

ABOUT TELEPHONE NUMBERS.

Petitions from Subscribers to Have Their Calls Changed Are Numerous.

"Do you have many requests for a change of telephone numbers?" asked the caller of the head clerk, according to the New York Sun.

"Lots of them," said he. "The changes we really make are few in proportion to the whole number of wires but the petitions are numerous enough."

"What are some of the reasons advanced for desiring a change?" was asked.

"Oh," sighed the clerk, "they are manifold. Some folk don't like their numbers because they are hard to remember. It is a fact that there are not many sets of figures that are not easy to keep in mind. In direct contrast to this class of grumblers was the man who was in here an hour or so ago.

"My number is too handy," said he. "It is too easily remembered. Its 1,000 and everybody can remember it. I live in a big apartment house where, in addition to the office telephone, most of the families have wires of their own. But they don't need 'em. Whenever anybody wants to send them a message he calls up and asks us to deliver it. Whenever the other folks in our block tell their friends or relations to telephone them on any matter of business or social entertainment, they first mention their own number in a casual way, and they invariably add: 'But I know you can't remember it, and you needn't bother to look it up in the directory. Just call up Mr. Wilkinson and he will see that we get the message. His number is 1,000. You can remember that all right.' And they do that."

"That," continued the clerk, "was an unusual case and I promised the office to report his complaint to the committee first thing in the morning."

"Another case that lies at the root of many requests for change is the superstition of our subscribers. This is not the only number that is in ill repute. There are many people who have one certain number which, for individual reasons, they believe invariably brings them bad luck, and by chance that number is allotted to them by the telephone company. They are never satisfied until it is changed to something which, so far as they are concerned, has no taint of hoodoo.

"A good many complaints reach us from people whose number is the same as that of some prominent concern in another exchange and whose messages they frequently receive by mistake. Last month we made a change for a well-to-do chap who had two phones—one at his office and one at his residence. They were both the same number, only in different exchanges, and the poor fellow was kept in hot water half the time by the mixing of calls. Two-thirds of the private confidential communications that ought to have come to the office during business hours went to his house and the man was actually white-headed before we got him straightened out."

THE BALANCE OF POWER.

Warfare Among All the Species of Animals is Constantly Being Waged.

It is curious to observe how frequently the progress of an animal or plant race, otherwise triumphant, is liable to be checked by the attack of some enemy that appears suddenly, at least, often unexpectedly, on the scene. Especially is this event witnessed in the history of the insect world; and but for the operation of some such principle in nature we should be in danger of being overwhelmed by certain species, to the exclusion of many other forms, says the London Chronicle. There is no doubt that the insect tribes inflict much damage on crops and fruits, and in many cases render the efforts and works of the farmer and gardener null and void.

But, on the whole, the balance of power in nature is very fairly sustained. There is scarcely a species of animals which does not include in its history a list of particular foes, and the increase of the one race implies the undesirable attentions of the other. This warfare among insects especially, and between insects and birds, and even between insect species and lower plant foes, can be illustrated by numerous examples drawn from the experiences of naturalists.

One of the latest observations on this head relates to the Nemesis that follows the trail of the caterpillars known as the "army worms," which in Australia eat up and destroy the wallaby grass. This devastation is disastrous. Indeed, but the saving clause appears in the person of a certain microscopic fungus. This low plant organism, apparently following on the track of the caterpillars, attacks the insects, and kills them off by the thousand. Here the plant roots the animal, just as, in the case of the plague of field mice, which devastated not only Greece, but also the south of Scotland a few years ago, a certain bacillus or microbe, cultivated and spread over the fields, afflicted the mice, killed them off, and restored peace to the farmers' souls.

A Grand Old Tortoise.

The most curious reminder of Holland's way in Ceylon is a living creature, a grand old tortoise, supposed to have belonged to one of the Dutch governors, some 200 years ago. He is very docile and ever ready to attract the attention of anyone who is likely to offer him plantain. The tortoise is so large that he can carry several boys on his back at one time. London News.

PERSONAL AND LITERARY.

The Bronte society, of England, is to undertake the compilation of a Bronte dictionary, the expense of which will be borne by one of the members.

De Quincy commonly wrote one of his essays in a week. He never hurried himself, and wrote slowly to avoid what to him was the disagreeable task of revision.

Paul Deschanel, president of the chamber of deputies, is the only French politician of note who has ambitions in the direction of fashionable society. In furthering these he is assisted by a popular, beautiful and wealthy wife.

A Lucerne newspaper writes that a man who recently traveled through Switzerland—a Belgian count—was much annoyed by being taken for Dreyfus. People crowded about him and stared and would not believe what he said about himself till he showed his card.

John Caldwell, of Pittsburg, well known as a financier and an electrical expert, makes a trip to New York about every month for the purpose of buying books, and his collection of first editions of modern authors and of Kellogg's volumes is one of the finest in the country.

That there are or have been humorists in Russia is recalled by the announcement that the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the Russian humorist Gogol is to be celebrated at Moscow on March 2, 1902, by the unveiling of a monument in his memory. Three prizes for models have been offered.

Bancroft devoted nearly 30 years to his "History of the United States," which is not a history of the United States at all, since it ends where the history of the country properly begins. Had the work been issued on the same scale down to the present, 75 or 80 volumes would have been required.

In a recent conversation with a friend Count Tolstoi referred to the effect of age in freeing the mind from dependence on the body. As a young man, he said, any bodily illness depressed his mind also, whereas in his present illness the mind has retained all its freshness and power of lucid thinking.

NOVEL GLASS BLOWING.

Compressed Air is Now Used Instead of the Human Breath.

Up to the present time the art of blowing glassware by means of compressed air has been limited to bottles and similar articles of small size, but a process is being exploited in Germany, the invention of Paul Sievert, of Dresden, by which bath-tubs and other large tanks can be made with the greatest ease. This process of blowing such articles originated in this country at Pittsburg just 20 years ago, but it has remained for a foreigner to perfect it, and Mr. Sievert says that there is almost no limit to the size of the articles which can be made by his process, reports the Patent Record. He has already made a number of bath-tubs which are said to have many advantages over those of metal and porcelain, the principal one being the economy of the glass. The tub is five feet six inches long, and about two feet wide, and consists of one piece of solid glass about two inches and a half in thickness. This thing was made complete in about five minutes. The other things shown are made for special manufacturing purposes, and Mr. Sievert thinks that he will soon be able to supply all the tanks and vats used in the various arts and industries for which clay, wood, cement and metal are now used, notably by brewers, distillers, fruit preservers and sugar refiners.

The method of manufacturing these articles is said to be very simple. The glass is taken from the furnace while at red heat, and in a liquid form, and placed in the mold, which may be readily swung into any desired position. Compressed air is then admitted through a flexible tube which connects with the bottom of the mold, the flow through which can be regulated by means of valves. As soon as the article is finished it is carried by a mechanical device to an annealing chamber, where it is again heated and then allowed to cool, after which process it is ready for use.

A Noah's Ark Handicap.

At a fancy fair got up the other day on a race course near Paris in aid of a military hospital, the chief attraction was a sort of Noah's ark handicap race. The trainers were ladies, who had their work out for them in the capacity of drivers as well. One sports-woman brought a guinea fowl, another a cock, a third a guinea pig. Others drove, pushed or pulled a tortoise, a duck, a hare, a rabbit, a sheep and a pigeon respectively. The guinea pig passed the winning post first, the hare, who started scratch, having gone off on a tangent, with its despairing mistress running after it, while the tortoise was sure, but too slow, and the others could not be got to finish the course, except the duck, which took second place. London Telegraph.

War's Wastage of Horses.

Roughly speaking, a corps requires to be remounted every four months, but one cavalry regiment records the staggering figure of 4,000 animals in a little over a year. It was the general opinion of experts that the members of the Household Cavalry proved themselves the best "caretakers" and, despite their heavy weight, got as much work out of their mounts as any cavalry in the field. There was even one instance of a troop horse weathering the whole campaign and returning fit and well to ceremonial duties in London. London Mail.

WIT AND WISDOM.

Selfishness is the father of misery and jealousy is the mother-in-law. Chicago Daily News.

The people who are always harping on their troubles will probably never be troubled with harps.—Ran's Horn.

The girl of sixteen who is proud of her beauty is warned to be humble. Has she never heard how long the bloom stays on the poppy?—Aitchison Globe.

All He Had.—"Callow—"When a fellow shaves himself it is necessary to share up against the grain?" Sallow—"What do you want to know, for? You'll only have to shave down."—Philadelphia Press.

On Their Wedding Trip.—"How can any one ask if marriage is a failure? Why, I wouldn't be single again for worlds." "She—"But suppose I were to die?" "He—"Oh, then, I'd get married again."—Town and Country.

An Absolute Necessity.—"Mr. Chairman," said the delegate from Upchereck, "if we are going to be so equipped that we can let slip the dogs of war, we have got to have more ocean greyhounds in our navy."—Baltimore American.

"So many of these city hunters mistake you for deer," said the Maine woodsman, "that I am going to wear a cowbell." "But people will make game of you," interposed his wife. "Well, they'll make game of me if I don't wear it."—Philadelphia Record.

The Son of the Naturalist.—The naturalist was angry at his mischievous son. "Young man," he sharply said, "when I get you in the house I will take great pleasure in giving you a handsome licking." The boy looking around. "You must excuse dad," he said to the assembled guests. "Sometimes he's a little careless in his pronunciation. It's really a lichen that he means to give me. Ain't it pa?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

INVESTED IN GOLF COURSES.

Over Thirty Clubs in Chicago That Have Cost Upwards of a Million Dollars.

According to H. J. Tweedie, an authority on golf in Chicago, the 30 or more golf clubs supported by the city represent an investment of \$1,000,000 in grounds, while the cost each year to members is something almost past guessing, says the Tribune of that city.

"One million dollars is a low estimate on golf grounds," said Mr. Tweedie. "Some clubs own the land, while others lease it, but in any case the grounds have to be prepared, sodded, bunkered and perhaps provided with water hazards.

"A good golf grounds needs at least 200 acres. Two hundred acres of good grounds in easy reach of Chicago would cost \$200 an acre for the land alone. Several clubs as large as this—The Ontonagon, Wheaton, Homewood and Midlothian clubs—have 200 acres or more each. The Midlothian, for instance, spent \$35,000 on a club house alone, while it has cost some of the others \$100,000 to complete houses, fences and fields. In three of these grounds the water hazards are nature's work, but the Wheaton club pumps water into an artificial pond.

"There are between 30 and 35 clubs in Chicago. Some of the grounds are as far away as Wisconsin, but they are supported by Chicago people.

"Now, as golf enthusiasts can play through a season for less than \$250, counting fares, fees to caddies and new equipment for the field. There are individuals who pay ten times as much for the pleasure of the game. One man in Chicago, for instance, has 128 drivers alone, with other clubs in proportion. These 128 drivers, at \$250 each, represent \$320. I doubt if anybody who plays golf at all spends less than \$30 as the season's legitimate expenses."

An average golf player of moderate means cannot equip himself for the game under \$20. The enthusiast may spend \$300 or \$400 without being considered extravagant. Counting a possible 3,000 golf players of all degrees in Chicago, it has been figured that they pay out not far from \$450,000 a year for the game.

With many of these players railroad fares are necessary and form a considerable portion of the expense. Care of grounds and the fees of the caddies are items of expense that are heavy in the aggregate. Club dues and clubhouse bills are in proportion, so that a golf suit and a selection of golf clubs are only a beginning of the game.

From the first pep of green in the spring until the first, or even the second snow, the Chicago golf enthusiast finds an open season for the game. It may cost the city thousands of dollars annually, but every golf player is confident that he has his money's worth when the snow and cold at last put an end to putting and to the job of the caddy.

Locomotives Are Clumsy.

There seems to be no present help for it, but the existent style of locomotive is at best a clumsy mechanism. The crank principle must be done away with before 100 miles an hour can be reached for long journeys. Recovery retards the progress of the boat. The forward motion is accompanied by a series of jerks. In an eight-oared boat the blades should not enter and leave the water at the same time, but should work in alternation. The forward motion of the crank helps the engine, while the backward motion retards it, and between the two the mechanism is gradually shaken to pieces. By ascending strength to speed a rotary engine might be built that would make 100 miles an hour at all distances. The high speed of electric motors is derived from the rotary principle.—N. Y. Press.

EVILS OF STREET LIFE

Unspeakable Sights and Sounds of a Great City.

Where the Criminals Are Schooled and Young Lives Ruined by the Vulgarity and Indecency of Corrupt Associations.

Street life and its influence in shaping the character of the children of a great city has been the subject of much study by the University Settlement Society of New York. Frederick King, who has investigated the condition of East side life personally, in a report submitted to the society gives the result of his observations.

"Aside from the mischievousness of youngsters from which the shopkeepers and push-cart peddlers constantly suffer, small crowds of boys and girls are not infrequently guilty of pure maliciousness in their actions, as, for example, in closely following and abusing some intoxicated person who passes through the streets. The effect upon the boys and girls of the vulgarity and all the unspeakable sights and sounds of the streets reflects itself not only in their actions, which are partly excusable because of their surroundings, but also most remarkably in their language. The children certainly cannot realize the meaning of much of the language which they use, and this fact only heightens a certain element of grotesqueness which one often finds in their speech.

In one of the poorer neighborhoods a child of four years was overheard to say to his mother, who had threatened him with paternal discipline: 'If papa touches me —' and then followed an expression which was simply astonishing, coming from so young a child. The mother remarked to an on-looker: 'Oh, ain't that awful the way he's cursin', and only a little while ago I licked him so for it. I had to pay two dollars doctor's bills afterward.' And this answer shows plainly the kind of discipline by which only too often a parent expects to control his child, both in the home and on the street.

It is sufficient to say that the evil effects of the vice of the streets upon the younger boys and girls and their own attitude toward such vice are simply heart-breaking to one who has seen conditions as they actually exist.

"Among fellows of 14 and over shooting 'craps' on the street corners is a common failing, which often leads to the commitment of the offender to a juvenile asylum, or at least makes it easy for him to take the next step, which is gambling at cards, in the numerous cafes of the district. Rolling the 'bones' is a serious evil among the older fellows, and allowances of 'Sunday money' often given by the parents, as well as the week's wages, may disappear in an evening. A most serious evil in the street life of the older boys and girls is their behavior toward one another. Many tenement rooms in the summer are almost unbearable on account of the heat, and are overcrowded at other times, and as a result boys and girls and young men and women of respectable families are almost obliged to carry on many of their friendships, and perhaps their love-making, on tenement stoops or on street corners. It is easy to imagine the result when those who are inclined toward vulgar and improper relations take advantage of such a condition of affairs, and also to imagine the counter effect upon those of respectable character.

"A most important factor in street life, and one which easily escapes the chance observer, is the 'tough' gang. These gangs are made up of fellows from six or eight to twenty years of age, who are popularly known as 'graffers' or pickpockets. They are the element which in time recruit the ranks of the city's low criminal classes and add to the unstable body of unskilled labor which contributes so largely to the populations of prisons and poorhouses. The members of the 'tough' gang either come from the poorest homes or from homes where plenty of money is given them by their parents, and where there is a corresponding lack of incentive on their part to earn an honest living. Their 'hang-outs' are on the street corners, in alleyways and in pool-rooms frequented only by boys and young men, where gambling at cards goes on openly.

"The relations of girls of 15 to 18 years of age with 'tough' gangs are particularly bad, girls of that age being regularly seen on street corners and at the 'hang-outs' of the gangs until a late hour of the night. It is under such conditions that young fellows develop into frequenters of the lowest type of dance halls, where working girls of 18 and 20 are turned into professional prostitutes, and the young men become procurers for the houses which have given such an evil reputation to the neighborhood.

"The life of the street is at its best a rough school of experience."

An Old Fishing Fleet.

The great North sea fishing fleet, known as the short blue trawlers, which for a century had headquarters at Yarmouth, after having been withdrawn from sea for some time has been finally dispersed, the last of the vessels, which formerly numbered 400 and employed 1,500 men and boys, being sold by auction. This fleet was unable to be profitably worked on account of the North sea being overfished by steam trawlers. The prices realized were remarkably low, the highest being \$600, while there were many vessels disposed of at \$120, \$150, \$175 and \$200 each. Some of the purchasers were Dutchmen.—N. Y. Sun.

DANGER IN CHILD DREAMS.

Death and Disaster Have Frequently Resulted from Terrible Nightmares.

"There is more danger in child dreams than one would suppose," said a well-known physician, reports the New Orleans Times-Democrat, "and really but few persons understand how close to death the child is when passing through one of these fearful frights of the night. Nightmares frequently kill grown persons and these horrible dreams which come to the child life are of the same kind. This is why I have always bitterly opposed telling children horrible tales. There is nothing to be gained by it. The average child cannot be frightened into doing the right thing. A child is inclined to do the wrong thing a horrible tale will not keep him from doing it. On the contrary, horrible results may follow the horrible impression which the child gathers from the story told. Bad dreams, a night of nervousness and tumbling and rolling and broken sleep will follow.

"But there is an even greater danger in the possible death of the child from shock. Deaths on this account may not be common among children, but a good percent of the persons who are found dead in bed after having retired at night apparently in good health die from this cause. It is called heart failure, and this is what it really is. But the question of what causes the heart to fail in its action is given but little thought. Now, in many of these cases shock—pure shock—caused by some horrible dream is responsible for the death of the person. He may have dreamed that he was shot through the heart, or through some other vital organ of the body, and may die before he can arouse himself from his slumber. Generally the prompt awakening will save the person, but under other circumstances the person will die before he can come into possession of his faculties.

"Children are very much shocked by bad dreams. They sometimes find themselves pursued by a wild animal, and they dream that they are unable to run, and wake up in a most horrible condition mentally and physically. But probably the most dangerous form of child dream is the thought, very common among sleeping children, that they are experiencing a long fall. They generally wake up before they strike the bottom of the place into which they are falling and the heart resumes its normal action. These dreams are very dangerous, and it is a wonder to me that more children are not killed. They get awfully close to death's door, and the waking is generally a fortunate thing."

POPULAR DRESS FABRICS.

Those That Are Favored by the Fashionables for Skirts and Bodices.

Taffeta again takes its place as a favorite lining for skirts and bodices. The rustling effect of this weave of silk became so universal that ultra-fashionable women eschewed it on that account, electing for soft-eling, noiseless silk or satin—the firm well-wearing American surahs being greatly favored. These silks certainly last much longer than taffetas, but taffeta's spry use is pronounced more reliable than any weave of the kind yet produced, owing to the new sort of leaves the voracious little silk-worms devour before they begin to weave their small, wonderful white shrouds of silk about them. It is the gentle swish of these fabrics that most women like, proclaiming the silk lining as the wearer walks, and imparting a certain attractive elegance to the simplest gown or costume. This faint frou-frou is never, however, to be confounded with the terrible rattle that so many cheap silk linings produce. Their wearers seem to imagine that it has the effect of a rich taffeta, but never was greater mistake made. The sound is as offensive and objectionable to many ears as if the rattler of the skirt blew a penny trumpet or rang a dinner bell, says the New York Post.

The tucking of fabrics of every description has become a fine art. Rows of perfectly laid tucks on a gown are one of the most economical ways of trimming it. None the less it is desirable from a decorative point of view, and it is really wonderful how many chic and charming changes have been produced on waists, jackets, skirts and toilets entire by this simple yet effective means. The fashion has lost not a shade in popularity, either here or abroad. There are wide, medium, narrow and mere well tucks, separate or in combination; tucks horizontal, vertical, diagonal, with or without rows of insertion between; in short, the mode is still put to uses infinite, and as a simple form of decoration it cannot be surpassed. It is now employed on gowns appropriate to wearers of every age, from the infant in arms to the grandmother in caps and spectacles—of caps, by the way, were not condemned in these days to total obscurity, and longettes substituted for "specs" by youthfully attired "grandmothers."

A Long Decree.

A curious deed is on file in Northumberland county, Pa. It bears date of October 9, 1793. In a series of whereas it traces the ownership of the land conveyed from the Creator of the earth, who "by parole and liverey of seizin did entice the parents of mankind, to wit, Adam and Eve, of all that certain tract of land called and known in the planetary system of the earth" down through the ages to the maker of the deed.—N. Y. Sun.

STILL WORSHIP FIRE.

Savages in the United States Who Stick to Old Beliefs.

Some Indians Create Combustion with Strange Mechanism After the Manner of Australian Blacks.

Some of the methods still pursued by savage races at the opening of the twentieth century for producing fire are very interesting, says the Chicago American.

The Zuni Indians of North America use an agave stick with sand to help the friction.

In the National museum at Washington is a collection of objects illustrative of fire worship on the American continent.

One article is a sort of fire pump, utilized by the Onondago at the feast of the White Dog, at which a white dog is sacrificed. This tool utilizes the mechanism of the pump drill for making the point of a stick revolve rapidly in another piece of wood, thus obtaining ignition. It resembles the apparatus in vogue among the Australian blacks.

The Hindus, by the way, have a similar sacred fire drill, by means of which they make fire nine times each day for nine days at a periodical festival. The Hupa Indians of California are remarkably expert framers. With a couple of simple sticks of soft mesquite wood they can produce fire in ten seconds.

The dwarfs of the Andaman islands of the Indian ocean until quite recently did not know how to make fire. On one of the islands of the archipelago is an active volcano, from which they were accustomed formerly to obtain fresh supplies of fire at intervals. Special expeditions for this purpose were not often necessary, inasmuch as they knew how to keep the fire smoldering in decayed wood for an indefinite length of time. They believe in purification by fire, and to this end they literally wash themselves in it. The feasts they perform with it far exceed the most wonderful act of fire-eating and fire-handling accomplished by civilized jugglers. Their fire festival is a periodical institution, and in preparation for it a gigantic heap of dry wood is gathered from the desert.

At the appointed moment the great pile of inflammable brush is lighted, and in a few moments the whole of it is in one blaze. A stream of sparks flies 100 feet or more in the air, and ashes fall about like a shower of snow. The ceremony always takes place at night, and the effect of it is both weird and impressive.

Just when the fire is raging at its hottest a whistle is heard from the outer darkness, and a dozen warriors, lithe and lean, dressed in narrow white breech cloths and mocassins, are daubed with white earth, so as to look like so many living statues, come bounding through the center of the corral that encloses the flaming heap. Yelling like demons, they move toward the fire, bearing aloft slender wands, tipped with balls of eagle down. Running down the fire, always to the left, they begin thrusting their wands toward the fire to burn off the down from the tips.

This done, another performance follows. It is heralded by a tremendous blowing of horns. Ten or more men run into the corral, each of them carrying two thick bundles of shredded cedar bark. Four times they run around the fire, waving the bundles, which are then lighted. Now begins a wild race around the fire, the rapid running causing the brands to throw out long streamers of flame over the hands and arms of the dancers.

The latter apply the brands to their own nude bodies and to the bodies of their comrades in front. A warrior will seize the flaming mass as if it were a sponge, and, keeping close to the man he is pursuing, will rub his back with it, as if barbing him. The sufferer in his turn catches up with the man in front of him and bathes him in flame. From time to time dancers sponge their own backs with the flaming brands. The spectators pick up the flaming bunches, thus dropped and bathe their own hands in the fire.

The Oyster.

Oysters are widely distributed throughout the world. Their chief habitats are in the United States and in France, with scattering colonies in England, Holland and other places. But the whole number in other parts of the world is inconsiderable as compared with that in the United States. Maryland alone produces twice as many oysters as the rest of the world put together. Oysters and poverty, Dickens says, go together, but it is not so in this country. Baltimore cans an immense number for both foreign and domestic consumption, the residue from which is enormous. The Indians of America, before the discovery of America, used them in great quantities. Near the mouth of St. John's river, Florida, there is a forest-land extending over 50 feet in height, extending over many acres of ground, consisting entirely of old oyster shells.—E. Meade Bache, in New Lippincott.

Capital Punishment in the States.

Capital punishment has been restored to the statute books by the Colorado legislature, in the hope that the deplorable lynching record of the Centennial state may be interrupted and redeemed by observance of the laws. Among the 45 states of the union, Rhode Island, Maine, Michigan and Wisconsin are now the only communities in which the penalty of a life for a life is not exacted under terms of statutory enactment.—Ledger Monthly.