HISTORY.

The Origin of Finger-Rings.

Mythology furnishes this account of the origin of the ring. Jupiter, from revenge, caused Strength, Force and Vulcan to chain his cousin-german Prometheus to the frosty Caucasus, where a vulture, all the livelong day, banqueted his fill on the black viands of his hot liver. The god had sworn to keep Prometheus there, according to Hesoid, eternally; but other authors give only 30,000 years as the limit. He who had punished did, for reasons, forgive; but, as Jupiter had sworn to keep Prometheus bound for the space of time mentioned, he, in order not to violate his oath, commanded that Prometheus should always wear upon his finger an iron ring, to or in which should be fastened a small fragment of Caucasus, so that it might be true, in a certain sense, that Prometheus still continued to be bound to that rock. Thus, as we have said, came the idea of the first ring, and, we may add, the insertion of a stone.

While some writers, under this story, connect Prometheus with the first ring, Pliny still says the inventor of it is not known, and observes that it was used by the Babylonians, Chaldeans, Persians and Greeks, although, as he thinks, the latter were unacquainted with it at the time of the Trojan war, as Homer does not mention it.

In the scriptures the signet ring is frequently named, and Quintus Curtius tells us that Alexander wore one. After his fatal debauch, and finding himself past recovery, and his voice beginning to fail, he gave his ring to his General, Perdiccas, with orders to convey his corpse the Temple of Ammon. Being asked to whom he would leave his empire, he answered, "To the most worthy."

The ring was generally the emblem of fidelity in civil engagements; and hence, no doubt, its ancient use in many functions and distinctions. A ring denoted eternity among the Hindoos, Persians, and Egyptians; and Brahma, as the creator of the world, bears a ring in his hand. The Egyptian priests in the temple of the creative Phtha (Vulcan of the Greeks) represented the year under the form a ring, made of a serpent having its tail in its mouth—a very common shape of ancient rings.

Pythagoras forbade the use of the figures of gods upon rings, lest, from seeing their images too frequently, it should breed a contempt for them.

The custom of wearing lighter rings in the summer and heavier in the winter are among the most absurd instances of Roman effeminacy. No ornament was more generally worn among the Romans than rings. They laid them aside at night, as well as when they bathed or were in mourning, or were suppliants. However, in times of sorrow, they rather changed than entirely put them aside; they then used iron ones, taking off the gold rings. It was a proof of the greatest poverty when anyone was obliged to pledge his ring to live. Rings were given by those who agreed to club for an entertainment. They were usually pulled off from the fingers of dying persons; but they seem to have been sometimes put on again before the dead body was buried.

Rings appear to have been worn indiscriminately on the fingers of each hand. It would seem, however, from Jeremiah, that the Hebrews wore them on the right hand; we there read that when the Lord threatened King Zedekiah with the utmost effects of his anger, he told him: "Though Coniah the son of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, were the signet on my right hand, yet would I pluck thee thence."

Among the Romans, before rings came to be adorned with stones, and while the graving was yet on the metal itself, everyone wore them at pleasure on what hand and finger he pleased. When stones came to be added, they had them altogether on the left hand; and it would have been held an excess of foppery to have put them on the right.

Pliny says they were at first worn on the fourth finger, then on the second or index, then on the little finger, and, at last, on all the fingers excepting the middle one.

According to Aulus Gellius, both the Greeks and Romans wore them on the fourth finger on the left hand; and the reason he gives for it is this, that having found, from anatomy, that this finger had a little nerve that went straight to the heart, they esteemed it the most honorable by this communication with that noble part.

At first the Romans only used a single ring; then one on each finger, and, at length, as we gather from Martial, several on each. Afterward, according to Aristophanes, one on each joint. Their foppery at length arose to such a pitch that they had their weekly rings.

Heliogabalus carried the point of using rings the farthest, for, according to Lampidius, he never wore the same ring or the same shoe twice.

INCOMPATIBILITY.

"Is it true, Harry, that you've broken off with Harkaway's daughter?" "Alas, yes; I was forced to, although she is a charming woman." "Why?" "Incompatibility of complexion. She does not suit my furniture."

"William, do you know why you are like a donkey?" "Like a donkey?" echoed William, opening his eyes wide; "no, I don't." "Do you give it up?" "I do." "Because your better half is stubbornness itself." "That's not bad. Ha! ha! I'll give that to my wife when I get home." "My dear," he asked as he sat down to supper, "do you know why I am like a donkey?" He waited a moment, expecting his wife to give it up. But she didn't. She looked at him somewhat commiseratingly as she answered: "I suppose because you were born so."

FUTURE OF THE REPUBLIC.

When, in 1776, the thirteen North American colonies put forth that Declaration of Independence which preluded the birth a of nation, the combined white population inhabiting them did not exceed two and a half million souls. Yet they had the courage to throw down the gage of battle to a power "with which," in Daniel Webster's words, "for purposes of foreign conquest and subjugation, Rome, in the height of her glory, was not to be compared; a power which has dotted over the surface of the whole globe with her possessions and military posts, whose morning drum-beat, following the sun and keeping company with the hours, circles the earth with one continuous and unbroken strain of martial airs of England." Fourteen years later came, in 1790, the first census of population taken in the United States, and it was found that within the borders of the young nation there was not quite 4,000,000 souls. At the expiration of ten years it appeared, upon taking the second census, that the population was a little more than five and a quarter millions, having increased between 1790 and 1800 at the rate of 35 per cent. In a short time the tenth census of what has long been a mighty people will be taken, and we risk little in saying that, in Joseph Hume's phrase, "the tottle of the whole" will show a population of at least 50,000,000, especially if the immigrants, who are now pouring into the United States in vast numbers, are not omitted from the calculation. In other words, the population of the great republic of 1880 will be their population in 1776 multiplied by twenty, and, were it likely that the same ratio of increase could be maintained for another century, the mind of man would sink before the effort of imagining what it is possible for the monster republic to be in 1980. However boundless the resources of the North American continent may be, it can hardly be expected that the second centenary of the United States will be celebrated by a thousand million beings, and such would be the result of multiplying 50,000,000 by twenty. Anyhow, it is certain that a century hence no such assemblage of men speaking the same language and amenable to the same general traditions of feeling, habit and education, will ever have been gathered together upon earth as will then occupy the great western continent.—*London Telegraph.*

SENSE LIKE A HORSE.

A man armed with an army gun and a butcher knife went into a South Arkansas newspaper office and remarked to a man sitting at a table:

"Are you the editor?"

"No, sir; I am the proprietor. Can I do anything for you?"

"I want to see the editor."

"On very particular business, sir?"

"No, not very. I simply wanted to kill him for publishing an article about me last week."

"Is your other business so pressing that you have to kill him this week?"

"If it is any accommodation I can wait a few days."

"I wish you would, for I sold him a calf some time ago, and he owes me $5 on it. If you kill him now I'll never get the money."

"But you could take the calf back and make what has already been paid clear of all expenses."

"That's a fact," said the proprietor, musing. "I'll send a boy after him. No; that would be taking advantage of him, and he may not like it. Call around next week and I'll have him here."

The man left, and the newspaper man remarked to himself: "So much for disobeying my wife. She told me not to forget my pistol. If I hadn't played proprietor that fellow would have shot me with that old Yankee gun. I wouldn't be found dead shot with such a gun. Next week, just about the time I'm busy, this fellow will come around again with his stalwart field-piece. If he'd only come with an Arkansaw pistol I would not mind it, but it would be an eternal disgrace to be killed with such a gun. After this I shall obey my wife. That woman's got horse sense, and looks into the future like a mule."

COUNTRY SOCIAL LIFE.

Country folks are in general so fully occupied with affairs that they have no time to discover how lonesome they really are. So far as this is concerned we think it is a misfortune. We are too busy. We work too hard. We take few or no holidays. We read and think too little, and do not spend sufficient time in social culture. There is no reason why those who plow the soil or "whose talk is of bullock" should not experience the refinements which are the result of formal social life. In business, at bargains, in pursuit of dollars, no man is seen at his best. He is thorney, spiney, with his back up as a porcupine might be at his business. Let one doff his working-clothes and enter a room full of neighbors—men, women, young men and maidens—and he is a man of another kind. He naturally falls into the way of an intuitive kindness, which is really the truest politeness; the doing to his companion what he should do to him. He "lets himself out" to please, and, after an evening spent in social converse, he retires with many rough corners and asperities toned down. For a few days that influence remains. It would be permanent if it could be reinforced now and then, and the good results would be most agreeable and useful. There is no difficulty in bringing these good influences to bear. Two or three persons with energy and some magnetism about them can put them in motion with ease. Now is the time to begin the effort.—*Rural New Yorker.*

Every tramp carries a roamin' nose.

FARM NOTES.

Farm Rakings.

If cows are in high condition it is recommended to give them a few days before calving one pound each of Epsom salts and one ounce ginger, which will prevent milk fever. This is a disease becoming more prevalent as cows are fed better.

Smut in Grain.—My experience is, if you can keep the grain from molding until the wheat comes up, you will have no smut. If there comes a good heavy rain fresh after sowing, so as to pack the ground and keep the air from the grain, there will be no smut.—*C. M. Snodgrass, Jack county, Tex.*

Rich turf cut into pieces four inches square and turned upside down furnish a first-rate medium for starting Lima beans, squash, melon, and cucumber seed. I put them in a sunny place during the day, and at night cover them if it is at all cold. I have gained a fortnight's time by this plan.—*T. J. S., Gloucester county, N. J.*

One of the essential things in growing branching corn is to put one grain in a hill and let all the branches grow. I think the reason so many have failed in its cultivation is because they plant three or four grains in a hill, as other corn, and the consequence is it cannot grow nor branch as it would with only one grain.—*G. Wolf, Montgomery county, Pa.*

James Myers, Elkhart, Ind., had a colt foaled last week which now stands fifteen and one-half hands high. When it is raised up its head reaches over the dam's back. It has to be fed by hand, owing to its inability to stoop to the maternal fount. The dam is a common animal, about 10 years old. The colt has attracted a great deal of attention. The body is well proportioned, with a couple of exceptions.

A correspondent of the *Country Gentleman* has had most gratifying success in raising calves on a mixture consisting of 50 pounds of corn meal, 50 pounds of middlings, 26 pounds to the bushel, and 5 pounds of sugar, well mixed. Of this mixture 3 pounds were given daily to the two—1½ pounds at each meal, mixed with a half bucket of boiling water, and the bucket filled with skimmed milk. The calves were taken from the cows as soon as dropped.

Cattle grazing at the outskirts of woods, among brushes and shrubbery, and near old hedges are liable to be covered with ticks. Brushing the cattle over once a week with a mixture of one part of kerosene and two parts of lard oil will protect them from the attacks of this vermin. When ticks are found on cattle in considerable numbers, they should not be removed by force, because in that case the head will remain imbedded in the hide of the animal, and, when in large numbers, will be apt to cause considerable irritation and inflammation of the skin. By applying a light coat of lard oil or a little benzine, by means of a brush, to the body of the ticks, they generally withdraw their heads and let go their hold on the hide.

How to Bud a Grapevine.—Select a good shoot or cutting about three inches long which has a plump, well-developed bud on it, and cut away lengthwise nearly half the wood opposite the bud and the entire length of the cutting, being careful not to remove the pith at the woody base of the bud. Then, with a sharp knife cut the ends of the cutting even and smooth, and as thus prepared lay the bud on the stem of the vine where it is to be budded and mark out the exact size and conformation of the cutting; cut out the wood so marked and make the cutting fit close, especially at the ends. A perfect fit is desirable. When this is done, press the bud in place, tie it firmly, and cover with wax. As soon as the bud has formed one leaf cut away the vine beyond it.—*Prairie Farmer.*

Hay for Hogs.—Few men are aware of the fact that hay is very beneficial to hogs, but it is true nevertheless. Hogs need rough food as well as horses, cattle or the human race. To prepare it you should have a cutting-box or hay-cutter, and the greener the hay the better. Cut the hay as short as oats, or shorter, and mix with bran shorts or middlings, and feed as other food. Hogs soon learn to like it, and, if soaked in swill as other slop food, it is highly relished by them. In winter use for the hogs the same hay you feed to your horses, and you will find that, while it saves bran, shorts or other food, it puts on flesh as rapidly as anything that can be given them. The use of hay can be commenced as early as the grass will do to cut, and when run through the cutting-box can be used to advantage by simply soaking in fresh water until it sours.—*Nebraska Farmer.*

The population of Montreal, if the corporation official statements are correct, is less by 4,000 than it was a short time ago. There are many hundreds of houses unoccupied to-day in Montreal, where five or six years ago it was almost impossible to find a house waiting for a tenant, and the rents and values of property are lower than they were even a year or two ago.

A centenarian ex-soldier, who recently died in a Russian village, continued his business of tailor till death, though he had been blind for forty years. His sense of touch was so acute that he could distinguish different bank notes. He used to thread his needle by means of his tongue.

A school teacher who had just been telling the story of David ended with, "And all this happened over 3,000 years ago." A little cherub, its blue eyes opening wide with wonder, said, after a moment's thought, "Oh dear, marm, what a memory you have got!"

CHOOSING FRIENDS.

The real bond of friendship is sympathy, congeniality of taste, a kinship of mind or heart. What should it signify to A that he has made a few hundred thousand dollars, more or less, while B, whom he thoroughly likes, hasn't saved as many hundreds? That is the usual form of the inquiry. On the other hand, why should B alter his estimate of A because of the circumstances? Why should he feel envious or ill at ease in his home, or think one must select his friends by the sum of their income? What is it that we love in our friends, themselves or their appendages? What is it that we should respect in ourselves, our personality or our bank account? Neither riches nor the lack of them are to be thought of in connection with real companionship. And according to our observation a good part of the unpleasantness in social distinctions based on wealth arises more from the lack of real self-respect in the men or women without money than from pride in the possessors of it. There are men rated poor to whom it would never occur that they were out of place in any assembly of refined and intelligent people, however great the aggregate of wealth represented. Perhaps they were born without the instinct of accumulation; perhaps they are lacking in the enviable ability to take care of themselves and their pockets at the same time, and have chosen to build up themselves rather than a fortune; perhaps, like Agassiz, they have found "no time to make money," or, like the majority of the race, no opportunity. No matter—their moods are sweet and amiable; their wit is keen and their humor excellent; their minds are bright, their hearts warm and their manners fine. And, as society is not a place for comparing inventories of property, they feel and appear quite at home. We have known men and women who would have been bankrupted if they had sold, even for $1,000,000, that sunshine of their soul—the sincere, infectious and radiant smile that distinguished them; and others, the sweet and rare fruits of whose spirit made their friends forget whether they were rich or poor.

Robert Burns, the poet of the people, truly sang that,

The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
The man's the gowd for a' that.

And it certainly is not conceit for the gold to refuse to rate itself as lead, simply because it lacks the stamp. What American society needs, and what we think it is gradually attaining, is a standard that rates men for what they are, and not for what they have; a recognition of the right of men to select their companionship as they please and can; and an independence of spirit that makes a poor man alike superior to patronage and above envy.

A ten volume dictionary of the ancient language of France has just been sent to press, and the first volume is out. It has cost the compiler thirty years' work and $70,000. The Government gives $30,000 toward it, and receives 200 copies for distribution among the public libraries and colleges of France. This work deals chiefly in words found in the literature of the eleventh, twelfth and thirteenth centuries.

We see by the newspapers that the rights of the minorities are still being trampled on, as they have for the last thousand years, and we should think they would be pretty well worn out by this time.—*Oil City Derrick.*

The health of Thomas A. Scott has improved decidedly since he gave up the Presidency of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company and went to his country home, Lansdowne, near Philadelphia.

Music.—They had been to the opera and heard the finest music by the leading talent. They went home to hear the baby's wild solo until it was quieted with a dose of Dr. Bull's Baby Syrup, which at once removed the Flatulence.

A young lady showing an elderly woman a beautiful cluster diamond ring, a present, when the old lady dropped her spectacles to the end of her nose, and exclaimed, "Lor' sakes, I thought it was an old seed wart."

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An ostrich long on exhibition at Rome, having been suffocated by thrusting its neck between the bars, there was found in its stomach four large stones, several smaller ones, seven nails, a necktie pin, an envelope, thirteen copper coins, fourteen beads, one French franc, two small keys, a piece of a handkerchief, a silver medal of the Pope, and the cross of an Italian order.

Robinson Warren, of St. Clairsville, Ohio, had always been so submissive under the domination of his wife that when he finally nerved himself to protest against her clubbing their child, she furiously caught up a handy revolver and killed him.

A Vermont couple put off applying for a divorce one term of court, so that they could profit by their tin wedding. And yet they tell us the people of this country are needlessly extravagant and unthrifty.

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