

Fish Has Ood Power to Benumb Opponent

In the winter of 1882, when the writer was at work on the fishes of Key West, a tourist came to his office, bearing a small ray or skate of which he told a curious story. Seeing the little fish close to shore, he stabbed it with a pocket knife. At once he felt a sharp shock like that from a Leyden jar, which, for the moment, paralyzed his arm.

So he brought the fish to me. It belonged to the family of torpedoes or electric rays, being one of the smallest kinds of these fishes, *Narcine brasiliensis*. It is locally known to the Bahama and Key West fishermen as numb-fish or cramp-fish, and to the Spanish as entemedor. These fishes, the torpedoes or electric rays, are very much like the ordinary skate in appearance, but softer in body and more rounded in form, the flesh being very watery and the skin everywhere perfectly smooth.

The torpedo yields a quick, sharp shock when touched, benumbing an enemy for the time being. The shock is well carried along a metallic conductor, such as a knife or spear. It is said to have the qualities of magnetism, "rendering the needle magnetic and decomposing chemical compounds." However disconcerting to one who feels it, it is not dangerous. The exercise of this power soon exhausts its possessor and a period of rest is needed.—Prof. David Starr Jordan in the Scientific American.

Had to Have Strong Coffee on Broadway

During her recent week-end visit to a town on the South shore the Woman stopped in a fruit and vegetable store to make some purchases for her friend. The clerk was having a rather difficult task, for the customer upon whom he was waiting wanted to know the history of each purchase.

"What kind of coffee have you?" she asked.

"Good coffee!" promptly responded the dark-eyed son of Italy.

"Yes, I know. But what brand is it?"

"These one, she's drink by all the people downtown, New York. Fifty-nine cents a pound."

"Oh, that's too expensive."

"Well, here's another, only 40 cents," hastily volunteered the man.

"Is it strong?" asked the lady dubiously. "I like strong coffee."

"Sure. Wonderful strong. They drink these kind on Broadway. They gotta have strong coffee there. They stay up all night."—New York Sun.

Hope-Making Plant

Much of the peninsula of Yucatan is very stony, and as there are practically no rivers, the planters depend on rain to irrigate their fields. Sisal hemp, or henequen, is the chief article of growth and export throughout the peninsula.

The sisal itself is an evergreen plant closely related to the century plant or American aloe. The fiber is extracted from the curving, swordlike leaves, which are cut at the end of the third or fourth year of growth. The leaves are macerated, or made into pulp, and the fibers torn apart by machine. The pulp is then washed away and the fibers dried and bleached by the sun, and when the process is completed this yellowish-white fiber ranks next to Manila hemp in making rope.—Washington Star.

Recalling Early Days

With plenty of patience, paper and a pencil, it is possible for you to remember what happened when you were six months old, asserts Dr. E. Pickworth Farrow, English psychologist, in *Popular Science Monthly*. For periods of one or two hours at a time, he says, write down any and every thought which occurs to you. Repeat the process several times. Then, as memories of recent happenings gradually are "worked off" on paper, you will go back to recollections of your early life.

Colors and Mentality

That different colors may have important effects on the mental state of people has been believed for many years. Some psychologists have gone so far as to prepare charts of the mental effects of different colors, red being stimulating and exciting, blue depressing, and so on. In a long series of tests made on children several months ago it was found that most of the children preferred red and orange colors to blue and violet ones. Red for most people is a cheerful, inspiring color.

Not Copied From Nature

My sculpture is not copied from nature. I follow a definite and preconceived idea about sculpture, and from that I make a sketch in clay. . . . What I search for is the disposition of volume in space, the figure in light and air. I search for an ample form and the copying of an actual figure is of no interest to me. . . . Who could copy nature? Even the Greeks never attempted it. . . . What is important is the general idea. It can't be explained, but has to be felt.—Malliol.

Knowledge and Power

A great many people "know" many things they really don't know. Some one has said that what is not known would fill more books than ever have been printed. Human knowledge is limited, yet a little knowledge may exert tremendous power.—Grit.

Gem Worn by Musician Idea of Old Greeks

When we sit at a concert listening to a great violinist, we are often diverted by the flash of a large diamond on one of the fingers of his bow hand. If we like the music and the artist we dismiss the impression with the thought that it is merely a bit of personal vanity on the part of the player.

But when we read that the practice of displaying handsome rings to the audience was in vogue at musical contests 2,400 years ago, and learn that the eminent Greek lyre players of the time of Timotheus wore jewels on the right hand, the hand which held the plectrum and sounded the strings, we find that we are confronting a long tradition of professional practice.

Perhaps this persistent habit may be traceable to the Greek desire to discover and reveal beauty everywhere, and to harmonize glints of color with musical tones, if such a combination is possible. Granting that this was the aim of the Greek artist, we must then be dealing not merely with the momentary whim of a vain musician, but with traits of Greek character which are also human, showing themselves in similar guise wherever similar situations occur, and persisting, therefore, through long years in the practices of a guild.—Charles Burton Gulick, in "Modern Traits in Old Greek Life."

Little Visible Charm in Captured Mermaid

That the belief in mermaids should have survived all these years is extraordinary; but there is another curious side to the matter—that each successive mermaid seen through the centuries seems to have been uglier than its predecessor.

Of this there can be no doubt if one contrasts the description of the "mermaid" of the ancient Greeks with those of more recent times.

In an account of a "mermaid" captured off the coast of Natal, a writer describes it as having screamed like a woman when caught, and goes on to state that it had seven ribs on each side, lungs, kidneys and a heart about the size of an ox heart. According to the writer, the "mermaid" was 11 feet long, had a huge tail instead of legs, lacked a tongue and teeth, but had a heavy chin, flat nose, eyes, and a kind of hair that grew in tufts. Not a very prepossessing "mermaid"!

It is more than probable that this 800-pound monster was a dugong, which, though once a land dweller, is now an inhabitant of the sea and undoubtedly responsible for many of the "mermaid" legends.

Childish Frankness

Speaking of embarrassing moments, Mrs. F. S. R. writes that she took her four-year-old daughter with her when calling one afternoon and they had not been in a woman's house long when the little one remarked:

"You may as well start getting dinner, Mrs. Brown, 'cause daddy's out of town an' if you ask us we can stay to dinner just as well as not."

"Needless to say," adds Mrs. F. S. R., "we got the invitation and I was very much embarrassed."—Boston Transcript.

Fly a "Free Animal," Not Pest—in Italy

In Florence you get over expecting things to be done and learn to take what is given in a mild spirit of thankfulness and to let the rest go.

The fly question is an example. We were Americans and we were determined that we were not going to be tormented by flies, Italian flies at that, lazy, insolent brutes unused to molestation. We combated them with screens, with sticky paper, with determined slaughterings. They merely returned in slow, persistent clouds the moment the holocaust was over. It seemed as though they were born both wise and wary, for screens could not keep them out nor fly paper entrap them. This was seemingly inexplicable until we discovered the kitchen windows invitingly open and Litzia placidly peeling potatoes with a sort of black halo moving about her head. She listened to the storm of expostulation unmoved and rather amused.

"Ah, signora," she explained, "but there is no way to keep out a fly—a fly—he is a free animal."—From "Falling Seeds," by Elizabeth C. Chapman.

Thinkers Have Ever Seen Trouble Ahead

We are all more or less nervous at times—especially when something goes wrong with us—about what is going to happen to the human race. The psychiatrists are particularly apprehensive. Dr. Max Shlapp, for instance, told the Academy of Medicine, at New York that he feared that the whole race of tomorrow would either be grossly damaged or lowered in general efficiency as a result of the high tension lives we lead—though, to be sure, all of us don't lead that kind of lives. 'Twas ever thus. Greece saw trouble ahead; so did Rome. Those who watched the moths flutter round the Louis XIV candle in France were gravely apprehensive, and so were those who frowned on the gayeries of the court of Charles II in England. Trouble was ahead then as it is now. Some pretty bad messes followed, but

humanity survived, and on the whole, improved. But trouble is always ahead. We never catch up with the dread of it. Surely there is comfort in the thought that the worst is yet to come—and probably will never get here.—Indianapolis News.

What She Wanted to Know

A woman called up the Times office the other day and asked the able and efficient young woman in charge of the telephone:

"Is there a bureau of information in the Times office?"

"What do you want to know?" asked the obliging young woman.

"That's what I want to know."

"Well, but what do you want to know?"

"That's what I want to know. Is there a bureau of—"

"I know, but what do you want to know?"

"That's what I want to know!"

"There's no bureau of information, but if you'll tell me what you want to know I'll—"

"Thank you. That's what I wanted to know. Good-by."—Leavenworth Times.

Cannot Harden Rubber

The bureau of standards says when rubber is melted it is changed both chemically and physically. It cannot be hardened. Contrary to what seems to be the quite common impression, rubber goods are not cast by pouring the melted material into molds.

Instead the crude rubber is worked between steam-heated rolls and at the same time the sulphur and other ingredients are mixed up. The warm, plastic mixture is then molded and heated to vulcanize the rubber—that is, to cause the sulphur to combine with it.

News

"News" is commonly believed to be formed from the initial letters of the four directions, north, east, west, and south, but it is authoritatively claimed that the interesting sameness is merely coincidence. There are synonymous foreign words "nova" and "nouvelles," which employ various letters to mean the same thing. In our own language the word was formerly spelled "newes." It is likely that the German word "das neue" is the origin of ours since their phrase, "Was giebt neues?" means the same as our, "What's the news?"

The Crisis

It is a common saying that men and women hate to pass forty and put on glasses.

There is a greater trial ahead of them; to have all their teeth out and buy a set of the kind that never looks natural.

False teeth are as easily detected as a wig; but people are rather more charitable for false teeth—somehow, they expect a man to boldly face baldness.—E. W. Howe's Monthly.

Sure Winner

Buddy Cohen was bragging about how much his father knew. "He knows everything," declared Buddy, but little Bertha was skeptical and finally Buddy did remember that he had asked his father a question or two that he couldn't answer.

Still loyal to his argument, however, he finally said: "Well, my father may not know everything, but we've got a dictionary that knows the rest."

TWO KINDS OF JUSTICE

The Colored people of this country are its greatest asset. They are patriotic, as proven in every war this country has been engaged in. But their patriotism has not only been shown in the time of war but in the days of peace their love of country has been shown. There have been no labor troubles made by Negro workmen. There have been no assassinations of presidents or other governing authorities by Negroes.

We have been patient and forbearing in the face of all kinds of adverse legislation. If the meek shall inherit the earth the Negroes of "these United States of America" ought to own America. For we are meek and forgiving and we are gluttons for punishment and always bob up smiling and happy after our "good white folks" have kicked us on the shins and have hit us below the belt.

But The News sounds this warning to our good white friends: The Negro is getting tired—we almost said "darned tired"—of this two handed justice. We are wondering why the white man cannot be fair and square. Here are two cases: Fleming and Bard, Negroes, are sentenced to death for an alleged rape of a white girl who never has identified them and about whose guilt there is great room for doubt. Yet it is said they must lie.

Charles Falone, white, is charged with rape of a Colored girl. He is identified, in fact he is almost caught in the act, and yet he only gets five years in jail and a thousand dollar fine and that not for rape but for "assault and battery." What can our white friends and fellow citizens be thinking about—to deal out this kind of justice? We have produced no anarchist assassins, or even radicals, but we warn "our good white folks" that it is not human nature to go on

grinning and bearing this kind of thing.

Patience ceases to be a virtue some time and we hope for their sakes as well as our own that the white man will come to himself and play the game fair and square. We make no threats. But—

—The Louisville News.

COLORED LAD IS THE PRESIDENT OF CLASS AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

Boston, Mass.—Edward P. Simms was elected president of the Sophomore Class of the Boston University School of Religious Education and Social Service. This is the first time in the history of the University that a colored youth has been elected to such a distinguished office. Mr. Simms is the son of the late Annie E. and S. Simms. His mother was, before her marriage, a teacher in the Boston public schools. His father served three years on the Boston city council. His grandfather was Mr. Elijah W. Smith, Boston's poet of twenty-five years ago. His great grandfather, the Rev. Thomas Paul, was New England's first colored minister.

Mr. Simms has received many honors since attending this school, one of which was to be selected as class representative at the All-School Banquet, held at Repertory Hall, Friday evening, May 6, 1927. He was also one of the few student speakers on the same program with Boston University's president, Daniel Marsh, at the Men's Council Banquet held recently.

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