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The "Curse of Scotland."

[Chicago News.]

A popular theory is that the nine of diamonds is called "the curse of Scotland" because the duke of Cumberland wrote an order on it before Culloden. This is disproved by the fact that the card was known by that name some time before—and, on occasion, it may be remarked that exactly the same story is told of the duke of Monmouth before the battle of Bothwell Brig.

Other explanation are: First, the arms of the detested earl of Stair, who promoted the union, remotely resemble the nine of diamonds; second, "curse" is a corruption of "cross," and the nine of diamonds were in the form of a St. Andrew's cross third, every ninth king of Scotland has been a tyrant and a curse to that country; fourth, a thief in Queen Mary's reign attempted to steal the crown jewels—he got away with the nine diamonds, and all Scotland was taxed for the theft; fifth, King James IV., before Culloden, spent time searching for a missing card the nine of diamonds—which time would have been better spent in preparing for the fight on the morrow; sixth, Mary of Lorraine others say, James duke of York, introduced the game of "comette" into Scotland, the nine of diamonds is the winning card, and many of the Scottish nobility lost sums they could ill-afford at the game; seventh, the Scots held in utmost detestation the pope. At the game of 10,000, the nine of diamonds is pope; therefore the nine of diamonds is the "curse of Scotland." With all these theories, one will do well not to believe too obstinately in the story of the "butcher's disatch," as Cumberland's message "Spare none," alleged to have been written on the nine of diamonds, is termed.

Experience in a Cyclone.

[Marion Telegraph and Messenger.]

Capt. Thomas T. Roach thus describes his experience in the cyclone: "I heard a noise outside and ran out to see what it was. I saw at some distance off a heavy black cloud, funnel shaped and twisted at the bottom like a screw. It seemed whirling with immense rapidity and was coming through the woods like a wild animal. It was just awful. People began to cry out and run around distracted and I felt very queer. I saw that big black thing come bounding along like a great cannon ball and I concluded I was about to be away with it and be an angel. The cloud did not get close to the ground, but bounded up and down, jumping clear over the tops of some of the trees and tearing others to pieces.

"I thought I would lie down awhile. I selected a spot that was full of water. I don't know why I chose such a place, but maybe it was because I was in a hurry and did not have time to choose well. It was a soft place, however, and had its attractions at that moment. After I had got myself well settled in the mud, I saw that the cyclone was giving me the go by. It passed about 300 yards to my left and tore things up terribly. There was a tree standing there in full view. The cyclone struck it about forty feet from the ground, turned the branches and all around a half a dozen times like lightning, and then snatched the whole upper portion into kindling wood and carried it off. It was an awe-inspiring sight, and although I am glad I saw it, I don't want to see it again—not so close, anyhow."

Curing a "Masher."

[Minneapolis Haze.]

She came into the sanctum selling letter-files and patent bill-holders. She was pretty and sweet, and somewhat talkative. "My life is hard," she said, "but I have a jolly lot of fun. When I was at St. Paul I stopped at the Science hotel. My husband is a traveling man and was in town at the same time. I happened to meet a Bible agent, who was determined I should go to work for him—got mashed a little, I think. Anyway, he followed me about until I got rather tired of it. He wanted to call and see me at the hotel, and I let him come!"

"Now, my husband stands six feet two and is built like John L. Sullivan, and when that little Bible peddler got into our room the sweet, sunny smile died out of his face, and when my husband took him on his knee and told him sweet little stories about good little children that had gone to heaven and had their pictures preserved in Sunday school books I thought he would die. My husband told him he was real glad to find such a nice little fellow, and was so glad he liked me, and that when we got rich we would adopt him—but I must go."

"No, I don't flirt; but it is impossible to keep some conceited puppies from making fools of themselves," and gathering up her samples she went away.

"River Cattle" in Florida.

[Book Reviewer.]

In an interesting sketch of "Life in Florida," in one of the chapters of her book Mary Treat says "Large herds of cattle have their feeding grounds in the rivers and streams. In the bays and coves of the St. Johns are acres of the volucria spiralis which grows as thick as grass upon the barrens. The grass-like leaves are from one to three feet long and the slender spiral flowering stems are five to six feet. Sometimes hundreds of cattle may be seen together feeding upon this plant, standing up to their backs in water. With heads entirely under water, they fill their mouths, then elevate them to chew and swallow. The natives call them river cattle, and say a true river animal will not feed on the barrens. With this plant the cattle eat a large quantity of animal food. Thickly adhering to the leaves are conical leaf-lice cocoons holding the larvae of a chironomid fly. This kind of diet and manner of feeding ought in time, according to Darwin's theory, to evolve a new species of cow."

A New Kind of Powder

[Chicago Tribune.]

It is said that Krupp, the gunmaker, has introduced a new kind of powder. It is known as brown powder, owing to its peculiar color, which resembles that of chocolate, and owes its discovery to a mere accident. The brown powder appears to have a decided advantage over the black in producing a greater velocity with an equal pressure of gas, and is applicable to guns of every caliber. The remarkable fact about it is that it explodes only in a tightly closed space, while in the open air or in a powder-box it ignites slowly and without explosion, although it is said to consist of saltpeter, sulphur and charcoal, like the black powder, the difference consisting in the relative proportions of these ingredients.

Oatmeal and Dyspepsia.

[Chicago Tim.]

The fact that Carlyle did not escape dyspepsia by oatmeal has attracted general attention to that article of food. A French physician has pointed out that the Scotch, who eat more oatmeal than any other people, are pre-eminently a dyspeptic people so long as they remain at home and adhere to their oatmeal diet, and he rightly argues from this fact that oatmeal is exceptionally difficult to digest.

Death for One Blunder.

Among the 1,500 laws regarding the French press is one centimes old, which threatens the proof-reader with death for even one blunder.

Japanese girls, it is said, use their fingernails as pens when writing love letters.

CASH FOR OLD LETTERS.

The Market Value of Answers Written to Quack Cure-Alls.

[Detroit News.]

"How do these people who pretend to give advice and send medicine for nothing make it pay?"

"Strange as it may seem," replied a physician, "the part of the business which these quacks advertise to do for the good of humanity pays them nothing at all. They are like the fishman who sold eggs at a loss. He said that it was the quantity that paid him. The same way that these people. It's the quantity that pays them. It isn't the amount of medicine they send out, either, but merely the number of letters received, that makes that kind of business profitable. How? Listen, and I'll tell you. Take one case. I have known of thousands. A person writes to one of those firms whose advertisements appears in every country paper in the union. He may have liver complaint, or kidney trouble. Perhaps he is dyspeptic, or suffering from some other kind of disease. He resolves to write to one of the 'philanthropists' and that's precisely what they want. They are not after your custom, but they do want your letter, for that is the only merchantable article in the whole transaction.

"There are houses in New York," he continued, "where they make it a business to simply trade in these letters. Many a man, after having written for medicine from a certain house and received a little box of worthless ground herbs, valued at about 1 cent, has been surprised a short time after to receive circulars and letters from all sorts of people about everything conceivable that can be purchased with money. He wonders how people down east have learned his address. It was that fatal letter he wrote to the medicine house. As soon as that especial firm had done with the young man his name and thousands of other letters were sold for a good round sum. The price varies according to the supply and demand. I have known a bundle of letters numbering 1,000 to have been sold for \$500. A few years ago there was a firm for the cure of everything that flesh is heir to doing business in Detroit. It became bankrupt and a receiver was appointed, and upon an order from one of the judges, he disposed of about \$3,000 letters, receiving therefor nearly \$2,000.

"You see now why it is to the interest of such men to advertise so liberally in small papers and invite correspondence. All these people lay particular stress on the idea that it is not necessary for the patient to make visits. Years of practice in certain branches of medicine, they claim, enables them to properly diagnose a case from the letter written. A diagnosis is very easy when the same remedy is applied to everything. The writer gets a box of herbs, or a little bottle, or a box of pills, and the sharp gets the letter, which is of much more value to him than the worthless stuff he sends his writer. Nor are these letters destroyed when once sold. They are passed on and on, sold and resold, till the victim absolutely refuses any more circulars or removes to some other city. His name is then stricken off the list of 'greeneyes,' and he obtains peace once more."

How Sympathy Depends on Appearance.

[Chronicle "Underton &"]

I have come to the conclusion that human sympathy, like human respect, goes entirely on appearances. A man may be suffering agony from some hidden trouble of the brain or the body, but he will not get half as much sympathy as the man whose eyes are watery and whose nose is inflamed from a cold in the head. One fellow will have a headache that is splitting that portion of his anatomy open, but the fellow with the hollow cough will divert every atom of human feeling in the vicinity. I don't know any thing more exacting than to have some one tell you how well you are looking when you're dying of indigestion. It's like watching a fellow crack nuts with his teeth when you've got the toothache. It is much more bearable to be told you look sick when you are well than to be congratulated upon your healthy appearance when you are sick.

The average human being will not believe a man's starving unless he can see his ribs. A man never gets much sympathy for a broken leg until it is all done up in splints. A caruncle on the back of a fellow's neck will inspire more pity than a hidden spinal complaint. A man may travel around with an aneurism of the sort, and the fellow who has the shrewdness to go to bed with a sick headache will get all the "ellies and stuff his lady friends can send him. It is a queer world, as everybody tells me I'm looking well," said a cynical fellow the other night. "Last week I had a cold in my head and everybody sympathized with me. Now that it has gone down and tackled my bronchial tubes, I feel as if I were in for consumption, I don't get any sympathy at all."

The Term "Chestnut."

[Chicago Times.]

It is with genuine satisfaction we learn that the term "chestnut," as applied in the colloquial slang of the day to a stale joke, implies no reflection upon the character of the chestnut of commerce and the Italian roasting machine. A gentleman writing to the New York Sun asserts, with every appearance of authority, that "chestnut," as opprobriously applied to a joke, was first used concerning some hoary witticisms in the performance of a minstrel company at the Chestnut Street theater, Philadelphia. One of these was repeated in the lobby of the Continental hotel in that city, and the relater was promptly reprimanded on the ground that the Chestnut Street theatre had a copyright on it. From this actors came to apply the single word "chestnut" to every story they heard frequently repeated.

Without this explanation the public might have gone on using the term "chestnut," supposing all the time that it derived its slang significance from the very unpleasant sensation occasioned by biting into a "most seeming fair" nut of the custanea vulgaris only to fill the mouth with the bitterness of its mold or the dustiness of its must.

Cattle Shrinking by Shipment.

[National Stockman.]

Those not conversant with the subject would hardly suppose that cattle will shrink more in process of shipment in severe cold than in severely hot weather, yet such is the case. Indeed, nothing will so quickly reduce the weight of a ripened animal as to subject it to a long ride in a stock car with the thermometer below zero. Animal life is sustained by combustion, and the bullock or pig in transit through an icy atmosphere is being slowly burned up in flesh and tissue.