelling on the occasion of Miss Miggs's final rout, or the unassuming meals recorded in "David Copperfield," or the more pretentious feasts in "Pickwick," not forgetting the leg of mutton "swartry" to which Mr. Weller was invited by the elite of Bath footmen? And has not every reader of "Martin Chuzzlewit" allowed a tender smile to curl his lips over the evolution of that incomparable pudding in the preparation and consumption of which such damage was done to John Westlock's affections? So go and read—and acquire your appetite.—London Chronicle.

**Above and Below Proof.**

Before the means of determining the true quantity of alcohol in spirits were known dealers employed a very rude method to form a notion of the "strength." A given quantity of the spirit was poured upon gunpowder in a dish and set on fire. If the gunpowder continued dry enough it took fire and exploded, but if it had been dampened by the water in the spirits the flame of the alcohol went out without setting the powder on fire. This was called the "proof." Spirits which kindled gunpowder were said to be "above proof," those that did not set fire to it were said to be "below proof," but this did not fix the strength. Clark in his hydrometer, which was invented about the year 1730, fixed the strength of proof spirits on the stem, at the specific gravity of .920, at the temperature of 60 degrees. This is the strength at which proof spirit is fixed by act of parliament, and at this strength it is no more than a mixture of forty-nine pounds of pure alcohol with fifty-one pounds of pure water.—London Standard.

**Case of Too Much Ham.**

One morning not long ago there tripped up to a butcher stall in a Baltimore market a dainty little thing out for her first marketing. "My husband bought a couple of nice hams from you not long ago," she announced. "Yes'm," said the smiling butcher; "I remember well. Fine hams, weren't they?" "They were delicious," said the young wife. "Have you any more like them?" "Lots," responded the butcher, indicating a row of hams in the rear of the stall. The young thing surveyed the hams thoughtfully. "Are you sure," she finally asked, "that they're from the same pig as that from which my husband bought?" "Yes'm," answered the butcher without so much as a quiver of an eyelid. "Then you may send me three more of them," she said.—Pittsburg Post.

**The Caspian Sea.**

The Caspian sea is, as Herodotus said 2,000 years ago, "a sea by itself, having no connection with any other." Every schoolboy knows that now, but it is remarkable to find Herodotus saying so, because centuries after his time such authorities as Strabo and Pliny believed that it was connected with the northern ocean by a long and narrow gulf. Geography seems to have had a setback in the interval through false information received at the time of Alexander's conquests. Herodotus says that the Caspian's length was fifteen days' voyage with a rowboat, its breadth eight days'. Since the actual figures are 750 miles and 400, this shows that a rowboat of the time did fifty miles a day.—London Graphic.

**Quinn's Mare.**

"I haven't got a limousine or any aeroplane; I haven't got a coach an' six, not e'en a special train; I haven't got a bicycle nor yet a boss an' team. I git along all right, by jinks, 'thout gasoline or steam. I travel jest by shank's mare an' never hev no fear but what I'll reach my stoppin' place the same day in the year. No artificial rigs for me, no busted tires or bones, no laudin' all up in a heap upon the highway stones. I may be slow a-gettin' round an' cause the world to stare, but I will git there by an' by all right side up with care."—Boston Herald.

**Not Guilty!**

The unabe seaman referred to by the American Thrasherman probably thought he was being accused of "mussing up the bedclothes." Enthusiastic Amateur Sailor—Let go that fib sheet! Unenthusiastic Landlubber (who has been decoyed into acting as crew)—I'm not touching the thing!

**Most Tactless of Men.**

"Clarence unintentionally offended the aspiring young poetess." "In what way?" "He sent her a gayly decorated wastebasket as a birthday present."—Philadelphia Record.

**A High One.**

Friend—Does the haron, your son-in-law, speak with much of an accent? Richpurse—He did when he discovered how I had fixed his wife's dowry.—Puck.

He who wishes to secure the good of others has already secured his own.—Confucius.

**The Boy and the Book.**

"The late Edward Everett Hale," said a Boston magazine editor, "was a great student of child life." "Dr. Hale once dilated to me on the incorrigibly bad taste in books that children have. He instanced the case of his own son, now a famous architect, whose taste he had a hard time forming." "The little boy, it seemed, cared only for the sensational in literature. Jack Harkaway and Deadwood Dick seemed to him the very topmost pinnacle of literary excellence. He yawned over the splendid historical works his father read to him." "One day, however, Dr. Hale had a gleam of hope. The little boy brought him a volume of English history and said: "'Will you read me some more out of this, please?' " "Why, certainly, my boy," the father answered cordially. "What part would you like to have?" "Read me, queen of Scots, getting her head cut off and the blood all running down her back!"

**Division.**

The new teacher glanced smilingly over the school and was delighted to see so many bright young faces among her new charges. "Now, children," she said, "so that I may find out what you know I will test you on arithmetic. Maggie Wilkins, if I were to divide three bananas among seventeen boys what would be the result?" "A riot," said Maggie, speaking up like a little drum major. "Possibly," said the teacher, "but that is not what I mean. Tommy, you may take the question. Three bananas among three boys—that would be one banana apiece for each boy. Now, three bananas among seventeen boys would be what?" "Three bananas, m'm," answered Tommy. "I know, but three into seventeen is"—said the teacher. "Three bananas would go into seventeen boys once and none over," said Tommy confidently. It was then that the new teacher resigned.—Harper's Weekly.

**The Wilderness.**

This theater of bloody conflicts is a vast sea, so to speak, of a dense forest—a second growth more than a century old. It is made up chiefly of scrubby, low limbed, stubborn oaks and disordered, haggard pines, for the soil is cold and thin, with here and there scattering clumps of alien cedars. Some of the oaks are large enough to cut two railroad ties, and every once and awhile you come across an acre or two of pines ten to twelve inches in diameter, tall and tapering, true to the soaring propensities of their kind. But generally, and above all where the battle was fought, the trees are noticeably stunted and so close together and thick lower limbs so intermingled with a thick underbrush that it is very difficult indeed to make one's way through them.—Atlantic Monthly.

**Meredith's Advice to Stead.**

W. T. Stead tells a characteristic story of George Meredith, which is all the more appreciable as it is told against himself. "He was a true friend," says Mr. Stead, "not less faithful in criticism than he was cordial in his appreciation. Of the former I remember well the neat way in which he put me out of conceit with my first attempt to write a story. I sent him my little effort with fear and trembling. My trepidation was not without warrant. 'I have read "From the Old World to the New,"' he wrote. 'Some of the characters are interesting and well drawn. One of them especially reminds me of Cecil Rhodes. But if any one of your friends tells you that he likes the story as a story don't believe him.'"

**Swiss Flags.**

The Swiss flag is red, and it bears a Greek cross in its center. The Swissers declared their independence in 1307, and at the battle of Morgarten, 1315, where the Austrians were defeated, they carried a plain red flag without any device. During the seventeenth century a white cross was added, though it is said that the cross appeared on some Swiss flags as early as 1339. The different cantons of Switzerland have different coats of arms and different flags.

**Verdi's Secrecy.**

Verdi observed great secrecy concerning his operas, even to his business associates, and it is said that the first intimation his business managers, the Ricordis, received of the composition of "Falstaff" was a toast offered by Bolto, who at supper one night, when the publisher and his wife were present, slyly glanced at Verdi and proposed a health to the "fat knight," at which it seemed Verdi and Bolto had been working for months.

**An Aspersions Suspected.**

"That is quite a remarkable Rembrandt," said the connoisseur. "Sir!" rejoined Mrs. Cumrox. "Yes, Rembrandt, you know, the great painter." "Oh! I thought you said 'remnant.'"—Washington Star.

**The Fraction.**

"Humble as I am," said a loud voiced orator at a meeting, "I still remember that I am a fraction of this magnificent empire."

"You are, indeed," said a bystander, "and a vulgar one at that."—London Express.

**Curious.**

If a man is bettered his condition is improved; if he is "bested" he is really "worsted."

**From Game to Game.**

He was afraid to tell her right out and out that he loved her, so he began in a roundabout way, hoping she would catch his drift, then betray, by her confusion, her own feelings. He didn't dream but that she loved him, but thought that she, like himself, was afraid to demonstrate it. "Heart trouble," she repeated. "Are you sure you've heart trouble, Alfred? You know indigestion is very like it at times." "Oh, I know I've got heart trouble, all right. I—can't you see it yourself?" "Why, how silly, Alfred! No one can see heart trouble. They have to feel it. Have you taken anything for it?" "No, not yet. But I—I want to, don't you know?" "I—don't you?" "I—I would—that is, if I could get it." "Can't you get it, Alfred?" "I—I don't know." "Have you tried?" "No, not yet." (Silence for two provoking moments.) "Alfred!" (coldly). "Yes." "Let's have a game of checkers."—Boston Herald.

**Walking.**

The ordinary man who is employed indoors throughout the day does not walk enough. He needs the fresh air and sunshine of the outdoors, and, no matter how tired he may be, a short time in the open air will rest him. If he has no opportunity to walk during the evening, he ought to do it in the morning. There is no better tonic than a two mile walk before going to work. Some business men who live some distance from their offices or stores walk down regularly every morning and are greatly benefited thereby. No matter how sluggish they may feel on arising, the morning walk puts them in good trim for the day's work. Exercise in the open air starts the blood circulating in every artery and vein in the entire system, opens up the pores of the skin, so that the waste matter in the body may be set free, limbers up the joints and muscles and puts one in shape for the duties of the day.—St. Joseph Gazette.

**The Meredith Cocoon.**

George Meredith may not have been an altogether familiar author to the ordinary reader who craves for quick sensation. He never came down to the simplicity of Sherlock Holmes or Captain Kettle. Meredith required an acute and trained intellect before he could be appreciated.

It was once mentioned, in referring to the difficulty which some people experience in reading Meredith's novels, that the Meredith "cocoon" was very hard, but that the milk when reached proved to be very sweet. This joke got into the papers. Two days afterward a well known firm of fruiterers had an inquiry from these cocoonists from a country customer! The letter was to the effect that, having read somewhere that Meredith's cocoons have had a large sale lately and that the milk was fashionable, the writer would like to have a few to try.—London Tatler.

**Queer Postal Training.**

In China whoever wishes to enter the postal service must give evidence of courage, robustness, power of endurance, ability to traverse great distances over mountains and valleys and through dangerous forests frequented by wild beasts and robbers. After this the applicant is sent into uncanny places, which are considered to be the abodes of evil spirits. When the Chinaman has satisfied the authorities in regard to these matters he is appointed a letter carrier.

**A Matter of Mind.**

"I have a great mind to go to the club tonight," said Mr. J. to his wife. "What?" she replied with surprise. "I have a great mind to go to the club tonight." "Whose?" she asked. "Whose what?" "Whose great mind?" "Why, my own, of course, madam." "Oh!" and the rising infection she gave the ejaculation was very provoking to a man of fine feeling.

**Taxless Towns.**

No fewer than 1,500 towns and villages in Germany still own, and have owned, down from the middle ages, so much common land that their inhabitants pay neither rates nor taxes. Five hundred of these townships and villages derive so great a rental from their lands that they are able, in addition, to pay every citizen on New Year's day, a bonus of from \$25 to \$100 as his share of the surplus revenue.

**Had No More Time.**

"I can't wait any further for you. What are you reading, anyhow?" "Henry James. Wait until I finish this chapter." "I'll wait until you get to the next comma and no longer."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

**They Adjourned.**

"Since you have insisted on trying on my hat, Miss Mabel, I shall certainly claim the forfeit." "I don't know what you mean, sir; and besides, this isn't a good place; they can see us from the hotel."—Life.

**Quite Rare.**

Gus—What did you think of our amateur theatricals, Miss Mamie? Rather a rare entertainment, was it not? Miss Mamie—Well—er—yes; it wasn't very well done, to be sure.—Harper's Bazar.

Avarice increases with the increasing pile of gold.—Juvenal.

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## BEFORE SCHOOL

Have your eyes examined before starting to school. Do not be troubled with your eyes this winter. If you have your eyes properly fitted with a pair of glasses you will not be compelled to go home with a sick headache or be troubled with a headache at all. Have your eyes examined before they become strained for close work and avoid future trouble. All work guaranteed satisfactory. **Dr. Henry C. Morris,** At Jenkins' Jewelry Store, Tillamook, Ore.

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## THE POET SAYS

"Beauty draws us by a single hair."

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