

WAIFS AND STRAYS.

The bright side is not always the right side.

An ounce of mother is worth a pound of clergy.—SPANISH PROVERB

One class of men must have their faith hammered in, like a nail, by authority. Another class must have it worked in, like a screw, by argument.—HOLMES.

The experience of humanity in life is very like men in a crowd. Some elbow their way to the front, others are pushed to the front, and others again are forced to the rear.

Every human being is individualised by a new arrangement of elements. His mind is a safe with a lock to which only certain letters are the key. His ideas follow in an order of their own.—EMERSON.

The habit of committing our thoughts to writing is a powerful means of expanding the mind and producing a logical and systematic arrangement of our views and opinions. It is this which gives the writer a vast superiority as to the accuracy and extent of his conceptions over the mere talker. No one can ever hope to know the principles of any art or science thoroughly who does not write as well as read upon the subject.—BLAKEY.

A DIVING CAT.—An extraordinary cat story reaches us from Birmingham (says the *Stock keeper*). According to an evening contemporary of that city, a gentleman living there possesses a cat which frequently accompanies him on a short walk. The other Sunday, whilst strolling along the banks of the river, the cat followed him, and was ordered home, but instead of obeying the order, as it usually did, it raced along the river bank, sniffing the whole way. The owner watched it with considerable interest, and saw it suddenly dive right under the water, and return with a rat in its mouth. It is the first instance we know of, a cat diving under water to fetch out a rat.

CARNIVOROUS PLANTS.—That carnivorous plants exist is a very well-known fact. Insects which alight on these plants are immediately caught in a net of sticky tentacles, and are soon reduced to a pulp and digested. Yes; digested is the exact expression, although it sounds peculiar. There is some reason for this. It is the plant's way of procuring a supply of nitrogen. But a learned botanist tells us that in Canada he has found a certain kind of aclepias, or swallow-wort, which kills insects not for food, but apparently out of sheer cruelty. It is a climbing plant, which people train over arbours and similar places. It begins to bloom in August, and its perfume attracts crowds of insects of the most varied species. No sooner have they plunged their proboscis into the sweet-scented corolla than they are seized by the hard-toothed stamens of the plant, and held in a vice-like grip until they are dead. A few of the larger insects manage to escape in a somewhat mutilated condition, but the more feeble insects invariably succumb. There is apparently no reason for this conduct. Evolutionists tell us that the scent of flowers is generally to attract insects in order to insure fertilisation, and this makes the plant's action all the more difficult of explanation.

VALUE OF ROYAL CROWNS.—One of the most costly crowns in existence is that of the King of Portugal. The jewels which ornament it are valued at £1,600,000. The crown which the Czar of Russia wears on special occasions is also one of the most precious in the world. The cross which surmounts the crown is composed of five magnificent diamonds resting on a large uncut but polished ruby. The small crown of the Czarina contains, according to authorities, the finest stones ever strung. The crown of the Queen of England, which is valued at £36,000, contains a great ruby, a large sapphire, sixteen small sapphires, eight emeralds, four small rubies, 1,360 brilliants, 1,273 rose diamonds, four pear-formed pearls, and 269 of other shapes. In his state clothes, including the crown, the Sultan of Johore wears diamonds worth £2,400,000. His collar, his epanlets, his girdle, and his cuffs sparkle with the precious stones. His bracelets are of massive gold, and his fingers are covered with rings which are almost priceless. The handle and the blade of his sword are covered with precious stones. The most costly in India of princely dignity, however, are those of the Sultan of Maharajah of Baroda, in India. The chief ornament is a necklace of five strings containing 500 diamonds, some of which are as large as hazel nuts. The upper and lower rows consist of emeralds of the same size.

MOSLEM PECULIARITIES AT THE TABLE.—The Moslem customs of eating are entirely different from those of Western life. A white cloth is spread upon the floor, whereon the dishes are placed. Before beginning the meal the guests are invited to wash their hands, mouth, and nose. The host then raises his hand and supplicates the blessing of the Almighty by saying—'Bismillah' ('in the name of God'). The guests then dip their fingers into the same dish with the host, but they must not eat with more than three fingers, nor open their mouths wide, nor take large mouthfuls, nor swallow hastily. If the guest has occasion to drink in the course of the meal he must do so softly. When the repast is over, the host again raises his hands, and exclaims—'Praise be to God.' The staple dish of all Mahometan dinners is a plain meat cooked in a large quantity of rice. The dish is usually placed in the centre, and curries, preserved fruits, and other toothsome flavours are added at discretion. In the economy of the household it is very necessary that the Moslem wife should be able to cook, for she is held responsible for the entertainment of the guests. Where there is more than one wife the cooking is taken by turns, one week at a time. Although among the poorer classes the women are not veiled it is usual for those of good family to go forth covered with what is called in Asia a burka, or in Egypt a habarah. The concealment of the face of a woman was strictly ordered by the prophet, and Mahomet must be held responsible for the exceedingly ugly covering which is used by the Moslem women who travel abroad. In Moslem households the mother and not the wife is the head of the harem, and she is looked up to with respect by the wives. In the event of her death the mother of the eldest son claims the rule of the household. It is not Mahomet whom we must blame for the degradation of women in the East, for it would not be difficult to show that his ideas about women were somewhat in advance of his contemporaries. He used to say, 'Woman was made from crooked rib, and if you try to bend it straight it will break; therefore, treat your wives kindly.'

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EDISON'S DISCOVERY OF THE PHONOGRAPH.

The axiom which tells us that 'great events from little causes spring' rarely received a more striking exemplification than in the case of the invention of the phonograph, which resulted from the accidental pricking of a finger. True, the finger pricked belonged to Edison.—'I discovered the principle by the merest accident,' states Mr Edison. 'I was singing to the mouthpiece of a telephone, when the vibrations of the voice sent the fine steel point into my finger. That set me to thinking. If I could record the actions of the point and send the point over the same surface afterward, I saw no reason why the thing would not talk. I tried the experiment first on a strip of telegraph paper, and found that the point made an alphabet. I shouted the words "Hallo! Hallo!" into the mouthpiece, ran the paper back over the steel point, and heard a faint "Hallo! Hallo!" in return. I determined to make a machine that would work accurately, and gave my assistants instructions, telling them what I had discovered. They laughed at me. That's the whole story. The phonograph is the result of the pricking of a finger.'

SHARK OIL.

Shark oil is exported in large quantities from Iceland to Germany. It is of a fine color, never becomes thick, and is said to possess similar medicinal virtues to cod liver oil; and no doubt it is often sold in the name of the latter product. A fleet of 100 boats is engaged in the industry every year, from January to August. They are schooners of from thirty to fifty tons, with a crew of from eight to ten men. The sharks are captured about twenty miles from the coast in winter, and in the summer about a hundred miles away, in deeper water. Every two or three weeks the boats return to port, with from 100 to 120 barrels of liver, which is boiled in dirty and evil-smelling hovels. The sharks captured by the Icelanders reach 20 feet in length and 5 feet in thickness. A liver yields up to five gallons of oil. The neighborhood of a shark-oil refinery is not to be mistaken, as the odor arising therefrom is far from pleasant. The fisherman earns about 35s per month, with a premium of 6d on each barrel of liver. The captain gets 2s 3d per barrel for the first hundred, and 3s 4d per barrel for all in excess. Sickness seems to be very rare among sharks, judging from the small quantity of healthy livers, belonging to a healthy fish, compared with the greenish ones from the fish suffering from disease, and the red livers from the thin, ill-conditioned fish. The Icelanders only take the livers from the fish, and neglect the fin, skin, and teeth; but that is not so in the Tasmanian fisheries, as in Sydney fins fetch £28 per ton. They are also saved in the Hawaiian, the Arabian Gulf, and the China fisheries; in fact, in China the fins of sharks are considered a delicacy. The Iceland shark is not such a difficult fish to tackle as the tiger shark, the terrible 'bluepointer' of Australian waters, which, although smaller, is swifter, more voracious, and furnished with a more massive jaw than his congeners; however, a large number of fishermen fall victims to his voracity and violence. One of the chief sites of the shark-liver industry is Slamsund, but when the oil leaves there it is not fit for use, but is sent on to Christiania, where it is refined and freed from sanguineous globules and stearin, filtered through paper, and packed ready for the market.—*Oil, Paint and Drug Reporter.*

GOLD IN THE SEA.

In seeking to account for the origin of gold Professor Lohley, in *Knowledge*, observes:—"Since the sea is the great receptacle for all solutions it was safe to conclude that it contained the soluble salts of gold, but the fact is not now a matter of mere deduction, but of actual knowledge. Sonstadt found, from careful experiments on the sea water of Ramsay Bay, Isle of Man, that sea water contains a little under a grain of gold per ton. Estimating the whole of the gold production of the world to the present time at £8,500,000,000 sterling, and taking the weight of the sea water of the globe at 560,000,000,000,000 tons, as was estimated by Professor Wartz, of New York, we find that the present sea of the globe contain upwards of 5,000,000 times as much gold as has ever been extracted from the rocks; and consequently we must conclude that the seas of the globe in the past have been fully able to stock its mineral deposits with all the gold they contain. From these considerations it seems probable that gold was originally dissolved in the waters of the ocean, from which it was deposited, as the result of the decomposition of soluble salts of gold, by the action of organic matter, and that it was then eliminated from sedimentary rocks by segregation to other metallic matter, with which it remained associated until thermal conditions—caused by deep-seated position or not far distant igneous action—induced a chemical reaction, and likewise heated sufficiently to a chemical reaction of the rocks to make it an effective solvent of the auriferous compound. So the gold of the massive rocks was carried with silica by percolating water into the accumulating "vein stuff" of rock fissures, where on cooler conditions supervening the auriferous compound was deposited in a solid condition, and the gold itself subsequently separated, by the segregation of the silica to the vein quartz, and left disseminated through the vein stuff as metallic gold in the forms in which it is now found."

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