

# ODD QUEER AND CURIOUS.

## Picture of Venus Found at Pompeii.

While excavating in a house at Pompeii, the workmen recently found a



PICTURE OF VENUS.

beautiful painting, to which the title "Venus at Her Toilette" has been given by Italian connoisseurs who have made a careful examination of it. They say that it certainly represents the Goddess of Love arraying herself in the morning, and that around her are her attendants and female slaves.

This painting is a fresco, and the house in which it was found belonged formerly to Marcus Laetorius Fronto, who during his life was evidently one of the most prominent men in Pompeii. In the house are six large rooms, all of which were elaborately furnished and decorated. Besides this fresco another one quite equal to it in beauty and representing the punishment of Neoptolemus was also found. Near them were discovered several minor paintings, as well as other relics of considerable value. At a little distance were unearthed the skeletons of six men, and, as one of them held tightly a large vase filled with pieces of money, the assumption is that they were burglars, who had taken advantage of the consternation in the city to rush into this wealthy man's house, and who had themselves been overtaken by the destroying fire before they could escape.

## This Bridge is of Growing Vines.

There is hardly any country in which more natural curiosities are to be found than in our neighbor, Mexico. One reason is because vegetation there is very luxuriant, and there are



A CURIOUS BRIDGE.

wide stretches of land on which grass, shrubs and trees are allowed to grow unchecked. A person traveling through such a region frequently comes across some freak of nature which it would be difficult, if not impossible, to find elsewhere.

Such a curiosity is the bridge of living vines, which is shown in the

accompanying picture. It is in a dense wood, and around it on all sides are shrubs of various kinds. The vines, which are thick and strong, form a natural roadway over a stream and are so firmly secured on either side that a passenger may avail himself of them without risk. It has, of course, taken time to produce a bridge of this kind, but unlike other bridges, this one instead of growing weaker every year grows stronger, for the vines are alive and their strength and tenacity increase as they grow.

## QUEER NEW PLANTS FROM CONGO.

New species of plants from the Congo are rapidly becoming popular in Europe. Among them not one is more admired than the calamus, which is a species of palm that grows in the Ogone region. It is notable for the fact that in a wild state it remains a low shrub for several years, then suddenly develops and, attaching itself to a tree near it, climbs quickly to its summit. Its wood is in much demand in the Congo, long straight canes, which are used for various purposes, being fashioned from it.

Another popular palm tree is the



CONGO PLANTS.

podococcus aculeatus, which grows in the Lower Congo region on the banks of the Fernan-Vaz. It is a dwarf and quite rare. Its leaves are soft and while the tree is young they remain unbroken, but as soon as the tree reaches its full height figures appear in them. One tree was grown from seed in France and is now attracting so much attention that several more seeds have been ordered from the Congo.

The tree known as musanga Smithii grows mainly on the western coast of the Congo, and is one of the most useful trees in that country. Its growth is extremely rapid and its wood is very light. Its leaves, too, are quite large, but, curiously enough, they do not furnish much shade, and for this reason the tree is grown a good deal on plantations of coffee and cocoa, where only a limited amount of shade is required.

Its wood is much used by the natives for the purpose of making rafts. M. J. Dybowski, director of the Colonial Garden at Vincennes, says that he has seen specimens on a plantation at Gabon which were eighty feet in height, though they were only four years old. The leaves of trees that have attained such a height are eighty centimetres in diameter and are very ornamental, being of a beautiful green on the upper side and of a brick red beneath. The musanga is indeed a most attractive tree, and one to which French horticulturists are now giving special attention.

Ficus fanderiformis benth (also known as ficus pandurata) is another very ornamental tree. It also grows rapidly, attaining a height of four feet when only eight months old. Its leaves are bright green, with red veins, and are of a goodly size. European gardeners say that they have no

trouble in growing this tree, since it flourishes in a hot house and can safely be placed in the open ground in summer.

## This Rat Caught by an Oyster.

Rats are the quickest of creatures and oysters the slowest. It is, therefore, surprising to learn that an oyster recently caught a rat. This happened in the shop of a fishmonger. The lat-



THE "OYSTER TRAP."

ter—who lives above his store—was awakened one night by an astonishing racket going on beneath him.

He thought burglars were trying to break into his store. When he cautiously entered with a light he could see nothing unusual. The noise—now mixed with squealing—was proceeding from a dark corner. There he found a rat frantically attempting to get down his hole, but prevented from doing so by a large oyster that had hold of his tail.

The rat's tail had happened to enter between the shells of the oyster as the former was prowling about for food, and the shells immediately closed and held him fast. Then his ratship jumped for his hole, dragging the oyster with him.

## Puts Out Candle with Billiard Ball.

An entirely new performance with cue and billiard ball has been given by the famous billiard player, Robert de Bremont, and has evoked a great deal of applause from billiard enthusiasts.



THE "WILLIAM TELL."

Mr. Bremont calls this trick the "William Tell." He performs it on any ordinary billiard table, upon which a lighted candle has been placed.

By hitting a ball with his cue ball, he sends the former over the flame, describing an arc. The holder or candle is not touched by the ball, but its motion extinguishes the light.

## Advantages of Civilization.

"I presume you appreciate the advantages you derive from being assimilated by a civilized country," said the interviewer to the Sultan of Bazoos Island. "Yes, indeed," assented his majesty. "Why, I got \$1,000 damages because of injuries sustained by swallowing the false teeth of the last missionary we put in the royal consumme."—Baltimore American.

Reuse will be choked up.—London Daily Mail.

## Dog Swimming Race.

A dog swimming race was the feature of a day's sport on the St. Charles river, near Boston, a few days ago, and, despite the fact that Tighe, a ferocious bulldog was urged on to victory by having a kitten—he was not fond of cats—held in front of him while he swam, Bruno, a smooth-coated collie, is still the champion swimmer among the upper set of Boston canines. The race was over a course of 300 yards for \$50 a side, and Bruno won by 12 3-5 seconds. Much interest was created by the novel contest, and it was witnessed by hundreds of persons from Farrell's bathhouse, near West Boston bridge. Many bets were made on the race, with the bulldog as favorite. The "dope" on the stronger animal seemed bad, however, and his followers lost heavily. Neither dog seemed to be exhausted by the swim, and there is now talk of another match between the same dogs for a mile for a big stake.

## Ambiguous Apology.

Two gentlemen had attended a temperance meeting, and, returning home by a dark and narrow lane, had been thrown out of their conveyance. The incident was reported in the local paper, and the account closed with the words: "Fortunately both men were sober." The editor received an angry letter from one of the gentlemen concerned, with a request for an apology. He was equal to the occasion. "In our account of the unfortunate accident to Messrs. —," wrote the editor, "we stated that, fortunately, both men were

sober. It appears this has given great offense. We therefore beg to withdraw it."—Literary World.

## Friendly Advice.

He was a great bore, and was talking to a crowd about the coming local election. Said he: "Gibbs is a good man; he is capable, honest, fearless, and conscientious. He will make the very kind of representative we need. He once saved my life from drowning." "Do you really want to see Gibbs elected?" said a solemn-faced old man. "I do, indeed. I'd give anything to see him elected," answered the bore. "Then never let anybody know he saved your life," counseled the solemn-faced man.—London Tit-Bits.

## Bicycles Not Popular.

Records are almost daily broken, but the sale and use of wheels steadily declines.—New York World.

## IT CURED A BAD HABIT.

The Smart Practical Joker Had the Tables Turned on Him.

"I never indulge the practical joke habit," said a gentleman who recently visited New Orleans, "and I have a good reason for taking no sort of stock in such things. There was a time in my life when I was fond of playing pranks, and I have turned some clever tricks along this line. But it has been several years since I made my last effort. It was living in a small town up in Arkansas and at the time was boarding with an aunt who was even fonder of the practical joke than I was. Along about Christmas time a young man came out to the town in which I lived to spend some time with friends. He was a dudish sort of a fellow and was just at that period of life when the gold watch and chain he wore impressed him as being the most important thing in the world. My aunt was quick to perceive his weakness. She hatched a plot. I was to slip into his bedroom and steal the watch and chain after he had fallen asleep. The night was fixed, and my friend retired about 10 o'clock. He always hung his vest, which contained his watch and chain and other valuables, on the bedpost at the head of the bed. My aunt knew exactly where I could find it, and about 10:30 I slipped stealthily into the room, found the vest and began to rifle the pockets. My friend roused up quickly, as he ran his hand under his pillow. Bang! bang! bang! I was shot. I was shot three times, with the revolver pressed almost against my breast. I could feel the holes in my back where the bullets had come out, and the blood was trickling down my spinal column. My aunt came rushing into the room. 'My God!' I said. 'Auntie, I'm shot!' She got the camphor bottle. I told her the bullets had passed clear through me and had rolled down into my shoes. They could stand it no longer, and, to my amazement, my aunt and my friend broke out into perfect spasms of laughter, and by degrees the real situation dawned upon me. My friend had expected my visit. He had extracted the lead from three cartridges in the pistol at the suggestion of my aunt, and had turned the tables on me. Since that time I have played no jokes."

## ARTIST'S SUMMER HOME.

On Top of an Oak Tree This Man Lives.

One could scarcely conceive a more unique plan for enjoying these intensely hot days than that adopted by artist D. Orrin Steinberger, whose home is a few miles north of Springfield, Ohio. Perched in a house fifty feet from the ground, in a majestic oak, secluded from the world, excepting the lowing cows in the field, a man whose pictures have demanded the attention of the nation spends most of his time. It is an ideal spot for his house in the tree. The entrance to the nest is through a long lane of willows. The tree-top house is made of boards with saplings bound across the side for support and protection. There is an elevated step on the west side, where Artist Steinberger sits and paints and sketches at will. While thick foliage of the overhanging boughs form a protection from the rain, yet the rays of the sun penetrate even to a certain extent, and to keep this out a canvas has been stretched on the east side. There is room on the floor of the nest for a dozen people. To reach the house a block and tackle is used for the more timid, who are seated in a swing and pulled up through a trap door. The trip up affects the nerves of some, especially the ladies. Artist Steinberger does not use this means of going to his nest. He mounts a ladder made of two small saplings and goes up the tree from limb to limb as rapidly as a squirrel. He built this home in the tree for the purpose of regaining his health going back to first principles. He drinks warm milk direct from the cow and breathes the pure air of the country. Since living here, his health has gradually returned, and he is now almost well.

## "Old" and "Modern" in Norway.

Many of the farms about Nystuen, Norway, have been cultivated for a thousand years. The buildings on some of them are 700 and 800 years old. Anything built within a century or two is considered modern. At Borgund, a few miles west of Nystuen, is a church that was built in 1150 or earlier. The antiquarians cannot determine the exact date, and it is mentioned in the official records of the diocese as far back as 1360. They are carefully preserved for all the intervening years. The use of window glass was unknown in Norway at the time of its erection, and the service probably consisted solely of the mass, chanted by candle light, while the congregation knelt devoutly in the dark nave. Beside the entrance are two rustic inscriptions carved in the logs in beautiful lettering. One of them reads: "Thorvald wrote these lines on St. Olaf's Fair," and the other, "This church stands upon holy ground."

## Electric Energy from Wind.

Electric energy from the wind has been successfully obtained in both England and Germany, but it is in the latter country that it has been actually put into use. M. G. Couz, of Hamburg, used a windmill with a regulator which would keep its speed constant, no matter what the speed of the wind was, and succeeded so well that there is a strong probability that it will be used in small villages in Germany and supply electric light and power at a low cost.

## FOR WOMEN AND HOME

### ITEMS OF INTEREST FOR MAIDS AND MATRONS.

How to Train a Husband—"Somebody's Mother" Did it for You and You Must Do It for Somebody's Daughter.

### TRAINING A HUSBAND.

The man who has everything his own way with women is invariably the man who in childhood was taught consideration for them. Sisters are good material to practice on, as then, even if your well-trained paragon never finds a mate worthy of him (a contingency which I fear few mothers would weep over), somebody will be the gainer. "Good boys love their sisters," as the old doggerel runs, but they are rarely polite to them. All but the best of them have two languages for girls—one for other boys' sisters, one which they perhaps consider to be efficacious in training their own sisters for the other boys' wives. They are fatally liable to mix the two up, or else to gradually merge them into one language—always, alas! the rough, "bossy," half-contemptuous one used to the sisters rather than the expensive and troublesome one of unaccustomed courtesy to other girls.

### Boys Without Sisters.

But there are boys who have no sisters. For these, and even those who have and who may be nice to them, there is the danger of getting out of touch with the feminine world and life. Some mothers are so anxious that their boys shall be boys that it is a case of "too much boy." Respecting women, and, perhaps—though almost too wild a hope—showing politeness toward them, they yet find themselves at 18 or 20 as far removed from any ability to understand the thoughts, wishes, ways and temperaments of the sex they are likely to marry as the Chinaman is unable to understand the Englishman. They make the men who say woman is an enigma, to avoid the trouble of solving her. They make also the men whose wives cry after they have gone off without remembering to kiss them goodby. That woman is a creature who likes goodby and other kisses; that she doesn't like you to read or whistle when she is talking to you (nor do other men); that she can bear being disagreed with when she tells you she knows she is losing all her looks ("My poor girl!" is a decidedly infelicitous reply to make), and that she doesn't like her comments on politics and the great world's other doings to be treated like those of "an infant crying for the light," even if they are such—are things every mother owes it to her impending or unimpending daughter-in-law to teach her son.

### The Mother's Duty.

She can do it by other means than throwing him into the companionship of fascinating girls, if that ruffles her maternal anxiety. Close companionship with her need not be apron-strings. A woman without sons once said to one who has: "I don't want the seat in a street car of any full-grown man, tired out with his work. But it exasperates me beyond endurance to see strong boys still in school, boys able to stand or to sit on a barbed wire fence all day watching a ball game, complacently occupying seats while delicate women pitch around hanging on straps. It is bad for the boys, because they surely must know it is bad for the women."

"How are they to know it?" asked her friend.

"Their mothers must surely have told them. Didn't you ever tell yours?"

"No," confessed the other. "I never thought of it." But it is safe to predict that she thought it the next time she lurched around in a car while a bunch of healthy half-grown boys comfortably cracked jokes and peanuts in their seats.

### Some Comparisons.

Interesting, though impossible, would be a comparison of the different little things (it is always a little thing) which have led different women to begin thinking of the man they ended by marrying. Ten to one it was some little act of niceness and gentleness whose seeds were sown while he still toddled and played "chu-chu cars." One woman confessed that she was first attracted to her husband because he spoke of all women as "girls," irrespective of age. A mother must have been somewhere at the bottom of that habit. He who would offer apples sufficiently golden and bright to tempt the breathless Atlanta of today from the various goals of ambition to which she is hastening must have had the seeds planted long years before he was old enough to care for them.

And woman has always been most actively concerned with the apple industry.—Philadelphia Press.

### CLOAK OF BLACK VELVET.



The wraps of the season are foreshadowed in this kimono shape of black velvet, lined throughout with white silk. The white satin revers and cuffs are strapped with black velvet ribbon and the collar is of chinchilla fur.

### GIRL'S LINEN.

The frock is of the natural linen color, and both the front of the waist and skirt are cut in blocks over a band of red linen, and each block is ornamented with a little button covered with red linen. The rest of the waist is tucked all round. The girle is of red silk.—Le Costume Elegant.

Among sums paid recently by an accident insurance company were \$25 to a person "stung by a wasp," and \$319.28 in a case where "a woman stepped on foot."—Indianapolis News.

## CASINO GOWNS FROM PARIS.



The gown on the left, designed by Doucet, is of embroidered white muslin made up over straw-colored silk, with a sheer like mother-of-pearl. The long tunic, plaited to fit smoothly over the hips, is of the embroidered muslin and falls over a deep dounce of plain muslin finished at the bottom with wide tucks.

The fitted bodice is of embroidered muslin, with a wide collar of the same falling over two plaited ruffles of the plain muslin. The chemise and full undersleeves are also of the plain muslin. The wide draped girdle is of soft taffeta of a deep straw color, and is finished with long ends in the back. A hat of black lace, ornamented with a black, white and yellow paradise plume completes this costume.

The gown on the right shows the daring of Paquin in the capricious combination of velvet and linen. The bolero is of ecru Irish guipure made up over cardinal red velvet in a most effective way. Around the neck of the bolero is an odd little collar, with buttoned straps of black velvet, which also faces the turnover cuff of guipure on the elbow sleeve.

The bolero opens over a full front of white muslin, tucked all over by hand, which is drawn in by a wide draped girdle of black velvet. The skirt is of the linen made with groups of lengthwise tucks, or plaits, and trimmed at the bottom with deep points of the guipure. Hat of cerise chip, trimmed entirely with cerise plumes.—La Mode Artistique.