

THINGS WORTH KNOWING.

Over 300,000 people dwell in boats in Canton.

Amongst the English nobility 19 per cent are childless.

The sewing machine was first patented in England in 1755.

Rats avoid a house wherein a guinea-pig is permitted to roam at will.

In Portugal men marry at fourteen and women at twelve years of age.

Suicide is only one-fourth as frequent among Jews as among Gentiles.

In the world there are 51,000 breweries, nearly 26,000 of them being in Germany.

The turtle lives for nearly a century, and the pike for about one hundred and seventy-five years.

London spent last year upon its hospitals the sum of £677,724, and received but £305,843.

An ordinary man can support on his shoulders 330 lbs., and can lift with both hands 236 lbs.

The domestic pets of the world carry 30 per cent. of the common contagious diseases from house to house.

France is the only European country which has to-day fewer able-bodied men than it had thirty years ago.

The "velocipede," the forerunner of the bicycle, was invented by one M. Draps, at Mannheim, in the year 1817.

A woman's best chance of marriage in England is between the ages of twenty and twenty-five. It is then 52 per cent.

The total recorded emigration to America numbers about 16,004,003, almost as many as the entire population of Spain.

A 30,000lb. block of salt, hollowed out and lit up inside with incandescent lights, is one of the curiosities of the World's Fair.

Of the old people in the United Kingdom above the age of sixty, rich and poor alike, one in seven is at the present moment in receipt of parish relief.

During the last twelve months the railways of the United Kingdom carried 864 millions of passengers, of whom 21 were killed and 601 injured.

The smallest crack, rent or fissure in a mass of metal, such as a bell or a locomotive axle, can be detected by a little instrument called a "schisophone."

Sir Henry Thompson says that out of every ten patients who came under his knife, nine would never have done so had it not been for errors of eating and drinking.

Among the 70,000 Irish of New Zealand are found some of her ablest statesmen, her most prosperous merchants, her best farmers, and her most loyal and respected inhabitants.

The new census of foreigners in Paris is about completed, and it appears that there are 3,599 permanent American residents. This is a falling off of more than 1,200 within two years.

A bar of iron worth 20s. worked into horseshoes is worth £2; made into needles is worth £70; made into pen-knife blades is worth £537; made into balance springs of watches it is worth £50,000.

It is pointed out that wasps become intoxicated by eating rotting fruits, the sugar of which passes into a kind of alcohol. While in this drunken condition the wasps do their worst stinging, being guilty of utterly unprovoked assaults.

A common carelessness, but one which invites malaria, is to allow flowers to stand in vases until the stems and foliage emit an unpleasant odour. The water should be changed every day, and it is a good plan to strip off the foliage below the point of immersion.

The nineteenth century will not end until midnight, Monday, December 31, 1900, although the old quarrel will probably again be renewed as to what constitutes a century when it winds up, and thousands will insist on a premature burial of the century at midnight on December 31, 1899.

The expression "over the left" is a contraction of "over the left shoulder." A couple of centuries ago, to pray that God might bless anyone over the left shoulder was equivalent to a terrible curse, and there is a case on record where a man was fined £5 for giving utterance to such a prayer.

For a short period under the West Saxon Kings of London, Croydon was the capital, and England a mere provincial town. Now, it is a city of 100,000 people, and would be South Wood, since it is south of London; but, when it was christened, it lay to the north of Croydon, which was the more important place of the two.

The President alone can pardon persons convicted of crimes against the United States; and the President cannot pardon persons convicted of crime against the various States. Governors of the States have nothing to do with crimes against the United States; they can pardon only those guilty of crimes against their respective States.

The sailor's trousers are tight on the thigh and loose below the thigh; the idea probably is to give him freedom of motion. The cut of the trousers is such, also, that the sailor can get out of them quickly if necessary; as, for instance, if he falls overboard, by letting go a hitch at the waist-band and kicking, he can shed his trousers with ease.

An odd discovery has been made by Dr. Koppen. Oil is so well known for its effects in calming the troubled waters that its use for this purpose has passed into one of the idioms of the day. In this peculiar property it has heretofore been without a rival. Dr. Koppen has found that a solution of common soap (one in 1,000 of water), or, in other words, mere soapy water, has the same effect.

Linen cloth was occasionally used for writing purposes, but was never very common. Linen manuscripts have been found folded in mummy cases, and the Chinese, before the invention of paper, used silk and cotton cloth. The Romans also wrote upon linen. The use of this material introduced a change in the manner of writing. The other substances were rather engraved than written upon, an iron point being used for the purpose.

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WHAT CHINESE REALLY EAT.

The Ideas of Most People on The Subject Are Very Absurd.

Nothing could be more absurd than the notions popularly held respecting Chinese diet says a recent writer. The very poor certainly do eat rats and dogs; but then people all over the world would do the same thing when they were driven to it by starvation. It is a mistake, however, to suppose that such comestibles are sold at the butchers' shops and vended in the streets of the cities.

The rodents consumed by the indigent of Canton are the river rats, which get fat on the rice that is carried on boats. Even the alleged practice of buying eggs for a year, with a view to digging them up and eating them in a putrid condition, is wholly mythical. The people preserve ducks' eggs in strong brine, covering each one with plaster, and keep them in barrels for a long time. Thus treated they are perfectly good after a lapse of many months.

The Chinese are by no means so peculiar in their diet as they have long been made out to be. In addition to their own produce they consume large quantities of food which is imported from other countries; but dogs, cats, rats, and added eggs are certainly not to be found in the list of their imports.

It appears that maize is already popular in the far east. In fact it is one of the most common articles of food in Szechuan and other provinces of Northern China, where it is eaten in the shape of "corn-pone" and "ash-cake," cooked just as it is prepared in the Southern States of America.

The Chinese are also becoming very fond of condensed milk, eating it as a preserve, and having no notion of diluting it for use as it is employed in this country. In fact, they never drink ordinary cows' milk, except for medicine, and for the latter purpose human milk is preferred.

A plant of newly foreign origin now cultivated very largely in China is the prickly pear, the fruit of which is much relished by these pig-tailed Orientals.

Flour has obtained great popularity in China; likewise white potatoes, which, especially in the north and north-west, have come into common use, though they are looked on as the poor man's dish.

When Warren Hastings held power in India he had a great many potatoes planted on the slopes of the Himalayas, whence they were carried by Jesuit missionaries into the Chinese Empire.

Tomatoes have been introduced in China, but as yet they are only eaten by foreigners there.

Turkeys have been propagated from stock brought from other countries, and they have multiplied in such numbers as to run wild in some parts.

The invention of Safety Matches.

The use of phosphorus had made matches so sensitive that the whole box often ignited spontaneously. Children were killed by sucking the matches, and at Boulogne two soldiers and a woman were poisoned by drinking coffee, when it was found that the woman's child, in playing about, had taken a box of lucifers and put it into the coffee-pot as it stood on the hob.

In 1847 an Austrian chemist named Schrotter made the important discovery that phosphorus may exist under two forms, the crystalline and the amorphous. The latter appeared like a piece of red brick, it gave off no fumes, and seemed to be altogether inert. Manufacturers, and even Governments, offered large rewards for a safe and easy application of the red variety.

But it was found that when the red phosphorus was mixed with chlorate of potash under slight pressure, it exploded with violence, and was restored back to the ordinary crystalline condition. Many fatal accidents arose from these attempts.

At length, in 1855, the apparently ridiculously simple suggestion was made by Herr Bottger, a Swedish gentleman, to keep the red phosphorus and the chlorate of potash paste separate until the moment when a match was to be lighted. For this purpose the red phosphorus was put on the box, and the match, being rubbed against it, ignited with ease. Thus originated the so-called "safety match," which was patented, and the patent sold to a large firm in England.

The Time He Got Left.

On an English railway, recently, a stylishly dressed young man with a portmanteau was travelling to Margate, obviously for the purpose of spending a holiday. On his way to the station he had purchased a pair of tan-leather shoes, which, from fear of losing the train, he had not stayed to try on. Soon after the train started he unwrapped the shoes and laid them on the floor of the carriage. He then took off the boots he was wearing, and they being an odd pair, with which he was evidently anxious not to be encumbered, he deliberately threw them out the carriage window. On proceeding to put on the new shoes he found to his great consternation, and the intense amusement of his fellow-passengers, that they were much too small, and that it was impossible for him to get his feet into them. On reaching his destination he had to march, to an accompaniment of sarcastic interrogations and laughter, the whole length of the platform, in his socks, with his portmanteau in one hand and his shoes in the other.

He Followed Suit.

A native of Ireland landing at Greenock wanted to take the train to Glasgow. Never having been in a railway station before, he did not know how to get his ticket. Seeing a lady, however, going in, Pat thought he would follow her, and he would soon know how to get aboard. The lady, going to the ticket-box and putting down her money, said, "Maryhill, single." Her ticket was duly handed to her, and she walked off. Pat, thinking it was all right, planked down his money, and shouted, "Patrick Murphy, married."

There Was a Limit.

It is the father of a precocious two-and-a-half-year-old who tells that the child was watching a lady make her toilet. The old lady had removed her false hair and her false teeth, when the astonished small boy said:—

"Bet yer can't take yer neck off."

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MEN AND WOMEN TALKED ABOUT.

The Prince of Wales has seventeen brothers-in-law, sixteen uncles, sixty-seven cousins, and fifty-seven nephews and nieces.

Prince Alexander of Prussia, cousin of the late Emperor William, who is seventy-six years of age, has just married an actress aged eighteen.

M. Marie, of Paris, is known as the "dog barber." He daily clips from ten to thirty dogs. The price of a clip is 2fr., about forty cents.

R. L. Stevenson is said to be busily employed in writing a history of his own family. This he will call "Northern Lights," and it is certainly not a bad title.

Joseph Hessel, the Austrian who invented the marine screw-propeller, died in abject poverty, but a monument was erected to his memory the other day in Vienna.

The Duchess Eugenie Litta Bolognina, of Milan, has just sold her jewels, lace, and fans for three million francs, which she is spending on the building of an hospital in the suburbs of that town.

The Princess of Bulgaria has won the hearts of the people by her simplicity. She attends the weekly market at Sofia on foot, going from stall to stall to make her many purchases, escorted only by a respectful crowd of peasants.

Mr. S. Baring-Gould, the author of "John Herring," has a great fancy for peacocks. Their screams disturb the peaceful village of Lewtrenchard, Devon, where the novelist and his forebears have resided for upwards of two centuries.

The late Lady Brassey one year took the trouble to have a record kept of the amounts asked of her and Lord Brassey, and the total represented £1,500,000. But, notwithstanding such a large clientele, she made it a practice of replying to every letter she received.

For the first time in the history of public dinners in England a woman has responded to the toast, "The Army." The occasion was a dinner in honour of the British trained nurses, and the response was by Miss Loch, superintendent of the Indian Army Nursing Service.

It is not often that a royal personage condescends to act as judge in a bicycle contest. The King of the Belgians recently did this, however, at Brussels. Since then he has become very fond of bicycling, and has offered a medal to be competed for by amateurs in a race from Paris to Brussels.

The richest man in the island of St. Christopher is Joaquin Farara, who went there a barefooted Portuguese boy of 16 years and began working for a shilling a day. Now he is 51 years old and owns \$1,000,000 worth of real estate in the island. It is said that he can neither read nor write.

Queen Victoria has a fine collection of caricatures from all the comic papers of the last half-century, having always caused the best ones to be sent to her without regard to parties. The collection has often caused much merriment, especially when the drawings have concerned rather dignified and unapproachable clerics.

Edward M. Greene, of San Francisco, has designed a novelty for the midwinter fair to be held in that city, which he hopes will rival the Eiffel Tower and the Ferris Wheel. It is a colossal statue of Justice, 150 ft. high, supporting an immense pair of scales, the extremities of which are cars holding fifty people each.

Harriet Beecher Stowe was eighty-two years old this year. She lives in a pretty but unpretentious gray cottage in Hartford, where she is cared for by her daughters. Notably active of body, for her years, she is ever on foot, and her bent, slight figure, with its white hair crowning the dark, wrinkled face, is often to be seen out-doors.

The Pope's nephew, Count Camillo Pecci, is a thorn in his uncle's side. Having lost large sums at play and contracted heavy debts, the Pope paid all, but banished him from the Papal Court. He now resides with his wife in Cuba. Pecci took the opportunity on the occasion of his uncle's jubilee to ask to be allowed to come back to his old haunts, but his holiness was obdurate.

Lieut. Conway, U. S. N., who has just died of typhoid fever at Owensboro, Ky., was the first man to make a first-rate chart of Behring Sea. While cruising in those waters in the season of 1882 as navigator of the Yorktown, Lieut. Conway, at the instance of Commander Evans, devoted most of his spare time to the work of preparing this chart. When done it was an admirably thorough and seamanlike production.

Three women who have achieved distinction as hunters are Lady Hopetoun, wife of the Governor of Victoria, who has been killing deer in Auckland; Mrs. Alan Gardner, who has been making a record in India for hunting cheetahs, shooting and spearing panthers, and sticking pigs; and Mrs. R. H. Tyacke, who, with her husband, has shot the largest number of bears ever killed in one season in Kulu, in the central Himalayas.

The young Duc d'Uzes, who died a little while ago in the African jungle, was remarkable for being the son of the best-known woman in France. The duchess is a grand-daughter of the Veuve Clicquot of champagne fame, and lives in splendid state in an old Bourbon castle in the Forest of Rambouillet, where she has the most luxurious stables and dog kennels in the world. In all kinds of aristocratic sport the duchess has no peer among her sex.

Lady Butler's fame as an artist comes of most strenuous application. As a child she was always drawing and painting, and her father himself undertook her general education, that it might not interfere with her artistic pursuits. His lessons were given almost entirely by reading aloud, the pupil at the same time proceeding with her brush and pencil. Even when travelling the little girl was always sketching what she saw, leaning out of railway carriages and diligences in order to obtain a view of something which had struck her fancy. Mr. Thompson taught his daughter for twelve years, and then she became a student at South Kensington. Miss Elizabeth Thompson married Sir William Butler some years after "The Roll Call" had made her famous.

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