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THE BALTIMORE NEWS

When you go to Baltimore be sure to see the largest printing press in the world on exhibition in the 40-foot plate glass window, Calvert and Fayette streets.

A COSTA RICAN VOLCANO.

Pen Picture of Poas and Its Dangerous Surroundings.

On the island of Costa Rico is the remarkable volcano of Poas. The crater has an altitude of about 8,500 feet. The traveler who makes the ascent on reaching the lip of the crater finds himself at the brink of a vast perpendicular sided pit, at the bottom of which lies a motionless pool of yellowish water. The sense of deadly stillness and desolation is undisturbed by any indication of life. The almost vertical walls are devoid of even a vestige of plant creation; not a bird wings its way through the air, the surface of the pool is without a ripple, and even the human voice sounds strange and incongruous. Suddenly the silence is broken by a great and startling underground rumbling, and a huge column of a dark colored liquid is thrown to a vast height from a spot near the center of the lake. The column ordinarily rises to a height varying from 250 to 500 feet. Almost instantly a vast cloud of vapor is evolved which surrounds the column and rises to an immense height.

A thousand feet below the lip is the lake or pool, along the shores of which it is necessary to move about with care because of numerous concealed holes filled with a slimy substance, consisting mainly of sulphate of lime with a large excess of sulphuric acid. This hardens in a few moments when exposed to the air, and consequently the pits are covered with slight shells that render it almost impossible to distinguish between them and solid ground. If a foot goes through this thin crust it will be found that in a few days the shoe will be destroyed, as the seams cannot resist the acid action. The lake at closer view is discovered to be covered with clouds of vapor and it is impossible to see for any distance. Among other gases, sulphur dioxide is present in considerable quantities, and at times the smell becomes almost unbearable.

At close range the water is grayish in color, and it is so acid that it almost burns the tongue when tasted. Any dark cloth moistened with the liquid instantly becomes red and is ultimately destroyed. The temperature at the shore, while varying considerably, ranges around 115 degrees F. During one of the greatest eruptions known a tremendous column of dark liquid rose to an estimated height of 2,600 feet and was about 300 feet in diameter. The waves produced on the lake by such an outburst are formidable, and long after the eruption has ceased the whole crater is filled with the roar of the troubled waters.—Chicago News.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

What is a sign of age in others is, of course, a sign of sense in you.

Some people think they have done their duty if they express a willingness to do it.

Some people in time grow almost famous for hearing of things that never happened.

The average man will stand without hitching a great deal better than if he is tied to a pole.

There is one thing sure—in a home where there is always enough cooked for company they always have it.

How severe a young man is with the love affairs of a widower, and how severe an elderly man is with the love affairs of a young fellow!

The jealousy of the children when mother cuts the pie isn't anything compared with that they feel in later years when father divides it.—Atchison Globe.

One Way to Get a Persian Carpet.

A woman who accompanied her husband up the Khyber pass in Afghanistan tells how she saw a fine Persian carpet and coveted it. An assistant to their host went out and returning said: "My head man says the owner of the carpet is a wicked old man, who will not sell his carpet at any price, but he has gone for the night to sleep in a little village close by, which is beyond British boundary. He wants to know if he shall make a hole in the wall of the mud hut and steal it while the old sinner sleeps. Shall he walk in at once and kill him and take it? He will do whichever memsahib likes." Memsahib, however, discovered that she could live without the carpet after all.

Robin Redbreast.

The country people of England, as well as of several other countries, have an idea that the red of the robin's breast was caused by a drop of blood which fell upon it at the crucifixion. According to the story, the robin, commiserating the condition of Christ, tried to pluck the crown of thorns from his brow, and, in doing so, got its breast wet with the blood flowing from the wounds. The color became permanent, being transmitted from generation to generation, and thus, according to the legend, the robin is a perpetual reminder of the sufferings of Christ.

Snobbishness In Dogs.

A dog fancier once took exception to Professor Huxley's assertion that "one of the most curious peculiarities of the dog mind was its inherent snobbishness, shown by the regard paid to external respectability. The dog who barks furiously at a beggar will let a well dressed man pass him without opposition." He said that, in fact, only dogs of well dressed persons act so. Dogs accustomed to men in rags bark, not at beggars, but at persons clothed in sleek broadcloth.

Kindness.

You may pulverize ice, but it is ice still, but let a sunbeam fall on it and it is soon dissolved. Abuse, however severe and humiliating, never softens men, but kindness will melt the most obdurate.

SIBERIAN HOSPITALITY.

A Charming Visit, With a Somewhat Terrifying Climax.

Detained at the Siberian village of Krivochokovo, M. Jules Legras remembered that he had a letter to a notable of the place and hastened to present it. M. Gautier in his book on Russia describes in M. Legras' own words the cordial hospitality with which he was received and also tells of the difficulty which concluded his charming visit.

"They had detained me till 10 o'clock in the evening," he writes, "by repeating, 'Why are you in a hurry?' and I was on the point of making my departure when I heard the mistress of the house say in a low voice to her husband, 'Shall I send for the carriage?' To which he replied, 'No.' At this word a shiver passed over me. Doubtless this host, who had made me send away the coachman, was unaware of what his refusal meant, else he would have said to me, 'Here is a sofa; sleep here.'

"My situation was perilous, but what could I do? At the end of a few moments I rose to take my leave, and, having asked if I could get a cab, was met with the reply that at this hour none could be obtained.

"Krivochokovo is a village whose population constitutes the very flotsam and jetsam of Siberian civilization. The village has neither streets nor lights nor police. It is considered a cutthroat spot, where honest people shut themselves tight at night.

"I had neither stick nor revolver, and I had on me a large sum of money. Finally, I was ignorant of the exact position of my inn, situated over a mile away. First of all, dogs threw themselves upon me. I shook them off and started as best I could.

"The night was inky black. Amid the irregular clusters of houses there was no regular street by which to guide myself. As I hesitated I heard a 'Who is that?' It was a watchman of a pile of wood who hailed me. He directed me, and, giving me a large branch that would do as a stick, he said: 'You are wrong, barine, to go about this way without a revolver. The place is not safe. May God protect you!'

"As I approached another cluster of houses a watchman sounded his rattle menacingly and dogs flew at me savagely. When this watchman approached I induced him to accompany me. He informed me that the evening before a traveler who was staying at my hotel, having started early to catch a train, had been assassinated about ten paces from there. Finally we reached the inn. It took a long time to make them open the door, but I finally got inside and reached my room, trembling with fever and fatigue, and fell down helplessly, only conscious of having passed an hour and a half whose remembrance will remain with me long. As for my so amiable host, whose hospitality might have cost me my life, he will doubtless never know of this adventure."

Macedonia.

Macedonia, the land of the three streams, Vardar, Struma and Vistritsa, is hemmed in by lofty mountains, of which the best known or the highest are Olympus, Shardagh and Rhodope, the last named rising to between 8,000 and 9,000 feet above the level of the sea. It is among the most picturesque countries of Europe, abounding in magnificent forests, which climb hills, fringe rivers and cover islands; in wild mountain scenes, wonderful waterfalls, silent, sailless lakes—an appropriate setting for gems of emerald islets, deep gorges, dizzy mountain paths, smiling plains and desolate passes, which ought to prove an irresistible attraction to the traveler who regards genuine danger and real discomfort as the appropriate condiment of pleasure.

The Shaving Brush.

It is likely that the best shaving brush ever made sheds more or less hairs. To prevent this take an elastic band, neither too heavy nor too light; cut it once (not in two), and, holding one end firmly on the handle, wind the rubber around the bristles as close up to the handle as you can, stretching taut as you wind. When you come to the end tie a simple flat knot (not a granny knot) or else lose the end. By careful winding a very neat job can be done, and the bristles can be worn down to the socket without losing a hair.

A Work of Art.

Miss Knox—There goes Bess Mugley. Miss Bright—Yes, she played the part of the heroine in the private theatricals at the church. Miss Knox—Gracious! Did she have the face to play the heroine? Miss Bright—No, but the costumer fixed one up for her.—Philadelphia Press.

Obedient.

"Now, Tommy," said the mother of a small boy as she paused in the disciplinary slipper exercise, "what made you eat the whole of that pie?"

"'C-cause," sobbed Tommy, "you t-told me to n-never do t-things by h-halves."—Chicago News.

She Got the Blessing.

"That young groom," said the minister after the ceremony, "gave me a fifty dollar fee. What a blessing!"

"Yes," said his wife, with her hand out, "it is more blessed to give than to receive."—Exchange.

Strangers.

Mrs. de Fashion (at a children's party)—Marie! Nursegirl—Yes, ma'am. Mrs. de Fashion—It's time for us to go home. Which of these children is mine?—Home Chat.

Nature is an æolian harp, a musical instrument whose tones are the reecho of higher strings within us.—Novalis.

IN THE NITRATE COUNTRY.

Industry of the Barren, Dusty Deserts of South America.

In his "Commercial Traveler In South America" Frank Wiborg writes: "We stopped at a number of the nitrate towns—Pisagua, Iquique, Autofagasta—and I visited some of the mills, or officinas, in order to see something of the industry. Deposits of the crude nitrate of soda, called here 'caliche,' are found in the pampa, or rolling plateau, beyond the first range of foothills. In some places this plateau is but ten miles from the coast, in others as far as fifty miles. The pampa is an utterly barren desert. On the surface there is nothing to tempt the heart of man, but a few feet down lies the nitrate stratum. This presents much the appearance of rock salt and varies in color, according to the purity of the deposit, from a whitish tint to a dark gray. The upper earth is blown away with dynamite, and then the caliche is dug out with pick and shovel, loaded on iron carts and carried up to the mills.

"Here the caliche is first broken into small pieces by heavy crushers and then put into large boiling vats. Inside these vats are coils of steam pipes, by means of which the temperature can be regulated accurately. Sea water is poured in, and the caliche is boiled for a certain time. The liquid solution that results is drawn off into settling vats, which are exposed to the open air and the sun. Evaporation is rapid, and the pure nitrate of soda soon begins crystallizing and settling to the bottom. After this has gone on for some time the remaining liquid is drawn off and the crust of nitrate is scraped from the sides and bottom of the vat and thoroughly dried in the sun. Then it is graded according to quality and packed for shipment in 100 pound sacks.

"Most of the nitrate exported is used as a fertilizer, but a part goes to the manufacture of powder and high explosives. The nitrate towns are even barer and drier and less inviting than most of the other bare, dry towns of the coast. To some of them fresh water is brought in pipes from a distance of more than 100 miles. Before the day of these pipes it used to be sold in the streets by the gallon. That water even now, though not scarce, yet is not plentiful, is perhaps some excuse for the awful dust that blows everywhere."

THE DEVIL'S CODE.

Legend of a Monk, Satan and a Quick Night's Work.

Stockholm's public library contains a wonderful work which is called "The Devil's Code" and which, in addition to its extraordinary name, is said to be the biggest manuscript in the world. Every letter is most beautifully drawn, and the magnitude of the work is so great that it seems impossible for any single monk to have done it.

The story of the origin of the manuscript, however, not only gives it as the work of one man, but also states it to be the work of a single night. The story runs as follows:

"A poor monk had been condemned to death, but was told mockingly by his judges that if he was able to copy the whole 'Code' between darkness and dawn he would be saved. Relying upon the impossibility of the task, those who sentenced him furnished him with the original copy of the 'Code,' with pen, ink and parchment, and left him.

"Death must have been as little liked in the middle ages as it is now, for the monk, forgetting the hopelessness of his task, commenced it. Before long, however, he saw that he could not save his own life by such weak exertions, and, fearing a cruel and horrible death, he invoked the aid of the prince of darkness, promising to surrender his soul if he were assisted in the task.

"The devil kindly obliged by appearing on the spot, accepted the contract and sat down to the work, and next morning 'The Devil's Code' was finished, the monk being found dead. The copying clerk from the infernal regions presumably fled away with the poor man's soul as soon as the wicked compact was finished."—Pearson's Weekly.

Embarrassing.

A New York judge, speaking of a mistake that had been made, said: "It might have been embarrassing—as embarrassing as the position of a young man of Toledo whom I heard about the other day. He had been calling now and then on a young lady, and one night as he sat in the parlor waiting for her to come down her mother entered the room instead and asked him in a very grave, stern way what his intentions were. He turned very red and was about to stammer some incoherent reply when suddenly the young lady called down from the head of the stairs, 'Mamma, mamma, that is not the one!'"

Remembered the Text.

A little Topeka girl came home from church the other day and was asked what the minister's text was. "I know it all right," she asserted. "Well, repeat it," her questioner demanded. "Don't be afraid and I will get you a bedquilt," was the astonishing answer. Investigation proved that the central thought of the sermon had been, "Fear not, and I will send you a comforter."—Kansas City Journal.

End of His Dream.

"I thought you said you were going to have a den in your new house."

"Yes, I did expect to, but after it had gone so far that we couldn't change things my wife discovered that she would need another closet."—Chicago Record-Herald.

A great lie is like a great fish on dry land; it may fret and fling and make a frightful bother, but it cannot hurt you. You have only to keep still and it will die of itself.—Crabbe.

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