

THE PASSING YEAR.

Are you rich in the years of bright gold Yet untold? Do they leisurely go, Like a dream that is fair, Or a prayer?

THE PEACH FIGURE.



ALTHOUGH the son and grandson of Government employes, I had no more than fairly got started in the same career than I resigned my position on account of two peaches.

I was a regular chip of the old block, and my father thought nothing could equal a Government career. So, after I had graduated, no one urged me to do anything but take a subordinate place in my father's department.

My wife was a beautiful girl, and what is better, very good and affectionate; but she had no fortune. That was a grave fault in the eyes of the little world of clerks in which I lived.

My chief was rich, and delighted in being conspicuous, priding himself on making a fine appearance in the social world. He frequently received, gave elegant dinners and, from time to time, issued invitations for a dancing party to the families of his employees and to the prominent people of the town.

While I put the finishing touches to my white cravat, my wife gave me numerous suggestions: "It will be perfectly lovely. Do not fail to see everything so as to tell me afterward. The names of the ladies who are there, the toilets, and the supper menu—there is to be a supper. It seems that they have ordered a great many delicacies from Chevet—some rare fruits; I heard of peaches that cost sixty cents apiece—oh, what peaches they must be! Do you know, if you were good, you would bring me one?"

I remonstrated, I showed her that the thing was impracticable, and how difficult it would be for a man in a dress suit to put such fruit as a peach in his pocket without the risk of being seen and pointed out. The more I objected, the more bent upon her whim did she become.

"On the contrary, nothing could be easier. In the midst of the crowd coming and going to supper, no one would see you. Take one as if for yourself, and then hide it adroitly. Don't shrug your shoulders. Perhaps it is only a bit of chiddishness; but I long for one; ever since I heard of those peaches, I have had a wild desire to taste them. Promise to bring me one, at least."

How could a man give a downright refusal to the woman he adored? I ended by murmuring a vague promise and then hastening away; but just as I turned the handle of the door she called me back. I saw her big blue eyes, bright with longing, turned upon me, and she cried once more: "Do you promise?"

daughter did the honors most graciously. At midnight, supper was served, and the dancers filed into the dining-room in couples. I followed, trembling, and scarcely had I entered before I saw the famous peaches sent by Chevet occupying a conspicuous place in the centre of the table.

They were, indeed, magnificent! There was a pyramid of them in a china basket, carefully arranged with grape leaves, which brought out the appetizing color of their velvety skins where deep red shaded into greenish white. From seeing them one could easily imagine the fragrance and delicate flavor of the luscious, rosy pulp. My eyes caressed them from afar, and I thought of the joyous cries that would greet me on my return if I succeeded in carrying home a sample of this perfect fruit. They were exciting general admiration, and the more I gazed at them, the more did my desire take the shape of a fixed purpose. I determined to have one or two. But how? The waiters kept a watch over this rare and costly delicacy, our host having reserved for himself the pleasure of offering his peaches to certain guests. From time to time, at a sign from my chief, the butler would daintily take one, cut it with a silver knife, and present the two halves on a Sevres plate to the designated person.

I watched this performance greedily, and, with fear, saw the pyramid fall in. However, the contents of the basket were not exhausted. Perhaps the order had been strictly executed; perhaps the peaches had been arranged with forethought; at any rate, when the banqueters, recalled by the orchestra's playing a prelude, hurried back to the dancing-hall, there were still half a dozen beautiful peaches nestling among the green leaves.

I followed the crowd, but it was only a false sortie. I had left my hat in a corner—a tall hat, which had bothered me considerably during the entire evening. I went back with the pretense of getting it, and, as I was, in a way, one of the household, the servants did not mistrust me. Besides, they were busy carrying out the dishes and glasses used by the guests, and, at a certain moment, I found myself alone near the sideboard.

There was not an instant to lose. After a furtive glance to the right and left, I approached the basket and made two of the peaches quickly roll into my hat, where I covered them with my handkerchief; then, very calm and dignified in appearance, though my heart was beating frightfully, I left the dining-room, carefully pressing the opening of my hat to my breast, and holding it there by means of my right hand, which, thrust inside of my vest, gave me a very majestic, almost Napoleonic, bearing.

My scheme was to cross the ball-room cautiously, to steal away, and, once outside, to carry home victoriously the two peaches wrapped in my handkerchief.

It was not so easy as I had fancied. The door was closed, and I saw all there was a double line of men and elderly ladies, hemming in the circle formed by the chairs of the dancers, while in the center there was a wide empty space, where a few couples were waiting.

I timidly made my way through groups of people; I squeezed between chairs with the suppleness of a snake; I trembled each moment for fear that a rough jog of my elbow would change the position of my hat and let the peaches fall. I could feel them rolling around inside, and I grew hot to my ears and the roots of my hair. At last, after much care and maneuvering, I reached the inner space just as a new figure was being organized. A lady is placed in the centre and the gentlemen circle about her with their backs turned; she holds a hat and places it upon the head of the man with whom she wishes to waltz.

I had hardly taken two steps when the director's daughter, who was leading the cotillon with a young counselor of the prefecture, cried:

"A hat! We need a hat!" At the same moment she caught sight of me with my stovetop against my breast. I met her glance, and my blood froze.

"Ah!" she said to me, "you have come just in time, M. Herbelot. Quick, your hat."

Before I could stammer out one word she had taken my hat, so hastily that the peaches forthwith rolled upon the floor, carrying my handkerchief and two or three grape-leaves with them.

You can imagine the tableau. The dancers laughed in their sleeves at my theft and discomfiture; my chief frowned, and grave men whispered and pointed their fingers at me, while I felt my knees grow weak. I longed to sink through the floor and disappear.

The young lady pressed her lips together to keep back her laughter, and, while returning my hat, said, in an ironical voice:

"Pick up your peaches, M. Herbelot." Shouts of mirth then resounded from all parts of the room—even the servants held their sides. Pale, haggard, and tottering, I fled, overwhelmed with my disgrace and so confused that I could hardly find the door. With a dead weight on my heart I hurried away to tell my wife of my disaster.

The next day the story was all over town. When I entered my department, my comrades received me with, "Herbelot, pick up your peaches." I could not venture into the street without hearing mocking voices murmur behind me: "Peaches."

the dawn and never pitying myself. It would seem that I was more fitted for agriculture than for pen-pushing, for, in a short time, I became an enthusiastic farmer. The property did well that our uncle, at his death, would it to us.

Why the Eagles Live.

Two eagles have built their nest for years in an old tree which stands not far from the St. Lawrence River in Lisbon, at a spot about eight miles north of Ogdensburg, N. Y. The spot is a slightly one and the tall trees in this bit of the old forest where the birds make their summer home is known by the dwellers for miles around. Each year the eagles come, and their arrival is as much expected and talked about as is the date when the ice will break up in the river which flows near by. Two eaglets have been hatched each year, time out of mind, and it is one of the interesting incidents in the neighborhood when the old birds "shake out" the young ones and give them their first lessons in flying. The birds never go far from home in summer. Almost every bright day one of them may be seen sailing high above the blue St. Lawrence on the watch for a fish, and then, falling like an arrow, to bury its claws in the back of its prey and sail home with a fish dinner with its mate. All summer they are there, and when the autumn colors come upon the trees they go away, to come again next spring. No one harms them.

One day last September, as a reporter for the New York Times was driving near the eagles' home, one of them was seen circling slowly several hundred feet above the river. A farmer near by called attention to the bird with evident pride.

"Does no one try to shoot them?" he was asked, after telling how they came there every year.

"No," he said, "never." "Why not?" he was asked. "The people here know the birds so well that they would not allow it, I reckon," was the reply. "If anybody was to hurt one of them birds it would make a powerful sight of talk in this neighborhood."

Another farmer a short distance on also fell to discussing the eagle, and he was asked if no one ever tried to shoot them. "No," he said, "not once. It wouldn't do. Nobody wants to harm them. It sort o' makes everybody feel good to see the Nation's bird flyin' near by. There ain't no danger of anybody's ever trying to kill eagles in this part of the country."

A few miles further on, another farmer, who had the reputation of being a hunter, fell to talking about this noble pair of birds, which seemed to be regarded with about the same patriotic sentiment as the flag or the Goddess of Liberty.

"Why doesn't somebody shoot them?" the old hunter was asked. "Well," he replied, forcibly, "a good many would like to take a crack at them, and some have on the sly. But, hang it, they fly pretty high, and of late years there's a big fine for killin' eagles in this State,"—New York Times.

Origin of the Liberty Cap.

The "liberty cap," that bag-shaped headgear so often seen on the head of the Goddess of Liberty and which surmounts the National colors on nearly all our silver coins, according to the Philadelphia Press, owes its origin to the Roman empire, where it was given to slaves as a sign of their manumission. The principal significance of the "liberty cap" to the American mind is not, however, its Roman origin, but rather its use as the official cap of the successive doges of republican Venice, that "model of the most stable Government ever framed by man." In the Doge's Palace at Venice there is a gallery full of portraits of the men who ruled the republic for 700 years, and the conspicuous place occupied by the "liberty cap" in these portraits shows its importance as a National symbol of freedom. It rather heightens the significance of this ancient symbol in the minds of good Americans when it is remembered that the Emperor Frederick Barbarossa humbled himself before a wearer of the "liberty cap," and that Andrea Dandolo wore it on the fourth crusade and at the conquest of Constantinople. It occupied a place in the forefront of the advancing hosts that in the early part of the fifteenth century swept the Dalmatian towns and conquered the entire coast from the estuary of the Po to the Island of Corfu. While Columbus was discovering America the wearers of the "liberty cap" were acquiring Zante and Cyprus, and when the first half of the half-starved settlements on the Massachusetts coast were battling for existence the republic from which we borrowed our "liberty cap," having successfully resisted a league of all the kings of Christendom, was at the zenith of its glory. The "liberty cap" is not as conspicuous in our National signs and symbols as it was in those of the rulers of the Adriatic, yet in a modest way it immortalizes the greatest republic of early times.

Uniformed Shark Exterminators.

Among the multifarious duties which demand the attention of the Calcutta police, the capture of sharks in the Hooghly finds a place. During the past twenty years rewards have been paid for the destruction of those marine man-eaters, and recently the Bengal Government laid down a scale for these payments.—San Francisco Chronicle.

FOOD ADULTERATION

HOW SOME FLAGRANT CASES MAY BE DETECTED.

Indications of Healthy Meat—Sausage and Fish Adulteration—To Tell Good Butter, Lard and Eggs—Fraud in Spices.

ADULTERATING articles of food is by no means an "invention" of modern times, but was practiced by our classical ancestors. During the middle ages the cunning baker mixed his flour with lime, sand and gypsum, and on discovery was thrown into a prison cell and compelled to eat the product of his entire bakery, which cured him of the fraudulent habit.

The most important article of food in every household is the meat. The meat which comes from healthy animals is distinguished by a pleasant odor and fresh color, from a delicate pink to a deep carmine, according to the animal from which it comes. It must be elastic to the touch. The dent which is caused by pressing a finger on it must disappear when the pressure is removed. The fatty substance of the meat is a good indicator of its quality. In healthy animals the fat is yellow and elastic and has a pleasant odor. The fat in the meat from sick animals is pale, gray and smelly and has an unpleasant odor.

Sausage offers a wide field for adulteration of the most dangerous kind, and in the pamphlets which vegetarians send broadcast over the land from time to time they give prominence to an anecdote which is as terse as it is illustrative of the esteem in which they hold the sausage. "A man saved the life of a butcher by endangering his own. The poor butcher, overcome with gratitude, cried out in a moment of self-forgetfulness: 'Never in your life again, my friend, eat sausage.'"

The adulterations in this line are manifold. To produce the fresh red color, so alluring in sausage, fuchsine is mixed with the ingredients instead of blood. It is a very common practice to put flour in sausage, and, while a little of it is harmless, it nevertheless leads to early fermentation of the article in question. The buyer, however, is very much imposed upon when flour is added in large quantities, for it enables the sausage makers to add from sixty to seventy per cent. of water, which is paid for at the rate of meat. France has lately put a stop to this fraud by limiting the addition of flour to three per cent.

Fish are adulterated in the same way by rubbing their gills with aniline, which gives them the appearance of freshness. The aniline is easily washed off and the fraud detected. In fresh fish the eyes are full and protruding, while in old fish they are opaque, dull and sunken. The best way to recognize an old fish is to watch the gills, which emit an odor of decay if the fish is too old for use.

Crawfish or crabs should always be bought alive. Crabs that are sold already cooked have usually been boiled after they were dead, and soon decay, generating a very dangerous poison. A crawfish that has been boiled alive will show a curious and twisted tail, while, on the other hand, one that was cooked after death has the tail perfectly straight.

The best way to tell butter from oleomargarine is to put a piece of it on a hot potato which has been boiled in the jacket and freshly peeled. The taste of butter is more pronounced when eaten in this way than any other, and the fraud is detected. It is also the safest way to discover the age of dairy or creamery butter.

Lard is frequently adulterated with water to increase its weight, and mixed with corn-starch, salt, chalk, etc., to bind the water to the fat. This may be discovered by carefully melting the lard and setting it aside in a lukewarm place. The fat not only separates from the water, but collects at the bottom of the dish with all the other foreign ingredients.

To tell good eggs from bad ones it is only necessary to put them in a dish filled with water containing from five to ten per cent. of salt. Fresh eggs drop to the bottom, old ones swim on the surface, and those of medium quality sink half way down.

All spices suffer more or less adulteration, but most of all those which are sold in a pulverized state. Ground pepper is mixed with paprika, millet, bread, powdered olives, almond meal, dust, sand, gypsum, sawdust, spar, and almost the same ingredients are used for the adulteration of cinnamon. Pulverized ginger fares no better, and cayenne pepper, while the sweet-scented anise seed comes in for a share of earth, sand and little brown and black stones. Housekeepers will always be more or less cheated in buying powdered spices, which should be bought in their natural state and ground at home. The vanilla bean, before the invention of the artificial vanilla, was deprived of its natural aroma and basted with balm of Peru.

Coffee is adulterated in all forms and in every possible way. Machines have been invented and large factories erected, where artificial coffee beans are made from acorn flour and gum arabic, and these are mixed with the real coffee; and even the real beans are covered with poisonous chemicals if they have been damaged by sea water in transportation or the influence of the sun or time. Ground or roasted coffee offer the best opportunities, however, for fraud.

But all these perpetrators of fraud and deception cannot hold a candle to the Chinese, who are masters in the art of the adulteration of tea, which they dye, mix and prepare from leaves that have but a bare resemblance to the real tea plant.—St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

The Biggest Man on Earth.

Citizens of this vicinity yesterday had an opportunity to behold the greatest living man in avoirdupois. John Hanson Craig, with his wife and three-year-old child, was visiting James Anderson and James McPherson, relatives. Craig's home is in Danville, Hendricks County, but he has been in the show business since his babyhood. In answer to questions he said: "I now weigh 902 pounds and am thirty-seven years old. At birth I weighed 11 pounds; at eleven months I weighed 77 pounds, at two years 206 pounds. At that time I took the \$1,000 premium at Barnum's baby show in New York City in the year 1858. At five years I weighed 302 pounds; at thirteen years, 405 pounds; at twenty-two, 725 pounds; at twenty-seven, 758 pounds; at twenty-eight, 774 pounds; at twenty-nine, 791 pounds; at thirty, 806 pounds; at thirty-one, 836 pounds; and my present weight is just 907 pounds. I am six feet and five inches high, measure eight feet and four inches around the hips, eighteen inches around the ankle, twenty-nine inches around the knee, sixty-six inches around the thigh next to the body. I require forty-one yards for a suit of clothes, and three pounds of yarn for stockings."

Mrs. Craig is a good-looking blonde, weighs 130 pounds, and formerly accompanied her husband in the role of snake charmer as "Zola Ayres." When asked how long they had been married she laughingly remarked that they were just now enjoying their second honeymoon, as they were divorced in January and remarried but a couple of weeks ago. Mr. Craig explained the trouble, stating that his wife had expressed a desire to learn fashionable dressmaking, and that he objected. She applied for a divorce, it was granted, and she went to Terre Haute and learned her trade. She then returned home and they were remarried. Mr. Craig has been all over Europe, and in every important city in the world. They went from here to Dayton, where Mrs. Craig was born and raised.—Frankfort (Ind.) Dispatch.

The Pariahs.

The Rev. T. B. Pandian, a Hindu gentleman of degree who has embraced Christianity, is endeavoring to rouse English sympathy for the Pariahs, or outcasts of Southern India. There are 8,000,000 or 9,000,000 of them, and, though entirely free by law, they are subject to some disabilities by caste opinion, one of which is so terrible that we have no hesitation in saying it ought to be remedied by force, even at the hazard of insurrection. They are forbidden to drink pure water. There are generally two public wells in every village, but the caste men will not suffer the Pariah families to approach them, even if they only touch the water with buckets. The women, therefore, have often to go miles to a water from a stream, and in rugged fields or jungle. The consequence is that they are constant victims of dysentery, and that when any typhoidal disease strikes the village they die like flies. It seems to us that this oppression is too bad, even though it be based on a religious prejudice, and the caste men should either be compelled to give up one of the wells, or better still, to sink a new well for the Pariahs, thus spending something to protect their own ceremonial purity. We have no doubt whatever of the exact truth of this statement as regards the water, and strongly recommend the grievance to any philanthropist in the House in want of work. It may be asked why the Pariahs bear such an outrageous oppression. First, because 2000 years of slavery have made them cowards; and secondly, because they believe, or half believe, the dogma of their caste neighbors, namely, that their suffering is just retribution for the sins of their previous lives. They are losing that faith, and some day they will fight for five minutes with torches instead of rifles, and then civilization in South India will temporarily end.—London Spectator.

"Victoria R." to the President.

The treaties which are stored in the State Department library at Washington are not the only valuable or historic documents there. There are some very valuable Washington, Jefferson, Madison and Monroe papers, and the original Declaration of Independence. Then there are letters of the rulers of other countries, telling of births and deaths and marriages in royal families. These letters, says the Philadelphia Times, are bound in volumes devoted to the different countries from which they came. There are many autographs of Queen Victoria in the court letters of Great Britain which fill an entire book. The most interesting was written February 14, 1840. It announced her marriage to Prince Albert. It is a good specimen of the form of royal communication with the ruling magistrate of the United States. It reads:

Victoria, by the Grace of God, Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc., etc., to the President of the United States of America, sendeth greeting: Our Good Friend—The celebration of our marriage with His Royal Highness, the Prince Albert Francis, Augustus Charles Emmanuel, second son of His Serene Highness, the reigning Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Gotha, having taken place at London on the 10th of the present month, we lose no time in notifying to you this event. The sentiments of friendship which you have manifested toward us on other occasions afford us the assurance that you will take an interest in an event which, by the blessings of the Almighty will, we trust, contribute to the welfare of our people and secure our own domestic happiness. And so with our cordial wishes for your welfare and prosperity, we recommend you to the protection of the Almighty. Given at our court at Windsor Castle, the fourth day of February, in the year of our Lord 1840, in the third year of our reign. VICTORIA R.

The Queen's Name.

The following extract from Charles Greville's "Diary," under date December 24, 1819, and, therefore, when Princess (now Queen) Victoria was exactly seven months old, bears upon the point raised:

"The Duke of Kent gave the name of Alexandrina to his daughter in compliment to the Emperor of Russia. She was to have had the name of Georgiana but the Duke insisted upon Alexandrina being her first name. The Regent sent for Lieven (the Russian Ambassador) and made him a great many compliments, (on le persiflant) on the Emperor's being godfather but informed him that the name of Georgiana could be second to no other in this country, and therefore she could not bear it all." It was accordingly as "Alexandrina Victoria" that the infant Princess was baptized on June 24, 1819.—Notes and Queries.

A Plucky Noblewoman.

The Marchioness of Waterford, looking through the window of her house, in London, the other day, saw a cabman ill-using his horse. Raising the window she commanded the man to desist, and upon his refusal, she gathered up her skirts, opened the front door, and, letting go her aristocratic left, she blackened the fellow's eye, and then had a policeman take him into custody on a charge of cruelty to animals.—New York Journal.

CURIOUS FACTS.

There are thirty species of tobacco. Uncle Sam gets few Spanish immigrants.

The loom was used by the Egyptians 2500 B. C.

The world now uses 13,000 kinds of postage stamps.

Broadies of silk, enriched with gold and silver, were made in China B. C. 1721.

Cambridge, Mass., has three pastors who have held their present charges for twenty-five years.

According to the last census there are over 3,000,000 bachelors in the United States—that is, 3,000,000 men over thirty years old who have never been married.

The finest opal of modern times belonged to Empress Josephine. It was called "The burning of Troy." Its fate is unknown, as it disappeared when the allies entered Paris.

An old European custom was to give a clock to any one who could take an oath that he had strictly minded his own business and not meddled with his neighbor's affairs for a year and a day.

The smallest republic in the world is Franceville, one of the islands of the New Hebrides. The inhabitants consist of forty European and 500 black workmen employed by a French company.

In Germany, when the vote of the jury stands six against six, the prisoner is acquitted. A vote of seven against five leaves the decision to the court, and in a vote of eight against four the prisoner is convicted.

A plant known as wild orange, on the Island of Reunion, is said to produce a beverage equal to coffee and much cheaper. It can be used alone or mixed. It is now raised on 21,000 acres, and its name is "mussaenda."

In some villages in the south of England the appointments of the wedding are made to bear a relation to the business of the town. At a carpenter's wedding the aisle of the church was strewn with shavings; at a blacksmith's with coal and iron filings; a farmer walked on straw, a butcher on skins. Collectors of rare stamps are much interested in the Afghanistan stamps. The Ameer Abdur Rahman has only had three issues of stamps since he came to the throne. The first was a round red stamp, the second an oblong black one, and the last a red oblong stamp bearing the figure of a mosque.

Mail Armor.

The covering for the body in time of war usually consists of ordinary garments very thickly quilted, or covered with small rings of metal sewn upon the inside.

The quilted material deadened to a considerable extent the force of a blow, and the rings made it very difficult for the lance or sword to pierce.

The covering for the body in time of war usually consists of ordinary garments very thickly quilted, or covered with small rings of metal sewn upon the inside. The quilted material deadened to a considerable extent the force of a blow, and the rings made it very difficult for the lance or sword to pierce. The mail armor varied much as to the manner in which the rings were affixed to the surface that they were intended to protect; in some instances they seem to be sewn on at one edge only, in rows, and so to overlap each other; in others they do not overlap, and in yet other cases they are linked together after the manner in which purses used to be made of small steel rings. This last form of mail was certainly the strongest and most perfect, and if the iron or steel links were well made it would require a skilful blow from sword or lance to penetrate through them, and even then the weapons would have to be of unusually well-tempered metal.

There was considerable variety in helmets and shields at different times during this period. We find the kite-shaped shield in the Bayeux tapestry, but later it became shorter and wider; the round Saxon shield, sometimes made of wood alone, sometimes covered with bull's hide, lingered for a long time, and for men-at-arms this shape was retained nearly as long as the use of the shield continued.—Westminster Review.

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