

SHAVING IN PORTO RICO.

No Use for American Razors or the Customary Soap.

The natives of our new territory, Porto Rico, have no need to buy soap, for the wooded country abounds in plants whose leaves and bulbs supply most fully the place of that indispensable article. Among the best of these is the soapree, so called, though it is more a bush than a tree. Its bulb when rubbed on wet clothes makes a snow-white lather, which has an odor like brown Windsor soap. The Porto Ricans, who are all, from the highest to the lowest, great dandies in their way, make soap out of cocoon oil and homemade lye—a fine soap it is, smooth and fragrant. This cocoon oil soap is used for shaving. When a man wishes to have a shave in the morning he starts out with his cocoon shell cup, and his donkey tail brush and bottle. It is never any trouble to find an empty bottle in Porto Rico, Cuba, Jamaica, or almost any of the larger West India islands, even in remote spots in the mountains. At least twenty generations of thirsty people have lived there and thrown away bottles. The man carries no mirror; he is too poor to own such a luxury. Not one house in twenty in Porto Rico has even the very cheapest looking glass. But generously rich nature provides the mirror, as well as the soap. The man goes to some convenient pool in the mountain stream where the water is quite still—there is his mirror. He breaks his bottle on a stone, and deftly picks out a sharp piece of suitable size. Then he lathers his face profusely, and begins to scrape away with his piece of glass, which in his hands works as well as the best steel razor. A cut, or even a slight scratch, is extremely rare as a result of this al fresco form of shaving.

Betrayed by a Postage Stamp.

Some folks always stamp their letters upside down for luck, said a postoffice inspector in a reminiscent mood, "and others put the stamp on the back, which makes the cancellation clerk forget his religion. I remember we caught a fellow once through the peculiar way he stamped a letter. He was wanted for frivolling with the laws of Uncle Sam, but had skipped out and couldn't be located. In looking over some of his correspondence I had noticed that he always put the stamp crosswise, so as to leave a small triangle of the envelope at the upper right hand corner. Why he did it I don't know, but the stamp was always in that one particular spot, and gummed down with mathematical accuracy. One day I was in a certain Georgia town, and while loafing near the cancellation table at the postoffice noticed several letters stamped as I have described. Just on chance I took a memoranda of the address and postmark, which was Chattanooga, and happened to be in that place on the following week I collared my man as he was inquiring for his mail. The letters I noticed turned out to have been addressed to his wife. When I told him how I got my pointer he was mad as blazes, and I guess he stamps his letters straight now—if he is out yet."

Safety Paper.

A new kind of safety paper for blaks etc., is announced, though the inventor's name does not appear. It is a foreign idea, one feature of the invention consisting in printing or otherwise impressing on the paper employed a plurality of sets of lines or marks, one or more of which sets are indelible and the remaining sets delible; these lines or marks are made so fine and so closely alternating or relatively disposed that, in ordinary observation with the naked eye, no single line or mark is distinguishable. Again, the indelible lines or marks are made of a color differing from those complementary to that of the delible lines or marks, so that, owing to their close juxtaposition, they will convey the impression of a color differing from those of either of the sets of lines or marks. Thus, any chemical action or erasure on such paper would, it is claimed, be at once discernible, and is shared made by the two color combinations would be hard to duplicate.

Queer Bread.

The Swedes, as the people of Sweden are called, bake their rye bread only two or three times a year; and what a baking it is, to be sure! It lasts for a week or more, and how busy every one is! They do not bake this bread in loaves, but they make it in flat cakes about the size of a dinner-plate with a large hole in the middle.

Artificial Wine.

About 250,000 gallons of artificial wine are being made from barley every year in a large factory in Hamburg. The medical profession in Germany thinks very highly of the wine, and recommends it in the hospitals of that country.

Clay Pipes.

The British museum contains a very full collection of clay pipes, dating back as far as the sixteenth century. The custom of waxing the pipe to prevent it sticking to the lips was introduced by the Dutch about the year 1700.

The Best Soldiers.

A foreign medical officer, speaking of soldiers, states that physical maturity does not occur till between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-five. Boys under twenty are almost sure to break down. The best armies are those with twenty-two years as the minimum.

Gunpowder Test.

The test required of gunpowder of any and all classes is to give the projectile a muzzle velocity of 2,000 feet per second, with a pressure not greater than fifteen tons to the square inch in the powder chamber.

Elephant Teeth.

Elephants have only eight teeth—two above and two below on each side. All elephants' "baby teeth" fall out when the animal is about fourteen years old, and a new set grows.

The Atlantic Cable.

About three seconds are occupied in transmitting a message from one end of the Atlantic cable to the other. This is about seven hundred miles a second.

GROWING GOLD.

The Mystery Explained by a Chemist's Experiments.

It is generally supposed that the nuggets which are found in the river gravels of Klondike and other auriferous regions have been brought down by the rivers direct from the reefs in which the gold originally lay. Many practical miners and scientific men, however, have long been of the opinion that this cannot be the case, for no masses of gold so large a size are ever found in the reefs themselves. They believe, on the other hand that the nuggets have grown where they are now found, just as a crystal of salt will grow in strong brine; but with so insoluble a substance as gold it is difficult to understand how such growth could take place. Experiments carried out in Australia have shown that decaying vegetable matter will cause the deposition of gold from solutions of gold salts, but these salts are not known to occur in reefs. The mystery is now solved. A Slavonic chemist named Zigmody has just shown that gold itself can exist in a soluble form. By acting on a slightly alkaline solution of a gold salt with formaldehyde and submitting the product to dialysis he has succeeded in obtaining gold in a colloidal condition, in which state it is soluble in water and may be precipitated by the addition of common salt. It is washed out by the rain, carried away in solution by the rivers, and deposited in the river gravels wherever there is anything containing salt to cause its precipitation. In the course of ages a large nugget may be formed in this way.

Courageous Animals.

In North America one of the largest of the weasel family is the "fisher," a very large, long-furred polecat, living mainly by the waterside, and, like many others of the tribe very partial to fish. It weighs about sixteen pounds, and its long, richly colored fur is exported in great quantities to different parts of Europe, though not often used in this country. A trapped "fisher" will attack anyone who comes in reach of the trap chain, and when free will beat off any dog of twice its size. But perhaps the most striking example of the courage of the smaller species yet recorded is that known as the fishing cat, which, though no relation to the Canadian "fisher," is quite as courageous. One of these, which was kept in a menagerie, broke through into the next cage, and there attacked and killed a leopard which was three times its own size.

The Indian mongoose possesses all the courage of the polecat, together with amiability and a "regulated" mind. It turns its pluck and provess to good ends, and we imagine it to stand at the head of the list of the smaller animals if quality as well as quantity is demanded as a mark of intrepidity. There is no doubt that the mongoose realizes the deadly nature of the cobra's bite. Its intense excitement is strong evidence of this. But a mongoose has been known to fight just as bravely against other foes. One was seen to attack and drive off a large greyhound which it fancied was hostile to it.

He Said Grace.

The old United Presbyterian kirk at Savoeh, in Scotland, had a minister some sixty years ago named David Caw, a very diminutive man, standing only about five feet two inches. He married a strapping, handsome lass, some five or six inches taller than he, and her name was Grace Wilson. The Sunday after the wedding he got a neighboring minister to preach for him, so that he could sit with his bride on the first Sunday. The minister was a good deal of a wag, so Mr. Caw made him promise faithfully that he would not allude in the sermon to him, his bride or the fact of the marriage, but Mr. Caw nearly sank through the floor when the text was given out, Ephesians iii, 8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this Grace given."

Writing on Glass.

A patent has been granted in Germany for a new method of writing on glass, using an aluminum point. The glass which is to be written on is first moistened with vinegar and the writing or drawing made with the point. Fine particles of aluminum adhere to the glass, which when dry shows the marking in silvery lines that cannot be readily removed by friction.

When France's President Travels.

The French President travels free on the railways during his official tour of France, but when the return journey is concluded, his secretary calculates what it would have cost if paid for at the regular rates, and this sum is handed over to be distributed among the poorest paid of the railway men.

Capitals of the United States.

Lancaster was the capital of the United States from Sept. 27, 1777, to Sept. 30, 1777. The capital was also located for a time at Baltimore, York, Princeton, Annapolis and New York. In 1800 the seat of the Government was transferred permanently from Philadelphia to Washington.

Vase Candlesticks.

The woman who is fond of novelties for her table will rejoice to learn that candlesticks are now made with vase pedestals. The holder for the wax taper rises from a little bowl in which flowers or ferns may be held.

The Visible Stars.

The number of stars visible to the naked eye is less than six thousand. The number of stars visible through the largest telescope is probably not less than one hundred millions.

An Underground City.

A subterranean city exists in Galicia, Austria, Poland, which contains a population of over 1,000 men, women and children, many of whom have never seen the light of day.

Paris Has Popular Prices.

The theatres of Paris have popular representations on certain days, when the seats cost only a quarter, or half, the usual price.

English Travelers.

It is calculated that in moving about from one place to another the people of England spend about \$750,000 a day.

BIRDS SHY OF WINDSTORMS

Tactics They Pursue to Escape Impending Danger.

The power of the winds is dreaded by almost all ordinary birds, and an instinctive knowledge seems to be possessed by them that if they once surrender to the force of the winds unknown dangers will have to be faced. Consequently, when a high storm prevails, all birds seek shelter of some kind. The strong-winged sea birds are the last to take fright at the approaching hurricane, but even they will finally try to escape its fury beneath the shelter of some cliff or sand dune. During tremendous windstorms birds may sometimes be seen flying overhead at a great altitude. When this phenomenon is observed it may be taken for granted that the upper atmosphere is comparatively quiet and that the disturbance is confined chiefly to the lower regions. Many sea birds seek the upper air of common quietness during tropical hurricanes.

When a heavy wind or gale springs up the gulls, terns and petrels will fly back and forth over the water's surface, rising and falling, and uttering their peculiar cries of warning. If the storm extends too high up they will drift gradually with the wind or fly away to the edge of the hurricane. Very often they get caught unexpectedly in the gales of wind and they find themselves in a dangerous position. Then they struggle with might and main against the powers of the air currents. Knowing that danger and death are in the air, they once come under the dominion of the wind, they use all the strength and tactics they are capable of to combat the elements. A young herring gull, a petrel or a tern thus surprised will beat up against the wind with powerful flight. It will rise high in the air, facing the gale and making a little progress forward as well as upward. Then it will suddenly descend with rapid flight toward one side of the storm-swept path, but falling off at the time in the direction of the blowing wind. Once more it will sweep around and face the storm, ascending heavenward and striking desperately out toward the direction of the storm.

Non-Freezing Water Pipes.

The Germans, who are so far ahead of many nations in a certain class of technical skill, have incorporated into their plumbing practice a non-freezing water pipe, which will save an incalculable amount of annoyance and profanity in a single winter. The purpose of the invention is not only to prevent the water from being frozen, but to provide an opportunity for its expansion by cold. Into the iron pipe, as far as it is above the ground, there is inserted a second narrower pipe of thin elastic substance, such, for instance, as rubber. This insertion remains unaffected by the ordinary pressure; but if the water should be frozen by extreme cold the elastic insertion is compressed by so much as the volume of water is increased by the freezing. With the coming of the thaw the insertion expands again to its original circumference. The object of the tin or lead around the insertion is to prevent an unpleasant taste or odor being imparted to the water. It is said that sections have withstood a cold test of 40 degrees centigrade, while others that were so provided invariably burst at that temperature.

Life on a Torpedo Boat.

So injurious is life on a torpedo boat that a year's continuous service will mentally and physically incapacitate a man. This assertion is made on the authority of Lord Charles Beresford, but that the strain on any one serving on these craft is very great is shown by the fact that to one month's service the British naval regulations allow one week off. Austria is endeavoring to mitigate the hardship of service on these boats, and life on one built for the Austrian navy, and tried on the Thames recently, was demonstrated to be pleasanter than on those of the English navy.

Just Like Other People.

Though the German emperor has an annual income of about three-quarters of a million sterling, the empress, who dresses "like a good-class woman," is most economical. The children's clothes are repaired in the workroom, where her own wardrobe is mended. When the clothes are outgrown they are cut up for the smaller members of the family, which can very well be done, seeing that six out of the seven children are boys.

All Muscles.

The elephant has more muscles in its trunk than any other creature possesses in its whole body, the number being, according to Cuvier, not fewer than 40,000; while in the whole of his body man can only boast of 527. This is why the elephant's trunk is so exceedingly strong, and at the same time so extremely delicate in its movements.

Activity of Baby Crocodiles.

The moment a young crocodile breaks its shell it is to all intents and purposes as active as it is at any time during its life. It will make straight for the water, even if it be out of sight and a good distance off, and it will pursue its prey with eagerness and agility during the first hour of its free existence.

Cutting of Diamonds.

Diamonds are cut in three different forms—the rose, the brilliant, and the table, of which the second is the prettiest. It is a double pyramid or cone, in which the top is cut off to form a large plane, and at the bottom directly opposite to a small plane.

Privateering.

Letters of marque and reprisal, which really meant the commissioning of privately owned vessels as warships—the old privateer, in fact—were first granted in 1295. They are not permitted now.

A Grafted Ear.

An enterprising veterinarian of Bristol, Pa., has successfully grafted an artificial ear on a horse. It exactly matches the ear on the other side of the animal's head and is equally under control.

China Tea.

China exported 35,000,000 pounds of tea the past season.

TESTS FOR INSANITY.

Rule of Thumb Methods Which Very Frequently Fail.

Most people imagine, said a nerve specialist, that doctors have some infallible test by which they can detect insanity immediately. Of course, that's all nonsense. There are many odd methods of diagnosing such cases, however. In locomotor ataxia the patient cannot walk with his eyes shut. In incipient paresis there is difficulty in articulating particular letters, and one famous scientist used to make his patients say "national intelligence." A man with an incipient case of the disease can't pronounce these words distinctly to save his soul. Another very eminent practitioner employed "truly rural" for the same purpose. If you have paresis I would advise you not to try to say "truly rural"—at least not in company.

The "knee-jerk" test is well known to physicians. To apply it the legs are crossed and a sharp blow struck just below the knee of the limb that is swinging loose, if the subject is all right there will be a prompt reflex action; in other words, his foot will fly up in spite of all efforts to keep it quiet. If not, there is something wrong, and that reminds me of a tragic incident which occurred in a southern court not many years ago. A man was being examined for insanity, and one of the lawyers made the experts the butt of a great deal of ridicule. He scoffed particularly at the knee-jerk test and asked to have it applied to himself. There was no reflex action, and the fact had a powerful effect on the jury, especially as the lawyer happened to be a man of brilliant attainments. After the trial was over he got to thinking about the matter, and in spite of his skepticism concluded to submit to a thorough private examination. It was made and discovered undeniable signs of locomotor ataxia, dooming him to a certain and lingering death.

Queer Beliefs About Seven.

So numerous are the queer beliefs concerning the number seven that a narration of them all would fill a volume, but we may mention a few of them. From the very earliest ages the seven great planets were known and ruled this world and the dwellers in it, and their number entered into every conceivable matter that concerned man. There are seven days in the week, "seven holes in the head for the master stars are seven," seven ages both for man and the world in which he lives. There were seven material heavens, and in the underworld described by Dante the great pagan dead who were not good enough for heaven or bad enough for hell reposed in a seven-walled and seven-gated city. There are seven colors in the spectrum and seven notes in the diatonic octave, and the "leading" note of the seventh scale is not always gifted with beneficent powers. In Portugal he is believed to be subject to the powers of darkness and to be compelled every Saturday evening to assume the likeness of an ass.

Tiddits in Porto Rico.

The oysters you get in Porto Rico are small and have the coppery taste that the bivalves they furnish in Europe have," remarked E. M. Mercer of New York. "The fish, however, are very fine, and the fruits of the island are delicious. In fact, it is a country where human life is easily supported with very little labor. The expense of living to the natives is very light. The boys of the common class go naked till they are about ten years old. I think that the reports of native immorality have been greatly exaggerated. My own observation was that the people behaved with quite as much propriety as they do in our own country, where certainly the opportunities for a correct mode of life are superior, seeing that we enjoy a much higher standard of civilization. For an oppressed and tax-ridden people the Porto Ricans do well, and there is little about them that calls for severe criticism."

Small Fame for Spanish Actors.

Theatres in Spain have no programmes. A bill in the lobby sometimes gives the cast, but most of the actors remain unknown by name. The curtain is devoted to advertisements, and in Madrid theatres advertising cards are affixed with the numbers on the back of each seat.

Workmen of Calcutta.

The hours of work in the Calcutta jute mills are from 4:30 a. m. to 9 p. m., or 16½ hours per day, Saturdays included, and all repairs and cleaning of machinery have to be made on Sundays.

Fasts of Jains.

In fasting feasts the sect of Jains, in India, is far ahead of its rivals. Fasts of from thirty to forty days are very common, and once a year they are said to abstain from food for seventy-five days.

Coaling a Warship.

The rate at which modern warships take in coal is simply marvelous. The magnificent, a first-class British battleship in the Mediterranean, recently averaged over 160 tons per hour—a rate of nearly three tons a minute.

Flowers in Tuscany.

Flowers are never used in Tuscany, but at Christmas and Easter all the walls of the cathedrals are decked with wonderful damask of almost priceless value.

Child Widows.

The latest Government census in India showed 6,016,759 girls between five and nine years of age, who were already married, of whom 170,000 had become widows.

Drafting of Spaniards.

Any Spaniard over the age of nineteen is liable to be called into military service for three years. By the payment of 1,500 pesetas (\$300) he can escape military duty.

Deafness.

At least one-third of all people in middle life have one ear affected by deafness.

Breweries.

Of 51,000 breweries in the world, 25,000 are in Germany.

Jasmine Pipe Stems.

In Turkey, the jasmine is extensively grown for the manufacture of pipe stems. For this purpose the stems of the growing plant are trained with the greatest care till they have attained the proper length and size. The bark is protected by a wrapping of varnished linen or calico. Two or three times a year this will be taken off and the bark treated to a citron juice bath. This is said to give it the light color so much sought after. Some of these pipe stems are from ten to eighteen feet in length and bring as much as \$100 each.

There is a powerful breed of dogs along Smith's sound that does not hesitate to attack the most ferocious wild animals. These dogs hunt in pairs and a big bear is a joke to them. One dog can bring down a reindeer and kill it in a few minutes. Their thick coat is tawny in hue and in winter a thick fleece of wool covers them. They look so much like wolves it is hard to tell what they are at a little distance.

Electrical Currents.

A scientist has discovered that electrical currents in the form of waves rapidly succeeding one another can produce insensibility to pain and cold in the flesh, acting as an anesthetic like ether. When the currents were applied to the finger and thumb by wires, the finger could be pricked with a pin without pain.

The most uncompromising critics are usually found in our own families.

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Cure Constipation

and you cure its consequences. These are some of the consequences of constipation: Bilioousness, loss of appetite, pimples, sour stomach, depression, coated tongue, nightmare, palpitation, cold feet, debility, dizziness, weakness, backache, vomiting, jaundice, piles, pallor, stitch, irritability, nervousness, headache, torpid liver, heartburn, foul breath, sleeplessness, drowsiness, hot skin, cramps, throbbing head.

Ayer's Pills

Dr. J. C. Ayer's Pills are a specific for all diseases of the liver, stomach, and bowels.

"I suffered from constipation which assumed such an obstinate form that I feared it would cause a stoppage of the bowels. After vainly trying various remedies, I began to take Ayer's Pills. Two boxes effected a complete cure."

D. BURKE, Saco, Me.
"For eight years I was afflicted with constipation, which became so bad that the doctors could do no more for me. Then I began to take Ayer's Pills, and soon the bowels recovered their natural action."
WM. H. DELACUETT, Dorset, Ont.

SOPES.

"Running sores appeared on my leg and spread over the entire lower portion of the limb. I got no help from medicine till I tried yours. I was cured by one bottle of"

Ayer's Sarsaparilla.

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