

It Gave Columbus the Idea For His Voyage of Discovery.

Mediaeval Europe knew but very little of eastern and northeastern Asia. Many of the most learned cosmographers of the time taught that Asia stretched eastward indefinitely, and no one imagined that it had an eastern coast washed by the ocean. It was seriously taught that eastern Asia was a land of vast swamps, inhabited by monster serpents and dragons. This was the opinion that still prevailed up to within 200 years of the time of Columbus.

At this time two Venetian merchants of the name of Polo went on a vast trading expedition to the uttermost parts of Asia. They were gone many years. Upon their return the son of one of them, a young man named Marco Polo, wrote out a full account of their travels, described the empire of the grand khan (the Chinese emperor) and revealed the fact that Asia was bounded on the east by a vast ocean. He described this eastern coast minutely, with all its vast cities and its wealth of precious stones and spices.

It was from reading this book that the imagination of Columbus was fired, and he conceived the bold idea of reaching this eastern coast of Asia by sailing toward the west around the earth.

So when he discovered Cuba he had not a doubt that he had landed upon the coast of Asia and that he looked upon the same scenes that Marco Polo had gazed upon 200 years before.

Still, the Philosopher Didn't Like It When Death Called.

A certain philosopher was in the habit of saying whenever he heard that an old friend had passed away: "Ah, well, death comes to us all! It is no new thing. It is what we must expect. Pass me the butter, my dear. Yes, death comes to all, and my friend's time had come."

Now, Death overheard these philosophical remarks at different times, and one day he showed himself to the philosopher.

"I am Death," said he simply.

"Go away!" said the man in a panic.

"I am not ready for you."

"Yes, but it is one of your favorite truisms that Death comes to all, and I am but proving your words."

"Go away! You are dreadful!"

"No more dreadful than I always am. But why have you changed so? You have never feared the death that has come to your friends. I never heard you sigh when I carried off your old companions. You have always said, 'It is the way of all flesh.' Shall I make an exception in favor of your flesh?"

"Yes, for I am not ready."

"But I am. Your time has come. Do not repine. Your friends will go on butting their heads against the door of death as you have taken every other death."

And the philosopher and Death departed on a long journey together.—Charles Battell Loomis.

About Sneezing.

Hospital nurses when assisting at a delicate operation have their own way of suppressing a cough or a sneeze. The operator's attention must not be distracted for a moment. Coughs and sneezes, too, spread germs on surfaces carefully rendered antiseptic. So every nurse soon learns to press her finger hard on the upper lip immediately below the nose when she feels a cough or a sneeze coming on. A pressure in the neighborhood of the ear, too, or a hard pressure on the roof of the mouth will nip a cough in the bud. And the will has great power to control a cough or a sneeze.

There was a French surgeon who used to say whenever he entered the wards of the hospital. "The first patient who coughs gets no food today." This method was usually successful.—Chicago News.

What Came Up.

A young man wishing to have a bit of fun at a farmer's expense passed a few remarks about his cattle and his garden and then said he had set some lettuce and cabbage which had not grown up.

Then the farmer said: "Oh, that's nothing! I set some carrot seeds, and what do you think came up?"

"Don't know," replied the young man.

Farmer—Why, old Brown's donkey, and ate the lot.—Newark Star.

The Turnip.

The turnip is supposed to be a native of Asia and Europe. It has been cultivated for centuries. The wild East Indian turnip is said to be remotely kin to the edible turnip. It is the size of a walnut and first tasted is sweetish, but in a moment the taster's tongue feels as though it were pricked by a hundred hot needles, and he feels like expectorating for hours after. It is the country boy's favorite medium for a joke on the visiting town boy.

Work and Worry.

"So you think worry kills more people than work?"

"I'm sure of it," replied the sarcastic scientist.

"Why?"

"Because so many people find it easier than work and devote their time to it."—Washington Star.

For who knows most, him loss of time most grieves.—Dante.

Managing the Weather.

It may safely be said that control of the weather by sorcerers was altogether disbelieved in by very few persons in the sixteenth century. But if the belief was held more strongly along one coast line than another it was around the Baltic rather than elsewhere. As late as 1670 a traveler tells us how, being becalmed off Finland, the captain sent ashore to buy a wind from a wizard. The fee was 10 kroner (say 36 shillings) and a pound of tobacco. The wizard tied a woolen rag with three knots in it to the mast. Untying the first knot produces just the wind they want, southwest. That slackening, untying knot No. 2 revives it for a time, but knot No. 3 brings up a fearful northeaster, which nearly sinks them. "Qui nescit orare, discit navigare," was a much quoted phrase. True enough of one traveler, it would appear, seeing he is reported to have prayed during a storm: "O Lord, I am no common beggar. I do not trouble thee every day, for I never prayed to thee before, and if it please thee to deliver me this once I will never pray to thee again as long as I live."—Atlantic Monthly.

Norway's Love For Bjornson.

What Bjornson was to his own people is best made clear by an incident which occurred at his beloved Aulestad not long before he was forced to start on his final journey to Paris in search of another lease of health and life. A regiment passed the place in the course of a maneuver. Its commander sent word ahead to the poet asking him to review the soldiers as they marched by. Bjornson stood on the veranda of his house, surrounded by his entire family—a man who had never held any public office, mind you! As the troop approached on the highroad below officers and men gave the salute due to a commanding general or a member of the royal house. But this was not all. From the rapidly moving ranks rose one mighty shout after another—a spontaneous outburst of devotion and gratitude such as it has been granted very few men the fortune to inspire.—Edward Bjorkman in American Review of Reviews.

Figures of Speech.

A well known ventriloquist who had consented to give a performance in aid of charity heard that certain members of his prospective audience were determined to watch the movements of his mouth with the closest scrutiny with a view of confounding him. The night came, the attendants carried in three dummies on chairs, and the artist made his appearance. His performance was unusually successful, the muscles of his face giving no evidence of his art. The changes of voice were marvelous, and the astonished crowd at the close of the exhibition gave him a rousing cheer. Again and again they called him back, and he expressed his pleasure by innumerable bows. At last the cheering ceased, and he was permitted to retire. Scarcely had he done so when the three "lay" figures got up from their chairs and walked off the stage. The ventriloquist had employed three friends to impersonate his usual mechanical figures.

The "Bull."

The origin of the word "bull" as the definition of a confused utterance is doubtful. Some philologists say it comes from the French boule—"fraud"—and others that it is derived from the Icelandic bull—"nonsense." Many definitions have been attempted, but the best probably is that of Sydney Smith. Writing of the difference between wit and "bulls," he says: "Wit discovers real relations that are apparent; 'bulls' admit apparent relations that are not real. The stronger the apparent connection and the more complete the real disconnection of the ideas the greater the surprise and the better the 'bull.'"

Where Looks Don't Matter.

Apropos of a titled foreigner's marriage to a rich and rather plain American girl a New Yorker said: "The count has no cause to complain. The ethics of such a marriage as his are but the ethics of the matrimonial agency. 'A man called at a matrimonial agency. 'I am interested,' he said, 'in the young lady who has \$250,000 in her own right. Could you let me see her photograph?' 'No; that is not the custom,' the agent replied. 'In any case over \$100,000 the photograph is never asked for.'"

Working Him.

"I want the office, of course," said the aspiring statesman, "but not unless I am the people's choice." "We can fix that, too," said his campaign manager, "only you know it's a good deal more expensive to be the people's choice than it is to go in as the compromise candidate."—Chicago Tribune.

Friendship.

Friendship is a vase which when it is flayed by heat or violence or accident may as well be broken at once. It can never be trusted again. The more graceful and ornamental it was the more clearly do we discern the hopelessness of restoring it to its former state.

A Continued Story.

"What did your wife say when you stayed out so late last night?" "I don't know. She hasn't finished telling it all to me yet."—Detroit Free Press.

In this world it is not what we take up, but what we give up, that makes us rich.—Beecher.

Stories of Frederick the Great.

In the course of some military evolutions Frederick the Great of Prussia, irritated by some mistake of a captain, ran after him with his stick in order to strike him. The captain ran away. The next morning the commanding officer reported to the king that the officer in question, one of the most efficient in the regiment, had sent in his papers. "Tell him to come to me," said the king. The officer, in great perturbation, came. "Good morning, major," he apostrophized the officer, who was speechless with surprise. "I wanted to tell you of your promotion, but you ran so fast I could not catch you up. Good morning."

Another time an officer attempted to get a comrade into bad odor with the king by telling his majesty that he was a drunkard. In a subsequent battle the latter's fitness was conspicuous, whereas his slanderer played a very poor part. When afterward he defied just the king at the head of his regiment his majesty called out to him in a voice of thunder. "The sooner you take to drink the better!"

The Old Time Surgeon.

Before anesthetics were known the surgeon's only expedient was to abridge his patient's sufferings by working rapidly. In this the old time surgeons did wonders. They had a control and a surety in their hands that are now seldom found. One day the celebrated surgeon Malsouneure had to amputate the leg of a poor devil, who began to howl in advance. "I'll give you my watch," said the surgeon. "If the operation lasts more than a minute." The man accepted the offer, but was obliged to forego the handsome watch, as the operation took less time than it requires to describe. To amputate an arm at the shoulder is a most difficult operation. Dr. Langenbeck of Germany did it in two minutes. A young physician who came to see him perform the operation adjusted his spectacles to his nose so as not to lose a single movement, but when the spectacles were in place the operation was over and the severed arm lay on the floor. Times have changed much since then.

Dr. Johnson's Church.

St. Clement Dunes has never forgotten the fact that Johnson worshipped within its walls. The pew in which he sat (it is in the north gallery, close to the pulpit) is marked by a brass plate which was erected by the parish-owners in 1851. In December, 1884, the centenary of Dr. Johnson's death was observed by a memorial service, when a special address was delivered by the Rev. Dr. Lindsay, at that time rector of St. Clement Dunes. Johnson's pew was on that occasion draped in violet. Johnson was always constant in his attendance at church on Good Friday and Easter day. On April 9, 1773, he went with Boswell. "His behavior," writes Boswell, "was, as I had imagined to myself, solemnly devout. I shall never forget the tremulous earnestness with which he pronounced the awful petition in the litany. In the hour of death and in the day of judgment, good Lord, deliver us!"—London News.

Fine Art of Letter Opening.

In Russia one letter in every ten passing through the post is opened by the authorities as a matter of course. Indeed, the postal authorities of every country have experts who have raised letter opening to a fine art. Some kinds of paper can be steamed open without leaving any traces, and this simple operation is finished by re-bushening the flap with a bone instrument. In the case of a seal a matrix is taken by means of new bread before breaking the wax. When other methods fail the envelope is placed between pieces of wood with edge projecting one-twentieth of an inch. The edge of the envelope is first fattened, then roughened and finally slit open. Later a hair line of strong white gum is applied and the edges united under pressure.—London Chronicle.

Charity and Prudence.

The contradictions of life are many. An observant man remarked recently that he was prowling about a certain city square when he came upon a drinking fountain which bore two conflicting inscriptions.

One, the original inscription on the fountain, was from the Bible, "And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

Above this hung a placard, "Please do not waste the water."—Youth's Companion.

Stewed Deers' Horns.

Deers' horns when young may form a dish for human consumption. Sir S. W. Baker writes, "When the large horns of the sambar, or wapiti, are growing they make an excellent dish, first scalded to divest them of down and then gently stewed with a good sauce and a few vegetables."—London Mail.

Her Description.

Muggins—Women have such queer ways of expressing themselves! Bug-gins—Such as? Muggins—Well, my wife was telling me about Miss Yellowleaf and said she was a sight to behold and in the very next breath said she wasn't fit to be seen.—Philadelphia Record.

Rural Amenities.

Fair Passenger—But, good gracious, why didn't the train stop here? It is supposed to. Porter—Yes, miss, but the engine driver has quarreled with the station master.—Polo Mele.

A Conclusion.

"Her husband doesn't smoke, drink, chew, swear or play cards." "Introduce me. Widows are my specialty."—Houston Post.

A Pearl Stringer's Keen Eye.

The pearl stringer's eye becomes practiced in the detection of real and imitation pearls. One glance is usually sufficient. A genuine pearl has a hard look. It presents a sort of shell-like surface with an indescribable bluish. This bluish is so cleverly counterfeited in wax imitations that even those who are accustomed to handling pearls day after day are likely to be deceived. In one of the large New York jewelry houses last winter a customer purchased a hand painted miniature set in a frame of imitation pearls. On examination it was found that several of the pearls had been slightly defaced, and the whole thing was sent to the manufacturing rooms for repairs. By chance it came under the eye of one of the pearl stringers, who instantly detected four genuine pearls in the circle of imitation ones about the picture. The frame had passed through a dozen expert hands without any one noticing the presence of real pearls. No one could account for their being there. If they had not been detected the purchaser of the frame would have had a bargain, for the four genuine pearls were worth many times more than the picture and the rest of its setting.—New York Tribune.

Spirit of Young America.

A teacher in a Philadelphia public school narrated the following account of how an aspiring young Italian citizen was beginning to show the effects of an American environment. The story, which was told at a teachers' association meeting, runs something like this:

Tony had been away from school about a week, and when he showed up one morning the teacher asked him where he had been.

"I ran away," said Tony.

"Ran away! What did you do that for?" asked the teacher.

"My father was going to lick me, so I thought I'd run away," was the reply.

The teacher by further questioning brought out the fact that Tony for some trifling dereliction had been threatened with a beating and had stayed away from home the best part of a week.

"But your father has the right to whip you," said the teacher.

"Yes, he may," added Tony, "but I was born in this country, and I don't want no foreigners to lick me."—Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

Costa Rican Volcanoes.

Costa Rica has been subject to earthquakes for many years. Part of the republic is exceedingly mountainous, and in this part of the country there are more than a score of volcanoes, some of them dead, but a few that break out periodically. There are three or four that have been active for more than a century. Some of these are near San Jose, the capital. Costa Ricans have always believed that earthquakes, which the country has experienced ever since it was first settled by Spanish adventurers, were caused by the volcanoes. There is good ground for this belief, because it has been noticed that earthquakes of more or less intensity followed the activity of these volcanoes. If the volcanic eruptions were violent the earthquakes were correspondingly severe.—Washington Post.

A Witty Retort.

A good story is told of two great Irishmen, the late Archbishop Plunket and Father Healy, the well known parish priest of Bray. Making their way together to Bray railroad station one morning, the priest urged that they should hurry, but the prelate's appeal to his watch convinced him that they had ample time. They arrived to see the train for Dublin disappearing. The archbishop's apologies were lavish. He pleaded that he had always had unbounded faith in his watch. "My dear Lord Plunket," was Father Healy's rejoinder, "faith won't do without the good works."—Blackwood's Magazine.

Alkarazza.

Alkarazza is the name given to vessels of very porous earthenware which when filled with water are always moist outside and owing to the evaporation of the water on their surface always keep their contents cool. Alkarazza can be made from any good potter's clay by mixing with it 10 per cent of its weight, dry, of very fine sawdust and then working it. On burning the sawdust is destroyed and the clay thereby left porous.

Started in Business.

"Father thinks I ought to go in for business a bit," remarked the glided youth.

"Made a start yet?"

"Oh, yass, I've ordered three business suits and had me name put up at a commercial club."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Her Instructions.

Conductor—Ticket, please. Passenger—Certainly, sir. Here is the key of my trunk, which is in the baggage car. In the pocket of my second best dress is my mileage book.—Harper's Bazar.

Life and a Living.

Many a man has made a good living who has made a poor life. Some men have made splendid lives who have made very moderate and even scanty livings.

A Hard Task.

"Now, sir," said an Irish barrister with severity to a loquacious witness, "hold your tongue and give your evidence clearly!"

Happiness consists largely in being too busy to be miserable.—Sheldon.

Straw Hats at Half Price. THIS WEEK IT'S Straw Hats AT HALF PRICE The price on every Straw Hat in the store, Panamas excepted, are cut exactly in half. IT'S CHEAPER to own a new hat at these prices than to get the old one cleaned. M. Faule & Son,