

NOTED PORT OF WANDERERS

Samara, on the Volga, Long the Lure of Nomadic People—its Past History.

Samara, the Volga port, seems to offer a peculiar significance for the wanderers of the world. Through the years, says The Villager, the district has been an especial lure for nomadic peoples; the fierce tribe of Bulgars occupied it until the thirteenth century and were followed by the Mongols, and when the power of the Golden Horde had waned the Volga bank was still ravaged by Bashkirs, Kalmucks and Nogai Tartars; the institution of the city of Samara itself was for the protection of the Russian empire's frontiers against the depredations of these nomadic marauders from the steppes.

In the effort to stabilize this border region and make it a solid bulwark, Catherine II offered Germans of Wuerttemberg and Baden special privileges for settlement here; today as much German as Russian may be heard in the streets of Samara.

Yet, after all the centuries of effort, the city is again swept by wanderers, fighting hordes who know no military "base," gypsy warriors who have traversed the Siberian expanse without baggage and without plan of campaign, with no orders save their own impulse, with no responsibilities save their own purpose; their exploit will go down into history with full as much picturesqueness as that of Genghis Khan's followers and with far more honor.

THINK VAMPIRES KILL SHEEP

Macedonian Shepherds Have Firm Belief in the Existence of Creatures of a Lower World.

A Macedonian shepherd, tending his flocks in the high pastures, sets off on his rounds in the morning, and finds several of his sheep mangled about the neck, dying or dead. He hastens to the nearest village and spreads the awful news—Vampires!

Now, a vampire may only be seen by certain gifted people, and these make it their life's business to destroy them. Their usual fee is about sixty dollars. So the shepherd hastens to a vampire killer, and this man takes down his long musket, loads it, and rams down a holy wafer on top of the charge. He puts on a long sheepskin coat and sets out for the hills.

Just before dawn he will be heard to fire a single shot. At daybreak he shows the shepherd a pool of blood. That is the dead vampire, for a vampire is all blood, and, being shot, of course resolves into a pool of blood.

A vampire slayer is treated with great deference by his neighbors. He is a power in the land. But in all villages there is usually one scoffer; one man who can read, or, perhaps, has traveled outside his native land. He laughs when you mention vampires, and talks of wolves and dogs that have run amuck. He even hints that it is possible to hide a bladder filled with blood beneath the long sheepskin coat the slayer wears. There is had feeling between the vampire slayer and this scoffer. They pass each other without speaking.

"Houses Roofed With Gold."

"Houses roofed with gold," of which Marco Polo wrote from rumor, were not mythical. On first arriving in Japan I made a journey to Otoko Yama, in central Japan, January 27, 1871, to test the story.

For centuries gold had little more value in Japan than in South America when Balboa sought the Pacific. Even until 1850 gold was worth only four times as much as silver. I found at the Shinto temple, erected 859 A. D., a gilded rain conduit which once encircled the whole of the eaves of the roof, but after the long wars only 30 feet or so was left.

Even at the Vienna exposition the solid gold plates on the dolphin from the Nakoya castle attracted attention. It is historically true that in early Japan there were roofs of gold.—W. E. Griffis in New York Tribune.

Getting Full Value of Flowers.

Highly ornamental vases are attractive in themselves but, as flower holders, they may be said to be partial failures, as they do not serve their purpose to the fullest extent. They rather attract attention to themselves, than set off the blooms for which they are designed. A vase of plain material or color, or one on which the design is obscure, is more to be desired, as it presents the flowers in their full beauty, and does not distract one's attention. In the same way, a vase of lusterware, of a shade that blends with the flowers it holds, is far more attractive than one of contrasting color. Vases that are to be used for all kinds of flowers might better be green, of a dull shade, as this resembles the plant coloring and is not noticeable.

Death of Madame Roland.

The terrible French revolution brought many women as well as men into prominence, some for their genius, some for their crimes and some for their misfortunes. Among the number was Mme. Roland, wife of a famous adherent of the revolution, who was guillotined November 8, 1793. As she passed to the scaffold, she gazed at a gigantic statue of Liberty erected near it and exclaimed, "O Liberty! how many crimes are committed in thy name!" Mme. Roland was not only a good but a beautiful woman, and the guillotine took the life of one who was, perhaps, the most remarkable woman of the French revolution.

HANGED FOR BURNING COAL

There Was a Time When Job of Looking After Production Would Have Been Sinecure.

The present-day restrictions with regard to the use of coal would have seemed very mild to our ancestors, remarks a writer in London Tit-Bits. There is no doubt that the use of what used to be called "sea coal" to distinguish it from charcoal had its drawbacks.

Many look forward to the time when there will be no more smoky chimneys in Britain, when the atmosphere of London will be as clean as it must have been in the days of Good Queen Bess, and when a new building will not be begrimed with soot almost as soon as it is built.

In the reign of Edward I the inhabitants of London petitioned the king against the growing use of coal, declaring that it was "a public nuisance, corrupting the air with its stink and smoke, to the great detriment of their health." Whereupon the king prohibited its use, offenders to be punished for a first offense by a fine and for a second to have their kilns and furnaces destroyed.

The practice of using coal as at length made a capital offense and a man was tried, condemned and hanged for burning coal in London.

In those days the population of England probably did not exceed four or five million, and wood was plentiful and cheap from the vast forests that covered tens of thousands of square miles where now are great towns.

ALWAYS SOMETHING TO DO

Secret of Sir Walter Scott's Marvelous Literary Achievements Told in a Few Words.

"Never to be doing nothing" was the simple but effective rule that enabled Sir Walter Scott to get done the enormous amount of work for which he is noted. A passage in Lockhart's life of the poet and novelist reads:

"Those who observed him the most constantly were never able to understand how he contrived to keep himself so thoroughly up with the stream of contemporary literature of almost all sorts, French and German, as well as English. That a rapid glance might tell him more than another man could gather by a week's poring may easily be guessed; but the grand secret was his perpetual practice of his own grand maxim, never to be doing nothing. He had no 'unconsidered trifles' of time. Every moment was turned to account; and thus he had leisure for everything—except, indeed, the newspapers, which consume so many precious hours nowadays with most men, and of which, during the period of my acquaintance with him, he certainly read less than any other man I ever knew that had any habit of reading at all. I should also except, speaking generally, the reviews and magazines of the time. Of these he saw few, and of the few he read little."

Varying Movements of Leaves.

Different species of trees move their leaves very differently, so that one may sometimes tell by the motion of shadows on the ground, if he be too indolent to look up, under what kind of tree he is sitting. On the tulip-tree (which has the finest name that ever tree had, making the very pronouncing of its name almost like the utterance of a strain of music—Liriodendron tulipifera), on the tulip-tree, the aspen, and on all native poplars, the leaves have an intense individualism. Each one moves to suit itself. Under the same wind one is trilling up and down, another is whirling, another slowly vibrating right and left, and others still, quieting themselves to sleep, as a mother gently pats her slumbering child; and each one intent upon a motion of its own. Sometimes other trees have single frisky leaves, but usually the oaks, maples, beeches, have community of motion. They are all acting together, or are all alike still.—Henry Ward Beecher.

The Bishop of Verdun.

St. Vanne, or Vitonius, died November 9, 1525. A celebrated congregation of reformed Benedictines in Lorraine, formed in the abbey of St. Vanne in Verdun, in 1604, took him for patron, and from the famous abbey and that of Moyen-Moustier, dedicated in honor of St. Hydulphus, bears the name of St. Vanne and St. Hydulphus. Many in France desired to accede to the reform, but on account of the wars then existing, a union was thought too difficult. A reform under the same plan was set on foot in France, under the name of the Congregation of St. Maur, and began in the abbey of St. Austin in Limoges in 1613, and confirmed by Gregory XV, in 1627, which now comprises 183 abbeys and priories.

Mystic Shrine.

The Ancient and Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine was founded 1,400 years ago at Mecca, Arabia. The modern order is of comparatively recent origin. It was founded at New York in 1871 by William J. Florence, the actor. It contains a legend as to Arabic origin and on its altars rest copies of the Bible and the Koran. The Mystic Shrine is an entirely separate organization from the Masonic order. However, one of the provisions of membership is that the applicant must be either a Scottish Rite Mason, that is to say, a Mason of the thirty-second degree, or a member of the order of Knights Templar.

RACIAL BLENDINGS IN SYRIA

So Many Nations Have Overrun the Country That No One Race Can Claim Pre-eminence.

Syria, the region extending from the Taurus mountains to Egypt and from the desert to "the great sea," is the land of the patriarchs and prophets and apostles—"the Holy Land." Its population numbers about three and one-half million of Semitic origin, speaking the Arabic language, and yet with so many races intermingled through the centuries of the various conquests and occupations that the people cannot claim any one race as their own. Greek, Roman and European crusader, all have blended with the ancient Semitic stock to produce the Syrians of today.

In Syria was the one great spot of Turkey—the Lebanon mountains. In 1890, because of the massacres, the European powers insisted that these mountains be made autonomous. And since that date this little district has been a living demonstration of what the people of the land are capable of becoming.

The steep mountain sides have been terraced to a height of 4,000 feet and planted to olives, figs and vines. Taxes have been low, safety to person and property secured, good roads built and kept in repair. The people have constructed more comfortable homes and have sent their sons to schools and colleges.

The story of the achievements of the Lebanon and its sons during these 60 years of autonomy would be a thrilling narrative in itself.

KEEP COOL AND KEEP WELL

Some Points of Importance to Be Remembered When an Epidemic Is Threatening Public Health.

At its worst any epidemic takes but a relatively small toll of the population, and as a rule the majority of people are resistant to the assaults of the worst disease germs, including influenza, if they but take ordinary care of themselves. This is important. Whatever medical science may advise as to prevention or as to treatment, one simple fact that outweighs everything else is that if every individual will but follow the normal life he has led, eat those things that are suited to his system, things he has always eaten with resulting good health, rest and sleep as usual and avoid overfatigue while carrying on his work, also as usual, he will escape the pestilence. There is no excuse for any panic. Above all, the individual should remember that the first and last rule to follow in this state of things is to keep cool and keep well. For the man who will keep cool will keep well, and the man who keeps well and has all his faculties about him will keep cool. This is no time for official or individual or collective hysteria.—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

Extravagance.

It makes no difference who administers the extravagance or how high the purpose is, extravagance is an evil in itself. There is something in the very fact that invites venality and corruption. The very sight of a great pile of money excites desire that too often finds some way for satisfying itself. The papers are full of instances of this kind. In fact, we could write a pretty good history of the country if we limited our narrative to graft and grabbing only, and yet much of it is overlooked because it is usual and expected. Extravagance has made many an unearned fortune and it is doing as much these days, especially in government contracts. This country should hasten to apply the doctrine that an overcharge is a crime and that profiteering is treason. There is nothing that so destroys the democratic level of a nation, whether it appears on the heights or in the depths.—Ohio State Journal.

Labor Strikes That Failed.

Labor strikes were frequent even in the earliest recorded days. An important strike occurred in Egypt during the reign of Cheops, several thousand years before the Christian era. While the great pyramid erected in honor of that monarch was in course of construction it is stated that 50,000 workmen refused to continue their labors. They were dissatisfied with the food furnished to them, which was insufficient in quantity and poor in quality. Argument proving useless on the part of the contractors, soldiers were ordered to drive the strikers back to work, and many thousands of them were cut to pieces, while those who could escape fled. The others were compelled to resume their labor.

Dogs in Roumania.

Each nation looks upon the dog in a different way, but the dogs of war and the dogs of peace (of a pastoral and agricultural people like the Roumanians) are beyond doubt the intelligentest of their kind. A little farther east he was sometimes held in fear, and an old Babylonian prayer runs thus: "From the dog, the snake, the scorpion, and whatever is baleful, may Merodach preserve us." . . . On the other hand, on some of the wonderful bas-reliefs of that period, our four-footed friends have been gratefully immortalized, and their names remain written thereon to this day—"He who ran and barked." "The biter of his foes." "The seler of his enemies." But here in Roumania "slayer of the wolf," "the friend of sheep," betokens a less disinterested path in life.—Exchange.

DIRE MENACE TO TRAVELER

Stinging Tree of Queensland Is Frequently Fatal to Unobserving or Too Careless Hunter.

Although the tropical shrubs of Queensland are luxuriant and beautiful, they are not without their dangerous drawbacks, for there is one plant among them that is deadly in its effects. This is the stinging tree. If a certain portion of the traveler's body is burned by the stinging tree death will follow.

"Sometimes while shooting turkeys in the scrubs I have entirely forgotten the stinging tree till warned of its close proximity by its smell," said a visitor to Queensland. "I was only once stung, and that very lightly. Its effects are curious; it leaves no mark, but the pain is maddening, and for months afterward the part when touched is tender, in rainy weather or when it gets wet in washing."

"I have seen a man who treats ordinary pain lightly roll on the ground in agony after being stung, and I have known a horse so completely mad, after getting into a grove of these trees, that he rushed open-mouthed at everyone who approached him and had to be shot. Dogs, when stung, will rush about whining piteously, biting pieces from the affected part. The small stinging trees, a few inches high, are as dangerous as any, being hard to see and seriously impeding one's ankles."

The stinging tree emits a peculiar and disagreeable smell. It is best known, however, by its leaf, which is nearly round and has a point at the top.

HEADGEAR OF ALL FASHIONS

In the Revolutionary War the Hats Worn by the Soldiers Were of Many Designs.

In our past wars there were no such things as flying shrapnel, or airplanes that dropped darts of steel on the soldiers below, so American soldiers wore ordinary army hats. But modern warfare has made it necessary that soldiers wear helmets of steel.

In the Revolutionary war our soldiers' hats were of many designs. One of the most common was the "cocked" hat, made of black or brown felt and turned up on the sides to form three corners. The Virginia riflemen wore brown felt hats with one side turned up, and the Maryland riflemen brown fur-trimmed hats.

The hat generally worn by the New York rangers or riflemen was of black felt, cap shaped, turned up in front, with a plume. Sometimes words were marked on the front, such as "Liberty," "Death," etc. Soldiers in the cavalry or "light horse" of Philadelphia wore sportsmen's caps, ornamented with buck's tails.

Hats worn by the First Governors' foot guards of Connecticut were closely modeled after those of the British Grenadiers. They were of black fur, cap shaped, with a piece of yellow felt in front. On the side they were decorated with a red plume. Privates in the Pennsylvania companies wore braided-bound hats. The dragoons wore cap-shaped helmets.

Promising Opening.

The traveling showman was waxing eloquent as he described the characteristics of his wild horse from Tartary.

"Ladies and gents," he said, "this animal is a real terror. If there's any gent in this company as fancies himself as a rider, I'll give him five pounds for every minute he sticks on this boss. I've rid hosses all my life, but this boss is beyond me. I've tried 'im every way, but 'e shakes me off in ten seconds."

"Why not get inside him?" queried a humorist.

The showman waited until the laughter had died down.

"My lad," he said, wistfully, "I've thought of that. But nature has been unkind to 'im in the matter of mouth; it ain't big enough. Now, if it 'ad been yours—"

But the humorist did not wait to hear the logical conclusion of the hypothesis.

Naval Nicknames.

Curious nicknames are applied to vessels of the British navy. The Ariadne is known as the "Halcyon Annie," or "Haggy Agony"; the Narcissus, as "Nasty Sister"; the Cressy as the "Greaser"; the Inconstant as the "Inkstand"; the Iphigenia as the "Silly Jane"; the Lucifer as the "Match Box"; the Hecla as the "He Cat," or "The Tom," and the Neptune as the "Jew's Harp." In the American navy similar nicknames have been used to some extent. The Sassafras was known as the "Sassy Cuss"; the Miantonomoh as "My Aunt Don't Know"; the Wissahickon as the "Widow Higgins"; the Winnabago or perhaps the Wyandottaw as "We Know She Goes Slow."—Chicago Daily News.

Would Be Lonely.

A little friend of mine is quite a mischievous little boy, and after a day of play with the boys of the neighborhood his conduct is not always everything his mother could wish. But he is quite a lovable little chap, too, and was one day showing his affection for his mother in true boy fashion, with hugs and kisses. His father looked on approvingly and said: "That is good, son. That is the way I like to see my boy. Can't you always play nicely and be good?" The answer voiced the feeling of Young America: "Sure, I can, but I'd have to play by myself."—Chicago Tribune.

SANITATION.

That the germ is the cause of most deadly disease is more than mere theory—it is a real fact. The work of tuberculosis sanitariums, the typhoid hospitals in the canal zone, the vaccine laboratories are all evidence of the fact that the safety of man does not depend on good or bad luck, but upon the fight which each individual makes upon the disease germs, the cause of most losses of life and dollars. In selecting a weapon to kill the germs of disease several vital questions must be looked squarely in the face or disinfectant will be little better than useless. First—Has the disinfectant the power to kill all kinds of disease germs? 2nd, Can the disinfectant be used safely whenever disease germs are found? 3rd, Is it effective, when used anywhere and every where, and by any body, and can it be used with safety? Therefore a disinfectant that can be used with safety must not be a poison or caustic acid, whereas poisonous disinfectants endanger the life of human beings or animals, this can be verified by turning to the files of our daily papers. When buying a disinfectant be sure what you buy as your life may depend on that purchase, look at the label, note the germ killing power and if it is poison or not. Disinfectants are measured upon the germ killing strength of undiluted carbolic acid, which they term a phenol coefficient. Look for the phenol coefficient on the label.

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