Pepper Popular

Black pepper is the most widely used of all spices. There was a queer medieval belief that black pepper came from a forest that had been burned over. When means of transportation were not well developed, and when the monotony of a smaller choice of foods made spices even more desirable than they are now, there must have been a tremendous interest in the caravans from the East that made spices one of their chief commodities. Pepper they brought from the East Indies, although it is now cultivated in other tropical countries. It is the dried fruit of a vinelike tree.

What, Ever?

"Here you are, then," wrote Oliver Wendell Holmes, on the subject of rowing, in the year 1858, "here you are, then, afloat with a body a rod and a half long, with arms, or wings, as you may choose to call them, stretching more than 20 feet from tip to tip, every volition of yours extending as perfectly into them as if your spinal cord ran down the center of your boat, and the nerves of your arms tingled as far as the broad blades of your oars.

"This, in sober earnest, is the nearest approach to flying that man has ever made or perhaps ever will make."—Autocrat of the Breakfast Table.

Operas

Grove's Dictionary of Music gives the following information concerning the difference between certain types of opera: Comic opera—a term used indiscriminately to denote a musico-dramatic work of an amusing nature. It is not the English equivalent to the French opera-comique, for that term includes works into which seriousness and even tragedy may enter; the type is rather the opera bouffe. Light opera is a term often employed for works in which sentiment counts for more than high spirits, although the latter is not necessarily absent. Grand opera is an opera with continuous music and of a serious nature.

Great Snakes!

Pudden's spider is descended from spiders which dwelt up our way and learnt the trick from the carpet snakes.

Old ma carpet snake stands on her tail straight on end. Her young 'uns climb up the old girl and dispose themselves at intervals in a first-class imitation of a dry shrub. As birds settle on this inviting roost they are affectionately embraced by the wriggler, borne to earth and devoured at leisure.

There was a dickens of a row when our dog chased a couple of cats up the outfit.—Sydney Bulletin.

Famous Painting

Gainsborough's picture, "The Blue Boy," is a portrait of Jonathan Butfall, son of a rich London merchant, and it was painted in 1779. Blue and brown predominate. According to tradition, Gainsborough painted it to confute the dictum of Sir Joshua Reynolds in his eighth "Discourse," in which he said in part: "It ought to be indispensably observed that the masses of light in a picture be always of a warm mellow color, yellow, red or a yellowish white, and that the blue, the gray or the green colors be kept almost entirely out of these masses and be used only to support or set off these warm colors. . . . Let the light be cold and the surrounding color warm, as we often see in the works of the Roman and Florentine painters, and it will be out of the power of art, even in the hands of Rubens and Titian, to make a picture splendid and harmonious."

Indian Tribes Shifted

From 1817 to 1840, the great southern tribes of Indians were removed to the Indian territory from Georgia, Alabama, Florida and Mississippi. These tribes were the Cherokees, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Creeks and Seminoles. These Indians held slaves and during the Civil war all of these tribes joined the Confederacy. They were compelled by the treaties of 1866 to cede to the United States much of their western lands upon which they had established no settlements, as a home for friendly Indians of other tribes.

Trumpeter's Guilt

A trumpeter during a battle ventured too near the enemy and was captured by them. They were about to proceed to put him to death when he begged them to hear his plea for mercy. "I do not fight," said he, "and indeed carry no weapon; I only blow this trumpet, and surely that cannot harm you; then why should you kill me?" "You may not fight, yourself," said the others, "but you encourage and guide your men to the fight." Words may be deeds.—Aesop.

Earliest Flour Mills

The first water wheel was erected in Ireland about 260 A. D. at the command of King Cormac in order to lighten the labors of a beautiful bondmaiden. In a few centuries they became quite common. Thus was introduced into Ireland the mill for grinding grain. Such mills were owned by lords, who demanded a percentage of the grain sent to be ground. Private ownership of these mills and of the quern, an everyday implement for grinding grain in the family, was forbidden.

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Jim Makes a Discovery

By JESSIE DOUGLAS

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GRACE LUTTRELL made a wistful little figure as she sat on the front porch steps in the soft light of a night in May. Across the still air came the far-away strains of music. By leaning over the edge of the steps you could just see one distant but brightly lighted window of the Students' Club building where the dance was going on. Your eye had to squint through some leafy branches and dodge around the corner of an intervening building, but this could be done and you were rewarded by the sight of flitting figures, much too far away to be recognized, but thrilling none the less and always moving, moving, gliding, turning.

"Oh, me, I do wish I were over there dressed in my little pink georgette," she said to the stars. "Wonder why the university crowd never asks me."

Grace did not know much about college snobbishness. She did not know that no matter how sweet and pretty and nice you are if your mother is a widow and has to take roomers to make an honest living you are socially nobody and social nobodies, be they ever so sweet and pretty and nice, do not often get asked to fraternity dances.

The girl sighed again as she sat there, then suddenly her mood changed and she jumped up and went running into the house. In the living room sat big Jim Young, football hero and crack student, the pride of the university known to the gang as the only man in captivity who had turned down a bid to join a frat.

"I belong to the university," he explained. "I'd rather feel like a brother to the whole crowd than just to be a member of a little clique." That ended it as far as he was concerned. And now on the eve of his graduation he promised to carry off most of the college honors.

"What's the matter, Grace?" he asked quickly as the daughter of his landlady came in, her eyes glistening with what looked suspiciously like tears to him.

"I've been listening to the music over at the Students' club and I feel as if I'd absolutely die if I didn't get a chance to go just once before school's out."

"You poor little kid," he sympathized. "I tell you what. I'm a rotten poor dancer—all feet, you know—but if you want to we'll run over. You slip on your prettiest frock and I'll go climb into my tux and we'll go."

Grace was upstairs in a jiffy, and in two more jiffies she was down again, but not before Jim had rushed into the living room wriggling into his coat on the way.

It was during intermission that they arrived at the Students' club and all eyes turned toward them.

Grace felt her success at once and joy sang in her heart. Small and light on her feet she made a delightful dancing partner and soon found herself being whirled out of one man's arms into those of another.

"Darn these tag dances," grumbled McAllister, one of her partners. "I bet we don't get two steps before somebody breaks."

At that moment Jim came up and took her away.

"Say, will you give me a date tomorrow evening?" called McAllister as she moved off in Jim's arms.

In answer Grace smiled and nodded warmly.

"I'd like to know what I brought you down here for," grumbled Jim crossly. "They've almost cut me out entirely. Let's get outside and take a walk."

Grace's feet were killing her in her little new satin slippers, but not for worlds would she show it by so much as one tiny limp so she walked by his side along the tree-bordered road that skirted the campus.

"Grace, I guess I must have been blind all these four years," he said at last, "but I came to my senses tonight. Don't let that McAllister fellow have a date with you tomorrow because I'm going home in a couple of weeks and I want all the evenings you've got. Seems to me I ought to have some rights."

"But that Mr. Foster—Forester, what's his name? asked me to the prom next Thursday and Mr. Jenkins to a 'movie' day after tomorrow, and—"

"Never mind what they asked you to," Jim broke in. "You and I are practically engaged and you can't go dating every cake-eating lounge lizard in college. You're mine, Grace," he said, putting his arm around her rather fiercely. "From the beginning of time we were intended for each other and you must have known it all along. I have if you haven't."

And Jim really believed it. That night in the quietness of his own bedroom he was perfectly certain that he had always been in love with pretty, dainty little Grace Luttrell, but Grace had no such illusions.

"Life's just the suddenest sort of thing," she marveled. "What do you suppose made him fall for me like that?"

She did not realize that a little competition adds spice to life and that we often have to see our friends through the eyes of others before we can truly appreciate them.

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French Beggars Flock to Their Special Mass

The great church of Sacre Coeur (Sacred Heart) on the heights of Montmartre, Paris, has a feature that could not be duplicated in any other church in the world. Every Sunday morning at eight o'clock there is "Beggars' Mass." Painfully climbing the steps come hundreds of the down-and-outs of Paris, some hatless and shoeless, others in rags and still others bent over with physical infirmities. But they are proud of their special service, and the mass is said to them by the chief dignitary of the church. The service is complete in everything but the collection. As the poor go out each receives 25 centimes—a nickel in the old days—and a card good for a large piece of bread. On special church days the gift is increased, and the attendance is larger. An office is also maintained to help them get work. Speaking of these Sunday services a church dignitary said: "If there remains a spark under the ashes it may be fanned to flame. Many there are who owe to their coming here the straightening of a broken life."—Pathfinder Magazine.

Romance of Brownings Throve on Mere Words

By modern standards, says David Loth in "The Brownings," Robert Browning and Elizabeth Barrett starved their love cruelly. A handclasp was beyond all Robert's daring. A kiss was something mentioned in poetry but never attempted in real life. However, they derived a certain pleasure from the realization that their love could thrive on a diet of mere words. And of words they were prodigal indeed. Over the exchange of a lock of hair they lavished enough of ingenuity and lyrical expression to have made a trunkful of the kind of plays Robert wrote.

His letter suggesting that she trust him with a wisp of black curl was a masterpiece of dignified pleading worthy of a request for a couple of dukedoms and a principality. He felt greatly daring, and well he might. An admirer of Ba's poetry had only three weeks before made a similar though not so elegantly phrased plea.

"I am too great a prude for such a thing," she answered.

Probable Age of Earth

The Naval observatory says that it is believed that the solar system has existed in approximately its present form for many millions of years; but from our present knowledge on this subject we cannot state what may have been its condition at any definite period in the remote past, such as 500,000,000 years ago. A recent estimate, found in "Astronomy," by Russell, Dugan and Stewart, gives the earth's age as possibly some four or five billion years, but this is subject to future revision if other factors in the problem become known. It is supposed that the day was formerly somewhat shorter, and the moon somewhat nearer the earth than at present.

Noise May Grow

A great deal of the noise which assails our ears in a busy city, for instance, is not only due to the constantly increasing use of machinery but because the type of building construction now used tends to prolong and transmit noises. A bare plastered wall, for example, reflects noises better than a mirror reflects light. If you clap your hands together in a bare plastered room, more than 95 per cent of the noise will be reflected from the wall. The sound of the hand clap will, therefore, persist for several seconds. This phenomenon of reverberation causes noises to be built up and retained "alive" in a room in such a way that their intensity is actually increased.

American "Penny Press"

The History of American Journalism states that the precursor of the penny press was the Daily Evening Transcript, established in Boston July 24, 1830, by Lynde M. Walter. While this paper was not sold on the streets for one penny, it was quoted at the extremely low rate of $4 per annum. Probably the first daily that was actually sold for one cent was the Cent of Philadelphia, published in the same year as the Daily Evening Transcript in Boston. In New York city the idea was first conceived by Dr. Horatio David Shepard.

Rigid Tests for Drivers

In Berlin candidates for places as bus drivers must pass a series of very rigid tests. When the applicant has complied with all other requirements he is placed at a steering wheel and confronted with a moving picture screen in which appears a procession of busses and other vehicles, a runaway horse, some old ladies scurrying back and forth and an occasional "jay walker." If the candidate avoids all these obstacles satisfactorily he gets the job.

Tree Belfries

Many of the first Christian church bells were fastened in tall trees that stood near the church, writes Satis N Coleman in his book, "Bells." Even today, in some villages of Russia and other countries, the bell hangs on the branches of a tall tree in the churchyard. In Iceland the bell usually is placed in the "lych gate," a covered entrance to the graveyard. The tree belfry once was common in Scotland and Ireland.

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Sally Deposited the Rubbish

By LEETE STONE

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SALLY GREEN had a distinct feeling of mental ease, of self-respect, of independence. She was a neat symbol of the modern business woman well up in her quest for success.

Ringing the elevator bell, she patted her handbag possessively, and hugged it closer under her arm. It contained two important envelopes. One, her week's salary, substantially raised recenty; the other, a firm, unqualified refusal of Alfred Brown's proposal of marriage.

Marriage? Flatly, no. Her sister's home life was ever before her; a drab existence presided over by a domineering husband. Threading a tortuous way toward the "L," Sally's sense of satisfaction grew, and the picture of her cozy rooms in Wellington court rose warmly to her mind. Soon a swift elevator would lift her to the sky floor; she would suffuse the tasteful apartment with soft, yellow light, fuss around a little, dine in the excellent restaurant downstairs, return and read luxuriously until twelve.

The mere thought was an allure beside which marriage grew pale and dull. An egotistical, smoke smelling man who in all likelihood snored, held no attraction for her as a permanent acquisition to her seemly menage. Babies? Oh, well! They had so many disagreeable habits beside squalling.

Sally opened her bag, frowning as she saw the letter rejecting Alfred Brown's proffer of devotion—still unposted. She had meant to drop it in the office chute. Well, there were two street boxes on her way from the station to Wellington court.

Seated in the train, she opened her evening paper with a crisp flourish. It was after rush hour and the car was but half occupied. A man and a girl entered and sat opposite Sally's corner. Looking up to turn a page she glimpsed the way these two smiled at each other in silence.

The man opposite fished a pencil and an envelope from his pocket and figured. He spoke plainly. Sally easily heard:

"Let's see how we stand, Mary. What have we spent? The table was $35. Don't you think we were wise not to get the two armchairs? The four small ones will do." His left hand stole over to pat the girl's slim hands, lying in her lap.

Sally Green endeavored to concentrate on the theatrical page before her; but each word of the couple opposite tapped insistently on her hard-won shell of independence and aloofness to matters marital.

Again interested, happy tones from over the way assailed and leaped Sally's mental barrier. The girl spoke.

"I think that chair you wish for me is rather too expensive, Fred. The one at Myer's would do just as well, and it's four dollars cheaper."

"Listen to me, little girl," countered the man, "I want you to have a good-looking chair for your desk, one that will be comfortable and permanent. Twenty dollars isn't too much. You let me attend to prices, my dear, while you stand by with the artistic advice on form and line—eh what?" Another gentle pat that Sally sensed rather than saw.

She could not put the two out of mind. Two children "playing house" who did not forsee the stern ordeal that stretched down the years. Ah, well, she, Sally Green, preferred the world of bigger things, of curt, serious business, of striving shoulder to shoulder with ruthless, keen-eyed men of finance.

Sally felt the suggestion of a shiver pervading her. The car was overheated. She could not explain this sensation of chill unless it came from somewhere deep inside her.

The man and girl across the way touched shoulders; he covered both her hands with one of his, looked deep in her eyes, smiled, and said: "Mary, old girl, I've got a surprise for you when we get home." It was not the words; it was the tender, caring quality of his voice that dug into Sally's soul. But she administered another mental shaking, more severe than the previous ones, rose as the train stood still at her station, and made her exit without a glance at the devoted pair.

Nevertheless, it would be rather fun to catch just a glimpse of the little nest of Fred and Mary; Mary at her desk and Fred sprawled out in a big leather armchair; but no! Merely glamor!

Abreast the first post box on her way home Sally reached up to mail her refusal to Alfred Brown. Chock full—the box; not space to squeeze another missive in its bulging mouth.

So she held the letter, ready to post at her home corner. A subconscious urge made her stare through a warmly lighted window in passing. Sally saw a woman lifting a fluffy baby from its crib and hand it to a tall man.

Again she visioned that tweed-clad arm and its loving gesture; again this flash of a woman, a baby, and a man holding it so gently.

What was this queer shiver that surged again from her toes to her finger tips? There! The post box just ahead! Sally reached for the metal flap . . . the hand with the letter sagged to her side . . . deft fingers tore the letter into four squares and Sally dropped them into a green curb can titled:

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