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In some sections of Dakota, where fuel is expensive, farmers will this year grow an acre or two of flax for fuel. It is claimed that a ton of flax straw is worth more for fuel than a ton of soft coal.

A feature in a New York physician's house, described in the American Architect, is a small hospital on the roof, carrying out a hobby of the doctor's for quarantining any member of his own family stricken with any infectious disease.

It occurred to a man on Capitol Hill, Washington, that it would be a good idea to mix the soil of all the States and territories in the Capitol park. Accordingly he wrote to postmasters and others, from Maine to Arizona, and received from each a package of earth, until his collection was completed. On Washington's birthday he mixed up the earth and dumped it in a corner.

It is reported that the czar intends, in 1887, to assume a title equivalent to that of emperor over the whole of Central Asia. It is said that his imperial majesty will make a state entry into Samarcand, and there formally assume the sovereignty over Central Asia in the presence of all the amcers and khans who are under the sway of imperial Russia. This is no new design on the part of Russia, for this scheme was for a long time under consideration by the late Alexander II., and has only come to light now through the indiscretion of a high official.

Two paragraphs have recently been going the rounds of the newspapers, the matter of which is undoubtedly erroneous. One says that a Connecticut man consumes two tons of chewing tobacco a year. If that is true, he uses every day about eighty-seven papers of tobacco of the ordinary size. The other paragraph declares that two women in Paris had a dispute as to which could talk the faster, and that one of them on trial distinctly pronounced 296,311 words in three hours. If that is true she uttered 1,645 words a minute, and twenty-seven words every second, which is commended for trial to any one who thinks it can be done.

It is estimated by insurance companies that in the United States last year dwelling houses were burned at the rate of one every hour, with an average loss of \$1,396. Barns and stables, fifty per week. Country stores, three per day, with a loss of \$110,000 per week. Ten hotels burn weekly, with a loss per year of \$4,000,000. Every other day a lumber yard goes up in smoke, each representing \$20,000. Forty-four cotton factories, the loss in each case being \$28,000; forty-three woolen mills at \$25,000 each, and forty-two chemical works at \$27,000 each, were destroyed by fire last year. Forty-two boot and shoe factories were consumed, the loss being \$17,000 each. Theatres were lapped up by the flames at the rate of five per month, average loss \$19,000. Only about half as many court houses were destroyed, the cost of each being about \$20,000.

On the Rio Grande frontier it is an open secret that wholesale smuggling to Mexico takes place almost daily. The laws of Mexico exact such enormous duties upon every conceivable article of necessity that paying such duties is often equivalent to buying the merchandise a second time. The number of papers necessary to make out an invoice to protect the shipment during its frequent inspections along the route and to pass State lines, which requires a world of stationery, makes it necessary for the shipper to be as expert as a Philadelphia lawyer to keep track of the red tape. This partially accounts for the prevalence of smuggling. There are many countries where an ordinary man is unable to attend to his own business of passing goods through a custom house, but Mexico is pre-eminently one of them, for if a man untutored in the technicalities of Mexican tariff law attempts to enter goods he finds himself in hot water at once. Fines of considerable magnitude are imposed, unlooked-for delays and annoyances are constantly happening. Lately the government officials of Mexico have commenced to punish contrabandists severely, and every one caught is severely dealt with to the full extent of rigid law. This has never been done heretofore. Jones, a Mormon, who lives on the Corralitos property, 120 miles southwest of El Paso, was sent out to get supplies and was caught with contraband goods by the Mexican guards, and has been sentenced to jail for six months. Marcos y Fuentes, a Mexican of the frontier town of Ascencio, is in jail now for six months for the same offense.

OUT TO THE SEA.

"Out to the sea! Out to the sea!" Sing the waters of inland rivers; From source to mouth In the sunny south The liquid stream, song quivers. "Down through the blue! Down through the blue!" Sings the moonlight's silvery sheen; "Thy breast must bear No greater care Than purest light e'er seen." "Sisters are we! Sisters are we!" In a harmony sing the twin. "Toward ocean we float Nor sail nor boat To guide us toward the main." "Careless are we! Careless are we!" Of shores we pass in flowing. We bid them smile As we pass the while, But cannot stay our going. "Oceans are vast! Oceans are vast, And the currents playing among them Forbid us to stay, But call us away; Think of our songs—we have sung them." Lessons are learned! Lessons are learned! From the water and moonlight flowing Out to the sea. In such harmony Like sisters in their going. —Courier-Journal.

BALKED.

"Won't you come down, Olive?" Rose Annesley paused, with her hand on her sister's chair; but Olive only laughed merrily, and shook her head. "What?" she replied, "when this is Mr. St. Cloud's first visit, and you two have not seen each other since you parted at Mount Desert? No, Rose dear, nothing would induce me to spoil the meeting." "The deuce!" muttered St. Cloud, under his breath; "here's a nice piece of work. I thought Rose owned fully as much as her sister. I'm not able to marry a girl without money—I really am not. If I could only put up a few thousand dollars, I could command a junior partnership in our house." He checked himself; he had spoken more freely than he intended. "How about this Miss Olive Annesley?" he asked, with a forced smile. "Anything of an old maid? Likely to die soon, and leave her property to Rose, eh?" "I should say not," answered Max, comically. "I have only seen Miss Annesley at a distance, but I should judge her to be a fine-looking woman of about twenty-seven or eight." "Quite young enough to marry," murmured St. Cloud, gloomily. Then rousing himself, with an effort, he changed the subject. But when he called on the Annesleys the next morning, he invited Max most cordially to accompany him, adding, jocularly: "You can take a chance at the heiress, old fellow; but mind, if you win her, I shall call for a division of the spoils." And Max was not loth to accept the invitation. He felt some curiosity to see St. Cloud's sweetheart, and remembering their conversation of the night before, some pity for her also. "He cannot love her as she ought to be loved!" was his mental comment—a conviction which strengthened after his meeting with Rose. She greeted him so cordially as "Bertie's friend" that when he looked into her innocent eyes, he felt something like a pang of self-reproach. He was presented to Olive at the same time, but she seated herself near St. Cloud, and seemed really determined to cultivate her future brother-in-law. St. Cloud responded warmly to her efforts, and a war of wits ensued between them, in which, man of the world as he was, he could not but feel, at times, a little puzzled by Olive Annesley. The arts and flatteries which he had practiced so successfully on other girls seemed to fall harmlessly on Olive's armor. In the days that followed he found himself devoting much more time to this pale, gray-eyed girl than to his own pretty Rose. He said to himself that she was the moneyed member of the family, and that it would certainly be to his interest to gain some influence over her. At first he really had no other object. He saw that Olive was peculiar—that she differed from the ordinary society girls whom he knew so well, and he took pains to become acquainted with her pet theories, her favorite authors—everything calculated to interest her. They had frequent discussions, in which St. Cloud would, at first, oppose her ideas, and then, with subtle tact, seem to defer to them. Rose was necessarily thrown a great deal into Max Hart's society; but she showed no sense of neglect, and only rejoiced that Bertie and her quiet sister should have taken such a fancy to each other. Max Hart alone divined in it all a deeper meaning than appeared on the surface. He saw that Olive was beginning to look for St. Cloud's coming as eagerly as Rose, that her color deepened whenever he approached, and that she showed at times an agitation strangely at variance with her usual calm demeanor. He was filled with righteous indignation. It was bad enough that a girl like Rose should be willing to throw herself away on a selfish scamp like St. Cloud, but that she should be deceived, betrayed, and, above all, by her own sister, was too much. He lost all self-control whenever he thought of it. Fortunately for his patience, the business which detained him was now concluded, and he found himself free to return.

Max Hart smiled pleasantly. He was a large, fine-looking man, with a rather bronzed complexion, and frank, kindly eyes.

"I am stopping here on business for our law firm," he explained. "They were at one time located here, and still have a good deal of business in the city. I saw your name on the hotel register, and concluded to hunt you up, but have been waiting so long your patience was nearly exhausted. What keeps you out so late?"

St. Cloud smiled complacently. He had always liked Max Hart well enough, though he considered the young lawyer in some respects an "odd fellow." Tonight, however, St. Cloud felt particularly good-humored, and therefore conversationally inclined.

"Well, to tell the truth, I'm engaged," he explained. "It's getting time for me to settle down, and I couldn't do so under more favorable circumstances. Rose Annesley is the dearest little girl in the world, and owns quite a handsome property beside."

"Do you mean the older or younger Miss Annesley?" queried Max, rather dryly.

And St. Cloud rejoined, in surprise: "I allude to the younger. Are they not both the daughters of the late John Annesley?"

"They are," replied his friend. "But Mr. Annesley was twice married, and his elder daughter inherits her fortune from her mother's family. Mr. Annesley himself lived up to his entire income, and his younger daughter inherited nothing. She is, and always has been, entirely dependent on her sister, though I doubt if she has ever felt this dependence, as Miss Annesley shares every comfort and luxury with her. I know whereof I speak," he added, with a sidelong look at St. Cloud's crestfallen countenance; "for our senior partner is Miss Olive Annesley's guardian, and transacts all her business affairs."

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But the evening before his departure, he overheard some words which seemed to him proof positive of what he feared.

Rose had stepped into the conservatory to gather for him some of her favorite flowers as a parting gift, and Max stood alone at a large bay-window which overlooked the balcony. St. Cloud and Olive, who had been promenading the balcony, apparently in deep conversation, passed near the window, which was partially open.

"I have much, very much, to tell you, Olive," he heard St. Cloud say, eagerly, "but I dare not. Never was a man placed in a more unfortunate position than myself."

"Why should you fear to speak?" asked Olive, in a slightly agitated tone, "if what you wish to say be indeed from your heart?"

"Can you doubt it?" was the reply, accompanied by a glance which made Max thrill with anger.

But at that moment Rose's cheerful tones were heard, exclaiming:

"Oh, Mr. Hart, I cannot find a single Marchal Niel in bloom! I am so sorry! With one of those buds, your bouquet would be perfect."

She stooped as she spoke to pin it on his coat, and Max glancing down at the little, white hand which held the flowers, thought, bitterly:

"Poor child! Betrayed by both lover and sister, what an awakening lies before her!"

That awakening came sooner than he dreamed, for the next afternoon, as Rose reclined, half asleep, on a sofa in the library, she heard St. Cloud ring at the door.

Before she could rouse herself sufficiently to speak, his voice was audible in the adjoining parlor, asking eagerly:

"You here, Olive, and alone? Where is Rose?"

"I left her asleep," was Olive's answer. And St. Cloud, understanding her to mean in her own apartments, said hurriedly:

"Do not rouse her. It is so seldom that I see you alone, and—lately I think you have avoided me, Olive."

There was no answer, and he continued:

"I cannot blame you; I know how true and noble you are, and I will not even speak of what I have suffered. But I place my whole fate in your hands. Decide for me. Say but the word, and I will marry Rose."

Olive's head dropped, her breath came quicker, as she murmured:

"No!"

A gleam of triumph shot from St. Cloud's eye. He drew near Olive, and bent over her until his cheek almost touched her own.

"My darling," he whispered, "you do not know what a struggle I have undergone. But Rose is generous. I will tell her all, and at some future day, when she is happy again, you will let me claim you—is it not so? For you do forgive me; you do love me a little. I am sure of it."

He laid his hand tenderly on her own, but at that touch, Olive started abruptly to her feet and turned her gray eyes, blazing like stars, full upon the astonished St. Cloud.

"Love you!" she said. "Yes, as you have loved her—my poor, trusting little Rose! Forgive you? Yes, when she forgets you—not before! Go, Bertie St. Cloud, and seek some other dupe! I have outwitted you at your own game!"

St. Cloud waited for no second bidding. He had been snared in the toils he himself had laid, and silently raging at his own failure, he quitted the house forever.

Olive turned at once to seek her sister. She found her still crouching on the sofa, from which she had half-risen, her face pale as ashes, her whole frame trembling like a leaf.

"Olive, Olive," she cried piteously, "I have heard all!"

And Olive, with the muttered comment, "Thank heaven!" knelt beside her, and drawing the poor little head down upon her shoulder, soothed her with the tenderest caresses. From that time St. Cloud's name was never mentioned between them.

But the rumor of the broken engagement must, in some way, have reached Max Hart, for it was not long ere he made it convenient to see the two sisters again. He asked no question; he sought no confidence; but his silent and respectful sympathy touched them as no words could have done.

In time he gained the place he coveted—that of a friend valued above all others by them both. But it was long ere he ventured to speak of love to Rose, and when he did, the color rushed painfully to her cheek.

"Do you know the story of my past?" she said, bravely.

And he replied: "Aye, and love you but the more! You are still my rose—my queen of flowers!"

"A poor, withered, faded rose!" she answered, smiling through her tears.

"But the one rose in the world for me!" he said.

And then she placed both hands in his to have and to hold.—Katherine Hyde.

Horse Prayer Cure.

The priests of Naples celebrate a yearly festival for the sake of prayer-curing vicious horses. One by one the brutes are annointed and blessed, and their masters buy holy biscuits, which they string together and hang around the horses in the form of a necklace. At the conclusion of the solemnity howitzers are blazed off, and the priest collects his fees with the aid of a peremptory bailiff. The belief in the efficacy of the farce is not more astonishing than the "King's Evil" superstition of mediæval England, where hosts of scrofula patients went hundreds of miles afoot to have their sores touched by the hand of the king.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

SELECT SIFTINGS.

A chemist has discovered an extract from coal tar 230 times sweeter than sugar.

The only Presidents who were never in Congress are Washington, Taylor, Grant, Arthur and Cleveland.

It was once a popular opinion that death is delayed until the ebb of the tide. Hence in cases of sickness many pretended that they could foretell the hour of the soul's departure.

The word grenade means pomegranate, and is so called from its resemblance in shape to that fruit. In military circles a grenade is an iron ball filled with powder, which causes great injury when it bursts.

The curious and remarkable discovery is reported that a South American shrub, called "aliza," exudes a juice which acts so powerful in stopping flows of blood that when a knife is smeared with it and used for surgical operations, the largest vessels may be severed without any hemorrhage.

Forks were used by the ancients for the same purpose as they now are. A two-pronged silver fork has been found in a ruin on the Via Appia at Rome, and one of five prongs, one of which is broken off, resembling our silver forks, has been found in a tomb at Pestum, and is now preserved in the museum at Naples.

A popular term formerly in use for the nails on the ten fingers was the ten "commandments," which, says Nares, doubtless led to the swearing by them, as by the real commandments. In the same way the fingers were also called the ten bones, and it was a common thing to use the exclamation, "By these ten bones!"

Probably the first American establishment for the exclusive manufacture of edged tools was founded by Mr. Samuel Collins, at Collinsville, Conn., which is now one of the largest establishments of the kind in the world. It was begun about 1826, when the product of a day's labor was the forging and tempering of eight broadaxes.

The minute hand of the clock on Westminster abbey is sixteen feet long, and the hour hand nine feet. They weigh about a hundred pounds each, and are kept in motion by weights proportionally ponderous, the hands and appendages, in all, weighing about one and a half tons.

In a recent snow storm in London this clock was stopped, the hands being impeded by the snow.

In Lisbon able-bodied beggars increase their claims to public charity by turning their throats in prodigious gorges. Special experts teach the art of developing these excrescences, and the proprietor of a thirty-pound neck-pouch feels as proud as the owner of a prize pig. There are dealers in deformed babies that can be borrowed at so much a night, with or without the privilege of stimulating their howls by additional artifices.

WISE WORDS.

A good name, like good will, is got by many actions and lost by one.

Pale death beats with impartial foot at the doors of the poor and turrents of kings.

Nature is frank and will allow no man to abuse himself without giving him a hint of it.

Remember this: However small you consider your possessions there is some one who envies you them.

There is no luck, but there is such a thing as hard work and knowing how to make it answer for what others call "luck."

Real difference of opinion, honestly expressed whenever the subject is serious enough to demand it, always deserves respectful attention and consideration.

No matter how low down man may get there is not more than one in every 100 of them but will prove true to a small trust if his pride be strengthened by your seeming faith in him.

Much of the world is prejudiced against facts, because facts stick to the text and don't go out of the way to concoct a palatable medium for the world's own genteel taste and wise opinions.

One breach of faith will always be remembered, no matter how loyal your subsequent life may be. People may imagine that they trust you, yet all the time they have an eye to the former breach.

Robinson Crusoe's Island.

The island of Juan Fernandez, upon which Alexander Selkirk, the prototype of Robinson Crusoe, spent his four solitary years, has never since been inhabited until twelve years ago, when the present Governor Rodt settled upon it with a small colony. Rodt is a Switzer. In 1866 he fought for Austria against the Prussians, and in 1870 for France. A truce of the French he emigrated to Chili and made himself useful to the government, at whose invitation he undertook the colonization of Robinson Crusoe's lonely island. Here he has resided for the last twelve years as governor and judge. Most of the settlements over whom he presides are German and Swiss. Nearly all the vegetation of the temperate zone thrives upon Juan Fernandez.

One for the Mahdi.

Lord Wolsley, in the course of his recent lecture, told a number of amusing anecdotes, the best of which was as follows: One of his officers, who happened to have a glass eye, was one day examining a prisoner, a zealous follower of the Mahdi. "Why do you believe in the Mahdi?" "I believe in him," replied the man, "because he can work miracles." The officer immediately took out his glass eye, tossed it up in the air, caught it and put it back in its place. "D'ye think the Mahdi could do that?" he asked. The man was appalled, and couldn't say another word.

WASHED AWAY.

All observed it started, drop by drop; The stream grew larger and larger every day; And lo! its flooding waters did not stop Till it had washed the bridge of love away.

The whole foundation, founded on the rock Of faith, fell swiftly downward, stone by stone; Fell swiftly down beneath the awful shock Of waves which beat so cruelly upon.

Its hydra-head it lifted ever higher; It coiled its sinewy length all through the day, Flooding the pleasant paths where had desire Walked undisturbed upon her way.

And when the night-time came, an awesome scene Showed where the hurtful flood-tide had been sent, For desolation reigned where erst had been A sunlight path, and flowers of sweet content.

Ah me! the saddest of sad sights it is, To see the wrecks of joy strewn thick ahead; The sweet, sweet flowers of happiness to miss, To miss, and feel they are for ever dead. To know no more upon joy's pleasant track, Our longing feet in all the years may stray;

Saddest of all—there is no going back, Because the bridge of love is washed away.

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

A false scent—a counterfeit. A long "felt" want—a new hat. Always what it is cracked up to be—ice.

"This is a long tramp," said a policeman as he ran in a six foot gait.—Boston Bulletin.

Some men are born great, some wrestle with the parlor stove, and some have the charge of the kitchen fire thrust upon them.—Siftings.

A friend of ours, absent on a trip to Washington, writes that he has been all through the national capital and considerable of his own.—New York News.

SACCHARINE COMMODITIES. 'Tis sweet to woo a favoring muse, Sweet is bread and honey, Sweet is glad election-news, And sweet the girl with money.

—Goodall's Sun. A little four-year old, while praying one night, said: "Please, God, bless papa and mamma, and make me a good little girl, and if at first you don't succeed, try, try again."—Life.

IMPROVED VERBION. How does the frisky little kid Improve each shining minute; He finds the jam his mother hid, And sticks his fingers in it.

—Pittsburg Commercial Courier. "Yes," said Fogg, in a facetious vein, twenty years ago Charley could not read or write; now he speaks two languages beside his own and is more or less familiar with half a dozen more. What do you think of that?" "Wonderful!" echoed the boarders. "And how old did you say he was?" asked Jones. Fogg—"Twenty-one next summer." Chorus—"H'm!"—Boston Transcript.

"How are you getting on?" asked Yeast of young Crimsoenback, whom he met on the street the other day. "First-rate," was the young man's reply. "What are you doing?" further queried Yeast. "I'm a medical director in an institution downtown." "A medical director?" "Yes; you see I direct envelopes in a patent-medicine house." "Oh,"—Statesman.

Strange footsteps haunt my chamber in the night; When shadows lengthen in the pale moon-light, A sound of weird and phantom forms in flight. (Rats.)

And from without my window comes a sound Like harps Æolian playing underground, And wailing voices from the dark, profound. (Cats.) —E. D. Pierson.

Games Among the Ancients.

Running, rowing, wrestling, boxing, quoit throwing, hunting, chariot racing, horse racing and games of ball were favorite sports of the ancients.

Polo, which has become fashionable during these last few years, is the "Chugar" of the Persians, and perhaps the Tartars, too, and is supposed to be prehistoric.

Games kindred to fives, racquets, tennis and lawn tennis were played in the days of Horace, and may have had their origin centuries before that era.

There was another game, "paganica," which was supposed to be a roving game, somewhat like hockey, golf or lacrosse. These games were much encouraged among the young men, and were played in the Campus Martius, Rome.

It is a curious thing, but handball is prehistoric in Ireland, and was and is a great national sport; and as it is known that the Phœnicians were in Ireland many centuries B. C., it is quite possible that they imported it from the Mediterranean, but this is pure speculation.

"Buck, buck, how many fingers do I hold up?" which used to be a common enough game among boys at school and in the streets of Rome in the days of Cicero, and mentioned as "micare digitis," to glitter or wink with the fingers, i. e., to move them quick as lightning, or to use a favorite expression of modern young lady novelists, to "glist," or we might take another of their favorite words, to "shimmer."

More than one-half of the internal revenue receipts of the government come from the four states of Illinois, New York, Ohio and Kentucky.