

St. Andrews' Bottle Dungeon.

St. Andrews is perhaps the most distinctive of the old castle towns of Scotland. It was built early in the thirteenth century, and it was here that Bishop Kennedy showed James II. how to break the power of his nobles by taking a bundle of arrows, separating them and stepping them one by one. In Stewart Dick's "The Pageant of the Forth" the author says: "Under the sea tower, in the heart of the rock where it juts into the sea, is a growsome dungeon known as the 'Bottle dungeon,' so called from its shape. In the floor of the lower room in the tower is a hole five feet in diameter. Down it goes for nearly twelve feet. The neck of the bottle then widens out to form a chamber nearly twenty-four feet in breadth. There is no light, no ventilation, no exit of any kind but the neck of the bottle. A prisoner there had no more chance of escape than a crab has in a creel."

A Hindu Dinner Party.

A Hindu ladies' dinner begins at 12 o'clock and lasts two hours. But the guests begin to assemble some time before the dinner, for the simple reason that they have to go into the garden and choose their own fruit and vegetables. Meat, by the way, is forbidden. The chief dish at a dinner party is composed of rice and maza. The guests sit on the floor in two rows, facing one another, and eat with their fingers. The most esteemed widow lady present hands round the dishes, and this service is considered a great honor. Coconut milk and various kinds of sherbet are drunk. When the meal is over the ladies take a small portion of betel nut wrapped in "pan" leaves. Pan is a green leaf something like laurel and is prepared in no fewer than eighty different ways. Each of those ways is supposed to give a different emotion to the eater.

The Decline of Winchester.

Winchester for five centuries was the active rival of London, and for 400 years English parliaments occasionally sat in the castle, which contains the round table of King Arthur. It was a city with great temples and the site of the first Christian church in Britain. Its buildings were of the most magnificent character, and pilgrims flocked from far and near to the magnificent cathedral which contained the body of St. Swithun and where many miracles were worked. William the Conqueror and Charles II. had palaces here, and within the monastery were buried King Alfred his queen and two sons. Winchester has indeed fallen upon evil days, for at the present time its population is only the same as it was in the days of Henry II.—Sheffield (England) Telegraph.

Arctic Marine Plants.

The inhabitants of the ocean, like those of the land, are affected by the climate. Arctic land plants cannot flourish at the equator, and in the arctic and the antarctic oceans marine plants are found that are unable to survive in warm water. Among the most remarkable of these cold water plants are the lamnariaceae, a kind of seaweed, which sometimes attains a gigantic size, exceeding in length the longest climbing plants of the tropical forests and developing huge stems like the trunks of trees. Investigation has shown that these plants flourish in the coldest waters of the polar seas and that they never advance farther from their frigid homes than to the limits of "summer temperature" in the ocean. The genial warmth destroys them just as a polar blast shrivels tropical flowers.

The End of the World.

Although our earth cannot in any vital sense last longer than the sun, it may last less long for intrinsic cause. Life is dependent not only on the sun, but on the presence of air. When this air departs life will depart too. Now the earth's air is going slowly, but surely, evaporating into space. If it all goes before the sun becomes extinct the earth's surface life will lapse while the sun still shines. Both processes—the evaporation of the air and the cooling of the sun—will require long eras of time, but the second process will be much the slower of the two. So we may expect the last inhabitants of the earth to die of lack of breath rather than from want of warmth.—Percival Lowell in Youth's Companion.

Slips of the Tongue.

In a case tried before a magistrate in Glasgow the defending agent made reference to a verbal agreement between the parties. "Let's see yer verbal agreement," the magistrate said "Hand it up here." At a parish council meeting, when a petition for some increase of wages was under consideration, the chairman said peevishly: "A canna mak' heid nor tail of this dockment. It's just like Alpha and Omega—it's got neither beginning nor end."—Glasgow Herald.

The Steeplechase.

The first steeplechases were literally "chases to a steeple." The earliest we can discover was a match in 1752 between Edmund Blake and Mr. O'Callaghan over four and a half miles of stiff country between the church of Nuttivant and St. Leger church spire.—London Tatler.

Next Thing to It.

She—Kind words can never die. He—Maybe not, but a whole lot of them seem laid up and not working.—Boston Transcript.

A smile is an asset. A frown a liability.—New York Press.

When Gladstone Spoke.

Gladstone was one in whom nervousness had become mannerism. When he rose to speak he began with a few gracious words on the speech which he was about to follow or some pointed remark as to the character and importance of the subject. In his earlier days this was no doubt to "get his breath." His next act was to raise his right hand over his head, the thumb bent down, and gently scratch his skull. That is rather common among public speakers. The third action of Mr. Gladstone was his peculiar and individual sign. Throwing his arms downward by his side, he would with his fingers seize the cuffs of his coat and draw these down over his shirt cuffs so as to conceal them completely. The ordinary practice is just the reverse, the desire being to expose and get conceal the white linen of the shirt cuffs. These were the invariable preludes to the great commoner's speeches.—Pall Mall Magazine.

Fingers Before Forks.

There are some rare occasions in these days of refined table manners when fingers are really permissible instead of forks, and one grows rather rebellious under too much restraint and wishes it were oftener so. Among the things one may eat with the fingers with propriety are radishes, olives, salted nuts, pickles, celery and asparagus where the little tongues are not provided; lettuce, endive or Romanine when cut to dip in French dressing or in salt; strawberries when served with bulls on them, biscuits and all small cakes, pears, peaches, plums, apricots, apples and grapes. Usually the large seeded fruits are pared and quartered. Legs and wings of fowls and birds may be taken in the hand, but it is not considered favorably. The firm cheeses, dry cakes, bonbons and sandwiches are all permitted to be taken in the fingers.—London Express.

Irregular Pulses.

A pulsus paradoxus is a pulse that stops for a moment when you are taking a deep breath. It is nothing very dreadful, though it occasionally worries people to find their pulse has stopped. A doctor who has been studying the pulse of various people has something interesting to say on the subject. "People get alarmed if their pulse is not regular," he says, "and yet plenty of healthy people have really extraordinary pulses. A dot and carry one pulse is possessed by many people. The pulses of athletes and others who take violent exercise for a short time go up at a tremendous rate. A runner the doctor experimented upon had a normal pulse beat of 70 to the minute. At the end of a hundred yards race his pulse was going along at 180. At the end of a hurdle race it rose to 204."—London Answers.

Two Views of the Same Question.

A noted bishop in order to point a lesson in humility sometimes tells a story of a young clergyman whose first appointment was to be an out of the way and poor parish. On his first Sunday in this new station the young man as he looked over his wretchedly clad and ignorant congregation could not help saying to himself, with a groan: "Dear me, what a dreadful thing it would be if I should have to stay here any great length of time!" At the end of the sermon a deacon made a prayer. To the young man's horror one part of the prayer was a benevolent hope that "this ignorant, inexperienced, barren pastor that had lately come to the parish might improve and grow learned and fruitful in good works, so that he would come to merit being kept on there for a while."

Where Books Were Pawned.

In primitive days books had a recognized and settled value. We know how they were exchanged for a horse or half a dozen sheep, but few people know the extent to which books were pawned in the middle ages. Oxford at one time had twenty giant chests full of these valuable pledges, and the process when stock was taken had to be conducted with care. The book fairs served to alter things, and presently as Smithfield market grew it set up a subservient industry on its outskirts, where the butchers sold skins and the parchment dealers bought. And this bookish street on the edge of Smithfield under the shadow of St. Paul's bore the pious name of Paternoster row.—Pall Mall Gazette.

Why She Left Them at Home.

"Have you any references?" asked the lady of the house. "Yes, ma'am. A lot of 'em." "Then why didn't you bring them with you?" "They're just like my photographs, ma'am. None of 'em does me justice."—Detroit Free Press.

Surprised.

Lady—I am surprised, little boy, to see you smoking that cigar. Boy—I'm surprised myself, lady; I thought the man would never drop it.—Philadelphia Telegram.

An Expensive Luxury.

"Yes," said the literary man with a sigh; "style is a fine thing for a writer to have, but when his wife's got it too it takes all the profit away."—Harper's Weekly.

Runaway Match.

"People wonder how I got my wife. It was a runaway match. I ran away, and she ran after me."—Cassell's Journal.

Contentment gives a crown where fortune hath denied it.—Ford.

Making Her Trunk Safe.

"No safety deposit vault red tape for me!" declared the woman who cannot help being the wife of a very rich man. "I keep my jewels in a shabby old trunk in my own room. There isn't even a lock on it. I had to force it off one time when I'd mislaid the key." "Evidently you don't encourage enterprise in burglars," observed one of her hearers. "All a man would have to do would be to raise the lid. You might at least make him a little trouble." "He'd have trouble enough," said the woman, mysteriously. "Our couchman's brother is an old sailor—a perfect artist in knots—and he showed me how to bind up the trunk in the most complicated way, and no burglar could possibly untie it. He wouldn't know the combination." "The only man in the group grinned. "Of course," he murmured reflectively, "no mere second story man would ever dream of cutting those knots."—Youth's Companion.

Saved.

A lazy negro who let his wife take in washing without demur had a dream one night and a policy dream at that. He borrowed money from her to play the combination, and before he left home he stated his conviction. "Mandy," he said, "Ah's gon' up town to play dis combine, what an sho' to come out. When you see me 'omn' home in a hack you break up yo' wash tubs." The "combine" didn't come out, and Sam, in great dejection, acquired a bit of gin. Then he was messed up by a dray, and some other negroes hired a hack to take him home. Sam was nearly out and was breathing heavily when the hack turned a familiar corner, and his wife was standing in the door. With his last ounce of energy he stuck his head out of the window and yelled: "Mandy, spare dem tubs!"—Chicago Post.

Looming Mirages.

In what are called "looming mirages" distant objects show an apparent extravagant increase in height without alteration of breadth. Distant pinnacles of ice are thus magnified into immense towers or tall, jagged mountains, and a ship thus reflected from far out at sea may appear to be twelve or fifteen times as tall as it is long. Rocks and trees are also shown in abnormal shapes and positions, white houses, animal and human beings appear in like exaggerated shapes. Before the sandy plains of our southwestern states and territories were converted into verdant fields by the ingenuity and tireless energy of man mirages were very common in those regions, the Indians regarding the phenomenon as being the work of evil spirits.

The Horse's Pedometers.

The whorls of hair on the coats of horses and other animals are natural pedometers, inasmuch as they register the locomotive activities of the animals on whose bodies they are found. The best examples and the greatest number of these hairy whorls and crests are found on the domestic horse. A notable instance is the graceful feathering that extends along the hollow of the flank, dividing the trunk of the animal from the hind quarters. There are also crests and whorls on the horse's chest and other parts of its body. A study of the action of the underlying muscles explains the origin of these peculiarities in the lay of the hair and furnishes the justification for calling them pedometers, although the analogy is, of course, merely superficial.—St. Louis Republic.

Pittsburgh in 1784.

When General Forbes captured Fort Duquesne in 1758 he renamed it Pittsburgh in honor of the great English inspirer of victory. Later it dropped the "h" and became Pittsburg, only finally to tack the "h" on officially and revert to the original spelling. In 1784 Arthur Lee described the place in language which seems strange to those who know "the Smoky City" of today: "Pittsburgh is inhabited almost entirely by Scots and Irish, who live in paltry log houses. There are in the town four attorneys, two doctors and not a priest of any persuasion, nor church or chapel, so that they are likely to be damned without the benefit of clergy. The place, I believe, will never be very considerable."

Chipping.

In parts of Switzerland the baker's wife carries round the bread in a sort of hamper, and she has not a fixed, unchangeable charge, but chaffers for a price with the customers. The old English word for this process was "chipping," which in many places in England has been corrupted into chipping. Chip plus Norton, for instance, is really Chipping Norton, or the place where goods were cheapened—that is, sold by thaffer.

Wise Exceptions.

"You really believe that a man should always be truthful to his wife?" "Certainly I do, always." "And do you always tell your wife the truth about her cooking?" "Oh, well—or—there are exceptions, you know."—Houston Post.

A Fluent Talker.

Whangs—Is your wife a good conversationalist? Bangs—She would be but for one thing—she talks so fluently that she interrupts herself.

Cruel.

"Doesn't it annoy you to hear a woman talking slang?" "Why mention slang especially?"—Exchange.

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