



THE SENSITIVE KETTLE.

"I don't feel well," the Kettle sighed. "The Pot responded, "Eh?" "Then doubtless that's the reason, marm. You do not sing to-day."

"But what's amiss?" the Kettle sobbed. "Why, sir, you're surely blind. Or you'd have noticed that the cook is shockingly unkind."

"I watched her make a cake just now— If I'd a pair of legs I'd run away! Oh, dear; oh, dear! How she did beat the eggs!"

"Nor was that all—remember, please, 'Tis truth I tell to you— For with my own two eyes I saw Her stone the raisins, too!"

"And afterward—a dreadful sight!— I felt inclined to scream!— The cruel creature took a fork And soundly whipped the cream!"

"Now, can you wonder that my nerves Have rather given way? Although I'm at the boiling point, I cannot sing to-day." —New York Tribune.

SOME AMUSEMENTS OF CHINESE CHILDREN.

When Chinese children want more active amusement, they play battledore and shuttlecock, only the battledore is usually the thick sole of the shoe or the instep of the foot. They manage it so cleverly that it is quite common to see the shuttlecock struck some two or three hundred times without a single miss.

"Ta chiau," of "hitting the ball," is another favorite game. Most boys without, no doubt, consider it rather monotonous, since it is simply played by striking the ball to the ground with the hand as many times as possible.

"Ta-teh-lo" is "whipping the top." A Chinese top is made of bamboo with a piece of wood going through it, and a large hole is cut in the side, which makes it have a fine humming sound as it spins.

"Hiding from the cat" is not unlike our familiar "blind man's buff," one child having his eyes blinded, and trying to catch the others, who escape from him in all directions.

A STICK OF PEPPERMINT.

When Mother Bruin gave Topsy Bruin a whole cent, she said: "Topsy, that is for you, because you are so good to the baby."

Topsy knew at once what he meant to do with it.

"Goodly," he exclaimed, "I mean to buy a peppermint stick."

"Very well," replied Mother Bruin, "only don't eat it all at once or you might get ill. Too much candy at one time is not good for little bears."

"Can you buy a whole peppermint stick for a cent?" asked Topsy, anxiously.

"Oh, yes, I think so," said Mother Bruin. "Run and see!"

So Topsy ran as fast as his short, fat legs could carry him down the road to where, beside an old stump, Granny Brown kept a little shop where she sold candy and cakes and needles and thread and corn and potatoes and a few other things.

Topsy was so short that his woolly brown head only just reached to the counter, but he held up the cent and said in as loud a voice as he could: "A stick of peppermint candy, please."

"Now that's too bad!" cried Granny Brown. "I've just sold my last stick of peppermint to a little fellow about your size, who came in a great hurry and snatched the first piece he saw."

Topsy felt very badly. He did so want that stick of peppermint candy.

"Will any other kind do?" asked Granny Brown.

Topsy shook his head. No other kind would taste so good. He was sure of that. He stood for a minute holding the string of the little cart he had dragged in after him and then turned sadly away, wondering what he could buy with that cent.

Just then a little brown bear came puffing into the shop.

"Haven't you got any other kind?" he called, holding out a stick of peppermint. "I took the wrong kind. Wintergreen or chocolate or lemon—anything but peppermint."

"Yes, indeed," cried Granny Brown, while Topsy looked up with a joyful smile.

So Granny Brown speedily found a stick of lemon for the little bear who didn't like peppermint, and the little bear who did like peppermint got the stick he wanted, after all!

Oh, how good it did taste! And when he told Mother Bruin all about it, she said:

"Now, that happened because you were a good little bear and always kind to your little sister."—Brooklyn Eagle.

A PAINTER OF CHILDREN.

The visit of M. Boutet de Monvel to America recently added to the interest with which the readers of St. Nicholas read the text and looked at the pictures by Monvel himself in an account by Marie von Vorst of the artist's life and work.

Great poets have written for children, she says; there are several writers whose immortal fame rests on fairy-tales and stories told to little people. But until the Frenchman, Maurice Boutet de Monvel, took his pencil and brush to draw and paint children—children of all classes and ages, at sport and work and play—until the Parisian parents clamored for him to make portraits of their little ones, we have never had a "painter in ordinary to children."

The French boy at his games and pleasures, on the way to the Lycee, with his black leather portfolio, dashing through the Bois de Boulogne on horseback, playing in the Tuilleries or Luxembourg Gardens at the various French games with his companions—the French boy, poor of rich, scholar or apprentice, in dress and manner a very different being from our own little fellows in America.

He wears his trousers short, very full, and drawn in at the knee by an elastic band. His suit is a sailor suit. His legs, in the coldest weather, are often bare. On his head is a cap known as the beret; over his shoulders is thrown a capuchon, or hooded cape. His suit is covered by a black apron, gathered in around his waist by a leather belt. Such is the schoolboy dashing across the park and boulevard, an especially picturesque figure in a city where all is picturesque.

As to the little girls, they are perfectly bewitching! With their nurses they sit up and down the Avenue du Bois, their pretty dresses, flying ribbons, and big hats making bright spots of color as they troop up the Champs-Elysees, or stopping before a "Punch and Judy Show," or to buy a toy from the booths of the vendors. These are the rich little maidens. Then there are the Jeanne and Maries and Catharines of the people, in soberer clothes, coarse blue stockings, stout faced boots, their dresses covered by the inevitable black apron. Hatless they go, winter and summer, to school, the neat pigtails bobbing behind as the child carries home a long loaf of bread, or joins her little friends on a bench in the Luxembourg Gardens, where the groups sew and chatter as sharply as the sparrows twittering around.

The French children are at once cheerful and sedate, polite and useful—a good combination, it seems to me! Indeed, it is hard to say which are most attractive—the flowers of Paris or the little people; for both make the city streets gay, winter and summer. But in this charming place M. Boutet de Monvel has found the children to be his inspiration, and the most delightful things of all.

Boutet de Monvel was born in Orleans in 1850. His family went to Paris to live when he was three years old, and there he grew up, surrounded by a household of younger brothers and sisters. As soon as he could hold a pencil Maurice began to draw, and later covered school books and slates and every available scrap of paper with his sketches.

As a young man he studied painting in the big studios of Paris under the most celebrated masters. Like most of the people whose names are important in science, art, and letters, Boutet de Monvel knew what it was to be poor, to struggle, and to be often discouraged. But determination to succeed, love for his work, faith in his inspiration, were stronger than circumstance. With his portfolio full of illustrations, he started out to earn his daily bread. At first refusals met him everywhere. "It would not have taken much to have completely discouraged me!" he has said.

But success was just before the disheartened artist. One day, when he entered a certain publishing house to ask for some illustrating work, M. Delagrave gave him a child's history of France to illustrate, and we can fancy with what delight the publishers greeted the quaint drawings which the unknown artist brought to them. "This was my debut," says M. de Monvel, "and after that I had all that I could do to fill the orders that came in to me."

The basis of knowledge on which sanitation rests is furnished chiefly by the observation of facts on a large scale as they occur in actual life. Its aim has been the removal of conditions which experience has shown to be favorable to the propagation and spread of disease, and the substitution of other conditions. In general this means the removal of what we call dirt. Hence we get the purification of the ground by drainage, by refuse disposal, by impervious paving, and so on; the purification of drinking water by subsidence and filtration, or by having recourse to unpolluted sources, deep wells and springs; the purification of food stuffs by inspection, and the destruction of unwholesome articles; the purification of the air by ventilation and regulations as to space; the purification of rivers by the diversion of polluting materials, and so on. Such was the line of activity, the aim being the improvement of the general conditions of life. It acts in two ways: it removes those agencies by which disease is fostered and spread and it promotes health, thereby rendering individuals less susceptible to such risks as they may encounter. Another measure must be added, of a different character—namely, the segregation of the sick as centres of infection; hence isolation hospitals. But this movement was carried a very little way during the first period; its development belongs to the second, of which it is a very important feature. Twenty years ago isolation hardly existed; nobody went to the fever hospitals—there were scarcely any to go to; and the only infectious disease not received and treated in the general hospital was smallpox.—The Contemporary Review.

A CENTURY'S WAR SHIPS.

FROM FRIGATES OF WOOD TO FLOATING STEEL FORTS.

Marvelous Advance in Construction of Ships of War—Power, Tonnage, Speed, Vulnerability as Compared with the Ships of Decatur.

The following article was written for the twentieth century issue of the New York World by Philip Hichborn, Chief Constructor, U. S. N.:

Naval architecture in this country has undergone an almost incredible transformation during the century just passed.

The evolution, whose consummation may be seen in the magnificent warships just sent out, has been marked by seven distinct stages, familiar to the student of this branch of our country's history.

Compare, for instance, the historic fleet of Columbus, the Santa Maria, Nina and Pinta, the first boats that floated our waters, with the modern ship. Great ships in their day, they would now seem the merest cockleshells. Indeed, the Santa Maria, largest of these famous vessels, was but 63 feet long and of but 200 tons burden.

Two centuries later on our first naval vessel was built. This proud achievement was called the Folklind. She wasn't really an American ship—she was built at Portsmouth—then they presented her to the English Government, which immediately added her to its navy. The Folklind was of 637 tons burden and carried thirty-four guns and a crew of 226 men.

Our historic Constitution marks the next stage of development, and represents the type of naval architecture that prevailed at the opening of the nineteenth century. No American need be told the story of this ship, built in 1797 and still in existence, which is perhaps the corner-stone of our national glory. The Constitution was a fine frigate in her time, 175 feet long, with 2,200 tons displacement.

During the entire first half of the century this type of vessel was not improved upon. In 1850 steam was introduced, and at this date there was built in Philadelphia the Powhatan, a side-wheel vessel of 3,980 tons displacement, carrying seventeen guns. At the same time there was built the Minnesota, one of the best war vessels in the world at that time.

To this class belonged the Roanoke and Merrimac, both cut down and converted into iron-clads at the beginning of the civil war by the Federal and Confederate authorities, respectively; the Franklin, in which Admiral Farragut made his tour of European ports after the close of the war; the Colorado and the Wabash. All were good ships and performed splendid service.

The Monitor was built by John Ericsson in 1861, and though individually she was the first crude development of an idea, she revolutionized the navies of the world. Her splendid service showed that spars and sails must no longer be considered as part of a war vessel's means of propulsion, and that ships must be protected by armor to meet the improvements in ordnance. While the Monitor type has long since passed out of favor as a sea-fighter, there are certain phases of national defense for which many authorities consider its latest development, the Arkansas, Connecticut, Florida and Wyoming, now building, the best vessels that can be devised. In them the only radical departure from the original consists in providing living accommodations above water. Other differences are those of detail.

The Katabdin and Holland were the best examples of the next stage. The former is the outcome of the Confederate ram Tennessee. Admiral Ammen, who participated in the fight between that vessel and the Federal ships, always thereafter held the fixed belief that the ram was the most formidable weapon of marine warfare, and finally persuaded Congress to authorize the construction of a vessel after his design, and the Katabdin Works in July, 1891. Owing to the difficulty of procuring her armor, she was not completed until February, 1896. She is 251 feet long, 43 feet 5 inches wide, 21 feet deep, and at a 15 feet draught displaces 2,155 tons.

The most perfect battle-ship of today is represented by the Virginia and class, the designs for which are being completed by the Bureau of Construction and Repair.

Hot House Grapes Coming into Favor. The time will probably come in America when the European grape will again be a valuable commercial fruit. It was at one time, the fruit selling readily at \$1.50 a pound. The cultivation went down for several reasons, among them the fear of competition with the outdoor grown European grapes from California. The injury to the roots by the phylloxera and the difficulty of getting the intelligent labor to manage the vine properly. It is clear, however, that no more fear of competition with the California product need be feared than with the Spanish grapes that come in barrels of cork dust from the Old World. These are very good in their way, and will usually bring remunerative returns, though the figures be small. There is no comparison between these in quality as compared with those grown under glass, by one who knows his business. This has been abundantly proved in England.—Meehan's Monthly.

The man who can't take a joke would never do as editor of a comic paper.

SCHOOL IN A CAVE.

Home of the Cliff Dwellers Now Used for Educational Purposes.

A most novel building is that on the banks of the Smoky Hill river, a few miles east of Kanopolis, Kan. It is known as the home of the cliff dwellers, and richly deserves the name. It is a huge cliff 60 feet high, rising sheer from the bottom lands along the river, and a few hundred feet from the banks of the stream. It was the headquarters of an old band of Indians, and the records of the tribe are cut deep in the face of the wall, still clear and sharp after long centuries of western wind and storm.

At the base of the cliff are limestone caves washed out by the waters of other days and enlarged by the people of this generation. Doors have been fixed in these openings that lead to the outer air, and, of course, all the light comes from that direction.

The caves are used by the people for various purposes, but the most interesting is that of holding the district school. For this purpose has been selected a room 12x14 feet square and with high ceilings. In one corner has been fitted up the teacher's desk, and the maps and charts are fastened to the wall. The rough rocks arch over the whole and the pupils are surrounded by walls that are cool and solid, while their seats and desks are placed in the earthen floor. The light comes from the door, though there are at times a necessity of a lamp when the skies are lowering. Day after day they study and recite in the little school, secure from the dangers of a storm or floor, for the cyclone and lightning are not to be feared in this secure retreat.

Adjoining the schoolroom is another room nearly as large, and the owner of the cliff finds it a pleasant place in which to spend the summer nights, the temperature being far below that of the outside air.

Then there is a wonderful spring that bubbles out of the earth a little farther in the cave, and the owner has fitted up a milk-room where a stream of pure cold water flows all the time around the crocks and pans and makes the production of the cream a profitable one. It is probably the finest milkhouse in the state, and the supply of coolness is never lessened.

A huge brick fireplace has been built in the schoolroom and makes the interior cheery in the dark days of winter. The great trees outside—oak, cottonwood and box elder—hide the cliff from the sun in the spring and summer and make of it a delightful resort.

The Paris brothers are owners of the claim on which is situated this remarkable cave and cliff, and they have refused large offers for it. Visitors come from long distances to see the novel formation and there is many a picnic in summer to the vicinity.

All around are wonders of the prairie formation—huge umbrella rocks stand up from the sod like great toadstools; caverns wherein are vast riches of rock salt, the mines being worked now with a small force, and which are likely to be of great value some day; rock cities where there may be seen all the fashions of houses and castles fantastically worked out on enduring stone, these and many more are found in the vicinity. It includes models of implements supposed to have been left when the Spaniards, under Coronado, came up through Kansas and founded the villages that were to be the beginning of a mighty nation. Indian vessels and relics of the mound builders are common, while petrifications that cannot be explained, except upon the assumption of the very ancient occupation of the prairies by an intelligent race, are in the collection.

The Search for Antiques.

If, writes an Alexandria, Va., correspondent, this old town had kept all the old furniture to be found in dwellings up to 1840-50 it would now be worth many thousands of dollars, but before the Centennial celebration held here in 1876 these antiques were estimated to be of little pecuniary worth. The little value placed upon such things here fifty years ago is shown by the destruction of Washington's town house, built by him in 1763, and torn down in the 50's in order to get room for a garden of the adjoining dwelling. Were this old town house now intact it could be sold for at least \$300,000, more than twice the value of the entire square on which it was located. In one case a family put out on its back lot old furniture which would now be worth \$300, and left it exposed to the sun and rain until it was destroyed. A large amount of waste paper, etc., from the lofts and garrets of Mount Vernon, removed when John A. Washington sold out to the Ladies' Mount Vernon Association, was stored here in an upper room at King and Lee streets, and a fire occurring there most of it was either scattered or burned.

An Imitation That Failed.

A Georgia Judge who tried to imitate King Solomon in deciding the ownership of a six months' old baby was nonplussed when, as he put the infant on the table and announced his intention of cutting it in halves with a big butcher knife, the women cried, "Don't do that; keep it yourself," and left the court hurriedly.

The cable brings word that Prince Chofa Maha Vajiravudh of Siam is traveling in Russia. If the prince is in a hurry he might save a good deal of time by using a rubber stamp when he gets up against the hotel registers.

LAND LAWS OF CHINA.

REAL ESTATE CAN NEVER BE INHERITED BY DAUGHTERS.

Agricultural Land is Divided into Three Classes—All Under Cultivation Must Pay Taxes—Collections Made by Ingenious Methods.

Some interesting details on this subject are appended to the latest report of the Governor of Hongkong to the Colonial Office. It explains that land, according to Chinese tenure, is held as freehold, by grant from the Crown, and descends in the male line only. Daughters never inherit. The land comprised in the original grant can be sold by the proprietors in subdivisions, and is most usually sold in perpetuity, or for 1,000 years. The proprietors record their names in the district registry as responsible for the tax, and their possession is legally secure so long as that is paid. Deeds of absolute sale have been brought in from the new territory for registration which were made in the reign of the Emperor Ka Tsing and of subsequent emperors of the Ming dynasty (A. D. 1519 to 1620), and which have been recognized by the present dynasty. Strictly a grant issued by the present dynasty should be attached to all grants made by the previous dynasty. The present owners under such grants are all the existing male descendants of the original grantee, and in one case the proprietors now number over 700. All land under cultivation is supposed to pay a land tax, and from time to time spasmodic attempts are made to survey the area under cultivation. But in spite of Government orders, all efforts to obtain correct data of the actual acreage brought under cultivation have been frustrated. The land owners, wishing to have their land exempted from the payment of taxes, seem to have succeeded in inducing the survey officers not to make correct reports. But when large and fertile tracts, yielding valuable crops, are not reported for registration, such has been the case with extensive areas reclaimed from the sea near San Tin, the Chinese authorities generally confiscate and resell them to private individuals, after they discover them.

Agricultural land is divided into three classes, each class paying a different rate. First-class lands are those near villages in fertile valleys, with a good depth of soil and a good water supply, producing annually two crops of rice or one crop of sugar cane. Second-class lands are those less fertile than the first class, and are generally situated higher up the slopes of hills, and have not such a good water supply as the first class. They produce annually one crop of rice or one crop of sugar cane. Third-class lands are those situated on still higher slopes and are far removed from a good water supply. They are generally devoted to the cultivation of peanuts, sweet potatoes, millet and other hardy crops which do not require much moisture. Fish ponds pay a special tax higher than that paid by cultivated land of the first class. The land tax is collected by the authorities sending out deputies, clerks and runners to different districts, notifications being posted calling upon landowners to pay the land tax with all haste. In some cases these collectors linger for more than a month in certain localities. No pay is given by the Government to the land collectors, who are left to their own ingenuity and wits to make as much as they can out of the villagers, without creating trouble. The villagers, of course, are anxious to get rid of these men, and are only too glad to pay the "extras" necessary to effect that object, especially as they have not infrequently placed themselves in a false position by not having reported portions of their land on which taxes should be paid. The villagers are not slow to understand that the longer these collectors remain in their neighborhood the greater the probability of their unregistered land being discovered. On this account the "extras" demanded are paid without demur, and indeed at times with alacrity. The land tax which has to be sent to Peking from each province is a fixed sum, and has not varied for years. It is easy to see what an opportunity this system offers for incorrect returns, as new lands are continually being brought under cultivation.—London Globe.

Swearing in in Parliament.

The London Chronicle calls attention to the fact that the swearing in of members of a new Parliament is no longer as picturesque as of old. "The oaths of allegiance, supremacy and abjuration," says the Chronicle, "were formally prescribed by statutes of Charles II., William III. and George I., and were required to be taken by every member. By an act of George IV., a special oath was provided for Roman Catholic members. It was not until 1858 that a further advance was made, when one oath for Protestant members was submitted for the oaths of allegiance, supremacy and abjuration, and a few years afterward a single oath was prescribed for members of all religious denominations.

"The oath now takes the following form: 'I, —, do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to her Majesty, Queen Victoria, her heirs and successors, according to law. So help me God.' Members who object to be sworn may avail themselves of the power granted by the oaths act of 1888, which enacts that a solemn affirmation may be made in lieu of an oath."

Most suicides by drowning occur at night.

DINING CAR KITCHENS.

They Are Conducted by Rules and All Portions Are the Same in Quantity.

"The Kitchen departments on railroad dining cars are run according to fixed rules," said an old Pullman conductor, "and nothing is left to chance or caprice. The cook is furnished with a manual giving explicit directions for the preparation of everything on the bill of fare, and he is held strictly accountable for any waste. He is even told how thick to cut the bread and how much butter to put on in case he is making sandwiches. Sometimes a hungry traveler, who naturally wants big portions, thinks the man in the kitchen is trying to economize on him, but he may rest assured he is getting exactly what the law allows—no more and no less.

"I remember a picture in one of the satirical papers a few years ago of a fat gentleman looking scornfully at several small sections of bread and butter. 'What do you call those?' he asks. 'Pullman sandwiches,' replies the waiter. 'Hu!' grunts the tourist. 'Mr. Pullman must cut 'em out with a conductor's punch!' We haven't got it down quite as fine as that, but we come pretty near it. The kitchens are stocked at regular intervals and a careful calculation is made of the exact number of portions in every article furnished. At the end of the run an inspection is made and the cook must account for everything, either in supplies or meal checks. Under that system petty pilfering is absolutely impossible. The purchasing agents, who lay in the stock at important points, from which travel is heavy, are exceedingly important members of the company's staff.

"They can easily render the dining service over any route profitable, or the reverse, and something more than mere experience and intelligence is required to make a success of the job. The men who have done the best at it seem to be guided by a sort of instinct, but, as a matter of fact, they are continually studying the conditions of travel. They learn what the general run of their patrons like at certain seasons of the year, and compile a curious sort of table of averages that they use as a basis in purchasing perishable stock, such as meats, fruits and fresh vegetables. There is a line in the Northwest that is known among the dining-car men as the 'beefsteak route,' on account of the extraordinary call for that particular article of diet, and I know of another that is nicknamed the 'oatmeal express' for similar reasons. The oatmeal express carries a good many ladies and children, and the beefsteak route is a favorite highway for drummers, so, after all, the explanation is simple enough. An expert stock purchaser can command a good salary, and not long ago a man who had been stationed for some years in New York was offered a very handsome position as superintendent of the refreshment service for a big railroad in England. It has been run at a loss ever since it was installed, but within sixty days after he took hold it began to return a profit. At the same time it was greatly improved. Dining cars are a comparatively new thing abroad and they are far behind the American, both in system and luxury."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

A Lawyer's Trick of the Voice.

"There is said to be a lawyer in Philadelphia," says the Philadelphia Record, "who possesses a trick of the voice to which a certain measure of his success in United States Supreme Court practice is due. The trick consists in winking a judge. Whether it is a common practice for the high dignitaries of the Federal Supreme bench to indulge in a nap in the course of a long and tedious argument, such happenings are not unknown, and it is well for an able logician of the bar to be prepared for it. The trick of winking a sleepy judge would seem to be something in the nature of slamming a law book under his nose or connecting his personality with the current of an electric battery. But the trick is explained as purely a matter of sound involved in the skilful control of the voice. It is said that a barrister practised in the art and rhetoric of addressing the bench can gather all the waves of sound from his throat into a focus and deposit it in the office of the judge's ear with the general effect of a bomb."

Musical Insects in Japan.

Singing birds are esteemed in all countries, but in Japan the musical sounds emitted by certain insects are appreciated. Listening to these minute singers has been for many centuries a favorite pastime of the Japanese, and has given birth to an original commerce at Tokio. Toward the end of May and the beginning of June may be seen suspended under the verandas of houses little cages of bamboo, from which break upon the silence of the fresh twilight strange whistlings and thrills which fill the heart with a delicate music. It is habitually in the evening, after the hour of the bath, that the people of Tokio seat themselves and listen to the natural concert. The most prized of these singing insects is the suzumushi. Its name means insect bell, and the sound which it emits resembles that of a little silver bell. It is a tiny black beetle with a flat body.

The surrender of the boomen is likely to cause a cut in the rates for ethnological exhibits in the American sidshow.