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HAS MORE IMPROVEMENTS THAN ALL OTHER SEWING MACHINES COMBINED

NEW HOME SEWING MACHINE CO.

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A Curious Ceremony.

An ancient and curious ceremony, doubtless a relic of feudal government, though its origin is unknown, is still observed annually on Martinmas Day at Stretton-on-Dunsmore, near the English Rugby.

In a field at the northern extremity of the village stands a stone which belongs to the Duke of Beuchleuch and which is all that remains of the ancient Knight-Cross.

Half an hour before sunrise on the morning of Martinmas Day, the villagers assemble at this stone and the Duke's agent reads a notice requiring the payment of certain "wroth silver" and proclaiming that in default of payment the forfeit will be twenty shillings for every penny and a white bull with red ears and red nose.

The names of the persons and parishes liable are then read and the silver is thrown into a cavity in the stone, whence it is removed by the attendant bailiff. Subsequently the principal actors in this queer performance breakfast together at the Duke's expense.

Moutenant Massenet, who lately finished a scientific mission near Bograna, discovered a Roman city in the southern part of Djéba. The circuit of the ruins is stated to be about three kilometres.

According to Col. A. Parnell, R. A., official records show that 2,270 persons were killed by lightning in Russia (exclusive of Poland and Finland) during the five years from 1870 to 1874. Of these persons no less than 2,161 dwelt in the country. During the same period, in the same territory, 4,192 fires were caused by lightning, 4,099 of them being in the country.

Patti's Perils.

Mme. Adeline Patti has been communicating a few personal reminiscences to the Paris Figaro, from which it appears that the life of a prima donna is far from being the spoiled existence that one would take it to be.

People may not believe it, but the position is one which for dangers surpasses that of the czar of Russia. They are caused by her rivals, she thinks, but they go beyond the limits of permissible rivalry.

"Once during a performance of 'Linda,'" she says, "I received a number of bouquets, the last of which was composed very oddly. One of the flowers fell out of it on to the stage, making a regular thud. It consisted of an enormous ball of lead, which, if it had been more firmly tied to the bouquet, must have struck my head. As it was, the bouquet hit my shoulder."

On another occasion the curtain fell on Mme. Patti's head, and she was saved only by the fashion then prevailing of rolling up her hair high upon her head; but it was not a mere accident. She had had matches put into the water she drinks, and has even received poisoned gloves, with the request to let the maker call them by her name.

On a Japanese Railway Car.

The Japs are peculiar, says a Yokonama letter. On a cold, rainy day they go about with their dress skirts caught up to their waists, and the water streaming down their bare legs.

Skin does not cost as much as cloth, you know. In the car we can see this native dress; a loose robe with no buttons, but folded over the breast and fastened by a sash. This is the dress of the men as well as women.

Some of the dresses are very rich indeed, being made of beautiful silk. One-half is longer than the other, which allows for pulling up above the sash, and then hanging down in front, making a pouch. This is the pocket where nearly everything is carried. There are also pockets at the bottom of the large square sleeves. Suspended from the sash is a little box and a leather wallet. Sometimes these articles are exquisite and very costly. The box contains the tobacco pipe and the wallet contains the tobacco. The box is frequently made of ivory or bronze, finely worked. Japanese tobacco is very, very mild. The average American smoker would disdain to use it.

The pipes consist of a long slender stem, and a tiny brass bowl not so large as an acorn cup. The smoker opens his wallet, takes out a very small quantity of tobacco and fills his pipe; then he takes out his box of matches, which are like the "parlor match" in America, contained in a sliding box (that horrible nuisance, a sulphur match, doesn't exist here); closing the match box about two-thirds, the pipe is lighted and three whiffs of smoke taken—very seldom more than that; the ashes are then emptied into the open third of the match box, the pipe refilled and lighted from these ashes. Frequently the ashes are dropped on the floor until the pipe is relighted, when they are extinguished. A pipe is seldom refilled more than three times, when it is put back into the case. The whole amount of tobacco imbued would not be equal to one puff of a strong cigar. But the almost universal practice here is to draw all the smoke up, expelling it from the nostrils instead of the mouth. Women smoke as well as men.

Every one in the car has a morning paper. Most of the passengers are sitting on their feet, which are crossed under them—a favorite posture.

It is generally the custom to read aloud. The reading is very peculiar, being mostly in a monotone, with occasionally a rise and fall in the tone. Some of the people have a very disagreeable habit of sucking the breath between their closed teeth. The noise thus made with unceasing regularity is almost unendurable if one has any nerves.

The Japanese are not a meddlesome people, and traveling with them is attended with almost no risk. A single lady could travel with a car load of Japanese men, and there would be not the slightest improper word spoken or act committed.

PEARLS OF THOUGHT.

Any truth, faithfully faced, is strength in itself.

Poverty may excuse a shabby coat, but it is no excuse for shabby morals.

Many a man's vices have been at first nothing worse than good qualities run wild.

No man can be happy without a friend, nor sure of a friend till he is unfortunate.

It is when the ashes that desolate our homes are cold, that we first understand our loss.

Every spirit makes its house, and we can give a shrewd guess from the house of the inhabitant.

We should do everything we can for others, if only to dissipate the thought of what they omit to do for us.

Many people wish they might live their lives over again; in nine cases out of ten they would only repeat them.

He who betrays another's secrets because he has quarreled with him was never worth the sacred name of friend; a breach of kindness on one side will not justify a breach on the other.

Whoever looks for a friend without imperfections will never find what he seeks. We love ourselves with all our faults, but they few or many, small or great, and we ought to love our friends in like manner.

The legitimate aim of criticism is to direct attention to the excellent. The bad will surely dig its own grave, and the imperfect may be safely left to that final neglect from which no amount of present undeserved popularity will rescue it.

When we are studying and pursuing excellence, we are ensuring durability; and the more thoroughly the idea of durability enters into our work and guides our lives, the more valuable will be the one and the nobler and happier will be the other.

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PAPER LUMBER.

Imitates All Sorts of Natural Wood in Grain, Color and Solidity.

A tall, elderly man, with a round, pleasant face, took from the marble mantel of a room overlooking Printing House square, New York, a section of what appeared to be walnut board.

"This is paper lumber," he said to a Sun reporter. "You may not be aware that a process has been invented for utilizing paper pulp in the manufacture of a substitute for natural wood. A mill has been erected in a Western town for the purpose of manufacturing artificial lumber, and a number of capitalists have taken hold of the matter. We are thoroughly convinced of the perfect practicability of paper lumber in the manufacture of all articles at present made from wood. It is only a question of a very short time when paper lumber will come into general use. I feel confident that it will prove much cheaper than wood, equally as durable, and fully as good for fine work."

Attention was directed to several articles of cabinet ware made of the material. Two of these were ordinary parlor tables, one of which resembled the peculiar mottled appearance seen in some choice hard woods. The surface of the table was varnished and highly polished. The other table was finished in exact imitation of rosewood. A panel door was also shown, the finish resembling mahogany. A couple of ladies' work boxes, made after an elegant pattern and highly finished, were also exhibited.

"The paper board," continued the gentleman, "is susceptible of the finest polish, and will take any tint or color. The lumber is made principally of the pulp of wheat, rye, and oat straw, and other vegetable fibres, combined with chemical ingredients and cements. It is formed in layers about one-quarter of an inch in thickness, and these are pressed together by powerful machinery, and thus rendered as hard as the hardest wood, besides being much more dense. The boards are also rendered waterproof in varying degrees, according to the purpose for which they are to be used. The material is as durable as time, and can be sold at a good profit for almost half less than ordinary pine lumber. It will take any finish, and in this respect alone is equal to the finest hard wood. Moreover, it can be marbled in imitation of any kind of marble, both in respect to a high degree of polish and an exact imitation of grain. It will not warp and can be rendered perfectly waterproof if desired, thus making it suitable for the construction of burial caskets. It makes just as solid a surface as any wood, and may be made of the hardness of stone. As a substitute for wood in the construction of buildings it possesses qualities of perfect adaptation. It will make the finest material in the world for roofing, not excepting slate or iron. It can be sawed, split, or planed, and boards made of it are perfectly smooth and flat from end to end on both sides, without any knots, cracks, or blemishes of any kind commonly met with in wood."

"Do you think that the supply of paper stock is sufficient to permit the general use of paper lumber as a substitute for wood?"

"Why not? The production of straw alone is sufficient. It takes 100 years to grow 20,000 feet of natural lumber on an acre of ground. This is according to official statistics. On the other hand an acre of ground will produce every year straw enough to make 2000 feet of artificial lumber, and hence in a hundred years it will produce 200,000 feet—ten times as much as the quantity of natural lumber."

California's Bounty for Scals.

H. Dawley is in the squirrel destroying business. He hires four men. His reward is five cents bounty for each scalp, paid by the county. He assigns his men to different districts. Farmers pay the men \$2 a day and board for going over their ranches. That nearly pays expenses, and the bounty on the scalps is largely profit. Dawley has a poison that knocks the squirrels out the first round, and generally before they can get into their holes. He says he has scalps enough on hand to clean out the squirrel and gopher bounty fund. He presents his scalps only as fast as there is money to pay the bounty. He has \$2,000 worth of scalps awaiting an increase in the fund.

Snake Mimics.

"I have in my private collection," said a Cincinnati naturalist, "some curious snakes. Here is one," taking down a small glass bottle filled with alcohol, "that exactly mimics the color of grass, and when alarmed they coil and thrust their heads up so that it looks exactly like a bulb, and this one I actually took for a plant, and grasped it by the head before I found out my mistake. This is another, from North America, that mimics a vine by hanging from the branches, and birds actually alight on it, and are caught."

Hurrah for the Man Who Pays!

There are men of brains who count their gains By the million dollars or more; They buy and sell, and really do well On the money of the poor.

They manage to get quite deep in debt By various crooked ways; And so we say that the man to-day Is the honest man who pays.

When in the town he never sneaks down Some alley or way-back street; With head erect he will never defect, But boldly each man will meet.

He counts the cost before he is lost In debt's mysterious maze; And he never buys in manner unwise, But calls for his bills and pays.

There's a certain air of debonair— In the man who buys for 25¢; He is not afraid of being betrayed By a jack-leg slyster's dash.

What he says to you he will certainly do, If it's cash or thirty days; And when he goes out, the clerks will shout, Hurrah for the man who pays!

— Dick Steele in Texas Siftings.

HUMOROUS.

A horticultural haul—Dragging a big bouquet across the stage.

"At last!" cried the convict, while breaking stone, "I am a striking example."

The high tinner commands a high salary and every singer should make a note of it.

The new song called "Only my Love and I," should be followed by "Three is a Crowd."

"Alice," said Mrs. Petulia in a subdued tone to her little girl one evening at supper, "you must eat bread with your jam." "But, mamma," protested Alice, "it's plenty good enough without bread."

Maker of musical instruments, cheerfully rubbing his hands: "There, thank goodness, the bass fiddle is finished at last!" After a pause: "Ach, Himmel, if I haven't left the glue-pot inside!"

A new mineral called adamascollite has been found in Missouri, and it is said that it will cut steel. Adamascollite will fill a long-felt want. Now the traveler can have a knife that will cut a railroad sandwich.

It is said that Americans are indebted to Mrs. Alexander Hamilton for the introduction of ice cream. This settlement is calculated to endear Mrs. Hamilton's name to young men whose girls have an appetite for ice cream.

"By Jove! there goes my birdie," exclaimed a swell, dodging around the corner and dragging his companion after him. "Where is she?" excitedly asks the latter. "It isn't a she. It's my tailor." "Your tailor? Why do you call him your birdie?" "Because he's always presenting his bill."

A Chicago confidence man, who began upon a countryman in the usual way, was, as is to be expected, heartily with a "I suppose you will come and see me soon." Then the countryman handed the sharper his card, which ran thus: R. W. McClaughrey, warden state penitentiary, Joliet, Ill.

The Ideal Beefsteak.

Any one can cook a beefsteak—in his mind. As a matter of fact, it requires an artist to do it; and this view is shared by a correspondent, who writes: "A member of my own family has brought the cooking of this article of food to perfection. The first requirement is not so much a tender and juicy steak, though this is always due to be desired, but a glowing bed of coals, a wire gridiron, a stout one with good sized wires, a double one so that you can turn the steak without touching it. The steak should be pounded only in extreme cases, when it is too thick and is 'stringy.' Attempt nothing else when cooking the steak, and have everything ready for the table, the roasted potatoes and vegetables all being in their respective dishes in the warming closet or oven, with doors left open a little way. From ten minutes onward is needed to cook the steak. The time must depend upon the size, and you can easily tell by the color of the gravy, which runs from the steak when gently pressed with a knife, as to its condition. If the master of the house likes it 'rare done,' when there is a suspicious brown gravy with the red it will be safe to infer that it is done enough for him. If, as is generally the case, the next stage is the favorite one, remove the steak from the gridiron, the instant the gravy is of a light brown. Remove it to a hot platter, pepper and salt it to suit your taste, put on small lumps of butter and then for two brief moments cover it with a hot plate, the two moments being sufficient to carry it to the table. One absolutely essential factor in the preparation of good beefsteak is that it must be served at once. If you can impress it upon your cook that he is not to let the steak stand and steam while he is doing other things, you will be likely to receive your reward for so doing."