

FEAR FOR THEIR TREASURE

How the Millions in Gold Stored in English Banks Are Guarded.

Officials of the Bank of England are said to be worried for the safety of the hoards of wealth stored in their strong boxes. The bank station of the new underground railway in London is close to the vaults of the world's greatest institution of finance. At a recent meeting of the bank directors it was suggested that some brave but wicked person might set off a quantity of explosive in the bank station, wrecking the foundations of the stately buildings above and sending the bars of bullion and streams of gold leaking out to the station platform. The feasibility of this scheme has been conceded by the bank governor. It is figured, however, that the "tube," as the underground railway is called, is a little too deep at this point. To reach the bullion vaults of the bank the conspirators would have to drive a shaft nearly 100 feet, and then they would face a wall of concrete, thick masonry and steel. At one time the Bank of England was the object of conspiracy. From a church tower close by the bank was bombarded. Afterward the authorities had the church and its threatening tower destroyed. Officials of the bank do not like the tunneling going on in the clay beneath their foundations. The constant pumping of water has affected even the solidity of the clay, and from this cause one of the wells which is within the three acres comprised within the bank's precincts has dried up.

Those three acres are valued at about \$5,000,000 each, and the treasures within them are guarded in fitting fashion. On either side of the main entrance to the bank are two small glass houses. In the one reposes a stately beadle. In the other are two wide-awake detectives. Other detectives are in and out of the rooms, but always unobtrusively. At night the police force is a heavy one. Every evening a compact body of men, commanded by a lieutenant, and including two sergeants, two drummers, a bugler and 30 privates, marches from Wellington barracks to the bank. They are in full marching order, and before they enter the technical limits of "the city" exercise that privilege of the guards of fixing bayonets. They are on duty for 12 hours, and but for the recurring spells of sentry-go have an easy time.

Officials of the bank provide moderate refreshments for these guards. In the guard room, which is of regulation pattern, are the usual shelf and blanket, sufficient accommodation for a soldier's intermittent dozing when on duty of this kind. The officer has a suite of rooms at his service—the dining-room of paneled oak, a neat bedroom and a bathroom. There is hidden away in the center of the bank one of the most pleasant gardens in London, where an after-dinner cigar may be enjoyed on a summer evening to the full, while the roar of the great metropolis around has died away to inarticulate murmurs.

A King's New Palace.

King Leopold of Belgium has taken possession of the new Japanese palace in the Royal park at Laeken. It is divided into several wings. Each of them contains half a dozen of finely decorated drawing-rooms. The furniture, the ornaments, the sculptures, the paintings, the screens and the roof were executed at Tokio by the best Japanese artists. More than 2,000 electric lights illuminate the palace, where the king intends giving some gorgeous receptions in honor of the shah of Persia next summer.

Blessings of Speech.

The victim of the automobile accident was plainly dying. He was just delivering a touching speech about the "wife and children" when he caught sight of the man who had run him down. A volley of choice expressions arose from the dying man's lips. This apparently relieved him greatly, for he got up and walked home.—Jud.

A Man's Stake.

It is a man's stake to live alone. He wants to save money.—Daily News.

ROPING BIG BEAR NOT EASY

Bruin Chases Ranch Owner and Later Narrowly Escapes with His Life.

"In the winter of 1893," said Tim Kinney, a ranchman of Rock Springs, Wyo., to a Washington Post reporter, "the bears in Bitter creek were surely a nuisance to the stockmen. I lost so many calves that I got fighting mad, and declared war on the four-footed despoilers. "One day my foreman and I were out rounding up a herd of beeves when in a low, marshy spot we came across one of the biggest bears I ever saw. Unluckily, we didn't have either rifle or revolver, but as I looked at the beast and thought of my dead calves my dander got up, and it occurred to me that we might throw our lariats over him and hold him until some way of executing the death penalty could be found. "We thought it was a picnic, as far as throwing a rope over Mr. Bear was concerned. My man got his rope over the enemy's neck and I got him around one leg. It looked as though we had him. Dismounting, I made the end of my lariat fast to the stump of a tree, but the foreman stayed on his pony. Grabbing a huge rock, I got quite close to the brute and dealt him a terrible blow on the forehead. With a howl of rage he gave a mighty lunge that broke the rope from the tree and started after me.

"But for the tremendous efforts of my companion, who still maintained his hold, I would have been caught and killed before I could have been able to reach my pony. As it was the shave was extremely close, and the bear was right at my heels as I got in the saddle. All this time the foreman was tugging and hauling manfully, and if he hadn't been strong and skillful I'd have never lived to tell this yarn. In a few minutes I managed to get another piece of rope, and this time old Silver Tip was unable to break his fastening. Both of us then assaulted him with stones and beat him into insensibility before administering the coup de grace with a hunting knife."

"The day was warm for March. The sailor sat in the ice cream saloon eating ice cream and lady cake. "The queerest marriage I ever seen, miss," he said, "was in the Andaman islands. But maybe you ain't interested in marriages?" He laughed as men always laugh over this joke, and the pretty waitress permitted herself to smile. "The islanders in them islands," he said, "is dwarfs. Four feet, on the average. Very fierce and ugly. "If a young islander wants a girl for his wife he asks her parents for her. They never refuse. They take the girl and hide her in the forest. There the lad must find her before morning. If he finds her she's his. If he don't she ain't."

SAILOR'S MARRIAGE YARN.

Tells Party in Ice Cream Parlor of Customs Which Are Peculiar to Andaman Islands.

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"Of course I don't need to tell you that if the girl wants the young feller she sees to it that he finds her all right.

"And vice versa.

"Here is how the marriage ceremony is performed. The lad climbs up a slim young tree and the girl climbs up another close to him. Her clothes don't bother her in climbing—clothes never bother an Andaman islander. We clap they go, and as they near the top their weight bends the slim trees over toward each other prettily. The trees bow and bend and creak, and finally the lad's hand touches the girl's and from that moment a shout goes up, for the wedding has done the business. The ceremony is finished. The young folks' troubles have begun."

Egg-Swallowing Record.

A singular story of egg-swallowing comes from Marr, the capital of Natal. A well-known citizen made a bet with a local auctioneer that he could swallow 42 raw eggs in 15 minutes. He performed the feat in eight minutes, and was paid to swallow 60 raw eggs in 15 minutes.

OUR HISTORY IS MASCULINE

Hard and Uncolored Is the Chronicle of the Events Connected with America.

Our history is hard and masculine; colored with few purple lights; too little related to our tenderer sentiments and deeper passions. When older peoples have paused, as we did then, they have looked upon far different scenes, says William Garrott Brown, in the Atlantic. Fairer companies have stood about more stately figures of triumph or of tragedy than that America and the world now gazed upon. The common chamber, the gaunt, pale president, the strong, bearded counselors at his bedside—this was unlike the scenes which European peoples have fixed in their memories. Charles I. and Mary Stuart on their scaffolds, the barons and the king at Runnymede, Maria Theresa appealing to the nobles of Hungary to take up their swords for her child, Marie Antoinette and Mirabeau, and many another pageant of human love and sacrifice are treasured up by other people as we have treasured up this crude, unluckey martyrdom.

Even the great personality of Lincoln, now potent in so many individual lives, intimate and familiar to so many of our hidden moods, was not yet fully revealed to his fellows. It was the emancipator only that had fallen, the leader and shepherd of men. Outwardly at least his experience was limited as theirs was. Dying in the midst of multitudes, master of armies and of navies, he was still of the frontier; as, indeed, all our American life was still, in a sense, only the frontier and western fringe of European life.

True, Lincoln also leads us back to the princes whose peer he was, but we can pass from his death bed with no irreverence, no sense of shock or change, to look out, in the plain light of day, upon the whole wide field of work and strife and progress which was always in his thought, and glimpse the attitude and state of the republic when his summons passed, like an angelus, across the continent.

LACE-BARK TREES ARE FEW

But Half a Dozen of This Species Now Exist—Reason for So Naming.

There are in all about half a dozen lace-bark trees in the world, so called because the inner bark yields a natural lace in a ready-made sheet form, which can be made up in serviceable articles of apparel. Only four of these curious species of trees are of much practical value. Tourists who have stopped at Hawaii or Samoa may recall the lace-bark clothing of the natives—clothing of a neat brown color when new, of remarkable strength and of a fragrant odor, like freshly cured tobacco leaf. The native tapa cloth, as it is called, is made from the bark of the brunstonia papirifera, but it is not usually included among the real lace-bark trees.

In its natural state the real lace-bark is of a delicate cream-white tint. It is probably a kind of fibrous pith. When the outer bark is removed it can be unfolded and unwound in one seamless piece, having a surface of a little more than a square yard. Washing and sun bleaching give it a dazzling white appearance. The fabric is ably light. It is used in the West Indies for mantles, cravats, collars, cuffs, window curtains—in a word, for every purpose that ordinary lace is used. In making up shawls, veils and the like it is customary to piece two sheets of lace-bark together. Delicate and apparently weak as it is in single mesh, a bit of lace-bark, if rolled into a thin string, will all but resist human strength to break it.

Despite its practical use there is no essential demand for lace-bark. It has been used by the natives for hundreds of years and yet is comparatively little known to this day. A few specimens of lace-bark articles exist in different countries of Europe. These were made hundreds of years ago, yet, although their age is considerable, they are said to be in a good state of preservation.

Nothing Left.

A political reformer is a politician who has managed to get himself disliked by the machine.—Daily News.

CIVILITIES AT THE FRONT.

On Christmas Day Japanese and Russians Agree to Suspend Fight That All May Feast.

A Japanese officer serving on the Shabo has a strange and interesting story to tell of intercourse and civilities between the two armies.

The Japanese being desirous of conveying to the Russians news of the fall of Port Arthur, volunteers were invited to carry the letters. Two non-commissioned officers and two privates undertook the task. They rode out toward the enemy's lines with the intention of delivering the letters directly into the hands of the Russians, instead of depositing them at some midway point, as had been the custom hitherto. There was, however, great danger that this new method might be fatal to the little party.

But they rode off stoutly to within a thousand meters of the enemy's outpost, waving white handkerchiefs. The Russians did not fire, and the Japanese went steadily on. When they were only about 30 or 40 yards away, a party of Russians lay down in firing positions, but still the sergeants and soldiers rode on, energetically waving their white flags. Presently the Russians motioned them to lay down their arms, thinking they had come to surrender. The Japanese, however, regardless of risk, pushed on to within hand-shaking distance. Then the Russians saw that they carried several bottles of wine and boxes of cigars. On the latter was inscribed in big letters: "Tomorrow will be your Christmas day. We shall not attack if you do not. Drink and smoke to your heart's content and have a good time."

At first the Russians did not wish to accept the presents, but when they read the hearty sentences written on the boxes in their own language, they were much overcome, and there ensued an exchange of the friendliest greetings.

Then the visitors handed in their letters and spoke of the fall of Port Arthur, the news of which was received with profound discouragement. "There is no further object in the war," said the Russian soldiers. Eager questions were asked about Gen. Stoessel, and the men were much interested to hear he shortly would be on his way home. The Japanese then presented the Russians with some pictorial post cards showing how well Russian prisoners were treated in Japan.

Finally the four men rode away in safety with the rousing cheers of the grateful enemy ringing in their ears.

THE BOOTMAKER IN CHINA

Common People Very Rarely Wear This Sort of Footwear—Customs in the North.

Boots are only worn in China by officials, servants, soldiers, sailors, and special hob-nailed boots, occasionally in wet weather, by the common people. The universal form of foot-covering is a shoe, while coolies and the poorest classes have to content themselves with straw or leather sandals, or go barefoot. Women's shoes are made at home and, except in isolated cases in Shanghai, are never exposed for sale in shops. This remark does not apply to the peculiar form of shoe worn by Manchou women, which is perched on a sort of small stilt. In the north, during the winter months, the ordinary boot or shoe is often wadded or lined with sheepskin, and of late years reproductions of Chinese boots and shoes in india rubber have been imported from the United States and Germany, and found favor with Chinese at the treaty ports.

Woman's Progress in Roumania.

The post of official shorthand writer in the Roumanian parliament has for the first time been won by a woman. It was a competitive appointment and the lady applicant beat all her male rivals. Since the new government took up the reins women have made great strides in Roumania in the matter of competing with men. A short time ago the finance minister had no fewer than 15 women employed as secretaries in the central offices. There is a great outcry against the minister's manifest partiality for women clerks in his department.

SOME RICH ARE SLOW PAY

Notorious Fact Declares Writer That Many in Society Haggle Over Their Bills.

It is notorious that the rich are often scandalously slow in paying their bills. I recall one instance where the wife of a multi-millionaire (she was afterward divorced), took no notice, month after month, of a bill amounting to over \$20,000 for her daughter's wedding trousseau, and this bill was not paid for more than a year after the ceremony, and only then because a resourceful collector "held up" the multimillionaire himself in the street one day, and finally got his check, declares Cleveland Moffett, in Success.

I have been told of several rich women in the smart set, two of them very rich, who are wont to haggle over prices in the shops as if they were in genteel poverty, one of these ladies, whose showy Newport fetes are widely proclaimed, tried on a certain occasion, to "beat down" an estimate for candle shades, favors, etc., that she wanted in a hurry for a dinner dance, and, having failed in hereffort, she finally exclaimed: "Why, you oughtn't to charge me a cent for these things! Think of the advertising you can get out of it! If you treat me right I'll see that your place is mentioned by all the reporters!"

And another, whose husband is one of the richest men in the world, actually wept before a Fifth avenue dressmaker in her pleadings for a reduction of \$15 on the price of a certain garment that she simply had to have but could not afford, she declared, out of the small allowance made her by her husband.

When I was in Newport last summer people were laughing at the latest petty economy of this same husband, who is certainly one of the "closest" of our idle millionaires. He had heard of a new aluminum paint, warranted to keep shiny without much rubbing, and he had forthwith given orders that the brasses on his beautiful yacht be swabbed over with this paint so that it might reduce his pay roll by the wages of two sailors previously needed to clean these brasses! This gentleman's income must be at least \$4,000,000!

WASP BECOMES A HUNTER.

Intelligent Insect Proves a Veritable Octopus in Preying on Its Fellows.

When summer warmth has awakened the maternal instincts of the insect world, the mud-dauber wasp may be seen gathering mortar at the margin of stream, pool or puddle, writes C. H. McCook, in Harper's Magazine. Filling her mandibles, which serve as both spade and hod, she bears the load of mud to some rough surface, rock or wall, or board or beam. She spreads and shapes her mortar, until, after many visits to the mud-bed, she has built a tubular cell about an inch long and three-eighths of an inch wide. Then her huntress instinct awakens and her raids upon the spider realm begin. For within this cylinder the mother mason will put a single egg. In the course of time this will hatch into a ravenous larva, whose natural food is living spiders; and these the mother proceeds to capture and entomb within the mud-daub nursery. On this errand she may be seen hawking over the near cobwebs of various sorts, venturing within the meshed and beaded snares that prove fatal to most incoomers, and sometimes even to herself. If the occupant, expectant of prey, sallies forth to seize the intruder, it finds itself a captive, not a captor. The wasp shakes the silken filament from wings and feet, turns upon the spider, seizes and stings it, bears it to her cell, and thrusts it therein.

It's Not Unlikely.

"Some marriages may be made in Heaven," observed the Pobjick philosopher, as he kicked the grocery cart off the cracker box, "but ez I glance around the ranks of sassiety it occees to me that the devil manufactures quite a few."—Chicago Sun.

Her Tender Heart.

"Why do you suppose a woman usually cries at her wedding?" "Out of sympathy, probably, for the men she could not marry."—Houston Post.

OCTOPUS UNCANNY THING.

Cuttlefish Have Been Found with a Reach of Thirty-Eight Feet—Kill Victims.

Of all the big game of the deep sea that have been taken by man the cuttlefishes are the most diabolical in shape and general appearance. I have handled and measured one that was 38 feet in length, a weird, spiderlike creature with two antennae-like arms 30 feet in length, says a writer in Metropolitan Magazine. Specimens of these animals have been caught 70 feet in length, the captors fighting them with axes, cutting the arms which seized and held the boat.

Off the coast of California and Alaska there is a kind of cuttlefish of this animal—a species of cuttlefish—that looks like the cuttlefish, but is much larger, and most esteemed by fishermen. It is found off the Farallones on rock bottom and at times the fishermen haul in their lines thinking that they have fouled a piece of seaweed. So heavy is the weight of the surface is rounded, but it comes about above the water surface the boat and the men are forced to fight with knives and hand-axes the weird, uncanny game that has a radial spread of 30 feet, its eight sucker-lined arms being 15 feet in length and possessed of extraordinary power. A specimen taken on the island of San Clemente had a spread of about 28 feet and gave the fishermen a hard battle to sever its arms.

Nothing more diabolical can be conceived than this spiderlike giant of the deep sea, living among the rocks 600 to 1,000 feet below the surface. An individual of moderate size which I kept alive displayed the greatest pugnacity. The moment it approached it would literally hurl itself at my arm, winding its long tentacles about it in a manner suggestive of what a large individual might do. Indeed, Dr. A. S. Packard, professor of zoology at Brown university, says:

"An Indian woman at Victoria, Vancouver island, in 1877, was seized and drowned by an octopus, probably of this species, while bathing on the shore. Smaller specimens on coral reefs sometimes seize collectors or natives, and fastening to them with their relentless suckered arms, tire and frighten to death the hapless victim."

REYNOLDS AND HIS RIVAL.

Contrast Between the Two Artists—Difference Between Art and Nature.

The contrast between these two artists is almost the difference between art and nature, says St. Nicholas. Reynolds was learned in what other painters had done, and had reduced his own art to a system. Gainsborough found out almost everything for himself, never lost the simple, natural way of looking at things and people; and painted not according to rule, but at the dictation of what he felt. Reynolds planned out his effects, Gainsborough painted on the spur of the impulsion which the subject aroused. Reynolds' art was based on safe general principles; Gainsborough's was the fresh and spontaneous expression of his temperament—depending, that is to say, on feelings rather than on calculation. His temperament, or habit of mind, was dreamy and poetic, gentle and retiring, including a small range of experience. Reynolds, on the other hand, was a man of the world and of business capacity; intimate with Samuel Johnson, Oliver Goldsmith and other celebrities of the day; a man of knowledge and clever conversational power, whose pictures by their variety prove his versatility. Consequently when the Royal academy was established, in 1768, he was elected president by acclamation and was knighted by George III, an honor that has ever since been bestowed on the holder of this office.

These two men were at the head of the group of portrait painters who, in the latter part of the eighteenth century and in the early years of the succeeding one, added luster to the new growth of art in England.

Bunyan in 105 Languages.

One book alone, the "Pilgrim's Progress," holds the record for English literature, having been reproduced in 105 different tongues