



Those who look for coincidences will be interested in knowing that the day before the burning of Spurgeon's Tabernacle, during the Pastor's College Conference, Mr Charles Spurgeon read the twelfth chapter of Hebrews, containing the phrase, 'For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched and that burned with fire,' and concluding, 'For our God is a consuming fire.' His brother, Mr Thomas Spurgeon, entitled his presidential address, 'No Strange Fire,' while one of the questions that had been addressed to the conference in a circular had been, 'Does the fire burn brightly on the altar?' The Rev. John McNeill, the missionary, who was due at the Tabernacle next week, used as his motto for his last Sunday's lecture, 'Turn and burn,' a phrase borrowed from Baxter. But perhaps the most extraordinary coincidence of all is the apparent fulfilment of the prediction in Old Moore's Almanack—'About the middle of the month (April) the destruction of a famous building by fire may be expected. Insurances will cover the actual cost, but historical associations, alas! have no money equivalent.'—Daily Chronicle.

A French newspaper has discovered that there was no such thing as a battle at Atbara, that the story of the fight was a mere invention. This journal, which is very widely read in France, remarks:—'How very annoying English papers are, with their long glowing descriptions of the English soldiers' victories over the Dervishes. Do they imagine that anyone believes them capable of killing 1,000 Dervishes and wounding four times as many? Nonsense. This is absolutely untrue. The story was simply got up in order to satisfy the amour propre of the nation, which could not get over the ignominious defeats inflicted on its army by a handful of savage Afridis. It is easy enough to explain how such incredible hoaxes can be palmed on the British public. As no correspondents are allowed to accompany the Sirdar's army, and the Dervishes have no wires of their own, John Bull can say anything he likes.'

The throne room of Spain is described as a magnificent apartment of crimson and gold, with colossal mirrors and a chandelier of rock crystal that is considered the finest example of the kind in the world. Under the gorgeous canopy are two large chairs, handsomely carved and gilded, and upholstered in crimson brocade. Upon these the Queen Regent and the boy King sit upon occasions of ceremony.

It is said that the last person in England to wear that curious fashion of head dress common in George III's time, a pigtail, was an old gentleman (a centenarian), who died but a few months ago in the East End of London. With his queer little queue of white hair, nattily tied behind with a knot of blue ribbon, his corded knee-breeches, and low buckle shoes, a large flowered waistcoat down to his hips, and plum-coloured open coat that showed the big frilled shirt and tight stock, the old man was a picturesque figure a mid squalid surroundings. He had been considered quite a dandy in his youth. He was very vain of his tail, and often prided himself, in his weak, quavering voice, of being 'the only gentleman left that was dressed as a real gentleman should be.'

The making of cigarettes has always been an occupation suited to feminine fingers, and a great many women have achieved in private life much skill in the rolling of these articles for their husbands and brothers long before they began to think of making them for their own use. This suggested, some ten or twelve years ago, to a certain lady well-known in society, the possibility of turning her skill in this matter in a direction which would prove useful. She started cigarette-making on a small scale, and secured the promise of patronage from a number of the West End clubs, as well as from certain co-operative societies. Her cigarettes were well and carefully made. She began to get a ready market for them, and to employ the services of other women in making them. In the course of a very few years she was making an excellent income by her business, and other ladies all over

the country were fast following her example. Cigarette making is an excellent home money-making occupation, because it can be carried on with ease in any house, however small, and requires no capital for machinery, implements, etc.

In Germany, the man who loses both his hands accidentally can claim the whole of his life insurance money, if he be insured, on the ground that he has lost the means of maintaining himself. A loss of the right hand reduces the claim to from 50 to 80 per cent. of the total.

Three years ago (says an American journal) we didn't know what golf was in this country. In Scotland they have played it for 450 years. They are playing it this season with clubs made in America. A single Chicago firm has shipped to Scotland 10,000 golf sticks in a few months, and has orders for 15,000 more. Cricket—well, we have played cricket more or less for some years, but never with the true British zest. Nevertheless, the best cricket bats and balls are now made in the United States and shipped to the tight little island.

The average Boer seems to be a painfully polite sort of person, if we may judge from an advertisement which appears in a recent issue of the 'Krugersdorp Sentinel.' It is placed under the heading of 'Death—Smit,' and runs thus:—'On the 28th inst., Amy Jane Mary Smit, eldest daughter of Jane and William Smit, aged 1 day 2½ hours. The bereaved and heart-broken parents beg to tender their hearty thanks to Dr. Jones for his unremitting attention during the illness of the deceased, and for the moderate brevity of his bill. Also to Mrs Williams for the loan of clean sheets, and to Mr Wilson for running for the doctor, and to Mr Robinson for recommending mustard plaster.' Such comprehensive gratitude is not often met with.

A German doctor has started a theory that most drunkards can be cured by a very simple and pleasant course of treatment, namely, by eating apples at every meal. He says that apples, if eaten in large quantities, possess properties which entirely do away with the craving that all confirmed drunkards have for drink.

Mr Cecil Rhodes, says 'Cassell's Saturday Journal,' considers himself a very good character-reader from facial expression, and has declared that he hardly ever varies his first opinion of a person. Not many months ago a friend of his presented a young man to him in the hope that the youth might find favour and so secure a good post of some kind or other. The youth was considerably gratified by Mr Rhodes' reception of him, but the friend was not satisfied. 'The chief never smiles like that at a face he fancies,' was his comment. And it subsequently proved a true forecast.

Unquestionably the army of ladies who smoke cigarettes is a rapidly-increasing one, and we have been at some pains this month, says an English Exchange, to secure expert evidence on the matter—by which we mean testimony of manufacturers who have devoted special attention to the subject. They are unanimous on the general question, viz., in testifying to the rapidity with which the practice has spread, but there are differences of opinion on points of detail. Some believe that feminine cigarette smokers are seldom to be found outside the higher classes of society, while others consider that there is a goodly percentage of female workers who smoke.—'Tobacco.'

Baden-Baden, once the great gambling resort of Europe, since abolishing her gambling tables has rebounded to the other extreme and is offering 'blue lums' as an attraction to visitors, two of whom were recently stopped by the police from purchasing flowers on Sunday.

'Personal observation has taught me,' said a Cuban cigar dealer, 'that not one person in a hundred knows how to smoke a cigar to enjoy it thoroughly. For instance, most men, after buying their cigars, stick them between their teeth and gnaw the ends off recklessly, thereby tearing and loosening the wrapper. Then they light their cigars and puff away as if their very lives depended upon flushing them in a hurry. Thus treated, the finest cigar will burn irregularly, and the smokers will, nine times out of ten, lay the blame on the cigar. The cigar may be to blame, but in most cases the fault lies in the way it has been handled.'

## MEN AND WOMEN.

At a woman's congress held in Paris resolutions have been adopted to the effect that all families must secure certificates of health from intending sons-in-law in order to guard the daughters of the Republic from risk and to prevent hereditary maladies in the fathers of a later generation.

America is undoubtedly the happy hunting-ground of the woman doctor. The increase in her numbers has within the last twenty years been phenomenal. It is estimated that there are now about forty-five hundred women practitioners in that country as against five hundred and twenty-seven in 1870. The majority of these are of course general practitioners, but there are as well homoeopaths, hospital physicians, and surgeons, professors in schools, specialists for diseases of women, alienists, orthopaedists, oculists, aurists, and electro-therapeutists. Doubtless, like their brothers, they suffer from the stress of keen competition, but it is stated that most of them succeed in making good headway, while one or two of the leading lights are credited with amassing the eminently satisfactory income of £5,000.

Medical circles in Berlin are much agitated over a statement made by a prominent physician of that city to the effect that the nurses in the private hospitals are in league with the undertakers, who distribute among them circulars offering as much as £5 by way of gratuity for a good job.

Mr Chamberlain, when a little boy, was playing one day with his sister at a game of 'battle'—each child having a regiment of toy soldiers and a popgun to fire at the enemy.

The little girl's soldiers went down very quickly, but his stood firm, and he was proclaimed the victor.

He had glued his men to the floor!

—'Pearson's Weekly.'

'I am tired at the close of the day, 'tis true, but I always try to remember that my wife may be tired as myself.' If all husbands would not only think this, but act upon it, many weary women would smile, and feel half their burdens drop at once from their shoulders.

A hand or body warmer which can be carried in the pocket is one of the novelties of the season. The pocket 'Instra,' as it is called, is the first practical means by which slow burning fuel has been made available for heating the human body in a safe and cleanly manner. So small an amount of fuel is used that a refill, which lasts three or four hours, weighs only one-seventh of an ounce. To show their safety 'Instras' have been habitually carried in the same pocket mixed up with gunpowder cartridges, and they are equally effective in their cleanliness. Possibly the pocket 'Instras' will be most popularly carried in the ladies' muff, or in the pocket to give warmth to the body; but we can also imagine them to be very useful to travellers by road or rail, particularly as they are quite free from smell.

So many engagements are made on board ship, and so many happy marriages result from them, that a captain of one of the largest Atlantic liners states that men, who, for some reason or other, are unable to secure wives at home, take a trip over to America on the chance of meeting a girl on the boat.

The Supreme Court of Georgia recently passed upon the novel question whether the contract of marriage is such a contract as is contemplated by the law which provides that contracts entered into and signed on Sunday shall be illegal and void. In 1850 a Mrs Cone married a Mr Underwood, and in her marriage contract reserved her estate for herself and her children. Mrs Cone's grandson, in a suit for the ownership of the property, was not permitted to introduce the marriage as evidence, the defence showing that it was concluded on a Sunday. The lower court held that a Sunday marriage contract was as void, so far as its effects on property rights was concerned, as any other Sunday contract in regard to labour or employment. This decision was reversed by the Supreme Court, which held that the Legislature, in enacting Sunday laws, can regulate only ordinary employment, while entering into a marriage contract is not ordinary employment.'

## PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS

Among the passengers of the Rotiti from Wellington to Auckland last week was Mr Ranson, Auckland manager of the Northern S.S. Company.

Rev. Mr and Mrs Robertson, Auckland, accompanied by their niece Miss Robertson, of Scotland, left by the Wakatere on Monday on a trip to the Thames.

Miss Lulu Brandon, of Wellington, is about to pay a lengthy visit to Napier.

Miss Bessie Jones, from Parnell, Auckland, is staying at the Sanatorium, Cambridge, for the benefit of her health.

Miss Mildred Rees, of Wellington, is visiting Blenheim, and is staying with Mrs Griffiths.

Dr. Williams, of the Thames Hospital, who has been travelling in the Australian colonies for the benefit of his health, returned to the Thames on Thursday very much the better for his travels.

Mr and Mrs R. H. Rhodes, Otahuhu, Tai Tapu, have gone to the North Island for two or three weeks' change.

Miss Parkes, of Wanganni, who has been on a visit to Auckland, left for her home on Monday by the Rotiti.

Colonel Stapp, who has been for a trip down South, has returned to New Plymouth.

Mr and Mrs Heaton Rhodes, Christchurch, were the guests of Mrs S. A. Rhodes, at the 'Grange,' Wellington, for the Steeplechase Meeting on the 16th and left for Auckland on Monday last.

Mrs Ernest Gray intends to take up her residence in Christchurch, where she has already secured a house in Worcester-street West.

Mrs Kennedy, of Wellington, is staying in Napier on a visit.

Miss B. Rennell, who has been for some time on a visit to Dunedin, has returned to her home in New Plymouth.

Archbishop Redwood has been visiting Blenheim and preached both morning and evening in St. Mary's Church last Sunday. At the evening service the Archbishop played Gounod's 'Ave Maria' splendidly on his violin, Miss McCabe acting as accompanist. Mrs Marks sang 'O Salutaris' very pleasingly.

Mr and Mrs C. W. Adams and Miss Adams, of Blenheim, have been visiting Mrs J. Bell, at Hillersden, Wairau Valley.

Mrs Frank Lawry was a passenger from Auckland to Wellington by the Takapuna last Thursday.

Mr H. C. Seymour, Tyntesfield, has gone for a trip down the Sounds with Captain Harris, of Picton.

Mr Louison, Mayor of Christchurch, is at present paying a visit to the Empire City.

Miss Mabel Tendall, eldest daughter of Mr G. F. Tendall, of Christchurch, has returned from England with very high honours and a diploma from the National Training School of Cookery, South Kensington, where she has been studying for two or three years.

Mr Hyde, of the Public Trust Office, of New Plymouth, has been transferred to Wellington, and will be succeeded by Mr Oswin. Before leaving Wellington Mr Oswin was presented by his fellow clerks with a handsome silver mounted travelling bag and a case of razors.

Miss Elworthy (Timaru) is staying with Mrs Wallis, in Wellington.

Miss Robertson and Miss Pitt (Nelson), have gone to Wellington for a trip.

Mr A. B. Wright, Government Surveyor, residing in Mt. Albert, Auckland, has gone to Sydney for a fortnight's holiday.