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THE CURIOSITY SHOP.

About Pouring Oil on the Troubled Waters. The phrase "oil on the troubled waters," occurs in Bede's "Ecclesiastical History"...

Symbols of the Evangelists. Matthew is symbolized by a man with a pen in his hand, and a scroll before him, looking over his left shoulder at an angel...

Swift Fish. It is understood that for short distances the salmon is the swiftest of fish. It has been calculated that its speed, at high pressure, or under chase, is from twenty to twenty-five miles an hour...

The Pretender. Charles Edward, known as the Pretender, was the grandson of James II, of England. He was defeated at the battle of Culloden on the 16th of April, 1746, a reward of \$150,000 being offered for his person...

An Old Song. "Adams and Liberty" was written in the year 1798, by Robert Treat Paine, and was first sung at the anniversary of the Massachusetts Charitable Fire society, in Boston, June 1, 1798...

To Freeze Without Ice. There are several ways of freezing without the use of ice or brine. Use an ice cream freezer, so arranged that by no possibility can the freezing mixture get into the material to be frozen...

First in War, First in Peace. The eulogy on Washington, "To the memory of the man, first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen," was delivered by Gen. Henry Lee from the resolutions presented to the house of representatives on the death of Gen. Washington, Dec. 26, 1799...

What's a Grass Widow? A veuve de grace—a widow by the grace or indulgence of the king or the law. A grass widow is a divorced wife, though the term is now applied to any woman not living with her husband...

The National House. The house of representatives is constituted of 325 members from thirty-eight states, and two delegates from each territory. The latter have no voting power or places on committees...

Not Leap Years. There has been and there will be a year that can be divided by four and yet not be a leap year. Seventeen hundred was such a year, 1800 was, 1900 will be, 2100 will be such a year...

SCIENCE AND PROGRESS.

INSTRUCTIVE FACTS GLEANED FROM LABORATORY AND WORKSHOP. An Illustrated Description of a Chinese Musical Kite Provided with a Resonator and Emitting Plaintive Mourners Similar to an Aolian Harp...



A Suggestion to Ticklish Subjects. A correspondent in Science writes as follows: "I was a very ticklish youngster, and my comrades sometimes used that weakness for their own amusement..."

Carpet a Source of Contamination. People are beginning to complain of the beating and brushing of carpets in the open air in the vicinity of inhabited houses, on account not only of the dust which is raised, but especially on account of the bacteria which may be set free when the carpets come from houses where zymotic diseases have existed...

An Experiment of Interest to Students. The force of steam boiler explosions can be illustrated by getting a tube made by a tinsmith, say half an inch in diameter and closed at one end. Put a piece of ice the size of a cherry, or half a teaspoonful of water, into the tube and cork the open end tightly. Suspend the tube over a flame, so that the ice melts and is converted into steam. The cork will be forced out with a loud explosion...

Flour Dust Dangerous. The Milling World reminds millers of the oft-proved fact that flour dust is a dangerously explosive material. Beware, says the editor, of lights thrust or carried into bins or rooms filled with dust laden air. In many cases the carrying of a light in dusty places by some careless boy has been the real cause of "mysterious" fires and explosions...

Scientific Recreation at Desert. Amateurs are being continually surprised with the everyday and commonplace subjects that afford illustrations of learned facts in chemistry and the arts. La Nature suggests the neat little experiment as a pleasing and instructive amusement at dessert. Drop into a glass of champagne a grape or a raisin. Watch it drop to the bottom of the glass and observe the bubbles of gas that attach themselves to it. This causes it to rise to the surface, where the bubbles burst. Then it sinks and afterward begins its ascent again. The bubbles of carbonic acid gas perform the role of minute balloons ascending in the liquid...

A Precious Stone in Colorado. A precious stone of much interest has been discovered in Colorado. It is opaque white hydrophane. The finder calls it "magic stone," because, as usual with this mineral, it has the property of becoming transparent if water is dropped slowly on it from one to three minutes. It is so porous that it will absorb its own weight in water. It quickly recovers its opacity...

Substitute for Milk. "What did you do for milk?" asked a lady, referring to the snow blockade. "Why, we took hot water, and looked at it from a scientific point of view," was the reply. "It is 87 per cent. milk, you know; that is to say, milk is 87 per cent. water, which is about the same thing..."

More than 1,000,000 pounds of tin foil are used yearly in this country to cover tobacco...

MEN OF NEWSPAPER FAME.

What Press Paragraphers Have to Say of Them—Bits of Gossip. Speaker Carlisle smoked a pipe in his study. Gen. Sherman has given his portrait to Harvard university.

Mr. Gladstone plays the violin—with no great success, however. H. Rider Haggard is said to eat onions when composing his harrowing tales. President Charles K. Adams, of Cornell, declares that co-education is a success.

Mr. W. H. Murray is going on a tour of exploration to the extreme north of British America. The ladder of fame possesses many rungs. It is said, Charles Mitchell's ladder contained just forty.

Louis Kossuth is still living at Turin with his sister, in good health and busy with his autobiography. Prof. William James of Harvard, is going to try to revive the fashion of experimenting with planchette.

Joel Chandler Harris became the father of ten children before he named one of them after himself. Admirable modesty. M. de Brazza, the African explorer, is reported to be almost hopelessly ill. His experiences on the Congo ruined his health.

Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes has presented his large and valuable collection of medical and surgical books to the Medical library of Boston. Mr. Herman Merivale relates that once on a first night he thought the play so bad that he groaned aloud, and so loud that the audience cried: "Turn him out!" The play was his own.

Urbain Olivier, the Swiss novelist, who recently died at the age of 78, conscientiously produced one book a year and at the same time cultivated a farm. He was a very successful farmer. John Lamar Acree, of Lower Lee county, Ga., died recently from a brass harmonica. The harmonica was a Christmas present, and in blowing it the harmonica poisoned his mouth and lungs.

Richard Mansfield, the actor, though not legally bound to pay a royalty to Robert Louis Stevenson for the use of a dramatized version of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," nevertheless sends a large check every month to the famous author.

Jacques Hartog, who acted as courier for Jay Gould in Europe, says in a newspaper interview: "Mr. Jay Gould is one of the nicest men I ever came across, and all the members of his family are extremely courteous and generous in their treatment." Here is one man who is a hero to his valet.

John E. Fitzgerald, the president of the Irish National League of America, who lives at Omaha, was for a time a common laborer on a Nebraska railroad at a salary of fifty cents a day. He is now president of several banks, is at the head of the Nebraska stock yards at Lincoln, and employs about 4,000 men. His fortune runs into the millions.

M. Georges Ohnet, author of "Le Maitre de Forges," "Serge Panine," etc., used to be a lawyer, and then a journalist. He is a small, nervous man, talkative and petulant. For a short time in the winter he lives in Paris, but spends most of the year at his country seat at Azymes. "I am," he says, "the laziest of lazy people. I have only one pleasure, one ambition; and that is to sit in the sun and do nothing." Yet he is a prolific and most successful author.

"I happened to catch Ingersoll alone the other evening," said one of the best known of New Yorkers. "He spoke to me of Shakespeare—spoke three hours, spoke as he never spoke to an audience. He knows Shakespeare by heart, knows the familiar and the slightest phrase, knows that era, and declares that it was one of the greatest intellectual achievements since history. He not only asserts it, but proves it with quotations, references, examples." Ingersoll's agnosticism has been practically forgotten here. He is ready to declare himself if asked, but he no longer, except incidentally, speaks of these views. He shuns show and ostentation and declines invitations to formal dinners, which he abominates, by the score every month. But he delights in having a wit at his own table, and the sparks fly when he gets one.

The French President's Wife. President Carnot's wife is a clever woman, lively and well informed, and has made a great effort to restore some of the social glories of Paris, which were so much obscured under the Greys regime. She was active in pushing her husband and in keeping his name before the public, and never missed attending an official reception, so to her honours to a certain extent his present honors. While she was going to all these receptions she was taking notes of the failures and errors of the hostesses, and has thereby managed to avoid most of them, now that she herself has to give them. She is the daughter of a brilliant man, Dupont White, the translator of Stuart Mill's works into French. She speaks English with perfect fluency, and is much more fond of English than of French novels. George Eliot is her favorite, but Ouida and Miss Braddon she also likes because of their rapidity, which carries her swiftly along to the denouement. She has no son, which is a great grief to her, but for consolation has four pretty clever little daughters, whom she treats with great care. She is extremely fond of American women, and since her adoption to the Elysee has been careful to have the United States well represented by its female citizens at all her receptions.—New York World.

Hansom in London. Lord Shrewsbury and Talbot has gone into the coal trade, in imitation of Lord Londonderry, and advertises his wares in his hansom cabs. Lord Shrewsbury and Talbot's hansom cabs are said to be the most convenient and well appointed in London. The driver can open and close the folding doors in front by pressing a spring, thus saving the fare a good deal of trouble. Inside are printed instructions for communication with the driver by whistle signals; one whistle means turn to the right, two whistles to the left, and so on. It is suggested that a small silver whistle should hang up in the hansom for ladies, as it can be expected that they whistle with their mouths.

Adulterated Cheese. Dairy Commissioner Howard says that adulterated cheese is to a considerable extent brought into Minnesota and consumed. It contains coloring matter, hog's lard and arsenic, and as it can be sold for less than genuine cheese can be made for flimsy ready purchasers. The law imposes a fine of \$75 upon the person found guilty of selling this so-called cheese, and the dairy commissioners are looking up some cases they have in hand.—New York Sun.

Watch in a Ring. A seal ring, with a watch set in room of the seal, is the latest thing out in jewelry. The timekeeper is a marvel of delicate workmanship, and really a triumph of the jeweler's art. It is a trifle larger than the ordinary cameo or signet for ladies' wear, but not large enough to be clumsy or to look out of place on a delicate hand.—Chicago Herald.

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