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AWAITING THE EXPLORER. Officers of a fish commission steamship recently returned from a long cruise say that, with the exception of the Fiji and Tahiti groups, nearly every island in the South Seas is "mischarted"—located, on charts, miles distant from its true position.

Recent years have yielded material additions to our knowledge of the north polar region, but the expedition now preparing will readily find untroubled fields. As for the south polar region, maps of it are mainly imagined.

Africa is not so "dark" a continent as it was fifty years ago, but north of the Congo there is territory little known, and even in the Congo State there are many wide, unexplored tracts between the watercourses.

In Asia, there is still mystery in Tibet; the eastern half of the Himalaya system is known only in incomplete outlines, and in the southern part of Arabia is a great un-surveyed territory assumed to be a desert.

It will be a good many years yet before any young scientist, aglow with the passion for travel and discovery, will be able to complain that the world holds nothing new.

"WHAT GOD HAS WROUGHT." The peril of the foreign refugees in Pekin, their defense, their rescue, the diplomatic questions which are pending—all these things the newspapers have described and explained; but behind all this rises something mightier still.

The deaths of many of the missionaries have been accompanied by tortures too horrible to recount, yet hardly was the news received when other devoted men and women were offering themselves as volunteers to go out in the places of those who had fallen.

Is their faith fanatical? Is it fruitful in results? Let us turn to a scene in besieged Pekin for our answer, and listen to the one hundred and fifty Christian

Chinese girls who felt the strain under which their teacher was suffering, and comforted her with these words: 'We know that you are troubled about us, but we are praying and we are peaceful. If God is willing to spare us, we shall be glad; but if we must die, it will be all right.'

These may be little things; but it is written that the young man "whose name was SAUL," and who guarded the clothes of those who stoned STEPHEN, became the great apostle to the Gentiles.

HABIT. 'My boy there hasn't a habit—not a habit of any kind,' was the remark of a proud father one day. What he meant was that his son did not use tobacco, drink whisky, or do anything of that kind.

PLUTARCH said: 'Habit is second nature.' WELLINGTON added: 'It is ten times nature.' Every person, it is often remarked, is but a bundle of habits. A great many of the physical and mental actions of our lives are purely habitual.

A learned college professor who has made a special study of "habit" says that the great thing in all education is thus to make our nervous system our ally instead of our enemy, by giving to it the care of as many details of daily life as possible.

Absent-mindedness is not to be desired, but it is still less desirable to compel the mind to decide each time which sock shall be put on first. The happy mean between the two is to select the best way of doing the ordinary routine thing of every day life, get into the habit of doing them in that way, and then let the nervous system carry out the programme.

There is always more or less doubt at election times whether the money that is handed out to some workers is actually spent or not and two candidates in the recent contest had practical evidence of this fact not very long ago. They were in the shiretown of a neighboring county, and to pass the time engaged with four of their friends in a game of forty-fives. The stakes were light, "just enough to make it interesting," and at the end of a few games they started to settle up preparatory to taking the train.

It was unfortunate that Mr. Croker was compelled to go to England to gamble on horse races instead of staying at home and suppressing wickedness, as he desired.

You are always hearing of the 'nameless' longing in a woman's heart. If she is single, it is for a lover; and if she is married, it is for money.

A girl in Virginia died of old age at 20. But, odd as this case is, it is an improvement on the more frequent one of giddy youth at the age of 80.

A New York man of 80 has been a vegetarian for 45 years, and still death has not come to his relief.

'He made his money out of oil wells.' 'No wonder, then, he's such a bore.'

VERSES OF YESTERDAY AND TODAY

The Phantom Ship. It is off the harbor of Fuzwash town, That twice in the run of a year A ship is seen in a burning flame,

We were of all seamen a gallant crew, And we sailed out of old Bordeaux, Laden with French and with Spanish gold, Hid away in the hold below,

We launched the boat with our blood stained gold, And we set the ship on fire; When the magazine with a mighty shock, Spread devastation dire;

The olden golden tale he told, And of her charms he wrote with ease; Her voice with Melba's he enrolled, And ended up with lines like these:

"I love you for your voice's powers; I know it for the fact is true That I could sit for hours and hours And listen while you practice."

She sang for him, Oh, how she sang! I really cannot tell you how, And then she said, without a pang, "For just an hour I'll practice now."

His head was dazed, his heart was crazed, And gave a peep, one by one, Her wondrous execution praised, And kissed her as he went away.

Young man, be careful what you write When rhyme too loose your fancy frees; Be satisfied when meals delight, Nor solve the kitchen's mysteries.

When Mary does her thinking 'Tis twilight and the sun Is tucked to bed 'neath curtains red And sits a peep, one by one,

Far thoughts, mysterious, tender, Great thoughts, majestic, wise, These come and go with ebb and flow In little Mary's eyes,

But only just my fingers Can creep beneath her hair,— A mass of golden wealth untold,— And sweetly smile there The clinging ringlets under;

Lullaby, 1900. Sleep, baby, sleep! As the shadows creep, Father is off on the hills away, Chasing the golf ball on its way;

'He suggested that possibly I might learn to love him,' said the spinster. 'Yes, of course,' returned her dearest friend. 'Doubtless he realizes the truth of the saying that 'One is never too old to learn.'



AUNT SALLY'S SILK DRESS.

She gave the Minister a Few Points on the Benefits of Black Silk. A writer in the Christian Observer tells of two women who, in the early part of this century, lived in Virginia. They were noted for their common sense, and many of their sprightly sayings are quoted and enjoyed to this day.

'Well, Aunt Sally,' said he, 'you have been very kind to me and my wife during our stay at your house, and we appreciate your kindness. We shall never forget it. But, my dear sister, before parting with you I must say that it has troubled my wife and myself very much to see you a devotee to the fashion of the world.'

'My dear brother,' said Aunt Sally, 'I did not know that my plain black silk was troubling anybody. It hangs up there behind the door, and as it needs no washing, it is always ready to slip on when company comes or when I go to church, and I find it very handy.'

'But, my dear brother, since you have been plain with me, I must be plain with you. Since you and your wife have been staying here, I and my cook have some days had to stay at home and be absent from church because we were doing up the white dresses of your wife that she might look well at the conference. Pardon me for explaining, and when you and your wife come this way, call again.'

A Rattlesnake Trap.

Rattlesnakes were the most dangerous wild animals with which the early settlers of New Jersey had to contend. They were very numerous, and their bite, if not treated properly at once, was generally fatal. In "Stories from American History" F. R. Stockton cites an incident which gives an idea of the abundance of rattlers in the new colony.

There was no reason to believe that this was a snake cemetery, to which the creatures retired when they supposed they were approaching the end of their days; but it was, without doubt, a great rattlesnake trap.

The winding, narrow passage leading to it must have been very attractive to a snake seeking retired quarters in which to take its long winter nap. Although the cave at the bottom of the great crack was easy enough to get into, it was so arranged that it was difficult, if not impossible, for a snake to get out of it, especially in the spring, when these creatures are very thin and weak, having been nourished all winter by their own fat.

This year after year the rattlesnakes must have gone down into that cavity, without knowing that they could never get out again.

Respectfulness and Self-Respect.

'The cabman and conductor would be kind to you, but they would not be respectful,' quotes Mr. Howells in his recent reminiscences of James Russell Lowell, in mentioning the little ways in which Mr. Lowell, on his return from the "comfortably padded environment" of London, found America less comfortable than the country he had left.

No doubt, kindness in deed is more than respectfulness in word. Nevertheless, Mr Lowell was not the only American who, returning from England, has missed the smoothness, ease and pleasantness in the conduct of the small affairs of life with which English respectfulness has much to do. At its best, it is the good manners of

the uneducated; at its worst, it degenerates into servility.

One of the many unexpected discussions arising from the South African war touches this matter in its military aspect. The ready deference of the uneducated English private toward his officers, has induced in some of the officers an attitude of kindly but arrogant personal superiority. But the colonial soldiers, although obedient and well-drilled, and although they fully accept their officers' right to command them, regard the right as professional only. They do not consider that it implies a superior manhood.

They will not endure bullying or swaggering or slanging, and they resent superciliousness. They are, in short, like our American soldiers, respectful and self-respectful; and the reluctant authorities have found that instead of greater independence impairing their usefulness, their greater initiative has made them more valuable than the machine-like, home-trained Tommy Atkinses.

As a result, there is a growing opinion that England's somipaternal, semicontemptuous attitude, which has cheerily ticketed them the world over as "absent-minded beggars," plucky but irresponsible, is neither wise nor fair. Tommy himself accepted it, but it was not good for him; now his spirited colonial cousins repudiate it entirely, and England agrees that they are right.

The Bright Side of Things.

'He declares absolutely that he will look only on the bright side of things,' said his mother and sister declare that they have never seen him low-spirited or in a bad temper.

There are many people to whom cheerfulness is an easy virtue. They are none too numerous, and they ought to be grateful daily that a healthy mind, a light heart and a vigorous body make it easy for them to see the bright side of things.

But the young man of whom the St. Louis Globe-Democrat speaks in our opening sentence is a hopeless cripple. To him cheerfulness is not the mere effervescence of high animal spirits nor the overflow of good health, but the expression of religious peace. It is the attitude of a spirit that has met pain and disappointment, and has conquered them.

When Johnnie Walsh was four years old his trouble began. It was rheumatism and for some years he hobbled about on crutches. But hip disease set in, and the original trouble grew worse and Johnnie took to his bed.

For eight years he has lain there, slowly and steadily losing the use of arms and legs, and suffering also in more recent years a partial loss of sight, so that the comfort of reading long at a time is denied him. His mother and sister have little time to read to him, and if he were inclined to grow morbid or impatient he has abundant opportunity.

'Yet, let no one go to Johnnie with words of pity. He will laugh them away,' says the reporter. Indeed, his strong will and gentle spirit bring others to him, both for comfort and for counsel. Children throng about him to hear Bible stories and fairy tales; people who read little are instructed by his descriptions of new inventions and of foreign lands; and all are cheered and helped by his patient, Christian spirit.

He is twenty-two years of age, and was carried to the polls this fall to cast his first vote, for Johnnie has a man's interest in politics. He is a member of the church, also, and when, at long intervals, he is able to be carried to church, he treasures the experience through succeeding months.

No one can talk long with Johnnie without finding out that he is a very earnest Christian, says the reporter, and he adds, 'A visit to Johnnie is a cure for the blues. His affliction has been turned into a blessing, and his presence breathes sweet peace and comfort.'

Cheer by the hymns which he loves, the crippled boy has written others of his own, which his friends delight to hear from him. It is not the accuracy of rhyme or meter that makes these verses musical to those who know their author bet the spirit which they breathe of strength and gentle trust.

'There is no silver lining to this cloud,' says many a man whose affliction is less than half that of this brave lad's. In serene faith and helpful affection Johnnie Walsh has found the bright side of a very dark sorrow, and this has brightened not only his life, but the lives of many others.