

CIVIL SERVICE ANSWERS.

Unique Collections of the Commission's Examiners.

Ludicrous Blunders Made by Applicants for Government Positions.

In examining the papers of candidates for Government positions the Civil Service authorities often come across answers to questions so exceedingly ludicrous that their faces wear a smile for half an hour afterward.

Here are a couple of definitions of specific gravity which certainly possess the merit of originality:

"Specific gravity is an unknown quantity in the atmosphere, which draws all substances toward the earth."

"The eagle belongs to the great family of mammalia, but differs in many characteristics from others of this family, especially in the manner of raising its young."

"In the year of eighteen hundred and sixty-five was Abraham Lincoln shot in the back by a man named John Wilkes Booth."

"The man who wrote the following had been requested to give his views as to the advantages to be derived from the reading of good books."

"My allusions avoiding political or religious opinions are as follows: I am to the first step in honesty. It takes religion to make a man. If there were no religion or if a man had no religious opinions, in my estimation we would be in a vast condition, but having religion and other things combined we have the pleasure of using our opinions."

"The subject of the following sketch is 'Why so many young men abandon farm for city life.'"

"Young men come to the city to learn and improve themselves they learn more and see more they have more improvements in the city than in the country, such as our colleges, churches, large buildings, theaters, railroads, lectures, vaudeville, and steam vessels."

"The following is in answer to a question, asking 'the qualifications which in your opinion a clerk, stenographer, or gauger in the Internal Revenue Service should possess.'"

"He should be a man of good sound judgment and also a just and honest man, and qualified to tend to the business and a white American born citizen not less than 21 years old nor over 65 years of age nor should he serve longer than 40 years."

"This letter from Lexington, Ky., hardly belongs in the 'freak' class, but displays such a degree of intelligence and good sense that it is published. It is in answer to the question, 'Why do you wish to enter the Government service?'"

"I wish to ask a few questions in regard to the examination for carrier in the Postoffice Department."

"Does a soldier that has been discharged for bad habits stand a good show if he can get a job in the Postoffice?"

"I have lost a finger on my left hand and have a habit of using bad language when excited. Would either of these things debar me as an applicant?"

According to the despatches, Mr. Mullah has suffered another whipping. Mr. Mullah's first name is Madison, corrupted to Mad, a reasonable name for a man of his name. He doesn't like the English people, and has no scruples about saying so. Every little while he goes over where they are and dares them to come out in the alley.

"BOB" THE CABHORSE DEAD

An Eventful Career Extending Over a Period of Thirty Years.

A Remarkably Intelligent Animal Who Was Pleas'd When Great Men Rode Behind Him—A Winter Night's Experience in a Snowstorm.

"Bob," the oldest and best-loved cab horse in Washington, who was known during his long and eventful career as the Capital by many statesmen, is dead.

This morning their Majesties and the Princess rode in their carriage to the Parsonage House at Radcliffe, where a fete was given by her Majesty.

Her Royal Highness Princess Elizabeth, under whose direction the entertainment was conducted, previously attended with Viscountess Sudley to receive the royal family, who on their arrival were conducted by her Majesty to the tent.

While their Majesties and the company were at dinner, Mr. Ellison in the character of a monk, came to announce the arrival of the Archbishop of Canterbury, dressed as a Highland officer, delivered a panegyric on the valor of British soldiers and sailors, and having been admitted, laid the inevitable standard, taken from the French in the battle of Waterloo, and sang a song composed for the occasion.

As soon as the dinner was over the Staffordshire, North Devon, and the band of the Scotch Grays struck up "God Save the King," and a person standing up, drank to the "King of God Health, and a Long Continuance." The health of her Majesty, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, the Duke of York and the army, the Marquis Cornwallis, the Admiral, and the French Emperor, the band playing "Rule Britannia" and "Britons Strike Home."

As soon as the entertainment was over their Majesties and company went into the fair which the Archbishop had ordered, which consisted of milliners' shops, lottery offices, toy shops, libraries, and shews. His Majesty purchased something. Mr. Penley, in the character of a clergyman, rode about the fair seated on an ass, and his humor excited much merriment.

The Princess and the nobility wore bandeaux and ribbons, with the words in gold, letters, and colors, distributed by the Princess and the British army and navy, a space being allotted for dancing. At the moment the royal family entered this retreat Mr. Ellison, in the uniform of a lieutenant of the navy, with a sword and a hat, and a white American born citizen, approached the royal presence, and on Mr. Sanford's exclaiming, "Messmates, see our beloved monarch," the comedians retired into another part of the gardens and delivered an oration on the British flag, which was succeeded by Mr. Taylor singing "God Save the King," and "Rule Britannia," in full chorus by the sailors.

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It was a remarkable fine day, which was the first of the season. At 6 o'clock the royal family returned to the lodge, and afterward visited the theatre—London Times, August 1, 1891.

THOUGHT CERVENA ESCAPED.

People at Santiago Rejoiced for a Whole Day Over It.

Curiously enough, the Spanish military and naval authorities in Santiago believed that the fleet of the United States, when Schley destroyed their fleet, Admiral Cervera had escaped with his ships. The whole city was given to rejoicing over the victory until about sunset, when the news of the tragedy became known. The B. & O. N. Y. intelligence has recently made public the diary of Lieutenant Muller y Tejero, the second in command of the naval forces in Santiago. He gives the following account of the battle as it appeared to the officers who were left behind in the city.

"The day was most beautiful and the calm perfect. Therefore, the smoke, far from vanishing, rose up in a straight line. When the first moment of excitement was over we could see perfectly that the smoke from the first group was more or less distant from each other. But what group did our fleet form? If the one furthest to the west, then no doubt it was not surrounded and had the open sea before it. The second group, however, was surrounded and had a great advantage. If on the contrary it formed the second or third, then it was between two fires."

"Later on it was noticed that the firing was at a greater distance and decreased in intensity, and that the column of the second group was further to the west. Had they succeeded in escaping and outwitting the hostile fleet? For the present one thing was certain—our ships had not gone down in the entrance of the harbor nor even close to it, and that was of great importance, for the greatest danger was in the channel. Imagine our joy when the Merro advised us by telephone that our fleet was fighting in wing formation, and that the enemy did not have the range. Evidently the ships were not far from us. I will not attempt to describe what we felt that day—we at Santiago who have the honor of belonging to the navy."

"I still had my horse at my disposal, and as I remembered the anxiety in which I had been living, I hastened to bring him the good news, which I thought would do him a great deal of good. When I arrived he knew it already, and said every-else in Santiago. It had spread all over the city. I found him radiant with satisfaction."

"I may safely say that the 2d of July was a day of great rejoicing, for as will be seen later, when I relate the events of the day, it was believed that our fleet had accomplished their object, though at the cost of the destroyers, the loss of which was already known. And, although we felt very sad over the victims there would have been, the result on the whole was brilliant that it surprised me. It was not until 6 o'clock that evening that the Spaniards awoke from their dream. The British ship, Admiral Cervera's ship, arrived in the city at 8 o'clock. What a horrible contrast! What a sad awakening," writes Lieutenant Tejero—Baltimore American.

TRAFIC IN EXPLOSIVES.

Empty Nitro-Glycerine Kegs a Constant Source of Danger.

How to Dispose of Them is a Difficult Problem—A Boston Man Who Has Had Many Narrow Escapes Relates Some of His Experiences.

"There are scores of men about Boston who handle every day enough dynamite to blow themselves and their immediate neighborhood into the adjoining States, and yet an explosion is so rare that it is almost a curiosity. They are expert dynamite handlers, and have become well versed in the vagaries and the uncertainties of that powerful and mysterious substance."

Mr. Anton Colman, a veteran dynamite man, is responsible for that statement, and it is corroborated by the numerous contractors who are using the giant explosive about the city.

Out in Roxbury on the many ledges that are being blasted away to make room for buildings or to put a lot of stone in the market, the dynamite handler is most frequently found in the woods, however, in Brookline and parts of Brighton and some few places in Dorchester. He is generally an American, well advanced in life, full of experience in blasts and blasting, and brought up on dynamite. He has handled it for years, and perhaps gingerly cared for by its ancestor and propellant, the savage nitro-glycerin.

Mr. Colman is perhaps one of the oldest of all the old-timers, and has been looking after high explosives for the past twenty-five or thirty years; he has been on most of the big jobs in Massachusetts and in many parts of New England and has had many hairbreadth escapes and narrow squeaks. He was a member of the Hoosac tunnel work for some time, and has seen service in many important excavations and cuttings.

Mr. Colman is about seventy years old, and was born in Maine. He spent the early part of his life on his uncle's farm near Lisbon, but when he was a young man he came to Boston to make a living. He drifted about through many different occupations until he finally got a job with a contractor who was blasting a road down near Providence and served with him in many capacities. He went to the war and on his return went back to contracting, and for a time he was in business for himself and did some important work around the city.

"Dynamite and the blasting powder which we have today is much different from what it used to be in the days when I first started in the business," said Mr. Colman, "and I am not as well posted on everything as I might like to be, but there are some things about blasting powder that when a man learns them once he never forgets them as long as he lives, and no matter what kind of powder he used or how much the style changes it is all the same to him. He will be trusted, and I hated to take chances with it."

"I remember there was a youngster in the seat in front of me, with his mother and he leaned over and by degrees I noticed him into some sort of a stupor. I did not mind it, and as it amused the kid I kept it up. Well, I turned my head for a second to look out of the window and you can imagine my terror when I heard a shriek and turned my face to the youngster fall over the back of the seat square onto the bag full of the dynamite. My heart stopped for a minute and I picked that child up so tenderly and with such a concerned look that his mother talked me into some sort of the way. I did not tell her what I had in the bag. 'Frozen dynamite is a bad thing, too. The stuff can stand only a very little cold, and becomes hard as a brick at about 45 degrees, and is useless unless it can be thawed out. The stuff is so nearly always useless, for I have known some bad explosions to occur from frozen dynamite, and there are some contractors who will tell you that the frozen stuff is worse than any other kind, and they are not altogether wrong. I know a chap who was more afraid of dynamite than anything else in the world, who was always being made the victim of some practical joke or other, and was never at peace."

"One of the men who was most prominent in teasing him discovered a stick of frozen dynamite one morning, and feigning to be intoxicated, he got into an altercation with the timid man, and then seemingly in the height of his ebullient frenzy, dashed the frozen stick on the ground with an oath. The other fellow fell like a log, and was sick for a good many days from fright, but there was no explosion. I saw that same chap who had played the joke drop a frozen stick over a cliff one morning, and he was nearly scared to death when it went off with a terrific sound and threw fragments of rock high in the air. He became deathly pale when he realized how serious his joke might have been, and he never spoke of it thereafter, but he fooled with high explosives—Boston Globe."

THE CAT CAME BACK.

Chloroformed and Buried, It Came to Life and Escaped.

Remarkable vitality possessed by a family cat has caused great tribulation in a family living in the Berkshire Apartments, at the southeast corner of Eighth street and 12th Street, whose identity, however, is kept a carefully guarded secret by all concerned. A middle-aged woman brought puss to Kinsman's drug store, beneath the elevated railroad station at the corner, for chloroforming, and she had her family very much perturbed by the cat's escape, and she and her family were about to start for the country, and wanted to have it painlessly destroyed. Its leg was broken, she said, and application to their friends had failed to bring it back to life. They didn't want to turn it out into the streets, and doubted the efficacy of the methods of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in such cases. Mr. Bailey entrusted the task to Ernest Richardson, the store boy, who took the creature to the cellar and held a chloroform soaked piece of cotton to its nostrils until it stretched out, apparently dead.

Then he dropped the carcass into a rubbish barrel. Soon after, two young boys, the daughters of the household, came to the store with a neat paper box, and told Mr. Bailey that the cat had been a great pet in the family, and they were determined not to go away without giving it a decent burial. The store boy, who placed it in the box, wrapped and tied it neatly and started to find a pretty place for a grave. They came upon one in a cool nook in Mornington Park, out of sight of passing policemen, and began to dig quickly. Their labors were about half done when there was a scratching and yawning within the improvised coffin, the lid flew off, and the cat darted away amid the trees.

It was not seen again by those who knew it until Sunday night, when Mr. Bailey was going home with his own dog, Teddy, who is named because of his beautiful teeth, and his big cat, Dick, who is known to him on his journey's end, and from the store, when his jaws the cat who ought to have been dead and buried, sitting on the base of the Hancock statue, at St. Nicholas Avenue and 12th Street, suddenly appeared. He had been in the store yesterday to find his former owners, and was told that they had already gone away.—New York Times.

BEAR NATURE.

Funny Antics of Three Specimens on a Hot Sunday.

It was so hot Sunday afternoon that the big bear in the second cage at the City Park had to be taken out.

"So," this must be heaven," murmured the agent, following the farmer into the house and explaining that everybody at home was as well as could be expected. Not till the agent was full of a boiled dinner and attempted to sell a book did the farmer begin to see a man in a white coat, the agent explained that he greeted all elderly strangers as "uncle," that he even had a few almost real ones in South Clark Street in Chicago.

When first seen by the agent, the bear was all right, and when the real nephew does come he may find an electric current in the latch string.—Chicago Tribune.

TOWED ASHORE BY A EISH.

Lively Black Bass Proves a Boon to the Fisherman.

"You may call me a fisherman, and say that they are not fit for white men to eat," Mr. Ringwater was saying earnestly, "but just the same I want you to understand that they are about the gamiest fish that swims, and if it hadn't been for one little black bass, I wouldn't have been here today. Hereafter I'll stand for the black bass and all their shortcomings. It happened this way."

"One afternoon early in the week I got the craze and drove out to Pawhus on a boat and sailed all day. I had a fish basket and my tomato can full of worms and an old rod which I picked up somewhere about the house and I made up my mind that if there was any fish to be gotten out of the bay, I would get it. I chartered an old flat-bottomed pout, the cleanest one which I could discover in the vicinity, and then I started out. I rowed like one of the Pennsylvania crumens at Henley until I came to a point where the water was shallow, then I let down the anchor and began to fish."

"It was but the work of two or three minutes to put my rod together, bait the hook with a worm and throw it overboard. After that I waited for some time, but I never did hear what it was all about. I guess if I had read the papers I'd have found out. Anyhow, I'll bet there was something doing there. I was watching the water, and I knew it before I did. He was the happiest horse I ever saw. No, Bob didn't get sick on that account. That was eight years ago. I guess Bob carried more than 500 swells, including Senators and Cabinet officers, and Members of Congress since then."

"In those days Bob was a swell-looking horse. He could hold his head up with the best of them, and he came from blooded stock, too, Bob did. At least, I heard so. He was a fine-looking fellow, but he did, and lived to be nearly thirty, too. Yes, sir, that was Bob's age when he was killed. He was a fine fellow, everybody who knew him would tell you. Bob didn't tell 'em by their clothes either. He knew a gentleman by instinct. If you stay in this business it don't take long to find out that Senators are not always the best dressed men. Sometimes, though, gentlemen dress like swells, but they don't have 'em."

Book Agent in Luck.

There is a farmer living just north of Evanston and a book agent somewhere in the neighborhood west of Chicago, each of whom feels that he is a victim of a cruel circumstance.

Last week the farmer had a note from a nephew to say that the boy would visit the farm on Tuesday. There, a nephew had not met for fifteen years, and the old man drove to the station in his most uncomfortable coat, that he might welcome his sister's "only child. But the young man failed to come. After waiting for some time, the old man appeared the old man drove away, disappointed. The book agent entered into the dramatic personae early the next morning. Looking over the top rail of the barnyard gate he called, "Hello, uncle."

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TRAPPING THE TARANTULA

California Boys Capture the Venomous Insects for Sale.

Death-Dealing Spiders Are Easily Trained—Taught to Take Food From the Hand—How They Are Caged—Many Desperate Fights.

"The most remarkable of all the strange developments of life in the Far West is the tarantula industry in southern California. Just think of catching deadly insects for sale on the market as cheaply and almost as readily as one would gather blackberries."

During the months of July, August, and September the tarantulas take their annual outing and hold high carnival, for then the environments of their underground homes are dry and parched and they can crawl delightfully through a wealth of dry cactus holla or mesquite where crouch weary groups of sagrebrows, cactus, and wild grasses, all oppressed by heat and grey with thirst.

The great sun looks down and smiles at the promulgating spiders, while the surfaces of dry cactus holla and mesquite puddles in which they may unexpectedly douse their hairy legs, for they have an intense aversion to water, and to get all ten legs wet at once would indeed be a calamity.

They live almost exclusively in rough, unutilized areas, and seldom intrude their uncanny presence in city or town. In dredging out their subterranean domestic establishments, the walls of their burrows for a distance of ten feet from the entrance are lined with a soft mud, which is easily manipulated. There may be intelligent method in their selection of a home, for the soil in color corresponds with their dusky hue, and they can crawl about with less fear of being observed by their enemies.

During the tarantula season small boys in cotton shirts and jumpers dot the foothills and dry fields like punctuation marks, intent upon capturing these dangerous little creatures. The paragraphs of these intrepid youths consist of tin cans and glass jars with covers, a pair of water and two long slender sticks that can be used as pinchers, with which to handle the spiders.

Two tarantulas are never put into the same receptacle, for when in captivity they seem to have an inveterate antipathy for each other and fight with the most ferocious abandon, biting, scratching, and mutilating one another until both contestants are dead.

An energetic and industrious youngster sometimes reaps a substantial income during the summer vacation by catching tarantulas, which he sells to dealers in delicacies for the purpose of feeding the boys do not discover their prey prying at large they hunt about for promising-looking holes in the ground, for the location of the tarantula is always indicated by a white sicken web that outlines the rim of the hole, which is a sign of cold water, giving Mr. and Mrs. Spider an impromptu bath, quite upsetting the equilibrium of their domestic affairs, and they rush out to discover the cause of the disturbance. The spider, in respect above ground is unpropitious, for they are immediately grabbed by the pinners and hustled unceremoniously into a tin, glass, or wooden jail, there to await their doom.

The Pasadena artist who guides the taxidermist in the handling of these creatures evidently takes no heed of the old Kentish proverb: "If you wish to live and thrive, let a spider run alive," for an average of 5,000 bugs a year pass into the vast unknown of the sea, where they are thrust into the sea.

Upon being suddenly thrown into this ill-smelling tank, the tarantula's astonishment and indignation is great, his sentiments being expressed by a series of movements of his hairy body and demonic gleams that scintillate from his eight tiny eyes. With a final flourish, in which all ten legs reach out pleadingly toward an imaginary benefactor, he gives a despairing order and subsides.

Chloroform is sometimes used to kill the bugs, but is objectionable, because it loosens the furz of the spider, which if dropped on the hand of the taxidermist will sometimes cause a severe skin disease. Long pinners are invariably used to handle the tarantulas, and under no circumstances are they touched with the hands.

The curing method is simple, only white arsenic and borax being used. After the embalming process, their legs, which curl tight under them in their death struggle, are stretched out in natural angle, being pinned into position on a card with black paper, and placed in a desiccating tin. They are afterward labeled, placed in small pasteboard boxes, and sold to tourists for twenty-five cents each. Sometimes the barbaric instincts of the boys might be soothed by the fact that a dozen spiders on a table and watch them fight. A terrible battle ensues, for the wrath of the participants is great, and the weapons formidable. In preparing for the attack they stand side by side, their legs for a distance of ten feet from the fringe until the mandibles protrude in a straight line from the face, then with all the muscular force of which they are capable they launch themselves forward, aiming the poisonous mandibles into the face of the enemy. Every movement expresses antagonism, violent, terrific, and finally all six are clutched together, forming a compact ball. Thinking the proceedings have progressed far enough, the taxidermist cracks the ball in two, pinches and precipitates all six spiders into the turpentine-gasoline combination, where they dissolve partnership with one another and with life.

When one tarantula bites another the survivors of the bite may be under the influence of humor, thing absolutely drunk. This is the first result. Then comes a numbing or paralytic condition which often lasts for a week, during which the spider is unable to move. At the end of that time he usually dies.

A lively snake of the garter variety was captured a short time ago and taken into the taxidermist's shop, where a number of tarantulas had just arrived. Being curious to learn the social relations between the tarantulas and the snake, a young boy, a great pompous spider, whose every black hair bristled with imperious authority, was placed on the table with the snake, who showed the utmost confidence.

Calling her shining curves in a ray of sunlight that fell from the ceiling, the snake seemed inclined to indulge in a peaceful siesta.

She was not allowed to rest, however, for the tarantula, upon perceiving her, strode up and with a mighty thrust buried his fangs in her shining scales. The snake was startled and partially stunned, but struck out nobly and would have cold about the creature. But he did not give up the fight, until, with a last muscular twitch, the snake lay dead.

In spite of this extensive trade in venomous goods, no one is known to have been bitten in the United States. In South America the tarantula is most deadly, the species in Mexico being almost equally bad. Tarantulas sometimes lose a leg in their encounters, and it is given out as an absolute fact by a man who has contracted the habit of catching tarantulas for years, that a new leg will sprout out from the old stump, and the spider be made as good as new.

Though the tarantulas are fierce and combative amongst themselves, they can be tamed and used in the kitchen. They are fed from the hand or drink water from a leaf. Though they may be amiable about the enemy, but are under such treatment and don't die.—New York Times.