

SOMEWHAT STRANGE.

ACCIDENTS AND INCIDENTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE.

Queer Facts and Thrilling Adventures Which Show that Truth is Stranger than Fiction.

"WHILE traveling from house to house in Charlton county last January," said a well-known canvasser at Waycross, Ga., "I heard a strange story about an alligator. A farmer who lives in close proximity to an alligator pond was at work on the plantation and his family was at a neighbor's house. Returning home about sundown, they heard a strange noise in one of the living rooms. The farmer supposed that a burglar was in the house and quickly opened the front door and took down his shotgun. He went in the room where the noise was, and lying restlessly upon the bed with his head on the pillow, was a medium-sized alligator. The man was surprised and frightened. The alligator heard a noise, and looking around, saw the gun pointed toward him. The man banged away with his gun and a dozen buckshot entered the alligator's head. Another load of shot was sent whizzing at the reptile, causing death instantly. The dishes and tables in the dining room were broken and the pantry was robbed of its victuals. Having satisfied his appetite, the reptile crawled upon the bed and prepared to take a nap. The alligator was, with difficulty removed from the house."

A CURIOUS case of word blindness is reported in the *Occidental Medical Times* by Dr. A. W. Hoisholt. The patient was a musician, aged sixty-three, with confused memory but coherent in language and free from hallucination. Speech was normal, with no misapplication of words. He understood everything said to him and could spell correctly and write properly at dictation, but when asked to read what he had written could not do so, not even his own name. Single letters of the alphabet he generally read correctly, but he could not put even three letters together and pronounce them. This he attributed to poor sight, yet he recognized objects at a long distance. When furnished with a violin he could play most difficult passages of music without a fault, but when requested to play by note he hesitated and played something not on the paper. His vision could not be improved with glasses. At the autopsy the cortical surface around the posterior end of the first temporo-sphenoidal fissure was found somewhat depressed below the surrounding surface and presented several hemorrhagic spots about the size of a small pea.

THE Mayor and employees of the city hall of Versailles, France, were terribly frightened when a bold employe the other day suddenly discovered a bomb in the building, plunged it into a bucket of water to extinguish the fuse, and then showed it to them. There was loud talk of rewarding the brave man with a better position, until the police began to investigate the matter. They found that the bomb had been made in the city hall itself, as it was tied up with the peculiar tape used by the officials, and sealed with the sealing wax used exclusively for official purposes. They showed also that the bomb had not been on fire when it was picked up, but that the fuse had been partially burnt, and afterward extinguished and inserted into the bomb. A threatening letter, which accompanied the bomb, was found to be in the same employe's handwriting. They drove the man into so close a corner that he confessed making the bomb, that he might find it and get a raise in his place for his supposed bravery in extinguishing the dangerous thing.

THE following circumstance occurred at the Cape of Good Hope: In one of the violent storms that often occur there a vessel was forced on the rocks and beaten to pieces. The greater part of the crew perished miserably, as no boat could venture to their assistance. Meanwhile a planter came from his farm to see the wreck, and knowing the spirit of his horse and his excellence as a swimmer, he determined to make a desperate effort for their deliverance and pushed into the thundering breakers. At first both disappeared, but were soon seen on the surface. Nearing the wreck, he caused two of the poor seamen to cling to his boots, and so brought them safe to the shore. Seven times did he repeat this perilous feat and saved fourteen lives; but alas! the eighth time, the horse being much fatigued and meeting with a formidable wave, the gallant fellow lost his balance and was overwhelmed in a moment. He was seen no more, but the noble horse reached the land in safety.

At the aquarium in Berlin there is a big gorilla whose habits are a great deal more correct than those of most of his distant relatives. He gets up at 8 o'clock in the morning, takes a bath, and uses soap without hesitation. When his toilet is completed he takes a cup of milk, after which he eats two loaves of bread, with Frankfurt sausages and smoked Hamburg beef, all of which he moistens with a glass of lager beer. At 1 p. m. he takes a bowl of soup, with rice and potatoes, and a wing of a chicken. He uses his knife and fork and his napkin like a born aristocrat; but when he thinks that his keepers are not observing him he discards the implements of civilization and plunges his muzzle into the bowl, as if to give evidence of the melancholy fact that even a gorilla can be a hog.

A PROMINENT Portland (Me.) man tells of a queer experience he had

losing a ring. He first noticed that it was gone one morning when he was in church. He glanced down at his hand and the ring was not there. As it was a valuable one, he did considerable hunting when he got home, but without avail. He gave it up as gone. The next morning at his store he spied the ring on the self-same finger from which he had lost it. The explanation of this somewhat mysterious episode is easy. The ring fitted loosely upon the finger, and when the gentleman went home Saturday night he wore a pair of gloves, which he took off and did not put on again until Monday morning. The ring must have remained in the finger of the glove and have been restored when that article was next put on.

The house at Morristown, N. J., occupied by Frank Stockton (the story writer), once had the report of being haunted. The owner was about completing the sale of the house to a lawyer when a word was dropped as to the uncanny legend touching the place, and the would-be purchaser immediately declined to proceed further with the negotiations. Mr. Stockton, however, cheerfully took the house, ghost and all, and perhaps he was a little disappointed when the trimming of some trees about the eaves put to flight the legend of the place. It was discovered that the squirrels were accustomed to leap from the trees to the roof and use the water trough as a runway. The sound of their scampering had been mistaken for that of ghosts!

A REMARKABLE story of a ride upon an avalanche comes from Atlanta, in the Sawtooth mountains, Idaho. Generally when a man is caught in a snowslide he is buried and either crushed or smothered to death, but in this case the imperiled man actually rode the avalanche half a mile and came out alive. Charles Goetz was hunting in the mountains near Atlanta when the snow started under his feet. He was unable to extricate himself from the moving mass, and in a few moments he was being carried along upon the breast of a roaring avalanche. The slide rushed down into a rocky, precipitous canyon, but Goetz went through alive. He was found eleven hours afterward by a rescuing party, and though terribly bruised, he is in a fair way to recovery.

GEORGE DIEFFENBACK of Louisville, has a game hen from County Galway, Ireland, that is better than a rat terrier. The other morning a large rat tried to get at the hen's nest. Instantly the hen was all feathers. When the rat tried to run under her, she pecked at him viciously. The rat jumped at her and tried to catch her by the neck. Every time the rat came at the hen she dropped her wings and met him more than half way. Once the rat pulled out a little bunch of feathers, but his jump was short, and he failed to catch the hen's neck. This made the hen more angry. She went at the rat in earnest. The rat would snap its jaws and squeak in a great rage. The two fought for half an hour, and the hen killed the rat. The rat weighed three pounds.

A PORTLAND (OR.) paper says that Gus Carlson, who was accidentally thrown against a steam wood saw some four months ago and a gas cut across his breastbone and ribs, exposing his lungs and other internal mechanism, has nearly recovered and will soon be able to go out. The doctors were much interested in his case, or rather in viewing what was inside the case, as it is very seldom they get a chance to watch the expansion and contraction of a set of lungs. The most remarkable thing about it was to see how gradually the lungs were filled and how suddenly they collapsed when the breath expired. The doctors would have liked to leave a deep hole open in Carlson's thorax, but were afraid he might contract pneumonia through it.

A MILLIONAIRE who was noted for his eccentricity has died at Antwerp. M. van Goulaken was one of the celebrities of the City of Rubens; and his house one of the sights that was more amusing to the visitor than to the neighborhood. Van Goulaken had a special antipathy to tram lines, and when they were laid down in front of his house many years ago, he took an oath, and registered it in a letter to the authorities, that he would never have his house cleaned or painted again. The house was long a disgrace to the fashionable quarter in which he lived; but he regarded its dirtiness with grim satisfaction. In his will he has forbidden his heirs to use the word "regret" in any announcement of his death.

LIGHTNING struck a pine tree at Brookville, Fla., recently, tearing it to pieces and scattering it in every direction. One piece of timber about seven feet long, about the size of an ordinary rail, was thrown seventy feet and the end driven into the ground over a foot. Other and smaller pieces were thrown fifty to ninety feet away.

In the heart of London is a public newsroom without a librarian or anyone to look after the papers. They are chained and padlocked so they cannot be carried off. Little damage is done and the room is usually quiet and orderly.

NORTH GEORGIA has a young man only twenty-two years of age who has been married three times, and is now looking for a fourth wife.

A SUGGESTION.
Mamma—Remember, Frankie, what the dentist said about candy ruining your teeth.
Frankie—Yes; but why don't you let me prove it like we do in "rhythmics"?—[Chicago Inter Ocean.

THE CAR SEARCHER.

Borrowed Cars, Like Umbrellas, Often Go Astray.

If you want to get an idea of the immensity of American railroading, talk to a car searcher. The United States covers a pretty large area, as some one has observed, but the railroad men, and particularly the car searchers, know their way about it as a policeman knows his beat. A car searcher, he is said for the benefit of the uninformed, is an official sent out by one of the companies to look for cars which have been borrowed by other lines and treated like borrowed umbrellas. Of course these officials are experienced men, a great trust is reposed in them and they have a great weight of responsibility to carry on their shoulders.

One of these men whom I met a few evenings ago talked of one car "somewhere around by Eagle Pass," or a chance of finding another at Portland, Oregon, as if these places were only a few squares the other side of Broadway. He had been sent out by one of the big lines that cover the territory between New York and Seattle to find certain freight cars that had been running up long bills for "demurrage" against their borrowers. "Demurrage" is a charge made by the owners of a car at so much per day, for the time the car is kept away from its own line.

"They'll take a car," he said, "somewhere down South, and, instead of sending it back when they're done with it, will use it for some other work. That goes on and on until, first thing you know, the car gets in a smashup."

"Then you have no more chance of finding it," I interrupted. This was where I displayed my ignorance.

"Haven't I, though? I go to where the car was sent and make them show me the books. Let me tell you about one car belonging to our line that got away down South, and nobody could trace it. The agent at that depot was a little bit of a man, all beard. When I showed him the entry on his books and asked him where that car was he said he didn't know anything about it. "One night," he says, "I left it here on the siding, and when I came next morning it was gone. Some of those freight conductors must have come in here in the night, and looking around for a car, they just took that one." "You're a liar," I said. "I've been railroading all my life, and I know that conductors don't go rambling about a yard at night time looking to get cars. They ain't so anxious to find extra work as all that. Now," I said, "you just tell me where that car got to, or I will report that you lost it." Well, he commenced whimpering about his family, and how he'd lose his job if I got him into trouble about that car. At last he owned up that one day they were short of cars in the yard; they took and loaded our car with agricultural machinery for Atlanta, Ga.; the train was wrecked and the car was all burned up. "If you had told us that at the time," I said, "you would have had to pay \$300 or \$400. Now you'll have to pay about \$7,000 for demurrage, and serve you right. As for your family, I've got a family, too. If I go back and tell the company I can't find that car, what is my family to do? And I was right. They had to pay about \$7,000."—[Louisville Courier-Journal.

Table Oils.

While this country has turned to a considerable extent, either knowingly or by the prevalence of adulteration, to the use of cotton-seed oil for the purposes for which olive oil was formerly thought to be the only article suitable, in Germany they have been led to look to other sources to find a substitute for the olive, which they had difficulty in obtaining pure, and they think they have found it in an oil from the seeds of the linden tree, and at lower prices than the olive oil.

Dr. Muller reports to the German Botanical Society that these seeds have fifty-eight per cent. oil. The oil has the appearance of olive oil, and is said to have a very fine flavor, free from any bitter or aromatic taste. It does not evaporate, it never becomes rancid, and has no tendency to oxygenate. It has been exposed to a temperature three degrees below zero without showing any change in the way of hardening or chilling.

They have used the oil of the beechnut with good satisfaction for several years, and the nut has nearly twenty-three per cent. of oil which could be obtained without any expense, but a simple pressing process, but there is one drawback to its becoming in general use, which is the well-known uncertainty of the tree in bearing, often not yielding freely for years at a time. The linden, on the contrary, is a regular bearer, and a large amount of the seed can be gathered each fall.—[Boston Cultivator.

How "Sizes" Vary.

When you speak of a man's hat being "about two sizes too large for him" you do not mean that the proper fit would be a hat two inches smaller in either circumference or diameter; with his coat, however, when you say "size" you mean inch. The following may be of interest to those likely to get mixed on the question of "sizes" and inches.
A "size" in a coat is exactly an inch, in underwear it is two inches, in a sock an inch, in a collar one-half inch, a shirt the same, in shoes one-sixth of an inch, in pants one inch, in gloves one-fourth of an inch, and in hats one-eighth of an inch.—[St. Louis Republic.

England spends \$90,000,000 a year on her navy.

SEA FOOD SUPPLY.

HOW NEW YORK'S FISH MARKET IS STOCKED.

Voyages of the Fishing Smacks—Methods of Catching Various Kinds of Fish—Bait Used.

Every year, following each other like vast armies, the different tribes of sea fish with which the New York market is stocked, swarm along the coast from Florida to the banks of Newfoundland. Whence they come and whither they go is still an unsolved problem. All we know is that these migrations occur annually, in regular order, and that the amount of the catch varies from year to year.

The fleet of fishing smacks that leaves New York, about the middle of March, to meet the northward moving swarms, numbers from 40 to 60 sails. Each takes out a crew of four to six men, and is provisioned for a two weeks' voyage. These crews are composed chiefly of Swedes, Norwegians and Portuguese. The captains or men in command are, as a rule, "down-Easters."

The smacks are divided into two classes, called respectively "wet" and "dry." The wet smack is one equipped with wells for keeping the fish in water and bringing them into port alive. There are some dozen or fifteen of this class. The dry smack has no wells. Many of them are absent from New York for months, in which case their catch is delivered and their provisions renewed at the nearest large port on the coast. The boats that go south do not return with their fish from points south of Cape May, and the boats that go east, from points east of Block Island, their catches are shipped to the city by rail.

Smacks leaving about the middle of March make for Cape Hatteras direct. They reach there generally just as the advance column of the great procession of blue fish is rounding the cape. It is from half a mile to three-quarters of a mile wide and moves at a distance of two or three miles from shore. The movement is so slow that the boats can follow the fish until Thanksgiving day without need of going any further east than the coast of Massachusetts.

A smack is considered to have had good average luck if it gets 5,000 blue fish, or 30,000 pounds. As wells are not used for this fish, the catch is preserved in ice-houses. The bait they like most is moss bunker and herring. As the season advances and the weather gets colder, the boats desert the trail of the blue fish, run into port, change their gear and fishing tackle, and go out after cod.

The mackerel stream is pursued pretty much in the same fashion from Hatteras to New Foundland, although it does not begin until a month later. But the method of catching them is different from that adopted in the case of cod or blue fish. Mackerel journey in big schools or groups. They are comparatively small, and are not "game," in the sense of showing fight. Hence seines are used exclusively for their capture. Codfish, on the other hand, would tear a seine all to pieces. As some of them weigh from 60 to 70 pounds, the resistance they are capable of making is very great. It is a singular fact, however, that the cod does not show fight when he is being drawn through the water until he reaches the surface. He can be taken with an ordinary fishing line, providing you are quick enough to disable him with your knife just as he comes to the top of the water. All the large cod require to be captured in this way. The smaller ones have not weight or strength enough to break a line.

The migration of the cod is such that fishing for them east of Sandy Hook continues good until the middle of January. They are the most prolific and the most persistently hunted of all deep sea food tribes. The bait used for them is skimmers, a specie of sea clam of which they are voraciously fond. When the smacks that go to Hatteras in the beginning of the year to meet the streams of fish moving north from equatorial waters finally quit the pursuit, they can generally find profitable occupation by turning their attention to the cod. It is a saying among the fishermen that cod are like the poor—you always have them with you.

In catching haddock, that peculiar device known as a trawl is used. It consists of a strong line some 600 feet in length. To this are attached 400 hooks, 18 inches apart. When the hooks have been baited the line is cast overboard and secured to a buoy. From time to time it is hauled in, rebaited and thrown out again. The haddock is a sedate sort of fellow, who takes his meals leisurely and is prepared to suffer the consequences with resignation.

All the fish above referred to belong to the deep sea groups and constitute the staple fish of this and all other northern markets. In comparison with them the supply obtained from our bays, inlets, estuaries and other inshore fisheries, is small.

The yield of lobsters has for several years past been steadily declining. They are scarcer now than they have ever been before. They are not migratory in their habits, simply moving in shore during warm weather and retreating to deep water in the winter. Over-fishing and the destruction of the egg-bearing and immature lobsters have probably caused the decrease. The best that come to this market are taken at Noank, Connecticut. In Massachusetts they are trying with considerable success the plan of hatching the eggs artificially. From the South New York obtain

all the prawns that are sold here. They do not exist in Northern waters. We also depend upon the South chiefly for shrimp, although they are caught in our bays and rivers at certain seasons of the year. From the same source come red snappers and weak fish. The latter are called sea trout by the Southerners.—[New York News.

A FIELD FOR EXPLORERS.

Ruins of Great Cities in Central and Eastern Asia.

In Central and Eastern Asia there lies an unexplored region full of interest, and to the archaeologist in especial. A great traveler and clever writer, the Russian General Prjevalsky, speaking of the oasis of Tcherchen, situated in the great table lands hemmed in by the three unbroken wall of the Himalayas, says that close to it are the ruins of two great cities, the oldest of which, according to local tradition, was destroyed 3,000 years ago, and the other by the Mongolians in the tenth century of our era.

"The emplacement of the two cities is now covered, owing to the shifting sands and the desert winds, with strange and heterogeneous relics, with broken china and kitchen utensils and human bones. The natives often find copper and gold coins, ingots, diamonds and turquoise, and what is most remarkable, broken glass. Coffins of some undecaying wood or material are there also, within which beautifully preserved embalmed bodies are found. The male mummies are all enormously tall, powerfully built men, with long, wavy hair. A vault was found with twelve dead men sitting in it. Another time in a separate coffin a young girl was found by us. Her eyes were closed with golden disks, and the jaws held firm by a golden circle running from under the chin, across the top of the head. Clad in a narrow woollen garment, her bosom was covered with golden stars, her feet being left naked." To this the lecturer adds that all along the way on the River Tcherchen they heard legends about twenty-three towns buried ages ago by the sands of the desert. The same tradition exists on the Lob-nor and in the oasis of Kerya.

Mme. Blavatsky, who was in the earlier part of her life a great and indefatigable traveler, covering more ground in a given time than is usually accomplished by even those of the sterner and more enduring sex, bears witness also to those ancient ruins, which she openly avers are prehistoric; the pages of her works also make frequent reference to other ruins of ancient character scattered throughout the desert regions of Central Asia. She hints, too, at buried crypts and underground vaults in the desert of Gobi, in particular, in which are stored many of the preserved records of the ages.

However this may be, the ruins described are certainly in place awaiting the organized efforts of science to recover for the world a long forgotten page in the history of the peoples of the globe. Or, as in the case of Troy, private enterprise may step in, and continuing the investigations begun by the Russian traveler, read this riddle of a bygone civilization aright.—[Pittsburg Dispatch.

The King's Pleasure.

Louis the Fourteenth once remarked impatiently in the hearing of the Duke d'Antin, superintendent of the royal buildings, that he hoped that some time a forest which he had always disliked, because it obstructed one of his favorite views, would be cut down. Unknown to the king, Duke d'Antin had the trunks of all the trees in the objectionable piece of forest sawed through near the ground in such a way that they still stood, though a slight pull would bring them down. He removed every evidence of the work, and fastened ropes to the tops of the trees, and concealed more than twelve hundred men in the forest to manage the ropes at a signal from him. The duke knew on what day the king would walk in the wood, and planned his work accordingly. The king took his accustomed promenade, and, as usual, he expressed his sentiments about the hated forest. "Your majesty, the forest shall be removed whenever you like," said D'Antin. "Indeed," said the king, "then I wish it might be done at once." At that moment D'Antin blew a shrill blast from a whistle, and to the utter amazement of the king and the royal party, the forest fell as if by enchantment.—[Argonaut.

Death by Strangulation.

"Death by strangulation," said Dr. E. L. Henry, of Baltimore, to a St. Louis Globe-Democrat reporter, "is supposed to be the most pleasant way to die. Hanging, drowning, opiate poisoning and asphyxiation with gas, to the person in a normal condition bring pleasant dreams, usually a most beautiful panorama of landscape views floats through the brain, and there is a sensation of floating through space in luxurious ease. But should the person recover, the pain is the most intense of any that could be suffered, and there are people who are so constituted that this pain is all that is realized, even during the process of strangulation. To these people the sensation is that of being pierced by thousands of sharp needles, and their head seems to be bursting with blows upon the inside of the skull. With such persons it is the most horrible form of death."

In the public and private schools in the United States there are 269,634 teachers.

MONKEY MANNERS.

Some Surprising Accomplishments of the Anthropoids.

Speaking of the intelligence of apes, says a naturalist in the *Washington Star*, anthropoids are capable of acquiring some very surprising accomplishments, though their limitations are distinct. Chimpanzees have been taught to wait on the table and to sweep out rooms. A distinguished Frenchman published a book a while ago, in which he expressed the opinion that chimpanzees would, sooner or later, take the place of domestic servants. He owed one of these animals, which he trained to light the fire and to wake his master when the oven was hot. Buffon, in 1740, had a chimpanzee which ate at the table, opened a napkin and employed it rightly, used a fork and spoon, poured out wine and clinked glasses, poured out tea and put sugar in it, washed windows and tried to imitate its owner in writing with a pen.

A young gorilla at the Berlin aquarium slept in an ordinary bed, covering himself with the bedclothes and ate at table with the keeper. He drank water from a glass, carrying the latter steadily to his mouth without spilling the contents, and setting it down carefully. He died of consumption, unfortunately. This melancholy fate seems always to attend gorillas and chimpanzees in confinement. Thus there is not any hopeful prospect for the plan which has been suggested for developing the intelligence of apes by keeping a number of them together and mating the most intellectual specimens together, with a view to securing by such artificial selection a survival of the fittest in the course of generations. By this means it was hoped to obtain a highly developed type of anthropoid which might be attractive socially, and, perhaps, even subject to missionary influence.

About one year in a cage usually winds up the existence of a gorilla or chimpanzee. Gorillas, by the way, often gather about fires that have been deserted in their native forests, greatly enjoying the warmth. But the limitation of their intelligence is very plainly indicated by the fact that it never occurs to them to prolong their pleasure by putting on more wood. When pillaging a field of sugar cane, they never think of trying to pull up the stalks one by one, but gather as many as they can in their arms and try to wrench all together out of the earth. It is understood that the ancient Egyptians made use of baboons, which they employed to gather oranges. At all events, many carvings on the tombs exhibit scenes in which monkeys in trees are picking fruit while people stand below with baskets."

Farming in France.

The report of the Secretary of the English Legation in Paris has just been submitted to parliament. It appears from the report that no less than 14,000,000 of the inhabitants of France, i. e., three-quarters of the agricultural population, are occupied in small farming. There are 4,802,697 farms of twenty acres or under, which cover an area of 24,900,214 acres, or one-fourth of the total of the land capable of cultivation. Butter, eggs, chickens, grain, vegetables, fruit, milk, cheese, and in a certain degree cattle, sheep and pigs are the products they rely upon. Sheep, and, if we except a few calves, cattle, otherwise than for the dairy, are clearly not suited for production on such small farms. Grain may also be at an economic disadvantage, but everything else here enumerated would be suitable for small holders in England.

Producers in France suffer, as do those of England, from middlemen and heavy transit charges, for articles of commerce which are only worth from eight to ten cents each in Finistere are sold in Paris the following day for 50 cents; the difference is swallowed up by the railways, the brokers and the retail merchants. The transport system from Finistere to London via St. Malo, is also unsatisfactory, both as regards cost and speed, and attention is being directed towards establishing a direct trade with Manchester. In Normandy, however, producers are better treated, as they realize three-fourths of the price paid by consumers. In some parts of Brittany they do well, but in others they only get one-fourth. The system of association for the mutual protection of agricultural interests is making great strides.

Chinese Minstrelsy.

When I had finished eating my evening meal, the beggar's son told me that his father was a noted minstrel, and wished to regale me with one of his songs. Having received leave, he tuned a dilapidated banjo, and broke out in a wild, wailing, accompanied by many grunts, much sniffing, and the most horrible grimaces, rolling his sightless eyes about. In a nearly unintelligible jargon he told of the life and exploits of a great, good, and honest official—a mythical personage of whom one often hears in China. It was long, very long, and very painful to listen to. When he had finally brought his song to an end, and the good official had received from the emperor a coral button of office, a yellow riding-jacket, and a patent of nobility with retroactive effect, enabling his parents and his grand-parents to the third and fourth generations, he asked leave to sing another ditty; but I bribed him to desist, and he went to another hotel, and charmed the inmates with his songs far into the night.—[Century.