

Do Your Work Early.

Beside my window in the early spring.
A robin built her nest and reared her young;
And every day the same sweet song she sung.
Until her little ones had taken wing
To try their own bird living; everything
Was done before the summer roses hung
About our home, or purple clusters swung
Upon our vines at autumn's opening.
Do your work early in the day or year,
Be it a song to sing, or word to cheer,
Or house to build, or gift to bless the race;
Life may not reach its noon, or setting sun;
No one can do the work you have undone,
For no one fills another's place.
—SARAH K. BOLTON, in the Independent.

"Beware of the Bomb!"

I was looking over the papers in the smoking-room of a Paris cafe. My eye chanced to fall upon the "Echoes of the Stage" column, and I exclaimed aloud:

"At it again!"
A Frenchman sitting near me looked up in wonder at my petulant tone, so I hastened to explain, speaking fluently, in very bad French:

"Round the World in Eighty Days" is on the boards again. Will they ever have done with that absurd affair? They seem to think it a feat equal to the labors of Hercules."

The Frenchman looked shocked.

"Phileas Fogg was no better than a tortoise!" I cried boastfully. "I could do much better than he—"

"You can go round the world in less than eighty days?" asked my hearer slowly, and I answered in the same tone: "I will go round the world in seventy days if you like."

"I take you up!" he cried.

"What do you bet?"

"Five thousand francs."

"Done," said I, and we exchanged cards, and bows.

That was how it came about that I left Paris for the East on the 5th of January, and stepped on board a transatlantic steamer from a New York pier on the 5th of March. So far I had not lost a minute, and now it only remained to be seen whether I should reach Havre in seven days as the steamship company promised. It would be a close shave at best. A variety of detentions might occur; a slight accident to the machinery, and all would be lost.

I was nearly consumed with anxiety but the ship acted up to her reputation, and on the 12th of March I stepped once more on to French soil.

I cast the ship a look of gratitude as she lay at the Harve pier letting off steam from her monstrous boiler. Then I glanced at my watch. It was four in the afternoon; there was plenty of time for me to dine at my ease and catch the six-forty express. That would bring me to Paris at half-past eleven. I took out my time table to make sure. As I ran my eye down the column of figures, an inspiration came to me.

"Where's the use of starting this evening!" I said to myself, "if I get there too early, it will look as if I were afraid of losing the wager. How much better to arrive at the very last second, with brilliancy and dash and dramatic effect, just as they do on the stage. That would be worthy of a genius! Now, here is a train which leaves Havre tomorrow morning at 6.55, and reaches the Saint Lazare Station at 11.30. The time fixed for me to meet the fellow at the office of the Semaphore just before the first stroke of noon. I can easily go from Saint-Lazare to the Exchange in eight minutes, in a cab, so there is nothing to prevent my appearing in the nick of time, as just Phileas Fogg did, after making every one's heart palpitate with suspense. That's settled. I shall not go on until tomorrow!"

Accordingly, I went with my baggage to the best hotel, dined comfortably, took a walk through the town smoking a cigar and returned at ten o'clock to go to bed.

"I must take the 6.55 train tomorrow morning," I said to the hotel-proprietor; can you have me awakened in time?"

"We have a trustworthy man on purpose for that work," was the reply. "That may be," said I skeptically, "but after all, if you could let me have an alarm clock, I would feel more safe."

"I will lend you my own, although I assure you it is unnecessary," said the host, and accordingly I carried the tiny clock to my room, wound the alarm, set it at six, stood it on a little table beside the bed, and went to sleep with a quiet mind.

I was in a heavy slumber when I felt my arm being shaken violently. "What's the matter?" I grumbled without opening my eyes.

"You have only just time, sir," said a voice in my ear.

"Time for what?" I asked, looking up drowsily.

"To catch your train," was the reply.

I sat up and glanced at the clock. It was half-past six!

Without another word, I leaped from the bed with such precipitation that I threw down the table with the little clock, dashed into my clothes, crowded my few belongings into my trunk frantically, flew down the stairs, four at a time, sprang into the stage which was awaiting me, and hardly drew breath until I was on the train.

Out! What a close squeeze! Two minutes more and I would have lost my bet. However, all's well that ends well; I had my ticket, my trunk was on the train, the whistle sounded,—I was off for Paris.

When I entered the St. Lazare station the hands of the big clock pointed to half-past eleven. I hailed a cab, and learned that there was time for me to take my trunk with me.

At that moment it appeared in the arms of two porters who were carrying it with the greatest care. Confound them, how slow they were. What fool ever accused the railway companies of handling baggage roughly, I hastened towards the men exclaiming:

"Be quick, now!"

I had hardly uttered the words when a heavy hand was laid on my shoulder, and, turning round to see the cause of such familiarity, I found myself face to face with a gendarme.

"What is the matter with you?" I asked in amazement.

"Matter enough," replied the man in a jeering tone, tightening his hold; "you will see!"

Behind the gendarme came two railway officials.

They stooped over my trunk solemnly, turned their heads as if listening, then stood up and exchanged a glance which plainly said: "There is not a doubt of it."

"They are crazy," I thought, but then a horrible conviction flashed through my brain. Whether the men was sane or not, one thing was sure: It was forty minutes past eleven. At all hazards I must make my escape. I shook myself free of the gendarme's grasp, and knocking over two or three people in my flight dashed madly away; but was stopped by two custom-house officers who seized me by the collar. I was dragged, protesting and gesticulating back to where my trunk stood. There was evidently a mistake somewhere.

"Let me go!" I cried, "let me go! And I swear I will come back in an hour—"

The gendarme's lips described a smile behind his thick moustache, as he took possession of me again, this time with both hands.

"Come, now; don't try that," said one of the railway officials; "you may as well confess. You arrived from New York in great haste and under suspicious circumstances. Who are you? What have you in this trunk?"

"Clothes, nothing but my clothes," I answered, speaking worse French than usual in my agitation.

"No explosives?" insisted the official.

"Explosives! What for? I am not a pyrotechnist, nor a chemist."

"Then what is the meaning of this strange noise? Inside your trunk there is a sound of machinery—in short, an infernal machine. Yesterday, the London police arrested four American anarchists who had similar articles in their possession. You are known to be one of the gang."

I listened in speechless wonder to his words. I looked at my trunk, and my wonder increased to stupefaction as I heard a metallic tick-tack inside. Suddenly there was a loud ringing report—like a signal for an explosion.

"Beware of the bomb!" shrieked some one; officers and porters scattered in all directions, and even the gendarme moved away. I alone remained, like a hero. I tore open the trunk and pulled out the clothes in feverish haste. All at once I felt something hard inside a night-shirt, and the next moment drew out and exposed to view—a little clock.

I had unknowingly packed up the hotel-keeper's property, and it was striking the alarm six hours behind time.

"Confound the old turnip!" I cried, throwing it down furiously. I was answered by a loud peal of laughter from the spectators.

Then putting my head down, like a wild boar that scents the hounds, I dashed toward the cab again and sprang in, shouting to the driver,

"I'll give you a louis if you get me to Place de la Bourse before noon."

Seven minutes and a half later the cab was tearing up to the Stock Exchange. I jumped out, flew upstairs to the Semaphore office, burst into the room like a hurricane, and remarked in a stentorian tone:

"Here I am, gentlemen!"

The next instant the first stroke of noon sounded from the Exchange clock.—[From the French, in Romance.

No Steel Engravings.

In his lecture before the Art Student's League, Frederick Keppel said that not one of the famous engravings of the world was of steel, all being copper. Toward the close of his discourse he affected to correct his former statement.

"That," said he, "would not be strictly true, for there is one; it is the portrait of an elderly lady with accessories decorative and symbolical, but the curious thing about this one steel engraving which I have to show is, that it is universally and enormously popular. Tastes may differ as to schools of art but I have never known a single collector who has not been willing and even eager to add it to his collection. The desire for its possession is indeed so intense that I have known refined and fastidious men and women, too, to welcome a copy that was damaged, torn and soiled. For my own part I have often found it very difficult to procure. I have often striven in vain to get it in exchange for other prints of far greater beauty. This strangely fascinating engraving was mainly done by Charles Burt, of Brooklyn.

"It is the copyright property of its publishers and so jealous are they of its reputation that when I was preparing photographic illustrations for this lecture the publishers absolutely refused to allow their engraving to be copied or imitated in any manner whatever. Fortunately I have a tolerably good original impression of Mr. Burt's famous plate, which as I have said already, is the most admired engraving I know of."

After this prelude, when the audience had been worked up to a fever of expectancy, Mr. Keppel said: "Here it is!" and flashed before their astonished gaze a plain familiar one dollar bill. Then everybody laughed.—Buffalo Courier.

Street Names in Philadelphia.

Probably no city in the country is burdened with street names which are so meaningless as Philadelphia's. Many of them are absolutely silly, and upward of a hundred bear the Christian name of women. In fact, there are few women's names which have not been immortalized in the name of a street. There are no less than five Ann streets in Philadelphia, in addition to which there is an Ann's place and an Anna street. There are three Mary streets, three Rose streets, and three Elizabeth streets, with an Elizabeth place thrown in for good measure. Not content with two Ella streets, the city fathers have named two streets after Ellen, with an Ellen place. In addition to these there are two Florence streets and as many Florence avenues, and two of all the following streets: Caroline, Emlene, Isabella, Letitia, Lydia, Margaretta, May, Minerva, Pearl, Sarah, and Victoria. From among the other street names may be culled the following: Abigail, Agnes, Bertha, Carrie, Clara, Eliza, Emma, Evelina, Grace, Helen, Jane, Julia, Laura, Lena, Lily, Lucy, Martha, Mand, Priscilla, Susanna, Viola, Virginia, and Zenobia.—[Philadelphia Record.

Messenger Swallows.

"It seems quite possible that the swallow will prove a successful rival to the carrier pigeon in its peculiar line of service," said Harold W. Swain, of Washington, D. C. "I know a man who has been experimenting with these birds for years and who managed to tame them and make them love their cage so that they will invariably return to it after a few hours' liberty. The speed of these messengers can be judged from a single experiment. The man of whom I speak once caught an untrained swallow which had its nest on his farm. He put the bird in a basket and gave it to a friend who was going to a city 150 miles distant, telling him to turn the bird loose on his arrival there and telegraph him as soon as the bird was set free. This was done, and the bird reached home in one hour and a half. Their great speed and diminutive forms would especially recommend swallows for use in war, as it would not be an easy matter to shoot such carriers on the wing."—[St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Nerve.

Tailor—When are you going to pay for that overcoat?

Dude—Really, my—

Tailor—Now, look here, if you don't pay, I'll bring suit within thirty days.

Dude—Make it a summer suit, old man, and you can bring it right away.

—[Detroit Free Press.

FIRE-EATERS.

How Seemingly Wonderful Feats Are Performed.

Mouth, Throat and Hands Are Coated With A Solution.

"Of course, all fire eaters have a solution with which they wash their mouths and throats," the professor said in explaining his tricks to the reporter. The formula is the one great secret in the business. Every performer has something different, at least in some, if not in all. An explanation of this gas trick will suffice to give an inkling of the basis of the work of all fire eaters. Before I begin my performance I coat my mouth with the solution, and when ready, I manage, while I am not observed, to put a ball of worsted which has previously been saturated with gasoline, into my mouth. This requires a sleight of hand of no mean ability, and while there is not much of detection in a good-sized hall, it is only with great difficulty that one can escape observation here. You know that gasoline possesses volatile qualities of the most positive sort. When it comes in contact with air it forms a vapor that is more easily ignited than gas. I blow steadily through the gasoline ball which I hold in my mouth, and the vapor is formed. When I am on the stage the solution ignites it, but tonight I had no opportunity to bathe my mouth, and so a match had to be used. That spoils the illusion somewhat, but still leaves it a good trick, and any one can perform it that way without a knowledge of the solution.

"The Human Lamp-trick also meets with great favor, and is as simple as rolling off a log," he went on. "I drink from a can what purports to be kerosene oil, and to prove that it is, I pour some of it in a lamp, put a wick in the lamp and light it. Any man who has ever had the oil get low in a lamp that he is trying to read or work by knows that it is possible to fill the lamp with water when there are only a few drops of oil in it and have it burn for some time. That is precisely what I do. After I have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the audience that the can contains oil, I take a wick saturated with sweet oil, place it in my mouth, light it and have a little blaze all by myself. For exhibition purposes, I am a human lamp. The illusion is a good one and no mistake.

"The fire-eater, like the athlete, must keep himself in condition if he hopes to do his work well," the professor continued. "He can't use the solution which protects his throat and mouth unless his stomach is strong. While it is not injurious, it is nauseating, and it affects the stomach and throat to such an extent that none but perfectly healthy people can use it. When the solution is used on the hands and mouth regularly it forms a film or coating over the skin that furnishes protection from the heat. This solution is absolutely necessary in all tricks except the simplest, and of course a man cannot make a success of this business unless he knows how to prepare it. Once he learns that secret the rest is easy enough, provided that he is in condition all the time to use it without any ill-effect.

"The best illustration of the value of the solution is given in the trick where the performer walks on red-hot iron, sharp sword edges and the like," he explained further. "There is but little illusion about these tricks, as any one can easily see, and they can only be performed by a long season of training and by the exercise of the greatest patience on the part of the person who would do them. Even though a man's mouth is coated thick with sulphuric acid solution, and he does the coating every day, when he comes to bite a chunk out of a red-hot piece of iron his task is no easy one. The heat softens the iron, but still it requires a man with a powerful jaw to bite off a chunk, and then it is unpleasantly hot to the palate, in spite of the cooling effects of the solution. That trick was so hard and came so near actual work that I have about given it up, and only perform it on very rare occasions now.

"If a man can stand the taste of oakum," he said in conclusion, "here is another little trick that is very catchy and can be performed by the veriest tyro, so simple is it. I always make a hit when I eat oakum balls saturated with burning pitch. 'Eat' is a good word there; it sounds so much stronger than if I were to say I simply put them in my mouth and that the fire then goes out. That is the effect of putting blazing pitch in a place where there is no air. The rest

is one to the solution. But unless you have tasted oakum and developed what epicures call a cultivated taste, I would not advise you to try an experiment with it, for you will not be likely to get the taste out of your mouth for days."—New York News.

Longevity of Toads and Frogs.

The persistence of life in frogs is very long. Spallanzani preserved some frogs in a mass of snow for two years. They became dry, stiff, and almost friable, but a gradual heat brought them back to life. Vulpain observed a return of life in frogs and salamanders that had been poisoned with curate and nicotine. In both cases the animals in question had been for several days in the condition of cadavers. Toads have been shut up in blocks of plaster, and then, having been deprived of all air except what may penetrate through the material, and of all sources of food, resuscitated several years afterward. The question presents one as the most curious problems that biological science has been called upon to explain. The longevity and vital resistance of toads are surprising. Besides the experiments we have cited, nature sometimes presents some already made, and vastly more astonishing. Toads are said to have been found in rocks. Such cases are rare, but it would be as unreasonable to doubt them as to believe in some of the miraculous explanations that have been made of the matter. The phenomena is marvellous, it is true, but it is supported by evidence that we are not able to contest; and skepticism, which is incompatible with science, will have to disappear if rigorous observation shall confirm it.—[New York Recorder.

The Couch a Necessity.

There are times when so many of the things that distract us could be straightened out and the way be made clear, if only one had a long comfortable couch on whose soft bosom he could throw himself, boots and brains, stretch his weary frame, unmindful of tides and tapestry, close his tired eyes, relax the tension of his muscles and give his harassed mind a chance.

Ten minutes of this soothing narcotic, when the head throbs, the soul yearns for endless, dreamless, eternal rest, would make the vision clear, the nerves steady, the heart light and the star of hope shine again.

There is no doubt that the longing to die is mistaken for the need of a nap. Instead of the immortality of the soul business men and working men want regular and systematic doses of dozing; and, after a mossy bank in the shade of an old oak that succeeding seasons have converted into a tenement of song-birds, there is nothing that can approach a big sofa or a low, long couch placed in a corner, where tired Nature can turn her face to the wall and sleep and doze away the gloom.—[New York Ledger.

Atmospherical Curios.

If it were possible for one to rise above the stratum of air which surrounds the planet earth, the sun would appear to the observer as a huge, sharply-outlined ball of fire, while everything else would be wrapped in impenetrable darkness. This is true because we know that there could be no sensation of light conveyed to the brain without an atmosphere for the sun's rays to act upon. But, on the contrary, if the earth's atmosphere extended to a height of 700 miles, instead of forty-five or fifty, as is probably the case, the sun's heat and rays could never penetrate it. Had such been the state of things "in the beginning," this earth would never have been populated with its varied forms of animal life. But, should such a state of affairs accidentally be brought about through some unknown agency, every vestige of animal life would perish from the face of the earth in a very short time, and the terrors of starvation would be augmented a thousand-fold by the fact that everything would be wrapped in darkness darker than the blackest midnight.—[St. Louis Republic.

Vanishing Ink.

There are various kinds of invisible inks, but here is a method of making ink which can be wiped off a sheet of paper with a pocket handkerchief without leaving a trace. Dissolve some starch in water until it is as thick as cream. Then add to it a few drops of tincture of iodine, which will turn the starch to a dark red color. Now take a pen and write with this prepared ink upon a sheet of note paper. The ink will dry right away, after which you may erase the whole of your letter by simply wiping the sheet with a pocket handkerchief. It will disappear as easily as chalk from an ordinary black-board.—[Boston Post.

The Golden Age.

If men were happy in the days of gold
Why should we weary and complain today?
Has Nature failed, or feeble grown, or old?
Look forth upon the teeming fields and say!

Lo! the harvest of the sky?
Or have the mountains stooped their royal
brow?

Have warring winds forgot their battle cry?
Has Ocean ceased his lion soul to rouse?

Has melody forsown the summer day?
Has Love forgotten to be cruel, kind?

Have Time's enchantments faded all away?
Or is it thy poor, groping soul is blind?
Look forth! No longer weep with doubt and
fear.

Behold! the golden age is ever here.
—P. McArthur, in Independent.

HUMOROUS.

Teacher—What is the passive mood of the verb to work? Johnny—To loaf.

"How did Nettie get the measles?"
Small Brother—"Oh, she'd saved up coupons, I s'pose."

Many a person thinks he or she plays the piano, when in reality he or she is only playing with the piano.

Can anybody give a good reason why clocks should not strike when they are required to work over time?

"You are like a toy watch."
She remarked to her beau,
When he asked why, she said:
"Because you won't go."

Patience on a monument is nothing compared to a man sitting on an empty powder keg until it explodes.

Stella—That new young man's face seems very familiar. L—Hattie—Well, it isn't half so much so as his manners.

"The modern handshake," said Uncle Allen, with his eyes on the opera boxes, "is a notoriously high-handed proceeding."

It takes these nine tailors to make a man," said the duke, with nervous chills.
"But alas! It takes (as you observe in the play) but one tailor to make nine bills."

"There was great consternation on the staff of the Oriental last evening," wrote the critic, "when Ah Sing, the leading actor, lost his cue."

A lawyer said to a witness: "You're a nice fellow, ain't you?" Witness replied—"I am sir, and if I was not on my oath I'd say the same of you."

"What sort of a collection have you, Will?" asked the visitor? "Perhaps I can help you." "Well, sir," said Will, "I'm collecting American coins."

My heart is very sad tonight,
Unrest is in the air,
I cannot tell what it is;
Dyspepsia or despair.

Miss Elderby—I don't understand why some women are so sensitive about their age. I have never tried to conceal mine. Miss Trenchant—You are very wise.

Mrs. Clatter—Do you believe that cures can be effected by the laying on of hands? Mrs. Clatter—Most certainly; I cured my boy from smoking in that way.

"I'll send you to jail for contempt of court, sir," said the irate judge to the insolent attorney. "Don't do it, your Honor," pleaded the lawyer; "I don't want a life sentence."

"What song is now most popular?"
Asked St. from way down east;
Straightway his city friend replied,
"The one that's sung the least."

Jack—I'm going into the perfumery business. Tom—Why in that? You don't know anything about it, do you? Jack—No; but if I fail, I'll be sure to come out a few cents ahead.

"Why, sir," said the young man, "do you refer to this as a dime-museum poem?" "Because," replied the editor, "it is a freak. It has more than the normal number of feet."

Lives are unequal. One will buy
His seat for fifty cents;
Another holds the weary eye
To a knot-hole in the fence.

The Polite Letter Writer.—Elder Sister—I am writing to Amy; is there anything you'd like to say to her? Younger Sister (who hates Amy)—Yes, plenty; but you'd better only give her my love.

"Don't sit on this bench with me, George, please!" said Maud. "Why not?" asked George. "Because it is only strong enough for one," said Maud. "Then, I say, Maud, can't we be made one?" suggested George.

Man wants but little here below
And gets that if he can;
But woman asks for even less—
She only wants the man.

Aunt Maria—Are you sure that Mr. Spooner loves you? Carrie—I guess you would think so to hear she silly things he says to me. Aunt Maria—But how do you know you love him? Carrie—Because they don't seem silly to me.

Hicks—What an awful amount of talk these legislators indulge in in comparison with the amount of work they perform. Wick—They are mostly married men, and they don't have a fair opportunity for talking when at home.