

COINS OF THE PAST.

Gold Pieces That Were Once Common, but Are Now Rarely Seen.

Recent mention of the disappearance of the \$2.50 gold piece from circulation and the premium this coin commands as a curio has set many to rummaging in old pocketbooks and bottoms of cash boxes and drawers in search of odd or out of date coins. Some have found a \$2.50 piece, but not many. The \$3 piece, once quite common, but always a sort of curiosity, is often found, and many have specimens of the little gold coins representing 25 cents and 50 cents which were not minted by the government and probably have not so much gold in them as they represent. They used to pass as coin, but were never in general circulation, being so easily lost that they soon became scarce. One of the handsomest coin relics seen is a \$10 gold piece bearing the mint stamp of 1799. It is larger than the present \$10 piece. The owner has it hung in a band and wears it as a charm on his watch chain. The owner says he refused an offer of \$150 for this relic. The old octagonal \$50 pieces were quite common in California in early days, when gold dust was largely used as a circulating medium. They were made of pure gold, and, while they had not the elegant finish of the gold coins minted by the government in these days, many still remember them as the handsomest coins they ever saw. Many people now would consider them handsome on account of the \$50 in them.—New York Tribune.

BURNING THE YULE LOG.

The Custom One of Ancient Origin.

The Yule Candle.

The custom of burning a large log of wood which is known as the Yule log is very ancient in its origin. All through the middle ages every farmhouse, cottage and castle in England burned its Yule log upon the hearth, the log being dragged in with much ceremony.

At Yuletide when the great log flamed In chimneypiece and laugh and jest went round.

The word "Yule" itself seems to be derived from the Anglo-Saxon "Geol," meaning December. Earlier still the Yule, or midwinter, feast is seen in its most flourishing state among the Norsemen, who conmemorated the fiery sun wheel with a mighty feast. They believed that during the twelve nights from Dec. 25 to Jan. 6 they could trace the actual movements of their great Odin, or Odhinn, the god of storms, and other deified beings on the earth.

The Yule log, with its cheery blaze, comes to us across the centuries as a dim memory of the fires lit to celebrate the setting out of the sun on his northward journey toward the light and warmth of summer.

A large candle known as the Yule candle used also to light the Christmas eve festivities. It was a bad omen if the candle burned out before the evening was at an end.—Detroit Free Press.

ALWAYS BE SANGUINE.

Keep to the Highways and Sun the Back Alleys of Life.

Keep to the broad highways of hope and cheerfulness. Expect to succeed. Think success, and you will succeed. Keep out of the back alleys of gloom and pessimism. Join the procession of the cheerful, the willing and the hopeful. Be sanguine. Know the pleasures of living. Enjoy the sunshine of hope.

Keep away from the scavengers and rapiers who infest the back alleys of life. Your pessimist is your scavenger, your rapiers. He may be a necessary evil, a boll as it were on the body social, but too much of him is fatal. He never gave the world a smile. He never contributed to the good cheer of any human being. He never lifted the gloom from any distressed soul. He is the antithesis of progress. He is the pollywog which in the evolution of life is continually dragging backward toward the slimy past, resisting the progress of development which must go on with or without him.

Beware of the encroachments of the carping, pessimistic spirit. It is a hardy plant. It takes root easily in the mind, and, like the thistle, when once it gains a foothold it is well nigh impossible to uproot it, but it cannot live in an atmosphere of sunshine and cheerfulness. Therefore, keep to the highways. Keep out of the back alleys.—Exchange.

Children's Weight.

Some curious experiments have been made at one of the royal philanthropic institutions in Copenhagen. For some years back the seventy boys and girls in the place have been carefully weighed every day in groups of fifteen and under. Thereby it is proved that the children gain weight mostly in autumn and in the early part of December. From that time till the end of April there is scarcely any increase in weight. More remarkable still, there is a diminution till the end of summer.

Hobson's Choice.

Tom—I've been bitten to her wedding, but I'm not going. Dick—But your absence will surely be noticed. Do you think you can afford that?

Tom—Well, when you can't afford to have your presents noticed your absence is imperative.—Philadelphia Press.

Where It Should Begin.

"But why do you have your hero marry in the first chapter?" they asked. "Because," replied the author, "it has always seemed absurd to me to end a novel just where a man's troubles really begin. That's where you should begin the story."—Chicago Post.

When a man tells you that all women are delusions and snares, it's doubtful to fudge he has been snared by a delusion.—Cooking Club.

THE PRINCE'S WRAITH.

An Apparition Whose Coming Was a Sign of Death.

King Gustavus IV. of Sweden, who reigned in the early part of the last century, was taking supper one evening with the Prince of Baden and others, among them a Count Lowenfjelm. Suddenly, halfway through the supper, the king let drop his knife and fork and, turning to Lowenfjelm, said: "Look! Don't you see?" at the same time gazing across the table. No one understood what he meant, and so he dropped the subject. Later, after the Prince of Baden had departed, the king said to his companions: "When I asked you whether you saw anything, I had myself distinctly seen the double, or wraith, of the Prince of Baden enter the room and, passing round the table, place itself behind that prince's chair, where it quickly faded away and vanished. You know," added the king, "the terrible import attached in our country to such apparitions, and, having given you the key to what you may well have thought unaccountable conduct on my part, I now request you to keep strictly to yourselves what I have imparted to you." The following evening and at the same hour, according to Count Lowenfjelm, while the court was seated as usual at supper, the clatter of horse's hoofs was heard in the palace quadrangle, and a courier was speedily announced, who brought tidings of a disastrous carriage accident in which the Prince of Baden had lost his life.

CALIFORNIA'S CHARM.

How the Visitor From the East Finally Capitulates.

You will not find everything in southern California. You will miss the wide stretches of green in the open places, far removed from the dusty cities, the noble trees, the clear streams of water, the blue lake nestled in among the pine clad mountains. You will miss that splendid miracle the change of the seasons, when your whole nature comes into closer touch with the great mother heart of nature than at any other time in all the year.

You will miss much. But when you have been here a year, when month after month of rare and beautiful weather blend into each other, when the sea wooes you and the flowers charm you and the brown mountains beckon you and the soft air soothes you, after a year has passed you find there are some compensations for the lovely things you have left behind you. You come to realize that nature has done more for this stretch of sea and mountain girt land than she has done for any other spot on the globe.

You may have been charmed with California when you came, you may have been captivated after you had been here a year, you may capitulate and consent to be captured by the time two golden summers have stolen over you.—The World Today.

Hot Water.

Cold blooded people, who have little thirst, will do well to make a business of drinking a certain amount of hot water every day throughout the winter season. It lessens the tendency to take cold, improves the circulation and benefits coughs and insomnia.

Before going to bed is a very good time for this practice, as it warms up and relaxes the system, thus preparing the way for a good night's sleep.

Many cases of indigestion, headache, neuralgia, cold hands and feet, can be cured in half an hour by drinking slowly one or two pints of water so hot that it almost burns the throat.—Medical Brief.

Malay Poetry.

The Malays possess a poetical nature and, like the Japanese, regard the writing of poetry as an art to be aspired to by anybody. Short couplets are their delight, especially those with a little moral attached. One founded on the weather tends to comfort a person who has been badly treated: "Now it is wet, now it is fine. A day will come for retaliation." Then, again, of lovers they say, "As the owl sighs longingly for the moon." A young and pretty brat speak of as being "like a swan not yet unfolded," an apt illustration when one thinks of the bright colors of new sarongs.

Condensed Milk Lacks Water.

Steam emanating from boiling milk if condensed would become water. This may be seen in the manufacture of condensed milk, which is only ordinary milk boiled down until the water is out of it. If a liquid which contains solid bodies in solution be evaporated, the solids are left behind. That this is so may be shown by adding to water that is to be distilled a trace of magenta and a little salt. The distilled water has no taste and is colorless. The magenta is generally deposited upon the sides of the boiling vessel.

A Scotch Tooth.

Dentist (after struggling for twenty minutes in a vain endeavor to extract the tooth)—I must say you—you have the firmest tooth I ever had—dealing with. Patient—I'm in nae hurry. It's graun' practice for ye, an' it'll teach ye that maun a' work for oor livin'.

Art Criticism.

Amateur—This is my latest attempt at a landscape. May I ask what you think of the perspective? Artist—The perspective is its strong point. The farther away you stand the better it looks.—Chicago Tribune.

Luck in Business.

"I see that somebody says there is no such thing as luck in business." "He must be one of the lucky ones who have succeeded."—Chicago Record-Herald.

NAPOLEON'S POLICE.

They Were Well Watched to Insure a Full Measure of Duty.

During the reign of Emperor Napoleon I, at a dinner in Paris the conversation turned upon the emperor and his government. One of the company remarked that he was a great man, but was too fond of war. When the party broke up, a gentleman who was present requested to speak in private to the person who had made that observation. "Sir," said he, "I am sorry for it, but I must request you to go with me to the police." "Why?" said the other in the greatest apparent alarm. "I have said nothing against the emperor but what every one must acknowledge, that he is too fond of war. There can be no harm in that." "With that I have nothing to do. You must go with me to the police." The other now began to show the strongest symptoms of fear. He entreated the police agent in the most pathetic language to have compassion on him. The other, however, stood unmoved by all his solicitation, when suddenly the man rose from his knees and burst into a laugh, to the utter astonishment of the informer. "You think you have caught me," said he. "You are a spy of the police. So am I, and I was put over you to see whether you would do your duty."

THE COST OF A LEGACY.

Sometimes It Doesn't Pay to Inherit Money In Italy.

In Italy it appears to be a somewhat expensive affair to inherit money—that is, if it be a small sum. Not long ago a young man died in the little town of Romagna who left 1 lire 58 centesimi, or not quite 34 cents. This sum, which had been deposited in the postoffice savings bank, became the property of the young man's father. As the amount was so small, the father thought it unnecessary to make a declaration of the legacy as the law prescribes, especially as the stamped paper on which the declaration must be made would cost about 22 centesimi more than the money involved.

Three months afterward he received a demand from the local state treasury for the payment of 14 lire 48 centesimi (nearly \$3). Thinking a mistake had been made, he took no notice of this demand, with the result that later an official called upon him and demanded the immediate payment of 18 lire (\$3.50). The father had not sufficient money in hand, so the official took possession of the man's furniture. The cost of this seizure brought the total sum to 30 lire, which the poor man had to pay that same evening to avoid the sale of his goods by auction.

AN EARLY AIRSHIP.

It Was Built in England in 1835, but Was a Failure.

We are told by Peter Farley, who wrote as an eyewitness, that in August, 1835, the Eagle was officially advertised to sail from London with government dispatches and passengers for Paris and to establish direct communication between the capitals of Europe. This early type of airship was 160 feet long, 50 feet high and 40 feet wide, and she lay in the dockyard of the Aeronautic society in Victoria road, near Kensington gardens, then quite a rural spot.

Built to hold an abundant supply of gas, she was covered with oiled lawn and carried a frame seventy-five feet long and seven feet high, with a cabin secured by ropes to the balloon. An immense rudder and wings or fins on each side for purposes of propulsion completed her fittings. The deck was guarded by netting.

After all this preparation and advertisement the Eagle never got beyond Victoria road, for Count Lennox and his assistants failed to provide the necessary motive power.

The Barber's Pole.

The origin of the barber's pole, itself almost now a thing of the past, originated in the days of barber surgeons, when bloodletting was considered a panacea for most of the ills that flesh is heir to. The pole was used for the patient to grasp during the operation, and a fillet or bandage for tying up the arm. When the pole was not in use, the tape was tied to it and twisted round it, and then it was hung up as a sign. At length, instead of hanging out the actual pole used in operations, a painted one with stripes round it in imitation of the genuine article and its bandages was placed over the shop.

Ducks and Geese.

Do geese "quack?" "No," says the observant critic; "geese do not quack, but they squawk." It is the ducks that quack, and the story of the goose going about from day to day with a "quack, quack, quack," is declared to be without good foundation. There is, indeed, quite a difference in the vocabulary of these feathered creatures, but it requires a sharp ear to discover the difference.

The Cost.

Laura—I don't know, George. It seems such a solemn thing to marry. Have you counted the cost? George—The cost, Laura? The cost? Bless me, I've got a clergyman cousin that'll marry us for nothing!

A Practical Connoisseur.

Mrs. Cobwiger—What a beautiful collection of antiques you have, my dear! Mrs. Payvenu—It should be. My husband knows all about such things and had them made to order. Judge.

Harrowing Response.

The Grammarian—It always makes me tired when I hear a man say "don't" when he should say "doesn't." The Other Party—Don't it, though? Cincinnati Times-Star.

TOLEDO BLADES.

Those of Modern Make Not Comparable With the Ancient Ones.

Toledo blades are still made in the government weapon factory, but those of modern production do not compare with the ancient work. It seems to be a lost art. The genuine Toledo blades, made by the Moors, were so elastic and tough that they could be curled up like a watch spring. You can see them in the armory at Madrid, but only ordinary swords and bayonets for the army were made there today. The secret seems to have been forgotten. The steel came from England. It is the same as is used for ordinary purposes, and, as in Japan, where the art reached an equal degree of superiority, the difference in the product lay in the skill of the armorer and the process he used.

In the secondhand shops of Toledo and of the bric-a-brac dealers you can buy old swords for reasonable prices, but genuine ones, made before the sixteenth century, when the best were produced and the art began to decline, are very rare and are promptly picked up by connoisseurs whenever they are offered. The names of the old makers are as well known as those of the painters of great pictures, and a sword made by Nicholas or Dune or Don Isidro or Corrientes in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries is worth several times its weight in gold.

Each armorer of Toledo in ancient times, as in Japan, had his cipher, which is to be found on his blades, and there was as much rivalry among them as there is today among the opera singers. Julian del Rel, the most famous of the Moorish swordmakers, always cut the figure of a dog on the blades of his swords near the hilt, and Morillo, who was also famous, used a wolf for his coat of arms. The swordmakers of Toledo had a guild for mutual protection, but they worked separately. Each had his own secrets for refining and tempering steel, which he concealed from his rivals, but transmitted to his children, who inherited the business.—Chicago Record-Herald.

PICKINGS FROM FICTION.

A Horse Alike.

First Comedian—I know something awfully funny. Second Comedian—What is it? First Comedian—Why, I was held up by a highwayman last night. But the joke was on him. I told him there was no use searching me as my wife had been through my pockets just five minutes before. Second Comedian—But I don't see that the joke was on him. It was on you. First Comedian—No, you're wrong. It wasn't on either of us. It was on my wife. There wasn't any money in my pockets to begin with!—Detroit Free Press.

stinctive attitude all the efforts a man has made toward perfection; ay, and all that his ancestors have made before him.—John Percyfield.

It is no use to pretend that hard luck does not take the manhood out of a man. When he has an inferior part in life to play, he begins to look the part, and he looks the superior part when he has that to play.—Letters Home.

Saved His Friend.

This little story is told of two Scotch laddies who, while fishing in strictly preserved water, for which only one was provided with a permit, were suddenly confronted by the bailiff. One of them quickly collected his tackle and ran his might across the field, the bailiff in quick pursuit. After covering a large tract of country the angler was down completely exhausted and awaited the panting and enraged pursuer.

"Do you know that you should not fish in that water without permission?" asked the irate man.

"Yes," said the lad, "but I have permission. I've got an order."

"What made you run then, you young scoundrel?"

"Oh, just to let the other lad away—he hadn't got one."

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What Did He Want?

A certain professor is a very absent-minded man. He was busily engaged in solving some scientific problem. The servant hastily opened the door of his studio and announced a great family event.

"A little stranger has arrived."

"Eh?"

"It is a little boy."

"Little boy! Well, ask him what he wants."—London Standard.

Earning and Getting.

"It was only five years ago that I was started in with our firm at \$5 a week," said Bragg, "and now I earn \$50 a week without any trouble."

Perhaps it is from overwork among the