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The statement that pepper is an elixir of life is much strengthened by the fact that in Mexico, where pepper is the main condiment, people more than frequently live to be 110 to 120 years old. The great objection, however, to the elixir is that the people while alive have not much life in them.

Australian papers are offering prizes for the best designs for a national flag to commemorate the new era inaugurated by the Commonwealth. The most valuable is a check for \$250, offered by the Australian Review of Reviews, and in this competition the six Australian Premiers are to be the judges.

It is evident that the fast selling books of no particular literary merit, but with the elements of popularity, have changed the standards of acceptance in the leading publishing houses. Most of the new novels that are being put on the market now could not have secured a second reading two years ago. They are simply the publishers' dice, thrown in the hope that a luck number will be turned.

The New York Sun tells a good story illustrative of the effect of American labor-saving machinery. An agent coming into the London office of the concern by which he was employed was asked how the farmers were talking to a certain field machine. "I can best tell you," he replied, "by saying that while last year as a rule I sat on the fence watching twenty men do a piece of work, this year it was the twenty men who sat on the fence watching me do it." Could he have put it more graphically?

The extent to which the forests have been denuded of timber in recent years has caused thoughtful persons considerable anxiety as to where the woodpulp necessary for the manufacture of printing paper is to come from a few years hence. Consequently the news that printing paper can be made from the cotton fibre will be hailed with interest. The Atlanta correspondent of the New York Evening Post states that a large factory will soon be established in that city for the manufacture of printing paper from cotton. The project, if successful, will not only lower the price of printing paper, but will prove a great boon to the South by opening up a new demand for its staple product.

Englishmen and the Queen.

Curiously enough the great mass of Englishmen knew little or nothing of the sovereign as their ruler. They had only the vaguest idea of the part she took in the government of her realm and her people; they knew practically nothing of the controlling and dominant force she exercised in international and domestic politics. But about this they cared nothing. It was sufficient for them to know that she was a good woman, a woman whose heart always went out to her people, who shared with them their joys as well as their sorrows, who was keenly interested in everything that could make them better and happier. And perhaps more than anything else was the knowledge that she was a woman who had suffered much, whose heart had been often wrenched, and whose spirit often tried, and yet through it all she had remained serene, hopeful, always an example for right living, always an inspiration to the weary and the afflicted. Perhaps that was the real secret of the devotion which she inspired in Englishmen the world over.—A. Maurice Low, in Harper's Weekly.

More than a million people are treated in the hospitals of London each year.

Of the 630 cotton mills in the South, Texas has 17, Kentucky 7 and Arkansas 4.

The number of libraries endowed by Mr. Carnegie is now 85.

TO AN OLD CLOCK.

BY JAMES JEFFREY ROCHER.

Old clock, if you've come here to give advice
About Time's flight,
And think to scare us with your wheels—
think twice—
Go slow to-night.
Dull preacher of one dreary, weary creed
By Death inspired,
The limits of our patience you exceed
And make us tired.
No need for you to tell the lapse of life
With tick and chime,
Who made you Empire, bidding us to strive,
By calling "Time?"
You stand there, like a Pharisee of yore,
Proclaiming grace,
With two admonitory hands before
Your smug, flat face.
Although you know the time of day at home,
You call it slow,
Is marking time at "half-past twenty-three"
Six weeks ago!

Beware mistakes:
It's yesterday in China now. In Rome
To-morrow breaks.
And somewhere off in Mars or Mercury,
no doubt,
If it could speak
For us to hear, some clock to-night bawls
out, "Tis Tuesday week!"

While one on 't'other side of space (may-
be
You'll call it slow)
Is marking time at "half-past twenty-three"
Six weeks ago!
So don't get gay with humble sons of
men,
As some clocks do:
One day your wheels will slacken up, and
then
Good-Night to you!
—Saturday Evening Post.

A FIRING LINE MYSTERY.

Life Secret of Young Bond, Whose Lips a Bullet Sealed.

THE Kansas man had served with Funston in the Philippines, had returned safely, had been a town hero for a month or so, and then went on the stump in the campaign. Several of the campaign orators met for a Sunday in a Western hotel where their roads crossed in their journeys to assignments, and were comparing notes. The man who had served with Funston gradually assumed command of the conversation, and the talk drifted from a discussion of the question why men rushed to serve in the Philippine campaign to one of the problems why men, in many cases, unexpectedly, show not only rare bravery but downright recklessness in battle. The Kansas man, for whom the name Maxwell will do so far as this article is concerned, said:

"As I was saying, we found men out there who had been wild, and whose parents were glad to see them enter the army; we found men who had been crossed in love; we found men who had been a failure in life, even if they were mere youths; we found many daredevils, and, curiously enough, most of them were cautious on the firing line, we found some who had passed that they wanted forgotten; we found some under assumed names, for one reason or another; we found the usual number of bullies, braggarts and bluffers, and being once under fire was the cure for them. But all these made up a very small number in comparison with those who had enlisted for love of country, with perhaps a desire for adventure thrown in.

"But of all the curious characters I came across the strangest was a man named Bond. He was silent as to his past; he made few friends; there was a glitter in his eye if we were in danger which was positively magnetic, and we came gradually to respect his reserve and to be proud of him. There was one man in our company, however, whose propensity for nosing into others' affairs was especially marked, and who, it was plain to be seen, was offensive to Bond. The name of Peters will do for this inquisitive man. He was a good fellow, and meant nothing more than friendly interest when he was poking around to find out all about his companions, and we learned at last to overlook his weakness—all but Bond. It was evident that Bond was desirous of curing Peters or of punishing him for his offensive behavior. Bond gradually became reckless on the firing line. Any one could see it was not assumed, but was genuine, and this conduct deepened the mystery as to his past and made Peters the more zealous to find out all about him.

"One day Bond fell with a wound. Peters carried him to the rear, cared for him, stayed by him as long as he could, did everything that could be done under the circumstances, like offering to write home, and all that sort of thing. He was apparently sizing up his chances of living. He was also thinking whether it was worth while to forgive Peters for the past or to give him a thrust he would never forget. It was about midnight that Peters returned to his place with us, and the next morning he had a story to tell to three of us in whom he confided.

Maxwell paused and, just as his hearers were becoming uneasy, he said this was the story Peters had related: "Boys, we've got a murderer among us, not only a murderer, but the worst kind of a one, a man who killed his father, and who, if it were proved against him, would, up to this time, have pretended that it was an accident. He's Bond. It explains why he has been so reckless lately; he wanted to be killed. Matter of conscience, you see. He whispered it all to me, asked me to write home, saying that he was dead and had passed away forgiving every one and revealing the secret. His name isn't Bond, but I'm under pledge not to tell what it is. He asked me to write without waiting for him to do actually, and he wanted me to get him reported dead so that it would be called home; said his friends would recognize him under the assumed name. It's a mighty sad story.

"Bond told me that he came from Ohio. His father was a bank president and was found murdered in the bank vault two years ago. Robbers had killed him and made their escape. He had evidently surprised them. Young Bond was the real murderer. He was just under twenty-one. He had been stealing from his father's private business for more than a year so as to get on gambling with a fast set of young fellows whom a sharper got together regularly and was plundering right along. On Bond's twenty-first birthday there had to be a settlement of the books, for his father intended to take him into business partnership. Bond had to have no less than \$5000 to make good his stealings. There was no other way left to him than to steal it. He knew all about the bank, the combinations to the locks, the ways of the watchman and all that, and he had studied up knock-out drops. He left some liquor that had been doctored with drugs for the watchman to drink, knowing the man's weakness, and the rest was easy. He entered the bank from the rear stealthily, having made sure that the watchman was unconscious, had just got into the inner vault, when he heard a noise and saw a dim light in the outer room. He knew it could not be the watchman, and at once raised his revolver for action and crouched to one side. Then he heard a voice, saying: "My God, I must have killed him. I didn't know it was so powerful. Wake up, Mike!"

"There was no response, and Bond says he recognized the voice as that of his father just in time, for he intended to shoot and escape in a rush if possible. Then Bond became conscious of his own danger. His father might shoot him. The father soon saw the open doors of the vault. "What does this mean?" he said. "Mike, you didn't do this; you couldn't. Who is there? Speak, or I'll shoot. Quick!" Then it was that Bond saw he had no show and he shouted to his father not to shoot, and revealed his own identity. "Then there followed a strange scene in that bank vault. There were the father, the son and the unconscious watchman together in the early hours of the morning. "What does this mean," said the father, sternly. "Has it come to this—my son a bank robber?" Young Bond said he was game, and he replied: "What are you doing here? Are you a bank robber yourself? You see he had overheard his father make that exclamation about Mike, and he took chances. "Explain your position on the inside of that vault," said the father. "Explain what you said about not knowing that something was so powerful when you saw Mike," said the son. And then the son went to pieces, and each, thinking that Mike was about to die, confessed to the other. The father had been speculating in the Eastern markets, had used up a lot of trust funds in his charge, and the only way for him to get out was to rob his own bank. He had also left some knock-out drops for the watchman, and it was the combined dose that made father and son think that the man would die. The son owned up to the father, and then followed a discussion as to what was best to be done.

"They agreed that the bank must be robbed; that was their only salvation. They agreed also that it would be best for one of them to appear to be defending the bank's treasure. It was finally decided that it would be best for the son to wound the father slightly in the side, take enough money to suit their purposes and leave his father there to be discovered in the morning. The old man said he was so desperate that he would take chances, and he would tell a story about feeling uneasy in his dreams as to the condition of affairs at the bank and of getting up in the night and going down there to see if all was right, of encountering a robber or set of robbers, of having a mighty struggle with them, ending, so far as he could recollect, with a revolver shot which made him unconscious. He had no fear as to Mike. If Mike recovered he would be so ashamed of being drunk that he would invent some story of being gagged, especially as father and son had arranged to bind him with a gag and tie his hands.

"Then father and son planned the details of the shooting, disarranged the furniture, bound and gagged the watchman, took the money and broke the locks, and the father lay down after tearing his clothing and had the son give him what he supposed was only a slight flesh wound in the side. The old man was full of nerve, and after the shooting was over hurried the son away and told him how to act when the discovery was made in the morning. They had wounded the watchman, also.

"Bond says he went home and to bed and acted his part thoroughly when they roused him to tell him of the dreadful accident to his father. It turned out really to be a dreadful affair, for both the father and the watchman were found dead and the bank robbed. Young Bond says he made good his gambling debts and en-

listed in the army so as to get away from the storm that arose when it was found that his father was insolvent. It soon became the general theory in the town that the elder Bond had gone there to rob the bank, and had been killed by a real bank robber, and there were those who thought they could remember the exact looks of certain mysterious strangers that had been seen about town.

"Bond's conscience could stand it no longer, he says, and he went to Kansas and enlisted and came out here, hoping secretly that he would be killed, for he had not the courage to commit suicide. He wanted me to write to his relatives clearing up the entire mystery, and telling them that he had explained his crime. The one thing I can't understand," said Peters in telling the story, "is why he wants me to write all this before he dies. He must have a dreadful conscience. He said to me: 'I am wounded exactly in the place in which my father was wounded when I shot him. I know I can't live. Just tell the truth about me, and make sure that the boys will not despise me too much. I have done my duty by them and by the flag,' says he. I broke down and wept, I'll admit, and I'm prepared to say there's no living soul but has some good in them. And then there's the duty of deciding what's to be done if Bond recovers. Ought we to give him away? I say no."

According to Maxwell the bugles just then blew for a forward movement, and soon all were lying on the firing line shooting at the Philippines. Maxwell made another awkward pause, and one of his auditors said:

"Well, I suppose Bond really did and you fellows did the right thing by him even in death."

"Die?" said Maxwell. "Great Scott, no! At least, not then. Less than two hours after Peters had told that story Bond came stealing up to the firing line, and there he lay next to me all day working like a demon. 'I thought you were dying,' I said to him. 'Thunder, no,' he replied. 'It was only a little wound. Scarcely bled at all. When Peters wasn't around the doctor told me it amounted to nothing, but urged me to stay in the rear for the night. This morning he put a little plaster on the broken skin, and here I am again. Did Peters tell you a long story about my mysterious past? Did, eh? I thought so. I told him that you purposely. I thought it about time to call him off and make him a laughing stock. Pretty good story, wasn't it? Any truth in it. Thunder, no. I knew I was not hurt. Even if Bond shouldn't happen to be my real name, there's no occasion for getting up such a yarn as that. What's that? Am I hurt? Yes, old man, I guess I am."

"I saw that he had been wounded seriously this time. I supported his head on my knee, gave him a drink of water, his eyes became fixed and between his gasps he said to me: 'Maxwell, I guess you had better tell Peters to write that story home after all, just as I told it to him. I thought I was dying or near to it last night when I talked to him. I'm going—now. Be—sure—to—tell—him—to—write—'"

"Was he really a murderer and bank robber?" asked one of Maxwell's listeners.

"The army records do not show that he was," was the response.—New York Sun.

New System of Electric Heating.

A new system of electric heat is upon the market. It consists of an electric heater and a blower. The motor is of the standard fan type, and is secured to a conical metal case. There is an intake for air at the back. The heater consists of clay tubes wound with fine German silver wire and covered with an insulating coat of enamel. The tubes are arranged radially and the fan and the heater are both closed in by a metallic casing. The heater can draw air from without the room or car, or in cold weather can operate, using the air in the room or car. Two of these heaters will, it is said, heat a forty-foot car to the proper temperature. In the ordinary system some of the persons in the cars are uncomfortably warm, while others are cold, but with the fan distribution the heat is positively distributed. The fan will also prove useful in school buildings, on ships and war vessels. It will be especially valuable when vessels are out of commission where it is desired to both warm and move the air.—Scientific American.

Seeking Indian Brides.

Letters from points beyond the Indian Territory from parties seeking Indian brides continue to be received by the officials at Muskogee, Ind. Ter. The latest was received by Postmaster H. T. Estes, from Oakes, N. D., and was accompanied by a photograph. It said: "The enclosed photograph is one of a locomotive engine man, bachelor, thirty-four years, weight 190 pounds, physical condition perfect. Will go before any board of medical examiners. At present employed on one of the largest systems in the Northwest. Have been through the country some years ago. Can you put me in communication with some good Indian girl? One with some education preferred."—Dallas (Tex.) News.

"Little Lord Fauntleroy" a Reporter. A Washington special to the New York Times says the original "Little Lord Fauntleroy" is now a Congressional newspaper reporter. He is Lionel, the oldest son of Mrs. Frances Hodgson Burnett. As a member of the staff of a Washington paper he made his appearance in the press gallery of the Senate, seeking items. He looks plain and businesslike, and not at all as it would seem Little Lord Fauntleroy might look as a young man of twenty or thereabouts.

PROGRESS OF THE HEN

DEVELOPMENT OF THE POULTRY BUSINESS IN THIS COUNTRY.

As a Wealth Producer the American Hen Is a Marvel—The Standard of Perfection—The Green Duck Business is Prosperous—The Pigeon Fanciers.

Official census figures will show that as a wealth-producer the American hen is a marvel, says the Chicago Record. As an illustration of the earning power of this autocat of the barnyard it will be well to quote from Missouri, the foremost State in the industry. The report of the Bureau of Statistics for the last fiscal year shows that the total number of pounds of poultry, live and dressed, shipped from the 114 counties of that State were 106,888,710 pounds, an increase of 36,907,443 pounds over the preceding year. The total number of dozens of eggs shipped from there last year were 34,875,040, making an aggregate value to the producers of poultry and eggs of \$12,001,048.54. The relative importance of the poultry industry of that State, as compared with the other industries, will be better understood when it is shown that the total value of all corn, wheat, oats, flax, timothy seed, clover seed, millet seed, cane seed, castor beans, cotton seed, tobacco, broom corn, hay and straw, which was shipped by all the counties in that State last year did not equal the value of the poultry and eggs shipped during the same time by over \$17,000.

The American Standard of Perfection, as drafted and copyrighted by the American Poultry Association, contains the names of 115 various fowls, 114 of which are due to the development of man. Nature made one—a comely, wild thing which made its home in the jungle along with the primeval creation. It is a long call from this ancient fowl of ungainly proportions to the lordly Langshan or the massive Cochins in the present day, but the ancestry is certain. The relation can be traced back further than the time of Christian era.

Europe, Asia and America have all contributed to the development of the poultry and the many and varied strains that now exist are the result of centuries of improvement. England and America have been foremost in the work, however, and the results accomplished by the fanciers of these two countries in recent years have been nothing short of remarkable. By intelligent breeding these fanciers have produced fowls of all sizes from the diminutive bantam to the mammoth bronze turkey; one tiny bit of feathered vanity weighing only a few ounces—so small, in fact, that it can be entirely covered by a pint cup and the other a bulky fowl weighing from forty to sixty pounds—as much as a half-grown boy. Results equally as wonderful have been accomplished in color effects. We have fowls feathered in every natural color. There are varieties in red, black, brown and white, with nearly all possible combinations, besides buff and Andalusian blue. Not content with this the fanciers have shown that they can lace, stripe, spangle or bar the feathers of their birds in any way to satisfy their individual fancy. In fact, it seems that about all there is left for them to do along this line is to put their initials on the feathers of their birds.

The successful fancier breeds for beauty and utility combined. If he desires to create a new strain he must be an imaginative soul. He must erect in his mind's eye an ideal fowl and then persevere in his endeavor to produce one like it. He jots down a description of this visionary bird from beak to toe nail. If he prefers to go by the standard he will find that very exacting; every detail is looked to scrupulously; length and color of comb, arch of neck, length and breadth of back, length and color of legs, design and color of plumage, etc. Having decided upon an ideal he mates his birds and starts his strain, picking from each brood the most perfect specimens and gradually working toward this ideal through generation after generation. It is a sort of partnership arrangement with nature, as it were.

It requires much time and patience to breed a line up to anything approaching perfection, but once attained the reward is well worthy of the effort. Single birds have sold in this country for as much as \$500, while in England \$1000 has been paid for single specimens. The breeder does not depend altogether upon fancy prices for individual birds, however, for his return. He profits by the increased productivity of his flocks. For instance, in the matter of egg laying, it may be cited that the average American hen lays about 100 eggs per year. The practical poultryman goes in for better results and gets them. Numerous instances show whole flocks with an average of 200 to the hen per year—an increase of 100 per cent.

The "green-duck" industry forms another important branch of the poultry business. "Green ducks" mean imperial Pekins, which were originally imported from China, and they are raised by the thousands and tens of thousands by artificial means, fed scientifically and marketed when they are from eight to ten weeks old. This is just before they molt their first coat of feathers, at which time they weigh from eight to ten pounds per pair. Some of them are fed upon celery seed to give their meat the flavor of the famous Southern canvassbacks, and so successfully that the difference cannot be detected. Separate duck ranches on Long Island, Harrisburg, Penn., Trenton, N. J.; Dallas, Penn., and elsewhere produce annually from March 1 to August 1 from 20,000 to 30,000 "green ducks," marketing them principally in New York and Boston.

This industry is also well developed in New England, particularly in Eastern Massachusetts, where there are several ranches that produce from 20,000 to 25,000 ducks annually; two of the largest being located at South Easton and Wrentham. But Long Island leads, Speen being the centre of the greatest annual production. Fully 100,000 "green ducks" are grown each season within a few miles of this little village.

The three most prominent members of the large poultry family in this country are the Leghorns, the Wyandottes and the Plymouth Rocks. The Leghorns are the egg-type. They are long in body, light in weight and very active. Their average frequently runs as high as 200 eggs per year to the hen. The Wyandottes are strictly an American production. They are short in body, plump, round and heavier than Leghorns. They have full breast development, have yellow legs and skin and consequently show up well when dressed. Their meat is tender, has fine grain and good flavor, and they are the ideal table fowl, either as broilers, weighing from one-half pound to a pound and a half, or as roasters, weighing from three to five pounds. The Plymouth Rocks are very similar to the Wyandottes except their bodies are longer and they will weigh a pound more at maturity. The Barred Plymouth Rock is the great American all-purpose bird; the kind the farmer, the fancier and all swear by. The Wyandotte is a later breed, and is fast growing in popularity, especially with breeders, but the old stand-bys, the Barred Rocks, will doubtless hold their supremacy for many years.

The pigeon fanciers have kept pace with the poultrymen, and the results they have met with are wonderful. They have given us the gorgeous fantail, a little bird with a tail big enough to almost fit its little body out of kilter. In the case of the fantail the fanciers have simply bred to a deformity. The improved strain is simply a line-bred monstrosity. Some fellow found a pigeon in his flock with a tail feather turned the wrong way. He got the idea that a bird with all its tail feathers turned the wrong way would be a good thing, so he sought a mate for his freak, paired them, and the fantail was soon with us. Along comes another fellow who thought he would like to see a pair with two rows of feathers turned the wrong way. We now have them with three rows, and the end seems afar off. These fantails have all the vanity of Solomon. In their coops they droop about with very little show of life, but when taken out they immediately spread their ample fans and strut about as pompous as you please. When placed in front of a mirror the big show takes place. They try to outdo the image in the glass, and the competition is something laughable.

As a close second to the fantail in the way of a wonder comes the tumbler. There are two kinds, indoor and outdoor tumblers. The parlor performers will turn somersaults for you in the most artistic manner possible. The outdoor species will sail up in the air several hundred feet and then fall suddenly downward, turning over and over as they come down.

They right themselves before they reach the ground, soar skyward again and perform the same astonishing gyrations until you tire of the performance. The explanation of the tumbler is simple. The breeder found a crazy bird, a little fowl with an insane desire to turn over continuously. He bred the freak and brought forth the clever tumbler.

The Meteoric Theory.

The discovery that all the great interstellar spaces are full of planetary and meteoric life, forming all manner of subordinate planetary systems, led to the new theory, advocated first by Professor Tait, the English scientist, that the entire universe is of meteoric origin. This startling theory is to the effect that all the suns and moons and planets came from the aggregation of solid particles brought together by the force of gravitation, the action of this force producing heat, incandescence and sometimes vaporization. This one great conception serves to explain all hitherto unexplained phenomena and implies a conception of the cosmos which makes the nebular hypothesis as to the origin of matter seem weak and insignificant.

"Bobs" and the Run-Boys.
A pretty story is told of Earl Roberts and a run-boy in the employ of the refreshment contractors at Basingstoke Station. As the train conveying Earl Roberts to London drew up in Basingstoke Station the little run-boy rushed eagerly forward to see the distinguished General, but was roughly repulsed by one of the railway officials. The incident, however, did not escape the kindly eyes of "Bobs." Noticing the look of deep disappointment on the lad's face, Earl Roberts called to him, bought one of his buns, and gave him a penny for himself.—London Mail.

The Molecular Theory.

The nature of gases was never understood until it was discovered that they are formed of molecules which are in a state of very rapid motion in all directions. These molecules are far apart, frequently come together, and rebound without loss of energy. At ordinary temperatures a cubic inch of gas contains some hundred trillion molecules. The importance of this theory is the conclusion drawn from it that heat is the equivalent of these millions of molecules in motion and cold the equivalent of the cessation of motion. This is now one of the elements of physics.

Paris Scavengers.

Paris has 149 brigades of scavengers in all 2000 men and 600 women.