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Housewifely English Sparrows.
A loving student of the English sparrow as the bird is to be seen in Brooklyn finds that the little creature has in his domestic relations many human traits. When the sparrows are mating and building, the male sinks into insignificance beside the female. When a nesting place is to be selected the male looks jauntily about and is ready to accept anything that comes to hand, but the hen examines each proposed site with critical care, apparently studies the relations of the place to sun, wind and rain, and finally decides the question with small consideration for the opinions of her spouse.
When the nest is to be built the housewifely character of the hen again asserts itself. She is busy all day long gathering sticks and straws to serve as building material. Nothing is taken haphazard, but every stick or straw fits to a nicety and is admirably adapted to the end for which it is selected. As to the male, he gives moral support and little else. While the hen is devoting all her energies to the task in hand he sits on a neighboring bough and encourages her with music. Nor does she expect or wish more at his hands.
Now and then, apparently pricked by conscience, he leaves his perch, picks up a clumsy stick or straw and carries it to the scene of the building operations. But his contribution is seldom received with favor. The hen usually examines it with the ill concealed scorn that wives sometimes accord to domestic performances of husbands, and in nine cases out of ten she tosses away the proffered material as soon as the back of her spouse is turned.—New York Sun.

HARBOR DEFENSES.
PLANTING DEADLY EXPLOSIVES TO PROTECT THE COAST.
What a Vast Amount of Labor, Skill, Time and Money is Needed to Complete a Thorough System of Coast Defense—Advantages of the Torpedo.
There is a very widely diffused idea among people who have not made a special study of the subject that torpedoes, and torpedoes alone, can defend any harbor against a hostile attack.
The destructive effects of a few torpedo explosions under the most favorable circumstances have caused this branch of warfare to assume an undue importance, an importance wholly unwarranted by the results and created by generalizations from isolated instances, entirely without regard to the natural limitations of the efficiency of any torpedo system, however perfect.
It is the object of this article to endeavor to show the actual capabilities of torpedoes, the results attainable by their use, and the restrictions inevitably attending their indefinite expansion into a complete system of defense.
Great guns must play an important part in all harbor defense, but for the proper and adequate defending of navigable channels buoyant mines, exploded by contact, are the mainstays.
With their use, however, a host of perplexing conditions arise, the twisting and wearing of the cables and moorings, the depression due to the currents, the danger of sympathetic explosions, the leaking of the cases, the obstruction of the channel for friendly navigation—all these have to be overcome as best they may be.
Where a port has several navigable channels, and it is practicable to sacrifice one or more, their closure by means of self acting torpedoes is easy.
Where a channel, however, cannot be entirely abandoned, self acting mines are useless, for in order to be thoroughly reliable they must be as dangerous to a friend as to an enemy. Furthermore, their planting, and much more, their removal upon the cessation of hostilities is to be accomplished only at great risk. The limited applicability of ground mines is well known. Torpedo science furnishes two other types for harbor defense; the buoyant mine and the dirigible torpedo, although the latter properly forms a distinct class.
Great nicety in planting torpedoes cannot be expected, and this fact, coupled with the inevitable shifting of the mines from various causes, leads directly to the conclusion that a great number of mines must be relied upon rather than precision in their manipulation.
Despite the number of mines, a vessel attempting to pass the lines may still fail to strike a mine hard enough to work the circuit closer. To meet this contingency a perfect torpedo system must provide means for firing the mines at will in groups of three or four. It will always be possible to accurately locate a vessel within a dangerous space of this number of mines, and their simultaneous explosion will have the desired effect.
To furnish a passage for the electric current many cables are needed, and to avoid confusion some regular method of planting must be adopted. It is convenient to plant the torpedoes in groups capable of being fired by judgment, these groups constituting the units, which are combined into the larger unit whose limit is generally the number of mines that can be operated through a single seven core cable.
The grand groups thus formed are arranged in lines, the latter radiating in such a manner from the operating casements that the separate units can be easily located by triangulation. The intervals between the lines are filled with skirmish lines—single mines strung on a single conductor cable and exploding by contact only.
Many forms of movable torpedoes for harbor defense have been tried in different countries with varying degrees of success. For accuracy of direction and range of destructive power the Sims-Edison fish torpedo is perhaps unexcelled. Extended trials at Willet's point have satisfactorily demonstrated its ability to carry 200 pounds of dynamite to a distance of two miles at a speed of about twenty miles per hour. The charge is exploded upon contact with the vessel or by the action of the operator on shore.
The dirigibility of the torpedo is perfect. It follows its prey as though endowed with life, swerving to the right or left as necessary, diving under booms or other obstructions, cutting through nets, and never slackening its great speed until the end of its cable is reached. At present a two mile radius is deemed sufficient, although this could be increased if necessary by enlarging the "fish" itself.—Cosmopolitan.

STATUE OF CHARLES THE FIRST.
Comely and calm he rides
Held by his own Whitehall:
Only the night wind glides:
No crowds, nor rebels, brawl.
Gone, too, his court, and yet,
The stars his courtiers,
Stars in their stations set;
And every wandering star.
Alone he rides, alone,
The fair and fatal king:
Dark night is all his own,
That strange and solemn thing.
Which are more full of fate,
The stars, or those sad eyes?
Which are more still and great,
Those brows, or the dark skies?
—Lionel Johnson.

Symbols of the Thunderbolt.
The different nations of the world, both ancient and modern, have employed various symbols to represent the fires that flash from the thundercloud. The Chaldeans symbolized it with a trident, the learned Babylonians used a human arm for the same purpose. The bas-reliefs of Nimrod and Maltha, the work of later and more refined Assyrian artists, show the trident doubled or transformed into a trident fascicle. This triumph of the classic art secured for the ancient Mesopotamian symbol the advantage over all other representations of the thunderbolt.
The Greeks represented the storm fire with the features of a bird of prey. Later on, when they had begun the use of the Asiatic form of the symbol, they put it in the claws of an eagle and made it the scepter of Zeus. Gaul received the symbol from Italy, but soon altered it to the familiar two headed hammer seen on the Gallo-Roman monuments. The same symbol is seen on amulets found in Germany, Scandinavia and Brittany.—St. Louis Republic.

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A Cowboy's Sense of Humor.
A globe trotting Englishman told me this story: "To show you that the cowboys are not as bad as they have been painted—in fact, that they are opposed to anything like lawbreaking and violence—I will relate an incident. There was a poor clerk standing up over his books at a desk in a shop on the main street, and there was a cowboy riding up and down the street. Well, the cowboy saw the clerk and his sense of humor was aroused by the idea of shooting at him, d'you know. Those cowboys have a very remarkable sense of humor. So the cowboy up with his pistol, d'you know, and he shoots the poor clerk right through the head, killing him instantly.
"Well, now, that sort of thing is very distinctly frowned upon by cowboys, as a rule, and in this case the cowboy held a meeting and resolved that the fellow with the lively but dangerous sense of humor should be hanged at once. They put a rope around his neck, and there being no tree anywhere in sight they hung him to the side of a Pullman as the train came rolling in. I've seen a number of occurrences of that sort, which makes me quite positive in stating that though they are a very rum sort of beggars they are really not a bad lot."—Julian Ralph in Harper's Weekly.

A Lazy, Though Shrewd Fellow.
Tulkinson—a barrister and bachelor combined, by the way—is a very systematic man. The other day he had his house fitted with electrical appliances, and giving instructions to his servant Joseph, he said:
"Now I want you to understand, Joseph, that when I ring once that means for you, and when I ring twice that means for Maggie, the housemaid."
Joseph, who is the laziest wretch that ever accepted wages he did not earn, bowed respectfully and withdrew. A little later the bell rang. Joseph never moved. Presently it rang again, and according to instructions Maggie came hurrying to her master, who was very angry.
"Why didn't that rascal, Joseph, come when I rang for him?" said the barrister bachelordisgustedly.
"Why, sir," answered Maggie, "Joseph is busy in the office reading your newspaper. When he heard the first ring he said to me, 'Now, Maggie, wait until he rings the second time, and then it will be you he wants.'"—London Tit-Bits.

Strange Cave Dwellers in Spain.
At a meeting of the Royal Geographical society, of Madrid, Dr. Bide gave an account of his exploration of a wild district in the province of Caeceres, which he represented as still inhabited by a strange people who speak a curious patois and live in caves and inaccessible retreats. They have a hairy skin and have hitherto displayed a strong repugnance to mixing with their Spanish and Portuguese neighbors. Roads have lately been pushed into the district inhabited by the "Jurdes," and they are beginning to learn the Castilian language and attend the fairs and markets.—W. H. Larrabee in Popular Science Monthly.

The Growth of Railroad Mileage.
In 1830 there were twenty-three miles of railway in operation in the United States. By 1832 the mileage had increased to 229 miles, and in 1835 the country had 1,098 miles of railroad. The first through railroad from the east westward was completed in 1842 between Boston and Albany, connecting at the latter place with the Erie canal. In the same year the last link of the line from Albany to Buffalo was opened. At the end of 1848 the total mileage of all the railroads in the country was 5,996 miles, or about 500 miles more than there are now in the state of Nebraska.—Edward Rosewater's Omaha Address.

The Flute is Very Old.
The flute is very old in its origin, but the flute of today is different from that of the ancients. It has been improved upon from time to time, and the old people would probably fail to recognize it now. The flageolet, which is somewhat similar, is credited to Juvigny about 1581.—Harper's Young People.

Tall Men in Asia and Africa.
The tallest men of South America are found in the western provinces of the Argentine Republic, of Asia in Afghanistan and Kaypootana, of Africa in the highlands of Abyssinia.—Yankee Blade.

The Color of the Complexion.
If Mrs. Emily Crawford's deductions are true, beauty and such a hitherto difficult achievement as a complexion are mere matters of determination. Mrs. Crawford says that Frenchwomen used to be brown as a berry; but of late years they are conspicuous for their marble charm. The expression is Mrs. Crawford's. This, she says, is simply the result of their intense desire for beauty; pallor; it is altogether a matter of will power. It is elsewhere admitted that the Parisian has been giving a great deal of consideration to her diet, and has found that poultry and milk are better allies, so far as her skin is concerned, than butcher's meat and wine.—San Francisco Argonaut.

Perfumes the Horse Likes.
There are some perfumes that are very grateful to horses, however little credit a horse may commonly receive for possessing delicacy of scent. Horse trainers are aware of the fact and make use of their knowledge in training stubborn and apparently intractable animals. Many trainers have favorite perfumes, the composition of which they keep a secret, and it is the possession of this means of appealing to the horse's aestheticism that enables so many of them to accomplish such wonderful results.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

An Electric Bell Call.
One of the patents for electrical contrivances issued from the patent office is for an automatic guest call for use in hotels. It consists of a combination of a clock connected through a series of relays and contacts with an annunciator bell system. A guest wishing a call at a certain time has his bell connected to this time strip on the clock circuit; at the designated hour the bell in his room rings for a certain period, or until he stops it.—New York World.

Barbers Use Little Wax Now.
Says a barber: "A thing that isn't used much these days is grease. This store consumed three pounds of it a day ten years ago, and we don't get away with a solitary pound now. I once calculated that 100,000 New York men carried around 150 pounds of wax in their mustaches. This was at the rate of one ounce of wax to forty mustaches."—New York Herald.

Enemies of the Salmon Fisheries.
Seals and sea lions are a great nuisance to the salmon fishermen. At the mouth of the Columbia river they watch the gill nets and grab the caught salmon by the throats, devouring those parts which they regard especially as tidbits. Bears are very fond of salmon and catch a great many of them in the streams. They eat only the heads.—Washington Star.

Felt Flattered.
England is laughing at the story told in Henry Norman's "Real Japan" of the American minister at Tokio, who thought the Japanese "darned clever" people because they greeted him with cries of "Ohayo." "How did they know that I was from Ohio?" he asked.

"The tenement house," said a speaker at a recent public meeting, "is the enemy of philanthropy of the present day." He meant that whatever is done to ameliorate the condition of the masses of the poor in the great cities is, to a great extent, neutralized by the conditions under which they live.
The value of the product of the factories and mills west of the Mississippi during the year 1891 is computed at \$423,968,695, and the product of the states west of the Missouri alone is computed at \$198,722,653.
In territorial area the United States ranks third. Great Britain controls 8,557,000 square miles of territory, Russia, 8,352,940 miles, and the United States, counting Alaska, 3,580,242 miles.
It is said that in all the forests of the earth there are no two leaves exactly the same. It is also said that amid all peoples of the earth there are no two faces precisely alike.
Watch a man reading his own contribution to a magazine, and you will get a picture of absolute concentration.

The Largest Ocean Steamers.
The largest passenger steamships in commission are the sister ships City of New York and City of Paris, each having 10,449 tons displacement. The steamship having the largest accommodations for cabin passengers is the Cunarder Etruria, which can carry 550. The longest steamship is the Teutonic, 565 feet.—New York Advertiser.

Bowknots Still in Favor.
The rage for bowknots shows no signs of abating. Easter gifts were devised of them in every form.