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THE OBSERVING ROBIN.

How Does the Bird Know Just Where to Bore For Grubs?

I once observed a robin boring for grubs in a country dooryard. It is a common enough sight to witness one seize an angleworm and drag it from its burrow in the turf, but I am not sure that I ever before saw one drill for grubs and bring the big white morsel to the surface. The robin I am speaking of had a nest of young in a maple near by, and she worked the neighborhood very industriously for food. She would run along over the short grass after the manner of robins, stopping every few feet, her form stiff and erect. Now and then she would suddenly bend her head toward the ground and bring eye or ear for a moment to bear intently upon it. Then she would spring to boring the turf vigorously with her bill, changing her attitude at each stroke, alert and watchful, throwing up the grass roots and little jets of soil, stabbing deeper and deeper, growing every moment more and more excited, till finally a fat grub was seized and brought forth. Time after time during several days I saw her mine for grubs in this way and drag them forth. How did she know where to drill? The insect was in every case an inch below the surface. Did she hear it gnawing the roots of the grasses or did she see a movement in the turf beneath which the grub was at work? I know not. I only know that she struck her game unerringly each time. Only twice did I see her make a few thrusts and then desist, as if she had been for the moment deceived. —John Burroughs in Outing.

COQUELIN'S REPLY.

How the French Actor Got Into the Sub Rosa Club.

One of the most famous of the Quartier Latin clubs in Paris is the one which is called the Sub Rosa.

The elder Coquelin, the great actor, was present one night at the club's weekly feast and applied for membership. Now, the only rules of the Sub Rosa men are: "Think much. Write little. Be as silent as you can." The presiding officer, with this last rule in mind, answered the applicant by placing before him a tumbler filled so full of water that another drop would have caused it to run over. Coquelin understood. The club membership was obviously full.

Over the table was suspended a rose, the club emblem. While the glass still stood before him Coquelin broke a petal from the flower and laid it so gently on the water that not a single drop escaped. A silent man could join and make no trouble.

Around the table ran a ripple of smiles and little hand claps and nods of approval, and then, as if of one accord, all began making bread balls. Then a cup was passed from hand to hand and each deposited his "ballot" in it, and all were found to be round. Not one had been pressed flat in sign of disapproval. So Coquelin joined the Sub Rosa club.—Warwick James Price in Success.

His Cottage His Castle.

The right of every Englishman to consider his cottage as his castle was never but once questioned, and that was by a London magistrate who was presiding in an action for trespass.

"My client," said the barrister in making his plea, "is a poor man—he lives in a hovel, and this miserable dwelling is in a forlorn and dilapidated state—but still, thank God, the laborer's cottage, however ruinous its plight, is still his sanctuary and his castle. Yes, the winds may enter it, and the rains may enter it, but the king cannot enter it."

"What! Not the reigning king?" asked the joke loving judge.

Feared the Worst.

Friday Vizer, a familiar negro about town in a certain part of Mississippi, had been found dead, and, being a member of no church or lodge—very unusual for a negro—there was no one to pray for his soul in the great beyond. A few old intimates, however, carried the body to the cemetery in a rude pine coffin, and Bob McRaven, one of the number, an old "befo' de wah darky," was called upon for a few remarks. Bob removed his hat and stepped reverently and sadly toward the open grave and in solemn, funereal tones said:

"Friday Vizer, you is gone. We hopes you is gone whar we s'pects you ain't!" —Lippincott's Magazine.

True Greatness.

True greatness, first of all, is a thing of the heart. It is all alive with robust and generous sympathies. It is neither behind its age nor too far before it. It is up with its age and ahead of it only just so far as to be able to lead its march. It cannot slumber, for activity is a necessity of its existence. It is no reservoir, but a fountain.—Roswell D. Hitchcock.

Both Strong.

"For a moment," he related, "I held my breath"—

"My," she interrupted admiringly, "how strong you must be!"

He edged away, blushed and felt in his vest pocket for a clove.—Cleveland Leader.

Disagreeable Economy.

Husband—You are not economical. Wife—Well, if you don't call a woman economical who saves her wedding dress for a possible second marriage I'd like to know what you think economy is like.—San Francisco Bulletin.

His Line of Reasoning.

"What reason does he give for not paying his wife alimony?"

"He says that marriage is a lottery and hence alimony is a gambling debt." —Collier's Weekly.

SPIDER SILK.

Its Wonderful Strength, Elasticity and Lasting Quality.

The astronomer after the experience of many years has found that the spider furnishes the only thread which can be successfully used in carrying on his work, writes Ambrose Swazey in the Scientific American.

The spider lines mostly used are from one-fifth to one-seventh of a thousandth of an inch in diameter, and, in addition to their strength and elasticity, they have the peculiar property of withstanding great changes of temperature, and often when measuring the sun spots, although the heat is so intense as to crack the lenses of the micrometer eyepiece, yet the spider lines are not in the least injured.

The threads of the silkworm, although of great value as a commercial product, are so coarse and rough compared with the silk of the spider that they cannot be used in such instruments.

Spider lines, although but a fraction of a thousandth of an inch in diameter, are made up of several thousands of microscopic streams of fluid, which unite and form a single line, and it is because of this that they remain true and round under the highest magnifying power.

A SCHOOLBOY'S DECISION.

Different, It Might Have Changed the World's History.

"When Charles Wesley, one of the founders of Methodism, was at school a gentleman of the same name introduced himself by letter to the boy's father and declared his intention of making Charles his heir," says a writer. "From that time forth the benefactor discharged the boy's liability at school and behaved as the handsomest Santa Claus all the year round. After some years the incognito asked the boy if he would accompany him to Ireland. Charles eventually decided against going. The stranger went his way alone. In Ireland he struck up an acquaintance with a person who adopted his name of Wesley, or Wellesley, became the first Earl of Mornington, grandfather of the Marquis of Wellesley and of the Duke of Wellington. Had Charles Wesley accompanied his benefactor to Ireland there had been no Methodist church, British India might still have been menaced by foes, even if it remained British at all; Napoleon would never have met his Waterloo, and England might have become an appanage of France. All this turned upon the decision of a schoolboy."

ORIGIN OF LLOYD'S.

Humble Beginning of Europe's Great Maritime Agency.

Two centuries ago a man who had a cargo to send to the Mediterranean contrived to get rid of some of the risk by inducing a friend to take an interest with him. It was necessary to write out a statement of contract to which the guarantors subscribed. This was the first underwriting. These two men happened to be frequenters of Lloyd's coffee house in London, which was a favorite place for the merchants of the town to gather to discuss business or to gossip.

Others immediately saw the advantage of the scheme which their colleagues had devised, and on the next voyage the risk was parceled out among a larger number of the patrons of the coffee house.

Out of this small beginning has grown the great European maritime agency, still bearing the name of the humble coffee house proprietor, and which not only writes risks on vessels, but rates them and publishes their arrivals at every port the world over, no matter how small or how remotely situated.—From "The Annals of the American Academy."

A Factory Chapel.

For more than half a century the lace manufacturing firm of Messrs. Thomas Adams & Co., Nottingham, England, have insisted on all their work people, who number some hundreds of both sexes, attending a short service each morning prior to commencing their day's work. The firm have a large chapel underneath their warehouse, with an excellent organ, while the choir, composed of their own employees, is one that would do credit to many of our leading places of worship. A local clergyman attends each morning for the service, which usually lasts about half an hour, and a sermon is preached three times a week.

Dog Announces Crossings.

A blind man and a spaniel dog leading him with the aid of chain furnished a curious sight on Chestnut street the other day. Pedestrians looked on in amazement, and many followed the blind man and his friend to see if anything curious would happen when they reached a street crossing. Strange enough, the dog barked when the curbstone was reached and in that way informed the blind man that he should be careful and step down.—Philadelphia Press.

Chance For a Bargain.

Wife—Henry, dear! Husband—Well? Wife—I want to make a bargain with you. If you will let me have £2 this afternoon I will let you do £3 worth of grumbling about my extravagance. —London Tit-Bits.

Hereditary.

Mrs. Maguire—'Tis Mary Ann O'Reilly thot's th' foine pianny player intoire-ly! Mrs. Clancy—Shure, an' no wonder! Isn't her Uncle Barney a pianny mover?—Judge.

"The reason," said Uncle Thomas, "that some stupid men get along better than some smart ones is that they don't keep talkin' all the time and makin' enemies."

SOOTHING A HORSE.

The Animal's Easy Introduction to a Steam Street Roller.

In one of the broad uptown thoroughfares a few days ago a mounted patrolman encountered a steam roller in action, and the horse was terribly frightened. It reared and balked and then made angles across the street, first one way and then the other, until the policeman jumped off and tried coaxing. Leading his mount step by step in the direction of the roller, which had come to a standstill, he petted the animal and talked to it, urging it forward.

"A fine horse like you to be afraid of a steam roller," said the policeman. The horse pricked up its ears and ventured ahead another step or two.

"Come, now; come along. You can't be a policeman and be afraid of a bit of iron. Now come on, good boy."

The horse made a few more steps forward.

"Come on," continued the policeman. "Now, then, be good. The department can't afford to be giving $300 apiece for horses that haven't any nerve. Come on, now."

Coaxing it along in this way with infinite patience, the officer after several minutes got the animal up to the roller. The horse daintily put forward one foot and tapped the front of the iron wheel, waited a moment and, finding that the machine did not kick or run, reared contemptuously and tapped the object with both feet, then wheeled and walked quietly away. The policeman remounted, and it is safe to say that horse will never bother about a steam roller again.—New York Post.

HISTORY OF SHOES.

In No Article of Attire Have More Vagaries Been Shown.

Shoes or their equivalent are of a certainty even more ancient than gloves, for they were a necessity of locomotion, while the other was but a luxury. Sometimes they were made of skins, sometimes of papyrus, as in Egypt. Often they were gilded and decked with jewels, and the most expert artists of the day were employed to decorate the foot coverings of wealthy patricians, consuls, emperors and their favorites. In no article of attire have more vagaries been shown. Today a lady who desires to be considered in the height of fashion wears shoes pointed as much as possible, but in the time of Queen Mary the taste was all the other way, and it was found necessary to issue a royal proclamation prohibiting shoes with toes wider than six inches. But perhaps the most extraordinary development in the way of footgear were the "chopines" introduced by the ladies of Venice to make themselves taller than they really were. The articles were really a kind of stilts made of wood and leather and sometimes reached the absurd height of twelve inches. Even a trained acrobat would have difficulty in walking on such things, and ordinary women had such trouble with them that when they attempted a promenade they required the assistance of a servant at each side and another behind to keep them from falling.—From Redfern's "Royal and Historic Shoes."

Thaddeus Stevens' Wit.

When Thaddeus Stevens had taken to his bed for the last time a visitor told him he was looking well. "Oh, John," was the quick reply, "it is not my appearance, but my disappearance, that troubles me!" One day a member of the house of representatives who was noted for his uncertain course on all questions and who confessed that he never investigated a point under discussion without finding himself a neutral asked for leave of absence. "Mr. Speaker," said Stevens, "I do not rise to object, but to suggest that the honorable member need not ask this favor, for he can easily pair off with himself!"

Evolution of the Skate.

The earliest known skates were those roughly shaped from the canon bone of a horse or cow, and Scandinavian archaeologists claim an antiquity of 1,600 years for these. The wearer of these rude skates obtained speed not by a stroke of the foot, but by pushing himself along with a piked staff. Skates made entirely of wood were next introduced. These were followed by wooden ones shod with flat strips of iron. Then were gradually developed bladed skates, and finally experts evolved the Fen type, Norwegian racer and figure skates of the present day.—London Standard.

Offering No Challenges.

"Do you claim that the world owes you a living?"

"No," answered Meandering Mike. "De man dat goes around claimin' makes hisself unpopular. I'm satisfied to git my livin' whether it's owin' to me or not."—Washington Star.

His Shorthand.

Employer (to new clerk)—You don't seem to keep pace with my dictation. Why don't you write shorthand? I believe you told me that you knew shorthand. Clerk—So I do, but it takes me longer than ordinary writing.

Lacking the Motive Power.

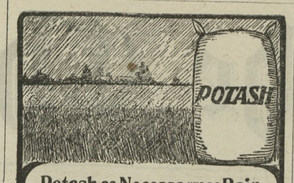
"I wonder why the car doesn't start!" exclaimed an impatient passenger.

"There are not enough people on board yet to make the cargo," replied another who understood the situation.

On a Plate.

He—I'd like to take your photograph, Edie. Really, you're sweet enough to eat! She—I see, and that's why you want to put me on a plate.—Illustrated Bits.

There is a selfishness even in gratitude when it is too profuse.—Cumberland.



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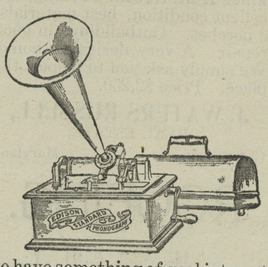
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