

LIFE OF A SILK HAT

WITH CARE ONE MAY BE MADE TO LAST A HUNDRED YEARS.

And It Can Be Made Over and Over Again as Long as the Frame Holds Together—How Its Twenty-nine Pieces Are Molded Into One.

"Actors use up the old silk hats," said the latter. "Actors?" asked the listener.

"Actors," said the latter, pausing in the act of lifting a chunk of iron out of the stove and dropping it in the hollow flatiron he carried. "Actors—I mean variety actors, of course. They need them in their business. Haven't you ever wondered where all the old silk hats come from when you've seen the comedians kicking each other's tiles all over the stage? Well, such places as mine supply them.

"It takes a good many years to wear out a silk hat. With proper care they'll last to be a hundred years old. Of course before that time the silk will turn red on top, where it is exposed to the sun, but that redness can be overcome for a time. You can make over a silk hat so long as the frame holds together.

"There are twenty-nine pieces in a silk hat. They are the brim, which is in four pieces; the silk lining, in two; the foundation, in two; the gossamer tips between—there are two of these also; the two coverings for the side crown, the two for the tips, the three pieces of plush, the three rubbers, the underbrim, one piece; the two pieces of the band and binding, the leather, one piece; the bow braid, one piece; the label, one piece; the eyelets, two of them; the sticker, or piece of court plaster, joining the sweatband together in the back.

"Cotton cloth is the foundation of the silk hat. It is stiffened with shellac cut with ammonia and hot water. The cloth is cut up in strips, cut on the bias, and then stretched on the block in four thicknesses, one thickness being stretched and permitted to dry before another is put on. The lining is put in first, the cloth being stretched over that, and then, after it has been permitted to dry, it is ironed on the block, powdered gum demar being dusted on to prevent the iron from sticking to the cloth soaked in shellac.

"The block is in five pieces, the center, the two sides and the two ends, which are removed in this order when the cloth body has dried in shape. The leading makers get out their hats on the block they adopt for the style of the season, and block makers then imitate this block until any better may buy from a New York or Boston block maker the season's latest block at a reasonable price.

"The block is then removed from the shellac cloth shell, and a doffer is inserted to stretch the hat to the required size, the block being a trifle small. This doffer is simply a felt shape, which fits closely to the block, and thus puts a thickness of felt between the hat and the block. The hat is ironed as soon as the doffer is inserted, this melting the shellac and permitting the cloth shell to adapt itself to the changed conditions. After the ironing it is covered with a coat of shellac varnish, for which the latter now has to pay \$5 a quart. When it is dry again the silk plush is put on with a hot iron, steamed on, in fact.

"This plush comes in rolls like any other and is sold by the yard. It is cut in strips seven inches wide for the crown and two and one-half inches for the brim. The top piece having been cut out, it is sewed to the crown piece and is then put on the cloth shell. Once on the plush nap is turned back at the joint, cut off and stuck on and then brushed back, which makes a joining so neat that it is almost impossible to detect.

"The hat is put on a potance block and potanced, which means simply that it is hung on a round block of cloth covered wood which rests on an elbow iron at the hatter's bench and is finished over again, after having already been finished with a hot iron and plenty of elbow grease. The edge of the brim is curled, the hat is trimmed, bound, the leather sweatband is inserted, and then it is ironed again until it shines like glass. After that it is ready to wear.

"It may be made over whenever the change in the modes is great enough to make this seem desirable, and when it gets too dirty it may be washed by the hatter and thus thoroughly cleansed. When he makes it over he strips the plush from the frame and starts at the beginning again, just as for a new hat, with this exception, that he has the groundwork and has simply to shape it again. If any piece of the silk looks worn he will replace it so deftly that one may not be detected from the other, and thus the silk hat may be said never to wear out."—Providence Journal.

His Specialty. Mrs. Knicker—is your husband an after dinner speaker. Mrs. Backer—No, but he does a powerful lot of grumbling during it.—Brooklyn Life.

There are ways of showing satisfaction without a superabundance of words.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

How severe a young man is with the love affairs of a widower, and how severe an elderly man is with the love affairs of a young fellow!

The jealousy of the children when mother cuts the pie isn't anything compared with that they feel in later years when father divides it.—Atholton Globe.

THE AGILE TIGER.

He is "Shod With Silence" and is as Quick as Lightning.

Most wild animals are specialists—say, they are highly developed in one particular direction. The tiger is great as a stalker. His feet seem to be "shod with silence." R. H. Elliot, for many years a resident of India, cited an experience of one of his neighbors illustrative of this point.

He had been much annoyed by tigers and at last tied a bullock out in a clearing and took up his own position in a tree to wait till the tiger should come after the bait. The ground was covered with dried leaves, which in hot weather are so brittle that even the walking of a bird over them can be heard for a good distance.

In no very long time a large tiger slipped out of the forest and slowly edged toward the bullock. His method was so elaborate and careful that the man who saw it used to declare that it would have been worth 1,000 rupees to any young sportsman to have witnessed it.

So carefully did he put down each paw and so gradually did he crush the leaves under it that not a sound was to be heard. Between him and the bullock was a stump about four feet high, with long projecting surface roots. This, plainly, the tiger looked upon as a godsend.

He got upon one of the roots, balanced himself carefully and so was able to walk quickly and silently as far as the stump. He approached so gradually and noiselessly and his color against the brown leaves was so invisible that he was close upon the bullock before he was perceived.

Then instantly the bullock charged. The tiger eluded him and in a moment more had his paws on the bullock's neck ready to drag him down. Then, like a flash, he caught sight of the rope by which the bullock was tied and turned and sprang into the forest, all so quickly that the man in the tree had no opportunity to fire.

SIZE OF A THUNDERBOLT.

Geologists Have a System by Which Such Measures Are Taken.

"Did you ever see the diameter of a lightning flash measured?" asked a geologist. "Well, here is the case which once inclosed a flash of lightning, fitted it exactly, so that you can see how big it was. This is called a 'fulgarite,' or 'lightning hole,' and the material it is made of is glass.

"When a bolt of lightning strikes a bed of sand it plunges downward into the sand for a distance less or greater, transforming simultaneously into glass the silica in the material through which it passes. Thus by its great heat it forms a glass tube of precisely its own size.

"Now and then such a tube, known as a fulgarite, is found and dug up. Fulgarites have been followed into the sand by excavations for nearly thirty feet. They vary in interior diameter from the size of a quill to three inches or more, according to the 'bore' of the flash. But fulgarites are not produced alone in sand. They are found also in solid rock, though very naturally of slight depth, and frequently existing as a thin, glassy covering on the surface.

"Such fulgarites occur in astonishing abundance on the summit of Little Ararat, in Armenia. The rock is so soft and porous that blocks a foot long can be obtained, perforated in all directions by little tubes filled with bottle green glass formed from the fused rock.

"Some wonderful fulgarites were found by Humboldt on the high Nevada de Toluca, in Mexico. Masses of the rock were covered with a thin layer of green glass. Its peculiar shimmer in the sun led Humboldt to ascend the precipitous peak at the risk of his life."

It Won For Sardon.

It is a singular fact that the famous French dramatist Sardon owed his first success on the boards to his excellent handwriting. He had sent in his often rejected play, "La Taverne des Etudiants," to the Odeon management for consideration, and the manuscript was thrown, with some others, upon a table. One day at rehearsal the charming actress Mlle. Berengere was attracted by the handwriting and took up the manuscript, crying, "Oh, what an exquisite hand!" She read the play and recommended it so strongly to the directors that they were induced to read it and then accept it. At the time Sardon was starving. He had gone through seven long years of terrible hardship and privation.

Hops In England.

The English were taught the uses of hops by a native Artois, who introduced them into England in 1524. They met with some hostility, for physicians represented them as unwholesome, and parliament was petitioned against them as a "wicked weed." In 1528 their use was prohibited under severe penalties. Henry VIII. appears to have been prejudiced against hops, for in a manuscript, dated Eltham, January, 1530, occurs an injunction to his brewer "not to put hops or brimstone" into the ale.

The Living.

Sis—Why did you throw up your situation, Ernest? Brother—Because I am going to get married. Sis—But what will you live on—love? Brother—Oh, no! We are going to live on my love's father.

In Danger.

Gregson (in alarm)—Great Scott, I've left my pocketbook under my pillow! Fisher—Oh, well, your servant is honest, isn't she? Gregson—That's just it. She'll take it to my wife.

What we call despair is often only the painful eagerness of unfeigned hope.—George Eliot.

SIBERIAN HOSPITALITY.

A Charming Visit, With a Somewhat Terrifying Climax.

Detained at the Siberian village of Krivochokovo, M. Jules Legras remembered that he had a letter to a notable of the place and hastened to present it. M. Gautier in his book on Russia describes in M. Legras' own words the cordial hospitality with which he was received and also tells of the difficulty which concluded his charming visit.

"They had detained me till 10 o'clock in the evening," he writes, "by repeating, 'Why are you in a hurry? and I was on the point of making my departure when I heard the mistress of the house say in a low voice to her husband, 'Shall I send for the carriage?' To which he replied, 'No.' At this word a shiver passed over me. Doubtless this host, who had made me send away the coachman, was unaware of what his refusal meant, else he would have said to me, 'Here is a sofa; sleep here.' 'My situation was perilous, but what could I do? At the end of a few moments I rose to take my leave, and, having asked if I could get a cab, was met with the reply that at this hour none could be obtained.

"Krivochokovo is a village whose population constitutes the very fotsam and jetsam of Siberian civilization. The village has neither streets nor lights nor police. It is considered a cutthroat spot, where honest people shut themselves tight at night.

"I had neither stick nor revolver, and I had on me a large sum of money. Finally, I was ignorant of the exact position of my inn, situated over a mile away. First of all, dogs threw themselves upon me. I shook them off and started as best I could.

"The night was inky black. Amid the irregular clusters of houses there was no regular street by which to guide myself. As I hesitated I heard a 'Who is that?' It was a watchman of a pile of wood who hailed me. He directed me, and, giving me a large branch that would do as a stick, he said: 'You are wrong, barine, to go about this way without a revolver. The place is not safe. May God protect you!'

"As I approached another cluster of houses a watchman sounded his rattle menacingly and dogs flew at me savagely. When this watchman approached I induced him to accompany me. He informed me that the evening before a traveler who was staying at my hotel, having started early to catch a train, had been assassinated about ten paces from there. Finally we reached the inn. It took a long time to make them open the door, but I finally got inside and reached my room, trembling with fever and fatigue, and fell down helplessly, only conscious of having passed an hour and a half whose remembrance will remain with me long. As for my so amiable host, whose hospitality might have cost me my life, he will doubtless never know of this adventure."

Macedonia.

Macedonia, the land of the three streams, Vardar, Struma and Vistritsa, is hemmed in by lofty mountains, of which the best known or the highest are Olympus, Sharlakh and Rhodope, the last named rising to between 8,000 and 9,000 feet above the level of the sea. It is among the most picturesque countries of Europe, abounding in magnificent forests, which climb hills, fringe rivers and cover islands; in wild mountain scenes, wonderful waterfalls, silent, sailless lakes—an appropriate setting for gems of emerald islets, deep gorges, dizzy mountain paths, smiling plains and desolate passes, which ought to prove an irresistible attraction to the traveler who regards genuine danger and real discomfort as the appropriate condiment of pleasure.

The Shaving Brush.

It is likely that the best shaving brush ever made sheds more or less hairs. To prevent this take an elastic band, neither too heavy nor too light; cut it once (not in two), and, holding one end firmly on the handle, wind the rubber around the bristles as close up to the handle as you can, stretching taut as you wind. When you come to the end tie a simple flat knot (not a granny knot) or else lose the end. By careful winding a very neat job can be done, and the bristles can be worn down to the socket without losing a hair.

A Work of Art.

Miss Knox—There goes Bess Mugley. Miss Bright—Yes, she played the part of the heroine in the private theatricals at the church. Miss Knox—Gracious! Did she have the face to play the heroine? Miss Bright—No, but the customer fixed one up for her.—Philadelphia Press.

Cast Iron.

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He Wasn't Acrobatic.

Miss Prue Dent—Papa says you are imprudent and that he will never consent to my marrying a man that is unable to make both ends meet. Orville Harduppe—Well, I'm afraid I shall never be able to do so. I'm not a contortionist. Good evening.—Pittsburg Dispatch.

The wise man is he who asks a great deal of advice and takes a very little of it.

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