

Tennyson and Victoria.

Speaking of Tennyson's hospitality, the following anecdote is related: Her Majesty, the Queen, announced it to be her good pleasure to honor her poet laureate with a visit. Unfortunately, she did not say precisely what day she would arrive. In duty bound, the whole family was put into its best "bib and tucker." The children agonized in their best rig, and were rigorously "pent" in-doors. Mrs. Tennyson was bedecked with her state raiment, and the great author himself was gotten up to perfection, and in the latest invention of his tailor. Four or five days went by in the same atmosphere of expectation and grandeur, but no royal guests came driving up. At last it became unbearable. Ordinary manners were proclaimed; everybody sighed with relief and flung aside too violent etiquette with too belated and beribboned attire. The children resumed their intimacies with mud-pies and rocking-horses. Mrs. Tennyson began to enjoy a novel and a wrapper, and, casting aside romance, Mr. Tennyson took up a hoe and began weeding his garden, and, with glowing cheeks and animated eyes, tried "to make two blades of grass grow where before there was only one." Of course, when everything was jogging along in this cozy and homelike way, the Queen and her escort arrived. At first there was a general flutter of fright and excitement. Everybody was embarrassed and ill at ease. But the grand old fellow, coming up to the house with soiled hands and sweatdrops on his lofty brow, made it all right in a few words. "My sovereign, we expected you for several days, and were prepared to receive you as should become those who are honored by their Queen; but to-day we did not know of your intention, and are therefore only so far prepared as loyalty and love can make us." It is needless to say that the visit was a very friendly and pleasant affair, and, we doubt not, far better enjoyed by so sensible a woman as Queen Victoria than it would have been had it been attended with courtly formality and state.

Choosing a Dwelling.

The mackerel, which commercially ranks next to the cod among salt-water fishes, is also partial to a cool home, though it is found somewhat further south than the cod. Like the last-named fish, it seeks very cold water in which to spawn, preferring that of which the temperature is but little above the freezing-point. Instead of enjoying cold water all the year round, however, as the cod seems to do, there is a possibility that the mackerel hibernates. Seeking a soft, muddy or sandy bed at the approach of winter, it buries itself therein, first drawing a scale or film over each eye. Whether this film is an apology for a night-cap, or the result of a drooping of the eyelid through extreme drowsiness, or due to providential design, or development according to environment, *a la Darwin*, is yet to be decided; but the existence of such a covering to the eye during hibernation has been proved by examination of mackerel which have been dragged from their comfortable couches by the dredges of intrusive scientists. It is not impossible that it may yet be discovered that the film is the result of disease, and that the muddy bottom is resorted to, not as winter-quarters, but as a hospital where "earth-cure" is practiced as a specialty. Whether sick or sleepy, however, the mackerel has an intense aversion to a cold bed, so in selecting a resting-place he avoids ground over which salt ice is likely to drift, and drizzle its chilly water downward. How the fish arrives at certainties or probabilities on this subject is something that no fellow not a mackerel can find out, but the dredge has never found one of these fish in localities where salt ice melts.—*Harper's*.

FOOD FOR THE SICK.—Beef-tea, if rightly made, may be received with benefit by a stomach which would reject or be un nourished by any other aliment, but skill in preparing it is not universal among nurses. The two following receipts may be relied on as among the best that can be devised: Beef-tea (with moderate warming up after cold steeping).—Take one pound of the best beef; cut it into thin slices and scrape the meat fine; put it along with two-thirds of a saltspoonful of salt into one pint of cold water contained in an earthen bowl, and let the mixture stand two or three hours, stirring it frequently; place it in the same vessel covered on the back part of the range, and let it come very gradually to a blood heat and no more, for any higher temperature would injure the nutriment; then strain it through a fine sieve or muslin bag, and it is ready for use. The making of beef-tea is not a cooking process. Beef-tea without heat.—Take one-third of a pound of fresh beef, mutton, poultry, or game, minced very fine; place it in fourteen ounces of soft cold water, to which has been added a pinch, or about eighteen grains, of table salt, and three or four drops of muriatic acid; stir all with a wooden spoon, and set it aside for one hour, stirring it occasionally; then strain it through a gauze or sieve, and wash the residue left on the sieve by means of five additional ounces of cold soft water, pressing it, so that all the soluble matter will be removed from the residue; mix the two strainings, and the extract is ready for use. It should be drunk freely every two or three hours.

CREAM FOR PUDDING.—One egg, one cup sugar, one pint milk, one cup flour; boil until thick; flavor the pudding and cream with lemon.

A Vision of Death.

At a certain factory not a hundred miles from Bradford were gathered the members of a firm engaged in manufacturing nitro-glycerine and some workmen. The gentlemen were intently watching the process of manufacturing the explosive, when one of them incautiously dropped his cigar-stub on the floor, which was covered with running water, bearing on the surface small particles of nitro-glycerine. The latter caught fire and burned brilliantly with a sputtering noise. To say that these spectators were alarmed would be to put it very mildly. They were simply paralyzed with terror, and watched the spreading fiery stream with the helpless fascination with which a victim is said to look in the glittering eyes of a rattlesnake. All around them were cans filled with nitro-glycerine, enough to annihilate an army, and every man felt as though he was the victim of a hideous night-mare which held him powerless. Flight was impossible; their limbs refused to perform their office, and an awful death seemed inevitable. The apparently doomed men saw the little lake of fire spread slowly but surely on the floor, but the flames hissed as though in triumph at the certain death that seemed to await their victims. None of the spectators will soon forget this thrilling episode in their lives, and money could not hire them to repeat the experiment. When the fire had almost reached a can filled with glycerine, one of the workmen aroused from his lethargy, and, taking off his coat, spread it on the floor and extinguished the flames, when, of course, all danger ceased. One of the gentlemen present, when describing his experience, said: "I never knew before what it was to be sick from fear. When I saw the infernal stuff burning, and felt that every man of us would be blown to atoms in five seconds, every muscle of my body seemed palsied. I gasped for breath, my head swam, and I only felt a deathly sensation of nausea in my stomach. All present turned an ashy paleness of the face. Then I vainly wondered whether there would be any pain in the death-stroke. The remembrance of a nitro-glycerine horror, where the still palpitating heart of one of its victims was picked up a minute after the explosion came to my mind, and I surmised whether my heart would undergo that strange experience after being torn from my body. The thought of my family caused me the most poignant anguish, and tears coursed down my cheeks. Then several incidents of my life, of which I can not speak with pride, were vividly presented to my mind's eye, and induced vague reflections on the subject of future punishment. Sometimes in my dreams I have felt myself in the presence of frightful peril, such as lying in the path of an express train or tottering on the brink of a vast abyss, but was utterly incapable of moving hand or foot for my preservation. So I seemed in this case. I could not lift a finger, or make a move. After what seemed to be an eternity of waiting for my inevitable fate, my attention was arrested by a movement on the part of the workman, who took off his coat hurriedly. Then he bent forward, and, with the utmost deliberation, laid it on the pool of fire, moving it gently along and patting it with his hands until every spark was extinguished. The reaction from the terrible suspense was almost overpowering, and I felt weak as a child, but on going out into the open air my old-time spirits came back very rapidly. May I never have another such experience."—*Bradford Era*.

Behanding Pirates.

A public execution in Shanghai is thus described: I went to see six Chinese pirates beheaded yesterday. The open square where all the executions take place was filled with Chinese of all ages and conditions, and a few Europeans among them. The prisoners were the most forlorn starlings I ever saw, and betrayed no more fear at their approaching fate than if they were to be spectators at an execution. A huge Tartar officiated as executioner. He was armed with a native sword, and stood on a small platform in the center of the square. After the criminals, with their hands tied behind, had been taken upon the stage the executioner took one of the pirates by the arm, brought him to the edge of the platform, hit him a sharp rap with his hand on the head, which caused the poor fellow to bow his head, and then the executioner's sword went up, was poised in the air a full half-minute, and, with a sweep, the glittering blade descended, and the poor criminal's head went flying off in one direction and the body in another. One by one the others met their fate in the same way, the Tartar making a very short, business-like job of it, merely turning to receive the plaudits of the crowd after each head rolled off, and responded by a grin which showed every one of his teeth. But the stolidity of the poor wretches was beyond description. Not a muscle quivered, and, even when waiting for the blade of the executioner to fall, I could not detect a sign of emotion. The crowd seemed to enjoy the sight immensely, and set up a yell of delight at each cut of the Tartar's sword. I am told that executions are common here.

TEAS FOR THE SICK-ROOM.—Dried leaves of sage, one-half ounce; boiling water, one quart; steep for three-quarters of an hour and then strain for use; sugar can be added to suit the taste. Peppermint, spearmint, balm, horshound and other herb teas are made in the same manner.

St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg is a city of *gourmets*. The long nights in winter, and the excessive cold and discomfort out of doors, drive the inhabitants to in-door pleasures. They consequently pay great attention to the *cuisine*, and the cooks become *ordon-bleus*. The best *cuisine* is, of course, the French, and there are French *chefs* in many of the houses, but the Russians have a number of national dishes they are fond of, especially soups—cabbage soup eaten with sour cream, cucumber soup, and a cold, sour soup, which they swear by, but which is not very agreeable to a foreign palate. The root vegetables, turnips, beets, etc., are remarkably good; so are watermelons and cucumbers, while game, snipe, woodcock, partridges, white partridges, hazel grouse, black cock, *cogs du bois*, and hare are all abundant in their season and good. In the way of fish, the salmon is excellent, and they have trout, pot-fish, perch, grayling, sea-trout, somewhat like a striped bass, and the famous sturgeon, which I do not think deserves its reputation. Its roe makes the best caviare. The regular Russian restaurant is not to be seen in St. Petersburg. There is one in Moscow, they call the Hermitage, which is thoroughly Russian. A feature of these restaurants is an immense mechanical organ, which grinds out lively airs during dinner. One can hardly talk. The correct thing to do is to take, before dinner, a "zacouska," which being interpreted means a preliminary lunch, a small glass of *liqueur*, generally "wodka," with salt fish or caviare, or a little cheese. This is supposed to whet dulled appetite. Besides the pleasures of the table, the Russians rely greatly upon cards to pass the long winter evenings. They play a great deal and play high. Whist, with some modifications in the counting; baccarat, and a game they call "quinza," something like "Boston," are their principal games. Cards are a monopoly in Russia, and their importation is strictly prohibited. The profits on their sale go to the support of the Foundlings' Hospital, and it is magnificently supported. Any infant can be brought there, and no questions are asked either as regards the mother or the child, and no payment is necessary. It is said to be the only place in Russia where no passport is required.—*The Penn Monthly*.

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