

DEALERS IN MILLIONS.

MOST FAMOUS FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE WORLD.

England and France's Two Great Banks—Treasures in Their Vaults That Might Purchase a Kingdom—History of Each.

On the first day of January, 1835, the Bank of England will celebrate the second centennial anniversary of its establishment. Of the many great banking institutions in the world none is more widely or better known than this bank. This famous institution was founded in 1694 by William Patterson, a Scotchman, and the origin of banking in England, in anything like the modern sense of the term, may be said to date from that time. On January 1, 1695, the doors of the bank were opened for business. Its capital was then £1,300,000. Two years later it was increased to £2,201,000. A dozen years later (1710) it was again increased to £5,500,000. In 1816 the capital was raised to its present amount, £14,553,000, upon which dividends are paid at the rate of £10 per share. There is besides a reserve fund of £3,200,000. The price of the stock is quoted at about £338 per share.

The charter given (July 27, 1694) to the Bank of England was a very liberal one. It included the exclusive privilege of issuing notes payable on demand and also, in consideration of advances made to the government, was to be the sole keeper of the government balances. The disastrous panic of 1825 enabled the Ministry to compel the Bank of England to relinquish some of the privileges of its charter. Up to the year 1826 it was the only joint-stock bank in England, and until 1834 it remained the only joint-stock bank in London.

The first offices occupied by the bank were at the Grocers' Hall in the Poultry. In 1734 the bank moved to Threadneedle street. The present building occupies the unique position of being situated in four parishes. It is reached on the site of John Houlton's house and many other buildings, including the Church of St. Christopher-le-Stocks, the burial ground of which is now the "garden" of the bank. In this place was buried in the last century a clerk of the bank named Jenkins, who was six feet six inches in length and was interred there to save the corpse from the resurrectionists.

The interior of the bank has little of special interest. The various halls are spacious and modern in appearance, and transactions during business hours seldom involve any crowding. The basement is entered through a carefully guarded iron door. In it are the vaults where the bullion, specie and other valuables and curiosities are to be found. There are also the barracks where thirty-six soldiers are quartered from 7 o'clock every evening until 7 o'clock the next morning for the protection of the bank. This custom of quartering soldiers in the bank originated at the time of the Lord George Gordon riots, when an attempt was made to sack the bank.

The Bank of England first issued notes in 1695, which were of the denomination of £20. The £10 notes were issued in 1759 and the £5 notes in 1793. Three or four years later notes for £1 and £2 were issued. These latter were withdrawn from circulation in 1844, and no notes are now issued for less than £5, and notes of a higher denomination than £1,000.

"As good as gold" faithfully represents the character of a Bank of England note. They are a legal tender everywhere in Great Britain except at the bank itself, where they are required to be paid in gold, and every note issued by the bank could so be paid without one pound of the capital of the institution being touched. Notes issued by and on account of the Bank of England are never again circulated (even though they may not have been taken five feet from the teller's window), but are destroyed after going through a most minute process of cancellation. Of course, under such circumstances, every note paid out by the bank is "brand-new." The present note circulation of the bank is somewhat over £25,000,000. For the management of the public debt the bank receives £247,000 per year. The remaining profits of the bank are derived from its use of its deposits, on which it allows no interest, and of its own capital.

The management of this bank is under the care of twenty-four directors, each of whom receives the sum of £500 per year for his services. William Liddardale, the governor, receives £1,000 a year, and the deputy-governor, David Powell, a like amount. The honor attached to the holding of these offices is far beyond any pecuniary compensation. Many of London's ablest financiers would gladly accept the governorship of the Bank of England solely for the honor that attaches to it. The Bank of England is the great depository of the bullion of that country and in ordinary times holds in its vaults about £25,000,000. This is a much smaller amount than is held by the Bank of France. That is accounted for by the fact that the smallest notes issued are for £5, thus necessitating an enormous quantity of gold being kept by the people. Then, too, the lending powers and the commerce of Great Britain are so enormous that there is almost a perpetual drain of gold such as is not found in other European countries or in the United States. The total amount of bullion in the Bank of England November 12, 1891, was £22,946,692.

In London the Bank of England is known as the "Old Lady of Threadneedle street." In Paris the Bank of France is known as the "Old Lady of the Rue de la Valliere." The Bank of France was instituted in 1803 by laws which were approved in 1808, and, as Napoleon said, was established with the object of providing money at all times at 4 per cent interest. Since its opening it has had the exclusive privilege in Paris, and since 1867 in France of issuing notes payable on demand. Its charter extends only to the year 1897. The capital of the bank is 182,500,000 francs. This bank is not the fiscal agent of the Government as is that of England. It does not collect or disburse the revenues of the exchequer, but it lends to it largely in its exigencies, and has borne the Government safely through extraordinary needs, a most notable case being the advance of funds

during the time of the Franco-Prussian war. When the war began the circulation of the bank was \$251,000,000 and its specie \$29,000,000, or 90 per cent of its circulation. In June, 1871, when the war was closed, the circulation was \$442,000,000 and its specie \$110,000,000, or about 25 per cent of its circulation.

The Bank of France is situated close to the Place des Victoires. The building which it occupies was originally constructed in 1260 as a residence of the Duc de la Valliere. It covers all the space between the Rue de la Valliere, the Rue Radziwille, the Rue Bailiff and the Rue Croix des Petits-Champs. In 1810 the building was restored and somewhat remodelled, but many of the rooms still retain their original ornamentation. The size of the banking room proper is about the only striking thing in connection with the general public have access. The golden gallery (restored in 1875) is one of the interesting sights, as is also the room where by a chemical process all the old bills are reduced to pulp. A large number of employees are found in the printing office; cutters, engravers, printers, chemists—each has a place, for the bank makes its own paper and ink and does all the work in connection with the production of the bills.

The governor of the Bank of France is M. Joseph Magnin, one of the ablest financiers in Paris, and under whose direction and influence the bank has enjoyed a high degree of prosperity. There are two deputy governors, who, with fifteen regents and three examiners, constitute the board of management. This board meets once a week, when all the interesting questions relative to the bank's interest are passed upon. Some of the rules and methods of conducting the business of this bank date back to a time when banking was in its infancy, and an effort is now being made to have certain of these rules laid aside. (New York Recorder.)

DRAWN DOWN BY ALLIGATORS.

Awful Fate of a Mexican While Crossing a River.

"Yes, I've shot any number of alligators. The swamp immediately in the rear of my quarters at Belize abounded with them, and I often popped off one in the early morning from my veranda. They proved uninteresting prey, however, always giving up the ghost at the first discharge; but still I can tell you quite a tragic incident connected with the brutish which occurred under my very eyes. You know that I was stationed at Orange Walk, British Honduras, for several months. The name of the place sounds pretty enough, but that's all there is pretty about it. It is, in fact, nothing but a wretched Spanish Indian village, so that we had no outside associates and no diversion except hunting and riding.

"In connection with the latter pursuit, we were in the habit of riding occasionally to a village called San Estevan, situated some twenty miles distant on the New River, but on the far side from Orange Walk, so that we had to cross the river in order to get there. This we did sometimes at Orange Walk, sometimes at San Estevan, just as the whim seized us. There was no bridge or regular ferry at either place, so that our way of crossing was by means of a canoe, while our horses swam behind. As the canoe would not hold more than two at a time, the ferryman and passenger, this crossing was a work of time, more especially when any of the horses elected to be fractious.

"On the occasion of which I speak we had decided to ride down on our own side of the river and cross over at San Estevan, as the rainy season was not long over and the track in question was decidedly the better of the two. After a few hours enjoyable riding through the forest's pleasant shade we arrived at the crossing and shouted for the negro to take us over. He soon put in an appearance, and we were all soon safely seated on the opposite shore, the horses seemingly enjoying the cool swim after the journey. We were saddling our horses, preparatory to remounting, when we saw a native sugar planter, or ranchoero, come trotting down to the opposite shore. He presented quite a contrast to us in his picturesque and splendid costume. It is needless to describe it. Every one knows the velvet garments trimmed with gold lace and buttons, the beautiful embroidered linen, huge silver spurs, and broad sombrero of the typical Mexican. He was mounted on a spirited little white horse, which contrasted favorably with his black costume. The ferryman was about to put off to bring him over, when with a careless wave of the hand, he put his horse to the water, and the gallant little beast started on his journey bravely and resolutely.

"We all stood mechanically watching him, none of us, I believe, apprehending any mishap, when the horse uttered a shrill scream of pain and terror, while he was perceptibly sinking lower and lower in the water. His rider, with blanched face and staring eyeballs, seemed to be struggling to disengage himself from his sinking steed, but he, too, suddenly gave a fearful scream and slowly sank from view. For a moment no one moved or spoke, but all stood gazing spellbound at the spot where so lately had been a human being full of life and gaiety, while his sombrero floated slowly down the sultry stream. A moment later Coleman and I had sprung into the canoe, I peering anxiously over the prow while he wielded the paddle in frantic haste, neither of us, however, entertaining any hopes of doing any good. For a few moments we paused in midstream, intently watching the water's surface, till a succession of dark crimson rings rising to the surface confirmed our worst fears and left no doubt as to the terrible fate of the Mexican.

"Whether the survivors were attracted by our crossing over, and arrived in time to make a meal of the unfortunate ranchoero, I don't know, but we decided to recross at Orange Walk, and I swore that if my horse Jack got over safely he should never enter that accursed stream again. He never did." (Globe-Democrat.)

"What's in a Name?"

"What's in a name?" is frequently asked in the courts, with varying answers. Among the cases recently reported is a

landgrant suit in which the certificate was issued to John Gibney in 1836 by the Republic of Texas. Fifty-two years later the widow of John Gibney claimed the land, saying that the original grantee had been her husband. She succeeded in establishing her claim in spite of the lapse of years, and one of the points decided was that Gibney and Gibney sounded near enough alike to overcome any objection founded on the difference of spelling. When, however, a deed was signed "F. W. Chandler" and the actual certificate was that "T. W. Chandler" acknowledged the document the variance was considered important and the deed set aside. A man accused of murder was indicted in Louisiana for the murder of Edmund Kembell. The copy of the indictment served upon him charged him with killing Edmund Kembell. He was tried, convicted and sentenced, but the Louisiana Supreme Court has recently granted him a new trial on the ground that an incorrect copy of the indictment was served. A new trial was also granted to Turner Clements, who was convicted of allowing his cattle to go on the inclosed land of some other owner. The indictment or information was against "Clements Turner," but when the witnesses began to testify the name was discovered to be "Turner Clements," and by that name the proceedings were carried on until the verdict was recorded. (New York Tribune.)

Executions in China.

"For the minor offences the punishment in China is beating on the mouth with a bamboo," says a traveler who has just returned from the Flowery Kingdom. "It is terrible to see the mouths of women as well as the cane is laid on, and of men too. When sent to jail they must supply their own food and that of the jailer, or they are allowed to starve. If they have not sufficient blankets they are allowed to freeze to death. There are different methods of execution. One is what would correspond with our hanging, but it is different. The victim is put against a post and a rope is thrown around his neck. Then it is pulled till the breath of life departs. Another form of execution is that of cutting to pieces by inches, which is done when the sentence of death is for the murder of a father or mother or some other near relative. First one ear is taken off, then the other, and the tongue is taken out, and so on. A third is death by starvation. I have seen a man caged in the public streets and allowed to end his life by this method, not being permitted to touch either water or food. Sometimes a small boy will bring him a little opium, which helps to lessen the suffering and brings about a more speedy death.

"The most common form is taking off the head by the sword, and the extraordinary nerve of these Chinese is shown in this more than any other. I have seen two beheaded, one placed before the other. It took three strokes of the sword to kill the first, and while the operation was going on the second knelt down with his neck outstretched waiting his turn. Thinking that the process was slow, he turned to the executioner and asked if he were going to be much longer with the first. Then, when the executioner came to him, he stretched his neck again and waited for the blow which completely severed his head from his body." (St. Louis Globe-Democrat.)

Women Make Poor Smugglers.

Mrs. Weltman, a Customs Inspectress, says women smugglers are less numerous now than they were a few years ago. It is rather more difficult for them to cheat the Government than most people think, and if any contraband are brought into this country without tolls being paid upon them they are of very little value. We can tell in a minute whether a woman passenger has any valuables concealed about her person, because women are nervous and give themselves away. I can easily pick out a woman who has some taxable property concealed about her. No matter how experienced she may be, she becomes flustered if a penetrating look is aimed at her dress. She colors up and acts as if she were ill at ease.

"It is a funny thing, but true, that a female smuggler can be detected by glancing at her feet and then looking suddenly up into her face. If she has diamonds, laces or any smuggled articles concealed about her she will turn all the colors of the rainbow. If not she simply looks at you inquiringly and then at her feet. The story printed the other day about a woman smuggling \$30,000 worth of diamonds in the back of a pelican is all rot. The very fact that a woman had such a pet and cared for it, as she naturally would in view of its value, would excite suspicion, and then a thorough investigation would follow." (St. Louis Globe-Democrat.)

The Sandwich Islands Tipple.

G. F. Burrell, of California, says that while the Sandwich Islanders know nothing of what we call whiskey, they have a fluid which can discount any corn juice in existence. It is called kava or yaquona. The method of production is so simple and the ingredients so cheap and plentiful that the stimulant is within the reach of all. A man with a shovel, a little water and a plantain leaf can secure a drink and be drunk within a quarter of an hour. The principal thing used in the manufacture of kava is a pepper-producing root, which is plentiful. He who aspires to intoxication has only to dig up a root and masticate it until it is soft enough to allow its juices to exude. Then he places it upon a plantain leaf and pours a little water over it, and his toddy is ready for business. Milk used in place of water makes a more palatable but no less effective drink. There is no fermentation and the liquor is as good immediately after its production as it would be if kept 100 years. Its effects are almost immediate and last for ten or twelve hours, and even longer in persons who are not accustomed to the use of kava.

Striped winter fabrics are made up quite on the bias, and, as a rule, there is nothing but three "baby" frills or a tiny puff of silk or roll of fur at the hem. There are also seen three spaced bands of fur on cloth skirts.

Different Kinds of Buffalo.

The buffalo is evidently a whole-souled creature, for many hunters have seen the common domesticated calves of the frontier farms standing patiently waiting for a lion he had accomplished his task the calves would eat the grass fearlessly, sharing, as by right, the fruits of their huge companion's toil. Hunters from a terrible death from thirst, says the Illustrated American. The buffalo, like the camel and the elephant, has the power of taking a large amount of water into his body, and depositing it in the reticulum, or cells of the honeycombed department of the stomach, until needed. The hunters, therefore, when their vessels are empty, and they see no sign of a stream within a day's travel, promptly slay the first buffalo that comes in view, for the sake of the water which they know will be found in the usual situation. The bonassu, or zubr buffalo, found in the Russian forest of Bialowizka, has a very peculiar trait. It gives forth a powerful and very pleasant odor, which partakes equally of musk and violet. This really delicious perfume is found to penetrate the whole of the body, to a certain extent, but it is exhaled most powerfully from the skin and hair which cover the upper part of the forehead. The zubr in appearance is very much like our American buffalo, but the hair on the head and shoulders is more tightly curled and not so rough or long. To preserve this really magnificent animal in perfection it is protected by the most rigid forest laws.

The yak, a curious species of buffalo, which is found in western Tibet, has not only the long mane reaching to the ground, but the flanks are covered with hair which reaches the ground in long, thick, silky masses. The hair of the tail is white, and the Chinese take these tails to dye red and blue, and then make tassels of them. When domesticated it needs very little care, foraging for itself and coming to be milked when called by the milk-maids, as a pet cow might do.

Ethiopian King of Kings.

King Menelik, of Abyssinia, has astonished the rulers of Europe by serving on them a general notice of "Keep Off This Plate." He did not do so in many words, "Beware of the dog," or "The bull is dangerous," but that is the purport of his circular, and his self-confidence is simply sublime. He signs his circular thus: "Lion Conqueror of the Tribe of Judah, Menelik, Chosen by God, King of Kings of Ethiopia." He announced that the time has come for him to re-establish the ancient limits from the sea to Nyanza and Khartoum, including all the Galla country. "I do not," he adds, "propose to be an indifferent spectator while foreign powers are dividing Africa among themselves," and concludes with a hope that Jesus Christ will dispose of the hearts of the Europeans so that they will be reasonable and stay away.

Menelik II. is a son of King Haeloo, who reigned in the south of the country, so by the union of the two powers and conquest of much other territory he is the most powerful ruler the nation ever had. His army consists of about 100,000 men, of whom 40,000 are armed in the best European fashion, with repeating rifles, a mitrailleuse and rifled cannon. Abyssinia also manufactures its own powder, so the agreement of European powers to keep warlike materials out of interior Africa has no effect there. Menelik is the son of a beggar woman whom his father took a fancy for, and she still lives in great honor, and the mother of the most powerful monarch in Africa. The King is an ardent advocate of introducing European civilization, and to encourage his people mastered the trade of clockmaking and also learned enough about gunnery to put together his mitrailleuse. His country is among the most interesting in the world. For ages it was a sort of Christian island in an ocean of paganism, and the claims of its Kings to direct descent from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba have often been matters of inquiry, song and romance. (Brooklyn Citizen.)

The Wonderful Paradise Fish.

The oddest of all piscatorial rarities is the German canary and one or two other species of bird and fish, this little finny beauty is the product of cultivation only, there being no place in the world where it is found in a wild state. In the land of the dragon they are kept and cultivated in ornamental aquariums, each succeeding generation of the little oddities exhibiting more diversified colors. The male is the larger of the two sexes, measuring, when full grown, 3½ inches. The body is shaped very much like that of a common pumpkin-seed sun-fish, its color surpassing in brilliancy any fish heretofore cultivated for the aquarium. The head of Macropodus (that's his generic name) is ash gray, mottled with irregular dark spots. The gills are azure blue, bordered with brilliant crimson. The eyes are yellow and red, with a black pupil. The sides of the body and the crescent-shaped caudal fin are deep crimson, the former having from ten to twelve vertical blue stripes, while the latter is bordered with blue. The upper surface of the body is continually changing color—sometimes it is white, at others gray, black or blue. The dorsal and anal fins are remarkably large, hence its generic name; Macro, large, podus, fin or foot. Both fins are shaped alike, and are striped with brown and bordered with a bright blue. The dull-colored ventral fins are protected by a brilliant scarlet-colored spine, extending three-fourths of an inch behind the body of the fin. The pectoral fins are well-shaped, but transparent and colorless. (St. Louis Republic.)

Sun "Fast" and Sun "Slow."

The sun's time is too fast by clock time on November 2 by sixteen minutes and twenty seconds, and on February 12 it is slow by nearly 144 minutes. There are only four days during the year when sun time and clock time agree,

viz.: April 15, June 15, September 1 and December 24. There is also a slight difference between the rising, middle and setting, varying with the longitude, but this is so small as to be hardly perceptible. Most almanacs give the approximate time of the sun's rising and setting, making the proper allowances for atmospheric refraction. The difference between the actual and apparent rising and setting of the sun also varies with the latitude where observations are being made. In this latitude this difference is set down at about the width of the sun's diameter, which is about thirty-two minutes of a degree. (St. Louis Republic.)

How Harry Found the Calf.

One evening little seven-year-old Harry started to hunt the cows in the wood pasture only a short distance from the house, and as he went past a clump of bushes he saw something that made his little heart jump for joy. "What do you suppose it was? A dear little Jersey calf almost hidden from sight under the green leaves. 'Oh, the dear little thing! I've found a little calf! I've found a little calf!'" he cried, and he sat down by the little soft-eyed beauty, and lovingly stroked its silky ears, and patted it on the head, saying to himself, "Oh, if sister Nellie were only here; but I am going to take it home; so get up little calf, you dear little thing." Just then something happened. Little mamma Jersey thought it was time to see if her baby was all safe, and when she found an owl boy sitting by it she just lowered her head and knocked poor little Harry around like a foot-ball for a moment, until he caught up a big stick, then he began to pay her back. He said afterwards he "would have brought that calf home or died." He drove the cow and one of the other cows were waiting, and one of them, little black Susie, was so taken with the pine-colored little stranger, that (to use Harry's words) she almost had a fit over it. As he went to open the gate the Jersey made another dash for him, knocking him down again, and rolling over him, stepped on his back; if some one in the house had not heard his screams and ran to his assistance, he would most likely have been badly hurt. She was a very little cow and had been disformed, and no one thought of her being cross or knew she had a little calf. Harry, telling his mamma about it after she had rubbed his bruises with arnica and pitied him to heart's content, said, between sobs: "The mean old thing! It was no more her calf than it was mine, for I found it first, and she just took it away from me, and even poor Blackey wanted it as bad as I did. The mean, hateful thing! Never mind, she shan't have the next calf I find." Poor Harry carried the print of Jersey's foot on his back for some time. And he still claims the pretty fat little "Bossie." (Farm, Field and Stockman.)

Two Kinds of Horse Treatment.

Looking from my window upon West Chester (Penn.) Park where a new building is being erected, I saw a large heavy wagon loaded with brick, which the driver was vainly trying to back up where the horses struggled, the driver lashed them, and the other men helped push the wheels. The driver became very violent, swore at the horses, one of which seemed balky, and both exhausted. Faster fell the blows, but still they reared and plunged to no purpose. Finally a happy thought seemed to occur to the driver. He threw down the reins, descended from his seat, went up to one horse and then to the other, patted their heads, stroked their necks, and finally went to his dinner-pail in the box of the wagon, got out a big red apple, cut it in two with his knife, gave half to each horse, waited patiently until they had eaten it, and then mounted the box again and picked up the reins. One horse put his head over the other's neck, as much as to say, "Let's see if we can do it," and when the driver tightened up the reins and spoke to them, with one tremendous push the horses sent the wagon back to the desired spot. If the teamsters in our city could have seen these horses, no one would ever think of lifting his whip to his team again. It was a lesson to us all. (Our Dumb Animals.)

Wrecked by a Mirage.

A mirage in the Caribbean Sea was the cause of the total loss of the American barkentine Steadfast, while bound from Port of Spain to Philadelphia with a cargo of street paving asphalt. When the Steadfast sighted the lofty peaks of St. Croix the atmosphere assumed a peculiar light color, and it became impossible to detect the sky from the island, everything assuming a similar shade and color, resembling the cirro-stratus clouds, hiding the entire lower portion of the island. The peaks and mountain tops appeared to be twenty miles away. The tops of the mountains seemed to grow from tall cocoanuts appearing to grow from sky to earth. The sugar grinding mills were pouring their smoke downward, and the workmen working upside down. The Steadfast was kept under easy sail and perfect control. Everything went well until a grinding sound was heard and a sudden tremor went through the ship. The vessel crashed over the reefs and was soon fast on the rocks of the shore where the wreck still remains. The mirage made the island appear twenty miles away. (Chicago Post.)

In the Grand Canal, Venice.

Nowhere else in the wide world is there such a sight. A double row of creamy white palaces tiled in red and topped with quaint chimneys. Overhanging balconies of marble bursting with flowers, with gay awnings above and streaming shadows below. Two lines of narrow quays crowded with people flashing bright bits of color in the blazing sun. Swarms of gondolas, barcos, and lesser water-spiders darting in and out. Lazy red-sailed luggers melon-loaded with crinkled green shadows crawling beneath their bows; while at the far end over the glistening highway, headed with people, curves the beautiful bridge—an ivory arch against a turquoise sky. (Scribner)

A Dog With a Memory.

A lively demonstration of canine reasoning occurred at Keeler last week. A small brown dog with a most intelligent head, familiarly known to the lower country residents as Barney, has been in the habit for a long time past of following the Darwin stage, never missing a trip. Changing the drivers makes no difference; he clings to the route and not the man. On off days he occasionally makes a visit to Cerro Gordo, and doing so recently was set upon and whipped by a dog there. Attached to Boland's store at Keeler is a big strong dog that has quite a reputation as a scraper. On the morning of the next Cerro Gordo trip Barney was noticed playing with the big dog. When the stage started Barney followed, and as his companion seemed averse to going he would run back and play, then forward, and finally persuaded the fighting dog into going too. Arriving in Cerro Gordo the little dog made a dash at his former vanquisher. John L. "stood in" and the bully was soundly "brushed." Barney wore a broad grin of satisfaction when he returned to Keeler, but he does not visit Cerro Gordo any more. (Inyo (Cal.) Independent.)

Breathe Pure Air.

With these statements in mind, I remembered some curious facts of my own experience in the army in 1862 and 1863. I was not strong, and indeed was hardly fit to be in the army at all. And when I found myself exposed all day long to a steady rain, and at night to the outdoor air, with no fire, no change of clothing, no shelter but a canvas covering at both ends, through which the rain dripped constantly, it seemed certain that the "death of cold" so often predicted must surely follow. Why it did not follow was more of a mystery then, however, than it is now. For I was in a place where the art of man no longer excluded one of the prime principles of health. I breathed pure air because I could not help it. During a service of fifteen months, with severe exposures, but fresh air constantly, the same immunity from colds prevailed. I remembered, too, that when I came home from the army the blessing and the curse—came back together. I had comfortable rooms to eat, breathe, and sleep in on the one hand, but very soon, colds, sore throats, and related troubles on the other. (Popular Science Monthly.)

A Sacred Vase.

For the last six hundred years there has been preserved in the Cathedral of Genoa an emerald vase of hexagonal shape. Its principal diameter measures 12½ inches and its height 5½ inches. This article is secured under several locks, the keys of which are in different hands. It is but rarely exhibited in public, and that only on a decree of the Senate. When brought out for exhibition the vessel is slung to the neck of the officiating priest by means of a cord fastened to both its handles, and he never allows it to pass out of his hands. By an ancient decree of the 24th May, 1476, it is forbidden to touch this vase or go too near it. During the siege of Genoa, in 1319, this vase was pledged to Cardinal Luc de Fresque for 1,300 gold marks, but it was subsequently redeemed. A citizen of Genoa has written a book in order to prove that this vessel was a gift presented to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba. (La Curiosita Universella.)

The Uses of Soapstone.

The mineral commonly known as soapstone, from its soapy or greasy feeling, or by the proper name of talc, is a silicate of magnesium, and a soft, white, or greenish mineral that has some valuable uses in the arts. The purest quality is the pure white, which is ground into the finest flour and used for adulterating candy, for mixing with fine paper pulp, and for the plastering of the inside walls of houses. The darker colored, impure stone is used for the lining of stoves and furnaces, griddles, and other domestic purposes for which an incombustible substance is required. The best quality is used by tailors for marking patterns on cloth, and is commonly known as French chalk. The mineral is abundant and is not of much value. The common price of it is \$10 per ton in the rough. (New York Times.)

Electrical Fire-Extinguishing.

In a new fire-extinguishing system, the building is provided with a chemical reservoir, from which pipes lead to a jar of acid near the ceiling of each room. The jar also contains a cartridge connected with an open circuit battery. The thermostat in each room is set at any desired point—say 80 degrees—and in case of fire the mercury rises to that point and closes the electric circuit. This explodes the cartridge, a valve drops, the chemicals are precipitated in the room, and the number of the room is signalled. This arrangement is supplemented by a series of dry pipes and, in case the chemicals fail to put out the fire, the room can be flooded with water by turning a cock on the outside of the building. (Trenton (N. J.) American.)

The Pretty Girls of 'Frisco.

Permit me to allude to the beautiful women of San Francisco. I have seen them as they moved along with the passing show arrayed in the height of fashion. One cannot help but notice their exceptionally graceful carriage. My, my! what style, what beauty, what splendor! Is it any wonder that man bows down before them and worships? It is a grand sight to pass down one of these 'Frisco streets on a pretty day and feast their eyes upon me lady and inhale the delicious breath of the lovely flowers she wears at her breast, for everybody here wears flowers—here in this sunny land of flowers the air is laden with their odor. (Chattanooga Times.)

Ex-Senator Edmunds is only sixty-two, but is a very old looking man.