

FRANKING MAIL MATTER.

At One Time Soldiers in This Country Enjoyed the Privilege.

The postoffice was first established for the principal and in some countries for the exclusive purpose of carrying official correspondence by mail.

In England the house of commons claimed the privilege as early as 1600. It was abolished in Great Britain, however, by the passage of Rowland's cheap postage measure in 1839.

In the early years of the United States government the privilege was granted widely, but it soon became necessary to restrict it.

COSMOPOLITAN DAMASCUS.

The Oldest City on Earth, It Shows All the World's Peoples.

At last we are set down in the midst of Damascus, a city that can claim life without a break from its founding back in the dim dawn of the world's history.

When Abram crossed the desert from Haran 4,000 years ago this city was standing (Genesis xiv, 15, and xv, 2).

She dates back to the time of the Pharaohs in Egypt. In fact, she was old when Greece and Rome were striplings in years.

Rome may be termed the Eternal City, but Damascus is twice as old, and though her streets have run red with blood of battle and rapine many times, she has not been overthrown.

"Babylon is an heap in the desert, and Tyre a ruin on the shore," but Damascus remains.

Was there ever such a place to see the nations of the earth parading together? Here in the market place are motley crowds of Persians, Moors, Afghans, Indians, Egyptians, Sudanese, Jews, Bedouins, Druses, Turks, Europeans.

The streets—so crooked, so narrow, so dirty, so full of life, with that strange spell of the desert upon them! The residences as seen from the street are ugly and disappointing enough, yet like old barns and tumbledown mills at home are fascinating and picturesque.—Christian Herald.

Mystery of a Bridegroom.

The mysterious disappearance of a bridegroom at a wedding is recalled by T. F. Thiselton Dyer in his "Strange Pages From Family Papers." The wedding took place in Lincolnshire about the year 1750.

A Change of Tune.

"Mamma, I'm tired of going to school."

"What's the matter, Willie?"

"The teacher!"

"Now, don't you say a word against your teacher, Willie. I've no doubt you annoy her dreadfully, and she seems like a very nice sort of person."

"Well, she said this mornin' that she didn't think I had much of a bringin' up at home, an'—"

"Wait! Did she say that? Well, of all the coarse impudence! You shan't go back there another day!"

Exit Willie, grinning.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Do You Know the Answer?

A teacher was giving to her class an exercise in spelling and defining words. "Thomas," she said to a curly haired little boy, "spell 'ibex.'" "I-b-e-x."

Mean Thing!

A New England physician says that if every family would keep a box of mustard in the house one-half of the doctors would starve to death.

Interested the Felina.

"Soreheaded my girl last night."

"Any member of the family come out?"

"Only the cat."—Chicago Record-Herald.

QUEST OF EL DORADO.

That Elusive Land of Gold and Jewels In South America.

Guiana is bounded on the north by the great river Orinoco and on the south by the still greater river Amazon. These two grand rivers are connected with one another, the Cissiquire, a branch from the Orinoco, falling into the Rio Negro, a tributary of the Amazon.

The kingdom of El Dorado was reputed to exist somewhere between the Rio Branco and the Essequibo, called by the Indians the Brother of the Orinoco. Manoa, the capital, was said to be somewhere between the Rio Branco and the Rupununi, a tributary of the Essequibo.

From a state paper in the public record office, London, it appears that in 1580 persons who traveled in America had reported that there was a place where the women wore great plates of gold, covering their whole bodies like armor. In every cottage pearls were to be found: in some houses a peck. Banqueting houses were built of crystal, with pillars of massive silver, some of gold.

A LIGHT IN AN AUTOMOBILE.

Use One of the Spark Plugs When You Have No Matches.

Did you ever while making an automobile tour find yourself on a lonely country road, perhaps miles from the nearest house, and suddenly discover that you had no matches? If you were anxious to light the lamps or eager for a smoke such a discovery would not prove at all conducive to the smoothness of your temper.

There is a simple way in which any one may secure a light without the aid of matches. You may be anxious for a smoke or it may be getting dark and you want to light your lamp, but in any event you can secure the necessary light if you will follow these directions:

Unscrew one of the spark plugs and let it lie on the cylinder head. Wrap a small wisp of waste around the end of any small stick of wood or if there is none handy wrap it around the end of a screwdriver or any other tool.

Dip the waste in the gasoline until it is thoroughly soaked. Of course you should have only a very small piece of waste; otherwise the blaze will be too big for you to handle.

After dipping this in the gasoline lay it close to the spark plug and turn the engine over until this plug sparks. This will ignite the waste and you will have a little torch sufficient for lighting your lamp.

Even if there is a heavy rain or snow, you can secure a light in this manner sufficient for your needs.—Detroit Free Press.

Fear of Old Military Service.

A prisoner's appeal to the court of criminal appeal for a longer sentence, although the first on record before that tribunal, is not altogether unparalleled at the assize, for offenders who have had the advantage of inside knowledge of the working of the prisons acts have been known to ask the Judge to give them penal servitude instead of a short period of hard labor.

They shrink from the more Spartan diet and severer restrictions that attach to the nominally lighter sentence. A century ago, when capital punishment was inflicted for many trivial crimes, a prisoner was sometimes given a choice—death or service in the army or navy. And the services in those days had such a terror for some criminals that many elected to be hanged instead of serving their country.—London Spectator.

Government of Japan.

The government of Japan is not an absolute monarchy, the mikado being largely responsible to the parliament and, to a degree, to the people back of the parliament. Under the mikado is the house of peers, composed of the princes of the blood and the nobility and the representatives of the vested interests, and the house of representatives, which is made up of some 390 members, representing the masses of the people.—New York Journal.

An Exception.

Little Mary was coloring pictures with her set of paints. She used a tint that failed to please and exclaimed: "Oh, I didn't mean to do that! However, what's done is done and can't be undone—except shoe laces."—Chicago News.

Poor Dora.

"Dora must have suffered some terrible disappointment. One never sees her smile now. What is the matter?"

"She's had two front teeth pulled out."—London Telegraph.

Up in a Balloon.

To remain motionless and watch the earth fall away from you as rapidly as a baseball falls from you when dropped from a window is the sensation of going up in a balloon.

There is only one cure for public distress, and that is public education, directed to make men thoughtful, merciful and just.—Ruskin.

VENUS AND MARS.

The Theory That Life Exists Upon Both of Those Planets.

We are bound to hold life to be a general phenomenon in nature, developing wherever the stars are shining on their attendant planets, and thus wherever a star twinkles in the depths of the firmament.

Now as for Mars and Venus, in our own system, it need hardly be said that they are surely inhabited by living beings of some kind. Observations show that Mars has a rare atmosphere, a day thirty-seven minutes longer than our own, seasons of the same type, but longer duration; and snow caps at the poles, and thus water vapor, though the amount is small. Mars is a desert planet, with a very rare air, about like that in the higher regions of the Himalaya mountains. But as life on the earth extends to the highest plateaus and mountains, except when perpetually frozen, it may also exist on the planet Mars, which has a moderate temperature, as shown by the formation of clouds in the twilight belt, after the sun has set for the Martians.

The probability of Venus being inhabited is much greater than that of Mars, for Venus rotates in 23 hours 21 minutes and in all respects so closely resembles the earth as to be called her twin sister. Venus has an abundance of air, clouds, water and also mountains and therefore seas, lakes and rivers. The seasons are like ours except they are shorter, the year being 225 days in length. Why should not such a planet be inhabited? If a man were transported to Venus and landed there without injury it seems certain that he could live and flourish physically under the air and temperature of this beautiful planet.—T. J. J. See in Leslie's.

GLOOMY CARLYLE.

His Pessimism and His Wonder at the Optimism of Emerson.

Thomas Carlyle's friendship with Ralph Waldo Emerson is a matter of history, but Charles Eliot Norton tells in his published letters that Carlyle marveled at the optimism of the American philosopher. Writing in 1873, Norton says: "As we were sitting together just after my coming in this afternoon, Carlyle spoke of Emerson. 'There's a great contrast between Emerson and myself. He seems verra content with life and takes much satisfaction in the world, especially in your country. One would suppose to hear him that ye had no troubles there and no share in the darkness that hangs over these old lands. It's a verra strikin' and curious spectacle to behold a man so confidently cheerful as Emerson in these days.'

"I agree with ye in thinkin' that the times that are comin' will be worse than ours, and that by and by men may through long pain and distress learn to obey the law eternal of order, without which there can be neither justice nor real happiness in this world or in any other. The last man in England who had real faith in it was Oliver Cromwell."

"Well, it may be as you say, I'm not such a verra bloody minded old villain after all (there a cordial laugh), not quite so horrid an ogre as some good people imagine. But the world is verra black to me, and I see nothin' to be content with in this brand new, patent society of ours. There's nothin' to hope for from it but confusion."

A Scoop.

John L. Toole, the famous English comedian and practical joker, and Mr. Justice Hawkins, who was afterward Lord Brampton, were great friends. They were at supper together one evening discussing the events of the day. The judge incidentally mentioned that he intended on the morrow giving the man he had been trying fifteen years because he deserved it.

As Toole was leaving he blandly inquired:

"Oh, would you mind calling at the newspaper offices and telling them about that fifteen years? It will be a tip for them—exclusive information, you know—and will do me no end of good with the press."

"Good gracious! No, sir!" exclaimed the judge, who took the precaution of accompanying Toole to his hotel and seeing him safely to bed.

Mohammedan Serenity.

A Mohammedan people enjoy one great advantage over all others—they never suffer from the anticipation of that which is to come, and, as a natural result, they can always enjoy the present, although only a few hours may separate them from disaster or even from death. Their implicit belief in an ordained future imparts a dignified repose and outward calm to all their actions.—Blackwood's Magazine.

The Feminine Paradox.

The uneducated woman has often the quickest perception, the finest tact, the most vivid sensibility. She will feel without speaking; she understands your inmost thoughts; she knows without being told.—London Black and White.

The First Skyscraper.

The first skyscraper was planned (but not built) by a Parisian architect in the year 1601. It was to be more than 300 feet high and provide rooms for 500 persons.

A Good Example.

Father—Why did you run away, Frans? Frans—Because mamma was so unkind. Father—That is no reason. Do I run away?

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