

MYSTERY OF THE MAINSPRING.

Some Breakages Not Yet Understood Despite Much Investigation.

Despite the investigations regarding the structure of mainsprings and the efforts to improve them; despite the experimentation and theorizing on the subject, some of the causes of the breaking of mainsprings remain an unsolved mystery. Many, indeed, are the known causes responsible for breaking, such as faulty construction or tempering, careless handling, leading to the formation of rust and poor fitting, but after all these which are recognized have been eliminated there still remains the fact well known to watchmakers that the best springs will, in spite of the most careful handling and proper adjustment, unexpectedly break, sometimes in a number of places. It will thus happen that of two springs made at the same time by the same process, of the same material, tempered in the same way and handled with the same care, one may last for years, while the other may break after two weeks' use, or even while being placed in the barrel. When it is considered that the spring is but from .008 to .009 of an inch in thickness; that the material must be subjected to a process which shall give it a high state of elasticity, and at the same time enable it to do its prescribed work for years, a slight molecular disarrangement in its structure may be expected to occur from causes too insignificant for observation. Many jewelers state that it is their experience that they have many more mainsprings to repair: after a warm, humid day than at any other time. Others believe the breaking to be due to electric disturbances, stating that after an electrical storm they find that many of their customers bring their watches to them for repair. The sudden cooling and consequent contraction of the tightly wound mainspring, caused by the removal of the watch from the body on a cool night following a warm day, is believed by some to account, in a measure, for the accidents mentioned. So far, however, no entirely satisfactory explanation has been suggested. The only conclusion to be drawn from the acknowledged facts of the case is that it is not safe for the watchmaker to infer, merely from the breaking of a mainspring, that it is of an inferior grade, nor for his customer to believe the watchmaker deficient in skill because the mainspring of his time-piece has snapped shortly after being replaced.

CURIOUS ALBINO TREE.

One Discovered Growing in a Garden in London.

Much interest has been caused lately by the appearance of a horse chestnut tree in the Thiergarten. The numerous branches around the lower part of the trunk have a pure white foliage, such as is seen on trees growing in dark places, where no chlorophyll can develop on account of want of light. The same whiteness of the leaves is also noticeable in a few of the neighboring branches through the crown to the top. People are often puzzled as to the cause of the peculiarity, and many strange explanations are sometimes given. The singular appearance of the tree has been noticed regularly for some years. This particular tree, it seems, had been attacked by a swarm of caterpillars and other creatures of the same species, and the foliage had already been destroyed; but still masses of caterpillars continued to crawl up and down the trunk, and finally clung there in lumps. To preserve the beautiful tree, after other means had been tried in vain, a solution of acid was used, and the ground all around was watered with it, as well as the trunk and the branches, which were specially drenched. This treatment proved successful. The tree gradually recovered, and now stands in its full strength and freshness, but has ever since shown the already described whiteness of its leaves, which presents a by no means unpleasant contrast to the otherwise dark green foliage.—London Standard.

A Curious Rescue.

A curious rescue was effected recently in the County Wicklow, Ireland. Some time in April last an unfortunate sheep became imprisoned on a part of the rugged cliffs arising from the banks of the Upper Lake Glendalough, and though many plans were proposed to get it down, no one was found willing to undertake the risk, when a gentleman from South Africa volunteered to rescue the poor animal. After an arduous and exciting climb, he managed to reach the spot, and, having attached a rope to the sheep, it was lowered to the lake, where a boat was ready to receive it. So hungry was the poor brute that when dangling in the air it tried to bite at the tufts of grass on the face of the cliff. It must have died of starvation in a very few days more, every bit of herbage within reach was nibbled to the earth. Some idea of the risk this rescuer ran may be gathered from the fact that this particular spot has always been considered inaccessible, and that it took the gentleman fully two hours to make the ascent. The lake under the cliff is forty fathoms deep.

CHINESE HISTORY IS ANCIENT.

Dates Back to the Time When Nineveh Was a Great Metropolis.

The authentic history and biography of China is doubtless the oldest in the world, even antedating that of the Jews. Those who with its chronology state that it embraces a period from the year 2697 B.C. back to the remote past, 697 years before Christ. The historians of China embrace a succession of uninterrupted series of more than 2,400 years. The full and continuous history of the empire was compiled in the second century of our era. The great libraries of Peking contain volumes of books numbered by the hundreds of thousands. In the archives of the government are still to be found the ancient predictions of eclipses made with great accuracy, together with works on astronomy which show a fair knowledge of that interesting science. Biographies, very succinctly written, of the emperors of the most ancient dynasties still exist, and written works of learned men are as voluminous as those of European nations. And all this learning and love of learning has been acquired without help or suggestion from any foreign people. If their authentic histories reach back nearly five centuries ago, mythical history reaches still further back into the very night of time. When Nineveh and Babylon were in the splendor of their might men in China were predicting eclipses, making catalogues and giving names to the stars. But Nineveh and Babylon were mere mounds of earth and rubbish when China was great, and to this date the civilization and life of the empire are the wonder of the world.

TO STOP BLEEDING.

Electricity Now Declared to Be the Best Relief.

The arresting of bleeding in surgical operations has always been one of the difficulties in certain cases, and the electric current has been used before this with a view to bringing about that condition of heat which is necessary in order to cause the blood to clot and so act as a block to the mouth of bleeding vessels, arresting hemorrhage. This, indeed, has resulted in the utilization of the electric cautery, as it is called in certain operations, the platinum wire at a red or almost white heat even supplanting the knife, because it burns through the tissues and at the same time prevents the wound bleeding to any great extent. This effect of heat was, indeed, known to our ancestors, who used red hot irons or boiling pitch, to sear the surface of the flesh after their operations, thus causing an immense amount of suffering to the patient, before the days of chloroform. A new adaptation of this use of electricity, for the purpose of stopping bleeding has been devised by inclosing a platinum wire in a pair of forceps of other instrument, the wire being insulated in a bed of burnt pipe clay, and as soon as the bleeding vessel is seized by the forceps and compressed in the ordinary way, an electric current is turned on, whose effect is so great that the tissues and the walls of the blood vessels are all agglutinated, so that the blood is no longer able to pass.

Cook Stove as a Monument.

William McKillip, at an early day a citizen of Traverse City, but for many years a resident of Muskegon, tells a curious coincidence which came in the list of his experiences. Mr. McKillip is a native of Washington county, New York, leaving it in 1846, and in a cemetery there with which he was familiar in early life there were deposited the remains of the wife of one Aaron Crosby. As a monument to her memory there was placed over her grave a common castron cooking stove, on the top being a marble slab, with the appropriate inscription of name, etc. The peculiarity of the cook stove monument naturally impressed itself upon his mind, aside from the fact that he was acquainted with the man who sought in this manner to perpetuate his wife's memory, but he was destined to see another monument of the same sort. Happening to be in Springfield, Ill., in 1852, he found the Sabbath somewhat lonely among strangers and to kill time wandered out to the cemetery. In looking about he came upon the counterpart of the cook stove memorial, and, upon reading the inscription on the slab, found that wife No. 2 of Aaron Crosby was resting below. No doubt both ladies were excellent cooks, and the appreciative Aaron knew no more appropriate way to perpetuate this great qualification.—Traverse City Eagle.

Mohammedan Women Medical Patients.

On those rare occasions when the aid of the European physician is sought for a female member of any Mohammedan family of distinction, the only part of the patient which the doctor is permitted to see is the hand, which is thrust for that purpose through a small opening in a curtain. This has had the effect of making medical men able to give fairly respectable diagnoses based upon the sight of the hand alone.

St. Winifred's Well to Be Protected.

Mr. Justice Byrne has thrown the protecting ermine over the High Court of Justice over St. Winifred's Well, in England, and declines to allow the water of the famous fountain—which is supposed to be endowed with miraculous powers of curing—wonderful as any in the Great Courdes—to be bottled and then to come and foreign consumption. Soda water or lemonade. The High Court of Justice did not exhibit the bottling of Winifred's mixture out of any churlish desire to keep her benefactions for the select few, but simply because the riparian owners of the stream fed from the spring object to be deprived of their quantum of water to enrich the local board, who wished to sell it for their own pecuniary profit. These owners had enjoyed the rivulet from time immemorial, and preferred its contents to a collection of useless surgical appliances. His lordship held that, although the board were the custodians of the well, they had no right to carry off its miraculous waters, which must remain in situ. Those who wish cures must get them on the spot. An injunction preventing any interference with Winifred was accordingly granted.

British Tars Row Against Malays.

In the harbor at Port Elizabeth, Cape Colony, the other day, an interesting boat race was held, a crew of British bluejackets being pitted against some Malay fishermen. The five seamen who represented the British navy were selected from the crew of the cruiser Doris, the flagship of Rear-Admiral Sir Robert H. Harris, one of the smartest admirals of the navy, and now in command of the Cape of Good Hope and West Coast of Africa squadron. If the seamen thought they were going to have a walkover they were greatly mistaken. The Malays gave them a good race; sometimes the naval men led, and then again the Malays would overtake them. Toward the finish, however, the seamen obtained a tactical advantage and managed to win with about a dozen lengths to spare.

Chief Justice of New Zealand an Atheist.

Sir Robert Stout, the new chief justice of New Zealand, is singular among occupants of high judicial office in being an avowed atheist. He was formerly known as the "Bradlaugh of the Antipodes," and he once presided over a secularist congress in Melbourne. He was born in the Shetland islands fifty-five years ago, emigrated to New Zealand in his nineteenth year, became a schoolmaster, studied law after school hours, and secured the right to wear a wig and gown at 27. At 31 he was an M. P. and at 34 attorney general in the government of Sir George Grey. In 1884 he became premier of a coalition government in association with Sir Julius Vogel.

Thoughtful Generosity.

A fine exhibition of thoughtful generosity is that displayed by the widow of M. Heriot, who was one of the founders of the great dry goods store, the Louvre, in Paris. She has announced her intention to give \$200,000 to the present company for the creation of a pension fund exclusively for those women employed in the store, who, by reason of age or infirmities, can no longer work. Only those whose salary has not exceeded \$1,000 a year can be candidates for this pension. Mme. Heriot was herself employed in the Louvre before her marriage. She, therefore, knows by experience the benefit that such a pension fund would confer on a class of hard-working women.

Blew Open the Safe.

A wealthy but absent-minded resident of McPherson, Kas., recently bought a safe in which to keep his valuables, and, being unable to remember the combination, scribbled it on the plastering of a near-by wall. Subsequently he ordered a calciminer to put a new coat on the wall. The memorandum was obliterated, and it became necessary to have the safe blown open.

Frauds in the Mails.

The Kansas City Star tells of a Kansas girl who sent \$1 to a New York "specialist" for a "sure cure for freckles." This is the recipe which she received: "Remove the freckles carefully with a pocketknife; soak them over night in salt water; then hang up in the smokehouse in a good, strong smoke made of sawdust and slippery elm bark for a week. Freckles thus treated never fail to be thoroughly cured."

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