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Out of 12,000,000 American families the income of 4,000,000 of these families is less than \$400 each per year, and the incomes of nearly 80 percent of the entire number are less than \$1000 each per year.

According to the Buffalo News there are 257 farms in New York state that make the culture of trees their principal business. The valuation is \$3,607,107. Vermont has four similar farms valued at \$28,500.

The old saying that "His note is as good as gold," has been modified in Kansas to "His note is better than gold." A Reno county farmer has just brought suit to compel a mortgage company to accept money for a note which it holds against him.

The agricultural building at the Louisiana Purchase exposition in St. Louis will be 700 by 2000 feet and will cover over two acres more of ground than did the big manufacture and liberal arts building at the Columbian exposition in Chicago. In this thought the St. Louisians take great delight.

The American match and the American watch are becoming more and more popular in the remotest corners of the globe. With American matches, and American oil, and American liberty the irreplaceable Yankee is doing a great deal of lighting and enlightening, and with his watches he is also marking time for the progress of civilization.

Joseph L. Thompson of Franklin, N. H., who is now in the 85th year of his age, has taught school in that town and vicinity for 55 years. He says, as one thing learned in his long practice of his calling, that one-third of a teacher's time is taken up in maintaining order. On the wall of his "study" hangs a card with the word "Why" in large letters. This, he says, has been his motto all through his life and studies.

A great many California oranges are shipped east in what are known as tramp cars. There is no fruit the price of which fluctuates as much as does that of oranges, and thousands of carloads of oranges are, therefore, started east with some uncertain destination. The car may be consigned to Kansas City, but in the meantime there are agents watching in the east for the best markets and on telegraphic information the car may be ordered on to Chicago or New York City.

Reporters are often more active and more gifted with an instinct for detail than the officers, says Charles E. Grinnell in the Atlantic. Together they make a formidable combination. But they are often divided in opinion, and yet oftener in their sympathies. Reporters, like the average citizen, are more apt to pity the prisoner, if for nothing else for the very reason that the police are down upon him. It is an ambition of reporters to unearth more facts than the police. Newspapers print news from a prisoner's friends as readily as news from his persecutors. Nevertheless, they spread abroad the charge against a suspected person more than he or his friends wish. Since the newspapers begin long before a trial to work up a popular interest in all the persons concerned, the results cannot be other than an exaggeration of the importance to the public of what stimulates and gratifies curiosity, whether or not it affects the question of the prisoner's guilt.

A Great Mistake.
The late Lord Morris did not gain a very favorable impression of the house of lords when he made his first speech there. When asked how he had got on, he replied: "Well, I made a mistake. I should have practised spakin' to a lot of gravestones before I addressed their lordships."

Woman vs. Woman.

She gave a little gasp and sat down. The hotel porter discreetly looked the other way; he was enjoying the little scene greatly; the Mt. Seymour Hotel provided many of them. The girl was young and pretty; the hand which toyed with the letter before her was studded with valuable rings, among them a narrow one of gold. It was evident that she was a wife. There was no husband to greet her, though the car with her luggage from the mail boat was standing at the door. Alphonse had had the pleasure of handing her the letter; it had been given to him by a handsome, dark-eyed man only a few hours before.

"Monsieur le Capitaine he say, 'Give to de lady direct she come.' Hein, I do give."

The girl arose, her blue eyes dim with tears; the susceptible Alphonse was overwhelmed.

"Marie," she said to her maid, "Capt. Molyneux has been ordered up to Pretoria; he only left today. Please see to the boxes."

She crossed the hall toward the elevator and disappeared.

Many eyes had watched the little drama; the lounging chairs in the hall were all occupied; officers on sick leave, men convalescent and men on their way up to the front or back to old England. Women, too, some grass widows, a few real widows, many more with no special concern in the war at all. But it was the war which had drawn them to Cape Town—the war, or, rather, the soldiers who were fighting. Where else but to the Mt. Seymour Hotel should they go? Rank and fashion, joy and misery, virtue and vice rubbed shoulders in that fashionable and exorbitant hostelry.

"Ah, a pretty woman," drawled young Dennis of the —th Lancers.

"Who is she?" queried his companion.

John Beresford rose languidly from his chair and satisfied his curiosity at the porter's office.

"It's Bob Molyneux's wife," he said to his friend. "Fancy. One of my oldest pals. I was so sick at having missed him this morning. He left just before I got here. Ah! there is Mrs. de la Fane; she's a pretty woman, if you like. I was introduced to her this morning by old Vigors."

He sprang to his feet and offered his chair to a tall, graceful woman who had entered the hall as he spoke.

She accepted it with a smile, and in a moment the little group attracted all eyes. Mrs. de la Fane was one of the leading spirits of the hotel; the acknowledged beauty, whose wonderful eyes drew every man into her toils; her husband was rolling in money; she was reported to be a Johannesburg millionaire; but the reports were rather vague. It was sufficient for her admirers that he spent his money like water, gave the best dinners a man could wish to sit down to, and did not scowl when other men smiled at his wife.

"What brings you down to Cape Town, Capt. Beresford?" asked Mrs. de la Fane. "Major Vigors tells me your regiment is in the thick of it just now." She raised her great violet eyes to the young man's face as she spoke.

The implication underlying the word stung him. He flushed, and tapped a side pocket in his coat.

"I have got a little bag here," he said with meaning—which contains—well, a few papers of importance."

"Oh!" laughed Mrs. de la Fane. "I see. You are one of Kitchener's messenger boys. Rather a satisfactory berth, isn't it, Captain? No risk, no worry, no exertion."

John Beresford caught those violet eyes again full in his own. His heart beat faster. He did not care to appear as one of no importance in this woman's eyes. His mission demanded secrecy, yet for the moment his tongue ran away with him.

"You are wrong, Mrs. de la Fane," he smiled in reply. "The papers would be worth—well, a lot to Kruger or Botha."

Taken unawares, and anxious to hide the trace of her recent tears, Muriel stammered hastily, "Tomorrow? No; the day after," and the next moment she was alone again. Bewildered, she turned the note over in her hand. There was no address upon it. She rose hurriedly and hastened to the door of the summer house. A man's figure, evidently that of a gentleman, was disappearing out of the garden gate on to the high road. It was too late to recall him.

She opened his note mechanically. In the dim light it was difficult to trace the writing, but a second glance left no room for doubt.

"The Societies Office, Stellenbosch. To Mrs. de la F.:

"Have you procured the dispatch case carried by the officer, J. B., yet? If so, the bearer of this is to be trusted; give it to him. If you have not yet secured it, tell him when to see you again. J. X. de W."

Muriel drew her breath sharply. She sat motionless, her brain busy. She realized at once that she had been mistaken for somebody in the pay of the Boers; a plot was hatching, and she—

At that moment she heard footsteps hurrying down the pathway. She thrust the note in the bosom of her dress. Suppose the messenger had discovered his mistake, and was returning? Her heart beat wildly. With sudden resolve Muriel had made up her mind. The summer house had an inner room, to which a small doorway gave admittance. Opening the door she plunged into the darkness. Holding her breath, she peered through the half-open door, not daring to close it for fear of making a noise. A man entered the summer house. A quick sigh of relief escaped Muriel's lips. It was not the messenger. She glanced at the man's face; then started back in horror. She recognized him as a man she had frequently seen in the hotel; but his eyes were now blood-shot, his expression wild, his manner distraught.

John Beresford (for it was he) drew a revolver from his coat and raised it against himself.

Muriel waited no longer. With a little cry she flung open the door and threw herself upon the man. The revolver fell from his hand.

"Oh! stop, stop!" she cried. "You can't know what you are doing."

John Beresford stared at her as though she were a ghost. He stood motionless, his arms hanging limply by his side, his wild eyes searching her own.

"Can't I help you?" whispered Muriel, gently, all the sympathy of her nature going out toward him. "Please let me try."

"Help! I am beyond help!" echoed the man, struggling with the words. "Leave me, for pity's sake, Mrs. Molyneux." There is only one way out of this.

"How do you know my name?" asked Muriel, in surprise.

"Molyneux was an old pal of mine," answered the other. "He would not speak to me now."

A sudden inspiration flashed across Muriel's brain. "What is your name?" she asked.

"John Beresford. For pity's sake leave me."

"Your initials are J. B., then? Have you—the dispatches—"

"How do you know about that?" said John Beresford, raising his head with a gleam of hope in his eyes. "Not a soul but myself and the thief knows that it was stolen from me within the last 24 hours."

Mrs. de la Fane glided down the footpath leading toward the summer house. She was dressed in white. As she drew near she caught the sound of voices, and walked slowly past the doorway.

She gave a little dry cough when she recognized John Beresford and Muriel Molyneux.

lord to date with him that evening. She handed the note to Mr. de la Fane and remarked, callously:

"What nerve the man has. Surely, he knows there is nothing for him to do but shoot himself. * * * He's ruined * * * silly creature."

Mr. de la Fane laughed harshly. So that evening a cheerful party assembled in the private dining room. Mrs. Molyneux and Mrs. de la Fane were the only ladies present, but some half-dozen men made up the party. With the dessert, John Beresford looked around at his guests, and placed a leather case on the table.

"I've had the queerest adventure since I've been in the hotel," he said laughing. "It's too rich to keep to myself; it might amuse you."

"Fire away," said one.

Mrs. de la Fane turned very white, but Muriel, watching her every movement, felt no pity.

"You know, of course," Beresford continued, "that I was sent down on special service to deliver some dispatches to Gen. G—, who arrives here this evening. Like an ass, I made no secret of my errand. I shall be wiser another time. Well, two days ago the case with the dispatches disappeared. You can imagine what felt like. After wild searchings for 24 hours there was only one thing to be done."

He then described his meeting with Muriel in the summer house, and her adventure with J. X. de W.'s messenger.

"I wrote a note," he continued, "and inclosed it with the original letter, addressing it to a certain lady, whose name does not matter, asking her to meet J. X. de W.'s messenger last night. In disguise I myself represented the messenger and received my dispatch back into my own hands."

The men laughed loud and long.

"The sequel, too, may be interesting," said John Beresford, coolly. "A couple of detectives are at this minute collaring J. X. de W.'s man."

"What about the lady?" he was asked.

"Well, I fancy you'll hear that she and her husband have been presented with tickets to Europe by the next boat."

A little choking cry came from Mrs. de la Fane's lips. She had fainted.—The Onlooker.

QUAINT AND CURIOUS.

A costly marble monument stands in a fashionable cemetery at Seattle, Wash., sacred to the memory of a faithful horse. The animal's owner was himself buried beside the horse recently.

The other day James Pelter, who lives near Winchester, Va., killed a bald eagle, whose spread of wings was seven feet. Mr. Pelter had lost several lambs and thought it remarkable that the thief left no tracks nor other sign of his visits to the farm, but when the eagle tried to carry off a dog which followed him, he concluded that the bird was the robber.

During the recent session of the British parliament no fewer than 6448 questions were asked in the house of commons. This number has only once been exceeded in recent years—namely, in the session of 1893-4, when the number of questions asked was 6534. Put the house sat on 226 days during that session, while there were only 118 sittings during the late session.

There are three nut cracking plants in St. Louis, Mo., giving employment to considerable numbers of people. The nut crackers are driven by electricity, each nut being fed individually into the crusher. After the shells are cracked the nuts are winnowed by an air blast, and the meat is picked from the crushed shells by hand, women and girls being employed for this part of the work.

A curious case came up the other day before the court in Caroline county, Md., when an ancient resident was charged with the larceny of nine eggs. Extra jurors had to be summoned, and it cost the county \$250 to try the case. The accused was 73 years old. His counsel said he had known the defendant for 40 years, and it was incredible that he would steal eggs. He argued that anyhow the state had not shown that the eggs were sound and nine rotten eggs would have no value at all. The jury sat out 15 minutes and returned a verdict of not guilty.

A Hamburg schoolteacher recently undertook to find out what his pupils knew about common things. Out of 120 children between 10 and 16 years of age, 58 had never seen a flock of sheep, 70 had never seen a violet growing, 90 had never heard a nightingale, 89 had never seen the sun rise, and 33 had not seen it set, 49 had never seen a man plow. He asserts that while city children may know about theatres and concert exhibitions, museums and stores, hundreds of the simplest things in life are mere words to them that convey no coherent idea.

Scouting Danger.

According to Nature, the French minister of war has asked the Paris Academy of Sciences to give an opinion as to the possibility of danger arising from the establishment of wireless telegraphy stations in the neighborhood of magazines containing powder or other explosives. It is suggested that the nature of the cases containing the explosive may be an important matter for consideration in connection with the subject.

FEEDING WILD ANIMALS

IT HAS BECOME A GREAT SCIENCE IN MODERN TIMES.

Thirty Thousand Dollars Spent for the Food of the Living Curiosities Maintained by New York City—Snakes Are Most Fastidious Creatures in Captivity.

The feeding of wild animals in captivity, so that they will thrive and grow contented in their confinement, has become a pretty accurate science in modern times, and the keepers of wild animals in zoological parks, menageries and circuses, have attained such success in this direction that it is rarely an animal dies because of improper feeding. Twenty-five years ago this was not the case. The mortality among menagerie animals was considerable, and the losses were so great that a systematic inquiry was made in regard to the feeding of wild animals in captivity. Partly as the result of that inquiry, and partly because of the accumulating experience in handling the animals, present methods of feeding have practically eliminated all danger to the animals from the food they may get.

The feeding of wild animals, birds, and fish in any large park or menagerie is consequently of scientific interest and value. Something less than \$30,000 worth of food is needed annually for the animals, birds and fish in the public parks, menageries and aquariums in the limits of Greater New York. A close analysis of the food purchased by this considerable sum shows that the largest amount of the money is spent for meat, fish and fowl. There are altogether some 40 to 50 different kinds of food used, and all of it is as good as the market affords. The common idea that scraps and waste food can be fed to wild animals is hardly consistent with modern menagerie experience. Such food would in a short time cause sickness and disease among the animals in captivity. Hence all the food is carefully selected, and is of the very best. In feeding the animals fish the greatest danger comes from ptomaine poison. Several fine otters and seals have been lost through feeding them with fish that had become tainted. The seals, sea lions, otters and pelicans are great consumers of fish, and they are fed every morning with medium sized herring, packed fresh in ice and delivered daily at the Zoological park. When it is impossible to secure good herring, other fish are procured and cut up, if too large to suit the fastidious creatures who live on a fish diet. These fish eating animals and birds are very susceptible to poor food, and any violent change in the quantity or quality of it almost instantly causes sickness. Probably more sea lions have been lost to zoological gardens in the past through insufficient knowledge concerning their food than any other class of valuable specimens. The slightest taint of the fish produces symptoms which usually terminate in sickness and death.

The snakes are also very susceptible to the kind of food given them, and they prove extremely fastidious creatures when held in captivity. It is impossible to supply some of the reptiles with the special food they like, and substitutes are not taken kindly to at first. Thus the big cobras in their native haunts live chiefly on other snakes—the small harmless varieties. Now it is manifestly impossible to secure sufficient small snakes to supply these voracious caterers at all seasons of the year. Nevertheless, the keepers of the Central Park menagerie and the Zoological Park in the Bronx make great efforts to collect small snakes for the valuable cobras. These considerable numbers, shipments often amounting as high as 150 at a time. Fed on these live snakes the cobras thrive in captivity and appear satisfied with their lot; but it becomes necessary to appease their appetite with rats and mice when snakes are scarce. While new cobras will not touch these rodents when they are first placed before them, they can sometimes be enticed to swallow them when tied to the tail of a small snake or even when stuffed in the skin of a dead reptile.

The other snakes are fed mostly on toads, mice and rabbits. Even English sparrows are purchased in considerable numbers for the reptiles. The average prices paid each year for these snake foods are 2 cents each for sparrows, 4 to 5 cents each for toads and frogs, and 2 to 3 cents each for live mice. At these quotations many boys make quite a little pocket money, and the Zoological park managers find the supply at times greater than the demand, so eager are the youngsters to feed the snakes. In the winter season, however, it sometimes becomes a question of considerable importance how to secure fresh food for the reptiles. At one time more than a dozen rattlesnakes had to be killed because of the keepers' inability to find plenty of live mice to keep them from starvation.

The wild carnivorous animals of the jungle need a certain amount of meat each day, and if they had their tastes always gratified they would accept nothing else; but stale bread is fed them in addition to the meat. The bears, monkeys and other beasts of the jungle learn to eat bread with evident relish, but the lions and tigers look forward eagerly to their fresh meat, and are not satisfied until it comes. About the usual feeding hour each day these creatures grow restless and pace anxiously up and down their cages. The appearance of the keeper with their dinner is a signal for whines and growls, and when the fresh meat is thrown to them they snap and snarl shrilly until they have disposed of it. Horse flesh has been found an excellent treat for these animals, and a

cheap food at that. It probably forms the principal diet of the lions and tigers in Central park, while the Zoological garden bears receive a limited amount of "chuck" beef every day.

There is a great variety of food given to the other animals, and the mess department of the park is an interesting place. There the cooks are preparing a huge basket of chicken heads, which have been chopped off in the markets for use at the menagerie. These fresh heads are fed to the foxes, which eat them greedily, and to some of the small carnivora. Roots and vegetables and fruits of all kinds are collected there. These are fed to the elk, deer, buffalo, birds, monkeys and many other creatures to keep their systems in good order. They represent a sort of medicinal food to counteract any evil effects of the heavier diet.

Hay, oats, wheat and corn naturally form a considerable part of the daily diet of the elephants, rhinoceri, hippopotami and similar herbivorous animals.—G. E. W., in the Scientific American.

BOOKS BOUND IN HUMAN SKIN.

Volume Enshrined in the Epidermis of a Beautiful Countess.

Some of the French bibliophiles have caused a number of volumes to be bound in the skin of human beings. Might not these weird literary treasures be designated in a very literal sense as "human documents"? A Parisian trade paper devoted to the leather industry declares that the skin of a human being is admirably adapted for book binding, that it is finely grained, of excellent quality, and durable besides. In England Dr. Anthony Askew caused a book on anatomy to be covered with the skin of a notorious sorcerer who was executed for murder. In the catalogue of the library of M. M. L. Veydt, minister of finance of Belgium, attention was called to a book entitled "Philosophy and Literary Opuscles," covered with human skin; the price was not prohibitory, being only 20 francs. In the Bibliotheque Imperiale, Paris, may be seen a Bible of the 13th century bound in the epidermis of a woman. A copy of Eugene Sue's "Mysteries of Paris" was enclosed in a similar ghastly binding. A plate inside the volume attests the fact.

Strange to say, there is a sentimental side to this weird fancy. A charming French countess, of extraordinary beauty, whose shoulders elicited exclamations of admiration from Plammarion, France's author-astronomer, rewarded the devotion of her admirer by leaving him, as a precious legacy, the skin from those same lovely shoulders, to do with as he pleased. Wishing to have it within his reach, he sent it to a tanner, who prepared it in the accepted manner. With the gallantry worthy of a Frenchman, the renowned astronomer caused a volume of an edition de luxe of his "Terre et Ciel" to be covered with the adorable epidermis of the sprightly countess. The edges of the leaves are of blood red, sprinkled with golden stars. On the dedication page one may read: "Souvenir d'une Morte."

Even a more gaudiful idea was that of a lawyer, M. Edmund Leroy, who caused the works of Delille, the translator of the "Georgics," to be covered with the poet's own skin. Mr. Leroy was present when the body was embalmed, and bribed the undertaker to strip off a portion of the dead man's epidermis. In these lugubrious fragments his writings were preserved. This curiosity is to be found in the library of Valenciennes, France.

There are a few specimens of bindings of human skin in the United States. A bibliophile in Cincinnati owns a couple of volumes, one, Sterne's "Sentimental Journey," done up in the dusky skin of a negress; the other, "Tristram Shandy," covered with the skin of a Chinese woman.

Not only has the skin of human beings been occasionally employed by the bookbinders, but that of almost every animal known to the naturalist. The monkey, the crocodile, the ape, the dog, the horse, the panther, the wolf, the elephant, the cat and the mole have all been subservient to the fantastic fancies of book lovers. For instance, a book on hunting, brought out in London, was bound in doe skin; a book on dogs in dog skin, etc., etc.

"Realism" in book binding may be carried too far. It gives one a curious sensation consciously to finger the tanned cuticle of a departed person. Were the reader superstitious, he might fancy that the spirit of the defunct would rise up and haunt him for the desecration.—Comtesse de Montaign, in the New York Post.

Xarque from Argentina.

The manufacture of xarque, or dried beef, the bilting of the Boers, forms one of the most important industries of the Argentine Republic, whence it is shipped in large quantities to Brazil and other South American states. A shipment of xarque is about to be made to the Italian colony of Erythraea, in Africa. According to a Brazilian paper, this dried beef is not at all bad when properly cooked, while it is far more nutritious than tinned beef, at a quarter of the latter's cost. Indeed, some foreigners not to the manner born get to like it so much that they insist on its appearing at the tables once or twice a week.