

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

To know a truth well, one must have fought it out.—NOVALIS.

Simplicity is nature's first step, and the last of art.—P. J. BAILEY.

There is no great genius free from some tincture of madness.—SENECA.

Idleness travels very leisurely and poverty soon overtakes her.—HUNTER.

He who despises mankind will never get the best out of others or himself.—ANON.

They are never alone that are accompanied with noble thoughts.—SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

If liberty with law is fire on the hearth, liberty without law is fire on the floor.—HILLARD.

No man will ever amount to much who labours under the impression that somebody else is always in his way.

'Weel, friends,' said a Scotch clergyman recently, 'the kirk is urgently in need of siller, and as we have failed to get money honestly we will have to see what a bazaar can do for us.'

LIKE A CROWDED 'BUS.

The world's like a crowded 'bus;
A few good men, perhaps,
May find a seat, but most of us
Must hang on by the straps.

MILITARY SALUTES.—The military custom of saluting by bringing the hand into a horizontal position over the eyebrows is supposed to date back to the tournaments of the Middle Ages, when, after the Queen of Beauty was enthroned, the knights who were to take part in the sports of the day marched past the dais on which she sat, and as they passed, shielded their eyes from the rays of her beauty. The principal part of the officers' salutes—kissing the hilt of the sword—dates also from the Middle Ages. When the crusaders were on the march to the Holy City, the knights were in the daily custom of planting their long two handed swords upright in the ground, thereby forming a cross, and before these they performed their morning devotions. On all military occasions they kissed the hilts of their swords in token of devotion to the cross—for the prayers of the soldiers were considered of such efficacy that they were made an essential part of their duty.

A BABY'S EVIDENCE.—Here is a story vouched for by a London journal, showing how a small baby once got his mother into serious difficulties and then made amends by getting her out of them again. It seems that a poor seamstress with a child in her arms was tried for the theft of three gold coins. She said in defence:—'I went to my employer's house on business. I carried my child in my arms, as it is now. I was not paying attention to it. There were several gold coins on the mantel-piece, and, unknown to me, it stretched out its little hand and seized three pieces, which I did not observe until I got home. I at once put on my bonnet and was going back to my employers to return them when I was arrested. This is the solemn truth, as I hope for heaven's mercy.' The Court could not believe this story. They upbraided the mother for her impudence in endeavoring to palm off such a falsehood for the truth. But she so pertinaciously asserted her innocence that a novel experiment was made in her favour. One of the officials proposed to renew the scene described by the mother. The gold coins were placed on the clerk's table. The mother was requested to resume the position in which she stood at her employer's house. There was then a breathless pause in court. The baby soon discovered the bright coins, eyed them for a moment, smiled, and then clutched them in its fingers with a miser's eagerness. The mother was at once acquitted.

AN EGYPTIAN WEDDING.—Among the wedding gifts of the bride, a pretty little maid of fifteen, were three diamond tiaras and fifty-six shawls! Her bedroom, which she furnished herself, was very beautiful; there were cut glass bowls and pitchers on the wash stand, fine linen towels heavily embroidered in gold, a silver toilet set on the dressing table, and on the little table by the bed, a gold tray, with gold pitcher and cups to match, and many other modern European articles about the room, showing that the Egyptian woman is progressing in some direction at least, notwithstanding her limited environment. There is no church ceremony for the bride; the groom goes to the mosque and prays, she meanwhile waiting for his return, seated on a throne in her apartment, and gazed at by many richly dressed women. A wedding affords them one of the few opportunities they have for displaying their possessions to each other, and they improve it. When the bridegroom came the trembling bride arose, her veil was put over her face, and from an opposite door the procession entered—eunuchs carrying torches, singing-women, and then the groom, dressed in a conventional modern European dress-suit. He was a good-looking fellow of twenty-two years. He had been educated in France, and had imbibed many progressive ideas. He advanced to the bride and raised her veil, seeing thus her face for the first time (what an anxious moment!) looked at her intently for a moment, and bent over and kissed her. Congratulations from those present ensued, and then all were ready for the wedding feast.

VIOLETS OF SPRING.

WHAT is most like the beauty of their face?
Or where on Nature's palette lies the hue
Can dominate their airy, tender grace?
Is it the tint of soft and misty blue
That coats the ruddy ripeness of the plum
Ere yet the touch of spoiling hand has come?

'Tis not the glow of summer skies at noon,
When white winged clouds make azure deeper still,
Nor when at midnight the full orb'd moon
Sends o'er the tide her strange, magnetic thrill.
And the far gleam of heaven's burnished floor
To glowing asphire deepens more and more.

But they have caught among their perfumed sheaves
Th' ethereal tint the purpling evening sends
O'er moor and mountain, flood, and folding leaves,
Ere slow, through paling skies the night descends;
When golden clouds beyond the distant hill
Stretch westward, and the earth grows darkly still.

Their odour fills the winding woodland way,
And floats in silence o'er the meadow sweet,
Like matin incense at the break of day,
When all earth kneels at her Creator's feet;
This tender blossom, too, its guileless prayer
Sends mounting upward on the morning air.

And like the sound of witching music past,
Or wind that murmurs in the summer trees,
Or echo, where some careless stone is cast—
It fills the heart with thrilling memories.
Old passions stir beneath the vague regrets
That breathe from clustering lips of violets.

MRS S. H. COALE

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

MEDICINAL VALUE OF APPLES.

The medicinal value of apples is not half appreciated, said Dr. J. L. Selkirk. 'To men of sedentary habits whose lives are sluggish the acids of the apple serve to eliminate from the body noxious matters, which, if retained, would make the brain heavy and dull, or bring about jaundice, skin eruptions and kindred evils. The malic acid of ripe apples, raw or cooked, will neutralise any excess of chalky matter engendered by eating too much meat. It is also true that such ripe fruit as the apple, pear and plum, taken without sugar, diminish acidity of the stomach rather than provoke it, as is popularly but erroneously supposed. Their juices are converted into alkaline carbonate, which tend to counteract acidity.'

SMALL STEAM ENGINES.

During the last few years several makes of small steam engines have come into extensive use for various kinds of work, but, unlike the general class of steam engines, they are worked in conjunction with small oil-fired boilers. They require practically no skilled attendance, are easily manipulated, entirely automatic in operation, and, after having been once started, may be said to take care of themselves. The oil burnt under the boilers is introduced into the furnaces in exactly the required quantities to maintain a certain steam pressure and supply, and the pressure itself is made to exercise all the functions of a controlling attendant, reducing or cutting off the oil supply when a set limit of pressure is attained, and again turning it on when there is a fall below that limit.

TRAMWAY GAS MOTORS IN GERMANY.

Two systems of street cars, to be driven by coal gas motors, have been devised. The cars, made by a Swiss firm for the Neuchatel and St. Blaise line, weigh six tons each, carry 20 passengers, are driven by an 8-horse power twin gas motor on one of the platforms, and consume from 24 to 33 cubic feet of gas per mile run. Sufficient gas can be carried for a round trip of six miles. In a car made on the plan of Herr Lührig, of Dresden, 10 reservoirs carry from 45 to 65 cubic feet of gas under a pressure of six atmospheres, the two engines—each of 7 to 8 horse power—are under the seats, and 29 passengers can be accommodated. Of the reservoirs, two are on the roof, the others under the body of the car. For a line of five miles, the total cost of construction and equipment is estimated at £30,000 for a gas railway, £38,000 for an electric railway, and £28,000 for a horse railway. At German prices, the running expenses are considerably less with gas than with electricity, and somewhat less with electricity than with horses.

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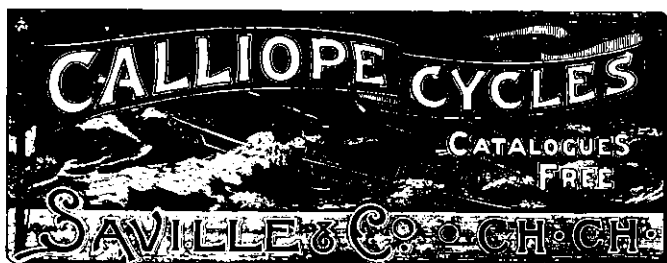
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COLOURS AND MICROBES.

A scheme for extracting the colouring matter from microbes has just been put forth by M. Gaston Spencier, a foreign chemist. To carry out this scheme it is necessary to cultivate the microbes on quite a commercial scale. Microbe farms will become the indispensable adjunct of every self-respecting dye factory. The nutritive broths and cultures, which at present are prepared in stealth and private laboratories, will be dealt with in soup kitchens and steamed in bulk. The bacillus will no longer, says the *Pall Mall Gazette*, drag out a precarious existence in the face of persecution, but will be fattened up under conditions which best suit him. When he has laid on pigment in sufficiently large quantities the liquid he infests will be strained off. He himself will be pressed and dried, and finally treated with chemical agents capable of removing the colouring matter which constitutes the secret of his strength and of his power to do harm. Hitherto we have not got anything out of the microbes that is worth having, but it looks as if we are going to get the best of him at last, and at least turn him to some commercial account.

TOOTHACHE.

Mr Main Nichol, in a communication to the *Dental Record*, advocates some new remedies for the various forms of pain familiar to most persons under the above heading. The dull, constant aching due to periosteal inflammation, he thinks, more effectually relieved by means of a comparatively fresh acetic acid, than by the tincture of acetic, the former having greater strength and more persistent action. The gum over the inflamed root being dried, a piece of the leaf of a suitable size is cut, and this is simply pressed into place, where, as a rule, it will remain as long as a cap-sicum plaster. Leaves may be kept moist in a tin box with a tight fitting lid, in the interior of which is a damp sponge. In pyorrhea alveolaris a common symptom is an intense itching, almost akin to pain, and perhaps more intolerable, provoking a constant desire to rub the gums. This pruritus, probably the result of the chronic gingivitis, is homologous to eczema and readily disappears with the employment of one of the essential oils, notably that of peppermint, used as a mouth-wash or toothbrush tincture. By the way, we may remark that a great improvement upon the ordinary toothbrush where medicaments are to be applied to the gum, either with or without massage, is the so-called 'indestructible toothbrush,' in which the bristles are replaced by indian rubber, which was invented by the late Mr Napier. Where pulp is acutely inflamed Mr Nichol advocates the heroic treatment of drilling into them with the dental engine and maintains that the relief obtained more than compensates for the pain of the operation. Perhaps it does; but it must surely be rare to find a patient willing a second time to submit to a similar proceeding without an anæsthetic. On one point everyone will agree with Mr Nichol, viz. that the exhibition of a little sympathy, if it will not relieve pain, will go far to enable the patient to bear it with fortitude. The sentiment expressed that every dentist ought to have had his teeth stopped is one that will probably be echoed by most who have been unfortunate enough to sit in a dental chair.