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STURGEON NEARLY EXTINCT.

Rapid Decrease of Catch in the Past Few Years.

It may surprise some persons to learn that a full grown female sturgeon is as valuable a creature as the fur seal. Yet this is a fact. It may also interest and surprise many to be told that more than \$1,000,000 are invested in the sturgeon catching industry in the Delaware river alone, and that more than seven-eighths of the caviar sold in this country as Russian caviar is made a few miles below this city from eggs of the sturgeon caught in this vicinity. Yet both these things are true also. The slaughter of the fur seals in Behring sea and their threatened early extinction by Canadian poachers produced at one time widespread excitement throughout the country, and for awhile caused decidedly strained relations between the governments of the United States and England. The sturgeon is as perilously near extinction as the fur seal. At the rate this valuable fish is disappearing and unless something is promptly done to prevent it in five years there will be none to catch. To show how rapidly the sturgeon are passing away it is only necessary to refer to the report of the Pennsylvania fish commission. According to the document, between the years 1880 and 1889 it was not uncommon for 1,000 sturgeon to be seen on the dock at Bayside as the result of one day's catch. In the latter named year the fish began to decrease in number rapidly. The average catch to a net that season was 60; in 1891 about 55; in 1892 it was 43; in 1893 it had fallen to 32; in 1894 down to 25; in 1895 the average to a net rose to 32, but in 1896 it fell to 27; in 1897 the average was 22; in 1898 it fell to 13, and in 1899 it sank to 8. In 1898 the total catch of sturgeon in the Delaware bay and river was over 5,000. Last season it was 2,510. It cannot take long at this rate to bring extermination.

Does Electricity Kill Trees?

New Haven (Conn.) Special to Philadelphia Inquirer: Indignant citizens who desire to save the noble elms that are the pride of New Haven have threatened to bring suit against the trolley car companies of the city for alleged damages to the trees. The assertion is made that the trolley wires charged with electricity are in some streets held in place by connecting wires fastened to the trees, and that charges of electric fluid are sent into the trees, which are thus killed. The trolley companies have sought to stave off damage suits by an offer to test the scientific correctness of these assertions. Permission has been obtained from the department of public works and police supervision assured for the interesting experiment within the week of charging the big tree in front of City Hall with the full voltage of the trolley system. If the tree dies a score of suits will be filed by property owners, who have been compelled to cut down trees, some of them 150 years old, since the trolley ran through the avenues.

He Shortened It.

A pompous butler one day announced some callers as follows: "Mr. Edwin Algernon Pembroke Penny, Mrs. Edwin Algernon Pembroke Penny and Miss Maud Victoria Penny." Other arrivals were announced at equal length and with equal solemnity. Before the next "at home" the master of the house suggested that so much repetition and elaboration was unnecessary; that he would prefer to have his guests announced more briefly. The magnificent being bowed grave assent and said nothing. But his feelings had been wounded and he was, unlike most of his kind, as clever as he was majestic. As before, the first to arrive were Mr. and Mrs. Penny and Miss Penny. When they had ascended the stairs they paused an instant at the drawing room door; the next they heard themselves briskly announced to their dismayed hosts in the comprehensive formula, "Threepeence."—*Wellesley Magazine.*

Mechanism of the Carp.

People marvel at the mechanism of the human body, with its 492 bones and 60 arteries. But man is simple in this respect compared with the carp. That remarkable fish moves no fewer than 4,386 bones and muscles every time it breathes. It has 4,320 veins, to say nothing of its 99 muscles.

THE FLIGHT OF YEARS.

The flight of years, like a dream appears—
Lost with the oblivious past!
What now remains, that memory gains
Of wisdom that will last?

Of human loss, perchance, brief store—
Since limited is sphere;
And human life, so fraught with strife,
Disports with hope and fear.

At eventide, some thoughts may glide
Beyond the setting sun;
Or when night's pall envelops all,
And earth's turmoil is done;

Silent and fleet, like angel feet,
Time hurries us along,
To that fair strand—"the Promised Land"
Those of the Pilgrim throng.

There, hopes and fears with vanished years,
Will thenceforth ever cease,
And sweetest harmony shall be
With that best Home of Peace!

Such hope inspires the heart that tires
With transient things of Time,
And solace gains, 'midst griefs and pains,
From God's great gift sublime!

—Frederick Saunders.

THE GREAT "LABEL CASE."

CAPTAIN HALLIWELL. I want to introduce you to a young lady who is very anxious to make your acquaintance.

My hostess led the way across the drawing room to a dark, exquisitely lovely girl. She watched us eagerly, and, without waiting for any introduction, sprang to her feet, and said: "Are you Captain Halliwell?"

I admitted the truth of the charge. "I am Edna Doughty," she said, with a slight air of defiance.

"Edna Doughty," I said, holding out my hand, "I am proud to meet you."
The name of Edna Doughty was in everybody's mouth in connection with what the papers called "The Great Label Case."

Lord Epworth was found dead in his bed. It transpired that he was secretly addicted to the practice of taking chloral. He had received a bottle by post from Messrs. Perott and Menson, the well-known chemists, from whom he usually obtained it, and had taken one dose out of it, a moderately strong one.

It killed him. It was taken for granted at first that his death was either the result of accident, or a case of suicide. But at the inquest Messrs. Perott and Menson positively denied having sent the bottle to Lord Epworth. It was certainly wrapped up in their label, and packed in one of their boxes. But they had not sent it.

The label was, of course, examined. It bore the postmark, "Hampstead, 3.15 p. m. 7, 8, 97."

It was obviously improbable that Messrs. Perott and Menson, whose place of business is in Bond street, would post medicine in Hampstead.

The chloral was analyzed and pronounced a strong poison.

Lord Epworth had been poisoned, and the crime had been committed by somebody who was perfectly acquainted with his habits.

So far as known this narrowed the circle to about ten persons—his household servants and a few relatives.

The question arose, who would benefit by his death. He was a married man, but separated from his wife. She had been an actress in her youth, and had a handsome allowance from her husband, whom she had not seen for fifteen years.

Lord Epworth's estate was immense. The family property, which was of great value, would pass to his nephew, Dalton Humphrey, a man who was well known and very popular in society.

It was on him that public attention was fixed. His uncle made him a very small allowance, and he was known to be in financial difficulties.

The death of his uncle would make him a rich man.

Further inquiries produced two startling revelations—the handwriting on the label closely resembled Mr. Humphrey's, but it appeared to be disguised; also, Mr. Humphrey had certainly purchased a bottle of chloral three days before his uncle's death, and it had been sent to him from Messrs. Perott and Menson's establishment by post.

Doubtless he had removed the wrappings carefully, substituted the poison, replaced the wrappings and sent it to his uncle, knowing that it would be consumed without suspicion.

In addition to this, Mr. Humphrey was known to have played golf at Hampstead on August 8, at about 3 o'clock in the afternoon—the time the package was posted.

He was, of course, arrested. He seemed to be somewhat dazed when the warrant was read to him, but not exactly surprised and said:

"Well, it served the brute right!"
In the teeth of such evidence, and what sounded like an admission of guilt, it was difficult for his friends to believe him innocent.

But one person believed in him, in spite of all, although he seemed not to believe in himself—the girl he was engaged to, Miss Edna Doughty.

She was a wealthy girl, and considered one of the "catches" of the season. In spite of all protests and arguments, she stood by her lover, and tested her complete confidence to him.

Public opinion was unanimous—Dalton Humphrey was guilty of a most treacherous and cowardly murder, and altogether unworthy of such a trump of a girl as Miss Doughty. As for her, for the moment she was the popular idol.

I must explain, too, that her reason for desiring to know me was that at a country house where I was visiting a few months previously, I had been instrumental in clearing up a family scandal.

At the bottom of my heart I firmly believed in the man's guilt. But it was impossible to refuse the request of such a noble-minded girl.

Our first and greatest difficulty was the prisoner himself. He would answer no questions and render no assistance. All he would say was:

"I don't care. Let them do what they like."

I felt it was not quite fair to infer the worst from this obstinacy. It might not arise from a consciousness of guilt. It is conceivable that a man's mind might be somewhat unbalanced at the gravity of the charge.

I examined the evidence carefully. The handwriting on the label certainly resembled his, but not so exactly as to be conclusive.

The question was, who would or could imitate it? Was it done out of malice? Above all, was it possible that there was a woman in the case? Some one, perhaps, who was jealous of Miss Doughty.

I knew many of his friends, and made careful inquiries, but could find no reason to suspect any one of conspiring against him.

One curious fact was elicited. Humphrey had left a vest end club at 3.10 o'clock on August 8. He drove to Hampstead in a cab, and arrived at the links late. If that was the case, how could he have posted the package at 3.15?

It was an odd discrepancy, but not by any means sufficient to clear him. A cunning man might have arranged things so.

I obtained a photograph of the label, and distributed copies among his friends.

But accident suggested a curious possibility. A friend of mine was interested in a "benefit" which was being organized for an actor. He called to let me know how it was progressing.

"I have had such a bit of luck," he said. "I wrote to Lady Epworth. When she was on the stage she was a 'pal' of old Burrows, and I thought perhaps she might fork out a fiver. However, to my surprise, the old screw has sent five and twenty pounds. Here's her letter."

While reading her letter I noticed that there was, at any rate, some resemblance between her writing and that on the label. It seemed to me that the writing on the label was about midway between that of Lady Epworth and Dalton Humphrey. If he had tried to imitate her handwriting or she had tried to imitate his, one could imagine that this would be the result.

I submitted the three specimens to an expert.

His report was unfavorable.

In his opinion the address had not been written by Lady Epworth. He was satisfied that the label was addressed by the person—whatever he was—who had written the third specimen. That person was, of course, the accused.

Messrs. Perott and Menson told me that they knew Lady Epworth by sight, but had never seen her in the shop, and I began to lose what little confidence I had ever had in the case.

But not so with Miss Doughty. She didn't believe "experts," nor, in fact, anybody who had anything to say against Mr. Humphrey, and suggested we should try another interview with him.

At first he was as obstinately silent as ever, but I mentioned the discrepancy in the time of posting. Instantly his attention was aroused.

"Do you mean to say," he said bitterly, "that you don't take it for granted that I am guilty?"

"I don't take anything for granted," I replied sharply. "And if you would only pull yourself together like a man we might do some good."

"What can I do?" he said, coloring. "Answer a few questions. Whom do you suspect?"

"Nobody. It is that which bewilders me."

"What about your aunt? Would she benefit by Lord Epworth's death?"

"Indirectly she would," he said, thoughtfully. "When my uncle married she was wildly in love, and made extravagant settlements."

"But she has an annual allowance?" I said.

"Yes; but she doesn't always get it," he said, with a smile, "because Epworth's affairs were in such a pickle. But now that he is dead nobody could prevent her stepping into a large property."

"What kind of a woman is she?" "A thoroughly bad lot," was the prompt answer.

"Does she know your handwriting?" I asked.

"Certainly. She has had letters from me."

This gave us something to work on. Further conversation brought to light the fact that there lived with Lady Epworth a Miss Denton, who seemed to be half lady's maid, half companion. Humphrey's maid, he believed she was a relation—probably a sister. It was possible that, although Lady Epworth

herself had never entered Perott and Menson's shop, her creature might have done so.

With some difficulty I procured a photograph of this Miss Denton, and, placing it among a number of others, took it to Messrs. Perott and Menson.

They picked it out immediately. The lady was a regular customer. She purchased chloral. They knew her name, and she gave the address of a small shop in Lady Epworth's neighborhood.

Moreover, they had transmitted through the post a bottle of chloral to the woman a few days before Lord Epworth's death.

She or Lady Epworth had evidently imitated Humphrey's handwriting, watched his movements and posted the poison at a time when suspicion would inevitably fall on him.

Having proceeded so far with the case, I now thought it right to hand it over to his solicitors to complete it, as I had no wish to pose as a detective.

Mr. Bennett, instead of consulting the police and taking steps to have the woman arrested, or at any rate, watched, simply wrote to Lady Epworth requesting her to call at his office.

Evidently she and her "lady's maid" took alarm, for the effect was startlingly tragic.

Next morning London was electrified to learn that Lady Epworth had died by poisoning by her own hand, and her accomplice had disappeared.

The expert on handwriting had blundered, as experts sometimes do, but we had no difficulty in obtaining Humphrey's release at the next magisterial inquiry. There was, however, still one point which had not been cleared up, and in Miss Doughty's presence I put two questions to him.

"Why had he purchased a bottle of chloral? and above all why had he tacitly admitted his guilt?"

His answer was a painful one.

"I have been secretly addicted to the habit of taking chloral for the last three years," he said. "I suppose the tendency is hereditary. Nobody knew of it, and I was constantly trying to break myself. When I was arrested I was more or less under its influence, and scarcely knew what I was saying. But when I found myself in jail on a charge of murder I honestly believed myself guilty. I believed I had been out of my mind."

I won't dwell on the scene that followed. Humphrey declared that this experience had cured him of the vice, and pledged his word of honor never to give way again, and he has kept his promise.

I fear that the account I have given of the affair has necessarily shown him in a bad light. But he is really "one of the best," and I know no happier people than the present Lord and Lady Epworth."—*Waverley Magazine.*

Remarkable Swarms of Insects.

From various parts of the country there were reports last summer of grasshoppers and locusts, swarms of insects that played havoc with the farmer. A swarm entered Colorado Springs some few years ago and swept away almost all the verdure. The insects covered the ground in places, and were swept out of the stores with brooms. That grasshoppers can stop a train seems incredible, yet a train on one of the northern roads in Colorado ran into a swarm one day which literally stopped it. The insects were piled up nearly a foot deep on the rails, and as the wheels crushed over them the train slid along and could not be started. The insects filled the cab, crawled over the cars and into them whenever they could find entrance and presented a sight that alarmed some of the passengers, as when they flew they filled the air like hail and formed a cloud which turned the sky to a red hue.

Held Up His Leg.

The following good story is told of a Glasgow ballie. In Scottish courts of law witnesses repeat the oath with the right hand raised. On one occasion, however, the magistrate found a difficulty.

"Hold up your right arm," he commanded.

"I cannae dae 't," said the witness.

"Why not?"

"Got shot in that arm."

"Then hold up your left."

"Cannae dae that, ayther—got shot in the ither ane tae."

"Then hold up your leg," responded the irate magistrate. "No man can be sworn in this court without holding up something."—*Philadelphia Call.*

Driftwood on New England Coast.

People who live on the New England coast like to use driftwood as fuel in open fireplaces. It is impregnated with copper and ocean salts, and when burned gives out the most brilliant colored flames. It is asserted that a New Bedford dealer has orders for the wood from all parts of the country, and even from Europe, and ships hundreds of barrels of it yearly. Various attempts have been made to imitate this wood by artificial process, but without success. Long submersion in the sea water is necessary to produce the brilliant flames.

The Plan That Failed.

There is a mother in a New England town who has much trouble with her small boys. They are very lively children of the small boy, given to running away, going in swimming, and doing many other things of which a good mother cannot approve. So the other day, to keep the most obstreperous of the small boys at home, she dressed him entirely in his sister's clothes. Then with a mind at rest, thinking he would not endure the shame of being seen on the street in girl's clothes, she went about her work with a quiet mind. But her confidence in that small boy's feelings was not well placed. He ventured out on the street and there meeting some genuine little girls, was evidently reproached by them for the false position in which he was placed. That is at least the conclusion the mother came to later, and that her small boy resented sarcastic remarks, for an older brother came running in in great excitement, crying:

"Oh, mother; Georgie is fighting with some other little girls."—*New York Times.*

Most Musical Town in the World.

Do you know which is the most musical town in the whole world? It is Desterad, in Brazil. One of our readers who resides there writes: "In our town, which contains scarcely 15,000 inhabitants, possessed of small means, there are 509 pianos and seven choral societies. The three suburbs again boast of six musical societies—two for each." If the manners of this town are not exceptionally sweet, proverbial axes of no account.—*Le Gaulois, Paris.*

SOUTH DAKOTA'S WIND CAVE.

It Is So Extensive That Some People Say That the State Is Hollow.

The good people of South Dakota regard Wind Cave as the tenth wonder of the world. From surface indications it would seem that a large part of the state is hollow, and the extent of Wind Cave is unknown. It was discovered in 1877 by a notorious character known as "Lame Johnny," who distinguished himself on several occasions by holding up the Deadwood stage and ambushing caravans of unwary travelers. His lack of prudence in one of these adventures resulted in a "necktie party" which ended Johnny's career, so that he was not able to profit by his discovery. J. B. McDonald rediscovered the phenomenon in 1884 by finding a large gap in the plain through which the wind was pouring out with great force, like the draught of a chimney. There are similar vent holes at frequent intervals over this neighborhood claim that several have been opened within the last few years.

The cave is divided into chambers. It is asserted that more than 3000 different rooms have already been discovered, varying in size from 12 feet in diameter to over three acres, and this is believed to be only a small portion of the cavern. The cave ceiling is not so high as that of Mammoth Cave, and the geologic formations are not as wonderful as those of Luray, but it has many attractions, and one in particular—the dryness of the atmosphere—which is said to afford instant and complete relief to asthmatic people.

The temperature of the cave is about 45 degrees the year round, being unaffected by the variations of the thermometer outside, but the variations of the barometer are sharply perceptible. When the mercury rises on the outside a current of air flows into the cave and follows a certain direction. When the glass falls this current changes and the air flows in another direction. This phenomenon has not been studied by competent meteorologists, but is so apparent that it attracted the attention of the early explorers of the canyon.

The effect of the air of the cave upon asthmatic people is equally peculiar. A sufferer from that disease finds immediate relief upon entering the cave, and there will be no return of the trouble for several days after. This has suggested the possibility of a permanent cure for such as can have the privilege of visiting the cave frequently, and a hotel is planned for their accommodation.—*Chicago Record.*

Says He Saw a Top Spin 71 Minutes.

"I see that a couple of Northern scientists are wrangling over the invention of a top that spins for an hour without stopping," said a New Orleans engineer, talking about mechanical curios. "No detailed description of the device has even been printed, but I can assure both claimants that it is far from a novelty."

"Over ten years ago, to the best of my recollection, a German watchmaker, who was then living here, made a top which I myself have several times seen spin for more than an hour. His name was William Freund, and I believe he is now at Dallas, Tex. He was a sort of all-round mechanical genius and used to occupy his leisure by making quaint automatic toys, which he generally gave away. The long-distance top consisted of a metal sphere, about the size of a football, surmounted by two thin, wide disks, which, to the best of my recollection, were made of tin, with a strip of lead around the edge. Freund called the thing the 'Saturn top,' because these disks made it look something like the familiar pictures of that planet. At the bottom of the sphere was a short pin with a sharp point, on which the apparatus revolved, and on top was a peg for winding the string which gave it its impetus. No other mechanism was visible. Freund spun the toy in a small saucer the two or three times I saw it in motion. He held it erect by a handle which rested in a cavity at the end of the peg, gave the string a quick jerk and away it went. It whirled around so smoothly and with such a total absence of anything like a wobble that it was hard to discern that it was really moving. It appeared to be standing perfectly still. The longest time that I saw it spin was one hour and 11 minutes, but on other occasions it beat that record slightly."—*New Orleans Times-Democrat.*

Hamburg Has Little Sunshine.

Hamburg had eighty-two days in 1889 when the sun was not visible at all. There were in all 1,367 hours of sunshine, or 400 hours less than in Helsingland.

Where to Locate?

WHY, IN THE TERRITORY TRAVERSED BY THE

Louisville AND Nashville Railroad,

—THE—
Great Central Southern Trunk Line,

—IN—
KENTUCKY, TENNESSEE, ALABAMA, MISSISSIPPI, FLORIDA,

—WHERE—
Farmers, Fruit Growers,

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and Money Lenders
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iron and Coal,

Labor—Everything.
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Louisville, Ky.

MILITARY NOTES.

Hereafter boys who enlist in the navy will not have to buy their uniforms.

The tube of a 12-inch gun has 50 spiral grooves inside, which cause the shot to revolve 75 times per second as it rushes through the air.

In India mounted officers traveling by rail on temporary duty may, if they prefer it, take a bicycle with them at government expense, in lieu of a charger.

The war office is buying in Canada £1,400 worth of moccasins for the troops in China. It is thought that they will prove more suitable for campaigning than boots.

The order of 208 guns and two destroyers for the Turkish navy has been placed with Messrs. Krupp, of Essen, notwithstanding that the tender of Messrs. Armstrong, Whitworth & Co., of Great Britain, was over \$400,000 less than that of the German firm.

Since the outbreak of the war in South Africa £104,050 has been received by the Lloyds' Patriotic Fund in aid of soldiers disabled by wounds who have left the service. A sum of £10,200 was handed over to be distributed among Colonial, and £2,570 has been given to disabled men at home.

The German China expedition corps is clothed in yellow-brown khaki. The troops carry highly sharpened sword bayonets, and the new rifles, 1898 model, known as "Boer guns." The officers are armed with long swords. Every soldier must carry a mosquito net and a blanket.

Until the time of Charles XII. of Sweden the artillery was not considered a part of the army; the men serving in it were not soldiers, but regarded as mechanics; the officers had no army rank. Charles XII. gave artillery officers a rank, and regularly organized the artillery into companies.

The battle of Pavia demonstrated the superiority of the gun in the hands of the Spanish infantry. The musket carried a 2-ounce ball, and sometimes brought down at one fire two or three mailed knights. The French sent a flag of truce to remonstrate against the use of such barbarous weapons.

There is a strong movement in Greece in favor of the Swiss military system in place of the German. The latter absorbs three entire years of the life of young men, whereas the Swiss system calls for only 100 days of drilling in the first year, and 20 days every second year thereafter, until the age of 32 is reached.

Over 100 vessels were employed in the British transport service in South Africa. The admiralty takes credit to itself for the fact that its immense transport service has not cost a life, except the lives of animals—200 trained war horses being killed on a single vessel whose flimsy fittings gave way in a storm and set the horses adrift.

The taste for tapestry is the craze of the hour. They are used for every purpose under the sun that furnishings can afford. Seats and backs of chairs, composed of small squares, reproducing in text stitch the paintings of Lanier and Wouverman, are the latest for drawing rooms, with curtains and carpets to match. A new plan in library, dining room or living room decorations shows a straight band of tapestry on either side, framing the window, while across the top, framing these, there is a straight cross band of Henry II. style. They are lined in some heavy textile to match the color scheme of the room.

Censorship in Siberia.

Hereafter officials who wish to edit books, write for newspapers and indulge their literary taste in Siberia, must first secure permission from the ministry of the interior, after having clearly indicated the precise nature and scope of their proposed literary flights. This rule is not intended to check genuine literary talent, but to curb crude criticism and strictures launched on pseudo-literary craft. Censorship, so rigorous elsewhere, is scarcely noticed in Siberia, so light is its hand. Still it exists, and may at any time be enforced more strictly when necessary.

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Great Central Southern Trunk Line. Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Mississippi, Florida.

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