

THE YOUNG FOLK'S CORNER

INTERESTING READING FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE.

At Hampton Court—A Cat's Whiskers—A Trade for Boys—Fire-Crackers—The Children of the Race.

At Hampton Court.

Two American women last summer sent one day from London to Hampton Court, and spent the morning in the gardens of the old palace there.

They were in a front room which overlooked the gardens of the palace. It was a sunny June morning, so still that they could hear the wind rustling through the branches of the great oaks in the avenues, and the bees buzzing in the roses which climbed up outside of the window.

"This is very restful and pleasant," said one of the Americans, "but we must hurry away. Think of thirty giggling shrieking girls out on a holiday! When do the young women come?" she added, turning to the waiter.

"They are in that room," he said. "They are in there, madam," pointing to an open door covered with a lace portiere.

The strangers looked at each other with an expression almost of incredulity. They listened, and a moment later heard the hum of gentle voices, of which not a word could be distinguished.

The mystery was easily explained. The shop-girls were in the habit of dealing with English gentlemen of the better class, and imitating them, had caught their low, controlled habit of speech.

"If our women would but learn it!" exclaimed one of the strangers. "Imagine thirty American girls out on a holiday! The clatter of voices! The shrill bursts of laughter; the shrieks and screams!"

"This little incident is a literal fact which is worthy of the consideration of girl readers. Our climate gives to all of our voices a certain nasal tone. The training of the voice in America, except among the most carefully educated people, hence the American in Europe is known as soon as he opens his mouth by his shrill, strident tones.

Two American women in a salon or gallery will make more noise than a large group of their French or English sisters. Yet these last are probably not a whit more gentle or modest at heart than they are.

It is true that a woman may have Cordelia's soft, low voice with the coarseness of Regan and malice of Goneril. But, on the other hand, what girl will be credited with Cordelia's tender heart if she persists in shrieking and giggling her way through life?—Youth's Companion.

"Jacko." "Jacko" is a tame rook, whose owner, a lady, writes to the London Spectator that she had kept him for five years, when one afternoon she noticed him march by her two or three times with a stick in his mouth.

He was hard at work on the foundations of a nest. For a fortnight he worked almost without cessation all day long. I really felt sorry for him, and sometimes tried to help him by holding up sticks one at a time, which he took from my hand as he wanted them. When at last the nest was finished he often had his afternoon nap in it.

There is a small rookery here, and this year, instead of building on his own account, Jacko tried to help the wild rooks. He followed them about with a twig in his beak, and kept with them all day, often running after them on the lawn with some of his dinner in his beak, wanting to feed them as he feeds the tame jackdaw, between whom and himself there is a strong affection. But they snubbed him dreadfully.

One day poor social Jacko must have thought he had at last found a responsive companion, for I found him bowing and cawing to the rook in the looking-glass! And more than once since then he has been seen going up-stairs with some delicacy in his beak evidently intended for his shadowy love.

Once while I was calling on a friend, a lady whom I did not know came in. She owns a rookery, and my friend told her of mine, adding that I was fond of rooks.

"Ah," said she, "so am I. I often say that, though the season we almost live on rook pie."

When I suggested that I should not like seeing my rooks in a pie, her really delightful answer was, "No more people prefer them stewed."

Little Children of the Race.

The following interesting view of "Childhood" is from an article by Miss Roseboro', on that subject, in the Christmas Century: "The little children of the race are intellectually more respectable than the majority of their adults. To be sure, it is their attitude and not their achievements that makes them so; but in estimating the human being as a mind rather than as a screw in the social machine, who can help thinking the attitude more important than the achievement? The abounding intellectual curiosity of children, and their continual return to the biggest and deepest questions—the origin of things, the sources and ends of beings—these are what make them superior. What if the question can never be absolutely answered? Is it not infinitely more respectable to have the earnestly in mind than to accept some humbug jumble reply, to dismiss them altogether and to devote existence wholly to the frivolities we call business, or pleasure, or learning? What else was Car-

SCIENCE AND PROGRESS.

INSTRUCTIVE AND INTERESTING READING FOR ALL.

Curious Inventions—Travels of a Star—Automatic Delivery of Letters—Photos—Rain Making a Failure.

Curious Inventions.

The history and growth of inventions are the subjects in which we are interested. The stylograph pen brought in £40,000 a year; the Indian rubber tips to pencils £20,000; metal plates for protecting the soles and heels of boots brought in £280,000 in 1881; the roller skates £200,000.

A clergyman realized \$400 a week by the invention of a toy; another toy, the return ball, brought in £10,000; the "Dancing Jim Crow," £15,000. The inventor of a copper cap for children's boots was able to leave his heirs £400,000; while Singer, of sewing machine fame, left at his death nearly £3,000,000.

There are other and wonderful things which people have thought it worth while to patent, strong in the hope of making a big fortune in the near future, only to find in so many cases that their inventions were impracticable and very often perfectly ridiculous.

Among such may be mentioned a child's bib with a trough attached, the whole formed of some waterproof material; a pocket which cannot be picked; a muff and box filled with air to save you from a watery grave; cuffs and collars made of steel, painted and enameled white; trousers with dented legs; and a hat which you can take off and behold a clean pair. This arrangement would be suitable. I should say, when worn with an overcoat.

A Trade for Boys.

If I had my way I would insist that every boy should learn a trade, writes Foster Coates in the Ladies' Home Journal. It was so in the olden times, and it should be so now.

The man who has a trade is a thousand times better equipped than the man who has none. Let every boy select the trade that best suits his ability, and promises the highest remuneration. When he has mastered his trade, if he dislikes it or it is not profitable, he can begin to study a profession, or enter upon a commercial life. If he should fail in both of these, he is still master of a good trade—something that no one can take from him, and which he can use as a resource in any emergency.

The man who is master of a good trade is as independent as a millionaire. He need never want; he can find profitable work in any corner of the world. I do not say one word against a professional career. But I do say emphatically that the man who has a trade and a profession as well, need have no fear of the future. The boy who wants to can master a trade between sixteen and twenty, and if he dislikes it, he still has time to study medicine, the law, or any other of the learned professions. But if he waits until he is twenty, or over, he may not have an opportunity or feel inclined to learn either.

Fire-Crackers.

The reason why the smell of burnt powder and smoke from fire-cracker stumps is so grateful to boys is not far to seek. It is the sudden force shown in the explosion and the little spice of danger as well as the noise that pleases the youth. The origin of firecrackers, according to Mr. W. Woodville Rockhill, the Tibetan explorer, is as follows: Firecrackers were originally joints of bamboo. They are made of paper at present, but the Chinese name "bamboo gun," shows what they were. The bamboo crackers made a very loud noise like our "capon crackers." Perhaps the fragments of bamboo flew about when they exploded, making them dangerous, so that paper was substituted. In making bamboo crackers the partitions in the joints of the bamboo were pierced, powder sifted in and a fuse introduced. It is interesting to see the way the present firecrackers, with their partitions of play, follow the old bamboo pattern.

Jack's Answer.

The chaplain of a man-of-war was fond of catechising the young sailors, much to their disgust. "What is your name?" he asked a new arrival one day. "Why, Jack Bowling, sir, to be sure."

"Who gave you that name?" proceeded the chaplain. "My godfathers and godmothers," replied the man, going on to answer the question correctly.

"What have your godfathers and godmothers further done for you?" "Well, sir," replied Jack, getting tired of the lesson, "they promised to do a great deal, and it's precious little they've done yet."

A Quiet Dog.

My little dog is very quiet; he's never known to rush about the house in a riot, because he's made of push.

English by Sound.

It was in one of our schools the other day where I picked up the following thrilling composition written by a twelve-year-old girl, which is one of the best pieces of English as she is "spelt" that I have yet seen: "A right little buoy, the son of a kernal, with a rough round his neck, flue up the road as quick as a deer. After a thyme he stopped at the house and wrung the bell. His tow hurt hymn and he kneaded wrest. He was two tired to raise his fare, pall face, and a faint mound of pane rose from his lips.

"The made who herd the belle was about to pair a pair, but she through it down and ran with all haste, for fear her guessed would not weight; but when she saw the little won't tier stood in her eyes at the site. 'Eve poor dear! Why do you lie hear? Are you dying?' 'Know,' he said, 'I am yew.' She boar him inn her arms, as she ought, to a room where he mite be quiet, gave him bred and meet, held a cent bottle under his knos, untied his choier, rapped him up warmly, and gave him a suite drachm from a vial, till at last he vent forth as hale as a young hoarse."

SCIENCE AND PROGRESS.

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Automatic Delivery of Letters.

An invention which is exciting a good deal of interest on the Continent, where the flat system of residence is so much in vogue, is an automatic electric letter and parcel deliverer, produced by a resident of Geneva.

The working of the apparatus is extremely simple, as the following few details will show, and its cost is insignificant. The object introduced into the box on the ground floor effects, at the top of the house, an electric contact, which opens the valve of a water tank. The water fills a cylinder, which serves as a counterpoise, and raises the letter-box, which, while in the act of passing each private box, opens itself by an ingenious yet simple mechanical arrangement, and deposits the respective contents therein.

Photos Sent by Wire.

The transmission of pictures by electricity is one of the latest applications of the subtle but extremely useful fluid, and the principle of this new discovery is somewhat similar to that on which the telephone is based, so being made of varying degrees of light, instead of sound, as in the telephone.

Travels of a Star.

A communication from M. Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer, in the New York Herald of the 3rd inst. mentions his discovery at Juvisy Observatory of the movement of a star by the naked eye. This is the first time in the history of astronomy, he says, that the displacement of a star has been settled without instrumental aid.

The star to which he refers shines beneath the brilliant star "Cluster" in the constellation of the Virgo. It is numbered 61 and is of the fifth magnitude. Hipparchus described it 2,000 years ago as a double star. It was then optically double, only not physically connected with another star. But it is no longer double even in appearance. It was in the attempt to ascertain the stellar parallax by the study of double stars that the elder Herschel found evidence of the great law that the dominion of gravitation extends beyond the limits of the solar system to the most remote regions of space.

Star atlases constructed by M. Flammarion and others show that not infrequently many stars in the same region of the heavens travel in company, or exhibit, as one says, a "preparatory tendency." It is not therefore, that any change in the relative positions of stars can be detected. But when the star is in line of sight observations with the spectroscopic make it possible to determine its rate of approach or recession. More than twenty years ago Huggins found by this means that Arcturus was approaching us at a speed of sixty miles a second, while Sirius was increasing his distance by nearly a third as much per second.

Star 61 in the constellation of the Virgo was once near star 63, forming with it, apparently, a double star. Now it is separated, says M. Flammarion, "by a distance exceeding by far that of the full moon, and it is flying with a rapid course to the southwest and preparing itself to abandon the Virgo, its arms and its 'Cluster,' to go and lose itself in the folds of Hydra, which unveil themselves in the south."

The Metric System.

Several British Consuls have recently warned their countrymen they were losing considerable trade in foreign countries owing to their persistent use of English weights and measures in their circulars and price-lists, which were frequently unintelligible to most of the foreign dealers, whereas their French, German and other competitors used the metric system, which was familiar to everybody, and naturally attracted custom. These warnings apply equally well to the exporters of the United States. The use of the metric or decimal system was authorized by our laws many years ago, but the use has not yet been made compulsory; hence the majority of people cling to the old system and dislike to change, although the metric is more simple and easily understood.

The metric system is so much more convenient, saves so much time, and has now become so generally adopted throughout the world that the United States ought no longer refuse to fall into line. A very little pressure would suffice to bring about the change. It would do the business, probably, if Congress were simply to pass a law requiring that estimates, contracts and bills specifying weights or measures, when not made out metrically, must bear a revenue stamp of one dime.

Rain Making a Failure.

The latest contribution to the rain-making controversy comes from Professor Curtis, meteorologist in charge of the experiments. In a communication from that gentleman, just published, he affirms in the most unequivocal manner that so far as the production of showers by means of explosions, either on the ground or in the upper air, is concerned, the experiments have been an utter failure. Showers were in some instances obtained, though by no means to the extent described in the telegraphic reports, the "torrents" of the imaginative reporters being in many instances mere drizzles. But even these were foretold by the Meteorological Department, and were due to natural causes, and not in any appreciable degree to the dynamite, and explosive balloons.

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"In those rain producing days perhaps some inventive genius will take a hint from this occurrence for the dissipation of a fog on a large scale by introducing large powder-driven Holtz machines on shipboard; sending a stream of electricity into the fog-laden air from various points along the rigging, thus producing a clear area in the neighborhood of the vessel. And who knows, perhaps, by the extension of the system, some day we may see a fogless London."—Engineering.

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