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Magnitude of Stars.

The brighter a star is the smaller the number representing its magnitude, and consequently a star of the first magnitude is brighter than one of the second, and one of the second magnitude is two magnitudes brighter than one of the fourth. In the same way stars brighter than the first magnitude can be represented by numbers smaller than one, by decimals, or even by negative numbers. Sirius is of the 1.4 magnitude, Vega of 0.2 magnitude. Our sun is a star of the 26.5 magnitude, and it gives us 10,000,000,000 times as much light as Sirius. If the sun were twice as far away from us as it is it would give only one-quarter as much light. If it were 100,000 times farther off than it is its light would be the same intensity as that of Sirius. But even at this enormous distance the sun would be only about one-sixth as far away as Sirius exactly lies. In other words, Sirius shines with a luster fully thirty times that of our sun.—New York World.

How Fast of Ramadan Begins.

Since the Mohammedan year is composed of lunar months, the beginning of the fast is dependent upon the appearance of the new moon. The word of the almanac is not taken as true evidence, and before the mufti, the highest Moslem official in the nation, declares the fast to have begun two Mohammedans must appear before him and swear that they have seen the new moon. In precisely the same manner the fact comes to a close. The mufti proclaims a three days' feast whenever the next new moon is seen by two of the faithful. One year the moon was visible in upper Egypt the night before it was observed in Cairo. Two Mohammedans up the Nile telegraphed the fact to the mufti, asking him to announce the feast. This he refused to do on the ground that a telegram could not take the place of two Moslem witnesses.—Christian Herald.

Old Daddy Longlegs.

Everybody is well acquainted with the insect called "daddy longlegs," but not everybody knows that there is evidence to show that this strange little creature, towering high upon its thread-like stilts, is probably a more ancient inhabitant of America than any representative of the human species. Far back in tertiary time, at the very dawn of the modern world, its ancestors lived, we are told, in great numbers in that part of the continent which we call Colorado. The fossil remains of these insects show the characteristic features that mark them today, although new species have taken the place of the old, for even "daddy longlegs" knows what evolution is and has attained to something that in his view is perhaps a kind of civilized existence suitable to the exigencies of life in the twentieth century.—Harper's Weekly.

The Tea Chewers.

"Chewing tea comes from Siam," said a traveler. "They call it mieng. It is in a plug, like chewing tobacco, and it has a villainous smell. This smell is due to the fermentation it has undergone. The tea that the Siamese employ for chewing purposes is a very coarse, rank plant. It is gathered like ordinary tea, but the leaves after being compressed into plugs are buried for fifteen days. They ferment during burial. On their resurrection they are very, very fragrant indeed. The Siamese boatmen chew tea. The rickshaw men chew it. The litterateurs chew it. They say it makes them work better. This is probably the truth, for I chewed a plug myself in Anam, and it exhilarated me strangely. But the aftermath was bad—a headache, smarting eyes and nervous depression."—Washington Post.

When Tolstoy Tried to Fly.

From earliest childhood Tolstoy was remarkably observant of the things that were going on in the world around him. Thus, while still in his teens, we find him taking an interest in the art of flying that was too practical to suit his devoted mother. With characteristic thoroughness he invented a design of his own and with equally characteristic courage proceeded to put it to an immediate test from a second story window. But the boy, who was afterward to find food for thought for the whole civilized world, was not destined to make his mark as an infant aeroplanist. He fell instantly to the ground, and, though by great good fortune no bones were actually broken, the concussion was so great that young Tolstoy afterward slept for sixteen hours on end.

Death.

Death, the dry pedant, spares neither the rose nor the thistle, nor does he forget the solitary blade of grass in the distant waste. He destroys thoroughly and unceasingly. Everywhere we may see how he crushes to dust plants and beasts, men and their works. Even the Egyptian pyramids, that would seem to defy him, are trophies of his power, monuments of decay, graves of primeval kings.—Heinrich Heine.

Pa's Idea.

"What was the trouble at the building of the tower of Babel, pa?"

"I'm not certain, but I think it was between the union and the nonunion workmen."—New York Press.

Serious Intentions.

Nellie—Hasn't Mr. Felewatley proposed yet? Nora—No, but he has gone as far as to ask what time we have breakfast and whether mother is a good cook.—Exchange.

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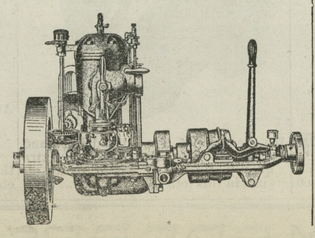

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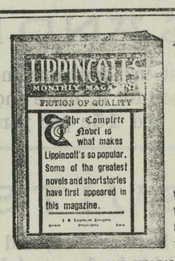

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