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"The Salt if you Please."

Everybody has a partiality for dinner, and one of the most frequent expressions at dinner table is the one which forms our title, and in order that our readers may know something of the substance they are using, we will tell them a few facts about salt. This is a chemical compound, of twenty three parts, by weight, of a beautifully silver-white but soft metal called sodium, discovered by Sir H. Davy in 1807, and thirty five parts of a pungent yellowish green grass, called chlorine, discovered by Scheele, in 1774; these two combined form this, the most widely diffused and useful of any one compound in the world. It is found in the sea, and in the rocks, from which our principal supply comes. The most wonderful deposits are in Poland and Hungary, where it is quarried like a rock, one of the Polish mines having been worked since 1251.

These Polish salt mines have heard the groan of many a poor captive, and have seen the last agonies of many a brave man; for, until lately, they were worked entirely by the state prisoners of Austria, Russia, or Poland, whichever happened to be in power at the time; and once the offender, or fancied hindrance to some other person's advancement, was let down into this subterranean prison, he never saw the light of day again. So salt has its history as well as science. Other large deposits are found in Cheshire, England, where the water is forced down by pipes into the salt, and is again pumped up as brine, which is evaporated and the salt obtained. To such an extent has this been carried, that one town in the "salt country," as it is called, has scarcely an upright house in it, all the foundations having sunk with the ground, to fill up the cavity left by the extracted salt.

In Virginia there are beds of salt, and the Salmon Mountains, in Oregon, are capable of affording large quantities of the same material. The brine springs of Salina and Syracuse are well known, and from about forty gallons of their brine one bushel of salt is obtained. There are also extensive salt springs in Ohio. The brine is pumped up from wells made in the rock and into which it flows and runs into boilers. These boilers are large iron kettles set in brickwork, and when fires are lighted under them, the brine is quickly evaporated. The moment the brine begins to boil, it becomes turbid, from the compounds of lime that it contains, and which are soluble in cold, but not in hot water; these first sediments are taken out with ladles called "bittern ladles," and the salt being next deposited from the brine is carried away to drain and dry. The remaining liquid contains a great quantity of magnesia in various forms, and gives it the name of "bittern," from the taste peculiar to magnesia in every form.

But how did this salt come into the rock? is the natural query, and the wonder seems greater, when we recollect that salt beds are found in nearly every one of the strata composing the earth's crust.—This fact proves another, that as the mass of these salt beds have come from the lakes left in the hollows of the rocks by the recession of the sea, the sea has, through all the geologic ages, been as salt as it is to-day. Let us take the Great Salt Lake as an illustration; it being the largest salt lake in the world, but by no means the only one, as such inland masses of saline water are found over the whole earth; but as this is the greatest in extent, it will form the best example. It is situated at an elevation of 4200 feet above the sea, on the Rocky Mountains, and has an area of 2,000 square miles; yet, high as it is, "once upon a time," as the story-books of our juvenility used to say, it was part of the sea, which retired, by the upheaval of the rocks, and that great basin took its salt water up with it. There are also however, salt rocks taking their place in regular geologic series with other rocks, interspersed between red sandstone, magnesia, and carboniferous strata; these we can only account for, as we do for other stratified rocks, viz: that they were deposited from their solution in water, or carried mechanically to the spot where now found by that ever mobile liquid.

A NUT TO CRACK.—A certain aged and respectable female in the apple trade purchased stock at several times as follows:

20 apples at 2 for 1c.—amounting to	15c.
30 apples at 3 for 1c.—amounting to	15c.
Total	25c.
60 apples at 5 for 2c.—amounting to	24c.

Believing the rate in each case to be the same, 5 for 2c, she is at a loss to know why the first 60 cost 1c more than the last. Who can tell her?

Letters of Marque—Their Origin and What They Mean.

Letters of Marque (says the Richmond *Wig*) are extraordinary commissions, granted by public authority to owners of a vessel, authorizing such vessel to make capture and prize of the persons, ships and property of another nation which has committed injuries, but neglects or refuses to give proper redress therefor. The vessel itself which bears such commission is sometimes called a letter of Marque.

The term *marque* is derived from the Anglo-Saxon *marca*—bound or boundary. Letters of marque and reprisal, as they are more fully termed, signify literally, therefore, commissions authorizing the passing of the frontiers, or boundary, for the purpose of taking in return.

In their origin they had reference to specific injuries in capturing, detaining or withholding the property of individuals in time of peace, and issued only to the party injured, or his agents. Their issue was not regarded as a declaration of war, though formal hostilities might be the ultimate result. Some consider them a species of hostilities, an imperfect war; but strictly, they are not a breach of the peace between nations, though a forcible redress of injury is contemplated. The force may not inaptly be likened to a redress for rent, which, in a measure, is a remedy placed in the hands of the injured party—the landlord himself.

It is unnecessary to trace the modification and regulation to which letters of marque have been subjected from their origin to the present day. Reprisals between nation and nation, as one means of obtaining justice, are of very ancient origin, and have their foundation in the nature of the relations of different powers. Though not of frequent occurrence now, yet as late as 1834, President Jackson, in his Annual Message, suggested the propriety of resorting to this method of obtaining satisfaction against France.

Letters of marque and reprisal, however, with reference to operations at sea, were not known till a much later period when the increase in the number of maritime powers, and the advance of commerce, gave rise to their necessity. In modern practice they are seldom, if ever, issued till war has been declared, or in immediate prospect. Merchants, in time of war, often deem it advisable to carry larger crews than usual, and more or less of an armament, for purposes of defense, and not unfrequently take out letters of marque, with the view, if opportunity offers, to indemnify themselves for the increased risk and expense of a voyage by taking prizes. Privateers, or vessels fitted out at private expense, for the purpose of cruising against an enemy's commerce, are commissioned by letters of marque. The term is now applied, in a general sense, to the authority under which all lawful private armed ships act.

In the United States, the power of granting letters of marque and reprisal is vested, by the Constitution, in Congress. In the war of 1812, this power was exercised in the act of June, 1812, declaring war, and provision made for the guidance and regulation of parties applying for such a commission, and of vessels sailing under them, by the acts of June 26, 1813. These acts were temporary in their design, and are now obsolete.—Special legislation would be required upon any future occasion which called for a renewed exercise of this power.

It would be a violation of the Neutrality Act of April 20, 1818, for an American vessel to be commissioned by a letter of marque in the service of any foreign power against a nation with whom we are at peace, or for any vessel to be fitted out and armed in any of our ports for the purpose of cruising under letters of marque against a friendly power.

TAKEN ABACK.—One of the ridiculous mishaps which will sometimes befall soldiers, befell a whole file of the snugly attired military of New Orleans on the day of the Twigg's reception. They were drawn up along the street in front of a building in course of construction, and close in their rear was a long mortar bed, two feet deep, with that plastic composition ready for the workmen. The space between the files for the passage of the carriages being rather narrow, the officer ordered his men to take a step back.—They did so, and about twenty feet of "sojers" instantaneously disappeared from sight backwards, the front file, in close order, preventing the rear rank from recovering themselves when their heels stumbled against the mortar bed. They were submerged, and every soldier of them had his pretty uniform spoiled.—They took cabs and absquatulated instantaneously.

Washington and the Czar.

The Governor of South Carolina, on the 22d ultimo, in reply to an address from the Commander of the "Picken Cadets," related the following interesting facts: "I remember while in a distant court of Europe, and at the most despotie of all Governments, that on a memorable occasion I visited the magnificent gardens that surround Peterhoff, near St. Petersburg. The gardens and grounds were dedicated to the enjoyment and peaceful pursuits of the greatest and most brilliant of courts. On a remote island of these magnificent grounds that had been set aside for the private enjoyment and private walks of the Emperor and Empress, a tree was pointed out to me in that garden, cultivated by particular and devoted hands, surrounded by wire wicket work, and flowers flourishing all around it. There stood on one branch of the tree a large brass plate, and on one side of that plate, in German, and on the other in Slavonic, was written, 'This tree was planted in 1820, by Nicholas, from an acorn that grew near the tomb of the great Washington.' This was the inscription upon that tree, placed there by one of the most absolute rulers that ever swayed the sceptre of empire. And yet in his private, secluded gardens, he paid this deep and heartfelt tribute to the memory of the greatest and purest man the world ever saw. He did not take an acorn from near the tomb of the great Elizabeth; nor did he take it from the garden of the greatest and purest man the world ever saw. He did not take an acorn from near the tomb of the great Elizabeth; nor did he take it from the garden of the greatest and purest man the world ever saw. He took an acorn from the tomb of a pure and mighty man, in the wilds of America, who had planted the seeds of a government consecrated to the freedom and independence of nations, whose every principle was directly at war with the principles of its own government; and yet so Washington, that even this mighty monarch, in private and secret, paid to him his heartfelt and deep tribute. The tree was watered and cultivated with more care than any of the trees in that garden. It was flourishing and green, and I trust in God it will continue to flourish fresh and green until its branches shall overspread the civilized world. I have also seen the Cossack of the Don and the Volga; I have seen the Lancers of Russia, and I have seen the Tartar and the Arab in the wilds of the interior; and yet, notwithstanding their semi-barbarian life, even they converse of the mighty Washington in their tents at night. There is no portion of the world that has not heard his name, and love and admire his great and manly truthfulness and virtue."

Office Hunting in Washington.

A late telegraphic despatch from Washington says: "The past week has brought to us some of the strangest looking beings ever seen in this city. Their appearance indicates anything but civilized life, while their arts in plying in and about the different departments and private rooms, clearly show them to be unfit for civilized society. Where they came from, or who they belong to, nobody seems to know. They are seen in the halls and ante-rooms awaiting their turn for an interview with the Secretaries. They are also seen at the Capitol, on the streets, and in the White House; and at all times and on all occasions, they carry with them their little half-worn out carpet-bag, from which they take, during the time they are compelled to wait for the Secretaries, their little bundle of refreshments, which they quietly munch. So far as ascertained, these gentlemen are applicants for clerkships in the Departments here, having letters and petitions to the Secretaries, signed by the local clergy, their friends and townsmen, and the schoolmasters of their districts—who in nearly every case is the author of their petitions. One man called upon Mr. Chase yesterday, having with him his wife and children, and expected, as he expressed it, to be set right to work. He came from Indiana, the children, the wife, and the baggage, were all up to the Secretary's office. The clerks are much annoyed by these people, who seem to have the impression that they have a perfect right to pry into every book or paper coming within their grasp. The applications for office per letters continue to pour in by the bushel. At the Treasury Department five extra clerks have been engaged to open and show them away alphabetically, so that they may be found again. No better wide ace is wanted of the depressed condition of the country than these same letters."

The virtue of others is always a terror to the wicked.

The way Banks evade the Usury Laws.

The banks have a plan so simple and effectual for evading the usury laws that it is not probable that they would give one cent to have these laws repealed.—When the market rate of interest is 14 per cent a year, the plan is for a merchant to get notes discounted at 7 per cent for double the amount of money that he wants, the whole to be carried to his credit, on condition that he is to draw out but half of it; thus if he gets \$5,000 from the bank he pays interest on \$10,000.

The way the bank managers to have their customers leave a portion of the money carried to their credit, is this. Several merchants offer notes at the bank for discount, and when they call to know whether the directors have decided to take the notes and pay the money for them (after taking out the interest,) one merchant finds that his paper has been discounted, while the offerings of another have been declined. The unsuccessful applicant calls on the cashier and asks him:—

"Mr. Chandler, why was not my paper done to-day; were not the names satisfactory?"

The cashier replies, "The directors found no fault with the names, Mr. Smith, but we had applications for all of our funds from firms whose accounts were better than yours, and we felt bound to give them the preference."

By the "accounts being better" is meant that these firms have larger sums to the credit of their accounts, on which they are paying interest, but which they have left with the bank to be loaned to somebody else, thus enabling the bank to get double interest on its funds.

Most merchants living in cities, expect, when they like money, to pay the market rate of interest, but the obstruction of the usury laws work a serious inconvenience to borrowers, especially when a portion of their receipts, having to leave a portion with the banks merely for the purpose of evading the usury laws.

We never knew a usury law in any community which was not systematically and generally evaded; and the inconvenience and expense of the evasions always fall upon the borrower.—*Scientific Amer.*

MEMORY OF THE ELEPHANT.—A female elephant, belonging to a gentleman at Calcutta, who was ordered from the upper country to Chittagong, on the route thither, broke loose from her keeper, and making her way to the woods, was lost.—The keeper made every excuse to vindicate himself, which the master of the animal would not listen to, but branded the man with carelessness, or something worse; for it was instantly supposed that he sold the elephant. He was tried for it, and condemned to work on the roads for life, and his wife and children were sold for slaves. About twelve years afterwards, this man, who was known to be well acquainted with breaking elephants, was sent into the country with a party to assist in catching wild ones. They came upon a herd, and this man fancied he saw among the group his long lost elephant, for which he had been condemned. He resolved to approach it—nor could the strongest remonstrances of the party dissuade him from the attempt. Having reached the animal, he spoke to her, when she immediately recognized his voice; she waved her trunk in the air, as a token of salutation, and spontaneously laid down and allowed him to mount her neck.—She afterward assisted in taking other elephants, and decoyed three young ones, to which she had given birth in her absence. The keeper returned, and the singular circumstances attending the recovery being told he regained his character; and, as a recompense for his unmerited sufferings, had a pension settled on him for life. This elephant was afterward in possession of Warren Hastings, when Governor-General of Hindostan.—*Popular Natural History.*

CHEATING GOING ON.—Some years ago a game of poker was being played in this place. Jim C. was in it, and during the game contrived to steal the four aces and lay them on his knee, to be played at the proper time. The player who sat next to him saw the move, and slipped the aces from his hiding place, putting four other cards in their stead. When Jim's turn came to deal, he called on all hands to go it blind. "I'll go over all of you." When all were in deep enough to suit him, he reached for his aces, and brought up something else. Throwing his cards on the table, in a tone of indignation he exclaimed:—"Gentlemen, I can't play in this game: there's cheating going on!"

"Charity Begins at Home."

A bill has passed the House of Representatives at Harrisburg, appropriating thirty thousand dollars for the relief of the people of Kansas. They people aforesaid may need a helping hand and they may not. In either case, however, it strikes us that the House has gone a great way to discover objects of benevolence—when starvation is standing at their own door.

For instance: In February, 1860, there were nine thousand persons employed in the wholesale clothing manufactories of this city. Now there are but eighteen hundred. In February, 1860, there were eighty-five hundred boot and shoemakers engaged by wholesale houses in that line. Now there are less than a thousand. The same startling contrasts are to be found in the hating, lace and tassel, cotton and other leading factories. A large proportion of the most thrifty and careful of this portion of our industrial classes, have been robbed of the money laid by, by the failure of other saving funds; and it may be safely said, at least one-half of the unemployed men and women of this city alone are now vibrating between moderate poverty and extreme starvation.

All this may be merely 'artificial.' Nobody may be 'hurt.' The gnawings of hunger and the humiliation attendant upon real want may not be deemed by our Legislature of the least moment, when applied to our own people, and, therefore, they may consider themselves justified in voting thousands of the public money to doubtful objects of charity abroad; but it is a popular and a Christian belief that 'charity begins at home.' If it be true that 'he who neglects his own household is worse than an infidel,' then, indeed, is the present Republican Legislature beyond 'having grace.'—*Phila. Transcript.*

THIRST WORSE THAN HUNGER.—The disturbance to the general system which is brought about by the abstinence of food, the organism can still live upon its own substance; but during abstinence from liquid, the organism has no such source of supply within itself. Men have been known to endure absolute privation of food for some weeks, but three days of absolute privation from drink (unless in a moist atmosphere) is, perhaps, the limit of endurance. Thirst is the most atrocious torture ever invented by oriental tyrants. It is that which most effectually tames animals. Mr. Estley, when he had a refractory horse, always used thirst as the most effective power of coercion, giving a little water as the reward for every act of obedience. The histories of shipwrecks paint fearful pictures of the suffering from thirst; and one of the most appalling cases known is the celebrated imprisonment of one hundred and forty-six men in the Black Hole of Calcutta.—*Blackwood.*

PAYING POST OFFICER.—The following table shows the leading post offices that yield a revenue over and above their expenses:

New York, New York.	\$99,963 58
St. Louis, Missouri.	22,798 05
Boston, Massachusetts.	19,804 61
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.	15,373 62
San Francisco, California.	11,329 57
Cincinnati, Ohio.	9,254 30
Memphis, Tennessee.	5,108 51
New Orleans, Louisiana.	9,068 30
Wilmington, Delaware.	4,957 30
Albany, New York.	4,700 21
Louisville, Kentucky.	4,487 04
Detroit, Michigan.	3,983 10
Washington, D. C.	3,553 83
Buffalo, New York.	3,516 97
Chicago, Illinois.	2,970 26
Toledo, Ohio.	2,907 70
Nashville, Tennessee.	2,671 21
Richmond, Virginia.	2,438 67
Montgomery, Alabama.	2,343 99
Baltimore, Maryland.	2,217 83
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.	

"In our County Court," writes an Eastern friend, "one of our smart young lawyers was well come up with the other day. A witness in a case of assault and battery, was asked by the junior counsel, 'How far was you, sir, from the parties when the alleged assault took place?'"

"Four feet five inches and a half," was the answer promptly given.

"Ah!" fiercely demanded the lawyer, "how came you to be so very exact as all this?"

"Because," said the witness, very coolly, "I expected that some confounded fool would likely as not ask me, and so I went and measured it."

Value the friendship of him who stands by you in storm; swarms of insects will surround you in sunshine.

A sermon in four words, on the vanity of earthly possession: "Shrouds have no pockets."

MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS.

As a steamboat was about to start from Cincinnati, one day, a young man came on board, leading a blushing damsel by the hand, and approaching the polite clerk, said in a suppressed voice:—"I say, me and my wife hev just got married, and I'm looking for accommodation."

"Looking for a berth?" hastily inquired the clerk, passing tickets out to another passenger.

"A Berth! thunder and lightning, no," speed the astonished man, "we hain't but just married; we want a place to stay all night, you know."

Justice Fair, relates an extraordinary instance of New York detective vigilance. The police discovered a box on the wharf, from the dimmed superscription of which they made out the words "cartridges" and "Pickens." Filled with zeal, they seized the incendiary, and reported a shipment of arms prevented. The owner appeared, however, and explained to their luminous understanding that "cartridges and Pickens" should read "partridges and chickens."

A beautiful girl stepped into a shop to buy a pair of mitts. "How much are they?" "Why," said the gallant but impudent clerk, lost in gazing upon her sparkling eyes and ruby lips, "you shall have them for a kiss." "Very well," said the lady pocketing the mitts, while her eyes spoke daggers, "and as I see you give credit here, charge it on your books, and let me know when you collect it;" and she hastily tripped out.

Orange or lemon juice left upon a knife or other piece of iron, will, in a few days, produce a stain so nearly resembling that caused by blood as to deceive the most careful observer; and not many years ago, in Paris, a man was nearly convicted of murder, owing to a knife being found in his possession with what was pronounced by several witnesses to be blood upon it.

Contentment produces, in some measure, all those effects which the alchemist usually ascribes to what he calls the philosopher's stone; and if it does not bring riches, it does the same thing by banishing the desire of them. If it cannot remove the disquietudes arising from a man's mind, body, or fortune, it makes him easy under them.

Joy is heightened by exultant strains of music, but grief is eased only by low ones. "A sweet, sad measure" is the balm of a wounded spirit. Music lightens toil. The sailor pulls cheerily for his song.

Lady Blessington said: "The separation of friends by death is less terrible than two hearts that have loved, but have ceased to sympathize, while memory is still recalling what they once were to each other."

Said an astronomer to a bright eyed girl, when talking of rainbows:—"Did you ever see a lunar bow, Miss?" "I have seen a bow by moonlight, if that's what you mean," was the sly rejoinder.

An Irishman being asked what he came to America for, said: "By the powers! you may be sure that it wasn't for want, for I had plenty of that at home."

QUERY.—Mr. A., and Mr. B., are widowers, each having one daughter. Mr. A. marries Mr. B's daughter, and Mr. B. marries Mr. A's daughter. What relation will their children be to each other.

It is the vice of the unlearned to suppose that the knowledge of books is of no account, and the vice of scholars to think there is no other knowledge worth having.

A notice of a steamboat explosion ends as follows: "The captain swam ashore. So did the chambermaid. She was insured for \$75,000, and loaded with iron."

Death is the only subject upon which everybody speaks and writes without a possibility of having experienced what he undertakes to discuss.

If falsehood paralyzed the tongue what a death-like silence would pervade society.

It is very possible to be too witty to be earnest, and too earnest to be witty.

The Maine Senate has passed the bill to repeal the Personal Liberty Act, by a vote of yeas seventeen, nays ten.

How to learn all your defects—quarrel with your best friend.

It requires great virtue to support bad fortune—far greater to support good.

Never waste a long explanation upon one who cannot take a hint.