

# The Meyersdale Commercial

All the News--Every Week.

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### PRINTERS PARTICULAR PEOPLE

#### WONDER ISLAND OF HISTORY.

The Story of Sicily is a Compendium of Medieval Romance.

Sicily's history is as vivid and picturesque, as ferocious and creative and destructive, as mythical and intensely practical as the stories of all the rest of the world put together. And in beauty of nature, of climate, or man, and of beast, the island is a paradise today, whether or not it was ever the workless, painless, passionless elysium where our first ancestors enjoyed all the good things of life without having to toil.

Nature itself, now in the guise of the misunderstood gods of old, now in convulsions or in quiet fertility, that goddess has made plain to us, weaves its mysterious shuttle through and through the highly colored fabric.

And men—such men!—tower above their fellows in the story like Titans—Phidias, Aeschylus, Theophrastus, Thucydides, Archimedes, the two great Hierons, Cleero, Verres, Diodorus, Hannibal, Roger the King, Belisarius, the great crusaders Richard of the Lion Heart and Louis the Saint of France, Charles of Anjou, Frederick II, the "wonder of the world," and Garibaldi. Even this partial list reads like a compendium of ancient and medieval romance and chivalry.—National Geographic Magazine.

#### CURIOUS FRENCH DUEL.

When Man and Wife Tried to Settle a Dispute With Swords.

Charles Coypeau, Sieur d'Assouci, a French poet and musician of the seventeenth century, relates in one of his "Adventures" that his father and mother were one day engaged in a discussion upon questions of law when a dispute arose between them, with regard to the precise signification and bearing of a provision in Justinian's code with respect to the rights of brothers.

Ultimately the quarrel waxed so furious that the disputants lost all control of themselves, defied each other to single combat and proceeded to settle their difference and determine the mind of the ancient legislator by a fight with swords.

This singular duel took place in their son's presence. Coypeau pere was an advocate by profession and a member of one of the French parliaments. Madams was exceedingly diminutive and had to wear exceptionally high pattens to approach the ordinary stature of women, but she was fierce and domineering in temper. The combat appears to have been a drawn battle, and the sense of Justinian remained as obscure and debatable as ever.

#### Tightwad.

"I understand that Mr. Pinchpenny has been operated on for appendicitis," remarked Miss Cayenne.  
"Yes. It's the first time any one was known to get anything out of him."  
"And even then they had to give him chloroform to get that."

#### How the Captain Tacked.

Captain Joshua Slocum, the famous solitary voyager, tells in his "Sailing Alone Around the World" an amusing story of the way in which he protected himself at night from marauding savages while in the neighborhood of Cape Horn. When he went to sleep Captain Slocum would sprinkle the deck with carpet tacks, taking particular care that not a few of them stood "business end" up. It is well known that one cannot step on a tack without saying something about it. A pretty good Christian would whistle; a savage will howl and claw the air. And that was just what happened, Slocum reports, about 12 o'clock one night. His vessel was boarded while he slept. But no sooner had they stepped on deck than the savages, howling like a pack of hounds, jumped pellmell, some into their canoes and some into the sea, a great deal of free language escaping them as they went. Slocum says that he was never disturbed again, though he sprinkled his deck with tacks many nights thereafter.

#### Winks and Eye Baths.

Every few seconds we wink both our eyelids at once, although not purposely. If we stop winking our eyes become uncomfortable and gradually cease to work as they should. When the eye is open the front of it is exposed to dirt and dust and is apt to become so dry that a painful stinging sensation results or would do so if constant moisture were not provided to cleanse and soothe the tissues.

As a matter of fact, each time we wink we wash the eye, says the Popular Science Monthly. Up above each eye is a tiny bag called the tear gland, and all the time we are awake it makes tears. When the front of the eye feels itself becoming a little too dry or dusty a communication is sent for a supply of moisture. The eyelid then comes down with a tear inside it to wash clean the front of the eye. This is the most gentle and perfect washing in the world.

#### Safety of a Ship.

The safety of a ship depends upon its stability, strength, water tightness and reserve stability and floatability if injured. The strength is due to the framing and plating or planking. Water tightness is effected by calking the seams between plates and planks. The seams of iron plates are calked by hammering the edge of the uppermost plates against the one underneath it. The seams between planks are partly filled with oakum, which is forced in and the remainder of the seam filled with pitch, marine glue or putty. The reserve stability and floatability when injured depend upon the position and volume of the interior space which is flooded. To reduce this volume to a safe point vessels are divided into compartments by water tight bulkheads, which extend across the ship at intervals.

Several hundred men were thrown out of work when fire damaged the Universal mill of the Central Iron and Steel company, Harrisburg, to the extent of \$15,000.

#### Stood on His Dignity.

United States Senator Hearst in his autobiography writes an anecdote of Anson Burlingame, the famous lawyer of Detroit, who was afterward minister to China. He says:

"Shortly after Burlingame came into active life he made a journey to Europe. The American minister obtained for him a ticket of admission to the house of commons. He was shown to a very comfortable seat in the gallery. In a few minutes an official came to him and said he must leave that seat, that the gallery where he was was reserved for peers. They are very particular about such things there. Burlingame got up to go out, when an old peer who happened to be sitting by him and had heard what was said interposed. 'Let him stay,' he said; 'he is a peer in his own country.' I am a sovereign in my own country, sir," replied Burlingame, "and shall lose caste if I associate with peers." And he went out."

#### Shooting With a Revolver.

Very few people, even accomplished shots, know how a revolver ought to be handled. Troops are taught in aiming never to look at the weapon at all, but to keep their eyes on the object to be struck. In quick firing, and especially in shooting from horseback, much better results are obtained in this way.

A man throwing a stone does not look at his hand. Neither does a billiard player sight along his cue. The same rules apply to the use of short weapons. Men have been trained to shoot excellently at a mark when their pistol sights were hidden. Nearly any one can sight a pistol correctly, the inaccuracy of the aim being due to the trembling of the hands before the trigger is pressed. By hiding the sight the temptation to hold too long is removed, and the first aim, generally the most accurate, is preserved.—Pearson's.

#### Old Time Cutlery.

The earliest instance of admission to the freedom of the Cutlery's company of London by apprenticeship is that of John, son of Saman the Knivesmith, who was apprenticed to Stephen atte Holt, cutler, in 1297. The Cutlers were divided into four main branches—the bladesmith or knivesmith made the blades, the hatter produced the handle or haft, the sheather the sheath, while the cutler put together the various parts and sold the tool or weapon complete. Closely allied to the craft were the burbours or furbers, who were common to the crafts of cutlers and armurers and were engaged in refurbishing and refitting old armor, weapons and garments. Another subsidiary occupation was that of the grinder. The bladesmiths were divided into two branches, the knivesmiths and swordsmiths.—London Graphic.

#### Shaming the Professor.

"You claim to be an expert in scientific research," sneered his wife.  
"What of it, woman?"  
"And yet every day I have to find your spectacles for you."—Exchange.

#### GIVE COURT POWER TO SUSPEND SENTENCE

Washington.—(Special Correspondence)—The recent decision of the Supreme Court that Federal judges have no power to suspend the imposition of a sentence, and the necessity of returning to prison thousands of men now at liberty under suspended sentences if the decision is carried to its logical result, has led Republican Representative John R. K. Scott of Pennsylvania to introduce a bill conferring power on the judges of United States courts to suspend sentence if in their judgement the circumstances of a case warrant that action. Mr. Scott claims that the passage of his bill will go far toward enabling the courts to dispense substantial justice, and prevent the infliction of great hardship on a large number of deserving men.

#### More Sinecures.

A fertile field where the Democrats could practice economy if they were so minded is the Adjutant General's office in the War Department. In the legislative appropriation bill, which provides salaries for hat office, there is a provision for 11 messengers and 61 assistant messengers, an increase of 8 over the allowance for last year. In other words there are 16 more assistant messengers provided for than one division than all the other bureaus of the War Department combined. A further provision of the bill prohibits the assignment, even temporarily, of any of those men to another bureau in the Department. The result is that one finds one or two able bodied men loitering in front of nearly every door of the Adjutant General's portion of the War Department building. Another example of Democratic inefficiency!

#### Presidential Rage Continues.

The decision of the President not to speak at the centennial of St. Johns church in Washington is generally attributed by Republicans of the Senate to the fact that Senator Lodge of Massachusetts, who recently denounced the President's peace note, was scheduled to speak on the same occasion. "If this country has reached a point," remarked one Senator, "where the President cannot be criticized without punishment being inflicted on the critic we are in the same situation as the subjects of the Czar." It is suggested that an effective way to retaliate would be for the Republican Senators to boycott the President when he comes to the Capitol to address Congress.

#### A Prosecuting Attorney's View.

The attempt of the Democrats of the House to prevent further investigation of the much-talked-of leak in regard to the President's peace note was strenuously resented by Congressman B. M. Chipperfield of Illinois, a leading member of the Rules Committee that conducted the preliminary investigation. "As States attorney," asserted Mr. Chipperfield, "I have sent many a man to the penitentiary until the last day of his life with less evidence than there is in this record, that there was a leak to Wall Street from Washington." Due to the insistence of Mr. Chipperfield and other Republican Members of the Rules Committee the House sent back to the committee the resolution of investigation for the purpose of demanding further information of the witnesses who had appeared before it.

#### Redwood and Fire.

Probably no other wood burns with more resistance than California redwood. It seems to have been made fire resistant by nature. In logging camps this is peculiarly noticeable, for no other wood could be so treated. Because of the enormous size of redwood trees the logs are very heavy—sixteen foot butt log weighs from thirty to fifty tons—and it is very difficult to handle them when the ground is littered with bark, undergrowth and tops. To get rid of this waste, or "slash," as the lumberman calls it, he simply sets it on fire. The slash burns off, but the logs do not burn. They come through this test by fire, which lasts from eight to ten hours, with merely a slight char on the sapwood on their exterior.

#### Wrinkled Prunes.

Personally we'd rather remain fat than to fall off suddenly and look wrinkly like a stewed prune.—Kansas City Star.  
It is the unstewed prune that is wrinkly. Stewed prunes are plump. Where do you board?—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.  
Darn it, the landlady assured us twice, very positively, that they had been stewed.—Kansas City Star.  
Stewed twice, perhaps.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

#### Not at All Plain.

"What is your husband's name, madam?" asked the polite directory canvasser.  
"John Smith," responded the lady.  
"Plain John Smith, eh?"  
"No, indeed! John is the handsomest man in this town."—London Answers.

Children Cry FOR FLETCHER'S CASTORIA

#### MINISTER TO BALKANS IS ACCUSED AS UNNEUTRAL



Photo by American Press Association. CHARLES J. VOPICKA.

American Minister Vopicka will be taken away from Bucharest as the German government asks, although he still will be the accredited American minister to Rumania, Serbia and Bulgaria. The German government has cited incidents in which it alleges he was unneutral toward the central powers and favored Rumania.

#### A GENERAL SURVEY OF THE WAR

Capture by the Teutonic forces of the town of Vadani, about six miles southwest of the important Rumanian trade center of Galatz, on the Danube, is reported in the official German communication. Vadani is on the railroad between Braila and Galatz.

On the northern Rumanian front Teutonic forces took by storm the top of a mountain south of the Oituz road, the war office announces. An attack by Russians on the Sereth, northwest of Braila, was repulsed.

"Except for lively artillery firing on both sides of the Somme there was little fighting at any point, owing to rain and snow," says the official report from the Franco-Belgian front.

Further advances have been made by the Austro-German forces in the Moldavian frontier mountains, where six machine guns and other booty fell into the hands of the attacking forces.

Heavy fighting is in progress on the northern end of the Russian front, both along the Dvina and south of Dvinsk. The Russians attacked along the Vilna-Dvinsk railroad, but were repulsed with heavy losses, says army headquarters.

The fighting north of the Ancre river, on the French front, is still in progress. Two attacks were made by British troops north of the Ancre. North of Beaucourt the British gained initial success, but were driven back with heavy losses by a counter attack. A thrust near Serre broke down under the German fire.

Six lines of entrenchments covering the town of Rafa on the Sinai peninsula have been captured by the British, it was announced officially in London. The statement says 1,600 Turks were captured. A Turkish relief force was destroyed.

Rafa is thirty miles northeast of El Arish, Egypt.

With this success the British have carried their advance to the border of Palestine. The attack was carried out by Australian troops and a camel corps.

In accordance with the agreement with the allies on Dec. 1 King Constantine of Greece began delivery to entente naval authorities of six batteries of mountain guns. He gave orders to the troops to suppress all hostile demonstrations, which was promptly done and a meeting called to protest against the acceptance of the allied ultimatum was summarily dispersed.

It is officially announced in Rome reports that the Italian battleship Regina Margherita struck a mine and sank Dec. 11 off the Albanian coast. Six hundred and seventy-five men on board perished. Two hundred and seventy were saved. The Regina Margherita was 13,215 tons, 426 feet long and manned with a normal complement of 810 men. It was reported last October that this warship had been damaged by an explosion.

A British cruiser of the Juno type (5,500-ton vessel) has been destroyed by Turkish gunfire, it is announced in the Turkish headquarters report of Jan. 11.

The British battleship Cornwallis (14,000 tons) was torpedoed and sunk in the Mediterranean sea, Tuesday, the British admiralty announced. The Cornwallis was built in 1901, and carried a crew of 750 men. She was capable of a speed of nineteen knots and was 465 feet in length.

Of the crew, thirteen are missing. The seaplane carrier Benoychree was also sunk in Kastelorz harbor, the admiralty said.

The Cornwallis is listed in the naval register as a class C battleship, but considering that she was sixteen years old, it is probable she had been put to other service than with the active fighting fleet.

#### NAVAL DISASTERS

Their Rarity is a Tribute to the Skill of Our Seamen.

#### THE WRECK OF THE SAGINAW.

This Catastrophe Brought Into Play the Wonderful Ability and Energy of Commander Sicaud and His Officers and Crew—An Epic of the Sea.

American naval officers are noted for their efficiency, fearlessness and energy not alone in the stress and turmoil of war, but also when emergencies arise where a battle with the elements may be more perilous than would be the heaviest big gun fire of an enemy.

Maritime disasters happily have been rare in our naval history. Their rarity indeed speaks volumes for the skill of our navigators, to whom negligence or incompetence has hardly ever been imputed. At most an overconfidence may be urged in one or two instances; but, generally speaking, our naval wrecks have been caused by violent convulsions of nature in her angriest mood or from causes over which our naval commanders had no control.

In the latter class was the wreck of the United States steamship Saginaw on Ocean Island in the north Pacific Oct. 29, 1870. This disaster was due to faulty charts that did not show the existence of an outlying reef upon which the vessel piled up in the darkness of the night. Through the energy and good seamanship of its commanding officer, Lieutenant Commander Montgomery Sicaud, who realized at once that his ship was a total loss, every such stores and provisions as the time permitted, which elapsed between the accident and the ship's breaking up.

Without delay he organized a camp on shore, establishing and enforcing the strictest rules, for upon them depended the lives of all concerned. He managed to secure a boiler from the wreck, and he converted it into a distiller, thus obtaining a constant supply of fresh water for drinking. It is difficult to imagine the sufferings those poor fellows would otherwise have undergone, since there was no potable water on the island.

Recognizing the fact that his party might be detained many weeks, if not months, and that Ocean Island was a breeding ground for sea fowl, he at once drew a line around his camp and forbade any one crossing it without authority, lest the birds be scared away and the only source of food disappear with them.

Raids for obtaining eggs and fowls were stealthily carried out at night under specific orders by selected and carefully instructed men. In this manner, reflecting great credit on Sicaud's forethought, there was never any lack of food, such as it was.

Since the scene of the disaster was a thousand miles removed from the ordinary path of vessels traversing the Pacific, little or no hope could be entertained of casual rescue. In some way or other word had to go to the outside world. One of the Saginaw's boats, prepared for this perilous service, was dispatched under Lieutenant John G. Talbot, with four seamen, to the Hawaiian Islands, some 1,500 miles away across a wintry ocean. Upon this slender thread hung the salvation of a hundred and more men.

The difficulties, storms and dangers encountered, the hardships and sufferings endured, make this trip of these gallant sailors one of the finest among the countless epics of the sea. Terribly exhausted by privation and the ceaseless struggle against old ocean's fury, their ears all lost in a heavy gale of wind, the boat pushed on under sail, only to be capsized by the surf landing on the beach of the island of Kauai.

It is related that Talbot sighted the very last outlying rocky islet of the Hawaiian group, fortunately recognized by one of his crew, and from there beat up against the trade wind to Kauai. Had he missed this islet, no more, in all probability, would ever have been heard of him, and it is equally likely that his shipmates on Ocean Island might not all have survived until success should crown a second attempt to communicate with civilization.

In the overturning of the boat four of its occupants were drowned, the brave Talbot among the number. Happily one seaman got ashore, more than half dead, to bring Sicaud's dispatches to the American minister to the Sandwich Islands, who at once chartered a steamer and sailed the same day to the relief of the marooned ship's company of the Saginaw. Except for the sad ending to Talbot's mission, this wreck, however unfortunate in itself, is a splendid example of the resourcefulness and skill of the American naval officer and so may be regarded with vastly more pride than regret.—Rear Admiral Caspar F. Goodrich in Philadelphia Ledger.

#### Odd Name Oddly Won.

The inn known as the "Same Yet," at Prestwich, has a curious history which Mr. Hackwood relates: "The House originally bore the 'Seven Stars,' but many years ago it became necessary to have its faded sign repainted. When the painter asked the landlord what he was to put on the board he received the answer, 'The same yet.' And the man took him at his word."—London News.

Have the courage to appear poor and you disarm poverty of its sharpest sting.—Mrs. Jameson.