

ENVIRONMENT OF AL.

People Prominent in Literature Who Have Sought Congratulatory Surroundings.

The workshops of American authors have much to do with the quality of what they produce. Differing temperaments require different conditions in which to accomplish the best results.

Margaret Deland has a perpetual bit of summer introduced into her Boston home. A small glass conservatory, filled with overhanging plants, is where this brilliant writer does her best work.

Winston Churchill, author of "Richard Carvel," lives in St. Louis in the winter and in Vermont in the summer. He does his work in a very business-like way in an office at the top of one of the city's skyscrapers.

Bret Harte generally writes out of doors, but always while smoking. He said the first lines always took a cigar and sometimes two cigars.

In the city of Atlanta, in a homelike little cottage embowered in rosebushes and apple trees, Joel Chandler Harris writes his inimitable tales of "Uncle Remus and Br'er Rabbit."

FIRE AMONG THE REDWOODS.

Impressive Sight Presented by the Tall Young Trees When Aflame.

Perhaps the most startling phenomenon of the fire was the quick death of childlike sequoias only a century or two of age, says John Muir, in Atlantic. In the midst of the other comparatively slow and steady fire-work, one of these tall beautiful saplings, leafy and branchy, would be seen blazing up suddenly all in one heaving, booming, passionate flame reaching from the ground to the top of the tree, and 50 to 100 feet or more above it, with a smoke column bending forward and streaming away on the upper free-flowing wind.

To burn these green trees a strong fire of dry wood beneath them is required to send up a current of air hot enough to disintegrate inflammable gases from the leaves and sprays; then, instead of the lower limbs gradually catching fire and lighting the next and next in succession, the whole tree seems to explode almost simultaneously, and with a round roaring and throbbing, a round tapering flame shoots up 200 or 300 feet, and in a second or two is quenched, leaving the green spire a black dead mast, bristled and roughened with down-curling boughs.

PHOTOGRAPHING BIRDS.

The More Common and Unsuspecting Are Most Difficult to Take.

Strangely enough, it is not always the more rare and shy birds which are most difficult to photograph, but, on the contrary, very common and usually unsuspecting species, when approached with photographic intent, are exceedingly wary. This is the case with the familiar robin, and also with the kingbird or bee-martin, says A. H. Verrill, in Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly. Time and again have I spent an entire afternoon endeavoring to photograph this saucy flycatcher, but without avail, and it is only very recently that I succeeded in inducing one to sit for his portrait, and even he condescended to do so only when his fatherly solicitude was aroused and I disturbed the peace of his young family. On the other hand, blue jays, which are notoriously wild, I have had no difficulty with, provided the time chosen was late summer or early autumn. I find that at this season they readily approach within range of my lens if their cries are imitated while in hiding. Many birds have habits which greatly facilitate matters once they are learned.

GIRLS AS BANK TELLERS.

Do Better Work and Are More Trustworthy Than Men, Says a Bank Cashier.

Behind each of the 13 windows in the savings department of the Royal Trust bank, 109 Jackson boulevard, sits a young woman taking in and paying out the money of several thousand depositors, reports the Chicago Chronicle.

The young women have been employed there for some time, though it is the only bank in Chicago where they do that kind of work. They have proven faithful and accurate in their work and the manager of the bank says that men will never displace them. "They are always at work on time," said Cashier Edwin F. Mack, "and when closing time comes they do not rush to get out for fear of working a minute too long. They do not spend the bank's time in telling each other of their experiences the night before."

"We are not hiring girls to save money. We pay them just as much as we once did men in the same places. We simply made the change because we found them more reliable and efficient."

More Trouble in Argentine Republic. Considerable race hatred has been aroused in the Argentine republic because the industrious German immigrants are making so much headway, while the indolent natives lag behind.

THE LARGEST FIRE COMPANY.

Several Hundred Men Serving Without Pay in the Forests of the Black Hills.

Capt. Seth Bullock, of Deadwood, S. D., the new forest supervisor of the Black Hills, has organized the largest fire company in the world. Every member is giving his services without pay yet is expected to be on duty constantly, says the St. Paul Dispatch.

Some time ago the secretary of the interior department made an order permitting people to graze cattle on the forest reserve to the full limit of 7,000 head for the million or more acres. A man can have four or less head without asking for a permit, but beyond that number to a limit of 150 he must ask permission of the supervisor, showing that he has the proper range and that he intends to comply with the law.

A proviso was inserted in this order by the secretary, which makes it compulsory for every man raising cattle to assist in putting out the forest fires. Until recently this part of the order has not been put into effect. Forest Supervisor Bullock has now obtained the name of every man who availed himself of this cattle order, and 25 brigades have been organized. There are 20 divisions on the reserve, each one being in charge of rangers, whose duty it is to see that the laws governing the reserve are complied with.

When a fire breaks out on the reserve the cattle raisers are expected to go immediately and put it out. The first man at the fire is to have full charge of the operations until the ranger arrives. In case the fire gets beyond control of one division of cattlemen and ranger, word is to be sent immediately to an adjoining district, and all of the people there are expected to come to their rescue.

After the fire is out the ranger of that one particular district is required to take the names of all the cattlemen who did not participate in putting out the fire, and a list of such persons is sent to the general office of the supervisor, in Deadwood. Unless the persons who did not attend the fire can give a good reason for their absence their permits to graze cattle on the Black Hills forest reserve are taken away from them.

The cattle grazers all over the hills are taking an interest in this original plan of Capt. Bullock and as a consequence several hundred men stand on guard constantly to put out forest fires. There are fully 7,000 head of cattle on the reserve. No sheep are allowed. It is considered a fine thing for the forest to have the grass kept down by the stock.

THE ROLLER BOAT.

Queer Craft That Canada Has Contributed to the Collection of Marine Freaks.

Canada's contribution to the world's collection of queer boats is a metal cylinder over 100 feet in length and 22 feet in diameter. As it rests in the water it looks for all the world like the towering smokestack of a manufacturing plant toppled over on its side. The reconstruction which this oddity of the shipping world has undergone during the past year or two has not affected its external appearance, but within its circular body a new heart has been installed, which diffuses new life blood in a radically new way, says Waldon Fawcett, in Frank Leslie's Popular Monthly.

Shorn of technicalities, the substitution, simply amounts to this: Under the old plan there were, so to speak, two locomotives on circular tracks, and they rolled the ship forward by climbing up inside just as a squirrel spins the wheel of his cage by mad attempts to ascend the bars of the circular prison. Now, the machinery is suspended in the center of the big tube. It will thus be seen that under the old plan gravity helped to do the work; now power alone must accomplish the task.

The large cylinder, made up of airtight compartments, which comprises the boat, is open at either end, in order to give admission to the interior. Under the old plan the steel tracks were placed at either end of the vessel and extended entirely around the interior of the cylinder or shell, being securely bolted, of course, to the inner face of the big tube. Upon the tracks at either end was a platform mounted on wheels, somewhat on the order of a flat car, which kept rolling gently backward when the boat was in motion, and was thus enabled to maintain a perfectly level position. Each platform carried a separate boiler and engine. When the engines started the platforms commenced to climb the inside of the cylinder, and constantly continued the attempt with the result that the effort of gravity to bring the weight to the lowest possible level had the effect of rolling the cylinder forward.

Russian Female Hermits. Among the villages on the Volga in the province of Samara a curious set of women has made its appearance. It was originated by an elderly peasant woman in Sosnowa, called the "Blessed Mother." These women have fled from the villages around into a remote district where they live singly in holes dug out of the face of the hill. They lead a life of fasting and prayer, and believe themselves called from the world, which they think it shortly about to perish in a general conflagration. The "Blessed Mother" has "ten wise virgins" as a sort of bodyguard, and the sect believe that these eleven women are possessed of miraculous powers.—London Globe.

The Main Objection. Many a young girl who objects to being the wife of a wealthy old man wouldn't object to being his widow.—Chicago Daily News.

PANTALOONS WITH LINING.

They Used to Be Worn But Are Never Heard Of in These Days.

An old clothing merchant in Chicago, whose sons have been his successors for many years, was in the store the other day for the first time in seven years, reports the Tribune.

"I suppose you have no pantaloons with lining," he said to his eldest boy, who replied that he had never heard of such a thing.

"We used to keep them in stock," continued the father. "As a rule I think most pantaloons with lining were home-made. Your mother made the first I ever saw, and I wore 'em. I think the lining was of some sort of cambric. But there were a few of my old customers who bought ready-made clothes of me, many years ago, and they insisted that their pantaloons should be lined. They had a idea that lining made it fit better. But the tailors I employed hated the work, and always charged more for putting in the lining."

"One of my customers, who wouldn't live long if he had to wear ready-made clothes now, took a fancy to a pair of unlined pantaloons, but refused to make the purchase unless I had lining put in. That was in 1850. My tailor said he never heard of such a thing, but I insisted. He had to take the pantaloons apart—unitch the seams and then put in the lining. It took him over a week to do the job. The customer got mad in waiting and refused to take the pantaloons. I sued him and got judgment, and he wouldn't speak to me for over a year. I saw him pass the house last week riding with his grandchildren in an automobile. I suppose he would have got hot if I had reminded him of the time when he wore lined pantaloons, and he had straps to them besides, so as to keep them in shape. I remember when a man who didn't wear straps to his pantaloons was not considered well dressed, and that was right here in Chicago."

DISCOVERY OF OXYGEN.

This Name Perpetuates an Error Said to Have Been Made by Noted Chemist.

It was 177 years on the list of August since Joseph Priestley discovered oxygen. He called it dephlogisticated air. Scheele, who separated it about the same time, empyreal air; while Condorcet, more happily than either, suggested vital air. Lavoisier named it oxygen—literally the acid maker—and in so doing perpetuated an error, says London Express.

It is not oxygen that is the essential element in the formation of acids, but hydrogen, so called because it helps to form water. The early chemists would have hit the mark better if they had interchanged the designations; for oxygen constitutes the great bulk of water, and hydrogen is a constituent of all acids. What's in a name in this case is a chemical misrepresentation. Priestley little knew how wide was the range of the element he had found. Oxygen forms one-fifth of the atmosphere, eight-ninths of the waters, and, taking altogether, one-half of all the materials of the globe, so far as they are known. As carbon is the basis of all the organic substance of the world, so oxygen, the supporter of life and combustion, represents its living energies.

MARKED SALMON RETURN.

Many of the Fish Come Back to Their Spawning Ground Every Fourth Year.

A. C. Little, state fish commissioner, is commencing to get results from scientific experiments conducted during the last four years, with the object of ascertaining what proportion of young salmon turned out by the state fish hatcheries return every fourth year to their spawning grounds. He has procured numerous fish tails from the Columbia river fishermen which bear certain marks placed upon them before the fish were set loose at the Kalama hatchery. These fish are spawn of the salmon caught in 1907, and are, therefore, four years old. None of the tails were obtained in previous years, again proving that salmon return only every fourth year, says the San Francisco Call.

The fact that the run of salmon on the Columbia river has been unexpectedly large this year is believed to have been due almost entirely to the great number of fish turned out by the Washington hatcheries on streams tributary to the Columbia. Several of these hatcheries have not been established long enough to get direct returns in the form of marked tails.

Tall Telegraph Poles in Texas. Beaumont, Tex., is noted not only for its oil, but the tallest telegraph poles in the United States. The tops are 150 feet above the ground. They were erected on the opposite banks of the Neches river by the Western Union Telegraph company in order to string a cable across the stream. The span is 144 feet in length. This height is necessary to admit the passage of ships through a draw-bridge, their masts being 100 feet tall and more.

Castle for Rent. A London paper printed this unique advertisement recently: "A castle, completely furnished, situated on the Atlantic coast, at one of the most romantic spots in the world, in full view of the sea. It is a stone building, of the most common; three reception and seven bedrooms; every modern convenience; 10 gns. a week. Address," etc.

HARD ON THE TOPERS.

The Short Corn Crop Will Increase the Price of Whisky Considerably.

"Lovers of cocktails, gin fizzes, creme de menthes and other seductive little mixtures in which spiritus frumenti form the principal ingredient will probably be interested to learn that the next few months will mark a considerable increase in the price of whisky," said a traveling man, according to the Charleston News and Courier.

"The practical failure of the corn crop," he continued, "in some of the western states, which heretofore furnished the greatest portion of the supply to the people of this country, and the consequent increase in price, will cause the distillers to pay a great deal more for their raw material than they have been in the habit of doing in the past. The consumers in this instance, as in all others since the law of supply and demand has been known, will, of course, be compelled to pay this increase in price. A number of people in this country are probably not aware of the fact that about 75 percent of the whisky distilled in this country is made from corn. Thousands every day are drinking what they suppose to be rye, when in reality it is nothing more than colored corn juice. Out in Kansas, Nebraska, Missouri and Iowa there will be less corn harvested this year than ever before in my recollection. Taking into consideration that these four states, where nearly all the corn in the United States is raised, or rather an enormous percentage of it, are so short as to the output this year, it can be readily seen what effect the decrease will have on the market. Distillers will be forced to pay well for their corn, and the only avenue of escape for them is to make the consumers fork over the difference."

DISTANCE JUDGING.

Success in Estimating Accurately a Given Space Is Very Rare.

A familiar example of the vagueness of our mental ideas on the dimensions of familiar objects is the trick by which a number of people are induced to measure off upon the wall what they consider to be the height of a top hat. Success in this feat is rare, says the London Globe, and the estimation in yards or miles of distances in the open air is no less difficult, though often considerably more useful. Generally, of course, it is the level surface or one filled with monotonous features many times repeated which is most underestimated, while diversification seems to impress the mind with a greater notion of extent. Even so, the usual tendency is greatly to underestimate distances of more than a quarter of a mile, while the differences between the guesswork computations of various members of the same party are often extraordinary. In our ordinary life we have rarely need for ascertaining in actual yards the distance of objects under observation, and our faculty of estimation is not developed much further when we have once left the stage behind at which all the objects in a room, for instance, appear to the infant to be equally within its grasp. The difficulty of judging distance is much increased over an undulating or hilly surface, whether it is desired to find out the actual superficial measurement of the "air line," as the Germans term it, for rifle shooting in sport or war. In this last application the training of the faculty is extremely important, and in actual fact often extremely imperfect.

TATTOOING IN WHITE.

Maids at the Seaside Have Utilized the Sun's Rays for a New and Novel Fad.

Positively the newest fad of the seashore resorts this season is exceedingly popular with the summer girls: tattooing in white. How it originated no one has been able to tell, but it got here, as nearly all can testify. One of the charmers appeared on the beach at Atlantic City the other day with her favorite college design apparently tattooed in white on her sun-browned arm. There was the white flag of the University of Pennsylvania, with the letters "U. P." and beneath this a little heart. The thing caused a deal of speculation and something of a sensation for a long time, but the fair schemer could not keep the secret and a lot of her chums copied the idea, which now threatens to spread all along the coast.

"How is it done?" asked the fair one in reply to a questioner. "That is easy. Before I expose my arm to the fierce rays of the sun I cut out the design I wished from adhesive plaster, and stuck it fast to my arm. When the browning process was well along I took off the plaster and there was the flag in white just as nice as you please."

One of the fair devotees of fads was not content to show her college preferences on her arm, but worked out a design on her neck. It is not likely that many will follow her idea, however, since they must don evening dress for the hops. Some of them have gone a step further and allowed the sun to print upon their fair arms the initials of their very best young men, with a sentimental design accompanying them.

A Poem That Paid. Rudyard Kipling's poem, "The Absent-Minded Beggar," made about \$100,000 for the British South African relief fund. Kipling turned over the \$1,250 paid him by the Daily Mail, and all other journals copying it paid in \$25, while \$500 a week was earned for some weeks by its recital at London musicals.

WANDERINGS OF A CHALICE.

Antique Communion Cup That Once Became a Prize for Horse Racing.

Surely one of the strangest vicissitudes which could befall a communion cup is to become the prize in a horse race; yet such has been the fate of one which once belonged to the Episcopal church of Clontarf, and after a disappearance of many years' duration has at last been restored to its original purpose. The incident is related in the Clontarf Parish Magazine, says the London Telegraph. The chalice of solid silver stands about four inches high, is richly embossed in three panels, with figures representing music, plenty and fashion; has no shank, but is supported on three balls, each held by an eagle's claw. It is considered to be of Dutch or Hanoverian workmanship, and was evidently not originally intended for sacred use. On it is the inscription: "The gift of Charles McEvilly, sen., Esq., to the church of Clontarf, April 8, 1721."

Some time in the early part of last century it disappeared from the church in a most mysterious manner, and all trace of it was lost until quite recently, when Col. P. D. Vigora, of Baginlawstown, discovered through a correspondence with Rev. J. Bloom, of Whitechurch, Stratford-on-Avon, that the cup was in the possession of Mr. J. R. West, of Alseot Park, in whose family it had been for many years. And, more extraordinary still, it is clear, from an inscription on the bottom of the chalice, that it was presented as a cup at the Clontarf races in 1833, and was won by a horse there. The inscription underneath reads: "Clontarf, July 18, 1833. Won by Exile, 5-year-old." The chalice will, it is to be hoped, be spared further wandering and will remain safe in Clontarf.

LOUISVILLE FIRE CATS.

Born in an Engine House They Became Fond of a Run with the Machine.

"Roba" and "Kit" are two coal black kittens which love excitement. They are about six months old and were born at the No. 4 hook and ladder house, says the Courier-Journal. Their mother had spent her whole life in the fire department, having lived at several of the engine houses and having moved from one to another whenever her owner was transferred. She has slept on the top of the hook and ladder truck since she has been at the No. 4 house, and has been carried to fires with the company a number of times. If an alarm came in when she was asleep on the truck she never took the trouble to move, but would remain on the truck until it returned from the fire.

Her two kittens seem to have inherited her love for the fire department, and since they have been old enough to run about they have gone to almost every fire. When an alarm comes in the kittens will make a run for the truck and climb to the top of it. As the big truck aways through the streets the kittens hang on, apparently enjoying the exciting ride. At the fire they never venture off the truck, but curl up and go to sleep. Several times the firemen have attempted to make the kittens stay away from fires, but every alarm that comes in finds them at their post on top of the truck.

ANTS AND LEMONADE.

The Little Insects Know How to Make a Refreshing Summer Drink.

"Did you ever know that ants will make lemonade?" asked the talkative grocer, relates the Philadelphia Record. "Yes, it's a fact. I happened to cut a lemon the other day, and left it on the counter. A couple of minutes later I noticed a bunch of ants making a great to do around the lemon. The antics of the little insects were so methodical that I took a few minutes off to investigate. A little sugar had been spilled on the counter near the spot where the lemon lay, and the ants were busy making trips between the sugar and the fruit. You may not believe it, sir, but every time one of the little creatures made the trip he carried back a grain of sugar, which was dropped into the lemon juice and then eagerly devoured."

"It struck me that maybe the manufacture of the lemonade was only an accidental process, due to the close proximity of the sugar and the lemon, so I carefully swept the sugar away. It seems incredible, but as true as I'm standing here those ants hunted around until they found the sugar barrel, when the whole bunch trooped back laden with sugar, which they dipped in the juice and swallowed. Wonderful is no name for it!"

Great Maine Forests. Maine's woods are known of all men, but few realize that vast and deep as they are, they exceed sevenfold the extent of the "Black Forest" of Germany, and cover nearly one-half (9,000,000 acres) of the area of the state. Hidden within these shaded wilds, the home of the moose, America's greatest game animal, there are more than 1,500 lakes, comprising one-fifth of the surface of the state. Their pure, pellucid waters fairly abound in fish of many kinds. In only three or four spots on this globe may one find in the same area an equal number of lakes and ponds. Combined, they represent a water surface of 2,300 square miles. From these sources flow 6,000 rivers and streams.

Big Pine Log. A pine log 94 feet long and 19 inches square was landed at Leith, Scotland, recently. It had been the largest and most perfect tree in Louisiana.

PITH AND POINT.

When a man of 60 does an odd thing, his loving relatives carefully lay the memory of it aside, to use in proving his insanity when his will is fled.—Acheson Globe.

It is a pity we cannot get all the wicked men to vote the other ticket just once so that we could figure out the exact size of the majority we need to convert.—Puck.

The river flows quietly along toward the sea, yet it always gets there. It might be well to remember this when you are trying to rush things.—Chicago Daily News.

Mistress—"Mary, you had a man in the kitchen last evening. Was he a relative of yours or a friend?" Maid—"Neither, marm; he was only just my husband."—Boston Transcript.

An Extravagant Affair.—"Mollie," he said, "if I should die first, I want you to see that I am cremated." "Mercy on us, John! Coal may be six dollars a ton then!"—Atlanta Constitution.

Jack—"I've resolved to give up drinking and betting and all that sort of thing." Tom—"Oh, you'll never keep that resolution." Jack—"I'll bet you the drinks I do."—Glasgow Evening Times.

She—"Why does a ship have to weigh its anchor every time it leaves port?" He—"Well—er—you see, the weight is constantly changing on account of the binacles that grow on it in the water."—Philadelphia Press.

To Avoid a Strain.—"Feeling blue, are you, Mr. Lightwyle?" said Miss Implicite, sympathetically. "You ought to do something to occupy your mind. I don't mean," she added after a moment, "that you ought to work very hard at anything."—Somerville Journal.

TEA DRINKING IN THE SOUTH.

The Quantity Consumed Has Greatly Increased During the Last Few Years.

"The increased consumption of tea is one of the interesting phases of modern commercial life in the south," said a drummer for a New Orleans house, according to the Times-Democrat, "and you would be surprised at the vast change which has taken place in this respect. The fact is that during the past few years the changes in the tea business have amounted to a revolution. I have just returned from a trip on the road, and I touched some of the more remote places in Texas and Mississippi, and while I have been out before in the same territory, I was surprised at the increased number of tea drinkers."

"Up to a few years ago in the more remote sections of the country tea was used almost exclusively in the sick room. Tea had to be bought in the country from the druggist. The man who dealt in general merchandise rarely thought of selling tea, unless he had a medicine counter in his store. Tea was something flimsy, something to be given to the convalescing patient, along with crackers, tasteless broth, and things of that sort."

"This is not the case now. Tea is bought in rather large quantities by country merchants, and the country folk use it for other than sick room purposes. It is extensively used throughout the country. "There is a still more interesting fact in connection with the growth of the tea trade. Negroes are now great tea consumers. You would be surprised at the amount of tea consumed by this element of the population. Using tea is a new thing with the negro element, but since they have gotten into the tea drinking habit they have vastly increased the consumption of the product. Yes, they have about quit using sassafras roots for tea making purposes, and this rather primitive drink is now used for its medicinal properties. It has exchanged places with the other tea. "These are some of the reasons for the increased consumption of tea. There are, of course, many other special and general causes for the new demand, and altogether the changes form a rather interesting subject so far as modern commerce is concerned."

Distinctive "Reading."

An aged colored man, who is well known to some of the attaches of the city hall, for whom he frequently does odd jobs at his homes, is familiarly called by the soubriquet of "Tute." One day "Tute" asked one of his many employers if he would kindly read a note for him, he request was complied with, and it proved to be a call upon "Tute's" services as a whitewasher and cleaner of collars. "Why, 'Tute,'" said the man, "this is very plainly written, and you surely ought to be able to read this yourself, for I have frequently seen you reading the papers." "Well, that's just it," replied "Tute." "Yes, I can't read writin' readin', but I kin read readin' readin'." This peculiar explanation revealed that "Tute" could manage to read print, but was unable to read writing.—Philadelphia Ledger.

A Diplomatic Reply.

"Does your wife open letters that are addressed to you?" casually inquired the friend.

Now, no man likes to admit that his mail is opened by another, and yet Higgins wished to be truthful.

"Not when they are delivered at my office," he replied.—Chicago Post.

An Indifference Center. Percy—I don't see how you keep so blamed cheerful and contented. Guy—Easy enough; I don't waste time or vitality thinking about the people who have more of this world's favors than I have. Detroit Free Press.