

HUNDRED MILE COAST.

The Oroya Railway in Peru Distinguished Itself in Many Ways.

Lord Ernest Hamilton describes his experience of a thrilling but perilous pastime, the descent in a small hand car of a wonderful mountain railway in Peru.

"As a matter of fact," he writes, referring to the title of the article, "it is 100; but, for the sake of a title, the extra six may go—100 are enough at any rate for purposes of illustration. These hundred odd miles are to be found on the Ferro-Carril Central of Peru, commonly called the Oroya railway, and they are to be found nowhere else.

"This Oroya railway is a very wonderful line indeed. It not only climbs higher than any other railway in the world, but also distinguished itself in a variety of other ways incidentally referred to hereafter. But the accomplishment with which I am chiefly concerned is this—that it provides the only road in the world which a man on wheels can travel over 100 miles by his own momentum and practically at any pace to which the fiend of recklessness may urge him.

"The object of what is here written is to trace the sensations born of a run down from the summit of the Oroya railway, 15,000 feet above sea level, to the verge of the Pacific. You start under the eye of the eternal snows, and you finish among humming birds and palms. You start sick with the unspeakable sickness of sorochu, and you finish in the ecstasy of an exultation too great for words.

"The gods of Olympus were worms beside the man who has during the last three hours controlled his car from the Paso de Galera to Callao, for it is in the control that lies the joy, as in other things apart from car running. To sit beside the brakeman is good, but to drop the brakeman on a friendly siding and grasp the lever in your own firm but not too exacting hand is to sup a liberal foretaste of the joys of heaven.—Pearson's Magazine.

OLD IDEAS ABOUT GEMS.

Pearls Were Thought to Be Dew-drops Caught by the Shell.

The Indians called rock crystal an "unripe diamond," and until the beginning of the eighteenth century India was thought to be the only land which produced that precious stone. It was not, therefore, until the discovery of India that the diamond was known to us. Yet as far back as 500 B. C. a "didactic history" of precious stones was written, and in Pliny's time the supply must have been plentiful, as he wrote, "We drink out of a mass of gems, and our drinking vessels are formed of emeralds." We are also told that Nero aided his weak sight by spectacles made of emeralds.

But is very difficult to determine whence all the gems came, as discoverers took care to leave no record. The nations who traded in them were afraid of their whereabouts being known, and even the most ancient merchants would not disclose any definite locale. All sorts of myths have accordingly sprung up concerning the origin of gems. "Diamond" was the name given to a youth who was turned into the hardest and most brilliant of substances to preserve him from "the ills that flesh is heir to." Amethyst was a beautiful nymph beloved by Bacchus, but saved from him by Diana, whereupon Bacchus turned the gem into wine color and endowed the wearer with the gift of preservation from intoxication.

The pearl was thought to be a dew-drop the shell had opened to receive. Amber was said to be honey melted by the sun, dropped into the sea and congealed. According to the Talmud, Noah had no light in the ark but that which came from precious stones.—Gentleman's Magazine.

A Lincoln Reason.

Speaking of gray hair puts me in mind of Bates—Attorney General Bates, you know—and of one of Lincoln's remarks. We were all going one day out from Washington to Tennytown—the president, Secretary Chase, Mr. Bates and myself—to see General McClellan review the Pennsylvania reserves. Bates' hair, I noticed, had retained its original dark color in perfect freshness, while his beard was almost as white as mine is now. It was an exception to the usual law, and I asked Mr. Bates after he had spoken of the peculiarity if he knew any special reason for it. He said he didn't, but the president exclaimed laughingly: "Why, don't you know? It's because he uses his chin more than he does his head."—Era.

The Only Way.

"Ah, Reginald, dearest," she sighed, "but how can I be sure that you will not grow weary of me after we have been married a little while?" "I don't know," he answered, "unless we get married and see."—Chicago Herald.

She Hadn't Thought of That.

"You should never take anything that doesn't agree with you," said the doctor. "If I'd always followed that rule, Marie," said the patient, turning to his wife, "where would you be?"—Stray Stories.

Not an Objection.

The Proprietor—But we haven't enough work to keep another man busy. The Applicant—Oh, I don't mind that! What I want is a steady job.—Indianapolis News.

Opaque.

"Mike, d' I ever tell ye the story about the dirty window?" "You did not. Tell me about it." "No use. You couldn't see through it."—Chicago News.

Autumn Haze.

"Autumn haze," says a meteorologist expert, "is dust composed of the finest particles of soil, dead leaves, smoke or ashes from wood fires, salt from ocean spray, the shells or scales from microscopic siliceous diatoms, germs of fungi, spores of ferns, pollen of flowers, etc. In the still air of damp nights these dust particles settle slowly down, and the morning air is comparatively clear. During the daylight the sun warms the soil, which heats the adjacent air, and the rising air currents carry up the dust as high as they go. Under certain conditions this layer of dust reaches higher and higher each day. During long, dry summers in India it reaches to a height of 7,000 feet, with a well defined upper surface that is higher in the daytime than at night. The reason why we have more of hazy weather in autumn is because there is then less horizontal wind and more rising air."

A Home Beyond the Grave.

Dan, a colored man, was employed as porter in a mercantile establishment in a town in Florida, and his duties required him to have the store swept by 7 o'clock in the morning. He had been late for many mornings, and on the sixteenth consecutive time his employer remonstrated with him thus: "Dan, why can't you get here on time?"

"Well, Mr. L.," said Dan, "yer see, I live the other side of Mount Hermon cemetery and can't always get yere on time."

"Why in the world do you live so far from your work?" said his employer.

Without a moment's hesitation Dan responded:

"Yer see, it's dis yere way, Mr. L.—I'll be hones' wid yee—I wants a home beyond the grave."

The Gummed Flower.

You may buy upon the street flowers which to the eye are of a bloom as fine and a growth as fresh as any which could be procured at the most costly establishment. You buy them for a song and bring them home, when, lo! to your astonishment and dismay they fall to pieces at a breath like a cardboard house. They have been subjected to one of the "tricks of the trade." It is known as the "gumming process." A sharp drop of gum is inserted with a sharp pointed instrument into the center of each calyx, and by this means the conformity of the bloom is preserved until the flowers are sold. The composition of the gum is such as to dry up and set immediately, becoming invisible even to the closest scrutiny.—Everybody's Magazine.

The Time For Planting Bulbs.

There is no definite rule to be laid down as to the length of time in which bulbs should be left in cold storage. As a general thing, top growth will not begin until root growth is completed. This nearly always takes from six weeks to two months. It is therefore generally safe to begin bringing October planted bulbs to the living room in December. Those desired for later flowering can be left in cold storage, where they will remain dormant as to top growth. By bringing bulbs to light and warmth at intervals of a week or ten days we secure a succession of bloom which makes it possible for us to brighten our windows with their beautiful flowers during the greater part of winter.—New Lippincott.

Carlyle's View of Aprons.

Carlyle in his "Sartor Resartus" was able to find a deep philosophy in aprons. "Aprons are defenses against injury to cleanliness, to safety, to modesty, sometimes to roguery. From the thin slip of notched silk (as it were, the emblem and befitting ghost of an apron) which some highest bred housewife has gracefully fastened on to the thick tanned hide girt around him with thongs, wherein the builder builds and at evening sticks his trowel, or to those jingling sheet iron aprons wherein your otherwise half naked Vulcan hammer and smelt in their smelt furnace, is there not range enough in the fashion and uses of this vestment?"

The Way of the World.

Funny world we live in. A man who has six horses standing idle in a stable walked two miles out in the country on a little matter of business a day or two ago, while another man who had no horses and very little money hired a team to go the same distance. This was an actual occurrence and shows the perversity of human nature. He who has the facilities for driving prefers to walk, while he who could much better prefer to walk and has no team goes and hires one. Men are crazy to own a team, and it soon becomes a bore to give the horse necessary exercise. It has always been thus and, we presume, always will be.

What Was Scarce.

Once a distinguished Russian grand duke found himself charged 20 francs apiece for hot-house peaches at the old Cafe de Paris, in the French metropolis. "Are hot-house peaches so scarce, then, even in midwinter?" he asked. "No," replied the maitre d'hotel, "but grand dukes are."

The Worm.

She—Yes, I am sorry I married you; so there! He—Oh! You were glad to get any body, I guess. You were no young bird when I married you. She—No? But, considering what I got, you must admit I was an early bird.—Philadelphia Press.

A Malicious Exposure.

Emeline—How I should love to overhear the conversation of several highly intellectual men! Edgar—Pooh! I've been with them. They always begin on books, but soon get to talking about something good to eat.—Detroit Free Press.

VAGARIES OF THE TIDES.

Curious Currents in the Ocean and Its Offshoots.

There are as many vagaries in the waters as in the winds. Why, for instance, should three great ocean currents send their warm waters across the wide Pacific, Atlantic and around the Cape of Good Hope? There have been many theories advanced to solve the problem of their origin, but all have proved fallacious. Other and equally mysterious currents exist in well nigh all parts of the world. The tides are so erratic in different parts of the world that one hesitates to accept the theory that the moon controls them in all cases.

It is on record that the sea has run for weeks out of the Java sea through the strait of Sunda and thence back again for a like period without any perceptible rise or fall during those times. Then there is the equatorial current that flows into the Caribbean sea, the ever flowing current to the eastward around Cape Horn, the cold stream flowing from the icy regions of the north past Newfoundland and Nova Scotia and along the American coast to the extreme end of Florida, the continual current running with a velocity of from four to five knots an hour through the strait of Gibraltar into the Mediterranean sea, the swift current running across the rocks and shoals off the end of Billiton island, which apparently starts from nowhere and ends somewhere in the vicinity of the same place, and the current which, starting half way up the China sea, runs from two to three knots an hour to the northeast and finally ends abruptly off the north end of Luzon.

Then we have those tidal vagaries known the world over as bores. Residents on Severn side are familiar with them, and those that run up the Hugi and Irawaddy rivers from side to side in a zigzag shape till they reach their limit, often tearing ships from their anchorage, originate nobody knows where or why. The rush of waters in the bay of Fundy is nothing but a huge bore sweeping all before it up to the head of the bay till the waters have risen to the height of fifty or sixty feet. Off Southampton we have the double tides, while at Singapore it has been observed for days at a time that there has been but the one rise and fall in the twenty-four hours. The tides may be and very often appear as though they were "moonstruck," but they certainly are not controlled with hard and fast rules by that or any other body.—London Shipping World.

Private Gambling in Russia.

There is a good deal of gambling in society in England, but it is nothing to what goes on in Russia, says the London Candid Friend. Vint, preference and roulette are the principal games. The second is the most popular in army circles, while many ladies of the highest rank keep roulette tables and have regular "evenings," on which play goes on for very high stakes. As is usually the case at roulette, the bank mostly wins, and the hostess takes good care to keep the bank.

Two Battles.

Porfirio Diaz gained national prominence and won his spurs at the battle of Puebla, where the Liberal forces made a gallant but ineffectual stand against the French who had invaded Mexico for the purpose of erecting a throne for Maximilian. Notwithstanding the fact that the Mexican forces were defeated, their defense against superior numbers was so gallant that the anniversary of the battle of the 5th of May became a national holiday in Mexico.

A brusque American once asked the president, "Why do you Mexicans celebrate a defeat when you know that the French finally took Puebla?" President Diaz, with a twinkle in his eye, replied, "Perhaps we have imitated the Americans even to the extent of celebrating our defeats, for I have been told that the British defeated the colonists at Bunker Hill, and yet you built a monument to commemorate the event."

Scotch Economy.

A Scottish noble lord, famed among his friends for his saving, or, as he would have put it himself, his careful propensities, went out one day shooting in his broad moors, accompanied only by his keeper. After an afternoon's hard work he sat down to rest and, ruefully contemplating his bag, observed thoughtfully, "And to think that each brace has cost me, first and last, at least 15 shillings, Donald!" "Eh, eh!" answered Donald consolingly. "Then it's a maircy yere lairdship missed the many ye did today, for it's a nice bit ye've saved, I'm thinking."—London Sketch.

Sedan Chairs in France.

The sedan chair still exists in Orleans, a bustling town not far from Paris. In this pretty city, says a Paris newspaper, especially on Sundays at the hour of mass, the classic sedan chair, as it was known to the gallants of the eighteenth century, is borne through the streets by robust carriers, its occupants being aged people and invalids, to whom the jolting of a carriage is intensely disagreeable.

The Cause of It.

"May I ask, sir, how it is that you and your brother are so bald?" inquired the inquisitive barber. "Well," replied the customer, "I'll tell you if you'll promise not to say anything more about it." "Oh, certainly, sir!" "Well, it's because our hair has fallen out."

A Wonderful Fan.

Mme. Pompadour had a wonderful fan. The lace cost about \$50,000, and it took some years to make the five sections, each one containing a medallion so minute as to be almost invisible to the naked eye. It is now in existence, broken and apart, but still showing traces of its great beauty.

Wanted to Repeat.

"Lady," said Meandering Mike, "have you any coffee or nice pie or—" "Haven't you been here twice before?" "Lady, I have. I'm too good a judge of cookin' to let such performances as yours go without an encore."—Washington Star.

When the Puss Gets Her Back Up.

It is not anger alone that makes cats arch their backs. Indeed, when two cats are preparing to fight they do not assume this attitude, but crouch low, just as they do when about to spring on their prey, the body being extended and the hair not in the least erect. But when, on meeting a dog suddenly, fear is combined with anger then the cat, standing at its full height, at once arches its back, with an instinctive effort to appear as formidable as possible.

Darwin compares it to the similar attitude of the lynx when attacked and to that of birds which ruffle their feathers and spread out their wings and tail when alarmed. It is noticeable that a cat will also arch its back when in an affectionate frame of mind, rubbing itself against its master's leg. At the same time it slightly raises its fur and holds its tail erect. Its whole attitude is just the reverse of that which it assumes when savage.

Darwin accounts for this in the following words: "Certain states of mind lead to certain habitual actions which are of no service. Now, when a directly opposite state of mind is induced, there is a strong and involuntary tendency to the performance of a movement of a directly opposite nature, though it may be of no service."

A Bride's Clever Idea.

Out in a big apartment house on Columbia heights there dwells a young married woman who is as naive as the bride in the comic weeklies. The housekeepers who live in the same house with her have been somewhat annoyed of late by mice. The young woman met one of them in the hall the other day, and the conversation naturally turned on their common pests.

"The mice have been so bad lately," said the elder woman, "that I keep everything locked up and all my eatables in the boxes."

The younger woman's eyes sparkled with eagerness.

"My!" she said. "I wouldn't dare do that. I wouldn't want to run such a risk. I leave crackers and cheese lying about every night when I go to bed so that when the mice become hungry they'll find something to eat and not gnaw things. I'm always afraid they'll bite holes in my new tablecloths and my nice centerpieces if I don't leave the cheese right where they can find it easily. I feel perfectly safe when I know there's plenty for them to eat right where they can get at it."

"There's nothing after all like having a clever idea like that now and then."—Washington Post.

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