

ROMANCE OF INVENTION.

Stevens and His T Rail and Canard's Clipper Ship Model.

Robert Livingston Stevens sailed from New York to Liverpool before the advent of the ocean steamer. In those days the passage took two months, and Stevens passed many an hour, jackknife in one hand and a piece of wood in the other, brooding over a problem that had often worried him—how to run a railroad without stone stringers for tracks. He wanted to get an iron rail that would "hold" and would take the place of the thin strips fastened to the chair of the roadbed. Just before he reached England his whittling revealed to him the solution of his problem, and that solution took the form of a T rail with a broad base that could be applied direct to a solid wood support. That T rail is still in use on all railways of the world.

The elder Canard, who was apprenticed as a lad to a Scotch shipbuilder, is said to have amused himself in whittling the hulls of vessels. Occasionally he would fit one of these with masts, sails and rigging complete. Tired of familiar types, he would experiment with new ships, and one of these it was that attracted the attention of his master, because it would not maintain its upright position in the water. Experiments were made to ballast it in order to give it the proper trim. The clipper-like shape and graceful long lines of the model promised great speed. Such is said to be the origin of the standard model of the Canard and later ocean greyhounds.

Old Age and Appetite.

An English scientist deprecates increased eating as a means of keeping up the strength of those who are advancing in years and particularly objects to the repeated and general use of concentrated forms of animal nourishment for the aged. Overnourishment in old age is apt to lead to pains and aches due to the impairment of excretion, and a long protracted course of overfeeding will end in an attack of gout. Even artificial teeth are not to be considered an unmixed blessing, for by a provision of nature the teeth begin to decay and become useless just when the system begins to thrive without much animal food of coarse fiber. Indigestion, says the scientist, is mostly not a disease, but an admonition. "It is the language of the stomach and is mostly an unknown tongue to those who are addressed." It means that the individual has not yet found his appropriate diet. "There is no food whatever which is wholesome in itself. That food is wholesome which is so to the individual."

The Crafty Farmer.

It appears that an old farmer near Houghton owned a large pile of small stones, with which he wished to fill a ditch, but he had already got about as much work out of his boys as they were willing to do, especially as it was nearing the hour for a ball game. The old man was bound to have the stones moved, anyhow, and so, pretending to have discovered a nest of snakes in the ditch, began stoning the place where the snakes were alleged to be. The boys, who a few minutes before were weary and listless, were now all life and animation. Each threw stones as fast as he could grab them, and the pile was soon in the ditch. There are two morals to this story—first, when you set about killing a snake throwing stones is a gladsome occupation; second, in selecting a father be careful not to choose a liar.

A Difference.

An American girl, pretty and bright, had been spending some time in Leamington, England.

The afternoon before her departure she suddenly remembered that several books from the public library should be returned. She took the volumes, sallied forth and presently encountered a young Englishman whose acquaintance, though brief, had not been without attraction.

"Really, now, how queer you American girls are!" he said. "Now, I suppose if you were at home, walking on Fifth avenue, you would never be seen with a fellow lugging all these books."

"Certainly not," she quickly and archly answered. "If I were in America, the gentleman would be carrying them."

An Autograph Request.

Embassadors receive many queer requests in the course of their official duties. Here is one that was sent to Mr. White by a western woman, who inclosed pieces of linen, when he was minister to Germany many years ago: "We are going to give a fair in our church, and I am making an autograph quilt. I want you to get me the autographs of the emperor and empress, the crown prince and Bismarck, and tell them to be very careful not to write too near the edge of the squares, as a seam has to be allowed for putting them together."

An Awful Jolt.

Miss Cutting—I think you will become quite a distinguished man if you live long enough.

Softleigh—Thanks awfully, doncher know. By the way, what do you—aw—think I will be distinguished for?

Miss Cutting—Longevity.

HOW A MAN DROWNS.

The Reason He Sometimes Comes Three Times to the Surface.

Few popular fallacies are of such wide extent as the belief that a person must rise to the surface three times, no more and no less, before he can possibly drown.

There is little ground for this supposition, although it has been almost universally believed in for generations. The truth is that a drowning person may sink the first time never to rise again, or he may, as he indeed does in the majority of cases, rise three times before he sinks forever.

It all depends upon the quantity of water that he swallows when he sinks and the size of his lungs. The human body in life naturally floats while the lungs are inflated. As long as one keeps his head above the surface of the water he can float, face up, without having to move hand or foot.

But as soon as a person sinks he gulps and imbibes a quantity of water. If after he has swallowed water he has any air in his lungs, he will undoubtedly rise again and will continue to sink and rise alternately until all the air is expelled from his lungs, when he will drown.

In most cases the frightened victim of an accident swallows enough water when he first sinks to leave him in a very exhausted condition; but, as there is still air left in his lungs, he soon finds himself on the surface again. Each time he sinks, however, the supply of air in his lungs grows less until ultimately there is no longer sufficient to support him.

Groom of No Importance.

If there is ever a time in a woman's life when she is the most important person in her own immediate circle, it is when she is a bride. Apropos of this is a story of a new society editress who had just returned from her first assignment, which was the writing up of a wedding:

"Did you get all the facts?" asked the city editor.

"All that are of any importance," replied the young woman. "I have a description of the bridal gown and the trousseau and the flowers and the wedding presents, and the objective point of the tour, and the names of the bridesmaids and the officiating clergyman and the reception days."

"Who is the bridegroom?" interrupted the city editor. "His name has been printed four different ways in the preliminary announcements."

"The groom?" faltered the young woman. "Why—why—I forgot to ask about him, and I guess nobody else thought of him, except maybe the bride."

Not What He Wanted.

A young man at the risk of his life saved a beautiful young girl from drowning. Her grateful father seized the rescuer of his daughter by the hand and in a voice tremulous with emotion said:

"Noble youth, to you I am indebted for everything that makes life dear to me. Which reward will you take—£100,000 or the hand of my daughter?"

"I'll take the daughter," replied the heroic rescuer, thinking thereby to get both the girl and the money.

"You have well chosen," replied the grateful father. "I could not have given you the £100,000 just yet in any case, as I have not yet saved that amount, being only a poor editor, but my daughter is yours for life. Take her and be happy. Bless you, my children!"—London Answers.

Where Every One Smokes.

Smoking is universal in Polynesia, China, Japan and Siam. In Burma the mother takes the cheroot from her mouth and puts it to the lips of her nursing babe, while the child purses its tiny lips and puffs away with every indication of pleasure. Kaffirs habitually smoke cigars with the lighted ends in their mouths and their tongues adroitly tucked out of harm's way. Even the pygmies of central Africa are inveterate smokers. The sun never sets on the smoking world, for before the white man of the occident puts down his pipe at night the yellow man of the orient has lit his matutinal cheroot.

An Explanation.

In one year the aurora borealis was seen one night as far south as Wiltshire. The inhabitants of a certain village assembled to witness the unwanted spectacle. Many were the inquiries as to what it was when a woman exclaimed: "Do thee send for our Jock. He's a scholar. I'll be bound he'll gie un a name!" When Jock arrived, he looked upward and said, "Oh, it's only a phenomenon!" "There," said the delighted mother; "didn't I tell 'ee he'd gie un a name?"



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