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A NIGHT WITH DICKENS.

AN ENGLISH REPORTER TELLS AN INTERESTING STORY.

The Famous Novelist Points Out the Places Where He Found His Characters—Meeting Dick Swiveler and Bill Sykes—Little Nell.

"Dickens! Yes, in his way he was a Shakespeare!" And Lloyd wheeled around in his chair, and faced me with unnaturally bright eyes and a flushed face.

I knew that Lloyd was an Englishman, and I heard that had given him a good position on a London paper when he came to this country, but he has told me very little about himself. How the name of Dickens cropped out in our conversation I cannot now remember, but when it was mentioned Lloyd became enthusiastic.

"I spent a wonderful night with him once," he said, lighting a fresh cigar, "and when you mentioned his name it all came back to me. It was in '58 or '59. At that time I had the police department on The South London Journal. Without stretching it at all, I think I may say that I had made some little reputation for myself.

"Well, to cut a long story short, I was working away at my desk one evening, when Inspector Davis came in.

"'What do you say to going the rounds with me to-night?' said the inspector.

"'Thanks,' I replied, 'but I am rather busy and cannot very well go.'

"'Sorry,' responded the inspector; 'I am to take Mr. Dickens along, and I took it for granted that you would want to go.'

"'Charles Dickens!' I shouted. 'Is he really going with you?'

"'That is the arrangement,' said the inspector. 'Can't you meet us at Bull's at 11?'

"You may rest assured that I promised. I wrote several notes to my reporters, and some minutes before 11 I turned up at Bull's, a third rate restaurant on Oxford street. Inspector Davis and another gentleman had just finished their supper. Of course, the other gentleman was Mr. Dickens. When I was introduced to him he drew me aside in a pleasant way.

"'Newspaper man?' he said. 'Well, I like all newspaper men. I ought to, you know, for I had a devil of a time myself as a reporter.'

"I made some sort of an answer, but Mr. Dickens went on to say:

"'After all, you newspaper men, you reporters, are the real novelists of the day. Your realistic stories of the comedies and tragedies of life cannot be surpassed.'

"'Now is the time to catch 'em,' said the inspector, looking at his watch.

"The programme for the night embraced a ramble through some of the by streets between Holborn and Oxford streets. Without the inspector it would have been a dangerous trip. The first place we visited was a thieves' lodging house. Fully 100 men were stretched on the floor, most of them asleep, but some were wide awake. One of the lodgers seized Mr. Dickens by the lapel of his coat.

"'D—— you!' he growled, 'what do you want here?'

"'Ask me that question to-morrow and I'll answer you,' said Mr. Dickens, with a laugh, and he handed the fellow his card.

"'Blast my eyes!' exclaimed the man. 'Well, sir, you are among friends here. I say, Mr. Dickens, may I send out for some ale or something?'

"'No, we can't wait,' replied the inspector, 'we must visit other places, and you wouldn't like to bother Mr. Dickens.'

"'Divil a bit of it!' exclaimed an Irishman, who had overheard the conversation, 'but I must shake hands wi' you.'

"After a few more handshakes we left and went out into a purer atmosphere. A gin palace stood in our way and a sudden thirst overcame me.

"'Come in, boys,' said Mr. Dickens, 'if we are going to make a night of it we must prepare for it.'

"We had a jolly time inside. Mr. Dickens chaffed the barmaids, and they giggled like anything. Inspector Davis, too, was at his best. But when he left, the inspector must have whispered something, for one of the barmaids ran after us and gave Mr. Dickens a little flower, saying, 'Oh, sir, you have done so much for us!'

"The inspector nudged me, and I thought about it, and I am thinking about it yet.

"At one place Mr. Dickens was in high glee. He pointed out a young fellow in a tawdry suit of clothes, and asked us if he was not a regular Dick Swiveler, and the man did seem to fill the bill exactly.

"'There is Bill Sykes,' he said at the last place we visited, a low cellar, in the very worst quarter.

"The man was the very picture of Bill Sykes, but he overheard Mr. Dickens, and came forward in a belligerent way.

"'Stand back there!' said Inspector Davis, 'don't you know me?'

"'I know you,' answered the ruffian, 'but I am going to mash this fellow's nose.'

"'Mr. Dickens, this is Mr. Chick Dyke,' said the inspector, laughing.

"'Not our Charles Dickens!' exclaimed the other.

"'The same,' was the answer.

"Well, that Bill Sykes fellow almost hugged Mr. Dickens. And they were all that way.

"Once Mr. Dickens pulled out his purse, but the inspector stopped him, and promised to call in the daytime. He said that it was dangerous to show money in that quarter at night.

"In the last house we visited there was a little golden haired girl curled up in the arms of an old man.

"'There is little Nell,' I broke out.

"'You are right,' Mr. Dickens answered, as he pressed my hand. 'We must look after her to-morrow, and after seeing her we had better go. I feel broken up.'

"I was glad to get away and so was Inspector Davis. We went back to Oxford street and had a high old time at a chop house until the morning. Mr. Dickens was as jolly as a man could be. He gave us no end of good advice, and even approved of my scheme of going to the United States.

"'I like those Americans,' he said; 'they like me.'

"Human nature, wasn't it? Shortly after that I left England, and I never saw Charles Dickens again. I know that you will think my little glimpse of the man a very unsatisfactory episode, but you were not there. You did not see the man. If you had felt the pressure of his hand, and looked into his clear eyes, and heard his cheery voice, you would feel as I do now when his name is mentioned."

Lloyd puffed away at his cigar, and I soon convinced him that I thoroughly understood him. A night with Dickens is something to be remembered with delight, and it is no wonder that Lloyd felt proud of his little adventure.—The Criterion.

Japan's Largest Paper.

The largest and most influential newspaper in Japan, The Nichi Nichi Shumbun, or Daily Times, of Tokio, has a circulation of 16,000 copies daily. Its columns are filled almost entirely with short stories and political essays, with very little, if any, news matter.—New York World.

Poisons in Bottle Stoppers.

The frequency of unaccountable deaths and the spread of deadly diseases has been a puzzle to sanitarians. A drop of solder in a can of fruit will cause the sickness and perhaps the death of the family which has partaken of it. But there is a danger comparatively new that threatens many. The expense of the common cork used as a stopper for bottles has induced many to substitute for it a plug of rubber, which is in no way deleterious if it is pure, but to make a cork cheaper still woolen fiber, or rags, mixed with black lead and then saturated with hot asphaltum has been substituted for the rubber. An examination of this fiber with a microscope has been made, and it is found to contain blood, pus and deadly virus, showing that the material out of which it is made is the cast off clothing from hospitals, quarantine and similar places. The black lead is in itself a virulent poison, but even that is not the worst of it. The fluid contents of the bottle dissolves the blood, pus and other defilement of the cloth, which are taken into the system in drinking.—Chicago News.

German Magazine Guns.

Returned travelers in Germany speak of the jealousy with which the German authorities guard the new magazine guns distributed among the soldiers of the army. Every gun is numbered and registered, the soldier must not take it from the garrison under any circumstances save when on parade, and he must be able to produce it at a moment's notice. All this is to prevent the Frenchmen from securing one to use as a pattern.—New York Sun.

Cyrus W. Field says that by hard work a man may accomplish anything in this world.

A WASHINGTON CHIROPODIST

Tells About the Various Presidents Who, He Says, Have Sat in His Chair.

There is an old chiropodist in Washington who has doctored the corns of all the great men in the country for the last third of a century. I asked him the other day how many presidents had sat in his chair.

"Let me see," he answered. "I believe I have had every one of them since the time of Buchanan. I came to Washington in his administration, but had not much practice then. People used to doctor their own corns. Several times a year I went to the White House while Lincoln was there. Both he and his wife had very troublesome feet. While I was operating on Lincoln once he admitted a delegation of clergymen, who had come to see him about extending the work of the Christian commission in the army. They were very much astonished when they were shown into the room where he sat on a table with his bare feet upon a chair, and I do not know of any other president who would have received so dignified a delegation under similar circumstances, but his time was very valuable, and he did not want to keep them waiting. He told a number of funny stories about his experience with corns and bunions, and very soon the doctors of divinity recovered from their astonishment and began to exchange views on the subject. Then they sobered down and presented their case to Mr. Lincoln, who promised to issue the order they wanted.

"At another time I was with him when Secretary Stanton came over from the war department with the news of a great victory and the president was so pleased that he jumped around the room with his bare feet like a boy.

"I never had much to do with Johnson, and never treated him but once that I remember of, when he came to the office. Grant had very good feet. They were quite small for a man of his build, and he had little trouble with them. I do not remember having treated him more than three or four times while he was president, although after he went out of office he came down here on several occasions. He was visiting Gen. Beale. I believe it was after his trip around the world.

"Hayes sent for me only once, but Garfield was a regular customer all the while he was in congress, and after he became president I suppose I have his name twenty or thirty times on my books. He was always troubled with corns. The day before he was assassinated, a colored man, in footman's livery, came into my office and asked if I could treat Gen. Garfield at once, as he was to leave town the next day. I had a patient in the chair, but he kindly consented to give way for the president, who then came up, and was here for half an hour. Arthur never had any trouble with his feet—he always was very careful about his shoes—but I was sent for several times while he was president to treat members of his family or guests."—Washington Cor. New York Tribune.

How One Woman Makes Money.

A clever young woman is building up a business of somewhat novel character in New York and Brooklyn. Traveling agents have long made a good thing out of antique furniture picked up on excursions in the wilds of rural New Hampshire or Connecticut, inducing farmers' wives to ransack their attics and bring out mirrors that only wanted regrinding, or brass handled chests of drawers in want of nothing but polish and varnish to fetch round sums from modern worshipers of bric-a-brac gone by. The best hunting ground for such things, curiously enough, has been overlooked almost entirely. New York and Brooklyn, as things go in this country, are ancient cities. There are low browed Dutch homesteads within the limits of the former city, and old houses on Second avenue, in the Washington square region, and on Fifth avenue itself, in New York, which only need to yield up their treasures to delight all the lovers of last century carved oak, mirror front wardrobes, rare spindle legged monstrosities and choice bits of buhl.

This young woman has begun a series of tours among the stately old mansions sunk to second class boarding houses, or gone yet further on the road to neglect and decay, and when she finds a relic of past grandeur she rehabilitates it and introduces it to an art lover or a curio lover, or a person ambitious of the repute of an art or curio lover—with money. An old ebony cabinet, inlaid with mother of pearl, an old dressing table, with a tray of Sevres let into the top, an old chair covered with French flowered satins of the early years of the century, these are grand dukes in banishment to be restored to their lost estate. It is pleasant business for a young woman with some knowledge, a good eye and better judgment, and she makes it profitable.—New York Cor. Nashville American.

The Persian on Horseback.

It is strange that, although the Persians are all horsemen, they do not know how to ride, using the term in our sense. They will canter or gallop all day long without visible discomfort, but they will sit on their animals like monkeys, with their knees drawn up and with their reins clutched tight, and will fall off on the slightest provocation. When babies of 3, they are already in the saddle, and they are in it all their lives; but they never receive any instruction, never know what a good, steady trot is, and never learn to keep firm on their horse's back. And, like them, the Persian horses never receive any training. The gait they are easiest to ride—the gallop—is their natural one, and they will only quit that for a brief spell in order to rest a little. You cannot get a trot out of a Persian horse unless you devote years and years of patient training to it. Then, again, they are all hard mouthed, and most of them shy at any unusual object or noise. For all that they have a good deal of native intelligence, and they are kind and affectionate. Kickers and biters are very rare among them. While in Arabia and Turkey mares are universally ridden, in Persia it is the stallions alone that serve this purpose. Geldings are unknown.—Wolf Von Schierbrand in The Cosmopolitan.

Pastry of the Ocean.

A reporter debarred from his usual call at Delmonico's, lunched at one of the coffee saloons of Park row. At his table sat an old sea bronzed sailor, who suddenly made the unappetizing inquiry of:

"Did you ever eat any lamp oil doughnuts?"

"Positively, never!" replied the reporter, with a slight gasp of horror.

The old man smilingly said: "Well, they're better than these greasy things on our plates. In my young days I was a whaler, and the captains of whaling ships used to give prizes to the men; something for sighting the first whale, or striking a big 200 barrel fellow, the fastest boat's crew, and so on. After a ship had stowed her first 1,000 barrels of oil, the crew would get a barrel of flour as a present from the captain. When we tried out our next sperm whale's blubber, the cook would take a lot of our flour, roll out a big batch of doughnuts and cook them in the hot, boiling oil—and first rate they used to taste when eaten with molasses. You see the oil when fresh is just as sweet as lard, and besides you must consider that it is not fish oil at all, for the whale, you know is an animal."—New York Tribune.

A Cheap Fireproof Stable.

A correspondent of The Hartford Courant relates what he saw in Frankfort, Germany. The loft of a stable had burned out, and he asked for the horses, thinking that they must all have perished, but he was assured that they were in the stable and all right, for no smoke nor heat could touch them.

After everything was burned in the loft, he made an inspection, and found that the stable was practically fireproof. They had in its construction used old railroad ties, placing them three and a half to four feet apart, and then put arched corrugated iron between the ties, and filled in with a mixture of cinders and lime, making it deep enough to protect the ties. The trap or door to reach the loft was made of sheet iron, filled in with the same compound. This kind of fireproofing is very cheap and, according to the writer, is very effective.—Scientific American.

The French Pronunciation.

A Boston girl who has been visiting—it seems queer, but Boston people go everywhere—at Newark, N. J., had been studying French for months before she went on the visit, and had flavored all her imaginations and perceptions, so to speak, with French. In driving about the town, where, it hardly needs to be said, there is a large German population, the Boston girl noticed over the doors of a great many establishments the sign, "Lager bier."

"Tell me," said the Boston girl, after inspecting one of these curious signs for the 100th time, "does M. Lahzhaybeeyay own all the stores in Newark?"—New York Tribune.

OPORTO'S RUBY WINE.

CURIOUS AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT ITS MANUFACTURE.

Among the Vineyards of a Land Where Toil Is Made Picturesque and Musical. Treading Out the Blood of the Grape. Testing the Juice.

The Alto Douro district in Portugal, whence the wine comes, comprises a series of steep acclivities and narrow ravines extending some thirty miles along the River Douro (Golden river) and varying in breadth from five to ten miles. It is situated both in the provinces of Traz-os-Montes and Beira, the first named containing by far the larger portion. The area of the vineyards is estimated at about 86,000 acres. In order to prevent the loose and flaky soil in which the vines are planted upon the steep sides of the hills from being washed away by heavy rains, the ground is cut away in terraces, forming a succession of steps, their sides banked up with walls of masonry. These rows of terraces line the sides of mountain after mountain, like cyclopean staircases, and on some slopes as many as 150 may be counted, rising one above another.

The population of the wine district is small, and as a considerable amount of labor is needed for the cultivation of the vine there is ample employment for vintagers, male and female, who flock thither at the proper season from remote regions, many coming from the province of Galicia in the north of Spain. The vintage in September of course attracts the largest influx. Dancing and singing on their way to the vineyards come bands of peasants to the gathering. Women with red and yellow kerchiefs tied over unkempt tresses, and with bare legs, may be seen and heard—for their singing, more or less melodious, is an invariable accompaniment of the work—all over the hill sides culling the bunches of fruit with small hooked knives. As the berries are thus detached and the unripe and unsound fruit removed, they are thrown into baskets borne on the arm of the vintager. These are emptied into large baskets, holding nearly a hundred weight, which, when filled, men, with sheepskins to protect their shoulders and plaited straw knots on their heads, hoist on their backs, and, moving off in Indian file, bear them along the rugged winding paths and up and down the steep flights of steps to the press house.

TOURS OF INSPECTION.

At the principal quintas agents of the port wine shippers take up their quarters. Thence they sally forth on daily tours of inspection, for the purpose of ascertaining that the wines their houses have contracted for are fairly and honestly made, that no unripe or unsound fruit gets into the lagares, and that the conditions under which the pressing and fermentation take place are favorable. Bullock carts go up and down the dried up stream gullies, over rough bowlders, jolted violently and discordantly creaking; droves of nimble little donkeys, with pig skins full of wine dangling on either side from a strap across their backs, or bringing bread for the vintagers, wend their way along zigzag bridle paths, and farmers with wine samples and peddlers with their packs on mules equipped with jangling bells, jog leisurely over the mountain roads. Twenty or more varieties of grapes are used to make port wine. For the most part they are black, thick skinned and pulpy, yielding an ample flow of saccharine must. Arrived at the press house they are at once shot into the lagares—immense receptacles constructed of solid masonry, with sides about three feet high, and holding enough grapes to produce from ten to thirty pipes of wine. When the lagare is filled the grapes are leveled with a hoe, and a gang of men is told off to tread them.

The wearisome operation of treading is begun by men, who step into the lagares with their white pants rolled up to the thigh, and their arms resting on each other's shoulders. With measured steps they advance and retire across the lagare, raising and lowering their feet alternately at the word of command, "right," "left," as though at squad drill. As the juice flows, and the fruit is reduced to a pulp, a livelier movement follows. A fiddler seated on the edge of the lagare saws away at some merry tune, while some of the treaders join in with fife, drum and guitar, playing and treading simultaneously. Songs and shouts swell the uproar. It is a difficult task, despite these ebullitions of enthusiasm, and frequent nips of brandy are served out by the overseers to keep the lazier and weaker at the task, which is wearisome in the extreme. Women looking in at the windows exchange jokes and laughter with the men.

THE FIRST TREADING.

The "sovar o vinho," or first treading, is kept up with occasional halts and relays of fresh men for about eighteen hours. After a long interval the treading is resumed. The fiddle strikes up anew, the drum rattles, the fife squeaks, the guitar twangs, the overseers drowsily upbraid. By this time the grapes are pretty well trodden, and the men, being nearly worn out, listlessly lift one purple dyed leg after another far into the watches of the night. In testing the quality of the mash a large white convex saucer is used. One of the treaders balancing himself on one brawny leg and holding up the other allows the liquid to drip from off his heel into the saucer. This is tasted and the amount of sugar determined by the saccharometer. This instrument also indicates, after the treading is completed and the juice is left to ferment, when the latter process has gone far enough. The stalks and skins of the grapes form a thick crust on the top of the must, which is then drawn off into large tonels holding from ten to thirty pipes each; the superincumbent mass of stalks and skins is heaped up in the center of the lagare, and the juice remaining in them is squeezed out by the leverage of a huge beam of wood, usually the trunk of a tree weighted with a large stone. The wine thus obtained is separately casked and kept by itself, as its quality is not up to the average mark.

Until the end of December the wine remains undisturbed. By that time it has cleared and has a deep purple tint. It is then drawn off its lees into other tonels, when some pure grape brandy is added to it. Empty pipes are sent up from Oporto in the ensuing spring to the quintas, where the wine is duly racked under the eyes of the shipper's agents. These pipes are transported by bullock carts to the Douro, where flat bottomed crafts carry them down the stream, which is swift and difficult of navigation, and rendered still more dangerous by numerous rapids. Their destination is the wine shipper's lodges or stores at Villa Nova de Gaia, a transpontine suburb of Oporto.—New York Press.

Applause at the opera is cheap—to be obtained for a song.

The West Coast of Mexico.

Warm weather commences here in May, and the heat becomes extreme during the months of June, July and August; in September the rains begin. A hot wind occasionally makes its appearance, and such is the fury of the withering blast that it seems to scorch the skin like a furnace. It comes when least expected, and continues sometimes for four and twenty hours. It is a remarkable circumstance that it does not extend more than a league from the coast, seaward, and that while it prevails fresh water deposited in jars continues deliciously cool, even in summer.

Fortunately for the people who live here, the night air is not injurious, as it is in many semi-tropical countries, for when the warm weather is fairly begun the inhabitants, rich and poor, are obliged to abandon the interior of their houses and pass the nights in the corridors and courtyards; the poorer class lie on blankets in the streets in front of their huts. The purity of the atmosphere, the dryness of the soil and the purifying effects of the winds which sweep over this country all tend to make this a very salubrious climate. The enormous death rates are attributed entirely to epidemics aggravated by unhealthful sanitary conditions; there is no sewerage and the streets are filthy. In spite of this the longevity of those living here is remarkable; several are more than 100 years of age, and two have attained, one to 114 and the other to 130.—Laura B. Starr in Cleveland Leader.

The Teeth of Whales.

The teeth of whales furnish one of the remarkable features indicative of the origin of that animal. They form a complete but rudimentary set, characteristic of a more perfectly developed land mammal, but disappear shortly after birth, performing no function whatever.—Globe-Democrat.

Unsymmetrical Physical Development.

Perfect symmetrical development is rarely found in man or woman. Of course, those who work with their hands and are much on their feet generally excel in form, but there is a tendency in all for some limb or parts of the body to become stronger and better developed than the others. To occupation can be attributed this disparity, which, however, unless marked, is not of great significance. Excluding from consideration that class given to hard manual labor, we find that, in the majority of men and women, after the age of maturity is reached, the upper half of the body does not retain its relative development and strength as compared with the lower half.

Of course, the solution is easy, the labor put upon the lower limbs is greater than that which falls upon the arms to do. The business man, when told by his physician that he must exercise, insists that he has all that he needs, for he is "on his feet from morning until night," and the hard working housekeeper thinks, too, she has quite enough, and gives the same reason. We find these people strong on their feet, but comparatively weak in their arms. Circulation in the lower half of the body is good, but in the upper part it is less free, and less blood is attracted to it. The natural adjustment is destroyed. Nature intends that a certain portion of blood in the human body should enter and distribute itself throughout the muscular system. If, however, large muscles, like those of the arms and trunk, are insufficiently exercised, and as a consequence grow smaller, then the blood intended for them is diverted elsewhere. It must be taken up by the internal organs, and the liver is the one organ which, from its peculiar construction, will bear the greatest increase in the blood supply.—Boston Herald.

The Fear of Drafts.

Foul dust in rooms cannot be got rid of by any amount of sweeping and carpet beating. The only thing that will remove and replace it is a current of comparatively pure air from the outside. Except in very cold weather there should always be two open windows in each room on opposite sides. "If we should follow that advice," the horrified reader will exclaim, "we should all catch a fatal cold. Don't I remember a dozen colds I got by being exposed to a sudden draft? Only a few nights ago, when I occupied a seat near the door of a theatre, the door was left open during the intermission, and the draft, though pleasant enough, gave me a bad cold. No, thank you, no drafts for me!"

This logic seems good, yet it is utter sophistry. As a metaphysician would say, the draft was only the occasion, not the real cause of the cold. The real cause was the foul, hot air in the theatre, which demoralized your skin and relaxed its blood vessels, so that they were unable to react suddenly and endure the healthful cool air from the street. In other words, it was not the draft that gave you the cold, but the sudden transition from hot to cold air. Such a transition is always injurious to the skin, whether it be from hoth to cold or from cold to hot air. But if you are not overheated, a current of cold air is never injurious.—The Epoch.

"Stirring Up" an Oil Well.

When the first flush of a well is gone, the torpedo agent is called in to increase the production. In shooting a well from 60 to 100 quarts of nitro-glycerine are used. This is lowered into the hole in shells cleverly contrived to prevent a premature explosion, and then the "go devil," a chunk of iron for exploding the cartridge on top of the glycerine, is dropped. In a minute or two an explosion about as loud as a firecracker will be heard, while the casing in the hole will rise a few inches above the derrick floor and then settle back. The response from the shot will not come until ten or twenty minutes later, then the well flows freely and at an increased rate. In the course of time the well refuses to flow of its own accord and is classed among the "pumpers." Two-inch tubing is run down to the producing sand, and the same machinery that was used in drilling the well is called in to do the pumping. From time to time the tubing and sucker rods are drawn and the well cleaned out or treated to another dose of glycerine. This explains why the derrick at a completed well is never torn down.—Rufus R. Wilson in San Francisco Chronicle.

Virtue in Onions and Beef.

What is the most strengthening food for a convalescent? Well, you know, the beef tea theory has been exploded. The most life giving and digestible food that can be given to one just recovering from an illness is chopped beef. Just take a pound of the finest round of raw beef, cut off all the fat, slice two onions, and add pepper and salt. Then chop the onions and meat together, turning them over and over until both are reduced almost to a pulp. Then spread on slices of rye bread and eat as sandwiches. People talk about celery being a nervine, but let me tell you that there is nothing which quiets the nerves without bad results like onions. The use of them induces sleep, and much strength is obtained from them. That is my ideal food for those convalescing or for any one who is in a weak state of health.—Kansas City Star.

Snow Drifts to Talk About.

"Those fifty foot snow drifts down east," remarked an old resident after reading the dispatches from Pennsylvania, "are pretty tall for the country, but they are ordinary and trifling compared with those of the early days. Back in 1854-5, when Omaha was only the landing of a ferryboat, we had a winter. There weren't any drifts, but solid snow. It filled the valley from the Iowa bluffs on a dead level to the high school hill. I freighted between St. Joe and Council Bluffs those days, and many a time I dropped through the roof of deserted dobies. When the April rise of the Missouri came down we had to blast a path through the snow bank to let the water run out."—Omaha Bee.

Her Domestic Afflictions.

Mrs. Hobson (to caller)—Your husband has been dead nearly two years, has he not, Mrs. Amidon?

Caller—Yes, quite two years. He caught a severe cold which developed into pneumonia. But I really must be going, Mrs. Hobson. (To dog)—Come Fido, get your blanket on. Dear little fellow, after all the trouble I've had, I wouldn't like you to get pneumonia.—The Epoch.

A Natural Lamp.

The light of the fireflies of tropical America seems to be dependent upon the will, as when feeding or asleep it is not seen, attaining its greatest brilliancy during activity and flight. The color of the light is rich green, but the eggs omit a light of a bluish tint, according to Dubois. This naturalist has made extremely interesting experiments with the pyrophorus. The eggs which he dried retained their luminosity for a week, the light reappearing when they were placed in water. He ground the luminosity organs in a mortar, after having dried them in a vacuum, and then mixed them in boiled water, the latter immediately becoming luminous. Dr. Dubois concluded that the light of the pyrophorus is intended as illumination for itself alone. To prove this he covered one of the upper lights with wax and the animal moved in a curve; when both spots were covered the beetle soon stopped and then moved in an uncertain manner, carefully feeling the ground with his antennæ. The spectrum of the light was extremely beautiful, being continuous, without dark or brilliant rays.—Christian at Work.

Topics of Conversation.

More than six months ago an English magazine offered a prize of three guineas for the most original and suitable topics of conversation on the four occasions of a morning call, before dinner, in the drawing room, during dinner (in the dining room) and in the train. Either this three guinea prize was no temptation to inventive conversationalists, or else the task proves to be impossible, for I believe the project has fallen through, and we must go on without the discovery of a royal road to brilliant talk. What a blessing a few sparkling suggestions would be to those of us who only can berate the weather when the supply of gossip falls short. In these days when money buys everything, the demand for appropriate topics of conversation really ought to be furnished regardless of expense. The trouble with the editor of this magazine in question was, not that he didn't mean well, but that he didn't make his prize worth the trying for. Three guineas! Why, bless the man, he should offer a hundred times three, and become a benefactor to mankind in the noble results he would attain.—Boston Herald.

THE WEE SMA' HOURS.

PEOPLE ENCOUNTERED ON A SURFACE CAR AT 2 IN THE MORNING.

A Conductor Chats with an Enterprising Reporter—Some Experiences—Country Cousins and Drunken Outcasts Who Utilize Street Cars as Lodging Houses.

Probably but few of the units that compose the throngs daily overcrowding the surface and elevated cars of New York's local transit system ever pause to reflect upon the persons who occupy their vacant places during the long hours of the night when, with the majority, they invoke the refreshing influence of Morpheus.

They are of all sorts and conditions, ranging from men of culture, intellect and refinement—such as those who dribble one by one out of the huge newspaper offices from midnight until the first glimmerings of dawn—to the homeless little newsboys, who haunt the vicinity of Park row and play pitch and toss in front of the city hall, while the greater world around is buried in sleep.

A reporter recently rode on a Third avenue car from the city hall to Twenty-third street. One of the occupants of the car, other than the reporter, was a frowsy looking object, huddled close to the stove, wearing a slouched hat, riddled with holes, pulled closely over its face; a threadbare coat, tightly buttoned over its shirtless chest, and a pair of trousers well calculated to excite the derision of any respectable scarecrow. Strangely enough, its boots were comparatively decent—perhaps an indication of the extreme laziness of the wearer. This creature was hopelessly drunk. It had begged or stolen sufficient money for an indulgence in Bowery whiskey, and a few nickels had been reserved to spend in riding up and down between the termini of the street car line until morning breaks, and it could crawl unmolested into some secluded corner and continue to sleep off the previous night's debauch.

The car stopped opposite the entrance to the Brooklyn bridge to take on a little party of belated musicians, the members of some orchestra fulfilling an engagement in the City of Churches. They were sober, but wide awake and merry withal, and their guttural German accents drowned the noise of the car wheels for awhile. Then as they got drowsy they relapsed into silence and quiet reigned until Grand street was reached.

A PASSENGER NOT WANTED.

Here the brake was applied in answer to a hail from a woman leaning against one of the "L" road pillars. As she loosed her hold on the pillar and approached the car the miserable creature betrayed her condition. She staggered blindly against the platform guard and ejaculated a tipsy oath, but the conductor snatched at the bell strap and signaled the driver to proceed, while with the other hand he gently pushed the would be passenger against her friendly pillar, at which she clutched just in time to save a fall.

"No," he said, in answer to questioning looks. "We don't let 'em get on when they're like that. Guess it's lucky I saw her in time; once that sort are aboard it's hard to get rid of 'em."

"You must see some strange sights and some queer people during your night trips," the reporter suggested, and the conductor smiled slightly as he replied in the affirmative. "You would be surprised if you knew what a number of 'lodgers' we get," he said. "There are this sort—bums and such like (indicating the inebriated slumberers)—who get hold of a little money, get drunk and ride up and down until they have nothing to pay their fare with. But they are not the only ones, by a long way. Women? Why, yes! and respectable ones, too. That is, I don't say they're all respectable, 'cause they ain't. But sometimes we have a real nice country girl who has arrived in the city late, has no friends here and don't like to take her chances at a strange hotel. They get aboard a car, and when they find it keeps running up and down the road and nobody dares interfere with 'em, why, they feel safe and conclude to stay with it until daylight. They can doze pretty easy in one of the corners. Oh, yes, the drunks make a disturbance now and then, but, as I told you, we won't allow 'em aboard if they seem quarrelsome, and if by chance we get one of that sort he has to shut up or get bounced—that's all."

At this point in the conversation the conductor jerked the bell strap and stopped the car to take on three loudly dressed, coarse looking women, who ostentatiously displayed their sealskin sacques and the huge diamonds on their fat red hands. They only rode a few blocks, and after they had alighted the conductor volunteered the information that they were connected with a "museum" and the adjoining saloon.

GOING HOME FROM THE BALL.

By this time we had reached some popular assembly rooms, where it was evident that a ball been in progress. Several devotees of Terpsichore climbed on to the platform.

The first party consisted of a respectable German, apparently a mechanic; his wife, a heavy looking blonde, and a pert child, 10 years of age. They were followed by two couples of flashily attired youths and young girls, and a stout elderly man, accompanied by a foxy looking young fellow and two women, attired in grotesquely juvenile costumes, who might be any age between 30 and 50. The whole party were in a hilarious condition, and the assumption of cheap blonde wigs by the males, coupled with the short skirts of the women, seemed to indicate their recent participation in a bal masque.

"Talking of all night passengers, we often have fellers ride with us who have lots of money about 'em," the conductor remarked. "Why, one night I had a reg'lar country 'softy,' who had come in from New Jersey on one of the late trains. He had run across some bunco steerers, but a detective warned him, and then he was so scared that he got on my car and stayed there all night. He showed me a big roll of bills, and said he had $4,000, with which he was goin' to pay for some land or sumthin'. He did not know enough to go to a respectable hotel and leave his money in their safe, so he decided to stay by me until the banks opened."

Here the car reached Fourteenth street, and the noisy masqueraders alighted.

The foregoing examples are types of the night birds who are to be found on any of the surface cars. The "L" road passengers are of a slightly modified class. The road is equally well patronized by those whom business or legitimate pleasure calls forth at hours when in the country, graveyards yawn, but fewer inebriates find their way up the stairs leading to an "L" station.—New York Herald.

Definition of Male Beauty.

To call a man charming in face, or lovely, or beautiful, or pretty, is to minimize—almost to insult him. A man can only be called handsome, and very, very few men can be called that.

A handsome man must be manly in figure, conveying the idea of strength and energy under the most reposeful exterior. He must have the shapely hands, feet and ears that tell of good blood and cultivated progenitors; he must have his head well shaped, well set and well carried; he must have a deep, broad chest and a straight back, and long shapely limbs; his features must be regularly formed, and yet full of expression, and the kingly power that great sculptors try to give to Jupiter.

Coloring does not much matter, so that there be no red upon the cheeks, and not too much in the lips, and, perhaps, the mezzo tints lend themselves most satisfactorily to manly beauty, but, above all, the handsome man must never be stout. The heavy throat which overflows the shirt collar never carries with it an air of refinement, whatever it may do of strength. A blonde man runs the risk of weakness and insipidity, and a black-beard man is handsome, even though he be a trifle melodramatic, but still golden haired and black haired men have been very attractive the world over.

Of course below this grand climacteric in the thoroughly handsome man there are ranks after ranks of good looking, attractive, pleasant faced men—some upon whom one loves to look and find sweet content in contemplating faces and forms far from faultless, and yet quite satisfactory. And here we come upon one of the most strange and almost cruel conditions of our being. A man may or may not be handsome, he may or may not have any physical attractiveness whatever, but nobody likes him the less for the deficiency, he never finds it a barrier in his career, a source of failure in his life; women love him and men approve of him just as readily as if he is handsome; in fact, the woman or women who love him set him down as handsome in serene defiance of the rules of beauty or the opinion of the world.—Mrs. Frank Leslie.

A doctor's report would properly come under the head of the news of the weak.—Duluth Paragrapher.

LIFE IN LIBRARIES.

SOME OF THE QUEER FOLKS WHO READ PUBLIC BOOKS.

The Same Old Man Who Reads the Same Old Volumes—How the Astor Library Helps Young Artists—Visitors at Cooper Institute.

Libraries, especially the big public ones of this town, somehow seem to have about them something pathetic. Take the Astor, for instance—that magnificent stone and iron home of a quarter of a million volumes. It isn't the unidentified books softly growing gray under the gathering dust of years that appeal to one, so much as the living delvers who dig through this accumulating forgetfulness in search of an idea. There they sit, day after day, generation after generation, patiently, silently, hungrily hunting a fact. The marble stairways have been worn into little hollows by their feet. Some of these footsteps have long ago lost their way in the enchanted region of Bohemia, and some of them, youthful and springy, show their owners to be still seeing rainbow visions of promise behind the soft swinging doors. Minister and mechanic, artist and artisan, physician and fiction writer jostle elbows one against the other, and for each one the shelves have a different story to tell. The Academy of the Immortals, the hospital or the morgue are the rewards of those who labor here.

SEEKING MECHANICAL LORE.

Over against the alcove where patent reports are kept sits an old man. The table in front of him is strewn with drawings on card board and tracings on oiled paper. Nine volumes, all forbidding looking, are piled up about him, and the tenth he has spread open before him. For four years he has sat the same way. As sure as comes the postman and the sun, so surely comes this strange old man, searching, probing, questioning the Sphynx pages that say so little or so much, pleading with the black volumes to give up their secret. He speaks to no one, and is jealously careful that no alien eye shall rest upon his drawings. If he were searching for the secret of perpetual motion he could not be more guarded in every action. Now and then the favorite works on mechanics are replaced by some rare and all forgotten screed teaching discoveries made by the old alchemists in their experiments toward making gold. He is only a type. His clothes are poor. He spends barely ten minutes at lunch during the day. Sometimes he does not go out at all. And, after all, the academy may not hold a niche for him.

For the artist the library is a mine, and the figured wall paper in your hallway has probably come from some old scroll that Japanese works here show. Just in the same way the delicately hammered griffins that ornament your silver service may be copies from some forgotten volume, or if not copies yet suggested by something seen there. The beautiful in art is tenacious of life, and has a lucky way of surviving the tooth of time that bids one hope. There is no busier table than this at which these workers bend.

When spring comes laughing in, a new order changes the routine of the library. The very dust upon the books seems to feel the quickening breath. Volumes that have not been touched for months are taken down. The number of feminine visitors increases. There is color and perfume and lightness to set off the shade that hangs over all. The far alcove to the south sees pretty heads bending above colored plates in old books whose type makes it difficult to tell an S from an F. And what are they looking for in these old volumes, you ask? For fashions. With the coming of blue skies there is an instinctive turning to new designs in dress. And where can one get better ideas than from those old plates that tell of "tea cup times of hoop and hood," when our grandmothers dreamt of moonlight and blue eyes. So the pretty Easter bonnet that your Phillis wears today is only a modification of one that her grandmother found fair half a century ago. So, too, when fancy dress balls are in vogue, the old library always sees an influx of feminine readers hanging over old fashion plates, studying up new ways to be beautiful, for the beautiful is as old as woman herself.

COOPER INSTITUTE'S VISITORS.

Just around the corner the library of Cooper institute has very different visitors. Like the Astor, it is a reference library and no books are allowed to be taken away. New York has no great public circulating libraries like those of Boston and Chicago. The free circulating library of this town and several smaller ones allow books to be taken out, but they are supported by private subscription and the city has no voice in their management.

There is no novel reading at the Astor because no novels are kept, and at the Cooper library the percentage of fiction is said to be smaller than at any other library in the world. Its reading room is the home of workingmen, and they read to improve their minds or for some specific purpose, not for fun. Early in the morning there is always a rush for the daily newspapers. The town is never without its contingent of unemployed, and these haunt the files, pouring over advertisements in the hope of finding a clew to a job. In the good old times when men feared God and honored the king, before the struggle for existence became a hand to hand fight, things were not so. You can tell one of these unemployed by the aimless way he walks the moment he enters the room, just as you can tell a policeman's drawling step among the thousands that sound outside your window.

Of course there are the usual loungers among the 2,000 people that come every day into the reading room. During the winter they come into the room to get warm, take a book in hand, forget themselves and are soon asleep. These are soon gotten rid of. For the past four months one Anarchist looking man has been taking a thorough course in chemistry. Another middle aged man sits every day by a post near the end of the hall. For nearly six months he has not missed a day. He comes in early in the morning, reads until noon, goes out to lunch, and returns and spends the afternoon in the same chair. The ladies have an alcove set apart for their own use. Many who do not have a fire at home drop in to read an afternoon away in a cozy nook. In the same way, a number of elderly men who have small incomes come day after day to their favorite corners and dream over tales of adventure.

The New York Historical library, a few blocks away, is saturated with intense and almost painful respectability. It, too, is a reference library, devoted almost wholly to American history, to genealogy and to heraldry. In this, our new country, the study of genealogy is not what the library hopes to see it, and every assistance is given to the author who compiles a volume on the rise and progress of the Smith family or the decline and fall of the Joneses.—F. A. Duneka in New York World.

A Serious Sentiment.

Those who know him only superficially would never suspect W. H. Foster, manager of the Boston Ideals, of sentimental philosophy; yet he is the man who said "You never know who likes you after your mother dies."

When Japanese Children Die.

We stopped one day at a pretty and rather modest temple shrine, where sat a clean polled, benevolent looking priest, with big rimmed spectacles astride his little nose. Before and above and about the shrine hung little children's frocks, their tiny shoes, pretty little belts, dolls, and other playthings.

"What is this?" we asked our guide.

"When little children come to die their mothers bring their dresses and playthings here, and put a little money in this box. Every day the priest offers prayers that the little ones may be made happy after death, and have nice things and pretty playthings when they go to stay up there with God."

As we talked, a heart stricken mother came and tossed her coin into the box, and as she placed the little bundle of her dear one's pretty clothes in the tender priestly hand, we thought there was but one thing better than this, the saying, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not."—Japan Letter.

A Curious Negro Superstition.

There is an old "darky" superstition which still holds a place in the minds of a great many of our colored population. When the first thunder storm of the year comes the superstitious negro makes a beeline for the nearest river or creek. He may be seen watching the rolling waters for some time, till at last he spies a dark object on its surface. He grabs it as it floats near the bank. With one exulting exclamation he binds the object around his wrist and goes his way in peace, secure, as he thinks, from the rheumatism and kindred ailments. What was the object? The skin of a water snake. Snakes are said to shed their skins when lightning first appears, and the negro believes that winding a snake skin around his wrist at this time exerts a counteracting influence on nearly all diseases.—Charlotte (N. C.) Chronicle.

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A whole medicine chest in your pocket, with one box of Ayer's Pills. As they operate directly on the stomach and bowels, they indirectly affect every other organ of the body. When the stomach is out of order, the head is affected, digestion fails, the blood becomes impoverished, and you fall an easy victim to any prevalent disease. Miss M. E. Boyle, of Wilkesbarre, Pa., puts the whole truth in a nutshell, when she says: **"I use no other medicine than Ayer's Pills.** They are all that any one needs, and just splendid to save money in doctors' bills."

Here is an instance of

A Physician

who lost his medicine chest, but, having at hand a bottle of Ayer's Pills, found himself fully equipped.—J. Arrison, M. D., of San José, Cal., writes:

"Some three years ago, by the merest accident, I was forced, so to speak, to prescribe Ayer's Cathartic Pills for several sick men among a party of engineers in the Sierra Nevada mountains, my medicine chest having been lost in crossing a mountain torrent. I was surprised and delighted at the action of the Pills, so much so, indeed, that I was led to a further trial of them, as well as of your Cherry Pectoral and Sarsaparilla. I have nothing but praise to offer in their favor."

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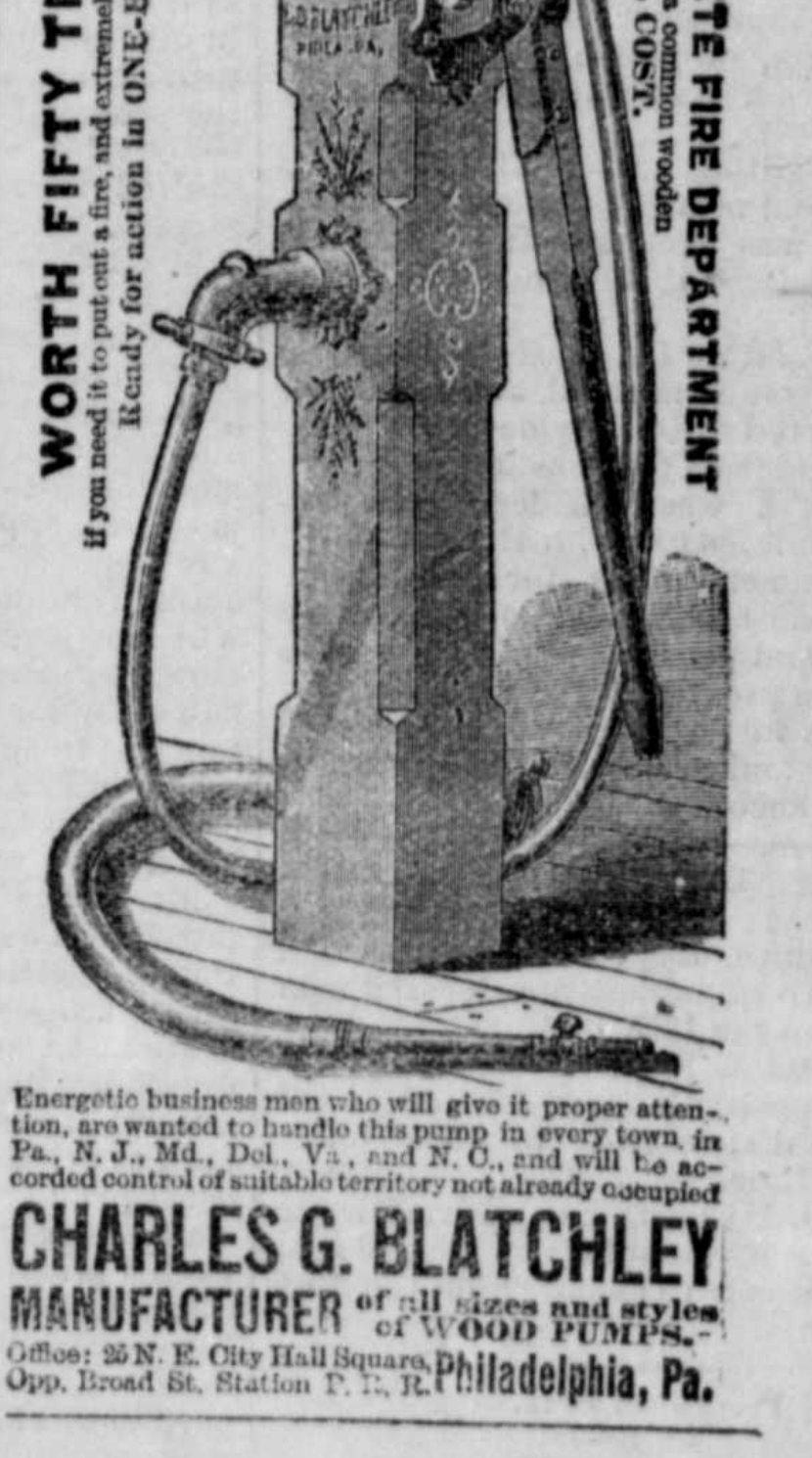
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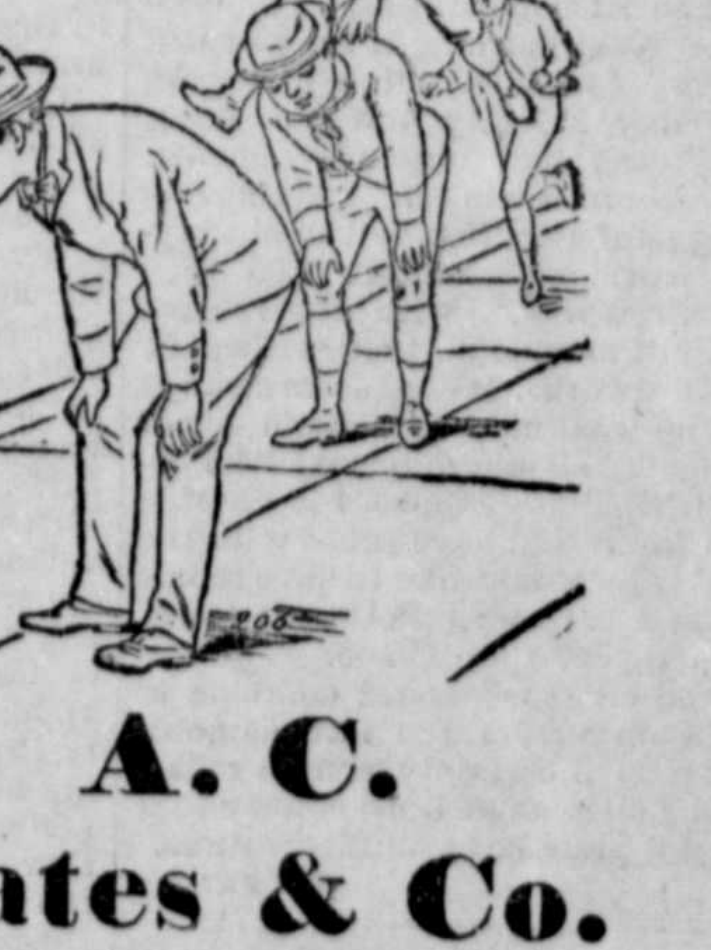

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