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AND OF THE

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Reaching over home in the parish, it is an excellent medium for

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OLD WOMEN.

Their Great Age Due to Their Great Talking, Says Tissot.

It is an acknowledged fact that a great age is attained by women often than by men. Tissot, with doubtful gallantry, accounts for this by declaring that the large amount of talking for which women are famous is a very healthy exercise and promotes circulation of blood without overexerting the organs.

One of the most famous female centenarians was the countess of Desmond who lived to be one hundred and forty five, and died in the reign of James I from the effects of an accident. This wonderful woman told herself, at the age of one hundred, so lively and strong as to be able to take part in a dance, and when she was one hundred and forty she traveled all the way from Bristol to London—no trifling journey in those days—in order to attend personally to some business affairs.

Lady Desmond is, however, quite thrown into the shade by a French woman, Marie Peron, who died in St. Colombe in June, 1888—it is said—at the wonderful age of one hundred and fifty-eight. Toward the end of her life she lived exclusively on goat's milk and cheese. Although her body was so shrunk that she weighed only forty-six pounds, she retained all her mental faculties to the last.

It is an extraordinary but incontestable fact that some women at the age when most people die, undergo a sort of natural process of rejuvenation—the hair and teeth grow again, the wrinkles disappear from the skin, and sight and hearing reacquire their former sharpness.

A Marquise De Mirabeau is an example of this rare and remarkable phenomenon. She died at the age of eighty-six, but a few years before her death she became in appearance quite young again. The same change happened to a nun of the name of Marguerite Verdun, who, at the age of sixty-two, lost her wrinkles, regained her sight and grew several new teeth. When she died, ten years later, her appearance was almost that of a young girl.

AN UNDERGROUND ROAD.

London's Electric Railway Is Three Hundred Feet Below the Surface.

London's electric railway runs from the "city" to Stockwell, a distance of four miles, more or less, and lies buried in the ground at a depth of three hundred feet nearly, at the city end, and is reached by elevators, says the Boston Transcript. This great descent is rendered necessary for two reasons—first, the road goes under the bed of the Thames, and second the city commissioners of sewers, who had a great say in the matter, agreed that if it were so low down they would only charge a small sum for the ground. The train consists of an engine and four vestibule cars, so that it is possible to pass from a smoking-carriage to a nonsmoker and vice versa. The seats are not arranged like our Pullman, but are fixed in the same manner as are the seats in the electric cars here.

The train is drawn by an engine with a storage battery and works very well unless the power gives out, when there is a delay sometimes of half an hour—not very agreeable in a tunnel just large enough for the train, admirably ventilated as the tunnel is. Since the opening of this unique railroad the fares have been altered and improved terms made, for now you can go half-way (i. e., to Kensington Oval) for one penny, and the journey from Stockwell to the city is regularly done in fifteen minutes. There are no tickets, but you can get commutation tickets for three, six, or twelve months at reasonable rates. The air in the tunnel is always fresh and, even in summer, cool.

A BROKEN ENGAGEMENT.

The Spectacular Fire Built by a Disappointed Damsel.

"Speaking of broken engagements," remarked a young girl to an Argonaut man the other day, "makes me think of a funny story. A friend of mine was expecting to be married, and had everything ready but her gowns. All the table and bed linen was hemmed and marked and put away in lavender, while dozens of tray cloths, dollies and bureau covers were made. She had even prepared a large supply of all kinds of house cloths for windows, silver, etc., and had put away six rolls of linen bandages in case anyone should cut a finger or sprain an arm. Well, the engagement was broken, and what do you think she did with all those things upon which she had lavished so much loving care? She made a big bonfire in the backyard and upon the flames, started by means of a match and an old barrel, she heaped her treasures. Never did vestal virgin feeding the sacred fires on ancient Roman altars make more fervent vows than did this nineteenth century maiden when sacrificing her dainty linen in the hope of assuaging her heartache. That all happened some years ago. On a cabinet in her own room stands a large jar, which people declare contains the ashes of her heart and of her bridal linen cremated together on that fateful day."

Fish Nets.

Fish nets are made from some very strange materials. The Eskimau manufacture them from strips of seal hide, and from thin slices of walrus-bones. By the Fijians they are constructed of human hair. Savages in various parts of the world plait the inner fibers of tree bark for fishing lines, and the Indians on the Pacific coast of North America use for the same purpose seaweed—a sort of kelp which is strong enough to hold a fifty pound weight.

THE SLEEPING SALOON.

John Bull's Curious Version of an American Idea.

Between the British conception of a saloon and that in vogue on this side of the Atlantic there is this in common that both are entered by a side door after nightfall. There the resemblance ceases. John Bull's saloon is an exhibit in the Transportation building, wherein it is full as difficult to look upon the wine when it is red as it ought to be in Evanston or Bangor. John Bull's saloon is as dry as his comic papers. He labels it "sleeping saloon" to distinguish it from all-night places where we never sleep. It occupies a position in the rear of the London & Northwestern Railway company's highly varnished trainlet, ingeniously constructed to defeat the ends of the trafficker in "popcorn, five a bag."

The British sleeping saloon is our great-grandmother's Pullman car. It is the great American "sleeper" as it would have been had it been invented before the war. Entering by the British passenger finds himself in a diminutive closet where he is permitted to smoke his pipe. Two rigid-backed chairs would elbow each other for standing room if they had any elbows. The man in charge says: "His is what a man 'as to put up with in Tobaccago," as he opens the door. Six berths are stowed away on either side of the smoking saloon. The berth saloons are divided into compartment saloons, four compartments comprising the entire carriage. Two of the compartments contain four berths devoid of any evidences of curtains in front. The remaining couple are of semi-exclusive character, containing two berths each, and being intended for roommates or elderly married couples. The car is probably half the length of the ordinary Pullman, and is destitute of even the adornment of the harmless necessary dandy with the appetite for quarters.

A CURIOUS CASE.

Is Established the Fact That There Are Some Rights Which Can't Be Waived.

A defendant in a murder case in New York state was once placed on trial before a jury of twelve, says the Brooklyn Eagle. A member of the jury died during his trial. The prisoner's counsel agreed with the district attorney that the trial should continue before eleven jurors and that no record of the death of one of their number should be entered on the minutes of the court. The prisoner was convicted and sentenced to punishment. An appeal was afterward taken to the effect that neither his counsel nor the district attorney nor the court nor the prisoner had a right to waive the latter's right to a trial by twelve jurors. The conviction was set aside for that reason. As, however, nothing in the record showed in a formal and official way that the trial occurred and that the verdict was rendered by less than twelve jurors, it was also held that the man had been put once in jeopardy and could not be put twice in the same position. He was, therefore, discharged. He was thus tried and not tried, found guilty and not found guilty, convicted and practically acquitted all at the same time and under the same proceeding. The contention was that every man indicted and tried for crime previous to his arraignment, and everyone who might be so indicted and so tried after his arraignment had an interest in his trial by twelve jurors, and that when he waived his own right he impaired their right in their trial and their right in his trial, and that the thing could not be permitted. This illustrates how a man holds some of his rights in trust for all the past and for all the future. Of such rights he cannot divest himself and cannot be divested.

MODERN ATHENS.

It Is Raising Its Standards to Those of Classical Greece.

"I once had a chat with the late Prof. Sophocles, the famous native Greek professor of Harvard, on the subject of the pronunciation of our language as taught in America," said the Greek consul, Mr. D. T. Timayenas, recently, to a reporter for the Boston Herald. "I asked him why he taught a pronunciation which he knew was not right."

"It doesn't make any difference what pronunciation we teach," he replied, "because these boys will never know anything anyway."

"The Germans have been the most conscientious and thorough students of the ancient Greek language," continued the consul. "It is but fair to say, however, that a very learned Greek lady, who has been in this country studying your institutions, says that she found a class of girls in Wellesley college who were better versed in Greek classics than the girls in our own schools in Athens. I should say they must be very good, then, for a great revival in Greek classical study has taken place within a few years. The spoken language is conforming more and more closely to classical standards. Foreign words that have crept into the language are being cast aside. I noticed the increased purity of the language when I returned to Greece and met some of my university classmates. They were following classical Greek so closely that I thought at first it was a joke or an affectation, but I soon saw that the 'net' were all talking that way."

Thought He Had Lost His Pension.

In a small village in Maine there lives an old soldier who has for many years received a pension from the government, which with his small earnings by occasional jobs, makes him comfortable. One day, while at work in the house of a neighbor, he slipped at the top of a flight of stairs and fell to the bottom. The lady of the house heard the noise, and hurried to learn the cause. "Why, Ambrose," she said, "is that you? Did you fall downstairs?" "Yes, marm, I did," answered the old man, "and for about a couple of minutes I thought I'd lost my pension."

ALLIGATOR SHOOTING.

An Exciting Sport Which Is Passed In Darkness.

Mr Kirk Munroe describes in the Cosmopolitan a canoe trip in company with two young Seminole Indians, Micococchee and Kowika, who were engaged in their regular occupation of hunting alligators for their hides. The canoe was a dugout, made by Micococchee himself out of a huge cypress log. The trio made camp late in the afternoon, and after awhile Mr. Munroe discovered what he had not before suspected—that the hunting was to be done at night.

Darkness had hardly fallen before the bellowing of alligators was heard—a sound much like the roar of an angry bull. Micococchee listened with evident satisfaction. "Allapatta plenty. Me catch 'em, Uncash!" We had killed five of the monsters when we turned our prow up stream. Micococchee wielded his push pole from the stern, Kowika sat in the middle of the canoe, while I, with jack light on my head and rifle in hand, occupied the position of honor in the bow.

The alligators had ceased their mutterings and I had begun to think that we had killed or frightened them all. Just then I was startled by a slight motion on the bank but a few yards away. At the same instant two oozes of fire gleamed through the blackness. What could they be? I was about to speak, when a sharp "hist" from behind told me that the moment for action had come. Taking a hasty aim at one of the lurid oozes, I fired.

The report of the rifle was followed by such a wild rush into the water, such whirling and splashing, such showers of spray and bloody foam that it was as if a small cyclone had been dropped from the heavens into that quiet spot. Little Kowika screamed in his excitement, but Micococchee only expressed his displeasure at my bad shot by muttering: "Ho-le-wa-gual! Heap bad!"

VETERANS PASSING AWAY.

In Every Town There Will Be Few Survivors of the Civil War.

Interesting in connection with the department encampment is the report of the medical director, Dr. J. R. Hayes, in part as follows, says the Washington Post:

"Our annual death rate equals 9.75 per cent. of the whole number in the Grand Army Republic in this department. This is equivalent to death rate of twenty-seven in a thousand, a larger death rate than usually pertains to any given number of people. Our band of nearly 4,000 is being rapidly mustered out, and if we apply the simple rules of arithmetic, and provided that we recruit no more, in the year 1920 not one of our 4,000 would be alive to tell the story of the past.

"We are dying faster than any other class of our population, because out of the 4,000 in our organization more than one-half are daily suffering from loss of limbs, from wounds, injuries and disabilities contracted during the war. Results of prison-life and the exposure and deprivation incident thereto now cause more suffering than the bullet. Loss of a limb shortens the life, but the rheumatism and scurvy contracted in prison also yearly call for premature victims. Premature aging of all the organs, diminished vital resistance to all disturbing causes, and more especially diseases of the heart, now so alarmingly present with many surviving veterans are mainly due to the rheumatism and scurvy of prison life.

"I have never seen a survivor from the prison at Andersonville, Ga., that did not have disease of heart in some form or other. So, taking our little band of 4,000 to-day, in about forty years all who have lost limbs or been seriously wounded or suffered the hardships and horrors of prison life will have passed away."

HIS MOTHER'S BIBLE.

The Book on Which President Cleveland Took the Oath of Office.

Among the relics stored away in the clerk's office of the supreme court of the United States, writes a Washington correspondent of the Philadelphia Times, is a handsome morocco-covered Bible of large octavo size. It is the Bible that was purchased eight years ago to administer the oath of office to President Cleveland at his inauguration on March 4. It had been the invariable custom before the inauguration of Mr. Cleveland to purchase a Bible for use at the inauguration ceremony and to present this interesting memento afterward to some member of the president's family. Following this custom, the clerk purchased a Bible to use in the inauguration of President Cleveland, but Mr. Cleveland notified the committee of arrangements of the senate that he wished to take the oath on the Bible given to him by his mother when, as a young man, he started out in the world to make his fortune. The committee naturally respected this sentiment of the president-elect and so Mr. Cleveland took the oath on his mother's Bible. It was a small book, morocco bound and gilt-edged. So far as is known here, Mr. Cleveland still has the book, and in the belief that it will be used at the coming ceremony the clerk of the supreme court has not purchased a Bible to be used on that occasion. It was planned four years ago to use the Bible purchased in 1885 at the ceremony of 1892; but after considering the matter the clerk determined to purchase another Bible for Mr. Harrison.

Engineering Skill.

Speaking of the remarkable feats of marine engineers, the Marine Journal recalls the achievement of Richard Peck, who at one time had charge of the single-engine of the old City of Vera Cruz coming up from Havana. South of Hatteras the piston rod went to smash, breaking into three pieces. But Peck, after twenty-four hours of continuous labor, actually mended that piston so that it was strong and true enough to do its part with the rest of the machinery, and he brought his ship into New York harbor steaming six knots. This was a deed which, in the opinion of the Boston Journal, quite surpasses even the recent notable performance of Engineer Tomlinson, of the *Guiana*.

UNDERGROUND AVALANCHES.

Evidence of Subterranean Convulsions Among the Mountains of Pennsylvania.

The curious phenomenon formerly exciting the wonder of people living in the vicinity of Thick Head and Sand mountains, south of Tusseyville, Center county, Pa., which has not been noticed for five years, has made its presence known again. For twelve years, at irregular intervals, the dwellers in that part of Center county had been disturbed by loud and mysterious noises which came from the ground between the two mountains named. In the spring of 1888 these noises were heard daily, with increased volume, for a week. The noises, according to the Chicago Herald, were sometimes like the rumble of distant thunder and then like the deadened crash of thunder heard in the air close by. On the seventh day of this protracted disturbance beneath these two mountains a resident of Tusseyville was climbing Thick Head mountain, when the rumbling began in the mountain opposite. At first it was deep and low, and it increased in violence until it became as the tumult of a mass of rock rolling down a mountain side. The person who heard the sounds said that they convinced him that they were caused by a subterranean avalanche, as it began at the very top of the mountain, increasing in violence and speed as it went down, and terminating in a terrible crash at the bottom.

After that day the Thick Head noises ceased, and were not heard again until a week ago, when they began just as they had terminated in a similar subterranean land or rock slide, except that this time the hidden avalanche occurred somewhere in the depth of Thick Head mountain, instead of in Sand mountain. In Potter county, Pa., between Ronlette and Bartville, is a hill in which rumblings of the same nature are heard at irregular intervals. This elevation is called Thunder hill, and it rises from the south bank of the Allegheny river. The noises that occur in this hill sometimes make the earth tremble for a long distance around, and they have been heard for a mile away. The theory of local savants is that a strong vein of natural gas underlies the hill, and that when the great resort is disturbed by some underground convulsion it rises in its might and tumbles rocks and things around in the confines of the hill until everything hums. Still no one has confidence enough in this theory to hand out the money that is being asked for to send a drill down into the alleged gas cauldron, let out its treasure and make everybody in that balliwick rich.

AT THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

No Trace of Wreckage in the Deepest of the Ocean's Depths.

An extraordinary circumstance that has been noticed with interest and that always creates surprise when first learned is the entire absence of foreign matter in the deepest part of the ocean's floor. Of all the vessels lost in mid-ocean; of all the human beings that have been drowned; of all the marine animals that have perished; of all the clay, sand and gravel let fall by dissolving icebergs, of all the various substances drifted from every shore by shifting currents, no trace remains, but in their place water from one thousand to twenty-five hundred fathoms in depth covers the uniform deposit of thick, bluish, tenacious slime called globigerina ooze, says the Cosmopolitan Magazine.

A bit of this under a powerful lens is declared to be a revelation of beauty not readily forgotten. The ooze is composed almost entirely of the daintiest, most delicately beautiful shells imaginable. At depths greater than twenty-five hundred fathoms the bottom of the sea consists mainly of product arising from exposure, for almost incalculable periods, to the chemical action of sea water, of pumice and other volcanic matters.

This finally results in the formation of red clay deposits that are considered characteristic of the profound depths of the ocean. Fragments of lime, which in the form of shells of foraminifera makes up so large a part of the globigerina ooze, is here almost entirely absent.

Nola was a very nearly universal solvent, and a very small large or small, remains the base of these tremendous masses, it is chemically eaten up, literally dissolved—a result which the enormous pressure of the water must materially hasten.

At one thousand fathoms the weight of the water pressure on all sides of an object immersed to that depth is very nearly one ton to the square inch, or more than one hundred times that sustained at the sea level, and at the greatest depth the pressure is so increased that it would wear nothing could withstand it; in fact, heavy metal cylinders let down with the sounding apparatus are sometimes, on being drawn up again to the surface, found bent and collapsed; strongly-made glass vessels which the metal inclosed are shattered into fragments.

EVERY SEVEN YEARS.

A Curious Belief in regard to Phases of Regeneration.

It is surprising how many people believe that the entire body of a man is renewed every seven years exactly, says the St. Louis Globe-Democrat. This used to be taught in books, and, although not orthodox now, is still accepted as gospel by many. To show its inaccuracy one has only to hit a nail on his finger hard enough, for in that case the injured object will come off and be replaced by an entirely new nail.

If this process occupied seven years such an accident would be a very tiresome affair, but, as any mechanic will tell you, it occupies a few weeks. The growth is more rapid in summer than winter, but never taking more than four months. So far as the nails are concerned, then, the renewal process is repeated about twenty-one times during the regulation seven years, and the theory is thus destroyed, even if no other proof of its falsity were forthcoming.

ZONE SYSTEM IN HUNGARY.

Official Figures Show It Is a Complete Success.

Three years ago the Hungarian government adopted the zone system of rates for railroad fares. The principle involved a large reduction in rates, especially to long-distance travelers. With Buda-Pesth as a center, the circumference of the first zone was about one hundred miles away, the second two hundred, and so on to the extreme limits of Hungary. Only a slight reduction in rates was made in the first zone, much larger in the second, and increasingly larger in the outer zones. The gross reduction was in the neighborhood of sixty per cent. Hungary was an ideal place for trying the plan, as all roads run to Buda-Pesth and the city itself was practically in the center of the country. Railroad men everywhere declared the plan foredoomed to failure, even where the conditions were as favorable as in Hungary.

The first official figures on the system have been published. Commenting on them, Transport says:

"Excellent results have, according to the official figures just published, been shown by the working of the zone system on the railways of Hungary. The eyes of Europe have been turned with a good deal of curiosity and interest to this, the most daring and systematic method of discrimination in favor of the long distance as against the short distance traveler in the world. The various zones or circles within which certain fares are charged are fixed by regulation, the principle adopted being the greater the distance from the capital the less the proportional rate per mile traveled. The system has been greatly appreciated by the people living in the more distant parts of the country, as the result shows. For some years before the introduction of the system the number of travelers averaged 6,000,000 annually. In the first year of the zone tariff the number rose to 10,000,000; the second year's returns showed that 19,000,000 had used the railways, while during the third year the number of travelers totaled 28,000,000. It is satisfactory to note a corresponding rise in the receipts, advancing from 9,708,000 gulden during the last year of the old system to 28,300,000 gulden during the year just closed."

SAVED BY HIS HORSE.

Very Peculiar Escape of a Man from a Break in the Ice.

The story comes up from below the city, says the Lewiston (Me.) Journal, about a man who attempted to cross the Androscooggin on the ice and was swamped, together with his team. He had been hauling wood across the river for several days, and had just one more load to haul.

As the water was up on the face of the ice he first thought to put off hauling it, but the thought that perhaps there would be another chance to haul it made him go across. When he started back he thought he wouldn't go in the same track where he had hauled the rest, so he went a little above.

The ice began to crack slowly when he got to the middle. Quick as a flash he unfastened the two tugs and one holdback. Then he struck the horse violently with the whip. At the same time the sled load of wood went through with a crash. He commenced to sink with it, but when the horse had been struck he jumped ahead and, breaking the off holdback, jerked the man off the load and dragged him to the shore with the reins. There he stopped and the man got up.

When he looked back the top of the wood and the shafts could be seen sticking out of the hole in the ice. He says that he had rather lose the wood than go near the hole again. It is frozen in now.

A Cat's Trip to India and Back.

A good cat story, says the London correspondent of the Yorkshire Post, comes from Bombay. In August a Liverpool resident proceeding to Bombay took out with him a cat which he intended to present to a friend in India. Some days after the arrival of the steamer in Bombay pussy was missed, and, though she was searched for high and low, she was nowhere to be found. Her owner had quite given her up for lost when he received intelligence from England that the cat had made her appearance at her old Liverpool home on the 25th of October as calm and collected as though a trip to India and back was quite in the ordinary course of her life. The facts are vouched for by a Bombay paper, and there is no reason to doubt their substantial accuracy.

Shell Mounds of Florida.

A ship's officer who has spent much time on the St. John's river, Florida, thinks that he has solved the problem as to the origin of the shell mounds that occur along that stream. The river twists about in an extraordinary way, so that in many places a view along the water extends for only a few rods, but he finds that a tall object or the smoke of a fire shown from the top of one of these mounds could be seen from those next below and above, and he believes that these eminences were Indian signal stations, by means of which the natives were able to announce the approach of a hostile force along the river, as the Greeks signaled the news of the fall of Troy to their home cities by lights on the mountain tops, that were repeated from peak to peak.

Hired Guests.

English society is raising a national lament because men no longer dance. Hostesses have for a long time been at their wits' end to secure partners for young women at balls and dancing parties. Now the situation is worse than ever and remedies are being eagerly sought. The suggestion is publicly discussed that a dancing agency be established similar to such institutions in Paris and Berlin. Hired guests, armed with guarantees of fitness and respectability, would appear at the proper hour, warranted to dance every number on the card and not give more than three dances to one young woman. Some such plan seems to be the only hope of saving the art of dancing in England.