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An Englishman of distinction making his first visit in the United States brought it to a close in Washington, and called at the White House in company with an American friend. A public reception was in progress, and, falling into line, he paid his respects to the president first in that way, and subsequently met him for a few moments in a private audience. He laughingly explained to the president that being in America he wanted to do as the Americans did. As they walked away together, the American asked the Englishman what had impressed him most in our free government.

"The accessibility of the chief magistrate, and the absence of all arms and force from his official residence," was the Englishman's reply.

"Links with the past" has been a standard headline in the English newspapers ever since the new century began. The theme is an old one, but many of the examples cited have been most interesting. It would seem impossible, for example, if it were not proved that Miss Courtenay, who signs herself an octogenarian, could have talked with the boatman who took out Mr. Alexander Pope for his constitutional row at Richmond. From Paris an even more striking instance is reported. A gray-haired prisoner was brought before the police justice for some trifling misdemeanor. "Have you no relatives?" asked the judge. "No. My parents are long since dead, and my only brother also died a hundred and thirty years ago." "A hundred and thirty years!" No trifling with the court, cried the outraged justice. "But I'm not joking, your honor," said the prisoner. "Just listen. My father married young, at 19, and within a year had a child born who died shortly after birth. After the death of his first wife, he married again, at the age of 76, and I am the offspring of that marriage. I am now nearly 73 years old. Reckon up, if you please, and see if my only brother did not die 120 years ago." The justice could only admit this apparently incredible link with the past.

ENGLAND'S NEW SWORD.

Made to Thrust, Because the Old One Would Not Cut.

That the rifle is mightier than the sword is an uncontroverted fact, but that the sword will be finally sheathed as an unusable weapon in modern war is not true, despite the endeavor of the pen to prove the worthlessness of it. As a shock weapon the sword holds no place with the lance, but its handiness in pursuit is undeniable if the sword be of the right kind. In South Africa our weapons, made ostensibly to cut, were used by our troops to belabor fugitive Boers in vain efforts to make a cut, and cess that flagellation would appear to be the proper term to apply. Recognizing this, the war office is going to arm the hussars with a new sword, whose chief use will be to thrust. The edge of a sword cannot be maintained upon prolonged service, but General Grant, the inspector general of cavalry, in recommending a new sword, suggests the preservation of a certain degree of sharpness by the use of leather scabbards. The new sword will be modeled on the pattern now in use, which was introduced in 1853, but with certain modifications, conforming with the Italian school. The hilt will be broader, to give freedom to the thrust, and the point will taper more, making the weight about a pound less. The new sword will introduce more thoroughly the Florentine system of fencing, to which the inspector of gymnastics, Colonel Malcolm Fox, has for so many years pinned his faith, and whose values his chief exponents, Captain Edgeworth Johnston, Sergeant Major Betts and ex-Staff Sergeant Foerster, have so often demonstrated in open competition. Swordmakers believe in this thrusting weapon, provided it is heavy enough to meet the rough usage of a campaign. This is just what the new sword will be—an unbreakable rapier of the broad kind.

It has been decided to hold a carnival in Sydney, New Scotia, next summer to include athletic sports, rowing and yacht racing.

An Affair of Honor.

When I was last in Paris I had a letter of introduction to the Countess de Clairmont, who lived in a venerable mansion in the Faubourg St. Germain, near the ancient abbey church. I found her to be an aged lady of a very old family, a very devout churchgoer, and a bigoted Legitimist, believing in "divine right" and the Count de Chambord, and fully expecting that he and his white flag would rule the destinies of France. She was naturally forgotten. Apart from dogma and politics she was, however, a very charming and interesting person. She had evidently been very handsome in her youth, and even in her old age retained a little coquetry and much spirit. At the recital of some deed of daring and heroism her black eyes would flash and sparkle and her lips tremble with emotion. It was like going back to the past century to sit in her dim drawing room, with its quaint old furniture, rich and religiously preserved, hung with portraits of her ancestors, and hear her talk of warriors, priests and nobles, whose mitres and swords had decayed, and whose moldy and moth-eaten banners, waving in church and chapel, are but tattered rags with the blazonry illegible.

One day I was looking at the portrait of a lady so lovely, with a sweet and melancholy beauty, that even the disfiguring costume of the last century, especially the abominable high head dress, could not mar its effect, for you looked only on the face and forgot the accessories. It was from the pencil of Mme. Lebrun, the favorite artist of Marie Antoinette, who has left us such touching souvenirs of the unhappy queen.

"That lady, I am sure, had a story," I said. "I need not ask if the original was a relative of yours, Madame, for I see a family likeness in the head."

"You are right," she said. "That portrait might pass for my own likeness as I looked 50 years ago. I have a miniature taken at the same age which looks like a reduced copy of Mme. Lebrun's charming picture."

"And the lady was—?"
"Pardon me," said the old countess, "I will tell you her story at full length. It is an old family history, but it is thought to have some of the elements of romance. Perhaps it may be of some future use to you as a story teller in your own country. So arm yourself with patience, cousin, and hear with an old woman's garrulity."

The old lady called me cousin because at some far away period there was a matrimonial alliance between our families, long before my grandfather emigrated to America.

I will not attempt to relate the narrative in the language of my hostess, but condense it and tell it in my own way.

The original of Mme. Lebrun's picture, then, was Victorine de Grantier, wife of Hector de Grantier, a gentleman of wealth and family. The marriage was an exception to the general rule of French marriages, being a love match. The parents of the lady had permitted her to choose a husband for herself; and though among her many suitors were some more eligible in point of fortune and opportunities for rising in the world than Hector, she gave him her hand because she could bestow her heart with it.

De Grantier was handsome, gentle and warm hearted. He had no vices, and but little ambition. He was a poet and a painter, though not a professional one, and he was in easy circumstances, although not reckoned a man of wealth.

Never was there a happier couple, and when the bride's father and mother, who died within a few days of each other, left the world almost hand in hand, the certainty of leaving their daughter the partner of a man devoted to her, heart and soul, soothed their last moments.

There was a shade of melancholy in Victorine's nature, and she often thought to herself that her married life was too happy—that it was like a still, bright, summer day, so perfect, so full of sunshine, so heavenly, that weather seems pronounce it too lovely to last, and regard it, with shaking heads, as the precursor of a devastating storm.

And the storm that wrecked the happiness of Victorine was near at hand. Among her rejected suitors was a wild, bold man, named Raoul Maltravers, an ensign in the royal navy of a very distinguished family high in power at court, who might well look forward to the prospect of seeing the broad pennant of an admiral float over his own quarter deck. But, with all the qualities of a noble race, he was stained with many vices. He was a gambler, a duellist and a libertine; prodigal with his gold, cruel with his sword and fatal in his hates.

Although his rejection was couched in the most respectful terms, it roused his worst passions, and he swore to wreak a deadly vengeance on the rival who prospered where he had failed. The hand he could not win himself should never be clasped in wedlock by another. In this temper of mind he went to sea.

It must be borne in mind that this project of vengeance was a secret locked in his own heart, to be divulged in action, not in words. Therefore, when, some months after the marriage, the ensign returned from his cruise, the incident did not create any alarm in the breast of Mme. Victorine de Grantier.

One morning when she awoke she

missed her husband from her side, but this caused her no surprise, for he was in the habit of rising without disturbing her, dressing, and then taking a ride on horseback. But he always returned to breakfast, which was served punctually at 11 o'clock in the forenoon. When, therefore, it came to be nearly noon, and he did not make his appearance, she was naturally uneasy. His horse was very spirited and might possibly have thrown him, she thought. But, on inquiry, it appeared that the animal was in his stall, and that M. de Grantier had left the house on foot.

Mme. de Grantier ordered the breakfast things removed, after making a slight repast and then took up a book to while away the time until her husband's return. At 1 o'clock a visitor was announced—Capt. Paul Beauregard, an officer in the French Guards. He was an intimate friend of De Grantier, as well as of the lady, and scarcely a day passed without their seeing him.

"My husband, have you seen anything of him?" she asked.

"I have been with him all the morning, madame."

"Where is he? Why did he not return with you? How has he been engaged?"

Capt. Beauregard replied to the last question:

"In an affair of honor, madame."

"A duel?"

"Yes; and he has been wounded. I thought it best to prepare you for the accident."

"He is dead," shrieked the unhappy lady, as she fell back in convulsions, for she had read the truth in the captain's face.

Beauregard rang the bell and left her in charge of her maid, while he went into another room. It was agony bitter as the pangs of death to listen to her walls and sobs and shrieks; but in an hour Florette, the waiting maid, pale, frightened, with swollen eyes, for she, too, had been weeping bitterly, came to say that Madame de Grantier was calmer and desired to speak with the captain.

The officer found the lady white as marble, but strangely quiet and collected.

"Hector is dead?" she half asked, half asserted.

Her friend drooped his eyes. The answer was sufficient.

"Now tell me how this happened," said the lady. "Hector was kind and gentle and courteous. He had no enemy—how could he have, for he never wronged a human being?"

"That did not prevent his having an enemy—a mortal foe—who last night publicly insulted him and thus forced a challenge from your husband."

"Ay, honor compelled Hector to draw the sword. But the name of that villain—the murderer?"

"Raoul Maltravers."

"He, the man whose hand I rejected? Oh, my poor, dear murdered Hector. Why did we ever meet? Fatal was the hour in which you saw and loved me. Often have your lips told me that I had made you the happiest of men. Little did you dream that I would give you death as well as love."

"I implore you, madam," said the captain, "not to view this tragedy in that light. An unforeseen calamity has fallen on you, and my heart bleeds at sight of your distress. But I can do more than pity; I can and will avenge Hector. Raoul Maltravers dies by my hand."

"Hold!" cried the widow, with sudden and startling energy. "I forbid you to espouse this quarrel. I have my own purpose of vengeance, and no man, not even you, shall be permitted to stand between me and my predestined victim. He has robbed me of more than life, but I will requite him. I was a fond, weak, gentle, loving, happy girl. They who know me henceforth will know me as a tigress thirsting for human blood. But no word of this to others. Be my friend in this extremity, as you were his true and loyal friend to the last moment, and conduct the funeral rites. You see how calm I am when I can speak these words without convulsions."

When Victorine was alone with her dead she had a wild outburst of passionate grief, but it rapidly gave place to a calmness so stern that it would have appalled an observer had there been witnesses in the chamber of death.

"Hector de Grantier," she said, addressing the cold clay, "if my Creator spares my life, your son, whom your eyes were never to behold, shall be your avenger. I will rear him strong, valiant, skillful, and teach him to look for no happiness, no rest, no employment, until he has slain the man who has robbed you of life, me of a husband and himself of a father."

Two months after the funeral the friends of the family were apprised that the widow lady was the mother of a daughter. Shortly after this event she retired with her infant child to an estate in Brittany.

Sixteen years passed away and then Mme. de Grantier, still wearing widow's weeds, again resumed her residence in Paris. She lived in a fashionable quarter, but in great privacy, receiving only relatives, making no acquaintances. Her daughter, Claudine, had grown up a beautiful girl, the picture of health—a bright flower to bloom in the almost conventional gloom of her mother's house.

The only frequent visitor was the young Chevalier de Hauteville, a cousin of Claudine, and strange to say, a perfect image of the girl—the same

height, features and complexion. The gossip of the neighborhood said they were born for each other and predicted a marriage between the parties. But the servants of the family asserted that the old lady would never, for some reason of her own, probably that of nearness of blood, permit the alliance, and that the young people rarely, if ever, met. It was observed that whenever Claudine had gone to church the chevalier was sure to make his appearance and when he was in the drawing room she was always absent. Whether this was arranged by the mother or whether this young woman and this young man, so strangely alike, cherished an antipathy equally strange, was a mystery, like almost everything else in this mysterious household.

Had the widow, foiled in her plan of vengeance by the sex of her offspring, forgotten or forgiven Raoul Maltravers? No one knew, but no one ever heard her pronounce his name.

Meanwhile Raoul Maltravers had left the sea, not being particularly fond of the music of heavy guns, for though brave enough on the duel ground, because he was the best blade in France, and always sure of victory, he was really a poltroon. He had married a very beautiful heiress, and lived in great splendor. He had more than one affair of honor after his marriage, with a fatal result to his antagonists.

One day the Chevalier de Hauteville made a morning call on Mme. de Grantier. He found her in her boudoir, which was draped with black, and lighted with wax tapers.

"You know this is a sad anniversary," she said. Then she added, with a sharp look of inquiry: "Raoul Maltravers."

"Dead," was the reply.

"Come to my heart," cried Victorine. "Claudine, you have avenged your father."

"Claudine!" I exclaimed, in utter astonishment, when the old countess had come to this point of her narrative.

"Yes," she replied, "the Chevalier de Hauteville and Claudine de Grantier were one and the same person. Mme. de Grantier had reared her daughter, like a man and trained her to arms in the solitude of her old provincial manor house, where a wondrously skilled professor of the sword, an Italian, gave her lessons daily. You must not think too harshly of the memory of Victorine de Grantier. I am now positively certain that the death of her husband turned her brain, and that during all the years of her widowhood she was a monomaniac. That she inspired her daughter with her fanatical idea of vengeance is natural—the mother lived for no other purpose."

"But what became of Claudine?"

"She is still living at an advanced age, a widow," replied the countess.

"Doubtless harrowed by remorse for having shed human blood?"

"It caused her great suffering for years, but the clergy whom she consulted told her that the circumstances absolved her from all moral guilt. She was an irresponsible agent of her mother—her judgment deliberately perverted by reason who had herself lost the power of reason. Yet were many hours of bitter sorrow and penitence passed by that unhappy woman. And now let me show you a sad relic."

The old lady rose, walked to an ebony cabinet and unlocking it took out a long, old-fashioned rapier and bade me draw it. I took forth the blade and remarked that it was covered with rust.

"Those darker stains are the life-blood of a man," said the old lady, with a heavy sigh—"for that was the sword with which I killed Raoul Maltravers."

"You?" I cried.

"Yes; for before I became Countess de Clairmont, I was Claude de Grantier."—New York News.

FIJIAN FIRE CEREMONY.

Natives Who Walked Over Red Hot Stones with Impunity.

Two New Zealand medical men, Drs. Hocken and Colquhoun, recently visited Fiji, where they had an opportunity of witnessing the now rare fire ceremony of the natives. It is so rare that the power is now confined to a single family living on an islet 20 miles from the Fijian metropolis, Suva. These people are able to walk, nude and with bare feet, across the white-hot, stony pavement of a huge oven.

An attempt was made on this occasion to register the heat, but when the thermometer had been placed for a few seconds about five feet from the oven it had to be withdrawn, as the solder of the covering began to melt. The thermometer then registered 282 degrees, and Dr. Hocken estimates that the range was over 400 degrees.

The fire walkers then approached, seven in number, and in single file walked leisurely across and around the oven. Heaps of hibiscus leaves were then thrown into the oven, causing clouds of steam, and upon the leaves and within the steam the natives sat or stood. The men were carefully examined by the doctors before and after the ceremony.

The soles of their feet were not thick or leathery, and were not in the least blistered. The men showed no symptoms of distress, and their pulse was unaffected. Preliminary tests failed to show that there had been any special preparation. Both doctors, while denying that there was anything miraculous about the experiment, expressed themselves as unable to give any scientific explanation.—London Chronicle.

Twenty years ago kerosene oil was practically unknown in China. In 1890 more than 100,000,000 gallons were imported.

WHAT FISH EAT.

Most Denizens of the Deep Live on Animal Substances.

There are many thousand species of fishes, and naturally there is a great diversity in their food. Nevertheless, it is possible to divide it into seven distinct classes. Now, all the animal life rests on a foundation of vegetables. Plants store up the vital forces in the air and sunshine and pass them on to the great army of vegetarians, who in their turn yield them up to the animals which live on flesh. One or two additional steps may sometimes be interposed, but the result is the same. A caterpillar eats a cabbage, an ichneumon fly quarters her brood on the caterpillar, an insect-eating bird snaps up the fly, and a bird of prey pounces upon the fly-catcher and finishes the story. The inevitable order is plant, vegetarian, flesh-eater.

The vast majority of fishes feed on fishes or other animals found in the sea. Probably, however, the vegetarians are more numerous than are generally supposed. For instance, all the text books declare that the gray mullet feeds on the living matter obtained by straining sand or mud in its mouth, which doubtless is true, but they go on to explain that owing to the peculiar construction of its throat larger bodies are prevented from passing into the stomach, which is not true. No amount of letter press will persuade a Land's End fisherman that a gray mullet cannot or does not eat seaweed; he is convinced from a life-long observation of its habits that it does, and the fact that the fish's stomach is often found full of seaweed proves that the fisherman is right. Fishes which undoubtedly catch and swallow living prey are wont on occasion to treat themselves to a dish of vegetables. I have just assisted at the post-mortem examination of a bream, which contained in addition to a crab large helpings of two kinds of seaweed in different stages of digestion.

But doubtless it is a fact that fishes live for the most part on animal diet, and it is obvious that this must consist largely of some other class than their own. If fishes ate fishes only the race would soon become extinct. Fortunately the sea is full of life, and for those which cannot or will not eat seaweed there are worms innumerable, jelly fishes, star fishes and sea urchins, the great host living in shells from the oyster to the periwinkle and the limpet, crabs and all other kindred, and lastly other fishes. The appetite must be capricious, indeed, which cannot find something to tempt it among all this vast array.—Newport News Herald.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

Japan is the country where the cremation of corpses is practiced on the largest scale. The custom dates back about 1200 years.

Among the British peers who have inherited barren titles is the young Earl of Seafield, who at the age of 12 succeeded to an earldom, two viscounties and two baronies, without so much as a single acre of land to maintain his dignities.

At no point is the River Jordan navigable for any considerable distance, even by small craft, and during its course it falls over 1200 feet. In addition to these drawbacks it presents the unique spectacle of a river flowing into a sea in which there cannot be found one living creature.

Barbaric African tribes hold the umbrella in high honor. In King Coffee of Ashanti's reign the greatest mark of regal favor that could be conferred on a distinguished guest was the gift of a sunshade adorned in savage style with the teeth of animals, the claws of birds, human jawbones and rough lumps of gold. The medicine men of these African tribes are invariably attended by an umbrella bearer.

Slot machines providing meals have been introduced in London. The refreshments are arranged on a long buffet behind a glass screen. On putting four pennies one after another into the slot the screen rises and a tray holding a teapot, milk jug, sugar bowl and cup and saucer comes within reach. The teapot contains tea leaves and hot water can be drawn from a public tank. Two pennies produce a roll with butter, or sandwiches, or bath buns, and other slots yield temperance drinks and confectionery.

"Speaking of curious wills," said a Georgian, "the will of Col. W. H. Jackson of Athens, Ga., a member of one of the best known families in our states, provided that a massive oak tree that he owned, around which he had played and which he had been taught to love as a child and later as a man, should, in the language of the document, 'have entire possession of itself and of all land within eight feet of it on all sides.' No one ever contested his will, and the oak still stands as its own owner."

Exploration has now revealed relics of Menes, the founder of the Egyptian monarchy, fashioned more than 6500 years ago. Of Zer, the successor to Menes, it is astonishing to find the forearm of his queen still in its wrappings, with four splendid bracelets intact. This brilliant and exquisitely finished group of jewelry is 2000 years older than the jewelry of Dahshur, the oldest up to then known. The arm of the queen had been broken off by the first plunderers and had lain in a hole in the wall of the tomb.

PERILS OF BANK FISHERMEN.

About Once in Two Days Two Men in a Dory Are Lost from the Ships.

The present season, owing to the prevalence of fogs on the Great Banks or fishing ledges, the sentiment of the Newfoundland coast has been remarkable for more driftway fishermen than any year during the past decade. The shipping records of the colony show a total of 94 of these men landed in colonial ports up to July 31, the first three months of the fishing period. They are always in pairs, two men to a dory, a flat bottomed, light riding boat, especially built to breast the surges on the Banks.

This represents 47 boats, and that is roughly one for every two days of the fishing. Besides these there is the great number who never are heard of again, their dories being swamped. This is the chief disaster which threatens them, and it leaves them no salvation. A dory never swamps when she is light, that is, empty; when she is heavy (laden with fish) a comber will strike her and boat and men will go down like stones. Sometimes, however, the boat is merely capsized, and then the occupants, if they can, clamber on the bottom and remain there till rescued, or till the relentless sea claims them for its own.

A remarkable case was reported recently. William Johnson and David Hawkins of the schooner Nems had their dory capsized and got on her bottom. There they remained all evening and night, but next morning Hawkins was stricken and slid into the water. It is a dangerous business to get on and off these boats in mid ocean, but Johnson contrived to place Hawkins once more in comparative safety. But it was only for a short time. Within an hour the poor fellow rolled off again, crying "Save me." His mate saw he was beyond saving, for he died almost as he was swept into the sea, but he determined to save the body. He fastened it to the boat's headrope, and there it remained until he was rescued at eventide by a boat from another vessel, when he insisted that the body be taken with him, where it was preserved with ice and salt until the ship reached land and he could give it burial.

These bankmen are most daring and venture north into Belle Isle strait almost before the winter ice floes are broken up. Two other fishermen, Henry Davis and Joseph Carroll of the schooner Petunia, fishing in that locality were brought to shore a fortnight ago, having been five days adrift without food or water. They were attending to their trawls or lines some distance from their ship when they got enmeshed in the fogs. Fog also enveloped them, and the decomposing ice masses caused greater danger than the sea. For their frail craft would be helpless against a blow from the jagged, unruly fragments tossing about and in the icy tumble of seas lay no hope of safety.

They drew their little boat onto the surface of the largest mass within reach, and on this they floated about for three days. They had not a morsel to eat, and the ice was so saturated with salt spray that they dared not use it to cool their thirst. They gnawed their leather belts, and on the fourth day, being carried toward the land launched the boat again and tried to reach it. They did get part way, but the wind fell, their sail was worthless, and they were too weak to row. The fourth day they lay helpless and almost dying in the bottom of the boat, but during the afternoon were rescued and rescued by a passing vessel bound for Labrador, which landed them at the most convenient harbor as she passed by.

Two others, Daly and Clarendon from the schooner Niagara, losing their vessel in a storm on the outer edge of the Banks, and knowing that she was driven south beyond their reach, resolutely determined to make for the shore. Having no sail they had to row the whole distance, 120 miles. They spent three days and nights doing it, during which time they had nothing to eat but a few fresh fish lying in the boat's bottom, their only drink being a quart of water in two bottles.

Many other cases like this could be cited, but the most hazardous ventures with the sea are merely daily routine with these people.—Chicago Record-Herald.

To the Pole by Wire.

The conditions surrounding Arctic travel are such that the principal difficulty is found in maintaining communication with a base of supplies. It is believed that wireless telegraphy has now reached a point where at least it promises such development that future exploring parties will be able to carry along apparatus and keep constantly in touch with their base camps. If this proves to be the case much of the terror of the Arctic will be removed, and exploration will be made both easier and safer, with the possibility that this added instrumentality will enable the discovery of the pole at no far distant date.—Electrical Review.

How to Detect a Cheap Shoe.

"It takes a rainy spell to show up a cheap shoe dealer. It can be spotted by an observer on a rainy day, though it may have come within an hour from the store. Watch the feet of people the next time it rains and you can pick out the inexpensive shoes. A cheap shoe always slips when the pavements are wet. Artificial stone pavements, especially show them up. The sole of a cheap, common shoe is made of imitation leather, composed of pressed paper, and water softens it and makes the wearer slide along while walking. You can always tell a cheap shoe in this way."—Indianapolis News.