

AN OLD THEORY ATTACKED.

In Childhood the Happiest Time in Our Lives? New York Ledger: It is often said that childhood is the happiest time of our life, but to admit this is to give to happiness a very narrow definition. It is to be unconscious of anything but mere physical existence is to be happy, then one may possibly allow that this is so; but to those who look upon happiness as a positive instead of a negative quality, such a view seems scarcely reasonable. The same argument will hold good if one declares that only people who are lowest in intellectual capabilities and ideas are superlatively happy. In one sense this may be so, but the happiness is not of that order that the class of critics would crave either for the "welfare" or their immediate circle. Nothingness in any form cannot be thought desirable by intelligent human beings, neither can that form of pleasure that simply means absence of discomfort and the enjoyment of purely animal existence; indeed the term happiness has so many definitions that it seems impossible to define it other than relatively.

FISH HATCHING BY THE MILLION.

Process by Which They Are Turned Into the Lake. You can see fish hatching by the million in the northeast corner of the government building at Chicago, where the fish commission has its display. There are myriads of yellow and pike perch breaking out of their tiny globular gelatinous eggs every day. Some of them are fed to big fish in the aquariums and some are turned loose in the lake. The process of the fish hatching seems simple enough, but the commission people want it understood that it took a long time to perfect it. The impregnated eggs are brought into the exhibit in big cans nearly every day. They are put into glass jars and slow currents of lake water, at the natural temperature, are kept flowing slowly through them. The eggs look like a mass of translucent jelly globules. One jar will contain as high as 450,000 perch eggs. It takes from twenty days upward, according to temperature, for the eggs to hatch. Each fish, as it hatches, seems to consist of tiny black spots which are eyes and an infinitesimal strip of gelatine which is the rest of the fish. They can all swim through a great rate right from the start, and as the young fry are drawn off through the escape tubes of the jars into vats that contain 1,000,000 or more exceedingly fresh fish, they seem to be always on the go. Of the eggs that are being hatched now, those of the pike perch, known generally as "wall-eyed pikes," come from Lake Erie. The yellow perch eggs come from the aquarium. The commission expect soon to be hatching black spotted trout eggs, brought from Leadville, Colo., and later in the season shad, lake trout, and California salmon.

THE GREAT FAIR.

Sculptured Art Surprises at the World's Fair. Harper's Weekly: One of the first delightful surprises of the fair is the immense population of inhabitants whose flesh is plaster, whose sinews are flax, and whose bones are iron; a population as varied as the history, traditions, arts, virtues and passions of mankind. It recalls the days of Greece, when men thought in marble, and bequeathed materialized fancies to all the after time of the world. These imposing Columbian people will not all outlive the days of today, although some of them are most beautiful enough to deserve eternity. No one could help wishing that the great statue of the republic, modeled by Mr. French, the majestic woman who stands against the cold wind, portly looking over the sea—could live forever and give to the future of America a national idea of purity, simplicity and greatness. But whatever else these minor gods are or not, they are too many—too many for even the lavish bounty of a dream. They cluster in porches, they stand in long processions along the lengthy facades, doing their respective part with dignity and seriousness; they pose upon pedestals, they crouch in architectural corners, or gaily greet you from cornices and other covens of vantage; or they are fastened into bas-relief, like skins of statues stretched upon some rare plain surface. In truth, all the bigness of the buildings is needed to repress and keep them in subordination. Gigantic inhabitants of a city of a dream, they people it so abundantly that the small human element is almost an impertinence or, at most, something unnoticeable in the grand company of its own creation.

Agrettes as Ornaments.

The agrette is a tuft of graceful thin feathers taken from a kind of heron called egret; and not only are these poor birds killed expressly to furnish ornaments for ladies' bonnets and hair, but they are killed at the time when they ought especially to be proud, when they are in the breeding season. They build their nests close together, and the feather-hunters look for these breeding-places. The best time to attack them is when the young birds are fully hatched but not yet able to fly; for at that time the solicitude of the parent birds is greatest, and, forgetful of their own danger, they are most readily made victims. They hover in a crowd over the heads of their despoilers, their boldness making it as easy as possible to shoot them down; and when the slaughter is finished and the few handfuls of coveted feathers plucked out, the poor birds are left in a heap to fester in the sun in sight of their orphaned young, that cry for food and are not fed.—Animal World.

He Loved His Country.

A writer in Blue and Gray gives the following very good version of a war tale that has been related in many ways: A patriotic private was doing picket duty

on the Rappahannock that terribly cold winter when Burnside lay along Fulmouth keeping watch of Lee on the Fredericksburg side. It was one of those mean winters, when it would freeze for three days and thaw the balance of the week, and it was colder when it was thawing than when there was an honest freeze. The night was bitter cold, and as the picket walked his beat, he dropped into soliloquy. "When a soldier had to anybody else to talk to, he found comfort in talking to himself, and this particular soldier ran on in this style: "Yes, I love my country, but just look at those shoes; nice protection they are for a night like this. But (straightening himself up and grasping his musket more firmly) I love my country; but look at this shoddy overcoat and those pants. Fine layout this for a grateful government. But I love my country; but if I ever get out of this scrape, I'll be d—d if I ever love another country."

Directions. A member of a professional baseball company put up at a first-class hotel in a city where his club was playing. It was his first season at the business, and he was not accustomed to so much luxury. After a vain attempt to read the menu, he called a waiter in French, the ball player beckoned to a waiter and said, hesitatingly: "Got any roast beef?" "Yes, sir, any vegetables, sah?" The ball player looked at the card again hopelessly, then with a defiant air he described a half circle around his plate setting off the space that is usually devoted to side dishes, and said: "Just make it kind o' cloudy around here."

And the waiter did.—New York Mercury. A Round Trip in America. America is a big country and they do things in a big way. When an insular British association meets at Edinburgh or Warwick the members confine themselves to such reasonable excursions as Roslin or the Forth Bridge, Stratford or Kenilworth. But the American Institute of Mechanical Engineers, which seems to have its home in New York, readily accepted the hospitable invitation of San Francisco. The mere going and returning involved a direct journey of 5,000 miles; but by way of agreeable interlude and the lightening of scientific labors many of the invited guests took a casual northern trip to Alaska.—Saturday Review.

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