HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Strong in Her Specialty.

Town Topics.

"My wife is a great linguist."

"How many languages does she speak?"

"Just one."

Fireproof.

London Truth.

Kentry—Is your flat fireproof?

Towne—You'd think so if you shivered there all winter.

No Doubt of It.

New York Sun.

Mrs. Cumso—I can distinctly see the man in the moon.

Mr. Cumso—I'll bet it's an Englishman after the Lunar gold deposits.

Say Not Forever.

Detroit Free Press.

"Yes," she observed, in speaking of it afterwards, "I thought he was going to say farewell forever, but he finally quit, short after 1 o'clock in the morning."

Their Mission.

Chicago Post.

"In Paris, I understand, the latest fad is for 'impressionist' menus."

"I presume the idea is that the guests should become accustomed to nightmares before leaving the table."

Hooking Him.

Puck.

Lord Totteringham (over the album of views)—Don't you—er—love an ancient ruin, Miss Goldrox?

Miss Goldrox (flutteringly)—I—I—this is so sudden, your lordship—but you may ask papa.

Wife's Cruel Thrust.

Washington Star.

"I wonder," said the man who had been out for the evening, "why some bright women marry such insignificant husbands."

"William," she said, admiringly, "you are really too modest; you really do yourself an injustice."

A Rare Thing.

New York World.

Old Lady (compassionately)—Poor fellow! I suppose your blindness is incurable. Have you ever been treated?

Blind Man (sighing)—Yes, mum, but not often. 'Taint many as likes to be seen goin' into a saloon with a blind beggar.

Authority for It.

Brooklyn Life.

Young Husband—Isn't that baby drinking an awful lot of milk recently, Mary? It seems wrong to give him so much.

Young Wife—How silly of you to say that, John. Don't you know the doctor says that the poor little thing is cutting its milk teeth?

A Witness to the Fact.

Boston Transcript.

Miemac—Wonder if it is true that there were two full moons in the month of December.

Knitowle—Oh, yes; I can swear to that. I was coming home from the club night before New Year's, and I saw both of them as plain as could be.

The Dramatic Divorce.

Detroit Tribune.

"I would not marry him. He is a brute. He will spend his time devising new indignities to inflict upon you."

"Well, the public demands novelty."

The two women of the stage, speaking together thus were fain to sigh, touching the limitations of their art.

Thought It Was Worse.

Chicago Tribune.

"What's that you are hiding, Ethel? What have you been reading? Show it to me instantly!"

"It's only a copy of 'L'Assammoir,' mamma."

"What a fright you gave me, child! I thought it was a New York society paper."

A Proper Expression.

Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

"I think gold is being hoarded," observed Manchester.

"Nonsense," replied Birmingham. "I was in a bank yesterday and saw about two quarts of gold coin on the counter."

"That's a fine way to speak of gold coin, measuring it as though it were milk or cider."

"The expression is all right. Gold comes in quartz."

GAINS IN SPEED OF TRAVEL.

They Are Continuous, and Every Year Sees an Advance.

Boston Herald.

The Janaury number of Scribner's magazine contains some suggestive notes in regard to the gains recently effected, or proposed, on the speed of travel. There was that sixty-five miles an hour train on the Lake Shore from Chicago to Buffalo, which demonstrated that the second lap of the one thousand-mile race between New York and Chicago can be done quite as fast as the first, east of Buffalo, and which opened up the possibility of New Yorkers being able at no distant day to see the same sun rise over Long Island and set over Chicago. Then, there is Austin Corbin's scheme for an easy five-day Atlantic run between Milford Haven and Fort Pond bay, inside of Montauk Point. More ambitious in its way than either enterprise, but entirely within the limits of scientific achievement, is the Washington scheme for the construction of a mail and passenger road between New York and the national capital, on which the trains shall shoot over the 240 miles in two hours. There is a bill before Congress to grant the company proposing this entreprise a charter and right of way, on the condition that a sufficient guarantee should be given of its ability to maintain this extraordinary rate of speed. It is stated that the promoters offer to demonstrate on a test line between Washington and Chesapeake bay, their ability to meet this self-imposed requirement.

As there is no limit to the amount of power which can be poured into an electric dynamo, the question of speed resolves itself simply into the number of revolutions per second which the bearings of car wheels and axles will stand. It is proposed to construct the Washington line on the already familiar "bicycle" plan: that is, with a single line of wheels running on a single rail. The track is to be elevated on a single line of iron posts, and an auxiliary rail on either side is to be provided to keep the train in an upright position in rounding curves. The trains are to weigh one-fourth as much as an ordinary express train, and they are intended to carry passengers, mail and express packages only. If the mechanical part of this scheme is as thoroughly practical as its electric side, there remains only the question of commercial return to affect its execution. The promoters of the enterprise claim for it a high degree of safety, since no grade crossings will be possible, and a considerable gain in economy on the score of the amount of land to be occupied.

In actual operation such a road could only be made to pay by the very frequent running of trains. An eminent electric railway engineer, Mr. Frank J. Sprague, has calculated that an electric railroad ninety miles long, which the trains should traverse in one hour, could be operated from two power stations, forty-five miles apart. He assumes the use of the "three-wire" system—the rails as an auxiliary between two trolley wires, and the use of a potential of nine hundred volts. But as a matter of commercial return it is also necessary to assume the running of trains consisting of two cars each every ten minutes. That is to say, there must be a continuous movement over the line of trains only ten minutes apart, otherwise the waste of power would be so great as to make the working of the road unprofitable. The "bicycle" road people may be able to figure out a return on the capital invested under less exacting conditions. But, in the present stage of development of electric railroading, it is an axiom that electricity has a distinct advantage over steam only in cases where a large number of train units can be moved at short intervals apart. Given that possibility, and the rate of speed or the nature of the service becomes merely a question of detail. There can be no question about the ease with which ninety miles an hour could be secured on an ordinary track, and it seems quite probable that 120 miles would be quite as attainable on the "bicycle" plan.

MOON MYTHS.

Ancient Origin of Belief Concerning the Luminary.

Philadelphia Letter in New York Post.

Before the American Folk Lore Society this morning Mr. W. W. Hewell, in giving an account of "Moon Superstitions in America," observed that the definitions of the term superstition given in English dictionaries were inadequate and misleading. He defined a superstition as a belief respecting casual sequence, depending on reasoning proper to an outgrown culture. He pointed out that modern survivals sometimes indicate a continuance of conceptions more ancient than a mass of connecting beliefs which have wholly perished. These conceptions endure, because, being simpler in their nature, they represent a human impulse which animated the prehistoric ancestor as well as the modern descendant. This is principally illustrated by means of a collection of English moon and sun superstitions still current in America, as contained in a collection made by Mrs. Fanny D. Bergen, intended to form a forthcoming volume in the memoirs of the society. By these examples she showed that lunar divination is still popularly maintained, and that the honor paid to the orb is little less than a continued worship. This record reveals the central principle of moon adoration, in the effect still ascribed to the apparent variation of the luminary. During the time while the moon increases, the principle of growth is supposed to prevail, and, conversely, the time of lunar diminution is presumed to be the season of decay. It is the new moon to which is dedicated the money, that under its expanding influence will assuredly multiply; it is at such times that the farmer must sow his seed. On the other hand, the abolition of pests and diminution of objects in which shrinkage is desired may be obtained by connecting these with the waning sphere.

For the reason indicated, the crescent was assigned as an emblem to goddesses of growth. This ornament passed from Roman divinities to the Virgin; on the walls of Venice, she appears crowned with a crescent, in the same manner as the divinities whom she has superseded. Of late the doctrine which perceives in myth a symbolic expression of the forces of nature, has fallen into comparative discredit, chiefly on account of the unscientific manner in which "sun-myths" have been treated; the English sayings are to be received as demonstration that one must not proceed too far in this attitude of doubt. If the popular mind to-day addresses the personified moon, it may be considered as certain that antiquity did the like. The modern survivals exhibit the fundamental conceptions out of which grow the complicated rites and elaborate mythologies of old religions. In this manner we are able to look back beyond recorded history, and to elucidate problems which neither philosophical speculation nor historical research has been able to expound.

MEASURING SUNSHINE.

One of the Interesting Duties of the Weather Prophets.

Boston Globe.

Within the past few years the development of the great signal stations situated at points on the Pacific or Atlantic coasts and in the interior of this country, and all under the direction of the United States Government Weather Bureau at Washington, has been something phenomenal. The increased interest of the people in the science of meteorology has gone a great way in stimulating the weather observers at the principal stations to the devising of more perfect instruments for indicating and recording atmospheric conditions.

There is scarcely an hour of the day when the conditions of the weather are not changing, although this statement might, to the layman, seem slightly overdrawn. So frequent and radical are these changes that the advanced meteorologist can no longer depend simply upon "eye observation," and it is absolutely necessary in the performance of his duty that he be provided with the most recently improved instruments.

The progress in the perfection of these delicate pieces of mechanism has been so great that the observers in the tower of the federal building, where the Boston station of the Weather Bureau is situated, are now measuring sunshine.

It is true. Not a day passes that the amount, in hours, minutes and seconds, of sunshine that has cheered the "Hub" is not telegraphed to Washington, and from there across the continent to all the principal stations. Away up on the very topmost part of the high tower on a bracket by itself is this delicate little instrument, and so nicely is it adjusted that though day may be dark and lowering clouds hover o'er it let but one tiny rift in their gloomy banks allow the imprisoned sun rays to slip out but for the fraction of time and the little sunshine machine has its tape ready and a record is made of "Old Sol's" solitary smile that day.

Not only does it catch the amount, but, through the help of electricity, sends the record buzzing down a wire into the main office on the top floor of the building and puts it in figures that can't lie upon a sheet of paper.

The principle upon which this bit of delicate mechanism operates is essentially that of the Leslie differential air thermometer in the form of a straight glass tube with cylindrical bulbs at each end; the whole inclosed in a projecting glass sheath. Mercury is used to separate the air in the two bulbs, a small quantity being inserted in the bottom and stem of the lower bulb, which bulb is smoothly coated on the outside with lampblack. The bulbs are filled with pure dry air and sealed at a temperature of about five degrees Fahrenheit, to secure greater density of air.

The space between the bulbs and the protecting sheath is then perfectly exhausted of air and is also sealed. In operation the glass instrument is mounted on an adjustable metallic base, to which it is firmly attached by a tubular clamp, two electrodes are attached to electric wires connected with the recording instrument in the office and the recorder itself is placed in a suitable location on the tower, where it has free exposure to the sun at all seasons of the year and at all hours of the day.

As already stated the principle upon which this instrument works is essentially that of a differential air thermometer; the air in each bulb being separated by a short column of mercury. The lower bulb is covered with a heavy coating of lampblack, and, when the instrument is exposed to the direct rays of sunlight the air in this bulb expands more than that in the upper bulb, which has no coating of lampblack or any substance to attract the heat rays, and the column of mercury is forced upward and closes an electrical circuit through the fused-in wires.

This circuit passes through the wire to the registers, and when the sun is shining short marks at regular intervals are made on the record sheet. During cloudy weather and at night time the mercury retreats toward the blackened bulb and breaks the circuit, and the record on the sheet is then a straight line.

The idea of measuring and recording sunshine electrically was first suggested by D. T. Maring, of the United States Weather Bureau, and afterward it was developed by Prof. C. F. Marvin into the simple and ingenious instrument described.

As a matter of further explanation it is well to state that the register upon which the record is kept is a bass cylinder connected with a clock works, and over this cylinder a sheet of paper, upon which are ruled lines, marked with the hours and minutes of the day, is placed. An automatic pen connected with the sunshine recorder by a fine electrical wire marks the results upon the paper as the cylinder is turned by the clock.

This record is removed at the close of each day, and the weather clerk enters it in his book after telegraphing it to the main office at Washington, D. C.

Not content with this achievement Professor Marvin has designed still another which is in operation at the first order stations of the service. It is known as the "photographic sunshine recorder."

HAS TO BRIBE HIS SEALS.

Prof. Woodward Can't Make Them Work Unless He Feeds Them.

New York Times.

"I made a great mistake when I was training those seals and sea lions of mine," said Professor Woodward at Koster & Bial's the other day. "They have me completely at their mercy when we get on the stage, and I now realize that in developing their brain power so that they will do tricks at my command, I also cultivated an association of ideas that now costs me lots of money.

"Just before we go on the stage—there are seven of us, six being seals and sea lions—I have to give a liberal portion of fish to every one of them. Then they are ready to amuse the public and go at it with vim and enjoyment.

"But, an act being over, I couldn't persuade those brutes to do another thing for me unless I gave them more fish. They'll lie flat on the stage, look at each other, then in a knowing way at me, and at the audience, and I'd take an oath I've seen them wink. When they get the fish, though, all their willingness comes back.

"Are they hard to care for? No, except that they're a mischievous, roving, curious and voracious lot.

"I keep them in a cage away back of the stage, and not far from where the women dress. Somebody unfastened the entrance the other day, and one of the seals flopped out, found the coast clear, and went on an inspection tour. He spent a couple of hours on tour, I should think, from the amount of evidence we found.

"Nobody missed him till at night, when the women began to come in. Suddenly there was a shriek, series of sharp barks, more shrieking, and a mad rush of women to the stage. One of the women, entering a dressing room, ran right against the wandering seal, and when he resented her intrusion, he almost scared her and everybody else to death."

Seals have been doing wonderful things on the stage for many years, but few men have had the success in training them that Professor Woodward has. His animals are jugglers of rare skill for creatures possessed of so few facilities for getting a grip on things. They swing batons with a great deal of the grace and dash of a drum major, and that fact is remarkable, because the seal is supposed to confine his grace to the water. They sing and warble—that is, no person among the audience would dare say that those seals and sea lions were not singing and warbling according to their knowledge of those accomplishments. They play chime bells, and in this act make genuine music. They fire guns, and then end the whole performance by a song and chorus, with accompaniment by a sealskin band of six pieces.

Have your grocer send you some of Huyler's Cocoa and Chocolates with your next order. Once tried, always used.

OFFERINGS OF THE POETS.

When I Get Home.

I shall not ask for splendor nor high place
When I get home; but just a house obscure,
Set where the maples' swaying shadows lace
The winding walk; wind-trembled vines, demure
Against the window pane, and on the floor
Their dancing lights, in intricate design
Of shining tracery; swerved o'er the door
A rose, old fashioned, and my love benign,
Smiling a welcome 'neath its showering sweet,
As elsewhere she did wait my home-bound feet.

I shall not care to sing and praise at first
When I get home; but just to lie and rest
Awhile, forgetful of the earth; the thirst
For peace full satisfied; my sheaves, sun drest,
In golden richness gleaming in the field,
And she I loved (and love), beside me there,
Breathing the tender thoughts whose happy yield
Has been denied through barren years. A prayer
Of harvest thanks—and then her pleasant ways
A garnered recompense for empty days!

Indianapolis. —Ollah Toph.

Inspiration.

My love is mistress of the violin,
How smooth she bows, what perfect fingering,
Such grace is in her sympathetic swing,
So snug the viol rests beneath her chin.
Scarce audibly the mellow notes begin,
But swell amain like mountain brooks in spring,
Till, in rich unison, each fondled string
Is vibrant with emotions from within.

So through my sense her finer spirit stirs
While all my being thrills to her intent.
The music which I make her touch confers
And, if its harmonies seem poorly blent,
Not through her lack of skill the fault occurs,
But through the bad tones of her instrument.

Spencer, Ind. —Fred L. Pochin.

Why?

Why is it we remember what
We know should quickly be forgot?
Why is it we forget straightway
That we should bear in mind for aye?

Indianapolis. —May W. Donnan.

Some Day of Days.

Some day, some day of days, treading the street
With idle, heedless pace,
Unlooking for such grace,
I shall behold your face.
Some day, some day of days, thus may we meet.

Perchance the sun may shine from skies of May,
Or winter's icy chill
Touch lightly vale and hill;
What matter? I shall thrill
Through every vein with summer on that day.

Once more life's perfect youth will all come back,
And for a moment there
I shall stand fresh and fair,
And drop the garment care;
Once more my perfect youth shall nothing lack.

I shut my eyes now, thinking how 'twill be,
How, face to face, each soul
Will slip its long control,
Forget the dismal dole
Of dreary fate's dark separating sea.

And glance to glance, and hand to hand in gree'ing,
The past, with all its fears,
Its silence and its tears,
Its lonely, yearning years,
Shall vanish in the moment of that meeting.

—Elizabeth Stuart Phelps.

Yesterday.

Oh, you are mine, and mine alway,
More mine than in your marriage, May,
And yet I want your yesterday.

And yet I want your yester-year—
The strange, sad season when we were
Cold as stone to each other, dear.

Ignorant, we went up and down
The wind-blown streets of the old town,
Where oft, perchance, you brushed my gown;

Where we, perchance, as cold as ice,
Looked in each other's stranger eyes.
Dear eyes that light my paradise.

Your name, that now with tears I say,
More dear than in our marriage, May,
Had no place in my prayers that day.

Your face had no place in my dreams,
Came in no faint, prophetic gleams,
Across the starbeams and moonbeams.

Another woman held the key
Of your true heart that knew not me
Nor all the heaven that was to be.

And yet my place was mine alway,
Mine still as in our marriage, May,
But, Love, I want your yesterday.

—Katharine Tynan.

Trust.

A picture memory brings to me—
I look across the years and see
Myself beside my mother's knee.

I feel her gentle hand restrain
My selfish moods, and know again
A child's blind sense of wrong and pain.

But wiser now, a man gray grown,
My childhood's needs are better known,
My mother's chastening love I own.

Gray grown, but in our Father's sight
A child still groping for the light,
To read His works and ways aright.

I bow myself beneath His hand;
That pain itself for good was planned,
I trust, but cannot understand.

I fondly dream it needs must be
That, as my mother dealt with me,
So with His children dealeth He.

I wait, and trust the end will prove
That here and there, below, above,
The chastening heals, the pain is love!

—John G. Whittier.

Freedom.

How lonely is vast Freedom! I may go,
Or come, or sit in the still house of thought,
All idleness unseeking and unsought,
From the gray morn to noon, to evening glow.
None shall reprove, if vacant hands I show,
Or question why the task remains unwrought;
Or done, or never done, 'twill be as naught
To every creature on the earth below.

How lonely is vast Freedom! I were fain
To follow any who would be my liege;
To say, "Do this!" or "To the world's end ride!"
I am as he that once sought all in vain
To enter his loved city, in her siege:
"How lone is Freedom!" at her gate he cried.

—Edith M. Thomas, in the Cosmopolitan.

To-Morrow.

To-morrow is too far away!
A bed of spice the garden is,
Nor bud nor blossom that we miss;
The roses tremble on the stem,
The violets and anemones:
Why should we wait to gather them?
Their bloom and balm are ours to-day,
To-morrow—who can say?

To-morrow is too far away,
Why should we slight the joy complete,
The flower open at our feet?
For us to-day the robin sings,
His curved flight the swallow wings,
For us the happy moments stay.
Stay yet, nor leave us all too fleet!
For life is sweet and youth is sweet,
And love—ah, love is sweet to-day,
To-morrow—who can say?

—Ina Coolbrith.

One of the New Women.

Lewiston Journal.

The most interesting rumor from Bar Harbor concerns the boom which a Camden pants factory is getting these days. This particular factory has a young and attractive woman as its selling agent and sells "direct to consumers." Within the past few days she has accosted nearly every Bar Harbor business man with the inquiry:

"Now, can't I measure you for a new suit of clothes or a pair of trousers?"

The victim generally gasps for breath and then gets down to business.

The young woman seems to know every man by name and that flatters him, for he has never seen her before. She has a little satchel with her, and a magnetic smile which plays under a pair of attractive eyes. Generally the victim condescends to buy a pair of pants. He has forgotten his measure, but she tells him that she is an expert, and perhaps they slip into a store and she runs the tape deftly about him, and, with the aid of a new-fangled board arrangement announces that she has his measure. It takes him but a jiffy, and he wonders as he pays a deposit, whether the pants will fit him or his son, or if he can bloomerize them for his daughter.

EDISON'S FIRST BIG CHECK.

So Large That He Thought It Couldn't Be Good.

New York Press.

Among the many inventions that sprang from the fertile brain of Thomas A. Edison was the instrument generally known as the ticker—the little clicking glass-covered affair that one sees nowadays in any pretentious barroom, reeling off its yards and yards of paper ribbon, bearing on the surface in clear letters the score from the Polo grounds, the results of speed trials between the thoroughbreds of the Eastern tracks and much important news. It is only within recent years that we have had this development of the machine that was originally intended to give to speculators in stock markets a line on how their money was going or coming.

Mr. Edison, however, isn't collecting royalties on the tickers turned out by the manufacturers, and to few persons is the fact known that the man who evolved the electric light, the telephone, the kinetoscope and numerous other wonders of the century is identical with the inventor of the original ticker. This comparatively insignificant work of the Wizard was the means by which he obtained the first money beyond his salary as a telegraph operator. To a party of his friends who entertained him one evening recently in the rooms of the Arion Society, Mr. Edison related how he sold the patent rights for the ticker.

"When I came to New York to sell my invention," Mr. Edison said, "I was largely in doubt as to its value. I knew it was a useful contrivance, but it was with some diffidence that I entered the presence of the manufacturer with whom I opened negotiations for its disposal. As a boy I had often longed to possess $5,000, and I had a good mind to hold out for that much money, though I felt secretly that I would be doing well to get $2,000. So, when the manufacturer asked me how much I wanted for the patent rights I stammered and asked how much he was willing to pay.

"'Come around in the morning,' he said, and I went home to dream about that $5,000 fortune I was going to get—perhaps. When I saw him in the morning he said with a take-that-or-take-nothing air of determination:

"'We have decided to pay you $40,000—not a cent more.'

"I almost fainted, but in less than five minutes I had stuck my name to a contract and was out in the street looking in a half-dazed way at a check in my hand, 'Payable to the order of Thomas A. Edison forty thousand dollars ($40,000).' Then I began to think, and the forty thousand seemed like forty millions, and I said to myself: 'Tom, you've been swindled. The check is not good.' And when I went to the bank—I had never been inside of one to do any business—and presented the check I was not surprised when the teller scrutinized it, glanced at me and pushed it back with a shake of the head and a remark that I was too excited to understand, but concluded that my fears were confirmed. So I stuffed it in my pocket and went to see a friend, to whom I related my experience.

"'Let's see the check,' he said. 'Why, that's all right. You must be identified,' and we went back to the bank. The cashier knew my friend and the money was soon counted out. Still I wasn't sure I was awake until I began to feel and hear the snap of the new banknotes. It was a big bundle of money, and I stuck some of it in every pocket, so that almost everywhere I put my hand I could feel it bulging out.

"When I went to the hotel that night do you think I took my clothes off? Not much. I slept in them, so I wouldn't wake up and find that it was all a cruel dream."

TOBACCO WARMLY DEFENDED.

English Clergymen No Longer Fear to Smoke, Even in Public.

London Telegraph.

Those of the Queen's lieges who are at once assiduous churchmen and inveterate smokers will be gratified to hear that a learned doctor of divinity, who is also a distinguished dignitary of the establishment, has made public profession of his implicit faith in the virtues of tobacco.

The other evening the Very Rev. J. C. Lees, D. D., took the chair at a smoking concert, held in St. Giles's Hall, Edinburgh, by the members of the Young Men's Cathedral Guild, and opened the proceedings by describing tobacco as "one of the greatest boons ever bestowed upon man," and by expressing his sincere hope that all present had "acquired the accomplishment of smoking."

The late Mr. Spurgeon, it may be remembered, took a very similar course. Being expostulated with for his habit of smoking, he boldly declared it to be harmless, and had the courage to say: "I thank God for a good cigar." It is a healthy sign of the times that ministers of religion should thus openly pay unstinted tribute of homage to the virtues of the fragrant weed, considering how steadfastly and severely its cult had been discouraged, in laymen as well as in "holy clerks," until a comparatively recent period, by the "tone-giving" ecclesiastical authorities in this country.

For well-nigh a couple of centuries after the first of our Stuart sovereigns, "Douce King Jamie," of pious memory, had issued his withering commination of the "noisome herb" introduced into England by Sir Walter Raleigh, the episcopacy of the Reformed Church persistently followed the cue given to British Protestants by that erudite but narrow-minded defender of the faith, and showed a heroic example of abstinence from the pleasure and comfort of smoking to their minor clergy and the secular congregations of their respective dioceses.

In the days when George was King, a sporting vicar, or convivial curate, having charge of souls in rural districts, might indulge in a pipe after breakfast or dinner without fear of his bishop or sacrifice of ghostly prestige in the opinion of his churchwardens and parishioners. Prelates, however, were never seen to smoke, even by their intimate friends, and in any cathedral town a seven-headed fiery dragon would have been a less surprising street sight than a dean with a lighted cigar in his mouth, or even an archdeacon "blowing a cloud" from a well-seasoned cutty.

Nowadays, when old world prejudices against the use of tobacco have to a great extent died out, the clergy of all ranks smoke as freely and fearlessly, if not perhaps as obtrusively, as the laity. They have the courage of their tastes, as well as of their opinions, and their emancipation from the petty and fantastic restraints formerly imposed upon them by "the cloth" is finely instanced by the unconventional utterances of so dignified an ecclesiastic as Dr. Lees, who, while presiding over a musical and convivial gathering of young Scotsmen, encouraged them to smoke to the top of their bent, adding, "I trust that you will spend your evening enjoyably, and that tobacco will help to keep you up to the mark."

Dr. Lees spoke words of truth and wisdom when he signalized the herb that soothes but not intoxicates as a blessing to mankind. Tobacco is, indeed, a universal benefactor, exercising its kindly influence with genial impartiality upon civilized and barbaric races alike.

MODERN WOMAN'S STRENGTH.

In This She Is Ahead of Past Feminine Generations.

London World.

Whatever may be thought of the pretensions to intellectual advances put forward on behalf of the modern woman, there is at least no denying her physical and muscular progress. Brought to the test of actual results, her claim to mental superiority over the woman who thought and worked and achieved in a less assertive age becomes by no means easy to establish. With all the exultant fuss about higher education and the equality of the sexes, we look in vain to-day for worthy successors to some of those gifted and brilliant women of the past who, quietly and without the aid of advertisement, wrote their names upon the history of their time. But when it comes to a question of physical comparison, the new feminine generation has far better reason to congratulate itself and pity its grandmothers.

The new era of feminine athleticism has, no doubt, its unlovely features and its possibilities of objectionable development. It must be owned, too, that experience has so far failed to prove, in the case of either the up-to-date maid or matron, that the mens sana is at all an assured accompaniment of that corpus sanum which her free indulgence in physical exercise does so much to secure. For all that, it is impossible for any one, however doubtful of certain "new" tendencies, to advocate a return to the quite recent days when croquet was about the most violent of allowable feminine exercises, and bodily vigor was held to be as "unsexing" to a girl as hysteria or fainting fits to her brother. The benefits of the revolution now being wrought by means of athletic training, golf, cycling, sculling and the rest are already so apparent that the old dogma of woman's inherent physical weakness has become utterly discredited. Nowadays the only intelligible hostility to the new order of things is that which proceeds, not from old-fashioned prejudice, but from the excusable jealousy of the "mere male," who stands in some danger of finding his supremacy challenged by a race of stalwart and amazonian womankind, even now rapidly approaching him in stature, strength and power of endurance.

Though we have freed ourselves from the superstition that womanliness is a quality depending for its existence on bodily weakness, we are not allowed to forget, on the other hand, how easily the fair devotee of athletic exercise may be tempted, in her newly cultivated enthusiasm, to overstep the retiring modesty of the feminine nature. It may be good in some respects for a woman to have something approaching a man's strength, but it is unpardonable on her part to use it like a man. So long as she is content to adhere to the legitimate objects of recreation and physical culture she does not derogate one iota from the dignity either of herself or her sex. The danger is lest she may be enticed by the spirit of emulation into athletic contests such as have, happily, been hitherto confined to male competitors. About the whole idea of such struggles between women there is something repellent to the point of degradation.

A SNAKE CHARMER IN CAIRO.

Powers Alleged to Be Developed by a Diet of Snakes' Heads.

New York Sun.

The Algerian papers report the death of the famous snake charmer, Hadj-Ali-ben-Chiekh-ben Aisa, aged 115. This fact has led M. Vigouroux to relate in a Paris paper an experience he had in Cairo last spring with a snake charmer.

At Cairo there is on old palace which is now used as an orphan asylum. Mr. Vigouroux, accompanied by a friend, was walking leisurely in one of the streets of the old city. They noticed a mild-looking young man, carrying a black leather bag, such as is always carried by serpent charmers. His face was pale, somewhat feminine, and his gait was loose and indolent, but his eyes were strange and singularly piercing. They at once engaged him to come the next day to the palace of Engha-Hanem. Guards were stationed around the building to prevent the charmer from getting into it before the appointed time. When he arrived he was led into the first courtyard. He was asked if there were any snakes there.

"Yes," he replied, "a great many."

As a precautionary measure he was conducted to an inner court in the center of the palace. There he was asked if he could catch a snake. The charmer whistled for a few seconds, and then listened attentively.

"Yes," said he, "there is a snake on this side," pointing to the wall. A bargain was then made with him, the rate being a shilling a snake. He immediately went to work with the air of a man who understood his business and was perfectly sure of the results.

Standing in the center of the court, gazing at the wall where he said the reptile was concealed, he began to recite a prayer or conjuration in Arabic, in which he addressed the serpent, saying in substance that everything and every creature must yield to the power of God. He also invoked Solomon and some celebrated Mussulman personages. While he was reciting this formula he sometimes stood perfectly straight, sometimes he leaned forward, and lastly he fell on his knees. When he had finished he picked up a little rod that lay beside him and scratched the wall with it, advancing toward the door of the building leading to the court. At the door he stopped and said:

"Here he is; come and look at him."

The party advanced, and on a line with his arm at the place where he had directed the rod they distinctly saw the head of a snake protruding from a hole in the wall. The snake charmer grabbed the head and pulled out a long, thin and wriggling reptile. He made it fasten its fangs in his garment. Then he pulled violently and showed the snake's teeth in the stuff. At last he threw the reptile on the ground, excited it and tossed it into his leather bag.

"How did you know," he was asked, "that there was a snake in that wall?"

"I smelt him," was the answer.

And certainlythere seemed to be no room to suspect faking in the exploit. One of the party remarked that the charmer might possibly have snakes concealed in his clothes. The fellow immediately threw off his blue blouse, which was his only covering, and shook it in the presence of the assemblage. He was asked if there were any more snakes in that court. After a moment's inspection he replied:

"In this wall there is a big one and a little one."

He was told to catch the little one first. He recited his prayer, and added to it a command to the big snake to lie still while he captured the little one. Then he proceeded with his wand along the wall, as before. When he reached the door he called us, saying: "Here he is!"

The head was sticking out of the hole. He grabbed it, pulled out the snake and broke its fangs in the manner described above. But the reptile bit him in the arm and drew blood. The bite didn't bother him. He threw the snake on the ground among the spectators, who stood in utter amazement. Then he went at work again.

It was the big snake's turn now. He was yanked out like the other two. Notwithstanding the apparent impossibility of fraud, the thing was so surprising that doubts were still expressed.

"Let him come into the garden," said one of the spectators, "and catch snakes there. Then we will be convinced."

The charmer accepted the offer.

"If there are any there," said he," I will catch them, but I cannot tell beforehand whether there are any or not, because at this time of the year the heat is not yet sufficient for them, and the greater number of snakes are still in the holes of old walls."

He was led out into the garden. At five or six paces from a heap of rubbish and weeds he began to whistle. Then he announced a snake.

"Yes, there are two," said he. Then, stooping down, he pulled one out, and, as he had left his leather bag in the courtyard, he put the head of the reptile in his mouth and held it there while he secured the second.

This last exploit closed the hunt. On being asked if he was not afraid when he put the head of that poisonous snake into his mouth, he replied:

"Oh, no; if it were not ramazan time, I would have eaten the head. It was from eating the heads of snakes in my youth that I acquired the power of finding and catching them."

That explanation was not satisfactory. Neither was his formulas of adjuration, but the spectators left with the idea that the mysteries of his profession were well worth an investigation by scientific men.

THE HUMOR TRADE DEPRESSED.

Conditions That Seem to Call for the Invention of Some New Jokes.

New York Sun.

Some of the young men and young women who try to amuse the public and at the same time earn an honest living by writing jokes find themselves confronted now with a serious crisis in their career. In the language of the trade reports they are suffering from the adverse competition, and they are threatened with hard times unless they are able to put something absolutely new on the market. This state of affairs has long been recognized in the trade, and serious study has been given to the problem of supplying an article at once light and original, that would catch the fancy of the public. It is believed that a pleasing income awaits the inventor of a new and successful brand of goods who is the first to get his wares upon the market.

The problem is more complicated than it appears to be on the surface. One of the conditions to be met is the disposal of the large stock of stationery which some joke writers have on hand. For years the tendency in one branch of the trade has been to the elaboration and systematization of stationery. For instance, one member of the Brooklyn Authors' Club has devised a system of stationery as elaborate and complete as any used in a bank or government office. It includes paper especially cut to suit the exact length of his jokes; envelopes in which to send the jokes to the editor, and other envelopes in which the editor may return the rejected jokes; circulars in which he speaks to the editor and other circulars in which the editor's views and thanks are to be communicated to him; remonstrances, protests and reproaches to obdurate editors; trade announcements; a brief, modest, and accurate sketch of his literary career and achievements; billheads, dunning circulars, and other necessaries of the practice of the highest form of literary art. All these documents are of fine paper, variously tinted to distinguish their purpose, and nicely printed. He lays in his stationery by wholesale, first, because of the belief that there is a better chance of having one joke accepted if you sent a batch of thirty at once than if you forward only three, an idea that involves a large waste of stationery. In addition he keeps an elaborate set of books, which enable him to ascertain instantly the whereabouts of any joke that is going the rounds, to avoid sending one joke twice to the same editor, and to keep track of his debts. Not all joke writers go into the stationery business so thoroughly as this one; but most of them do it to some extent, and habitually keep large stocks on hand. It is obvious that a radical innovation in their humor would mean a serious loss through their present supply of stationery being rendered useless, unless, of course, the stock on hand could be worked off previously. This is a risk about which some of them hesitate.

Then, too, they are not all of them convinced that the public wants a change—at any rate, a radical one. The present style of joke, consisting of a few lines of repartee, has enjoyed for years a popularity perhaps unparalleled in the history of humor. Its broad adaptability and the ease with which it may be produced, in form, at least, have given it tremendous vogue. Its range extends from the Attic salt of an Evarts or a Travers to the droolings of a bright babe. Consequently, everybody could enjoy such jokes and anybody could make them. The prices paid for such jokes range from 25 cents upward. People who make a business of it find it about as easy to write thirty or forty jokes as one. There is a story told of a lazy poet who simplified the process of earning a living for himself by taking one idea and dividing it into sixteen parts, each of which served as the basis of a poem, thus avoiding the necessity of inventing sixteen different ideas. His trituration of an idea is nothing to what is done by some writers of jokes. Such ease of production had the natural effect of raising a formidable body of competitors all over the country, and so the trade is now afflicted with the evils of overproduction and excessive competition. Those in the trade who do not believe that the cause of the present trouble lies in the style or quality of the jokes put upon the market think that a more healthful state of affairs could be brought about by forming a trade trust which could regulate production absolutely. They point to results that have followed other trade combinations and talk about reducing expenses of production and handling. On the other hand, no one has been able to suggest a plan by which the joke industry of the country could be brought under one management. Some members of the Brooklyn Authors' Club have discussed the advisability of forming similar organizations in the cities of the South and the West and uniting them in a national league, but it is obvious that such a plan would include only members, and there would remain a large number of independent producers. The chief argument of those who ascribe the present depression in trade to the jokes put upon the market is that editors all over the country are constantly on the lookout for bright things to put into their papers, and that if the number of jokes returned to authors is constantly increasing, it is because they are not considered bright things.

There are, of course, many members of the trade whose business has not been affected by the conditions described, and whose prosperity is without a cloud. But they have a grievance in common with the others. It is the habitual piracy committed by English comic papers. At one time one English comic paper, which has a large circulation in England, although it is not seen much over here, appeared week after week with a very large proportion of its space filled with humor stolen outright out of American publications. Its proprietor has made a fortune. There are several other offenders in a minor degree. The trade here thinks that steps ought to be taken to protect them and prevent such piracy.

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PHYSICIANS AND SOCIETY.

An English Doctor Accuses His Professional Brethren of Humbug.

New York Sun.

Dr. J. Burney Yeo, of England, has published an elaborate article on "Medicine and Society," which has stired up the medical profession. The lines have of late been drawn very tight around the regular school of medicine. It was supposed almost that its members could not do wrong. They were regarded as infallible, and legislation has conferred upon the profession very great privileges. It, therefore, causes a shock to have one of the leading lights of the profession stand up and declare that medical men are guilty of a vast amount of quackery and humbug, that they charge exorbitant fees for small services, that they are arbitrary and unjust in their relations to society, and jealous and mean in their relations to one another. All this Dr. Yeo alleges.

He first deals with the specialists who confine their attention to a single organ, such as the nose, liver, kidney or lungs. These specialists whom the public esteems so highly Dr. Yeo regards as on a very low plane, and a degradation to the profession. He says that a man of very limited ability can in a short time acquire a certain familiarity in the management of a single organ, and by merely identifying himself with the treatment of that organ, and compiling some work on the subject, however small its merit, he is able to advertise himself as a skillful specialist and earn a large income. Moreover, he soon begins to charge large fees. Dr. Yeo thinks that society is beginning to resent the increased cost of medical and surgical help, and getting to look on the members of the medical profession as more mercenary and less disinterested than they were wont to be. Thus the relations between the profession and society are to some extent less cordial. Cases are now frequent in law courts which testify to this fact.

Dr. Yeo's views as to extravagant charges of specialists is amply confirmed by everyday experience in New York city. Quite recently a specialist for the brain acknowledged charging $1,200 for a pretended operation which was never performed, and the writer of this article recently saw a bill for $500 charged for an operation on the eye which did not occupy more than three minutes. To this amount $250 was added for two weeks' board in the eye specialist's private hospital, making $750 in all for an operation for which $50 would have been ample compensation.

Another trouble that exists between physicians and society relates to the so-called etiquette by which society is coerced in the selection of consultants. Physicians claim the right to name the doctor who shall be called in consultation, and the consent of the attending physician is absolutely necessary before any consultation can be held. Should the patient desire the aid of a physician belonging to a different school of medicine from that in which the attending physician has been educated a peremptory refusal is at once given. Dr. Yeo considers this dictatorial conduct of the medical profession unjust and likely to bring it into disrepute; in fact, he denounces such acts "as trade union restrictions." Society claims perfect freedom to consult whom it chooses, either privately or in the presence of the family physician, and Dr. Yeo, speaking simply as a citizen, says he has no doubt on this point; that society is in the right.

Lastly, there is the burning question of unprofessional advertising. Dr. Yeo declares that the obstacles interposed to prevent a rising young physician from making his name publicly known are based on humbug and hypocrisy.

"We all seek publicity in one form or another," he says. "We advertise our colleges, hospitals, books, lectures, and appointments, and we delight in various forms of indirect advertising. Interprofessional advertising is practised constantly and freely by the most distinguished members of the profession, and it has always struck me as a very remarkable thing that, while advertising within the profession is practised so extensively without incurring any adverse criticism, the smallest notice in the public journals should excite such animosity, and this conduct is peculiar to the medical profession.

"With the legal profession the practice is quite contrary. Whoever is clever enough in that profession to make himself a reputation with the public is commended for his skill and ability, and what would be thought disreputable would be for lawyers to advertise themselves among lawyers. On the other hand, physicians endeavor to attract the notice of other physicians by every means in their power. What would be thought in the legal profession for a lawyer to distribute among other lawyers a paper or pamphlet entitled 'On a New and Successful Method of Defense in Actions for Libels?' And yet this is the kind of thing which all doctors do as a means of advertising themselves."

Dr. Yeo continues that he is confident of speaking within the limit when he says that three-fourths of the medical works published every year are for the purpose of advertising the author's special business. In conclusion he tells his medical friends that the real objection to public advertising lies in the fact that "you doctors are so jealous of one another."

A NEW WOMAN'S FEAT.

She Put on Bloomers and Painted Her Mother's House.

San Francisco Examiner.

"Well, the house needed painting and I did it. How does it look?" she said.

It was Miss Ida Munro who spoke as she looked with a certain pride of workmanship at the exterior of a neatly painted cottage, No. 211 Third avenue. That is where she lives, and when the painters wanted more money than her mother could afford to pay she just fitted herself out in bloomers and went to work to paint the house.

Miss Munro is a pretty black-eyed girl not quite twenty years of age. She does those things which she finds next to her hand to be done, even should they happen to be a little way outside of the everyday groove, and when she has an idea she is not afraid of it. Therefore she painted the house, and its appearance is as neat as if it had been decorated by a professional.

"The building sadly needed a coat of paint," said Miss Munro's mother, "but the regular painters asked such a high price for doing the work that I became discouraged, and I had almost given up the idea of having the work done when my daughter volunteered to turn painter provided I would supply the paint.

"'I was brought up in the country, you know, mother,' she said, 'and I am not afraid to climb. Then, since I have been in the city I have watched the carpenters and painters rigging their scaffolds, and I can do as well as they.'

"I did not take her seriously at first, but when I saw her making a pair of bloomers for herself and hunting up some pieces of lumber for scaffolds, I decided to let her go ahead, and now I am pleased with the result. Her young brother tried to assist her, but he did not put the paint on in a workmanlike manner and he was discharged from the job. The paints cost very little in comparison to the estimates of the professional painters, and they could not have done the work any better."