CAREFUL AUTHORS

Great Writers Who Were Very Particular About Details

It is surprising how punctilious some authors have been with respect even to the smallest detail of their manuscripts. Dickens was a perfect terror and would make enough fuss over an error of punctuation to drive a poor "comp" out of his wits.

Tennyson, too, was most particular that not a comma should be omitted or misplaced, while his revisions were never finished. Perhaps the greatest terror of the compositor was Thomas Carlyle, for he would cover every square inch of vacant space, both in the margin and between the lines, with minute additions and emendations, and not once, but a dozen times.

Victor Hugo was equally difficult to please and satisfy. Of one of his famous works he made the printers supply no fewer than eleven successive revised proofs, and the last half dozen were furnished in order to make quite sure that the commas were in their right places.

But perhaps Thomas Campbell, the famous poet who wrote such stirring masterpieces as Hohenlinden, The Battle of the Baltic, and Ye Mariners of England, takes the lead in this respect. He was fastidious to a degree, which fact probably accounts for the small quantity and perfect quality of his literary output. It is said that he once walked six miles to his printers and six miles back in order to have a comma changed into a semicolon.

But an equally careful and fastidious literary workman owed a great improvement in the opening line of his most famous poem to a printer. This was Thomas Grey, whose Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard is probably the best known poem in the English language. Its first line reads, "The curfew tolls the knell of parting day," but when Grey sent it to the press the manuscript read, "The curfew tolls, the knell of parting day."

The thoughtful compositor did not understand the word "tolls" as an intransitive verb, so dropped the comma, thinking that the poet had put it in by mistake, and when Gray read the line his sensitive ear at once caught its new, sustained melody, and he adopted the compositor's correction.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Fur Dealers Find it Profitable to Re-christen Common Furs

To supply the demand for a medium priced fur of beauty a common animal, the skunk, has been taken. The black domestic cat known to the trade as "genet," is also utilized to meet the demand for black furs, while northern hares are extensively manufactured into "Baltic fox" or "white fox" or "black lynx."

When the fur dressers and dyers produced a clipped and dyed muskrat skin that resembled sealskin almost perfectly, it was found that it would not sell under its real name because it was a common fur, used largely by the poorer classes. Consequently a name was invented for it and this popular and high priced fur is now sold as "Hudson Bay seal." The fur of the coney, a very cheap and common animal in France, is the raw product in producing "electric seal-skin," "clipped seal," and "Baltic seal."

Racoon, when first introduced, was cheap and was in little demand, but when given the name "Alaska bear" and "silver bear" it immediately came into favor. Skunk, which is an excellent fur of dark hue, though beautiful and durable, could not be sold as "skunk," but as "black marten," and "Alaska sable," it is in high favor and likely to remain in the class of the medium and high-priced furs. It is worth remarking that, since the prejudice against the muskrat, skunk and other cheaper furs has been overcome, they can be sold under their real names.

STRENGTH OF INSECTS

Dragon-fly Can Fly at Sixty Miles an Hour

When compared with the strength of man, the strength of an insect is most remarkable indeed. For instance, the busy little ant can carry a load forty times as heavy as himself, and the ordinary beetle can propel a burden a hundred times its own weight. The insignificant house-fly gives a hundred strokes of his wings in about two seconds, thus enabling him to go a distance of thirty-five feet in that time.

Perhaps the most wonderful of all insects is the dragon-fly. It goes through the air at the rate of sixty miles an hour, and can stop instantly, or change its course backward or sideways without lessening its speed or changing the position of its body.

One little honey-bee will hang suspended from a limb, while from his body a hundred others will depend—one holding to another, chain fashion; and one cannot see that the first bee wavers or finds its load heavy.

PREPARING CAVIAR

This Was a Russian Industry Many Years Ago

Preparing caviar for commercial purposes appears to have been a well-established business centuries ago, for a writer of long ago made this curious announcement: "It is made of roes of two different fishes which are caught in the River Volga, but especially near the city of Astrachan, the sturgeon and the beluga. The sturgeon is well known, but the beluga is a large fish about twelve or fifteen feet long, without scales, not unlike a sturgeon, but larger and incomparably more luxurious, his belly being as tender as marrow and his flesh whiter than veal, whence he is called the white fish by Europeans. This beluga lies in the bottom of the river at certain seasons and swallows many large pebbles of great weight to ballast himself against the force of the stream of the Volga, augmented by the melting of the snows in the spring. When the waters are assuaged he disgorges himself. Near the Astrachan they catch sometimes such a quantity that they throw away the flesh, though the daintiest of all fish, reserving only the spawn, of which they sometimes take 150 to 200 pounds' weight out of one fish. These roes they salt and press and put into cakes if it is to be sent abroad, else they keep it impressed, only a little covered with salt."

HORSE VS. MOTOR

Cost of Hay and Oats Away Above That of Gasoline

Thomas A. Edison is authority for the statement that the horse is the poorest motor ever built, and motor car manufacturers are finding that "the wizard of East Orange" knows whereof he speaks. Recent thorough research has shown that the average work horse will eat nearly eight times his own weight in a year. And yet the hauling power developed represents only about 2 per cent. of what should be expected from this expenditure.

It is safe to say that there is not a successful business man to-day who would be satisfied with a return of 2 per cent. on the money he invests in upkeep cost of any machine he operates. Any manufacturer would immediately discard a machine on which the maintenance cost was 49 times greater than the power returned. And yet because the "horse-habit" is so firmly fixed, industrial concerns pay a tremendous price for their motive power.

A horse eats ten pounds of food for every hour he works. He eats 12,000 pounds of food every year. A motor truck consumes no fuel—and this is the food of the vehicle—when it is not working. The minute this motor stops the feeding cost stops. The superiority of the motor is shown, too, in the power developed. The 35 horsepower truck will carry 1,500 pounds of merchandise from six to ten miles on a single gallon of gasoline. This is a vastly greater return in energy for the money expended than the 2 per cent. showing the horse makes.

WHY GRASS IS GREEN

Pigment Which Gives This Shade Has Other Properties

Science long since revealed many of the functions of color in the scheme of Nature. The stripes of the tiger, for instance, so blend with the hues of the jungle in which he lives as to assist in his concealment. The scant vegetation of the desert resembles the desert itself in the matter of color. It is thus more difficult to perceive and therefore less likely to be destroyed. Many of the most defenseless creatures are identical in hue with the more aggressive and in this lies something of immunity from attack.

It is thought that the brilliant tint of the flowers serve to attract the attention of the insects that live upon them. It is not so generally known, however, that the universal green which in a multitude of shades characterizes vegetation everywhere, serves a purpose of the first importance in preserving life upon the globe. Such, at any rate, is the conclusion of Hansom, who affirms that this pigment, chloropnyl, is in vegetation not because it is green, but on account of its chemical properties. Under the influence of the sunlight it manufactures the sugars and starch indispensable to the life of plant and animal alike.

It is found, he declares, even in the vegetation of the deep sea, where in the dense shadow sufficient light for its chemical action is furnished by the bright reds of other growth—another admirable instance of the function of color.

A UNIQUE STRUCTURE

An Interesting Bridge Crosses a Gorge in Indo-China

What is claimed to be one of the most interesting railway structures in the world is the bridge over the Faux Namti gorge in Indo-China, where, owing to the peculiar difficulties in the way of building a bridge of any type, it was necessary to adopt a special design suited to the only method of erection that seemed possible.

The sides of the gorge, according to a writer in Popular Mechanics, are practically vertical and have no chance of the approach to the bridge from either side except through tunnels.

The track grade is 335 feet above the river, so that no system of falsework could be used in building the bridge, while cantilevers were out of the question owing to the lack of "elbow room."

The design finally adopted consisted of two steel trusses, each hinged at the cliff side, which were erected in a vertical position and then lowered so that the ends met, forming a structure of inverted V-shape.

The ends of the two trusses were firmly connected, steel towers were erected on the humps of the trusses and on this support the steel deck truss, carrying the track, was placed. At the beginning of the work it was necessary to let the workmen down by ropes from the tunnel mouth to prepare the foundations of the supporting trusses.

The track trusses were built in the tunnels and were then moved into position on rollers. From end to end this bridge measures 220 feet 4 inches, while the distance between the heels of the supporting trusses is 180½ feet.

VERY LATEST DISEASE

Wireless Operators Are Victims Partly Because of Cramped Quarters

Every new invention seems to add at least one to the already long list of ills to which the human race is liable. Wireless telegraphy is no exception to this rule, for German physicians have discovered a brand-new disease which claims for its victims the operators of wireless instruments on shipboard.

The disease is a form of anæmia, characterized by great weakness of mind and body. An analysis of the blood of sufferers from it shows a surprising decrease in the number of red corpuscles. This "wireless debility" is believed to be due partly to the small, unsanitary quarters which ship-owners provide for their faithful wireless operators, and partly to the excessive ozonizing of the air by the high frequency currents of electricity required to operate powerful wireless plants.

This latter cause of the disease adds new strength to science's case against ozone. It used to be thought that the more ozone we got the better, but now it is known that except in very minute quantities it is extremely harmful.

THE WRONG HALF

With a determined expression the temperance preacher approached the working man.

"Now, tell me truthfully," he said, "what have you in that jar?"

"Whiskey," said the man.

"I thought so," said the temperance man. "Come, good fellow. Pour it away. It will do you no good. It will do you harm. Will you pour it away?"

"No."

"Come, come! To oblige me. I would not ask you if it were not for your good."

"Well," replied the workman, "I would, mister, only, you see, this whiskey ain't all mine. Half of it belongs to my brother."

"Very well, then, pour your half away. I will be satisfied with that."

"I can't mister. You see, his half is on top!"

SCRIPTURAL NAMES

Puritans Were Fond of Old Testament Nomenclature

A certain set of Christian names taken from the Scriptures has been in use so long that we do not think of them as Adam, Moses, Samuel, David, Daniel, Solomon, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Others taken from the Saints, like Peter, Paul, John, Stephen and Matthew, originally given to children because they were born on the saint's day, are still so common that we think of them as English names.

These names antedate the use of surnames, as may be inferred from the fact that nearly all of them have given rise to patronymics, like Jacobson, Peterson and Stephenson. In the twelfth century missionaries used to baptize whole villages at once, and to save time invested all the men with the name of John or some other saint, and the women usually Mary or Martha.

To distinguish the Johns some additional name like Short or Strong or White or Black was given him by the neighbors, and so Christian names and surnames were united.

After the Reformation it became the fashion among the Puritans to give children the names of characters in the Old Testament and odd ones like Melchizedek or Barzillai were preferred. Among these were Abel, Levi, Jesse, Amos, Asa, Isaiah, Ephraim, Gideon, Malachi, Job, Abner, Hosea, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zacharias, Peter, Eli and hundreds of others.

Significance of Little Things

We love little things, we hate little things, we fear little things; our lives are knit up with little things from the time we are born to the day we die.

But things draw us up to heaven or crush us down to hell. Little things live beside us on earth, eat and sleep with us, laugh and grumble with us, catch the early train with us, or make us miss it, irritate and appease us—never leave us alone for a minute.

That is why they are so much more important than the big things—the things that only come once in a while, at long intervals, and even then are nearly always the result of a hundred and one little things combined.

A BORN GOLFER

Francis Ouimet, who at the age of twenty won what practically amounts to the golf championship of the world has been a golf enthusiast since he was six years old, when he would sit for hours watching the members of a club near his home playing. When only a little older, his mother was unable to prevent him becoming a caddy. He always tried to caddy for those whom he considered the best players. He used to copy them, and soon began to play himself.

Then he had to go to school, but his mother says that his heart was really in golf and nothing else. When he used to come home from school in the evenings, and after he had gone to bed, his mother used to wonder what was the cause of the noises that came from his bed room.

One night she went up to find out, and found him practising putting!

MARKINGS ON MARS

Do These Indicate Land and Water, Snow and Ice?

There is no doubt that the main features of Mars are to be regarded as well established and some astronomers have given names to all the prominent objects. The markings on the surface of the planet are of two kinds. Some of them are iron-gray in color verging on green and the others are generally dark yellow or orange, sometimes verging on white. It seems natural to think that the former represent the oceans and the latter the continental masses of Mars.

It had been noted by early observers that each of the poles of Mars was made conspicuous by a white spot. To William Herschel we are indebted for the first systematic study of these extraordinary polar caps. He discovered that these arctic tracts on Mars vary both in extent and distinctness with the seasons of the hemisphere on which they are situated, attaining a maximum development from three to six months after the winter solstice on that planet and then shrinking until they are smallest about three to six months after the summer solstice. This paralleling of the behavior of the snow and ice which surround the earth's poles is remarkable and there is scarcely any question but that the white polar spots of Mars are about like ours.

Mars having a year of 687 days, the seasons on that planet are also like the year, much longer than ours. In Mars' northern hemisphere the summer lasts for 381 days and the winter must be 306 days. During the summer time the polar cap at the north diminishes from its winter diameter of 50 degrees to about five degrees, while the south polar cap, being placed to one side of the exact pole, appears to be quite free from ice and snow once a year.—Toronto World.

"Bone-head" Column in Box Scores

"I believe," says Secretary John Heydler, of the National League, "that the day is not far distant when we will see a new column in the box score to record the errors of judgment made by ballplayers. Errors of judgment are frequent, and they have far more importance on the outcome of games than the ordinary mechanical errors a player makes. It seems to me that more attention is being given to scoring each year, and the recording of errors of judgment will follow before many more seasons."

Lens For Railway Lights

For railroad signals and locomotive and car marking lamps a lens has been invented that spreads the light over an angle of 90 degrees, making it visible in any position it is likely to be needed.

Portable Electric Pump

A portable electric pump invented in Germany for many uses is mounted on a push cart, takes current from any convenient source and throws water lifted from wells or streams to a considerable height.

ORIGIN OF BOOT HEELS

Women First Wore Them so They Could Not Travel

It is said that the heels now worn on shoes had their origin in Persia, where they took the form of flat wood on sandals to raise the feet and prevent them from the hot sands.

It was many years afterward that this fashion was introduced into Venice, but the reason for its adoption in this case is said to have been quite different. Here the originators of the fashion were jealous husbands who reasoned that their women thus equipped would not venture far outside the precincts of their dwelling. These heels were called "clogs," and in order to satisfy the vanity of the wearers and perhaps to sweeten the pill—that is, the discomfort of appearing in them—they were elaborately adorned, sometimes being encrusted with gold and silver. The height of the clogs determined the rank of the wearer.