

QUAINT AND PICTURESQUE MARKETS OF THE CURB.



She Has Seen "Heaps" in Her Day.



"If I Was Rich I Would Buy Christmas Greens."



"Takin' Comfort."



Typical Curbstone Huckster.

Old Uncles and Aunties Who Sell Old-Time Flowers and Vegetables, and Have Among Their Wares Also Many Curious and Powerful Charms for Man and Maid--Eternal Salvation in a Turtle's Flipper.

THE busiest spot in Washington on Saturday mornings is the Center Market, between 9 o'clock and noon.

The big red brick, roofing food enough to feed the District, begins its work with the sun. By 6 o'clock the butchers have swung on their hooks sufficient meat to gorge an army of giants. Stacked on endless marble slabs is butter enough to spread on the countless loaves piled high on the bread shelves. Vegetable, fruit, and flower stalls mingle with gay irregularity, while down the entire length of one wing are congregated fifty delegates from every river in this section of the country, and, in their seasons, every sea fowl that skims the water and every game bird that wings the air.

The picturesque feature of the market is furnished by the country people, who run small truck gardens in the nearby country, and sell their produce, aquatier fashion, on the curb.

The stands against the wall are numbered and rented by the marketmaster to individual hucksters, the majority of whom are white, but the curbstones sites are free.

Obey the Gutter Rule.

The gutter rule of "First come, first choose," is as ancient as the days of the original market—a rambling, primitive structure built years and years before the



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civil war. In those way back times a canal divided the market from the Smithsonian grounds, and the region running parallel with the sluggish yellow water was known as Murder Bay.

"These squatters, who are mainly colored, possess what they call a great 'mirration' for the Saturday market, and their rickety teams, with the mud of Maryland and Virginia clotted on their shambling wheels, begin to arrive at any time between Friday's sunset and Saturday's dawn.

"I'm been sittin' heah on dis curbstone, winter an' summer, for nigh on to fifty years," chirruped one ancient brown soul yesterday, from behind a board of wild flowers, herbs, and tobacco twists, "an' Cahline, dat gal o' mine ober dar wid de apple blossoms an' guinea keat aigs, she's ben comin' along wid me ever since de wah."

"You must have seen many changes in your time, aunty?"

"I suttinly has. Beto' de wah all dem colored stone ponder was de canal, an' where you see dem cars passin' dar need to be a bridge. Many a time endurin' de wah I seen ambers creepin' ober dis slow-leavin' de blood to drip, drip, drip, an' I heahs de soljers groanin' in dere pain. Yes, unfeed, honey; I's seen heaps."

"What are these?" asked the reporter, pointing to rolls of fibrous brown bark

and withered switches tied with calico strings.

"Dat you got in your hand is red oak bark, for cuts; dis wild cherry an' assafras is for po' appetites, and ladies buy dese 'bacco twisses to keep off roaches an' moths. Dis dried gum is monstrous good for fits, and here's sumpin' dat a sure cure for ole maids—it is, honey, for a fac."

This boon for spinsters was a sheaf of slippery elm chips, a dozen or so small parcels girdled together by a leather shoe string—apparently much worn.

"You ought to make a pile of money out of dat, aunty. How does it work?"

The old body chuckled and proceeded to light her pipe.

"You see, honey, ole maid ladies is mostly lean an' jabous lookin' and sliptry allum makes 'em fat. When dey gets

fat an' smilin' some gentman gwine to get a 'mirration for 'em, an' ax 'em—unless de done start drinkin' allum tea too late."

The reporter left laden down with slippery elm chips and baited again before another woman—laughing and boxing, with a face as brown as a coconut and teeth as white as his meat.

She was proclaiming in the tones of an auctioneer that she was selling out for 5 cents, but experience taught the reporter that the promise was a delusion and a snare.

The stand was a bluish of laurel and pink hennepuckle. On one end of the board that served for her wares were three eggs in a strawberry box, and at the other was displayed a hare's foot, and a withered black Thing-with-claws to it, laid on a big, green leaf. In the middle

of all, was a fat, dressed chicken, with its stiff legs shooting in the air.

"I will take dat chicken," said the reporter, laying down a nickel.

The woman laughed out with the uncontrolled merriment of a child.

"Go 'way, lady. When chickens draps to 5 cents de country's ruined. Dat dominecker pullet is wuth a half dollar, but you kin have it for thirty-five."

"And what in the world is this?" poking a pencil at the Thing-with-claws.

"That's a mud turtle's flipper, caught in de full o' de moon."

"Is it 5 cents?"

"De Lawd, no. Flippers comes high, lady—when dey's caught in de full o' de moon. Dat identical flipper is wuth all of 15 cents, but you kin have it dis mornin' for 10."

"And how much for the hare's foot?"

"That's a first-class hare's foot, lady. I ain't seen none to beat it nowhere—but I ain't gwine to tote it back home if you wants it had enough to pay a dime. They ain't no luck to beat a hare's foot—exceptin' turtle flippers, o'cose."

"What is the difference between them?"

Their Remarkable Power.

"A hare's foot jes brings you money an' marriage, but a 'sensible mud turtle flipper, caught in de full o' de moon, des matchally bound to take you to the good place when you die."

Eternal happiness was cheap at the price, and the reporter bought both the chicken and the charm. And while the laughing, garrulous body was putting the dominecker in the basket, the purchaser asked what she meant by calling out that she was selling so cheap.

"That's jes my way of ketchin' custom. I calls an' you ladies stops, an' when you stops you moe' in general buys. Don't make no diffrance how you gets trade—so's you gets it—ain't dat so, Cindy Ann?"

Cindy Ann, who was on the alert to find a purchaser for her string of green

NOW COMETH THE SEASON OF GREENS

WITH the first hint, however delicate, of the approach of spring the hunter and purveyor of greens appears. It is a picturesque occupation, and the results are every beyond the conception of the mere eater of bread and meat and store food.

The first indication that it was green came the other day in market. The eldest and most comfortable looking black woman on the outside of Center Market waved an expressive hand toward a small heap of white green, curly looking leaves and tendrils. The marketer, she who knows good things and knows when there are to be good things, burst into an exclamation of joy, and clasping her hands gurgled one up to cry, "Dandelions!"

"Yes'm," assented the market woman, setting herself and spreading her skirts with a flourish that bespoke volumes of self-complacency. "Yes'm, dand'ion. I sho' had trouble gittin' it too. Mighty tejus wuch, mighty tejus. Jes' diggin' in de mud an' pickin' off little leaves, mighty tejus."

"How much?" queried the marketer.

"Well, honey, bein's it's you, an' you got sense enough to know dand'ion w'en you sees it, I guess you kin have de fat ten cents."

It was a small strawberry basket full, and not too full at that, but the marketer said that at this season it was cheap, and I would not dispute her for worlds, for she knows.

Then we made the rounds of the market women. There were no other wild greens in there. There was kale a-plenty, and the ever present and common spinach. Of beet tops and turnip tops and radish tops, too, there were none, as we knew, but then these are hardly wild greens. They are good eating, so the marketer affirmed, when properly cooked, and in the season when they flourish, they may be had for the asking in the market, where the greatest anxiety seems to be to get rid of them. But these are common and well known. Of the wild kind, that the small colored boy and girl go forth with knives and baskets to gather from the commons about the suburbs, there were none. Later in the season they will be piled up in their fresh verdancy, crisp and good to look upon, savory and tempting to the taste if properly prepared.

Every child knows the young dandelion sprouts, the first to appear on the lawns and commons, and around the house. The marketer is authority for the statement that the gathering of greens is a matter only done well by one who has a genius for it. I know the cooking is. When the dandelion has grown old it may be boiled with bacon, but in its young days it is delicious as a salad, wilted in bacon fat with vinegar and a soupcon of sugar, and

HOW TO GET A BOOK AT THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

VISITORS to the Library of Congress, that wonderful city of books, are, in general, unacquainted with the inner workings of that vast establishment. They know that if they call for a book they will obtain it, providing it is in its proper place, in a remarkably short space of time, considering the magnitude of the collection, each one of which is as large as a good-sized office building.

It is by means of the extremely ingenious mechanism of the pneumatic tubes and automatic book-carriers that this quick service is rendered possible. The pneumatic tubes are operated by compressed air, shooting short leather cases two inches in diameter in a few seconds between stations. These tubes run from the central desk in the main reading room to each of the nine decks or stories in each stack.

Having received a reader's ticket, the desk attendant in the stack finds on the shelves the volume wanted and places it on one of the automatic carriers which are constantly moving on an endless chain, and which traverse the entire height of each stack. The carrier delivers the book at the reading room desk to be handed to the reader. When returned by him it may be at once sent back to the stack by the same machine.

The book-carrier consists of a pair of parallel, endless sprocket chains, operated by means of an electric motor, at a speed of 100 feet per minute. The chains run over sheaves of such size that the book trays, hanging on transoms between the chains, may pass freely over the axles at the several changes of direction along the route.

The course of the carrier is wholly in a vertical plane from a pair of overhead shafts, eight feet above the reading room floor at the reading room desk, vertically downward to the collar of the building, thence horizontally to the ceiling to the center of the book stack, where it turns vertically upward, passing through all the stories to the top of the stack to a pair of sprocket shafts at that point, whence it returns to the reading room by a parallel route.

Eighteen book trays are suspended to the chains at equal intervals. They are constructed largely of aluminum, for lightness, the remainder being of brass. The tray bottoms consist of a pair of five-eighths of an inch apart, attached to the back of the tray and turning up slightly in front to prevent the books from projecting over.

This tray thus passes flatwise through similar flat sets of teeth, or toothed racks, as they may be called, located at the ter-

STRANGE AND VARIED ARTICLES LEFT IN SLEEPERS

JUST take a commercial dictionary and everything you find named in it can be found among the articles which passengers leave in the sleepers," said the lost property man of the Pullman Company to a Times man. "Yes, even babies have been discovered among the left and deserted 'articles' handed in by the conductors. I think I can safely say that about the only things which have failed to reach this company's museum are flasks with whiskey in them and boxes of cigars. Somehow or somehow else these articles have never been turned in to await claimants. I suppose people are more careful of these commodities than of others."

"All our conductors and porters are required to turn in all the property they find during a trip, and, of course, if they found flasks of whiskey and cigars they would not fail to turn them in. They give the name of the car, the date of the trip, the points of starting and destination, and the names of the articles they find. Then the articles are sent here to the museum and examined, ticketed, inventoried, and numbered."

"When a patron writes and says he left an article on one of our cars we write back and ask him to give the exact date, the route, the place at which he embarked, and the station at which he left the car. We also insist on a full description of the article, and any additional de-

tail or data he may be able to give. This is all necessary in order to prevent fraud and to protect the real owners, as there are occasions when fraud is attempted.

"I remember on one occasion a passenger—a drummer—got up hurriedly one morning and dressed rapidly in order to get off at a small station down on the Southern. It appeared that the drummer had been celebrating the night before and was in somewhat of a dazed state that morning. In his haste and dazed condition he neglected to take his watch and money from beneath his pillow in the berth. It happened that a thoroughly new and green porter was on the car and when he made up the drummer's berth he found the watch and money. He didn't keep quiet and turn the find over to the conductor, but yelled out that someone had gone off and left his watch and money. Two or three men, still in their berths looked out and stood up the situation.

"A few stations beyond the conductor of the sleeper received a telegram from the drummer stating his loss and requesting that the watch and money be left with the station agent at the next meal station. This was done, the conductor taking a receipt from the station agent.

"The day after we received a letter from a man who said he had left his gold watch, gold-link chain, and money in berth No. 5 on such and such a day, and that he had left the train at 7 o'clock in the morning at a certain station. The matter was looked up, the conductor and porter interrogated, and then we wrote the man and asked him for more details. We also telegraphed the station agent, who re-

ported that he knew the drummer, and had even examined the articles, and made him identify them before delivering and taking his receipt. We never heard anything further from the fellow who filed the claim by letter, but I am convinced he was one of the men who heard the porter yell out that someone had left his watch and money in the berth.

"About the queerest find was that of a baby. The conductor who found it was a single man, and didn't know very much about babies. He was also a nervous man, and didn't dare say a word to the porter or the train conductor or the passenger, because he feared the worst. He was satisfied that the baby had been put on board at a certain station by a person who had stepped on and off the car during the few minutes that the train stopped there. He had frequently had to stop at that station, and knew several persons there. Perhaps the mother had deliberately waited for his train.

"The conductor connected every scheme to get rid of that baby and finally managed to leave it on the sleeper when the other conductor took charge at Atlanta for New Orleans, and of course the last conductor had to turn it in. That baby was finally sent to an orphanage by the Pullman Company and an annual appropriation was made for its care and support. It was known as the Pullman baby."

"Any and every old thing can be found on the shelves in the lost-property room. We never have an 'old hoss sale' like the express companies and the Postoffice Department, but we keep the things until they are called for, and if they are never called for, why, we keep them anyway."

are really branches of the Government Printing Office, though they are devoted solely to the Library. Here, in the printing office, are printed the catalogues, now being struck off at the rate of 25 titles a day, averaging nearly 7000 a year. Books are at present being catalogued in about one hundred different languages and dialects. Of these thirty-five have already entered into the work of the printing office. The examiners and proofreaders have, therefore, to be especially accomplished.

Seventy thousand titles a year on the basis of the present "tokens" involve an aggregate of at least 5,500,000 cards. The miscellaneous forms and circulars for the general library and for the copyright office are millions in total of copies.

The force of the printing office consists of nineteen strikers.

Forty-nine workers are employed in the bindery. Most of the serials received are bound, but of the 520-odd current newspapers only about one-quarter (the leading American and certain of the foreign) are bound. The others are not destroyed, but laid away in loose covers for possible binding later.

Seventy-seven persons are at work in the catalogue division, one of the most remarkable departments in the conduct of the library. The function of a classifier in a library is, in brief, to arrange the books upon the shelves in orderly sequence. But in a library which is to be used, and which is to grow, the arrangement must be systematic; and it must be elastic; that is, "expansive." It must bring together books on the same subject, and within that subject books by the same author, and it must give alphabetic, or under certain subjects, chronological sequence to the authors. It must also designate each volume by a symbol, which will permanently identify its location, and yet permit of the insertion in the group of later additions with their appropriate symbols, each also self-explanatory and precisely locative.

The labor in cataloguing and the difficulty vary extraordinarily with the character of the book. Current American novels by known authors, pure romance (romance not dealing with any special question in history or ethics) may be catalogued at the rate of fifty or sixty a day. A single work in science may require a half day; if by composite authors, or including various subjects, perhaps several weeks.

The mere identification of the author, or the determination of the proper bibliographic statement, may involve references to various authorities; the determination of the subject entry may involve a detailed and careful examination of the contents. There is no limit to the knowledge useful to the cataloguer; he must, to be eminent in his "line," be a person of wide reading and accomplishments.