

FREAKISH STREAMS.

REMARKABLE CHARACTERISTICS OF SOME LARGE RIVERS.

The Mississippi No Longer Holds First Place in North America—A River of Writing Fluid—Wonderful Channel of "China's Sorrow."

It is a recognized fact in science that very few great rivers have been thoroughly explored by going up stream. For nearly 2,000 years travelers and explorers endeavored to discover the sources of the Nile by ascending that wonderful river. But by the time they had reached the difficult part of the stream their supplies and energy were exhausted, and they could go no farther. It is only by seeking the sources of rivers by overland routes that explorers meet with success. It was in this manner that Henry M. Stanley traced the route of the Congo in Africa. In this way of procedure Frederick Schwatka was enabled to float down to Yukon and Speke found the secret of the river Nile.

One of the most curious rivers that has come to the knowledge of men is the Webbe Shebeyil, of eastern Africa, a deep and rapid stream, abounding in strange fish and ferocious crocodiles. Although it flows for hundreds of miles through fertile lands the immense volume of water never reaches the sea. A short distance north of the equator the river is lost in a desert region a few miles from the Indian ocean.

Some of the more recent explorers of Alaska and British America claim that the Mississippi can no longer be regarded as the largest river on the North American continent. This distinction is claimed for the great Yukon river. According to Ivan Petroff, who spent over two years in Alaska, collecting materials for the last census, the Yukon empties into Norton sound about one-third more water than the Mississippi pours into the gulf of Mexico. The Yukon basin comprises the larger part of northern Alaska, and 600 miles from its mouth the river is a mile in width. Many centuries before it was discovered by white men it very likely served as the water highway into the interior, for tribes that we believe to have crossed from Asia to the American continent. The Yukon river is over 2,000 miles in length.

Travelers report that in Algeria there exists a small stream which the chemistry of nature has turned into ink. It is formed by the union of two rivulets, one of which is very strongly impregnated with iron, while the other, meandering through a peat marsh, imbues large quantities of gallic acid. Letters have been written with the natural compound of iron and gallic acid which forms this small, yet wonderful, stream.

The Rio de Vinagre, in Colombia, is a stream of the waters of which, by admixture with sulphuric acid, become so sour that the river has been appropriately named the Rio de Vinagre, or Vinegar river.

The Orange or Garieh river, in southern Africa, rises in the mountains which separate Natal from the Orange River Free State. The length of this stream is 1,000 miles. Its banks abound in various valuable woods, and around it are found rich copper ores. In this stream are many varieties of fish, which are found until the river passes through a rocky region containing copper, below which the water is said to be poisonous, almost instantly killing the fish that venture near it.

"China's Sorrow," a curious name for a river, is the title bestowed upon the great Hoang Ho, which rises in the mountains of Tibet and follows a wonderfully circuitous channel for 2,500 miles to the Yellow sea. The waywardness of this mighty volume of water makes the river a constant source of anxiety and danger to the 170,000,000 of people inhabiting the central plain Asia. It is known to have suddenly changed its course nine times. It has moved its mouth four degrees of latitude each time, emptying its vast floods in different directions, and finding a new channel for itself where scores of towns and villages have stood. The river has greatly changed the physical character of a wide area, converting fertile regions into a sandy desert or making shallows of them. Whether it is within the power of modern science to save this great plain from disastrous overflow and changes of the river's bed is a question which during late years has been widely discussed, especially in the scientific circles of Paris and London.

Another remarkable river is the Indus, a great stream in Hindustan. It rises in Tibet, and its course is a wonderful one. On reaching Sussil, its most northern point, it turns southward, loses itself in the hills and reappears at Takot in Kohistan. The Indus is 1,700 miles in length. After receiving the waters of many tributaries its channel grows narrow, and here it is divided into many channels, some of which never return to the parent stream. It abounds in fish and crocodiles.

That classical river, the Ganges, is erratic in its course, like the Hoang Ho. It is prominent both in the religion and the geography of India. It varies not only from season to season, but from year to year, and frequently exchanges old passages for new ones. It has been said that the Ganges delivers into the sea every year 534,000,000 tons of mud, sand and other solid matter.—Philadelphia Press.

Self Defense.

"So you accompanied your wife to the play, after all?"
"Yes. I happened to think that if I didn't she would tell me all about it when she came home."—Chicago Record.

Over one-third of the entire population of the globe, or about 400,000,000 people, speak nothing but the Chinese language.

CLIMATE AND COMPLEXION.

Does the Color of the Skin Depend Upon Meteorological Conditions?

The Egyptian has remained white notwithstanding a constant mixture with the black Nubians. The people who live in the dry section of the Nubian desert have a red skin. Other races that are brown or that vary from a white to a chamois color also live in dry country. The Abyssinians, however, in whose country the plateaus are well irrigated, are blacker. The blackest negroes in Africa are those who live in Guinea, where the greatest amount of rain falls. In Asia, says the writer, it is the same as in India. There is a close relation between the fall of rain and the color of the people. The more moist the climate is, the darker the skin of the natives. As one goes up the Ganges the climate becomes drier and the skin of the natives whiter. The Bengalese are black, but the Sikhs and the Rajpoots are of a dead white color.

In America it is the same. The Brazilians are generally darker than the inhabitants of the Andes. The Portuguese, who come from a rainy country, settled in Brazil, while the Spaniards inhabit the Andes and the dry La Plata section. Spain is very dry as compared with Portugal, and the Portuguese in Europe have the darkest skins of all Europeans. Heat, light and humidity, says the writer, are, then, all causes of pigmentation. In dealing with these three causes the question of pigmentation of the skin is alone, and their relative influence, he says, is a very complicated one. For instance, persons inhabiting a mountainous district, where the climate is cooler, have a lighter skin than those who live on the plains, although it has been seen that the Abyssinians are an exception to the rule. The native of Abyssinia is darker on the plateaus and lighter on the plains.

In Peru the inhabitants on the coast have a lighter skin than those on the mountains. D'Orbigny observed that in America in the impenetrable forests the savages were lighter; the darkness evidently prevented pigmentation. What, asks the writer, causes the difference between the negro laborer exposed to the sun and the Brazilian savage who lives in the forest? The latter is more or less chocolate colored, but not black. Are these facts, he asks, sufficient to prove absolutely Buffon's assertion that the color of the skin depends on the climate? Evidently not. If they were, we should see the descendants of a white person become black, and vice versa. The acclimated white man does not work in the sun, and he preserves his white skin as a Brahman does. Furthermore, it would require many generations to accomplish the change.—New York Medical Journal.

GREAT BOON TO A SUFFERER.

One Instance in Which a Cigarette Proved a Blessing.

"It was just six years ago," remarked E. H. Hume, an athletic looking Englishman, "that I was with the English army in upper Burma, and a week before Christmas I found myself taken down with black diphtheria. There had been an epidemic of the disease in the town and vicinity, and I, always susceptible to contagious diseases, was one of the first in the regiment to take it. Every day I grew worse, until the surgeon finally gave up all hope and told me that I could not live 12 hours longer. My comrades came to bid me goodby and a few of my intimate friends, fellows from my own home, staid with me to tell the folks how I passed my last hours on earth.

"My throat had become so swollen that I was in great pain and the phlegm had collected to such an extent that I could not speak. Breathing had become all but impossible.

"I knew that I had but a short time to live, and as a last request asked for a cigarette. It seemed to be the only thing on earth that I wanted. The surgeon refused to give me one, but a young Irishman who knew how fond I was of smoking took one from his pocket, saying that it would not possibly hurt me, as I was already dying. He held the cigarette to my lips and I inhaled a lot of smoke, which I thought would choke me. Instead of that the smoke poured out and brought with it the whole mass of phlegm which for a week the surgeon had tried his best to remove. The cigarette was the only thing possible that would have served the purpose. In four days I was on my feet, a well man, and I have never had a day's sickness since."—New York Times.

Sportsmen's Notebooks.

Nearly every sportsman keeps a notebook, in which are recorded dates, places and kinds, sizes, conditions and so on of the game or fish he does or does not take. Such a man, when he tells a story, big, little or odd, can clinch it by referring to his book. Every naturalist finds it imperative to note every detail of his observations, and at the end of ten years or a year he finds a satisfaction in looking over his notes which is worth the trouble ten times over. There are men who have notes dating back over 50 years which would be a mine of wealth for writers on natural history. One man carried scales in the woods with him for years and weighed piece by piece the moose and other big game that he killed, noting it down carefully, so that now, after a long hunting life, he can give the average weight of any wild animals with which he is familiar.—New York Sun.

A Pleasant Frolic.

After the dissipated Duke of Wharton had been narrating his frolics, Dean Swift said to him: "My lord, let me recommend one more to you. Take a frolic to be good. Rely upon it you will find it the pleasantest frolic you ever engaged in."

The Cost of Education.

College Youth—Here I've just received a letter from my governor, saying that my studies are costing him too much money. And yet I study as little as possible.—Exchange.

MAURICE HEALY.

A Funny Incident in Which He Figured in an Irish Court.

Tim Healy, the Irish M. P., has a brother who is a very clever barrister. He has written a book on the revision of the voting lists which is the standard authority with English jurists. In connection with that book a funny incident transpired in one of the courts at Belfast.

The home rulers of that city had wired to the London headquarters for an able lawyer to fight their battle, as they considered the local talent rather light for such a heavy legal contest. They received a reply granting their request.

The court opened, and the barrister for the Unionist party, a clever lawyer named Young, began an able and exhaustive argument why the names of certain individuals should not be retained on the list. The home rulers were wringing their hands in despair, for the man from London had not appeared—at least no one had seen him.

As Young continued, rendering quotation after quotation in support of his assertions, the poor Nationalists became frantic. Suddenly there was a lull in the proceedings. A modest looking young man had arisen to his feet to ask a question. Nobody knew him.

"My lord, th—th—a—I would like th—"

A roar of laughter resounded through the courtroom, and even the judge smiled. The crier shouted for silence, but the stuttering of the young man was so funny that it was some time ere it could be secured. Once more the stammerer tried.

"My lord, just one question. From what b-b-book does the l-l-learned gentleman quote?"

Mr. Young at once replied, "Healy's book on revision."

"I'm Healy," said the gentleman with the defect in speech.

The judge saluted him courteously, the opposing lawyer shook hands with him, and the Nationalist policy, which had been outlined as defensive, became aggressive in the hands of Maurice Healy, whose stuttering had caused such merriment, with the result that the only home ruler who ever sat for the city of Belfast, or probably ever will, was returned at the following election.—Thomas Sexton.—New York Herald.

HE DROPPED.

A Bad Tempered Young Man Gets a Lesson in Politeness.

A young fellow with bulging eyes, bloodshot and heavy from loss of sleep, swung on to the rear end of a south bound Clark street cable car. It was early and the car was filled with young women going to their work. The young fellow held between his thick, feverish lips a long, dark brown cigarette, and he sucked at it nervously.

The conductor, a little pink cheeked Irishman, reminded his passenger that smoking was not allowed on the rear platform.

"Oh, that's all right," said the young man and continued to smoke.

"No, it's not all right," replied the conductor, "and you will have to go forward, stop smoking here or get off."

The young man looked down at the little conductor a moment, shrugged his shoulders and started forward. As he passed through the car he pulled away at his cigarette, and by the time he reached the front door the car was full of smoke and many of the young women were coughing. Disregarding their indignant looks, he turned, as he reached the door, blew a mouthful of smoke into the car, and with a contemptuous sneer went outside.

The little Irish conductor had been watching him. He followed, and going close to him said:

"If you ever do such a thing in my car again, I'll punch your head off."

Although the young man was almost twice as big as the conductor, he made no reply, but tossed his cigarette away and his big red ears began to grow white.

The conductor left him, but just then a young man who had been watching the proceedings with animated interest came out and tapping the smoker on the shoulder said:

"I think you had better drop off here."

The young fellow passed his tongue over his parched lips, gave a startled glance into the car and dropped.—Chicago Tribune.

Here's a Bit of Pleasant Reading.

The so called "expulsion" of Lord Dauraven from the New York Yacht club reflects very little credit upon the members of that impotent and unsportsmanlike body. It is difficult to speak calmly of the puerile spite shown by these 39 Yankee yachtsmen in going through the farce of "expelling" a member who had already signified his intention of severing his connection with the club, and who, heaven knows, had little enough reason for wishing to remain in it. By their shameless eagerness to put an insult upon an honorable if mistaken English gentleman, the members of the New York Yacht club have forfeited even such modified respect as we in this country have hitherto had for them. They have made it utterly impossible for any self respecting Englishman ever again to challenge for the America's cup. I can hardly suppose, however, that that fact will cause them any regret, for they have all along displayed a determination to retain the trophy by hook or by crook.—London Figaro.

A Bag of Money.

A strange story of money recovered comes from Liverpool. A chimney sweep in cleaning an oven flue found £40 in coin in a bag. On telling the lady of the house she burst into tears and fainted. She had put the money there herself years ago, and having forgotten the fact had accused her son, who was rather wild, of stealing it, with the result that he had left the house in indignation and had never returned.

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