

The Planet Mercury.

Though Mercury is one of the smallest of the planets, it is perhaps the most troublesome to the astronomer. It lies so close to the sun that it is seen but seldom in comparison with the other great planets. Its orbit is very eccentric, and it experiences disturbances by the attraction of other bodies in a way not yet fully understood. A special difficulty has also been found in the attempt to place Mercury in the weighing scales. We can weigh the sun, the moon and even weigh the other planets, but Mercury presents difficulties of a peculiar character. Le Verrier, however, succeeded in devising a method of weighing it. He demonstrated that our earth is attracted by this planet, and he showed how the amount of attraction may be disclosed by observations of the sun, so that from an examination of the observations he made an approximate determination of the mass of Mercury. Le Verrier's result indicated that the weight of the planet was about the fifteenth part of the weight of the earth. In other words, if our earth was placed in a balance and fifteen globes, each equal to Mercury, were laid in the other scales would hang evenly.—"Story of the Heavens."

When Her Turn Came.

The Journal had taken on a "woman editor," whose duty was to look after the "woman's page." Space being scarce in the "local room," a desk was given her in the managing editor's room, directly adjoining. For a week or two no fault was found with her work, but one morning the managing editor said to her:

"Miss Penfield, your style of writing is a little too terse and epigrammatic for the needs of your department. You must study expansion."

"Very well, Mr. Ringgold," she answered. "I will try."

Thereafter her work appeared to give entire satisfaction, for there was no further criticism. About six months later, however, the managing editor after a morning spent in working at his desk suddenly wheeled in his chair and said:

"Miss Penfield, I want a wife. I want you. Will you marry me?"

"Mr. Ringgold," she responded, with a smiling smile, "that is rather terse and epigrammatic. Don't you think you ought to study expansion a little?"—Youth's Companion.

A Word of Warning.

"You never proposed to her on your knees," cried the veteran married man in dismay.

"Sure I did, sure," the youth repeated, a glad, proud light shining in his eyes.

"Well," said the veteran, "you'll regret it about twice a week for the rest of your life. After you get married the slightest argument, the first impatient word, will cause your wife to say, 'You won't like this when you went down on your knees and begged me, with tears in your eyes, to marry you.' It's pretty bad to have an angry wife read out your old love letters repeatedly," said the veteran, "but that is nothing to being reminded of your kneeling proposal every week till you are a great-grandfather."

"You proposed on your knees yourself?" the youth inquired.

"But the veteran frowned and made no reply."—Los Angeles Times.

The Seven Wise Men of Greece.

The seven wise men of Greece were Thales of Miletus, Periander of Corinth, Cleobolus of Lindus, Chilon of Laconia, Solon of Athens, Bias of Priene and Pittacus of Mitylene. Some fishermen of Miletus sold a draft of fishes to a bystander. When the net was drawn in it contained a golden tripod, and the purchaser claimed it was his, while the fishermen contended that they sold only the fish that might be in the net. The dispute was referred to the oracle of Delphi, who awarded the tripod to the wisest man in Greece. Thereupon it was taken to Thales, who declined it and suggested that it be given to Bias. He in turn refused to accept it, and thus it was successively declined by all the seven and they were thereafter known as the seven wise men of Greece.

The Number 4.

There are four cardinal points, four winds, four quarters of the moon, four seasons, four rules of arithmetic, four suits of cards, four quarters to the hour, four legs for furniture, most animals go on four legs, the dead are placed between four planks, the prisoners between four walls. We have four inches and four canine teeth, and our forks have four prongs. All animals when butchered are cut into four quarters. The violin, greatest of all string instruments, has but four strings. Four of a kind is a pretty good hand at poker, even if they are only four.—Exchange.

Dressed for the Part.

"What subject have you taken for your address at the Civic club?"

"Woman's moral obligations as a citizen."

"What a lovely subject! And what are you going to wear?"

"That new gown I brought home with me from Paris. And just think! I had it so cleverly packed in with my old clothes that the customs house inspector never discovered it was there."

THE CABBAGE CURE.

Old Ezekiel Had Long Been Wanting a Boiled Dish.

"This idea that people thrive best on the food they like best is not as modern as you seem to think," said the old doctor to the young doctor. "When Ezekiel Holmes was something over 100 years old he was taken sick, and my grandfather, one of the best physicians in that section, was called in to see him after the family had done their worst to make him better. "Grandfather pronounced Mr. Holmes very ill and told the family that the end was probably near—he might not live out the night. As soon as this news spread through the neighborhood several friends called to sit up or watch with the sufferer. Among them was a sea captain, who took the second watch.

"A little after midnight Mr. Holmes awoke and said the doctor was starving him. The captain asked what he would like to eat.

"'Corned beef and cabbage,' replied the old man.

"The captain found some in the pantry—it was a staple dish in those days—and gave him a generous plateful, reasoning, as he said afterward, that so long as the old man's hours were numbered he might as well have what he wanted while he lasted. After eating heartily Mr. Holmes said he felt much better and went quietly to sleep. The next morning, when grandfather called, he found his patient on the road to recovery. The old man not only got well, but kept so for four or five years afterward, and he always stoutly declared that his midnight meal had cured him.

"I'd been wanting a boiled dish a fortnight," he used to say, "and mother wouldn't let me have it. But I worked a traverse on her and got well."—Youth's Companion.

"MATUSHKA VOLGA."

Melody of Sorrow Heard in Prison and Palace in Russia.

There is an air so popular in Russia that it is even more familiar than their national anthem to the people of that great, mysterious empire. I have heard it in all parts of the czar's dominions from the Baltic sea to Bering strait and from Archangel to the Caspian, in the glittering palaces of Petersburg and in foul prison dens of Siberia.

It is a simple melody in the minor key, suggestive, like most Slav music, of sorrow and unrest, and it is called "Matushka (or Mother) Volga," as for some cryptic reason every Russian, be he noble or peasant, is taught from childhood to regard this great river in the light of a maternal relative. Yet the river is full of sad associations, for convicts formerly traveled a portion of the journey to Siberia along its broad, sluggish stream.

I can never forget the haunting sweetness of "Matushka Volga" as I heard it sung on a prison barge one quiet summer evening by a party of fettered political banished to the great lone land of exile, for "Mother Volga" was their last link with home and the loved ones they might never meet again.

Fortunately the condemned are now sent into Asia by the Transsiberian railway, and the unhappy exile is spared at least one bitter parting—that from his well beloved "Mother Volga."—Travel Magazine.

A Curious Tree.

One of the natural curiosities of south Mashonaland is a "German sausage tree." It bears deep crimson flowers, three inches long, in blazing bunches of twelve, but when the tree fruits into fat, substantial, sausage-like pods there remain no leaves, and it looks like a sausage larder indeed. These beans are twenty inches long and twelve inches in girth and are beloved of the native tribe of Shanganas and baboons. But the tribe of the Karenza are a very superior people and would never deign to eat them. There can be no reason for this, as at least no one can accuse these "sausages" of being connected in any way with dogs or cats.—Natal Witness.

May Cure Snoring Too.

"I've found a cure for nightmare," said the man who will eat despite his subsequent sufferings. "When I go to bed at night I slip a string through an empty spool, secure the spool firmly so it will not slide and then tie the string around my waist in such a way that the spool comes in the middle of my back. The result is that if I try to turn on my back in my sleep I lie on the spool, and I can assure you it awakens me promptly. No; it isn't pleasant to be awakened in that way, but it is better than having to go through one of the diabolical nightmares from which I have suffered for several years."—New York Press.

Must Keep It Dry.

The teacher had explained to a primary class the difference between solids and liquids and illustrated her points by objects kept on a table. When she thought her pupils had grasped the idea she held up her watch and asked, "Now, children, must I put this among the solids or among the liquids?" "Among the solids, teacher," a bright little boy replied. "Why not among the liquids?" she asked. "Because," replied the little fellow—"because if you do you will get it wet."

Wasted All His Wishes.

An Irish legend has it that a good fairy once visited an old couple and promised them that any three wishes they would make would be granted. After racking their brains for some time in an endeavor to discover what they desired most the couple decided to visit the county fair to see if something there would suggest what they wanted. They did so, and, after rambling around all day and not seeing anything that exactly suited them, toward evening they found themselves before a display of kitchen utensils. Among them was a soup ladle, cheap, but likely to appeal to a woman, so the old woman in an absent moment said, "Oh, I wish I had one of those," and immediately she had it. The old man was so enraged because his wife had thoughtlessly thrown away one valuable wish that he retorted, "I wish that was stuck down your throat," and immediately this was done. Thereupon he was at once sorry at what he wished, and the only thing left to do was to wish the ladle out again. So all three wishes went for naught.

How Snakes Get Over Ground.

Although the snake appears to have no legs or feet, it may be said to be practically supplied with upward of a hundred pairs of them. In fact, each joint of the backbone bears a pair of ribs, which are mobile and have their points attached to the inner surface of one of the large transverse, platelike scales which clothe the undersurface of the body. Thus by the movements of the ribs attached to it each plate can be drawn forward and its margin applied to the ground. By the successive application of these multitudinous plates the body can be drawn forward in a straight line without its being thrown into undulations from side to side. But rapid movements are also effected by such undulations, and serpents can by pressure and appropriate muscular action climb trees and sometimes spring forward. They also swim easily by lateral flexures, but no serpents advance by vertical bendings of the body, though they are so often drawn in such an attitude.

Bolivia's Electrical Storms.

Owing to the peculiar topographical formation of Bolivia, electric and other phenomena are of constant occurrence, the principal zone where such disturbances take place being the Altiplano, or grand plateau. As the atmosphere is heavily charged with electricity both in summer and winter, dry or electric storms are of frequent occurrence both on the plateau and in the valleys. Before the rainy season sets in electrical accumulation becomes considerable on the plateau region, its most violent manifestations taking place toward the eastern section of the tablelands. An electrical storm in these regions is always a most imposing spectacle, as the tremendous force of the wind, almost equal to a hurricane, and the heavy electrical accumulation in the clouds produce terrible atmospheric explosions and violent detonations, while the surface of the ground sparkles and crackles.

Vacation by Think.

Make a compact with your soul to take a vacation and the way is simple. There are portions of your time over which you have control. Probably your evenings and your Sundays are your own. Set apart a month or so. Eliminate the self assigned tasks for those hours out of business and give yourself up to the pursuit of pleasure. Get others to join you. Call a vacation club. Adopt a real vacation spirit and go in for a good time. Resolve never to speak of work out of business hours, but to fill to the full that time which is your own with recreations which most appeal to you. Did you ever sing? Sing now. Did you ever paint? Paint now. Remember nature's gifts to you and find occasion to praise nature within as well as without.—Exchange.

He Got It Wrong.

A lady while going downstairs to dinner had the misfortune to step slightly on the dress of a lady in front of her. The man on whose arm the former was leaning said aloud, rudely, so that the couple in front might hear: "Always getting in the way, like Balaam's ass."

Upon which the lady whose gown had been trodden on, turning round, replied with a sweet smile: "Pardon me! It was the angel who stood in the way and the ass which spoke."—Tit-Bits.

Touching.

Jack—That young Simperly seems such a fragile fellow I should hesitate to touch him for fear he would break. Sam—He wouldn't hesitate about touching you if he was broke.—London Telegraph.

Why Women Are Like Tugboats.

Biggs—Why are the tugs on the Wisconsin river like the co-eds who walk up and down State street? Muggs—And the answer is? Biggs—Some toe out and some toe in.—Wisconsin Sphinx.

Some men can't understand why the truth will nearly always serve better than a lie.

TIDES AND FISHING.

Fish Are More Active In Search For Food on the Flood Tide.

The most essential thing in sea fishing, next to tackle and bait, is a tide table, because all marine fishes except the flatfish—flounder and fluke—are captured more readily at a certain tide. The main cause for such is that fish are more active in their search for food generally on the flood tide. Vast schools of little fishes move close into shore on the incoming tide, working their way into the smaller bays and inlets, especially near the edge of banks, where they feed on the small crustaceans, shrimps and little minnows that can effectually hide from their larger enemies when the tide is low and the large fish are unable to get at them in very shoal waters.

It is a common and interesting sight to see a school of weakfish slowly moving in near the surface with the early tide. Suddenly one sees the smooth surface all in commotion. Silvery minnows leap frantically in all directions, looking like flashes of diamonds, then instantly disappear to certain death. At such times anglers should be ready with their boat trimmed snug, lines out floating forty feet away, baited with live shrimps.

Tide affects bottom feeders, though not to such a large extent. Fishing from piers and docks an hour before and after flood is most likely to give good results. On wrecks much depends on the kind of fish. The last of the ebb and at low tide is considered the worst condition for general fishing. In the open sea, on the banks, tidal influence counts for little or nothing. Any tide is as good as another.—Outing Magazine.

THE LIVERY STABLE DOG.

Some Ways in Which He Differs From the Fashionable Pets.

The common livery stable dog is totally unlike the "powder puff" or "toots and skigrams" dog, but his disposition is infinitely better. To lie on a cushion and growl and snap at the hand that would caress it is considered the height of folly in the livery stable variety.

The livery stable dog approaches you ingratiatingly and offers you a dirty paw to shake. After you have shaken it he solemnly gives you the other. Then he crawls up in your lap and licks you on the mouth.

The livery stable canine is a most industrious digger of holes. The theory is that he is going to lie down in the hole he digs, but he does no such thing. He goes and lies down right in the middle of the sidewalk, where people will have to step over him. He will never get out of anybody's way. He even lies down in the middle of the street and tries to make carts, wagons and automobiles avoid him.

He doesn't enjoy as large a vocabulary as the powder puff or skigrams dog. A phrase like "Does ums want ums itty bass?" would scare him to death. His advantages have not been such as to acquaint him with such hifalutin talk, but he does know a few simple phrases like "Git to blazes out of here, you darned pest!" He understands that perfectly.—Puck.

The American Youth.

If the truth were told most young American men are not especially interesting. They do not keep up their reading. They have a national obtundity when it comes to music, to art, to literature, nor do many of them take any of these things at all seriously. The young among them are not good conversationalists. Our cleverest men are monologists pure and simple. They lecture admirably. They are born orators along modified lines. They are inevitable story tellers. None of this is conversation, and women like conversation, like its courtesies, which at least pretend a little interest when their turn comes in the game. Knowledge of people and affairs outside our own country prickles more than one bubble about our young men.—Anna A. Rogers in Atlantic.

Discipline!

From the class room occupied by the roughest boys in the Sunday school came a great uproar. A secretary in the next room went to investigate. Complete silence followed the opening of the class room door.

"Have you a teacher?"

"No."

"Do you want one?"

"No."

"Then be quiet or you'll get one."

Result, comparative peace.—Manchester Guardian.

Looking Out For Grandma.

They are considerate youngsters in Nottingham, as most people know, says London Tit-Bits. A little boy whose grandmother had just died wrote the following letter, which he duly posted:

"Dear Angels—We have sent you grandma. Please give her a harp to play, as she is short winded and can't blow a trumpet."

Well Rehearsed.

Stage Manager—Remember, Bangs, we are depending on your baby to cry lustily in the third scene. Do you think he'll do his part? Actor Father—He ought to, sir. He's been rehearsing.

NOISY WEDDINGS.

Boisterous Prelude to Marriages In Old Rothenburg.

They love music in Rothenburg, and it is an incident of most functions, public and private. In front of the Rathaus, when wedding formalities are going on inside, hired musicians loudly drum and trumpet, whereas the people come running from all directions, for a wedding is not carried on with the quietness which would please the shy and retiring. Marriage is a sacrament neither lightly nor secretly entered into.

On the night before the wedding it is considered de regueur to hurl old pots and pans against the house of the bride with boisterous good wishes, and without these delicate attentions a bride would really feel slighted. Her two best friends wait upon her during the din and give her a wreath and a veil and some verses composed in her honor, and that the verses are curiously like those offered to brides in the past, except for necessary change of name, is not at all a drawback. Weddings are usually on Tuesdays and they take from 7 o'clock in the morning till 4 or 5 o'clock in the afternoon, including the time at the town hall. At the home there will likely be a play given in which are set forth the supposed foibles of the bride and groom, and some friend, masquerading as a gypsy, will come in and give whatever kind of prophecy best accords with his wits.—Robert Shackleton in Harper's Magazine.

MEXICANS' STAFF OF LIFE.

The Tortilla Is Their Bread—Frijoles Are Boiled Beans.

The tortilla is the ancient Indian bread of Mexico. Its only constituent is Indian corn (maize), which the women soak in lime-water until the kernels are at the point of bursting, then wash thoroughly until it is free from lime, when they grind it by rubbing it on a large block of stone, especially cut for the purpose, with a smaller stone which they hold in their hands. The operation looks very much like rubbing clothes on a washboard and is a laborious and tedious one. The lime renders the corn dough adhesive, like wheat flour dough, and it is easily patted between the hands into cakes the size and shape of an ordinary griddle-cake and is baked upon a thin stone griddle. Though no salt or leaven is added, fresh tortillas are exceedingly palatable.

The other food mainstay is frijoles—ordinary beans. They are boiled to a mush and with a liberal quantity of lard are warmed as required in a flat earthen dish that answers for a frying pan. The very poor people do not always have the luxury of frijoles and when they do have them cannot always afford the lard.—New York Sun.

Odd Death Certificates.

Certificates of death are not documents where one usually seeks for humor, but there is frequently to be found in them much of the unconscious variety. Here, for instance, is how the cause of death is stated in the case of a laborer:

"Died from injuries received through a bull accidentally kneeling on his chest."

The consideration shown for the feelings of the bull is a fine touch and suggests grave questions on the moral responsibility of the lower animals.

Again, a man is stated to have "died from the effects of injuries received after being run over by a railway train in motion owing to a misunderstanding between deceased and an engine driver." This description of a rather ordinary railway casualty is excellent.—London Express.

Sensitive Tobacco Plants.

In Cuba the best tobacco comes from one strip of land only, the slopes of a certain river, and even there a north wind may ruin the crop. Tobacco is the most sensitive plant we know of. The smallest thing affects its flavor. Plant Virginia tobacco in Germany, and the result is a better tobacco, but it is German tobacco, not Virginia. In North Borneo they produce the most delicate and silky leaves that ever were seen, but the tobacco lacks character and taste. Seed Havana seeds to the Philippines, and you merely produce a superior Manila.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Homemade Names.

"That little girl," remarked the druggist to the doctor, "was just in for 10 cents' worth of tincture of benzine. But I've had it before and gave her benzoin."

"That was easy," answered the doctor. "This morning on a diphtheria case the woman wanted to know if I administered antitoxin with an epidemic syringe."—New York Press.

Just the Opposite.

"When I first met you," cried the woman who had been married for her money, "you occupied a low, menial position, but now, thanks to me, you are a hymeneal one." her husband interrupted.

See W. S. Gooch at Stem before buying flues. July 9.

Giving the Bride a Tip.

"Here's a little pointer for you," said the bride of last year to the bride of this year. "I'll tell you my own experience, and you can judge for yourself what to do. When we returned from our wedding trip and I began to rummage through George's belongings I found six or seven pairs of gloves and at least nine pairs of silk hose, things that he had never had on. They had been tucked away in all sorts of places. Most of them I at once recognized as presents I had given to him from time to time. Besides them, I found a lot of handkerchiefs still unused, handkerchiefs that I had embroidered his initial on with my own hands.

"What do you suppose I did? Foolishly I gathered them all together and spread them out on the bed where he would see them when he came home and feel ashamed of himself for never using my presents. Just think what a lack of forethought I showed! Consider what a saving of pin money it would have been if I had put the things away and then doled them out to him for Christmas presents or birthday presents one by one. It would have served him exactly right too."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Are You a Beggar?

All the beggars are not holding out a hand to passersby in the street. You probably know the man who is ever whining for help. If a farmer, he thinks his neighbors should help him get in his grain or do his plowing. If in business, he is always trying to borrow or wanting some one to boost him or drum up customers. He never seems to think of relying on his own efforts. There is a well known fable about the larks in a grainfield. As long as the farmer depended on his neighbors and relations to come and cut his grain the larks felt perfectly safe. When the man determined to cut the grain himself the larks knew it was time to seek safety elsewhere.

There are times when every one needs help, but help should be asked only when one has made every possible effort for himself.

Too much help given a man weakens his character.—Milwaukee Journal.

A Quiet Rebuke.

An "object admonition" like the one described by Warren Lee Goss in his article, "Campaigning to No Purpose," published in Johnson's "Battles and Leaders of the Civil War," is often more efficacious than storms of reproach.

One day the colonel of the regiment noticed a soldier on parade wearing a badly soiled pair of gloves.

"Corporal," said the officer, "why do you set the men such a bad example as appearing before them in dirty gloves? Why is it?"

"I've had no pay, sir, since I entered the service," returned the corporal. "I can't afford to have them done up."

The colonel drew from his pocket a pair of gloves, spotlessly white. Handing them to the corporal, he said quietly: "Put these on. I washed them myself."

It was an forgotten lesson to the whole regiment.

Von Holstein's Dress Coat.

Prince Bulow once invited Herr von Holstein to dinner, telling him that it was to meet the emperor. "But," replied Holstein, "I don't believe that I have a dress coat at present. I will try, however, to get one made in time, and if I can't perhaps the emperor will take me as I am." This, the Times says, was reported to his majesty, who said that Herr von Holstein was to appear in any garb he pleased.

When the meeting took place Holstein was in his usual frock coat, and the emperor laughingly tapped him on the shoulder and said: "I see that dress coat wasn't ready. It doesn't matter."—London Standard.

Cheering Him Up.

"Bill," said the invalid's friend, "I've come to cheer you up a bit like I've brought you a few flasks, Bill, I thought if I was too late they'd come in handy for a wreat, yer know. No, don't get downhearted, Bill. Lummy, don't yer look gasbly! But there, keep up yer spirits, ole sport; I've come to see yer an' cheer yer up a bit. Nice little room yer 'ave 'ere; but as I says to meself when I was a'comin' up, wot a orkard staircase to get a coffin dahn!"—London Globe.

An Epitaph.

In the churchyard of Leigh, near Bolton, will be found a tombstone bearing the following amazing sentence: "A virtuous woman is 5s. to her husband." The explanation seems to be that space prevented "a crown" being cut in full, and the stonemason argued that a crown equals 5 shillings.—London Notes and Queries.

Musical Note.

"How do you sell your music?" asked the prospective customer.

"It depends on the kind you want," replied the smart clerk. "We sell piano music by the pound and organ music by the choir."

Some men never realize what constitutional liars they are until they are compelled to make an unusual effort to tell the truth.