

BEAVERS' HOMES.

How the Ingenious Little Builders Construct Their Houses.

When the beavers' dams are completed, the animals separate into small companies to build cabins or houses for themselves. These are constructed upon piles along the borders of the pond. They are of an oval shape, resembling a beehive, and they vary from five feet to ten feet in diameter, according to the number of families they are to accommodate.

These dwellings are never less than two stories high, generally three, and sometimes they contain four apartments. The walls of these are from two feet to three feet thick, formed of the same materials as the dams. On the inside they are made smooth, but left rough without, being rendered impenetrable to rain.

The lower story is about two feet high, the second is formed by a floor of sticks covered with mud, and the upper part terminates with an arched roof. Through each floor there is a passage, and the uppermost floor is always above the level of the water. Each of these huts has two doors, one on the land side to admit of their going out and seeking provisions that way, another under the water and low where it freezes to preserve their communication with the pond.—English Magazine.

FLOATING A WHALE.

Inflating the Monster Carcass to Keep It on the Surface.

"Then began the work of bringing the whale to the surface and blowing it up so that it would float," says a writer on whaling in Popular Mechanics. "Taking a hitch about a convenient post, the rope was slackened and run through a pulley block at the mast-head to relieve the strain of raising the great body. The winch was set in motion, and for fifteen minutes nothing was heard save the monotonous grind as fathom after fathom of line was wound in. When the body was brought alongside the lobes of the flukes were cut off and lifted to the deck. Then a long coil of small rubber hose, one end of which was attached to a pump and the other to a hollow, spear pointed tube of steel with perforations along its entire length, was brought into play. The spear was jabbed well down into the whale's side, the air pump was started, and the body slowly filled with air. When inflated sufficiently to keep it afloat, the tube was withdrawn, the incision plugged with oakum and the chains cast off. A buoy with a flag was then attached to the carcass and the whole set adrift to be picked up at the end of the day's hunting."

What He Wanted.

Young Mr. Charles was plainly embarrassed, and Miss Smith knew what was coming, or thought she did.

"Er—Miss Smith," he said feverishly, "could I—er—see your father for a moment or two?"

"Certainly, Mr. Charles!" And, excusing herself, she swept from the parlor. Presently the old man came in, and, after a short conversation with Mr. Charles, he stepped to the door and summoned his daughter.

Mr. Charles, whose face was radiant, said, "As I have a long ride before me, I think I will say good night."

"Oh, papa," pleaded the girl immediately her lover disappeared, "did he—did you?"

"I did," broke in the old man. His daughter fell on his neck and kissed him. He held her at arm's length.

"I did," he repeated. "I lent him fourpence to get home with—that was what he wanted me for!"—London Mail.

Origin of Surnames.

Surnames were introduced into England by the Normans and were adopted by the nobility about 1100. The old Normans used Fitz, which signifies son, as Fitzherbert. The Irish used O for grandson—O'Neal, O'Donnell. The Scottish Highlander used Mac, as Macdonald, son of Donald. The Welsh used Ap, as Ap Rhys, the son of Rhys, Ap Richard. The prefix Ap eventually was combined with the name of the father; hence Prys, Pritchard, etc. The northern nations added the word son to the father's name, as Williamson. Many of the most common surnames, such as Johnson, Wilson, Dyson, Nicholson, etc., were taken by Brabanters and others, Flemings, who were naturalized in the reign of Henry VI., 1435.

The Sycamore.

The sycamore has been called the Egyptian fig tree. The date of its being planted in England is not known, but it was very early. Mary, queen of Scots, brought over from France a young sycamore, which she planted in the gardens of Holyrood, and from this have sprung all the beautiful groves of sycamores now to be seen in Scotland.—St. James' Gazette.

His Dilemma.

"I'm in a difficulty over my girl." "What's wrong?" "I've been saying such nice things to her that she's getting conceited. If I stop she'll think I don't care for her any longer, and if I go on she'll think she's too good for me."—London Mail.

A Previous Specimen.

He—if I'd known how sarcastic you were I never should have married you. She—you had a chance to notice it. Didn't I say, "This is so sudden," when you proposed to me after four years' courtship?"—Boston Transcript.

A Heroine.

Ella—Bella never passes a mirror without looking in it. Stella—Brave girl!—Harper's Weekly.

THE TOWN THAT PUSH BUILT

V.—The Wily Furniture Man



HERE is the furniture dealer who read a clothier's ad, and by it was led to spend for clothing the selfsame bill That he got from the dry goods merchant's till, Where it had been placed when the butcher bought And paid with the bill that he had got When the grocer with him had settlement made With the money the honest workman paid.

P.S.—The local dealer who's up to snuff Will always advertise his stuff.

THE LANDLORD'S MISTAKE.

An American's Experience in an English Country Inn.

An American was journeying through England and encountered in a certain town a rather pretentious inn, at which he ordered turbot, a favorite dish in those parts.

The American had had a few days of dense fog, and his appearance and manner perhaps showed that he had become a little wheezy in consequence of the climate. He was indeed forced to have frequent recourse to his handkerchief.

When the turbot was brought the guest fancied, even before it reached his plate, that it was no longer fresh, and an attempt to eat it confirmed that impression. He called the proprietor, who at once sent a waiter for fresh turbot and removed the objectionable dish.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the innkeeper, "but we got the idea, sir, as you came in that you had a bad cold in your head, sir."

"And suppose I had? What could that have to do with my being served spoiled fish?" demanded the indignant traveler.

"I've nothing, sir. We as this rule in this house. Fish is a little doubtful, like that egg, sir, them which as lost the flavor of youth as I may say—them we serves to parties as appears to 'ave colds in their heads, sir, and we finds that, bein' as such parties can't smell to think they likes the fish just as well, sir, and hefore they prefers 'em."—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune

LONG DELAYED PROPOSAL.

A Note in a Bouquet That Was For Years Unanswered.

One of the longest delayed proposals on record is related in a French story of a shy young subaltern who was ordered away to the wars. Not daring to speak, he sent a nosegay of yellow roses to the girl he loved, with a little note inside begging her if she returned his love to wear one of the flowers in her breast that night at the ball. She appeared without it, and he went away broken hearted.

Years afterward, when he was a lame old general, he again met his old love, now a white haired widow. One day his old sweetheart gently asked him why he had never married. "Mad am," he answered somewhat sternly, "you ought to know best. If you had not refused to answer that note in the bouquet of yellow roses I might have been a happier man." "The note in the bouquet?" she repeated, growing pale.

She opened an old cabinet and took out from a drawer a shriveled bouquet of what had been yellow roses, among whose leafless stalks lurked a scrap of paper yellow with age. "See! I never had your note," she said, holding the bouquet up. "If I had I would not have answered it as you fancied." "Then answer it now," said the gallant old soldier. And the long delayed proposal was accepted at last.—London Telegraph.

Where Widows Commit Suicide.

Old customs die very hard in China, says a writer in the Wide World Magazine, and in several parts of the Celestial empire it is still considered a high act of virtue for a woman to commit suicide after the death of her husband. According to the law, the proceeding is actually legal in some provinces, and such is the state of public opinion that in districts where it is officially prohibited the authorities rarely interfere. These extraordinary voluntary sacrifices may frequently be seen, and I myself saw one take place. The widow herself, clad in white, the Chinese mourning color; the gallows erected for the occasion and the immense crowd gathered to witness the gruesome spectacle made a picture which I shall never forget.

Grecian Food For Dreamers.

Hashesh, the strange drug which has given our language its word "assassin"—a man so frenzied by the drug that he accomplishes murder—is used by the Persians, Turks and Egyptians in a manner akin to the use of opium by the Chinese. It is the product of a plant grown in large quantities in the Peloponnese (southern Greece), in the district about Tripolitza. The plant grows to a height of about four feet, and its branches are thickly covered with small leaves and studded with tiny seeds. The entire plant, stalk and branches, is cut within a few inches of the root and laid out in the sun to dry. The branches are then rubbed to separate the seeds, and these in turn are ground into a fine powder, which constitutes the drug. The drug has the power of inducing sleep and producing pleasant and fantastic dreams. Continued use of hashesh renders its devotees reckless and results in a wreck of their mental and physical constitution.—Montreal Standard.

Immune From Arrest.

In Washington, in the capital of the nation, there reside 200 men who, with their households, have absolute immunity from the laws of the land, even though they commit crimes of the first degree. They may shoot down the man who injures them; they may, if they see fit, paint the equestrian statue of General Phil Sheridan a vivid pea green, yet the hands of Uncle Sam must be kept from their shoulders, and woe unto the unfrightened policeman or other servant of the law who undertakes to bring them to justice once they have declared their official connections. These men who are so clothed in immunity are the members of the diplomatic corps, and their shield is international law. It is provided in the laws of nations that they must answer before the tribunals of their own countries for the offenses they commit here in Washington, but that they shall not be tried by any court of the United States.—Washington Star.

A Realistic Actor.

Malcolm was three years old. He stood stock still in the middle of the floor, one arm extended horizontally. His mother, looking up from her sewing, saw the door open.

"Shut the door, Malcolm, please," she said.

No response. She repeated her request. Still no response.

"Malcolm," she said more sternly, "I asked you to shut the door."

Still Malcolm stood in the middle of the floor with his arm outstretched and did not move.

"Malcolm," said his mother, "if you don't shut the door at once I shall have to punish you."

Malcolm burst into tears and flung himself on his mother's knees. "Mummy," he cried, "I was bein' a wooden sign, an' wooden signs can't shut doors!"—Woman's Home Companion.

Memory Studies.

A small boy went into a South Boston drug store, wrinkled his face, rubbed his head and rubbed his left foot up and down his right leg in an effort to remember something that had escaped him.

"Say," he began, "will you tell me the name of the place where we Americans have so many soldiers?"

"Fort Sheridan?"

"Oh, no. It's farther away than that."

"The Philippines?"

"That ain't just it, but it's somewhere around there."

"Perhaps you mean Manila?"

"Manila! That's right! I knew I would get it after awhile. I want a bottle of manila extract for flavorin'. They're goin' to have ice cream."—Boston Record.

Old Time Temperance.

The first temperance society is said to have been founded by Margrave Frederick V. in 1600, and it is instructive to learn that the noble members of that society were bound by a pledge good for two years not to drink more than seven bumpers of wine with any meal nor more than fourteen bumpers a day. They were, however, permitted to quench any surplus of thirst with beer and to drink one glass of whisky on the side. By this ideal of abstinence may be gauged the ordinary drinking habits of our forefathers in the good old times when knighthood was in flower.—Morris Hillquit in Socialism.

His Walking Papers.

"My sister'll be down in a minute," said little Clarence, who was entertaining the young man in the parlor. "I heard her tellin' maw a little while ago that she was goin' to give you your written permission to perambulate tonight. What do you reckon she meant by that?"

"I think I know, Clarence," said the young man, reaching for his hat. "You may tell her, if you please, that I have decided not to wait for it."—Exchange.

Barring It Out.

Irate Parent—No you think my daughter loves you, sir, and you wish to marry her? Young Lover—That's what I called to see you about. And if you don't mind I thought I'd just ask first if there is any insanity in your family. Irate Parent—No, sir, and there's not going to be any.—London Express.

Parliamentary Procedure.

"How about my letter of proposal?" demanded the young congressman. "It has been advanced to a second reading," answered the haughty Washington belle.—Kansas City Journal.

To draw a caricature of our contemporaries is not difficult. It requires only a small portion of talent and a great want of courtesy.—Disraeli.

The Middle Horse.

A farmer, plowing with three horses hitched abreast, noticed that the middle horse became tired and exhausted long before either of its mates. As the animal was the equal in every way of the other two, he was puzzled as to the cause of its not being able to stand the same amount of work. He finally observed, however, that as they drew the plow along the three horses had their noses close together, with the result that the middle horse was compelled to breathe the expired air from its fellows. The farmer then procured a long "jockey" stick, which he fastened with straps to the bits of the outside horses. The device worked perfectly, for, given its rightful share of good, fresh air, the middle horse was able to do the same amount of work and with no greater fatigue than its fellows.

Many persons are like the middle horse—they do not get their rightful share of pure air. And this is why they are not able to perform as much work nor of as good a quality as they would otherwise be able to do.—Chicago Tribune.

A Ticklish Moment.

If to act cleverly on the spot is the measure of tact, then the man who figures in the subjoined New York Tribune story deserves both respect and admiration: A woman, driving through New England last summer, noticed suddenly that her horse flinched a bit, so when she reached the next village she stopped at the door of the blacksmith shop. A man was holding up the doorpost, and to him she said: "Will you please tell the blacksmith to come out? I want to see him."

After the manner of the village idler, the man did not stir, but smiled sweetly at the woman and, lifting up his voice, called: "Bill, come out! There's a lady wants to see you."

From the depths of the blacksmith shop a deeper voice roared: "Is she young, John, or old?"

In the words of the old poem, "she looked at John and John looked at her." Then, still without moving, he answered: "You'll be satisfied, Bill, when you get out."

Survival of the Fittest.

Only one oyster embryo out of every 5,000,000 produced grows up through all the successive stages of youth to the adult state. Even in animals which produce a small number of young there is great destruction, and, taking all the individuals into consideration, only a single pair of young arrive at maturity to replace their parents. There is no exception to the rule that every organic being naturally multiplies at so high a rate that if not destroyed the progeny of a single pair would soon cover the earth. The elephant is reckoned the slowest breeder of known animals. It commences to breed at thirty years of age, dies at 100 and has six young in the interval. After 750 years, supposing all the offspring of a single pair fulfilled the rule and were not destroyed in an untimely way, there would be nearly 10,000,000 elephants alive descended from the first pair.—Sir Ray Lankester in London Telegraph.

When the Terror Quailed.

He would terrorize the neighbors in a most outrageous way, broke the wide world's standing records in athletics every day, while in pugilistic circles he could wipe men in the dust and show master tricks at fencing—laugh at every cut and thrust. He slew tigers in the jungle and scalped redskins on the plain. He chased lions across the mountains and harpooned upon the main. He could break a bucking broncho—yes, and rope a Texan steer; sling a bowie knife or hatchet, throw the boomerang or spear. In hairbreadth escapes he glided, did this worthy son of Mars, and he'd lick his weight in wildcats—kick them higher than the stars. But his shoes were in his pocket, and his face was ghastly white; he was silent as an oyster when he came in late at night.—Exchange.

He Took the Chance.

"No," she said, and there was that in her voice which told him she would neither change nor falter in her resolve—"no. I have vowed to marry none save one brave and strong enough to swear that should he ever be elected president he will give the vote to woman."

De Laney, such was his love's abounding depth, hesitated not at all. "I swear it," he cried and fell upon his knees before her.—Exchange.

Tibetan Test of Character.

The Tibetans have some strange tests for ascertaining the character of a man, said Sven Hedin. One is by means of a hole in a block of granite, through which the individual has to crawl. If he is an honest man he will, according to the theory of the Tibetans, creep through, but if a scoundrel he will stop in the middle.

War Play of the Future.

"What properties will we need for the battle scene?" "None whatever. The stage will be bare. The men are supposed to be wearing invisible uniforms and firing smokeless powder from noiseless guns."—Kansas City Journal.

The Best Advice.

If you are about to do something which may cause trouble, ask the advice of a man who has tried it. His advice will be stronger than that of a moralist, and it will be backed by experience.—Acheson Globe.

Keep an eye on your enemies, but keep a microscope to one eye and a telescope to the other when watching your "friends."—P. P. Shevlin.

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