

ODDS AND ENDS OF INTEREST FROM FAR AND NEAR

CURIOUS FORM OF LOCOMOTION.



THE frog-like attitude of this sheep is not assumed in play but is its natural position in walking. The animal was born with its hind legs so badly deformed that it could not walk straight. Its only means of locomotion is to stand

Source of Amber.

THE most striking example of the origin of a substance in everyday use being obscure is to be found in amber. For four thousand years amber has been well known, being used in formal ornaments for royal necklaces, in medicines, witchcraft—and later for the mouthpieces of various instruments, though its exact origin has never been traced. The most that can be said of it is that it is similar to the vegetable resins, and is in all probability derived from various extinct coniferous trees, while it differs from other resinous exudations owing to the changes induced by the fossilized condition.

Often it is found to contain extinct aspects of insects and plants, though only in the fossilized condition. A species of conifer has been established provisionally as the amber yielding tree, but it has been shown that many trees may have yielded the substance, and these not all necessarily belonging to the pine order. It is obtained in the greater quantities chiefly from the coasts of the Baltic Sea, where it is cast up by the action of the waves, especially after storms.

At Dovenby station, near Cuckermouth, the whole of the work is done by a woman. This is Mrs. Lizzie Davidson, who issues and collects the tickets, manages the signals and does all the other necessary work in connection with the arrival and departure of the trains.

Snow Statuary.

CAST iron dogs are a common decoration on many front lawns, but it has remained for an ingenious German to decorate his front yard with a group of dogs modeled in the most lifelike manner out of snow. A photograph of one of these white statuary dogs is herewith reproduced. The model of the dog is exceedingly successful when the difficulties of the material employed are considered. The statue lasted nearly eight weeks.

Bell ringing has been suggested as a new recreation for the athletic girl. Bell ringing, from the point of exercise, is one of the best things for developing the body, and there are plenty of village churches with rings of bells that lack male ringers. There are about twenty bands of women bell ringers in England at present, and of these the Misses White, Basingstoke, are the most expert. Three of these girls on one occasion helped their father to ring a peal of grandioso triples, consisting of 8,900 changes, in two hours and forty-five minutes.

PERFORMING BULLS ON THE STAGE.

THERE have been many horses which, with careful training, have turned out to be more or less satisfactory actors on the stage. This kind of endeavor is not, however, which has never before been entered by cows or bulls. Perhaps because they are considered as a species somewhat headstrong when provoked, no trainer has thought of educating them for the stage. A remarkably proficient team

literally on its head and hobbles along, using its nose as a third foot.

The elephants in the London Zoological Gardens earn \$4,000 a year by carrying visitors about on their backs.

Few people are aware that the Orkney and Shetland Islands, strictly speaking, belong to the kingdom of Norway, a circumstance which has been rectified by the recent events at Christiania. Toward the close of the thirteenth century King Christian, of Norway, pledged the Orkneys and the Shetlands, over which his rule was undisputed, to King James III., of Scotland, for the payment of the dowry of his daughter Margaret, who became Queen of Scotland. The pledge has not yet been redeemed.

AN EXPLOSIVE LETTER.



THE explosive letter with which Russian saboteurs at times seek to injure their enemies is a very ingenious, and at the same time dangerous weapon. Outwardly they appear harmless enough,

Fears of Famous Men.

ALL great people have had their follies, which is another way of saying that all have their weak points. Dr. Johnson, with all his philosophy, was not without a superstition. He was very careful not to enter a room with his left foot foremost. If by any chance he did he would immediately step back and re-enter with his right foot foremost. He was terribly afraid of death, too, and would not suffer it to be mentioned in his presence.

Julius Caesar, to whom the shouts of thousands of the enemy were but sweet music, was mortally afraid of the sound of thunder and always wanted to get underground to escape the dreadful noise. Marshal Saxe, who loved to look upon the ranks of opposing armies, fled and screamed in terror at the sight of a cat.

Peter the Great could scarcely be persuaded to cross a bridge, and whenever he placed his foot on one he would cry out with fear. Like the great man he was, he never able to do so. And Byron would never help any one to salt at table, nor would he be helped himself, and if any salt was spilled he would immediately get up and leave.

The authorities of San Francisco boast of being the first to employ a woman police constable.

The Tsar's Kitchen.

THERE is no part of the Tsar's palace so jealously guarded from the outside world and enveloped in so much mystery as the kitchen. Indeed, all the information we have about them has been given by one or two employes who have left the Tsar's service. The most complete and interesting of these accounts was given some time ago by Mr. Victor Hirtizer, who for two years was employed in the kitchen of the famous Winter Palace.

This imperial kitchen is the headquarters of the Tsar's culinary department, which includes scores of other palaces and employs many hundreds of hands, and its principal chef may well be described as the "kitchen autocrat" of the world. His salary exceeds \$20,000, he enjoys the rank of a general, and when he makes his tours of inspection every two months he travels in at least as much state as an Ambassador.

The duties of this king of chefs, like that of the head of any other great state department, are largely administrative, but he has one other important duty which cannot be delegated to a subordinate—that of devising new dishes to tempt the Tsar's appetite. In the invention of delicacies he is a past master, and spends hundreds of hours yearly in his private and superbly appointed kitchen experimenting in the manufacture of new entrées, selective sauces and soups and other delicacies of every kind, the recipes all of which are kept a profound secret.

The Tsar is an epicure, with a rare knowledge and appreciation of scientific foods, and every day he spends much time and thought in preparing the menu for his dinner. The other meals of the day are of much less importance. The breakfast, for instance, which is invariably eaten at eight o'clock, differs little, if at all, from that in thousands of the homes of his subjects, for it consists usually of tea, coffee, chocolate, eggs and some choice fish, with caviare and pâté de foie gras, for both of which His Majesty has a great fondness. Luncheon, which follows three hours later, is also a modest meal of soups, cold meats and salads, tea and dessert. But the dinner, which comes at five o'clock, is always a most elaborate meal of many courses and takes all the resources of the Tsar and his chefs.

One of the best known houses in Northamptonshire was designed to represent the four weeks and quarters of the year. It has four wings, facing the four quarters of the heavens, to represent the four quarters of the year; three hundred and sixty-five windows, one for each day; fifty-two chimneys, one for each week; and a large hall to represent the seven days of the week.

An Expert Climber.



LOW travelers on the Nile have failed to note the native Egyptian water carriers who ply their trade along the great waterway of the Pharaohs. Whatever changes have come to pass, whatever innovations or modern methods have taken place, the Egyptian water carrier remains as he was a thousand years ago. Tall, long of limb, agile and athletic, coat black, wearing nothing but his turban and his breech cloth, he holds every passing craft. If they need a fresh supply of water that is fit to drink, the carrier is the man to call. He is a man of the highest quality, and his cranium is heavy and the hold he must have on his single stick ladder must needs be sure.

New Atlantic Liners.

TWO new Cunarders, which are to be the fastest largest passenger boats in the world, are now in course of construction on the Tyne and the Clyde. A trip down the Tyne reveals in some slight degree the huge proportions of the new vessel, which is expected to do the journey between Queenstown and New York in four and a half days. The Tyne boat vessel is 700 feet in length, and the two masts will rise 20 feet above the keel, or within 24 feet of the top of the great dome of St. Paul's Cathedral. The four funnels will tower 100 feet above the keel, and their diameter will be high enough to allow two ordinary locomotives to pass each other inside. Her accommodation will be sufficient for 50 first and 1,200 second class, and 1,300 third class passengers, with a crew of about 600.

Major Charles Gault, who claims the unique distinction of being the smallest man in the world, is thirty-six pounds and is 18 inches in height. The little man is an entertainer of no mean merit.

A Famous Book Plate.



THE book plate used by Sir Henry Irving has now a recognized value in a collection of such designs. The copies of the plate have already been sold at good prices in England and on the continent. The design, which was made by direction of the great actor is shown herewith.

A Monkey in Full Dress.



THE monkey whose portrait is reproduced herewith is said to be the best dressed member of the monkey family in the world. His wardrobe consists of more than twenty suits of clothes, including the most fashionable garments for morning, afternoon and evening wear. He has hair suitable for each suit of clothes, with lined to match. This Beau Brummel of the monkey world is at present appearing on the London stage.

The Parcel Post.

THE parcel post is in successful operation in Austria. Parcels are carried up to a weight of 100 pounds, or only two pounds less than a hundredweight, and the minimum rate for a parcel of twenty-one pounds is fourteen cents. Any package can be insured for a trifle more, and the rate is proportionately increased. The sender of a parcel has to do in place upon it the proper stamp and await the arrival of the parcel post wagon, when in exchange for his parcel the postman will give him a receipt.

But undoubtedly the most remarkable feature of the Austrian Post Office is its savings bank department, which is utilized for quite a variety of purposes. It is a great deal simpler and still more comprehensive in its operation than the cumbersome system with which Britaners have to be content, and at the same time it is considerably less expensive.

The "Sparbank," as it is called, is used much by the rich as well as the poor, for it transacts the business of ordinary banking as well as that of a savings bank. Its rules and regulations are so simple that even the most ignorant of the people have no difficulty in understanding them, which is more than can be said of any British savings bank.

Some thousands of depositors use the savings bank for ordinary banking purposes, with this enormous advantage, that any check drawn upon it can be cashed at any post office in the kingdom. In transactions between depositors, a payment through the bank takes the shape of a mere ledger transfer of debit and credit, which does away with the necessity for actual cash passing between the parties.

For this work no commission is charged, and when checks are drawn on accounts which exceed a certain fixed sum the charge for cashing them is merely nominal. The savings bank is made use of by the government for paying the salaries of its subordinate officials throughout the empire.

An Austrian householder can and does pay his ordinary household expenses, such as his coal and gas bills, as well as those of his butcher, baker and candlestick maker, through the savings bank, and through the same medium the government is always willing to receive the tribute due to the State.

A school for judges has been opened in Paris. Make believe trials are held by pupils of the law school under the direction of distinguished pupils. The whole procedure, from the issuing of a warrant for arrest to the pronouncing of judgment, is gone through. One pupil acts as judge, another as advocate for the defence, a third as prosecuting attorney, and so on. The mock trials are held in all earnestness and no outsiders are allowed to attend.

AN ALLIGATOR HUNT.



SINCE crocodile skin has come to be of great commercial value in the manufacture of purses, handbags, the decoration of dresses, etc., crocodile hunting is a very profitable pastime. There is obviously enough danger in the sport to lead some enthusiasts to the chase. The crocodiles are usually hunted in the evening at dusk. The hunters wear built eye lanterns attached to their hats to attract attention.

The cost of electing M. Fallières President of the French Republic was \$5,000. While in office he will cost France \$2,000 a month.

Superstitions About Engines. YOU never see a ship launched on a Friday, and similarly a new locomotive hardly ever makes a trial trip on that day or on the thirteenth of the month. Even though the superstition may seem to be set in it, for he knows too well to set it at naught, for just as sailors consider that some ships are unlucky, so do train hands credit certain locomotives with a sort of demoralizing possession.

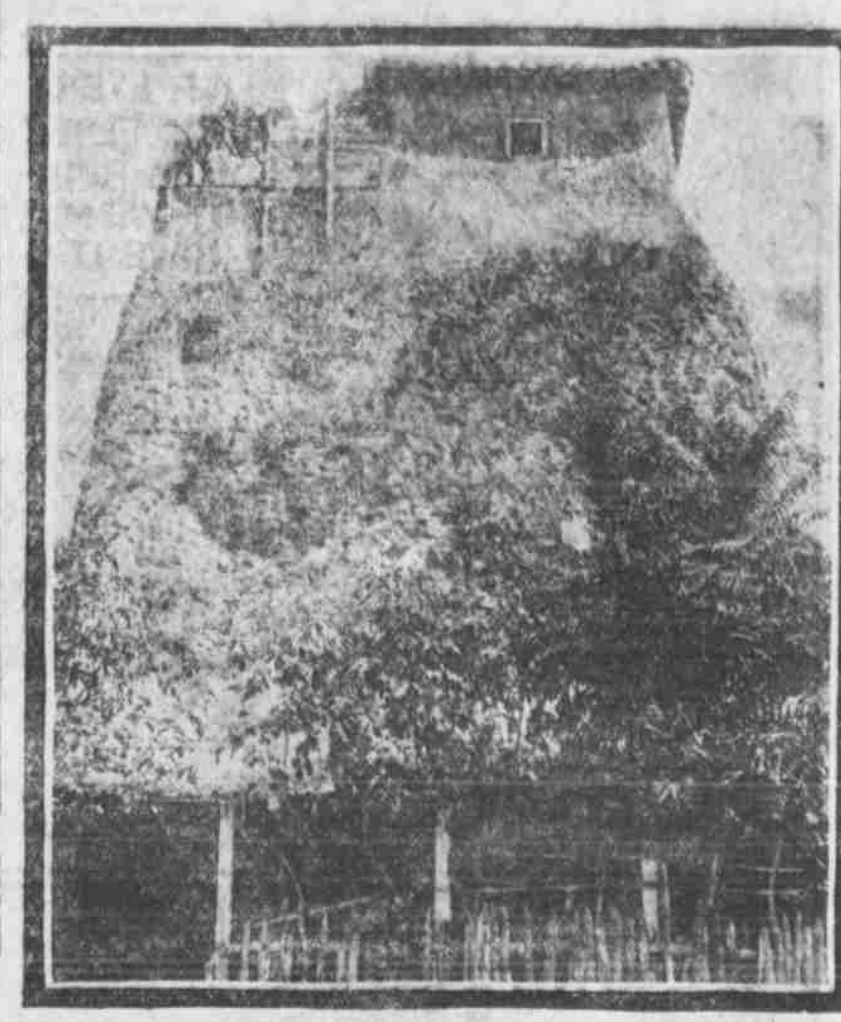
It is certainly very strange the difference that may be observed between two locomotives built from the same plans, at the same time, of similar material. One goes on her way quietly and smoothly, never breaks down, costs little or nothing to repair; the other causes trouble from the very first, runs off the line, kills the drivers, gets into accidents of all kinds and generally acts as if possessed by some evil spirit.

There was a famous instance some years ago on the South Florida Railway. A locomotive killed so many people that she gained the name of "The Hearse," and no fewer than three engine drivers actually left the employ of the company rather than continue driving her. The odd thing was that she never seemed to injure her own crew. Eventually her owners were forced to break her up, although she was by no means worn out.

Of actual ghosts in trains or railway engines one very seldom hears.

There is a well known actress in Paris who last year received the nice little sum of \$2,000 for giving a single recitation of the "Marseillaise," which lasted exactly ten minutes. The actress in question is Mile. Ludley, who some twenty years ago was forced upon the management of the Théâtre Français. For many years past she has been a full fledged member of the company, and last year her share of the profits amounted to exactly \$1,200. She only appeared once on the stage during the year, and that was to recite the national hymn on the occasion of a freepopular performance.

THE TOMB OF ROMULUS.



TRAVELLERS on the Apidan Way, the tourist is shown many historical spots that are bound to prove of intense interest—graving always that the statements of the guide are true. The above is a snapshot of what the guides would insist is the tomb of Romulus. It is a simple, shanty now perched

on the top of it would seem to indicate that the march of Christianity had somewhat dimmed the reverence for the old legend.

At a recent contest between blind athletes at a school in Pennsylvania one competitor did a long jump of 17 feet and another a high jump of 4 1/2 feet.

Tea Chest Lining. SOME of the many industries in connection with the tea trade is the collection of the lead with which tea chests are lined. China has been noted for many centuries for the purity of its lead, and this tea chest lead, as it is called, is regarded as the finest in existence. There are many uses for it; it is found very valuable in making the best kinds of solder.

Machinery is not usually employed in the production of this sheet lead, every sheet being generally made by hand in the most primitive fashion. A large brick is provided the size of the sheet of lead to be made, and is covered with two or three sheets of paper.

On these the molten lead is poured and another brick is placed on top, which presses the lead out to the required size and thickness. The sheets are then soldered together to the size of the tea chest; the tea is packed in and the top sheet is fashioned in place. The workmen are very expert, and they turn out an immense number of sheets in the course of a day.

Birds nest freely in the rafters of the ancient parish church at Ipswich, Kent. During the services the birds fill to and from pew to pew and are often fed by bread crumbs brought in the pockets of the worshippers.

Home for Wild Animals. THE most elaborate animal house in any zoological garden is said to be the new spacious outch house in the Berlin Zoological Garden. It is built after the design of an Egyptian palace and is decorated inside and out with ancient Egyptian figures of men and birds.

One of the most interesting features of the little known museum at the Royal Mint, which has recently been entirely reorganized, is the collection of medals which have never been issued. One of these is a Waterloo medal in silver, which is much larger than the design finally approved. Another is a West African medal with the bar for Dawkins, which was bestowed in 1875 upon only fifteen officers and men.

The works of a clock made for the Cathedral of St. Gervais d'Avanches weigh two tons, there are five sets of wheels, and the hours are struck on a bell weighing over six tons by a clapper of 230 pounds. For the quarters and the carillon there are twenty-two other bells, the weight of the quarter bells ranging from thirteen hundredweight to two tons. There are four faces to this clock, which is the largest in France.

SEA FISHING WITH HORSES.



THE fisherman who is not in the search of sport, but merely pursues the art for results, the methods of the horse-back fisherman along the French coast should make a very strong appeal. Fishing is done wholesale. Mounted on horses which will swim or wade as desired, and with great nets extending out on either side the fisherman goes through the water

catching, or rather screening, the fish in great quantities. The accompanying illustration shows a group of these fishermen emerging from the sea.

The Spanish soldier, with only two meals a day, keeps in excellent condition on a diet consisting of dry black bread, a little oil, some garlic and his black cigarette.