The Hatchet

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POPULAR • SCIENCE.

Three hundred and twenty acres of land have been purchased in Salt Lake Valley, the idea being to consolidate, as far as possible, the ostrich industry.

A swimmer who broke his neck last August, and who was successfully operated upon, is now able to write and his hand gained steadiness with each attempt.

The statue of the late Prof. Huxley by Onslow Ford was recently unveiled. It has been placed in the great hall of the Natural History Museum at South Kensington.

A crystal of beryl has been founded at Grafton, N. H., which was 2,900 pounds and another from the same locality measuring 45 by 24 inches weighed by calculation about 2 1-2 tons. In Utah crystals of gypsum over 4 feet long have been found. A crystal of spodumene—lithium, aluminium silicate--30 feet long has been discovered in South Dakota.

The question of the stability of the Ducal Palace in Venice is receiving great attention. The alarming reports which have been published are apparently exaggerations. The great library and archæological museum are to be transferred, thus relieving the weight of the upper stories. The palace was never intended by its builders as a storehouse for books and heavy models.

Vesuvius is becoming more and more active and those who live around it are greatly alarmed. Experts are inclined to consider that there is no immediate danger. The station of the cable road which leads to its summit has been destroyed. Four English travelers who were making the ascent of the volcano ventured too far and were overtaken by the lava and severely burned.

An aeronaut was recently poisoned by hydogen arsenide, which escaped from the balloon. This shows the necessity of purifying the hydrogen used for balloon purposes. The balloon was filled in the ordinary way, and nothing peculiar in the odor of the gas was noticed. A few hours afterward the persons who had assisted in the operation were taken seriously ill and one of them died.

It is probable that the metric system will be introduced before long in Russia; the bill which has been prepared to this effect by the Minister of Finance has received the approbation of the State Council, with the understanding that the University and the various scientific societies will give their assistance to the verification of the weights and measures necessary for commercial use. The details have been nearly all decided upon, and will be submitted to the Council in the near future. Since 1896 the metric system has been used by the medical service of the army in the compounding of formulas, this having been made obligatory.

Dr. Chavernao, of Aix, France, has just designed a new army stretcher. It is a rigid contrivance made in two halves, and its advantage over the existing French ambulance is that the wounded man can be lifted off the ground without experiencing any shock or pain. The halves of the stretcher are placed on each side of the sufferer and by pressure they fold together under the body of the patient, who is not touched with hands at all in the operation. When loaded the stretcher is loaded on a light bicycle carriage. Under the existing conditions of ambulance work in France, four men are required to lift the wounded man, but by the aid of the new stretcher only two attendants are required.

A new kind of map for railroad stations is being introduced in England by the Northwestern Railway Company. The map is made up of white tiles and is about six feet square and each tile is 8 inches square. The lines are marked in black and burnt sienna.

The stronger made nest of the crow is an example of the structure of nests of birds whose young are born naked. The cuckoo, though it constructs a nest of rudimentary character, builds one which will protect its young, which, curiously enough, are born one at a time, presumably in the order in which they were laid. The kingfisher shows no architectural ability at all in the building, but burrows a hole instead. The chimney-swift builds its nest with twigs which are stuck together by means of a gluey secretion in its salivary glands which it deposits as required. Rain easily moistens this glue and quite often the nests fall through into our fireplaces.

Measurements by an American microscopist to test the theory that the red blood corpuscles vary in size in different races have failed to show any marked differences.

The bulletin of the Kew botanic garden states that one of the Amaranth family, Acnida australis, originally from Florida, attained a length of about twenty-five feet.

The director of the Paris Observatory states that the map of the heavens on which work has progressing for nearly ten years, is nearly completed. It will show nearly thirty million stars down to the fourteenth magnitude.

The effects of hunger when prolonged are found by Professor Lassignardie to be much like those of drunkenness. At first the intellectual powers become unusually active and the imagination runs wild, then there is a change to excitability, selfishness, cruelty and weakened faculties.

The deepest oil well that has yet been sunk in this country, says the New York Sun, is in the valley of the Monongahela river, about twenty-five miles from Pittsburgh, and is not yet completed, unless work has been resumed quite recently. A few months ago the hole had been drilled to a depth of 5532 or a little more than a mile, and then work was suspended on account of an accident. It is intended to dig the well to a depth of six thousand feet. The two deepest bore holes in the country were both sunk in Germany, at government expense, to ascertain the thickness of the coal measures, and also whether other beds underlie those that were known.

CURIOUS FACTS.

Ostriches are often unruly, and when they are shipped each of them has a lady's stocking drawn over the head and neck, and in that condition they can be led like lambs.

To the Academy of Sciences (Paris), M. Baxtelli reports that when the heart of animals has ceased to beat for a quarter of an hour, it has been reanimated by abdominal massage.

In order to facilitate traffic along the shores of the Dead Sea it has been decided to establish regular intercourse by means of small steamers, and and the first steamer has been purchased. It will certainly be a shock to many to hear of a steamer on this historic body of water.

In olden times, when tea was a rare and precious luxury, silver strainers were used into which the exhausted leaves were put after they had been well watered and drained. They were afterward eaten sugar on bread and butter. This fact is recorded by Sir Walter Scott in "St. Roman's Well."

Because of the multiplication of government in Chicago, due to the existence of seven townships in Cook county, the per cent. cost of collecting taxes is 6.66 as compared with ·57 in New York proper, .96 in St. Paul, and 1.12 in Boston.

There are a number of deep places in the Hudson, as everyone is aware, but few know that spots ranging from a depth of twenty to twenty-four fathoms are frequently met with south of the highlands.

From a lecture delivered in the Sorbonne by M. Mangin, it would appear that Paris possesses about eighty thousand trees in the streets and public places in the city. It is calculated there are twenty-six thousand plane trees, seventeen thousand chestnuts and fifteen thousand elms, the remainder consisting of sycamores, maples, lindens, etc. Apparently there is only one oak and one mulberry.

A novelty just placed on the English market is a water-tight watch which is particularly designed for soldiers going to South Africa. The back, instead of being supplied with a spring, is screwed on, and the stem winding apparatus is protected by a screw top. The operation of the timepiece is said to be unaffected by heat or cold, and one of these timepieces has for months been running and keeping perfect time while constantly submerged in a jar of water in a London window.

What constitutes an accident? A man died not long ago in Vermont in consequence of perforation of the entestines by sharp fragments of some indigestible material swallowed with the food. He was the holder of an accident policy insuring him, according to the usual formula, against "bodily injury sustained through external, violent and accidental means." The company refused to pay on the ground that the cause of the man's death was not an accident, but the court has decided that this was an accidental injury within the meaning of the policy. In New York state it has been decided that the taking of poison by mistake is not an accident in the meaning of a similar insurance insurance policy, but in Illinois the courts have ruled exactly the opposite.

HISTORY.

Martha Washington was never in the White House.

The town of Hingham contains the church known as the "Old Ship," built in 1681, which is still used by the first parish. It is said to be the oldest church in continuous use in New England. Back of this building is the graveyard on a terraced hill with tall monuments to "the early settlers of Hingham" and to the 76 soldiers who died in the war for the Union; the tomb of General Lincoln, a native of Hingham; and a noble statue over the grave of War-governor Andrew.

Longfellow's house in Brattle street, Cambridge, is the most famous private house in America (Mount Vernon being public). It is a comfortable mansion and was built in 1759, being deserted by Col. Vassall, its Tory master, in 1775, and occupied by Washington as head-quarters during the eight months of the siege of Boston. Longfellow came here a boarder in 1837. He came possessed of the house later and died there in 1882. Washington's office and Longfellow's study were in the room of the first floor, to the right of the door, the officers' room and library being back of it, and the drawing room on the other side of the front door.

The First Parish Church; Roxbury, situated in Eliot square, is an excellent and well preserved specimen of Puritan architecture, dating from 1804. The society originated in 1632, and for many years had for its pastor the gentle John Eliot, who gave most of his time to preaching to the Indians and translating the Bible into their language. After nearly two centuries of Orthodoxy, the parish became Unitarian, and Dr. George Putnam led it from 1830 to 1676. In 1775-76 the steeple on this site served as a signal station for the American army. and the church became the target for cannon shots from the British lines.

Bunker Hill monument was built during the years 1625-1642. Lafayette attended the laying of the corner stone and President Tyler the official dedication, while Webster furnished the oration for both occasions. In the lodge at the base is Dexter's marble statue of General Warren, and in 1881 a bronze statue of Colonel Prescott was raised, showing the brave soldier in a seersucker coat and broad farmer's hat with drawn sword, as when warning his eager men, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."

At Constitution wharf, the live oak frigate Constitution, 44, "Old Ironsides," the pride of the American Navy, was built in 1894-'97. She was intended to fight the Algerine corsairs, and attacked Ttipoli in 1803 4, but her most glorious service occurred in the war with Great Britain. This ship was saved from being broken up when Dr. Holmes begged the Navy Department to

> Nail to the mast her holy flag,
> Set every threadbare sail,
> And give her to the god of storms,
> The lightning and the gale.

At this wharf also was built the Boston, 28, which captured several French armed ships; and the Argus, 16, which burnt so many British ships off the English coast that she was said to have "set the Channel all ablaze."

ITEMS OF INTEREST

All the soap used in Paragua is made of cocoa oil.

A new dye has been discovered in a South Norwalk, Conn. hat factory. The workmen have threatened to strike because it turns their whiskers to a lavender hue.

A self-supporting stocking has been invented. In the upper part of the leg a few threads of India rubber are woven, and they keep the stocking from dropping.

A bat is able to find its way without the use of its eyes. A blind bat has been known to avoid wires and other obstructions as easily as though it had perfect sight.

Last year the pylloxera destroyed 450,000 acres of vineyards in Spain. When the vines of France and Spain have been grafted with the American vine, they are never attacked by this destrucive insect.

A society composed of 300 married men exists in Riga, Russia. When a child is born to any member each of the other members contributes a rouble (seventy-five cents) and the entire sum is given to the happy father.

A freshly made grave in a Greenfield, Mass., cemetery bore a floral tribute with the word "Ante" upon it. Inquiry elicited the information that the florist had been engaged to arrange a floral emblem bearing the word "Auntie." When the blunder was discovered it was too late to make the correction, and the angry florist insisted that two dictionaries which he had consulted spelled the word that way.

Rats that infest ships are very cunning, and it is difficult to catch them. It is customary to bait the wire traps and tie them fast to prevent them springing. For two or three days this is done until the rodents become bold and careless. Then the traps are properly set and a big haul of rats is the result.

A lazy New York tramp goes around the streets with a puffed jaw, begging for five cents to make up the quarter necessary to have his aching tooth pulled. He never has it pulled, however, for at night he removes a wad of cotton from his mouth, the swelling goes down, and he contently goes home to enjoy the money he has coaxed from the charitable.

A cow that had evidently been engaged in the hardware business died in Wilkesbarre, Pa. Dr. Hogg, a veterinary surgeon, performed an autopsy and in the cow's stomach found an assortment of hardware, comprising two horseshoe nails, four eight-penny nails, three four penny nails, three carpet tacks, two hat pins, one small spike, two wire nails, two hairpins, as well as eleven pieces of broken glass and nine stones.

The illness of a Liverpool clergyman caused a substitute to appear in his pulpit on a recent Sunday, and he preached an excellent sermon. On the following Sabbath, as the preacher still continued ill, another substitute appeared, and he preached the very same sermon as his predecessor. Investigation disclosed the fact that both of the clergymen were generous patrons of a bureau which supplies sermons to lazy or incompetent divines.

PROPOSALS will be received at the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., until 12 o'clock noon May 29, 1900, and publicly opened immediately thereafter to furnish at the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C., the daily supply of ice and provender for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1901. Blank proposals will be furnished upon application to the Navy Yard, Washington, D. C. A. S. KENNY, *Paymaster General, U. S. N.* 5-1-00.

PROPOSALS will be received at the Bureau of Supplies and Accounts, Navy Department, Washington, D. C., until 12 o'clock noon, June 12, 1900, and publicly opened immediately thereafter to furnish the annual supply of coal, coke, wood, and charcoal at the Navy Yards: Portsmouth, N. H., Boston, Mass., New York, League Island, Pa., Washington, D. C., Norfolk, Va., Pensacola, Fla., the Naval Stations: Newport, R. I., Port Royal, S. C., Key West, Fla., and the Naval Academy, Annapolis, Md., the annual supply of coal at the Naval Hospitals Dispensaries, etc., Portsmouth, N. H., Chelsea, Mass., Newport, R. I., New York, Philadelphia, Pa., Washington, D. C., Norfolk, Va., Port Royal, S. C., also a quantity of naphtha for the Navy Yard, Boston, Mass., and fuel oil for the Navy Yard, New York. Blank forms of proposals will be furnished upon application to the Bureau to the Commandadts of the different Navy Yards, or to the Navy Pay Offices. A. S. KENNY, Paymaster General, U. S. N. 5-25-00

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