

FOREIGN SELECTIONS.

INTERESTING AND AMUSING EXCERPTS
FROM THE PUBLICATIONS OF
OVERSEA.

THACKERAY'S DAUGHTER ON GEORGE SAND.

The only time the writer ever saw Mme. Sand she gave her the impression of a sort of sphinx in a black silk dress. Her black hair shone dully in the light as she sat motionless, a dark face, a dark figure in the front of a theatre box. Two men were sitting behind her—I remember the cold, unemotional, almost reluctant salutation she gave in return to my friend's gracious and animated greeting. This was my only sight of that woman of genius, of that multitude of women whose acquaintance I only seem to be making to-day.

Many people have said that Consuelo was drawn from Mrs. Sartoris; others have christened Mme. Pauline Viardot Consuelo. I once asked this latter old friend about George Sand. "Everything has been already said," she answered, "Tout a été dit; mais ce que l'on ne dira jamais assez, c'est combien elle était bonne. Elle était bonne, bonne, bonne." This Consuelo went on to say that she had only known George Sand in her later life, when she was wise and beneficent, and then it was she had rendered her one great and special service for which she should ever be grateful. Mme. Sand had been the person to suggest and bring about her happy marriage.

On one occasion—so Mrs. Kemble used to tell us—Mrs. Sartoris called on George Sand. Mrs. Kemble asked her sister with some interest what had happened, what Mme. Sand had said and what she was like. The younger sister laughed. "She was very vehement, very dictatorial, very contradictory; in short, very like yourself, Fanny." But this can only have been a joke and meant as a joke, for the two women were of different elements and worlds apart. Mrs. Kemble had humor, George Sand was absolutely without humor. Would that that saving grace had been there to rescue her from the exuberances of romance.—(Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, in *The Cornhill Magazine*.)

VAMPIRES AND VAMPING.

Thus I have inexpensively perused, and thrown away Mr. Bram Stoker's "Dracula." One always heard that it was "horrid" enough to suit the taste of Miss Catherine Morland in "Northanger Abbey." Yet it only wins a smile from the experienced student of vampires and their ways. The rules of vampiring, as indicated by Mr. Stoker, are too numerous and too elaborate. One does not see why the leading vampire, Count Dracula, could not bolt out of the box where he was finally run to earth by a solicitor named Jonathan. If he could fly about as a bat, why did he crawl down steep walls head foremost? The rules of the game of Vampire ought to be printed in an appendix; at present the pastime is as difficult as Bridge. Perhaps I do not understand the rules.

First—Every vampire, all day, must lie in consecrated ground. He can be stumped when in his ground, not when out of it.

Second—All day a vampire is off side.

Third—No vampire may enter a house uninvited.

Fourth—No vampire may cross salt water except at ebb tide and full tide.

Fifth—Every person bitten by a vampire becomes a vampire. (This rule strikes at the root of morality.)

Sixth—No vampire can vamp a person protected by garlic. (The peasantry of Southern Europe always smell of garlic, perhaps as security against vampires.)

Seventh—A vampire, staked through the heart with a sharp piece of wood, is out.

Eighth—Every man should stake his own young woman if she is a vampire.

These appear to be the chief rules. There are others to which a person of taste would rather not allude.—(Andrew Lang, in *Longman's Magazine*.)

AMONG BOER PRISONERS AT ST. HELENA.

The Boer is a two sided individual. On the one hand, he is decidedly slim and double faced; on the other, he is obstinate and ignorant to a degree, full of strife, ready and willing to be stirring up bitter feeling against the English. This latter propensity was carried to such a pitch in their camps that it led to gross and malicious intimidation, and in one case to arson; and has led to the necessity of establishing separate peace camps, where those who are prepared to accept the inevitable and submit to British rule, and who are anxious to return to their homes, could express their views freely to one another without fear of threats and violence to their persons from their fellow prisoners. I will endeavor to relate briefly the system of intimidation that was going on. The irreconcilable party, with Commandants Wolmarans and Eloff at their head, had established what they were pleased to call a vigilance committee, consisting of about forty members, all irreconcilables of the worst description, and many of them, in my opinion, real bad characters. Some of them were Hollanders, some ex-Staats artillerymen, and a few Johannesburg detectives, besides—to their shame be it said—one or two Englishmen. These men used to make it their business to go round the camp at night time, listening to the conversation of others, and if in their opinion the slightest tendency was shown, or opinion expressed, in favor of ending the war by giving in, or a wish to take the oath of allegiance, if allowed to return to South Africa, they became marked men at once, and were often insulted, disfigured by having their beards cut off, and threatened with other violence.—(Lieutenant-Colonel A. L. Paget, in *Longman's Magazine*.)

SUDDEN BLANCHING OF HUMAN HAIR.

In his paper on the whitening of the hair of animals, Mr. Lyddeker remarks that, from the evidence, the fact of rapid blanching of human hair from emotion must be accepted. It may interest him and some of your readers to know of a definite instance of this effect, not from emotion, but from disease. I have recorded it where it is not likely to be generally accessible ("Man, Dis. Nerv. Syst.," Vol. II). A man, in consequence of an injury, had hemorrhage over the greater part of the left hemisphere of the brain. During the next two days the hairs of his beard and mustache on the opposite side, right, were observed to become paler and paler, until they were almost white at the time of his death, on the third day. The change extended up to the middle line and there ceased. A very curious fact is that the pale region was separated from the normal brown by a very narrow darker zone, almost black, in the middle line. Of course, emotion must act by its profound derangement of the function of the cortex of the brain. Here we had a like effect produced by an organic influence, occurring under observation, within two days, and limited to the opposite side to that which the disease would influence. The escape of the hair of the scalp, and affection of that of the face, may be ascribed to the special seat of the chief cerebral irritation. The hairs were made pale throughout their length. This, as an absolute fact, a result produced in two days, is significant. The only possible explanation is that the process at the root of the hair by which the normal pigment is produced is so changed that a material is formed capable of discharging the color of the pigment, and that this ascends the tubular hair and causes its effect, at least as far from the root as the length of the hairs on the face. The degree to which this chemical process is under the influence of the nervous system is strikingly obvious, but a similar action is treated on most of the secretory processes of the body. Tears are an illustration.—(Dr. W. R. Gowers, in *Knowledge*.)

ENGLISH AS SHE IS SPOKE.

[Wanted, a house on agreement; rent not to exceed, etc.; comeatable to Tube Railway. —(Morning Post.)

"Comeatable"! Next, please. At this rate we await with alarm the appearance of advertisements couched in the following terms:

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A DREAM STORY.

From time to time I have been so interested and amused by reading in "The Spectator" accounts of vivid and realistic dreams that I feel tempted to narrate one that happened to me, leaving it to your judgment as to whether it is worthy of notice in your paper. In November, 1893, I awoke one morning fully impressed with the idea that I was receiving as a gift an unusually large gypsy ring, set with a single sapphire with a brilliant on each side. The dream was a pleasant one to the female mind, and I soon fell asleep again, but only to awake with a still stronger impression that the jewel was actually in my hands. So curious were my sensations that on my maid entering my room at 8 o'clock I told her of the two dreams, most minutely describing the ring, and I also asked my husband to bear witness to the statement should anything follow to confirm the dream. Two hours later the postman arrived, and so great was my excitement and astonishment at seeing a small, neatly done up packet (evidently a ring case) that I dare scarcely open it, and decided to ask my maid to do so. Before breaking the seal I asked her to repeat the description of the ring that I had previously given her, and then the little packet was opened, and the joyful exclamation followed: "Why, my lady, here it is!" The ring was sent to me by a friend in memory of his wife, who had died some months before; but I had absolutely no idea that I should be the recipient of any souvenir of her, nor did I ever see her wearing the ring in question. The same maid is still in my service, and can (as well as Sir Astley) substantiate my story.—(Letter in *The Spectator*.)

A WORD FOR TALLEYRAND.

Talleyrand spoke well and wrote better, his appearance at the Académie de la Langue being looked for as an event. A social lion, he was not arrogant in prosperity, and in adversity he bore up with dignity. Forced into the priesthood, he never had or pretended to have a vocation; excommunicated by Rome, he was nevertheless able to serve the Church at critical times. Being in office under Louis XVIII, when Napoleon suddenly came back from Elba, the minister discovered that his liver was out of order, that he must go to Carlsbad. "The first duty of a diplomat," he observed, "is to take care of his liver." After Waterloo, when the situation again became difficult, the liver again became affected. It was, by the way, of the victor at Waterloo that Talleyrand said, "I am . . . grateful to the duke, since he is the one statesman in the world who has ever spoken well of me." This with tears in his eyes. Thiers, in a touching eulogy pronounced upon him at his death, said that Talleyrand "never harmed anybody, and that he hated persecution and violence of any kind."

While thwarting her rulers Talleyrand was secretly serving the interests of France. He never betrayed her. A celebrated French writer said of him: "Talleyrand is not the only man of that generation who, having entered life with noble illusions, after several unsuccessful attempts followed by as many disappointments, conceived a contempt for theory and acquired a stock of political scepticisms. It is only fair to acknowledge beside the flexibility of his form the perseverance of his patriotism." The reply of Louis XVIII when asked his opinion of his minister was to quote the lines of Corneille regarding Richelieu, "He has done me too much good that I should speak ill of him, and too much harm that I could speak well of him."—(Saturday Review.)

SENUSSISM.

It is a curious fact that the Arab mind has seldom been deeply stirred by the extravagances of religion. The great movements have been, with few exceptions, Puritanical and self-denying; and so it is with Senussism. Like the cult of the Wahabis, it deducts from, rather than adds to, the status of religion, but unlike Wahabism it leaves to the native some of the traditions of his people, notably the reverence for and pilgrimage to the tombs of saints. Dancing, music, smoking and coffee are strictly forbidden, as being contrary to the spirit if not to the letter of the Koran. In contradiction to this strict enforcement of orthodoxy, mystic ideas of Sufism are not wanting. Yet the Senussi allows his followers no direct doctrine of mysticism. He preaches repentance and abstinence; the mysticism he keeps for himself. It is he only who has reached the stage, through the perfection of knowledge, in which he can dictate to his people, and he holds out no hope, no matter how pure the life may be, of any other mortal reaching a parallel perfection. While he is reported to perform miracles, there is no evidence that he lays credit to such powers, nor that he has ever claimed to be the promised Mahdi. The stories current, more in the magazines and newspapers of Europe than in North Africa, that the Senussi has collected enormous stores of arms and ammunition, can be dis-

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missed as fables. He possesses no army, scarcely a retinue. His sole force and power is his own prestige, and the missionary enterprise of his devotees, who carry his reputation all over North Africa. His name is known and honored by millions, but these millions are scattered over thousands of oases and separated by thousands of miles. The Berber and the Arab, deadly enemies of each other, each reverence him, but the idea of a vast united movement is preposterous. Religion may be able to do much to heal open wounds, but the hatred and jealousy of the two rival native races of North Africa are incurable.—(Walter B. Harris, in *Blackwood's Magazine*.)

QUEER FACTS ABOUT ORCHIDS.

The life of an orchid hunter combines in itself all the most sensational features of exploration in untroubled districts, often infested by ferocious beasts and by even more savage natives, and in many cases highly malarious and disease laden. The rarer orchids are generally found in the most inaccessible spots, and in the densest and most marshy jungles. Even the natives avoid the districts into which the intrepid orchid hunter penetrates in search of his floral quarry.

A few years ago eight orchid hunters met at Tamatave, and then separated in search of specimens. Within a year only one of them survived, and he had spent months in the most pestilential swamps, from which he emerged with his health permanently impaired. One of the others had been captured by native priests, who drenched him with oil and burned him to death on their altar.

The expense of collecting the orchids and getting them at last into the salesroom is very great. For example, a fine orchid is found in a very out of the way part of Columbia. After being gathered the plants are wired to sticks and nailed inside boxes. These boxes are conveyed on a journey of several days to Bogota, whence another six days' journey takes them to Honda, where they are placed on rafts and conveyed down the Magdalena River to Savanilla—a fortnight's journey—where the steamer is awaited.

When at last, after a heavy outlay, the consignment reaches England, quite half the specimens will be dead, and in many cases the whole of them will be too far gone for recovery. The orchid importer has always to be prepared for heavy losses.

Twenty-seven thousand valuable plants were sent home on one occasion from Colombia by Mr. Roezl, and of these only two survived the voyage. They were sold for 40 guineas each—not a high price when one considers what they had cost.

Until the plant flowers its value is purely speculative. Its species is in most cases readily determined, but it may present some variation which will greatly enhance its value. For example, a certain orchid with a purple bloom may be worth about five shillings, but an example of the same species with white flowers will realize £100 at auction. The value of a plant depends upon its rarity and novelty even more than upon its beauty.

Many years ago an orchid, of quite new and unknown species, arrived in the packing in which some foreign plants were sent home. No one knew where it came from, and for a long while it continued unique. Orchid hunters sought everywhere for it, but not till seventy years later was it found.

Another orchid arrived in 1854 without any known place of origin, and notwithstanding persistent search, its native habitation has not been found yet.

Some years ago two orchids were found in the

Zoological Gardens on a heap of rubbish. They came in the packing with some South American monkeys, but their place of origin has not yet been discovered.—(*Harmsworth London Magazine*.)

LAST LINKS WITH SCOTT.

There still lives in what Lord Rosebery, speaking in the Scottish capital, called "this Edinburgh so sacred and beautiful to us," one who saw Sir Walter on the evening he declared himself to be the author of the *Waverley Novels*, no longer the Great Unknown. This veteran, George Croal, "distinctly remembers the storm of enthusiasm aroused on that occasion. He was also at Abbotsford two years later on professional duty, and had the pleasure of playing several Scotch airs on the pianoforte, to the evident gratification of his august patron. Both of these events are recalled with pride by Mr. Croal, whose recollections might be thought unique among those now living in the year of grace 1901." However, they are not unique, for another writer, after referring to the Edinburgh citizen who was present at the *Theatrical Fund Banquet* in 1827, states: "In Bowden, in Roxburghshire, during the summer months, I conversed with four individuals who had seen Sir Walter. One of them, Miss Janet Roxburgh, had attained the great age of one hundred years, and was still able to speak intelligently about the past. Another woman living in the village remembered as a girl seeing Sir Walter 'hirpling' across the village green to visit a namesake, Janet Scott, with whom he delighted to have a chat, as she had a great wealth of folklore stories, and from her Sir Walter gleaned much of the local Scotch dialect. Charles Newlands remembered being at the laying of the foundation stone of the bridge over the Tweed just at the junction where the Ettrick joins it, when Sir Walter performed the ceremony. Another correspondent, alive in 1900, Aaron Forrester, gunsmith, and his sister, Miss Forrester, talked with Sir Walter, and Thomas Small, inspector of poor, saw him marching in the Circuit Court procession at the county town."

"The Berwickshire News" in the autumn of 1900 reported that "there lives at Hawick one James Rutherford, an octogenarian, who still pursues his trade of tailor, and while sitting crosslegged at work speaks graphically of the people and Old World customs he saw in days of yore. He is an Earliston man by birth, and served his apprenticeship with the clothier who supplied the undertaker with the sable suit he wore at Sir Walter's funeral that dark September day in 1832, when the kindest of Scots was laid to rest in hushful Dryburgh. Rutherford, one Hogmanay, went 'guisarding.' The youthful 'guisers' called at Abbotsford, and there sang 'Scots wha hae' so enthusiastically that Sir Walter rewarded them with a crown. Rutherford oftentimes watched the well loved Sherra, axe in hand, trimming the glades in his new plantations, and chronicles 'he was ay kindly in his manner, and fond of children and animals.'—(Eve Blantyre Simpson, in *Chambers's Journal*.)

FORCE OF HABIT.

From *The Baltimore American*.

"Have you no regret?" we asked of the druggist who had served arsenic instead of quinine. "No," he replied, "but I have something just as good."

However, he well knew that we expected him to say this, else why would we have written the first question?