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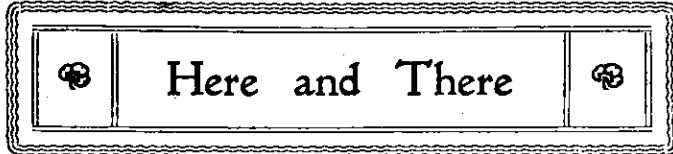
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Old Moore's Prophecies.

Old Moore, wizard and almanac maker, has been dreaming of the year 1908, and if the familiar white-covered tale of his vision, just published, is less a nightmare than usual, it has acquired an unwanted Jules Verne flavour.

For instance, he says that in March, 1908, we must look out for trouble on battleships. "Their greatest enemy is in their holds; the effects of earth current, acting on the vast magnetic body of metal, will be automatic in their destruction."

Still dreaming of the navy, he foretells, for December, "a new idea of coast defence in floating circular ironclads impenetrable by any shots, owing to the want of a striking point. If necessary they can reverse quickly on a dropped pivot anchor."

September will be marked by a laboratory discovery which "will cause double crops in many parts of the country," and October by the invention of reflecting ceilings, the effect of which "will be funny in the ballroom."

In December a "new and very beautiful flower will appear, and make a great sensation."

The rest of the story of 1908 is an extraordinary medley of good and evil, and to place some of the scenes in the prophetic pageant in close conjunction with one another is to create the suspicion that the hoary wizard is chuckling in his sleeve all the time. Here are some quaint contrasts:

January.—Harley-street will be supplanted by city consultants at popular prices.

February.—Death is reaping its rich harvest of millionaires and literary notables.

May 16.—A little naval uproar.

June 1.—Earthquake at the War Office.

August.—Our army and navy will have nothing to do but picnic.

September.—Crimes will be prevalent.

November.—Crimes will be less.

Little Kings.

It is a curious fact that most of the principal Kings of Europe are shorter than their consorts.

King Edward is six inches shorter than Queen Alexandra. The Tsarina is quite a head taller than the Tsar. The Emperor of Germany is of medium height, but the Empress is tall, and that is why the Kaiser will never consent to be photographed beside his wife unless she sits while he stands.

The King of Italy hardly comes up to the shoulders of Queen Helena; the King of Portugal, though by no means a little man, is certainly shorter than his wife, and the Queen of Denmark simply towers above her husband.

Beetle that can Bend Keys.

Visitors to the Zoo just now are taking an interest in the Insect House, where some very wonderful new arrivals are being studied by naturalists, says a London paper.

The Goliath beetle, from South America, would send a British housemaid into hysterics. Its body, arrayed almost clerically in black and white, is nearly five inches long.

It is not poisonous, nor is it intentionally ferocious, but there is a spot between the neck and shoulders which acts like a vice. A finger placed in this aperture would be broken at once, and a keeper who inserted a key in "the junction" found that "Goliath" had bent the key merely by shrugging its shoulders.

This great beetle is an inexpensive guest, as he only feeds on fruit which is absolutely rotten.

Close by the Goliath beetle are two newly-arrived bird-eating spiders. One of them hails from Central America. For concentrated wickedness it beats any known living thing. It keeps indisputable hours, and attacks everything it meets in its midnight prowls, from

fledglings to mice. Its bite will kill a man in less than half an hour.

The Zoo authorities are not indulging its tastes for the blood of small birds and mice, and are feeding it on cockroaches and worms. It is four inches long, and is just changing its hairy coat, which is a rusty brown.

A very rare birth is announced in the gardens. A collared peccary was born a few days ago in the swine sheds. The baby pig is about the size of a kitten, and yesterday was making strenuous efforts to grant like its mother.

In the new aviary close by the monkey house two recent arrivals—a pair of green-billed toucans—were much admired. Their enormous bills are the colour of a young lettuce, and their bodies are coloured gorgeously.

Another new arrival, the Korean cow, appeared very depressed. She had no doubt heard the news of her Emperor's abdication.

Demands of Sport.

A man with an inquiring mind has made some remarkably interesting calculations of the business side of sport.

While at Lord's he was handed an athletic outfitter's catalogue, and during the luncheon interval he amused himself by reckoning up some of the many varied materials used in different classes of sport, remarks the "London Express."

He found that there are fifteen varieties of tennis-bats, fifty-three varieties of athletic shoes, twenty-one forms of tennis rackets, nineteen different styles of golf clubs, and ten patterns of golf balls, each designed to get there in the fewest of strokes.

Of cricket materials there is simply no end, and the calculator gave us the task of counting when he had got into the hundreds.

Abandoning the multitudinous variety of gear used in cricket he dipped into the fisherman's section, and found that an enormous amount of ingenuity and cunning is required to catch a "wiggly" fish.

With proper solemnity the catalogue expatiated on the wily merits of 304 flies, 112 fly spoons, 99 hooks, 86 reels, and 102 rods.

With this astounding choice of equipment the fishermen still do a thriving trade in filling the creels of the followers of the cult, who must show something at the end of a day to justify their yards.

Another interesting fact elicited was that one firm alone utilises a capital of £900,000, and employs 3000 hands, with factories on three continents, in order that they may make these tools of sport for their own profit and for the use of "muddled oafs."

How to Swim.

Vol. II, No. 21, is the latest number of Spalding's Athletic Library published by the British Sports Publishing Co., Ltd., 2 and 3 Hind Court, Fleet-street, London, E.C. The book is entitled "How to Swim and Save Life." It is written conjointly by C. M. Daniels, present champion and holder of the British, American, and world's record for the hundred yards, by Hjalmar Johansson, winner of the King's Cup in 1904 and amateur diving champion of Sweden; and Archibald Sinclair, than whom there is no better authority on swimming in the United Kingdom. Mr Daniels reveals his portion of the book to "Learning to Swim," "Competitive Swimming," "Floating and Diving," and "Ornamental Swimming." Mr Johansson contributes an article on "Speed Swimming on the Breast" while Mr Sinclair devotes chapters, comparing times made in 1897 and 1907, "Speed Swimming on the Back" and "Speed Swimming and Life-saving." Laws governing the sport conclude what should prove to be one of the best books on swimming ever published. There are over 35 full-page photos of the prominent swimming officials, noted champions, and posed photographs of Mr Daniels showing the different strokes.

Conservative England.

"Central one-four-double-one-eight—please."

"Hallo! Is that Scotland-yard? Put me through to the Criminal Investigation Department—thank you."

This was the conversation between a member of the public anxious to report a robbery without loss of time and a Scotland-yard official, remarks a recent London paper.

It was then for the first time that the London headquarters of the metropolitan police and detective force were put in communication with the public telephone exchanges. Now and hereafter it is open for any citizen who has suffered wrong, or has important matters relating to crime to communicate, to ring up Scotland-yard and, through their private exchange, any police station.

Scotland-yard and the chief police-stations have been on the telephone for a considerable time, but hitherto it was a private and closely guarded "official system" only. Now the "Yari" is publicly registered in the telephone books as "14,118 Central."

Officials will in future put all who have "business" right through to the nearest police-station, so that help may be sent without delay.

It is hoped that this new system will materially aid the police in the capture of criminals, for much precious time has hitherto been lost in gaining information.

The King's New Order.

The King's decision to create a new order to reward acts of gallantry in mines, together with his Majesty's action in knighting the Lord Mayor of Cardiff, who is a working mason, are interesting signs that his Majesty, as the Fount of Honour, is resolved that the stream shall descend on those who really deserve it. Thus, on the occasion of his recent visit to Bangor, the King knighted, not some local dignitary of the kind who appear only on ceremonial occasions, but Dr. H. R. Reichel, the principal of the University College of North Wales, the man who has really done the hard work, and to whom more than to anyone the college owes its present prosperity. Hitherto, acts of heroism in mines could only be rewarded by the grant of the Albert Medal, or the St. John of Jerusalem Medal, but those distinctions, honourable as they are, would, naturally, be considered inferior to a regular order, such as will now be established.

It is interesting to note that when Queen Victoria came to the throne seventy years ago she found only five orders of knighthood in existence. During her long reign she established the Orders of the Star of India, the Indian Empire, the Royal Victorian Order, the Victoria Cross, the Distinguished Service Order, the Crown of India, the Victoria and Albert Order, and the Royal Red Cross, and she enlarged the Order of St. Michael and St. George. King Edward has so far only instituted two new orders, the limited and highly exclusive Order of Merit, and the Imperial Service Order, the latter designed to reward merit in the civil services of the Crown. It is a jest with the irreverent that the letters I.S.O. of this Order are to be interpreted as meaning "I'm So Old." There is also an Imperial Service Medal attached to the Order, which is used to reward quite humble servants of the State, such as rural postmen, dockyard artificers, and so on.

A Fadeless Fire.

The sacred fires of India have not all been extinguished. The most ancient which still exists was consecrated twelve centuries ago in commemoration of the voyage made by the Parsees when they emigrated from Persia to India. The fire is fed five times every two hours with sandalwood and other fragrant materials, combined with very dry fuel.



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