

A CONFUSION OF DATES.

Now Alaska and the Philippines Keep Their Calendars with the World.

Whereabouts—if there be a whereabouts at all—on the earth's surface is the place where the "day" may be considered to begin, and where the "date" consequently has to be changed?

A "day," of course, is a reality—it is the time occupied by the earth in making one rotation on its axis. But as so defined every meridian on the earth's surface has a "day" of its own. But it would be impossible to regulate human affairs upon the basis of each meridian having its own "day."

It is a matter of necessity to reckon, according to the day of some selected station, says the Glasgow Evening Times. Formerly each nation was wont to reckon time from a station of its own—whence came much confusion, affecting many questions. Nowadays, however, practically the whole world has agreed to take Greenwich as the selected station—to make it the general "first meridian."

Thus, then, the Greenwich "day" begins at the 180 degrees east meridian. The "date," therefore, must change there, or otherwise intolerable confusion would result. Compromise, therefore, has as a necessary complement to the general agreement adopted the Greenwich "day," the using of the 180 degrees east meridian as the basis of the "date line" or line of boundary at which the date is changed.

Though it mostly traverses ocean, the 180 degree meridian crosses land at a few points; and in order to avoid the confusion inevitable with a change of date on land, the actual date line is allowed to deviate somewhat from the true meridian line at certain points.

The date lines recognized by the admiralty and by the United States navy are almost the same. The meridian crosses an island of the Fiji group, and in consequence, were it not for a convenient deviation, its inhabitants might, if they chose, enjoy the puzzlement of passing from today into tomorrow, and returning from tomorrow into yesterday.

As a matter of fact, some queer things resulted in Alaska when it was Russian territory. For the Russians, having come by way of Siberia, had brought their own calendar with them; while the Canadians, who had come westward, had brought theirs. So on the frontier line it might be Sunday and church time for the Russians and Saturday and market day for their neighbors.

In the Philippines the difficulty also made itself felt at one time, inasmuch as, while within the sphere of the Asiatic date, they used the American one, the Spaniards having first reached them from the American side. It thus happened that Luzon and Celebes, though on the same meridian, employed opposite modes of reckoning.

Towns Kept the Trees. A grove of handsome pine trees borders the highway near the town of Easton, Me., forming one of the natural beauties of the place. It seems that a practical lumberman wanted the trees and offered the town authorities \$3,000 for them, enough to pay the entire municipal debt, but the town preferred keeping the trees.—N. Y. Sun.

Collisions to Avoid. Jack—We live in a wonderfully free city. Jonas—Oh, I don't know; our ancestors were afraid of Indians and bears, but we go around town in mortal terror of electric cars and automobiles.—Detroit Free Press.

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THE JAPANESE WOMAN.

She is Not a Slave, as Some Suppose, But the Antiest and Idol of the Home.

"No race can rise higher than its mothers." Japanese women are essentially a race of mothers, and the care and rearing of their children occupies so much of their time and thought that they are unable to have that extensive social life their western sisters enjoy, even were it not for the etiquette which makes it actually rashable for them to find their pleasures in their homes, writes Onoto Watanna, in Home and Flowers.

Many have imputed to Japanese women in consequence a lack of knowledge and undue meekness, regarding them as little more than servants of their families and husbands. Such criticism is purely superficial and far from being accurate; indeed, it is very inaccurate.

The position of a Japanese woman is a high one. She is addressed as "Okusama," the honorable lady of the house, and she is treated with the greatest consideration and respect by her husband and her family. Far from being a meek, slavish creature of the household, she is more of the mentor, the autocrat and idol of the home. In domestic affairs, she has full control. Her duties are onerous, but never repugnant to her. They consist of managing the household, practicing economy, making her home pleasant both in appearance and by her cheerfulness of disposition, and the education and instruction of her children, for even after the children have entered school they are still under her tutelage.

As her home is therefore her world, it is only natural that it has become the inherent instinct of the Japanese women to lavish the greatest love and tenderness upon their homes, and to expend much time and thought in endeavoring to make them as attractive and as pleasant as possible.

Her house is the acme of purity. To a western eye the aspect of the interior of a Japanese house may at first seem bare and barren. In truth, the Japanese abhor decoration of any kind, and consider it not only unattractive, but extremely vulgar. "I was once shown a so-called 'Japanese room' in the house of a Chicago millionaire, and I am quite sure that the same Japanese housewife would have thought herself in the room of some insane person, or else in some curiosity shop. Such a profusion of articles scattered broadcast about the room! Such a frightful display of mixed-up ornaments hanging to the wall!

THERE IS NO SPORT IN IT.

Northern Indiana Do Not Take Pleasure in Securing Venison for Their Larders.

A New Yorker who lives a small fraction of the time in the city, being usually long distances away in pursuit of game, tells of the method pursued by the Indians of British Columbia in taking deer, says the New York Tribune. They have evolved a system, this hunter says, that shows practical skill and sympathy and knowledge of natural conditions. To begin with, do not hunt deer for the pleasure of hunting. They go for deer as a housekeeper goes to market for beef. And what's more, in British Columbia, at any rate, they don't go often. Salmon are plentiful in the waters and are easily caught. So, why chase animals when they can secure fish? It is something as it is in Newfoundland, where I went a couple of seasons ago. There the prevailing fish, as you might say, is cod; and though there is no end to the variety of edible fish that can be taken, the natives never think of eating anything else. Cod is plentiful, and they form the habit, I suppose. This is so ingrained that they call codfish "fish" simply. The genus is divided into cod and the rest of fish.

"Well, when the British Columbia Indian makes up his mind for venison, he goes at it systematically and without sentiment. A group of half-a-dozen or ten men split and take either end of a valley. They proceed along the mountain slope from the two ends to the center. They choose the sheltered side of the valley on which the deer seek to escape the wind. Each party covers the mountain side, some near the foot and some at the top, and others between the lines, keeping abreast by an imitated owl hoot. The deer, on "winding" pursuit, have the trick of leaping away down the slope, unlike the goats, which go up, and thus, between the two approaching parties, they are swept together at the middle of the valley. A good sized herd will thus be killed off and the Indians supplied for many weeks by two or three days' exertion."

Must Keep Their Promises. Barnum would have had sailing down in Mexico. The Latin races do not have the love for humbugs that is characteristic of Anglo-Saxons. If an American is "biked" he enjoys seeing his neighbor go against the same game, but that is not true of a Mexican. If a man advertises an attraction and fails to produce it exactly as advertised he gets into serious trouble with Mexico. Theatergoers insist on having all performances up to specifications and go out of their way to see the managers punished who attempt to defraud the public. The sphere of the press agent is limited in that country. Many managers who are not familiar with the customs and laws of Mexico have found themselves behind the bars because they posted paper picturing acts which were not reproduced faithfully.—Chicago Chronicle.

HAIR AND INTELLECT.

Inferences About the Subsoil from the Top Crop—Artists and Children Prove the Rule.

Some curious statistics relating to hair have been collected by the school authorities at Lille. Thus, the auburn-haired boys are generally at the head of the recitation classes, and the blonde girls learn their lessons best, says Louis de Truth. Auburn boys and blonde lasses come out highest as arithmeticians. But in composition they are nowhere. The dark-haired children of both sexes have the quality of imagination, and in their compositions know how not to fatigue the attention. They have movement and originality. In short, they seem, as compared to the auburns and blondes, born stylists. Now, that I think of it, Sarah Bernhardt is, or was, auburn-haired, and Mme. Bartet had light brown hair 25 years ago—so light as to be almost fair. I should not call the late Mme. Jacques Stern (Crozette) in the heyday of her charms a blonde. But she had a darkish shade of fair hair that looked like heavy sheeny floss silk, and the ruddiness that one associates with auburn. Mme. Sarny was also fair without being exactly blond.

I dare say the auburn boys and blonde lasses in the Lille elementary schools are of Flemish, that is to say plebeian, race. Their brains do not grow at once congested when they stand up to recite and for that reason they keep the mastery of the vocal organs. In short, they continue to know what they are about. The dark children are probably of Celtic, that is to say Gallic, origin. The blood comes with a rush to their brains, and they grow confused, splutter, and break down. If they could only be taught to remain silent for a few moments, they would be all the better for this rush, as the confusion would have passed away, leaving only stimulated mental organs. Goldsmith, who was dark, always began by being confused in conversation. O'Connell wore a black wig, but his real hair in youth was auburn. I recollect very old people who heard him plead in his prime speak of it as such. His readiness was wonderful. But perhaps he might not have recited so well what somebody else had written.

I have rarely heard a great French orator recite. The president of the republic was one of the few, and he reached perfection in reciting Voltaire's verses to Emile Gambetta, in a low, sweet voice, recited sometimes passages from his favorite poets. Thiers could commit nothing to memory in the way of a poem or a speech by another orator. He had himself too much to say to incubate his mind with the writings of others. Louis Blanc shone, however, in reciting dramatic passages from Corneille and Racine, but his brother Charles—a fair, Jewish-looking man, not unlike the first Baron James de Rothschild—best him in declamation at the ecclesiastical school where they passed their youth. Charles Blanc triumphed in both masculine and feminine parts, and drew tears from his reverend preceptor's eyes as Andromaque. Louis was best as Polyxene or the Cid. Imagine wee Louis Blanc giving the illusion of that heroic warrior! Victor Hugo never seemed grander than in reading some noble work of his own. An old passport given to him in his twenty-seventh year speaks of him as having auburn hair, long and remarkably thick. I heard him recite the "To be or not to be" soliloquy as translated by his son Francois. Did he not throw expression into it!

To come back to stage people, the two Coquelins are fair. Mlle. Schneider, who rather recited than sang in the operettas of Offenbach, was remarkably fair. It may be that the late Queen Victoria would have read her speeches less well had she been a brunette. Rachel is an illustrious instance on the other side. I do not know whether her rival and supplanter Ristori should be classed among the dark or fair actresses. When I made her acquaintance the early color of her hair and complexion had departed. She had a fair-haired brother who suddenly became white-haired. He used to teach Italian, however, in a singing school.

Finally, on the subject of hair, I am sorry to say that the red-headed boys and girls in the Lille schools—les roux et les rousses—are at the bottom in everything save in good conduct marks. Nor are they remarkable for good health. The dark boys behave better than the auburn of the fair, and are more sensitive to praise or blame.

Quarins is a Vandal. A peculiar alteration made by the czarins has been much talked about and criticized in St. Petersburg. She has had the study of Alexander II, which up to now has been preserved untouched, turned into a bathroom. In this room Alexander II. signed the manifesto which abolished serfdom in Russia, and thus gave liberty to 23,000,000 of his subjects. "However long I may live I shall never be able to do a better deed," Alexander said when he had signed it. He expressed the wish that the room should remain just as it was. For 40 years nobody touched this sacred spot. But now, by order of the czarina, all the documents and historical records have been put into a lumber room. The imperial library in St. Petersburg has taken steps to have at least the historical documents saved.—N. Y. Commercial Advertiser.

Oil Massage for Consumption. At a sanitarium near Melbourne, a massage with olive oil or cod liver oil has been found a great aid in shortening the time of treatment for consumption.—London Lancet.

FOREIGN GOSSIP.

Wales has practically doubled its population in the last 60 years. Quails are now said to be extinct in Ireland, where they were formerly to be found in great numbers.

A German tourist reports that on the upper Amazon river it is customary to keep large harmless snakes about the houses for the purpose of killing rats and other vermin.

The Kobe Chronicle, speaking of the Imperial iron foundry in Japan, says that it has proved a failure because of the limited supply of ore in that country, and that the government hopes to secure the privilege of working the rich Hangang iron mine in China.

There are 806 trees to every square mile of territory in Germany, in the following proportions: Plum, 332; apple, 251; pear, 119; and cherry, 104. There are about three trees to every inhabitant. Many of the trees are owned by the townships, being planted along the highways, and the fruit yields a considerable revenue, thus reducing taxes.

The shortage of doctors in Russia is the subject of an article in St. Petersburg journal, which publishes statistics of the proportion of doctors in other European countries per 100,000 inhabitants. Great Britain heads the list with 180, Switzerland has 52, Germany 30, and Russia 8. In order to bring the percentage to the same level as Great Britain, Russia will have to have 130,000 doctors. At present there are only about 17,000.

A highly colored sample of red tape is sent over from England in the news of the failure of Second Lieut. Burke, of the Fourth East Surrey regiment of militia, to pass the medical examination for appointment to the regular British army. Mr. Burke served in South Africa, and stood high on the list of successful candidates at a recent examination. In Africa he distinguished himself and proved the power of his eyes by discovering that an approaching body of men was composed of Boers and not of British. Yet when the learned doctors came to examine his eyes they reported them as bad because he could not read by electric light. In a London fog, the regulation "three lines of letters" and so his earned commission is not to be given to him.

SPOILED 2,000,000 BALLS.

Women Are Kept Busy All Winter Long Making Baseballs for the Summer's Supply.

More than 2,000,000 baseballs were used up in this country during last season, and 1,000 or more women will be kept busy all winter making 2,000,000 more for next season. A member of one of the largest sporting goods firms in this country said the other day:

"I should put 2,000,000 as a conservative number. They include all grades. Fully one half were of the cheapest kind—the retail 5-cent ball. There is not much money in that, as you can see, when these balls have to be sold 2 1/2 cents apiece. From that low price there is a gradually ascending scale in price and quality, running through the 10, 15, 25, 30 and 75 cent lines up to \$1 and \$1.25, the latter being the price for the official league ball.

"This is the standard ball for use in all National and American league games and a number of minor leagues, including the intercollegiate. It, therefore, has an extensive sale. I should say that 250,000 of the more expensive balls are sold. That will convey some idea of the number of league and association games that are played all over the country. The demand for baseballs is always a steady one, and does not fluctuate to any appreciable extent."

The manufacture of baseballs does not give employment to so large a number of persons as might be supposed, says the New York Times. About 1,000 persons, mostly in New York, make the entire supply. Women take hundreds of these balls to their homes and sew them, particularly the cheaper varieties. The sewing of the more expensive league balls is a more scientific matter, and is done only by veteran baseball stitchers. New York, Philadelphia and Massachusetts are the chief places of baseball manufacture.

Private Mailing Cards.

The newest thing in private mailing cards in this country is a card with places in it made translucent, to represent say, windows. Openings are stamped out of the body of the card which is then backed with a thin, orange-tinted paper that will let light through when the card is held up to it, but which is of such a character that it can be written over without blotting. Here, for example, is a card with a picture of the New York post office, as seen from the south. The light spaces in this are the window openings and a crescent moon shows above. There are light spaces also in these buildings seen to the left up Broadway, none of these translucent spots being observable as such when the card is being handled in the ordinary manner. But hold the card up to the light and you have a picture of the New York post office by night.—N. Y. Journal.

Town Pigeons.

The increase in bird life in the metropolis is not one of the least striking of the many changes which have come about of late years within the sound of Westminster bells. Scarcely less noticeable than the irruption of wild species, though as yet little commented on, is the enormous increase in the numbers of the enormous increase in the numbers of the tame pigeons haunting our London streets.—London Field.

FISH WITH THEIR HANDS.

One of the Several Methods Employed by the Hawaiian Fishermen in Taking Big Fish.

A preliminary report on an investigation of the fisheries of the Hawaiian Islands made by David Starr Jordan, president of Leland Stanford Junior university, and Dr. Barton W. Evermann, ichthyologist of the United States commission of fish and fisheries, which is now made public in the form of a departmental bulletin, contains much interesting information concerning the customs and methods of fishing of the natives of the island, says the New York Times.

Probably the most interesting side of the native fisheries revealed in the report is that which relates to fishing with hook and line and with the hand. The bonito is the fish most generally caught with hook and line, and as the hook used is of mother-in-pearl, made from the shell of a mollusk now quite rare which glazes with an iridescence similar to the shimmer from the scales of the smaller kinds of fish on which the bonito lives, no bait is needed. The barb of these hooks is of bone, and two tufts of hog's bristles attached at right angles to the barbed end keep the inner side up, so that the hook lies flat on the surface of the sea. When a likely fishing ground has been reached the fishermen, standing up in the canoe, cast out his line violently so that the hook falls with a slap on the water and attracts the attention of the fish. The line and hook are then drawn rapidly toward the boat, as though it were a spoon, and the bonito, taking the hook to be a small fish, rises to it immediately. It is fortunate for the fisherman that he has to waste no time in baiting his hook for this method of casting frightens the school and the fish disappear within ten or fifteen minutes. An ingenious plan by which very large fish are caught is by planting a long pole on the shore in such a position as to cause it to lean decidedly toward the water. On the top of this a bell is arranged to the pole close to the top, and a long line, with baited hook at the end, is run through the block and allowed to float out to sea, the land end being tied in a ship to the bottom of the pole. As soon as a fish is hooked its struggles cause the bell to ring, whereupon the fisherman runs to the pole, loosens the slipknot, and plays the fish until he has drowned it, when it is hauled ashore.

"In fishing for octopus," says the report, "the native dives to the bottom, and with a stick pokes around in the small holes in which the octopus lives. When he touches one it seizes the stick and allows him to draw it out of the hole. When he reaches the surface the native grabs it with his hands and bites into the head, thus killing the animal."

DISEASE IN HAVANA.

Elaborate Precautions Taken by the Medical Experts to Prevent Its Spread.

"Isolation as is isolation" is the method of the Havana sanitary authorities for the treatment of infectious disease, reports the Philadelphia Medical Record. Indeed, they are so proud of their system that they do not hesitate to receive cases of yellow fever into the city itself. When a ship, say from Vera Cruz, arrives with two or three cases of yellow fever on board, it is not anchored at some distance from the city, and the miserable passengers and crews compelled to take all the risks of becoming victims of the disease and gradually dying one by one. On the contrary, the board of health sends its stretchers to the ship, the patients are removed under mosquito nettings to the observation or yellow fever hospital, the ships is fumigated, the passengers observed for a time, and finally discharged. So satisfactory has this method been that one of the sanitary officers declares that yellow fever has been practically stamped out in Cuba, because it is not endemic on the island, and Havana formerly the chief point of reception and distribution.

If a case of relapsing fever is discovered—and one was found recently in a sailor's boarding house in Havana—the patient is removed to the contagious hospital and isolated, while at the same time the most energetic war of extermination is waged against the miserable bed bugs in that particular boarding house until every one is destroyed, and thus, to the misfortune of the scientific investigation of relapsing fever, but to the great good of the community, the case of this disease remains unique.

Too much credit cannot be given to the able and energetic men who have control of the sanitation of the city of Havana. Not only do the city and the island of Cuba profit, but Cuba has ceased to be a source of menace to the entire southern coast of the United States, and it behooves us as Americans, and, as we fondly believe, the most advanced Americans, rather to learn that which they have of good, and form improved methods from them, than to remain fatuously indifferent to all methods not inaugurated by ourselves.

Chinese Emperor's Sacrifices. In his capacity as high priest the Chinese emperor has to offer at least 46 sacrifices to different gods in the course of a year. As to each sacrifice is dedicated one or more holidays, which must be passed by him in complete solitude, his time is pretty well taken up.—London Mail.

The Rattler's Venom. A rattlesnake that is five or six feet in length will yield a tablespoonful of venom two or three times a month. It takes its poison sacs at least a week to fill again after they have been emptied.—Nature.