

ROBBING THE MAILS.

THIEVES WHO PLUNDER UNCLE SAM'S POST.

Three West Virginia Mail Robbers—A Colorado Episode—The Last of Ed. Reeves—A Year's Record.

At least one picturesque episode marked the capture of three desperate mail robbers in Barbour county, West Virginia. There was in that part of the country, says the New York Sun, an organization known as the Red Men. At the beginning it was fairly respectable, being intended for the purpose of putting down traps, and included many good citizens. But bad characters got control of it, and it degenerated into a sort of White Caps Society, terrorizing that region, whipping prominent persons, and committing murders occasionally. Members of the association, while engaged in their nocturnal excursions, wore long robes of red stuff, red hats and red masks in the shape of hoods, so that their appearance was very awful indeed. Three desperadoes, named Price, Kittle and Hoffman, were the leaders, and they took to knocking down postal messengers and stealing letters and packages. They were hunted down in the mountains, and were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment. In court the most important witness was the secretary of the Red Men, named Brown, whose beard, measured by the official tape, was 5 feet 4 inches in length, his moustache 4 feet 2 inches.

In a remarkable robbery near Grand Junction, Colorado, in 1886, highwaymen held up a mail train, having piled ties on the track to stop it. They put the conductor and fireman out on a pile of rocks alongside the track and kept them covered with guns while they got the postal clerk and the express messenger and put them under guard likewise. Being content with pillaging the express and mail cars, they did not interfere with the passengers; but one Englishman on his travels insisted on leaving the car in order to see what was going on. When the porter tried to restrain him, saying that he would be killed if he went outside, he replied: "But I want to observe how the rob train in this blooming country, don't you know?" He went as far as the platform, but a bullet through his hat induced him to retreat precipitately. The four robbers were pursued by inspectors and marshals through Colorado and Utah and were caught.

A gang of highwaymen, led by the notorious Ed. Reeves, held up a train on the Panhandle road in Texas in 1887. They robbed the express car, knocking the messenger senseless with a six-shooter, but the postal clerk refused to open the mail car in response to their demand. They blew open the door with dynamite and cut open the pouches. Then they went through the sleeping cars and collected watches, rings, diamonds and other valuables from the passengers. Altogether it was very thoroughly done, and, besides jewelry, they secured \$7,000 in cash. Reeves was captured after a desperate fight, during which he was shot five times, and, preferring death to imprisonment, he offered the Sheriff \$50 to kill him. Five inspectors and deputy marshals lay in wait for Whitley, another desperate member of the band, at his house. When he entered they covered him with their guns, but he opened fire at once and fell, riddled with bullets.

One of the most remarkable Post Office robberies on record occurred at Minneapolis in July, 1888. The thieves entered through the stamp window at night, closing the shutter behind them. Then they broke into the safe in which the stamps were kept, using a diamond drill so quietly that men working close by in the building did not hear them. In front of the safe was a large plate-glass window, but the cold had covered it with frost, and no one could see through it. The burglars secured 600,000 two-cent stamps and 100,000 one-cent stamps, besides some money, the whole amounting to the value of over \$14,000. They tried to dispose of their booty through other persons and were caught in Chicago, \$4,078 worth of the stamps being recovered.

During the past year 58 Postmasters, 23 Assistant Postmasters, 45 clerks in Post Offices, and 66 mail carriers were arrested on charges of dishonesty. Postmasters are exposed to much temptation. Sometimes they are in tight places financially, and it seems to be a very simple thing to help themselves out temporarily by using some of the Government cash. Every dishonest Post Office employee imagines that his method of stealing is new; that he does it better than any one ever did it before, and that he can elude detection; but such offenders are caught invariably. They can never tell when they are being watched or how. All new Post Office buildings are constructed with peep-holes expressly for that purpose. The rifling of letters is the most common theft. A clerk was caught in the act recently at Wilmington, N. C. He was so expert in distinguishing paper money by smell that, after his capture, he selected, although blindfolded, seven letters containing bank notes out of 400 placed before him, in order to satisfy the curiosity of the inspectors. The method of detecting paper currency by feeling is familiar, as is also that of drawing a thread with a knot on the end of it through a letter, the knot fetching with it some of the fibre from the enclosed note.

In Charlotte, N. C., an inspector watched an employee who was stealing from registered letters. Over the post-office is an opera house, and the detective crawled beneath the stage so as to get his eye at a suitable crack. He saw the man open the letters by floating them on water, placing them afterward under a press for the purpose of sealing them with the old mullage. So engrossed was the man with his scheme that the inspector was able to walk in, peep over his shoulder, and say: "What have you got here, my boy?"

"Good Lord, you've got me," was his answer, as his knees gave way. A clerk in the post-office at Fargo, North Dakota, in October, 1889, asserted that he had been bound and gagged by two men who entered the building at night, half-smothered him with the bed clothes, burned his feet with a red hot

poker to compel him to give the combination of the safe, and shot him. The trifling nature of the wound and the fact that his foot was hardly blistered led to a suspicion that he had committed the robbery himself, which was proved by his subsequent confession.

What a Flat Wheel Is.

"There's a flat wheel on this truck under this end of the car," said an Erie official who sat in the back seat of the rear car of a passenger train to a Bradford (Penn.) Era man. "That must be taken out. It might wreck the train." "What's a flat wheel?" asked the scribe. "Listen," said the railroad man. "You hear that rapid pat-pat-pat of the wheel? That's caused by the flat wheel. On a spot on the surface of the wheel a flat place is worn. It may be done, and is generally, by setting up a brake so tight that the wheel slips on the rail. Let it slip but the least, yet a small place no larger than a silver dollar will be worn on the wheel. The next time the brake is set up hard the wheel stops with that same place on the rail, and it is worn larger. By the time it is a couple of inches in diameter it begins to pound every time the wheel turns. Instead of running a true circle as it revolves, the wheel strikes flat on the rail when the flat spot is reached. The consequence is that when the flat spot has grown to be three or four inches across it is a very dangerous thing. Every stroke against the rail by the flat side of the wheel is liable to break the wheel and ditch the train."

Around the shops and at nearly every creaky track in the railroad world these flat wheels may be seen. As soon as one is discovered the pair of wheels affected is taken out and sent to the junk track to be cast into new machinery. The flat spots are plainly perceptible, but they would hardly be judged by the uninitiated to be of sufficient importance to be one of the most dangerous elements of railroading, yet such is the case.

A Man Saved by a S. abird.

A vessel was plowing through the waters of the South Atlantic when a cry of "Man overboard!" was heard. The man at the wheel brought the ship up in the wind and boats were lowered, but by the time this was accomplished the sailor was a quarter of a mile astern.

He kept up, however, and as the boat approached a big albatross was seen to dart at him, and the next moment to struggle; then away went the bird, flapping violently, towing the sailor along the surface.

The men had to pull hard to gain upon it, and then it was found that the sailor was uninjured and perhaps had been saved by the bird.

He was almost exhausted when the albatross flew over him in evident curiosity; as it passed he seized its feet. The bird, in its fear and terror, was strong enough to tow him along the surface at a rapid rate. [Boston Globe.]

Their Ear Drums Burst.

The trial of the new heavy guns of the United States monitor Miantonomah at Gardiner's Bay, Long Island, was attended with a most peculiar accident to three of the officers of that vessel, all of whom had their ear drums burst by the concussion following a heavy discharge.

Surgeon Kand refused to discuss the subject beyond saying that had proper care been exercised the accident would not have happened.

As one of the first precautions taught in the navy is to stand on tiptoe with mouth open when heavy guns are being fired, there was considerable surprise at the navy yard upon learning of the accident. Unless the injured men had particularly sensitive ear drums the accident could not have happened without carelessness on their part. [New York Press.]

Does Tea Make Lunatics?

"I never knew of a case where a man or a woman's insanity could be traced directly to the drinking of tea," said Dr. Brower, of State street, to an Evening News reporter recently, when his attention was called to the paragraph in the London Lancet, wherein a woman who murdered her two children was supposed to be insane through drinking tea to excess.

"I have no doubt as to the injuriousness of excessive tea-drinking, and believe that with persons mentally wrong their case is much aggravated by its use. Still, take tea-tasters; I never heard of one in that business becoming insane, although I have known many who have wrecked their nervous systems in their calling."

Dr. Lyman, of No. 69 Randolph street, said: "Undoubtedly tea-drinking is the cause of many nervous troubles. It produces a chronic indigestion which is certainly apt to break down one's system. I believe a person with a tendency towards insanity would have his or her condition seriously aggravated by using tea in large quantities. A wit has made the remark that the pessimism of the Russians is largely due to their tea-drinking habits, and I quite believe it. Still I do not think insanity would arise from this habit alone. Combined with other abuses of the system it certainly would have a disastrous effect and might undoubtedly undermine the institution. I believe, as the Lancet says, that many of the ailments from which women suffer are at least aggravated by the excessive use of tea." [Chicago News.]

Buildings of Sawdust.

Extensive experiments have been made in Germany with sawdust that had been treated with acid. The action of the acid is to convert the fine particles of wood into a material that can be moulded into blocks or other form, having an extremely hard surface and being practically non-combustible. The material is said to be stronger than timber and much lighter than either iron or steel, while in point of cheapness it is superior to either wood or metals. Arrangements are being made to manufacture the material on an extensive scale. [Philadelphia Record.]

SOMETHING ABOUT CORDAGE.

Twine a Large Item of Expense in the Harvesting of the Wheat Crop.

Few people are aware of the magnitude of the business done yearly by the corporation known as the cordage trust, whose main offices are located in this city. The history of the trust has been that of the "survival of the fittest." They have from time to time bought up and otherwise absorbed more than four-fifths of all the cordage mills this side of the Rockies, until they have blossomed into what is practically a monopoly in their line of trade.

The National Cordage Company of the Atlantic slope does not, however, attempt to do business on the Pacific side of the Rockies. A cordage firm in San Francisco attends to all the "rope" business in that section. There is a sort of mutual agreement between the two concerns to keep off each other's territory. In this way there is, as it were, a double action monopoly, of which the National Cordage Company takes the largest share.

The business of this latter concern is to make rope from one-half inch to six inches in diameter and binder twine. What is known as mercantile twine—cord for tying up bundles, &c.—is not manufactured by the trust. They consider "that sort of stuff," as they express it, a tinkering item in the cordage business.

In rope alone the aggregate yearly sales of the trust amount to upward of \$10,000,000. Their main attention, however, is devoted to the manufacture of binder twine. This is a single strand of rope that is used by the farmers throughout the country for tying up their wheat stacks. The farmers use for this purpose about \$15,000,000 worth of twine yearly.

The mills of the cordage trust are scattered throughout the country from Maine to Texas.

They own several mills in Brooklyn, N. Y., and a dozen or more in Ohio, Indiana and Illinois. Their branch offices are to be found in almost every city of any size in the Union.

Most of the raw material used by the trust in the manufacture of binder twine comes from Yucatan. It is made from the fibre of a plant of the cactus species that grows here in great luxuriance. It is gathered and dried in Yucatan and shipped here in bales. It costs about four cents a pound. Manufactured into binder twine it is worth about eight cents. Most of the hemp used in the manufacture of rope comes from the Philippine Islands. The aggregate weight of the rope and "twine" used yearly in this country is something over one hundred thousand tons. [New York Herald.]

The Fox and the Hare.

One day the Fox saw the Hare enter her burrow, and knowing that he could not dig her out he approached with a grin upon his face and announced that he had been appointed a committee of one to go through the forest and report as to which animal was entitled to the prize for grace, beauty and fleetness of foot. There was no question, he said, that she could run three feet to his two, but simply as a formality she should come out and make a trial.

"Sir," replied the Hare from her safe retreat, "I am no Spring Chicken! Do we not all know that the Weasel is the fleetest animal in the forest?"

"Ah! yes," said the Fox, "but the Weasel has no grace. His body is altogether too long for his girth, and everybody has remarked on the size of his feet. Your form is pronounced faultless by all. I pray you come out that I may behold you."

"Sir," replied the Hare, "I may look green, but I am no hayseed. It was only yesterday that you chased me two miles and came near eating me. Not this eve, thank you!"

"But, my dear Hare," persisted the Fox, "it is well known that you are the loveliest eyes of any inhabitant of the forest."

"Do you really mean it?" queried the Hare.

"Of course I do! And such beautiful teeth!"

"Dear, dear me!" sighed the Hare. "And you have such a shy, cute way with you, and such a graceful walk. Really, I must insist on your coming out of that hole in the ground, which is no fitting domicile for such as you."

"Honestly, now, do you actually think?" began the Hare, as she popped her head above ground. But before she could finish the Fox had her. When she had been duly devoured he picked his teeth with a sassafras twig and observed to himself: "Flattery, if persisted in, is a weapon which never fails to bring down its game." [New York World.]

Do the Dying Fear Death?

A striking fact in connection with the phenomena of death is that dying persons as a rule have no fear, even though they fully comprehend that dissolution is fast taking place. This we notice even in executions, where the hanged are almost invariably reported as having "died game." Physicians and surgeons in general have decided that death following disease or injury is seldom accompanied with fear. Disease dulls the intelligence, so that the situation may not be fully comprehended in all cases, or, again, the patient may be suffering terrible pain and may look upon death as relief. It is generally believed now by psychologists, surgeons, physicians and others who have given the subject attention that nature, by a kind provision, has prepared the body and mind for the flight of the spirit. It is well known that as the hold upon life grows weaker that the desire to live grows gradually less, and that there is, comparatively speaking, scarcely a recorded instance where the dying person has not at last yielded up life without seeming reluctance or fear. Of course the various physical phenomena which usually accompany the act of dying vary considerably in the early stages with the causes which are producing death. To one schooled in death scenes, the physiognomy which the grim destroyer presents is one not easily mistaken. Among the many signs of death that are unmistakable are the falling pulse, the coldness of the ex-

tremities, the change in the countenance as the venous blood courses the arteries; the skin grows clammy as the various vessels refuse to longer perform their functions; the eyes glaze; the jaw drops; fluid accumulates in the wind-pipe, causing the "death rattle," and, finally, the breathing ceases altogether.

Many of the old-time hallucinations of the dying have lately been explained upon purely natural causes. [Times-Democrat.]

Living for Old Age.

The gradual lengthening of human life is among the achievements of modern civilization. It suggests that a vigorous old age may be in a considerable degree dependent upon personal conduct, and Dr. B. W. Richardson advises that parents give their children a start in the most favorable conditions and unnecessary griefs, and making their surroundings as happy as possible. The persons themselves, when older, should avoid grief, and eschew hate, jealousy, and intemperance, all of which hasten the coming of old age. When old age has really begun, its progress may be reduced to a minimum by securing the least friction and waste. Rules for this include subsistence on a moderate quantity of light but nutritious food, varying according to the season; dressing warmly, but lightly, to preserve an even temperature; keeping the body in fair exercise and the mind active and cheerful; maintaining an interest in the world's affairs, and taking a reasonable share in its labors and pleasures; securing plenty of sleep at proper hours in a comfortable room, and avoiding excitement and luxury. "Thoughtful living like this way may enable a weak man to out-live his robust but less wise neighbor." [Trenton (N. J.) American.]

Mexico's Miseries.

Mexico seems to be a pretty good place to keep away from just now. A correspondent writes to the New York Evening Post the yellow fever is sending dozens to their graves, and funeral processions are as common in Vera Cruz today as they were during the summer season. Cordoba, sixty miles from Vera Cruz, is also afflicted with yellow fever and smallpox. Campeche and Tuxpan are recording deaths from pestilence constantly, and from the failure of the authorities to subdue it before this, it seems evident that its reappearance will be most calamitous. The "grip" is making things uncomfortable for residents of the capital, and visitors spend as little time there as possible. At Daxaca it is prevalent to such an extent that not one family in the city has escaped it. In the State of Chilpancingo, the Governor is seriously ill with the malady, and his secretary is reported dying.

He Learned Better.

Senator Plumb died a millionaire, but he was once just as green as any other youth about business matters. If the story of an old friend in Kansas tells him is true. The future Senator had saved up \$100 and had it on deposit in a local bank. He wanted to use the money and one day asked the president of the bank for it. He told Plumb to sign a check. The young man looked up and said, "Eh?" "Make out a check for the amount and sign it," replied the banker. "No, sir-ee!" said the statesman in embryo; "no, sir-ee, I don't put my name on paper unless I keep the paper. I gave you my money without taking your receipt and I want it back on the same terms." And it took considerable arguing to persuade him that it was the customary thing to make checks for money. [New York World.]

A Mammoth Incubator.

An ingenious hop grower of Ukiah, Cal., put his kiln to a novel use the past summer, while waiting for the usual fall curing of his crop. After lighting the great furnace underneath the wire drying floor, he carefully gauged the temperature with a thermometer, and then spread freshly-laid eggs upon the screen, thus changing the building into a gigantic incubator. At the first trial, 6,500 eggs were tirelessly watched during the incubating period. There was much excitement evinced by the good townpeople when it came to the hatching out of the chicks. The capacious brick kiln was invaded by miscellaneous crowds of amused, curious visitors, and finally, at the solicitations of prominent inhabitants, a regular exhibition was made of the multiplied broods. On this occasion there were exposed at one time on the raised platform of the kiln, 2,500 downy, peeping mites of every conceivable shade possible in infantile chickens. Whether the experiment, successfully demonstrated in this instance, will be repeated by other hop growers, remains to be seen. [American Agriculturist.]

A GREAT big kick is being made by a Quaker City gas man because the World's Fair authorities have made no provision whatever, and refuse to make any provision, for the exhibition of gas utilization appliances. He says that there is over \$100,000,000 invested in the gas business in the United States, and thinks that such an industry should be recognized as well as the electrical industry, for which the fair managers have provided a special building, while they do not propose to have gas on the grounds for any purpose whatever. Dr. J. A. Hornsby, assistant chief of the directors of the fair, is quoted as saying that there are ten persons interested in electricity where one is interested in gas, and as gas is a back number there will be none of it at the exposition. He might as well say, comments the New York Press, that because coal for fuel is a back number as compared with steam there will be none on exhibition. The real fact is that 10,000 persons burn gas for light or fuel where ten persons use electric lights in his country, and that the whole populace in the large cities are deeply interested in any inventive appliances that will save the consumption of gas or give better light or heat from it. Electricity is more for the wealthy than the poor, and the fair should be for the millions, not for the millionaires. In the adjoining room various

LIVING CURIOSITIES.

WHERE SHOWMEN PROCURE THEIR WILD ANIMALS.

Visit to the Biggest Dealer in Animals and Birds in the World—How Captures are Made.

There are strange professions in this world, and but few could outrival that of the proprietor of the firm of Hagenbeck, Hamburg. They are most likely the foremost existing importers of animals, being in connection with all the leading museums, circuses, aquariums and zoological gardens on the continent, a large number of which depend entirely on Hagenbeck for their supply.

Ordinarily only purchasers known or introduced to the firm are allowed to visit the grounds, but a limited number of cards of admission are issued every month. On entering one passes the office room, where more than two dozen clerks are employed, of whom several are merely occupied in keeping account of the arrival and departure of animals, as these only stay there a few days before leaving for their final place of destination. Showing my card of admission I was introduced to one of the keepers. They seem to be a set of energetic men, who, armed with bowie knives and revolvers, are willing to dare any danger.

My conductor, says the New York Telegram, was a little muscular, clean shaven man who had already spent ten years in the service of the firm, and was therefore acquainted with all the peculiarities of his profession.

"The majority of the keepers are excellent marksmen," he related, "and acquainted with an explorer's life, being sent out as assistants in the expeditions. My last trip was to South America. We had a great time with the ostriches, which we chased on horseback, throwing the bola a ball attached to a string after them. But the heat was awful; I am sure the Llanos are the hottest place on earth."

"How often do they send out an expedition?"

"Oh, about five or six every year. There are three at work at present. One is expected home in a few days and another is going out in a month or so. A number of our best hunters are collecting several complete sets of furbearing animals in Canada. There is a great difference between simply shooting an animal and catching it alive, you know."

"Do the members of the expeditions consist of permanent employees of the firm?" I inquired.

"No; they generally send out but a few of our experienced men, a few apprentices and volunteers, mostly amateur sportsmen, under the supervision of the office staff. On arriving at their destination they hire as many natives as are deemed necessary."

"These expeditions must be an enormous expense," I remarked.

"Some of them cost up to \$75,000; they seldom go beyond that."

"Do many accidents happen?" I asked the little man.

"No, not many. Nevertheless the majority of us could show the marks of their paws and teeth," and, rolling up his shirt sleeves, he displayed a deep scar on his arm. A Tasmanian wolf did that, and look, here a jaguar got a firm clutch on me."

The tamer animals were merely fenced in. We passed a group of Japanese chamois which are very rare; Chilean alpacas, zebras, antelopes, &c. Then we came to the elephants, and my guide remarked:

"We are out of Asiatic elephants at present, as they are difficult to get since the government passed the bill for their protection. But here is a dozen of their African brothers with the schlapp ohren (long floppy ears)."

Near by were some crocodiles from the Upper Nile and the Amazon. One of them was a giant fellow over thirty feet long.

"Do you secure all your animals by the special expeditions you mentioned?"

"By no means. Many things are simply ordered. For instance, we get most of our dromedaries from the Crimea, while a large number of other animals fall into our hands by chance. We buy everything in the line of rare and outlandish animals, and people who trade in or keep animals for pleasure are aware of it. Hamburg is an excellent place for good bargains, as nearly every vessel brings us something rare and unlooked for. Every sailor comes armed with some specimen from the tropics."

"Parrots we only sell wholesale," he added, as their chatting fell on our ears.

"Take care of the kangaroo," my companion warned, "that beast could kill you with a single stroke of his foot."

When we came to the seals my talkative guide related laughingly how once two ice bears broke loose and, finding their way to the seals made short work of them.

"What are the most difficult animals to procure?"

"Undoubtedly the gorilla and the condor, which hardly pay the trouble. We only catch them to boast that we have everything on hand. But the greatest bother we had with a whale, having to build a special tank for him. Fish, anyhow, are not my taste," he continued, making a sour face, "if I were the proprietor, I would not bother with them," and pointing to some glass tanks, bound in iron he exclaimed: "Look, several of those tanks have to be filled with fresh sea water at regular intervals."

A graceful black swan was swimming solitarily in a small fenced-in tub, and a lyre bird near by was running against the wire railing. He is a native of the mountains of New South Wales.

"What is in those boxes?"

"Snakes," was the reply. "We can measure them by the yard. There are pythons, boa constrictors, adders; whatever you like. They are quite harmless creatures and quite easy to keep. They only require to be fed once in three months, and sleep away the rest of the time."

"You must need an enormous amount of meat to feed all these animals?"

"Well, yes, we have a special storehouse for it," and we entered an apartment that looked like a slaughter house. The largest portion of raw meat seemed to be furnished by horses killed by accident. In the adjoining room various

kinds of food was heaped up in pyramids or stowed away in bags and boxes.

"Coming to a courtyard my guide pointed out a number of wagons that looked like huge furniture vans. "We use those to transport our goods from the crassels and railway stations. Sometimes we run special trains."

"What do you do with the animals that die?" I inquired.

"We sell their skins and also their skeletons, though their carcasses first go to the dissecting rooms."

"The circuses are good customers of ours," resumed my guide. "We have traded with Salomonsky, Rentz, Carre, the Circus d'Hiver, Forepugh and Barnum. A tamer of wild animals is steadily engaged; he merely does the preparatory, but it seems to me the most dangerous work. I believe he is now at a lion who but a few weeks ago haunted the oases of the Sahara desert."

HEREDITY IN MONKEYS.

A Scheme for Improving the Intellectuals of Anthropoids.

A man of large means who resides in Washington has recently declared his intention, privately, to devote \$100,000 to a very original purpose.

The idea is that no satisfactory opportunity has ever been afforded for the development of the brute. Intelligence, like bodily qualities, is susceptible of improvement through breeding, as every one knows who has thought about the evolution of the dog from the wolf by artificial selection. This rich man proposes that monkeys or apes shall be taken as subjects for experiment, simply because man understands those animals better than he does others.

Lett fifty of them, half males and half females, be placed in a paddock, suitably provided with separate quarters for the sexes. Then have them mate, pair by pair, as shall be directed by those who superintend. Some of them will develop certain abilities more conspicuous than others. For example, certain individuals will exhibit superior understanding of the commands addressed to them or will show a greater dexterity in the handling of objects. Those which appear stupid are to be expelled from the colony, their places being filled by fresh recruits. When a male and a female are found who exhibit the same sort of aptitude in any direction they are to be mated. This process carried on for generations, would necessarily result in the development of superior characters until finally, after the lapse of twenty-five years perhaps, there would almost certainly be had apes or monkeys far higher in the scale of reason than any known up to the present time.

These putative cousins of the human race have already exhibited a mental and even mechanical capacity sufficient to give ground for great hopes of possible development in point of intellect. Chimpanzees have been taught to bring to the table, and the big Langur baboon of India is commonly used in that country to-day as a servant for working the punkah fans, with which flies are kept away from dinner tables. Explorer Stanley has given an account of apes who carry torches at night.

This is believed by scientists to be an absurdity, because all the anthropoid and simian tribes are too afraid of fire to render such a thing possible. It is a fact well known that gorillas, while they will gather about a deserted camp fire for the sake of a warmth, will never think of keeping the embers alight by adding fuel. Nevertheless, every book on natural history relates many an instance illustrative of these creatures' thinking powers, and there is no question that it could be greatly improved by the process of judicious breeding. Even a pig can be taught to count up to ten. [Washington Star.]

Metals Get Tired.

The question as to the fatigue of metals under long-continued stress has recently been tested, and, it is believed, satisfactorily settled, in the treatment of two similar suspension bridge links, and the results obtained. A square iron link, twelve inches wide, one inch thick and about twelve feet long, was taken from a bridge at Kieff, Russia, then about forty years old, and tested against a similar link which had lain unused in store ever since the building of the bridge. Under these circumstances, the means of comparison were considered in the highest degree favorable, and the result necessarily of a reliable character in determining whether or not iron actually loses, and to what extent, any of its strength in prolonged service. The effect of the test showed for the old used link an ultimate tensile strength of 21.8 tons per square inch, an elastic limit of 11.1 tons per square inch, an elongation of 14.5 per cent, and a contraction of 17.35 per cent, at the point of fracture. In the case of the unused link, the tensile strength was found to be 22.2 tons per square inch, with an elastic limit of 11.9 tons, and an elongation and contraction at fracture of 18.42 per cent, and 18.75 per cent, respectively. From this it appears, therefore, that the pieces of iron were of practically identical strength—the small difference actually observed being well within the ordinary range of variability of similar pieces of such metal. [New Orleans Picayune.]

Traps for Monkey Talk.

It seems odd to think of phonographs and electric batteries set up in the midst of wild forests of Africa. But these will be among the appurtenances that Professor Garner's expedition will carry with it. The object of this expedition is to make a study of the gorilla language.

The results of this unique tour of investigation will be awaited with keen interest. Never before have so many of the appliances of civilization been transported to the regions of barbarism. If Professor Garner succeeds in obtaining a record of gorilla talk on his phonograph cylinder, those who have the privilege of hearing it ground out will surely experience strange sensations as they reflect that they actually listened to the roarings of a wild beast uttering in his native lair, while they themselves are seated amid the comforts of their own homes. [Argosy.]