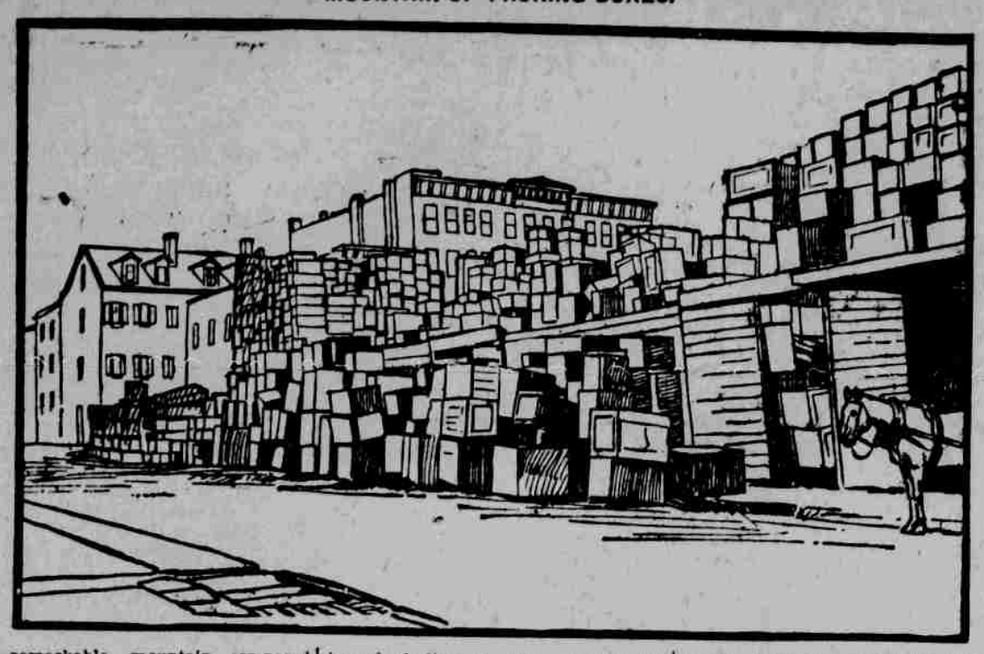
MOUNTAIN OF PACKING BOXES.



A remarkable mountain, composed entirely of packing boxes, has risen above the surrounding housetops in the lower West Side of New York. Its curious skyline, not unlike that of an Egyptian pyramid, may be seen for a considerable distance up and down the Hudson river and for several blocks.

The mountain is not the result of any sudden upheaval of the earth. Several years have been spent in building it to its present dizzy height. Hundreds of huge packing boxes are stored here, and as the market for these wooden cases grows brisk or dull the altitude of this mountain range abruptly changes. The condition of the market can be read in an instant by a glance at the jagged skyline of the packing-box mountain.

Like other mountains, this great mass is subject to devastating avalanches and landslides. It frequently happens that in removing a particular stratum of boxes the very foundations of the mountain are weakened, and from so slight a beginning a huge avalanche of boxes, with deafening roar, rushes down, gathering increased momentum as it proceeds, finally to spread itself across one of the bounding streets.

The packing-box mountain attracts many would-be mountain climbers. The fascinating and dangerous pastime of scaling mountain peaks, which has led so many to their deaths, exerts a strong influence, especially over the boys of the neighborhood. The practice is, rightly enough, discouraged by the owners of the mountain and by the police.

It frequently happens, however, that exploring expeditions of small boys elude the vigilance of those at the foot of the mountain and start on one of these expeditions. Only those who have scaled the Pyramid of Cheops can rightly appreciate the difficulties of such climbing. The boxes are usually about four feet high, rendering the climbing very difficult. It is practicallly impossible to reach the summit or even the lower peaks unassisted. The ascent is only to be accomplished with the assistance of much vigorous boosting.

LITTLE WORM DEVOURS SHIPS.

Harmless as it looks, there is no more dangerous worm in the world than the worm which spends its life in boring through wood, and which consequently does so much injury to ships. Indeed, it is known as the "ship's worm" for this reason.

The apparatus with which it bores is located in its head and consists of two oddly shaped scales, which work together in perfect harmony. The worm's body is almost transparent and exceedingly tender. It begins to bore when it is quite young, and thenceforth it lives and works in wood. It bores so quietly that it never betrays itself, and it always works in a longitudinal direction. It does not abandon this direction even if a pail or any other obstacle is in it way, for it simply goes around it.

DEALS IN HOUSE NUMBERS.

Branch of Municipal Government in Which One Man Finds Profit.

New York Sun: "It is a piano tuner; see his square black bag," said the suburban wife, looking out of one window.

"It's a doctor; see his gold spectacles," said the suburban, looking out of the other window.

"Sir," said the man who rang the bell after he got in, "I am a number man. I notice that the number on your house is on a pillar of the veranda, where it cannot be seen readily at night. I suggest that you have a number placed where it will be conspicuous."

"And are you from one of the city departments?" asked the suburban.

"No, sir," replied the number man. "I am following this as a side line to my regular business. I am ready to supply house numbers of every description, and, what is more, I guarantee that the number I put on a house is the correct number of that house. Furthermore, I am prepared to do gilding if that style of numbering is desired."

"I shouldn't think that the business would pay especially," remarked the suburban.

"It wouldn't unless it were done in the way I do it," said the number man. "For instance, I go into a suburban town like this, where the houses are not generally numbered, and where most people can't find out what the right numbers of their houses are. I map out the streets, get the lots numbered correctly, and am rewarded with quite a bunch of orders for numbers."

"Now, that's a branch of government I had never dreamed of," said the suburban.

"It is an important branch of municipal government, indeed," said the number man. "I have made a study of it. Perhaps I am the only man in New York who has gone into the thing so deeply. Now, over in Queens county some time ago they consolidated a lot of small paces. The result was that the numbering system of each separate place was thrown out of gear. I made a study of all the systems and devised one general system of numbering, of small places. The result was that the official method there. Again I got quite a bunch of orders as my reward. Worked in that way there is some profit in the business. Can I take an order from you?"

"Why, yes," replied the suburban, "but where will you put the number?"

"That is a vexed question," answered the number man. "Some people like the house number on the front door. But in summer, when the door is left open and a screen door is used, the number can't be seen. Again, in winter, if there are double doors, the outer doors hide the number when closed. So that if the number is on the door several sets of numbers are required.

"Others like the number on a pillar of the veranda, as in your case; but there the number is apt to be hidden or, at best, inconspicuous. It is well to have the number on the gate, if you have one, or on the front steps. Either plan I can recommend as making the number conspicuous."

"And what style of number do you recommend?" asked the suburban.

"The best of all are the blue and white enameled figures on iron. They come also in black and white. But some people object to them on account of their somewhat inartistic appearance. Next are the various big metal numbers, examples of which I show you. You will take these? Thanks. Tomorrow I will come and put them on. Good evening."

"Who would suppose there was so much in house numbering?" the suburban asked his wife.

"SPONGES" OF RUBBER.

Novelty is shown in a sponge that has made its appearance. It is of Russian manufacture and resembles closely a dark brown sponge, but, while it consists chiefly of holes, whatever solid material there is of it is rubber.

These sponges come in two sizes, oblong, with rounded corners. Whether, being made of rubber, they are less likely to form germ repositories than the genuine articles remains to be seen.

A dispatch from Naples says Mount Vesuvius shows signs of activity. Lava is flowing from the crater on the Pompeiian side, while hot cinders are being thrown up from time to time.

BABY FACE IN ORANGE.

One of the oddities the navel orange is noted for is its remarkable freaks

in simulating at times portions of the human anatomy.

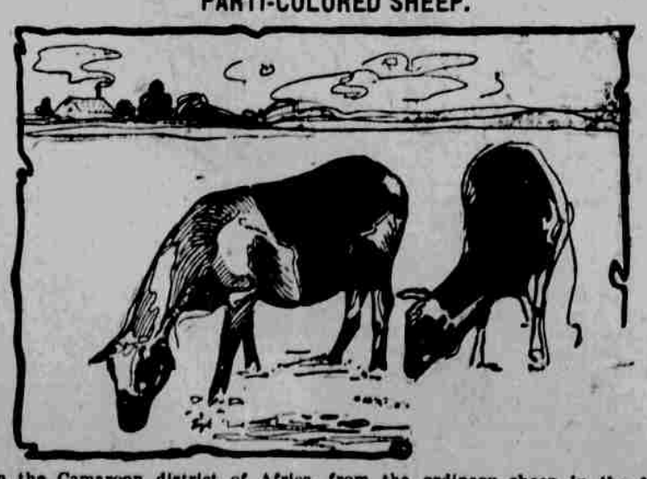
One of the most singular freaks of this kind is a large orange with a child's head protruding from the navel. The head is perfect, the face being the exact reproduction of a crying child.

The orange is preserved in spirits at the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce.

One result of the recent explosion of nitro-glycerine at Ardeer, Ayshire, was the breaking of 300 eggs in a shop at Orvine, a mile and a quarter away.

Dr. Fere, of Paris, believes in finger-prints as an index of character. The finer, the more detailed and delicate the finger-prints, he says, so much superior is the man.

PARTI-COLORED SHEEP.



In the Camaroon district of Africa are thousands of remarkable sheep, and the Germans who have settled there say that they are useful domestic animals.

There are two species, one being black and white and the other white and yellowish brown, and they all differ from the ordinary sheep in the fact that they are covered with short, smooth hair instead of with wool, the rams being the only ones among them which have a thick fleece around the neck.

A few of these animals were recently imported into Germany, and are now attracting much attention there.

THE MAN BEHIND THE PEN.

It's the man behind the pen, who isn't much,
Which the crippled public uses for its crutch;
He can serve it in a way
Till there comes a better day,
Then the man behind the pen, he isn't much!

It's the man behind the pen must always know
What to write to make his paper have the go;
Now 'tis boost for church or school,
Now 'tis show himself the fool—
It's the man behind the pen must always know!

It's the man behind the pen has least to do,
If you had his job, you'd think so, wouldn't you?
Answer queries, answer 'phone,
Edit copy, write his own—
It's the man behind the pen has least to do.

It's the man behind the pen who's growing rich,
That's the wherefore of his calling and the which;
Thirty, forty, by the week—
Envied by the lawyers sleek;
Oh, 'tis the man behind the pen who's growing rich!

It's the man behind the pen must set the pace
Yet deny himself an entry in the race;
He must boost for others' gain,
There's the folly, there the pain;
Oh, the man behind the pen must set the pace.

Oh, the man behind the pen, he isn't much;
If he were, he surely never would be such;
He must write what others do;
He's a pencil clerk for you—
Oh, the man behind the pen, he isn't much.

The Transferred Burden.

BY ETHEL M. COLSON.

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THE minister was pacing monotonously upon and down the church study, intent upon the "thinking out" of his sermon for Sunday. He jotted down his last idea with a patient sigh before answering the timid rap at the door. A single glance assured him that his expectation of finding a woman, and a woman in sore trouble, standing before it was well founded.

"I thought you might help me," the woman, who was young, pale and refined-looking, burst forth, in deep agitation, as he drew forward a chair. "I must have help from somewhere."

"You shall have it," the minister assured her, his face brave with sympathy. "But first, you know, you must tell me your trouble. Get the worst over at once," he added, encouragingly.

Then the story came rushingly—with the swift, resistless, on-bearing haste following long months of repression.

"I was married, at 18, to a man much older than myself. I didn't love him. I loved another man, and very dearly. But we were poor and my mother was ill and helpless; there didn't seem anything else to do. The man whom I loved and who loved me never knew of my marriage until he came back from the West, where he had gone to make money for our marriage. At first I think he hated me, but afterward he was sorroy for my suffering. And then, when my husband had gone away on a business journey, he kept coming to see me, and—"

"You made a bitter mistake together," finished the minister, as she stopped, helpless, unable to say another word.

"Yes, yes—a bitter mistake." She caught at the words eagerly, her face hidden in her trembling fingers. "And, after a little, I grew to hate him. And then—and then he died."

"Yes; and after?"

The kindly but commanding voice nerved her to further narration.

"After he was dead I was sorry. I put flowers on his grave this morning, when I put some on my mother's grave also. But I still hate him—I hate even his memory. He was so small and mean, so cruel, once I was in his power."

"And your husband?"

"He was so kind, so loving, so tender, so considerate that I grew to love him as passionately as I had hated the other. My mother died before he came back from his journey, so he never heard or knew of my wrongdoing; he thought it was natural grief and sorrow which made me so strange and sad. Last month he came near to death also, and I learned how much and how dearly I love him. And since then—"

Again she stopped, helpless. Again the minister came to her assistance.

"And since then you are wondering whether or no you ought to confess your infidenity to him?"

"Yes, oh, yes," she made excited answer. "I didn't mind so much as long as I didn't know how much I loved him. But now—it seems like sacrilege to let him think me good and faithful. And yet—I know he has never suspected, and he told me the other day that he'd rather die by slow torture than lose his faith in anyone he loved. And I know he's never had any real love or happiness before, and he's been such a good man always. So that, altogether—"

"We must think a little—and pray over it," said the minister, rising to pace the floor monotonously again. Only the sound of her passionate sobbing broke the silence until he came back to her side.

"No," he said decidedly, "you must never tell your husband. He is happy in the belief of your faithfulness; there is no reason why he should suffer for your sinning.

"You are anxious to atone for the sin, are you not? Yes, I was sure of it. And you feel that your conscience would be easier if you made a clean breast of it? Well, then, deny yourself that relief for the sake of your husband. Make atonement to him by keeping him from the knowledge and consequent suffering of your wrongdoing. Love him with all the strength of your nature, and glory and revel in the love he gives you. In God's great mercy there is forgiveness for all repentent sinners. Strive you after forgetfulness as well. Let the past slip out of your memory altogether—except in so far as it makes you very tender toward other sinners—and, if recollection does torment you occasionally, let it be a part of your atonement that you bear the suffering in silence and unaided. Never think of relieving your own conscience at the expense of your husband's happiness."

When the visitor, all timid smiles and lightened heart, had slipped out of the study the minister stood looking out of the window for a moment. He turned away abruptly to answer another summons to the study door.

It was a man, this time, who stepped nervously through it, a man of middle age and evidently laboring under stress of great excitement.

"The woman who has just left you," he exclaimed, breathlessly; "of what was your conversation? Tell me, for God's sake, tell me what it was that you spoke of!"

The practiced eyes and keen intuition of the minister told him all in a moment. The sudden, unaccustomed suspicion, the horrified putting away, the recurring, persihtent agony of doubt and uncertainty, the following of the wife to the church study, the irrepressible desire to know whether or no she had admitted a fault.

More than this, the minister divined that the fate of two lives lay within his handling, the ruin of two souls, the man as well as the woman, if he bungled or made mistakes. He acted, upon the impulse of the moment, as he would not, perhaps, have acted had he stopped to consider.

"The lady who went out last, you mean?" he asked, easily, his keen, kindly eyes noting every change of the other's contenance and expression. "The good-looking woman with brown hair and white veil? Why, she was merely interested in a sad case of distress and trouble which has come under her recent observation, and in regard to which she was anxious to secure my assistance. You have, perhaps, some special reason for asking?"

"You will never tell her?" the man implored him, his eyes aglow with relief, but his form trembling. "She is my wife, and I love her to distraction. This morning, in the cemetery where her mother lies buried, I found her putting flowers on the grave of a man—an old lover, I have heard lately, but a man whom she once told me she hated. Then I thought I understood many things which had used to puzzle me; it came to me like a flash, or I thought it did. I am a jealous man by nature, and I think I must have gone mad. She told me once, when we had heard you preach, that you looked like a kindly man, and one who could be trusted. I thought—perhaps—she had come here to tell you of her sinning. I will go home and apologize to her for my unwarranted—and insane—distrust."

"Do nothing of the sort," advised the minister, laying a friendly, counseling hand upon the other's shoulder. "There is nothing harder for a woman to forgive than such an accusation. Love, my friend, is a better means of dealing with a woman's heart and soul than suspicion or judgment. Before the depth and unselfishness of the love of even the lightest-natured woman the best of us men seem poor and insignificant; and the blackest sins of which a woman can be guilty" his kind eyes averted, yet all the while conscious that the visitor's pale cheek flushed hotly, as at some half-forgotten episode of bygone years—"are only those which we scarce account as sins at all—for ourselves."

Late that afternoon the minister, still struggling with the oft-interrupted, unfinished sermon, saw from his study window the two who had visited him walking the street lovingly, arm in arm, each wrapped in the other's affection. The man looked at the woman with a lover-like, reverential tenderness, the woman's face was sweet with the joyous, half-timid gladness which only comes on the farther edge of a great sorrow or danger. The minister, looking after them thankfully, smiles a whimsical, self-depreciatory smile.

"'Bear ye one another's burdens,'" he murmured, quizzically. "Well, I hope to God I advised them rightly, and I wonder whose, when things are reckoned, will be the burden which they have shifted from their own shoulders to mine!"

Discussion of "Loafer."

London Chronicle: The question as to the derivation of that word "loafer," which Mr. Rhodes' will is likely to elevate from the slang dictionary, is already getting acute. Despite "Notes and Queries," and the derivation, through Hans Breitmann, from "that lofer (lover) of yours always hanging around here," the word is Spanish, and, like galoot and others, came from Mexico, through Texas to the states. It is the Anglicized or Americanized form of gallofero, "an idle, lazy vagabond," passing, as any student of Bartlett knows, through glofero, and glofer, to lofer, and ending up with the pretense of having something English or American about it, as "loafer," a man who has no casual connection with the loaf he does not earn.

Of the loafer, Josh Billings has given in his "Alminax" a description which would have gone to Cecil Rhodes' heart, as of the type of man who was not to inherit Dalham or any other property that was his, if he could help it: "The loafer is a thing who is willing to be despised for the privilege of abusing others. He occupies all grades of society, from the judge on the bench clear down to the ragged creature who leans against lamp-posts and fights flies in August. He has no pride that is worthy and no delicacy that anybody could hurt. During his boyhood he kills cats and robs hens' nests. During middle life he begs all the tobacco he uses and drinks all the cheap whisky he can get at somebody else's expense, and does die at last." The loafer in America would seem to be more pronounced than his British brother, if we take Mr. Henry W. Shaw—Josh Billings—as authority.

The Bride.

"Haven't I married you before?" asked the clergyman pleasantly of the young lady from Chicago who was about to be joined to the young man from Oshkosh.

"Only twice," she murmured coyly, and the ceremony went on.—Boston Post.

According to the Paris Gaulois it is some years since a French private has been decorated with the Legion of Honor. This, however, has recently happened in the case of a gunner named Caillot, of the First Regiment of Artillery, who took part in the defense of Tien-Tsin, and displayed remarkable bravery. Unfortunately he was so seriously wonded that an arm and a leg had to be amputated.

Baby Margaret was watching a little bird hopping about on the lawn, when she saw him suddenly pick up a tiny stick and fly away with it. "I 'pect he's goin' to whip the baby bird," she said seriously.—Boston Transcript.

INDIAN BIRD MASK.

Some of the wierdest ceremonials ever devised are practiced by the Indians along the coast of British Columbia, as a part of their religious ritual. They wear incidentally to the performance exceedingly grotesque masks. In this way they impersonate various gods in a kind of mystery play, which lasts for several days.

One of the most curious of the costumes adopted is one that is designated to represent a huge bird, the mask in

this case consisting chiefly of a gigantic beak, which is fastened upon the head of the wearer. The body of the latter is concealed by strips of cedar bark, which hang down over the body.

In truth, the effect produced is quite realistic, and loses nothing by a clapping or snapping together of the great beak, which the person who takes the part of the bird is enabled to manipulate for this purpose by the help of a string.

NO NEED TO ASK.

Every Toper's Face Tells the Experienced Barkeeper What He Drinks.

New Orleans Times-Democrat: "The barkeeper who has been in business long enough can tell what a man drinks by looking at his face," said a man who has spent his life mixing drinks for the public. "He can do it if he is at all observant. Of course, there are many men who would spend a lifetime in the business without taking any note of the differences in skin discoloration resulting from the long and continuous use of drinks of different kinds. Yet it is a physical condition which may be observed by any man who will take the trouble to make the survey.

"Men often speak of the whisky nose, the whisky eye, the whisky face, and all that sort of thing, but they never stop to think that whisky is not the only thing that will bloat, mar and discolor the features. There is as much difference between the nose of the Cyrano de Bergerac and the nose of a flat-faced Fijian. The whisky nose is as red as a rose. The brandy nose is of purplish hue. It is about the color of blue blazes. The whisky face is different from the brandy face. The continued excessive use of either whisky or brandy will mark the face with little red lines, but the general appearance of the whisky face is unlike that of the face of a brandy user. Barkeepers are able to notice these differences. They are well defined. It would not be noticed in the weak watery condition and discoloration of the eyes. But the complexion and other marks would be found on the face which would indicate whether the man was in the habit of drinking the one thing or the other.

"The same thing may be said about other kinds of drinks. Take the man, for instance, who drinks beer regularly. The barkeepers can tell it by what may be called the mellow cast of his features. Beer gives the face an entirely different hue from that which results from the long use of either brandy or whisky. I am sometimes inclined to think that beer has a sort of nationalizing influence. I have seen Englishmen, Frenchmen and even Italians drink beer until they looked like they had just come from the Fatherland. It is an easy thing to tell the beer drinker just from the appearance of his face. I may say the same thing about the man who drinks absinthe. The indications are probably more pronounced in the case of the man who uses absinthe than in other cases. The things entering into the combination are stronger and have a more violent effect on the human system.

"But at any rate, the barkeeper can tell just what the man is in the habit of drinking if he will make a study of the faces. A brandy face, the whisky face, the beer face, the absinthe face are all different, and the lines are easily traced by the man who will take the trouble to study the effects of different drinks for a while.

MASCULINE CANDY FIENDS.

Men Who Consume Confectionery by the Hundredweight.

New York Evening Post: That candy has become the basis of a bad habit—like tea, tobacco, alcohol, or ice water—has long been admitted by medical men; that its worst victims are not women, however, is not so well known, except to the owners of candy shops. The fact that one man bought and devoured 400 pounds of the richest chocolates in one summer, and that the gastronomic feat was not looked upon as anything unusual by the candy clerks, will give some idea of the candy slavery to which the habitual candy eaters are committed. The man who consumed confectionary by the hundred-weight is young and sound in mind and body. He generally yields to temptation immediately after luncheon, although the craving sometimes becomes unendurable at an earlier hour. He estimates that the candy he has bought for personal consumption cost him $250 last summer. He has been an unwilling victim for years, and has frequently "sworn off," or attempted to. The last time was for three months, and when the self-imposed embargo was raised he bought two pounds of mixed chocolates and ate them between lunch and dinner.

The Hartford Times says: "In voting to concentrate the work of the Connecticut experiment station at the State college at Storrs the trustees of the Connecticut Agricultural college have done a wise thing. It has been evident for some time that the division of the work, and the transaction of so much of it at Middletown by experts connected with another institution, was unfavorable to the successful conduct of the Agricultural college. It is understood that the last change which occurred in the faculty at Storrs grew out of friction between the experts at Storrs and the experts at Middletown, and such embarrassment will be avoided