

AN OBSOLETE CUSTOM

The Letter of Recommendation No Longer in Demand.

Statements of Former Employers Regarding Applicants for Positions Not Required by Business Men.

The gradual disappearance of the conventional letter of recommendation seems to have followed naturally the growth of the world's business and the multiplying of the operative necessary to it in its present complications...

Influenced by this in perhaps great measure, the system of bonding the person who was taken into a position of special trust was evolved out of conditions under this system any person who might be able to write a telling letter of introduction for an applicant for an important position...

Just as this letter of recommendation has lost its influence and disappeared, the necessity for bonding employees has been denounced by some observers...

In certain lines of business to-day, especially in the conduct of the railroads, the letter of recommendation in another form has been in use. It is the "clearance paper" that a few years ago disturbed the courts in certain conspicuous charges that were investigated...

However the evolution of business many have affected the person in the position of seeking employment, there have been as marked changes in the disposition of metropolitan concerns...

As strong as the superstition of Friday is that concerning certain hours in European and oriental countries, in Paris the superstition is so prevalent that an enterprising business is that of selling cards on which are printed the hours that should be avoided...

First Worthy—Where do I get my opinions from on this "ere fair trade?" From Squire, of course. 'E kave me two partridges when me ole 'coonan were bad an'—

Second Worthy—Take care, Giles, take care. What's that but bribery? Don't you run on so fast, Gaffer. The boss was that 'fih, we never touched 'em—

Calms the Waves. Floating beds of seaweed, which are often met with in mid-ocean, have been observed to reduce the height of waves...

ON UNSOUND FOOTING.

Railways of Russia Are Not Paying the Cost of Construction and Operation.

The condition of the great Russian railway systems is not what it might be from the financier's standpoint. The federal roads are worked at a tremendous loss, supposed to be some \$200,000,000 a year, reports the New York World.

The Siberian railroad, which would be chiefly used in case of war with Japan, is not yet completed around Lake Balkal. Ten millions are asked to complete that link in communication and \$300,000 to connect the Trans-Balkal with the Manchurian road.

Consul Greenier, in Vladivostok, reports that the Tassur line is a financial failure. The deficits have been considerable. The Peking-Kalgan line is also built as a "Chinese road" and to have Chinese employees, but the money is furnished by the Russo-Chinese bank.

The manner in which trade conditions are subordinated to military needs is shown in this extract from Mr. Greenier's report to our state department: "The Moroccan manufacturers seem to have given up all intention of competing with the Japanese, who have taken complete possession of the Manchurian dry goods trade to such an extent that it seems impossible for the Russians to dislodge them."

"With regard to the transportation of tea, the Russian importers are still shy of the Manchurian railway, receiving the product by other ways, for the reason that they cannot get their goods insured by Russian companies for transit across Manchuria."

This seems almost incredible, and if true it enables the observer to put his finger upon the weak point in the Russian armor. The bear is not business-like. And in the end war bows to business.

Meanwhile tourists can have lots of fun with the Siberian road. A round-trip first-class ticket from London or Paris to Peking—either going by rail and returning by steamship about Asia, with stop-off privileges—will soon be available for \$204. Considering the distance this is cheap enough.

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SAGACITY OF FRANCE.

Not Looking for War and Taking Care of Her Cash.

Bitter Memories of the Cost of Former Struggles Constrain Toward Peace-Wary with Russia.

Russia is said to be dissatisfied with the attitude of France in the matter of the Japan difficulty. This report, says the Portland Oregonian, is probably not true, for the alliance between Russia and France does not oblige France to interfere unless Russia should be threatened with intervention by Great Britain or some other great power in behalf of Japan.

There is no doubt, however, says a Rome report, that in it is intended to convey a mild remonstrance upon a subject which had been discussed several times under his predecessors.

However, Plus X. is not an ascetic. The other day the veteran architect, Constantine Schneider, had occasion to see the holy father in order to submit some plans. As he was retiring, Plus X. smiling said: "Mr. Schneider, do you know that we are related?"

The rumors set afloat that the pope's sisters wanted him to abdicate and return to Venice were caused by a jocular remark. Being sympathized with by his sisters because of the hard work he had to perform and the long confinement within the walls of the vatican, the pope said: "I think it will be much better for me to abdicate and give up the position. We shall then be able to go back to Venice together and lead the happy life of the past."

The difficulties lately experienced in the condition of the vatican finances did not diminish the pope's inclination to joke. When Cardinal Del Val reminded him of the generosity of American Catholics, the pope is reported to have replied: "I really think that the only way out of these troubles would be the discovery of a rich American uncle," which expression is proverbial in Italy as the last hope of those in financial troubles.

Considering the deep-rooted antipathy which women entertain for mice, there is something decidedly humorous in the idea of women taking up mouse breeding as a fad. Yet it seems to possess charm for English women, who, seven years ago, organized a National Mouse Club, for the encouragement of the fad, and every year hold an annual show of the small creatures.

The Swiss naturalist has experimented for many years in the field in which he recently won such success, and was keenly alive to objections raised against telephotography.

He has done much valuable work with his telescope and finally determined to substantiate for his own satisfaction, as well as to convince unbelievers, his own theory that the telescope and the camera could be made to combine forces and bring about the desired results in mirage photography.

M. Vautier-Dufour's journey to Naples to take photographs of Vesuvius is an example of the work which the physicist will be able to accomplish with it. He can photograph any phenomenon visible at the extreme horizon, such as mirages, as well as those which he could not approach himself without danger.

POPE FOND OF A JOKE.

Plus X. Sometimes Employs Jest to Convey Reproof—An Instance in Point.

All Rome has discovered that the pope has an abundant sense of humor. His recent jocular allusion made to the Portuguese ambassador regarding the décolleté dresses of women attending diplomatic receptions and dances, to which cardinals and minor prelates are often invited, caused some excitement among the members of the "black aristocracy" until it was found that Plus X. had only made a jocular remark about the extremely low-cut dresses affected by some members of Roman society.

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WOMEN HAVE MOUSE CLUBS.

Hold Annual Shows for the Exhibition of Their Suspected Pet Avatars.

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LONG RANGE CAMERA.

Swiss Naturalist Invents a Wonderful Picture Taker.

Apparatus That Renders Long-Distance Photographs Practicable—Triumph in Scientific Progress.

A twentieth century camera has just accomplished, in the interests of science, what is looked on, even in this day of wonders, as a noteworthy feat, says the Philadelphia Press.

It has photographed at close range pictures of the terrible Mount Vesuvius in eruption as it is to-day sending forth volumes of smoke, and shooting tons of deadly lava and ashes.

The instrument that accomplished this deed is not by any means an ordinary camera. It is the outcome of an idea of a Swiss naturalist, M. Vautier-Dufour, of Geneva, who calls it a "telephot" and it overcomes the inconvenience of great distances with the ease of the wireless telegraph.

The visit to Vesuvius is the first practical demonstration the inventor has made of his wonderful instrument, and in this way he expects to prove to the doubting ones that his first attempt in the much-discussed telephotography affords a marked advancement in scientific research as well.

Soon after he completed this instrument M. Vautier-Dufour produced before the Society of Swiss naturalists the first photographs ever taken of a mirage.

His colleagues were much excited over the success of this experiment in telephotography, for the pictures, though taken miles away from the object, were as clear and detailed as though taken a few feet from the lens.

They demanded to see the apparatus through which such a signal victory in telephotography had been won. What was their surprise when the inventor presented for their examination an instrument simple in the extreme and readily portable with the rest of the camera.

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FAT AND LEAN IN JAPAN.

Methods Employed by the Little People to Gain or Get Rid of Flesh.

Should the lean American want to become fat, as the lean Japanese does, it is likely to find it difficult in such a city as New York. One of the chief features of the Japanese method of putting on flesh is to sleep outdoors with as little clothing as possible. The advocates of this doctrine, says the New York Tribune, believe that the less covering the body has the more it will seek to protect itself by the growth of fat.

In Japan there is a saying that any man can become lean, and any lean man fat, if he really wants such a change of figure.

Besides sleeping as lightly garmented as possible the Japanese searcher or flesh sleeps a great deal. Ten, twelve, and even fourteen hours are some too much for him. In his waking hours he is to be kept amused. Anxieties and thoughts of a serious nature are to be banished by the lively use of repartee and banter. For example, when he sits down to breakfast he should never take up the morning paper to digest along with his meal.

When the lean explorer for fatness takes exercise, he should practice a discreet moderation. He should not exert himself too strenuously. Should he go walking, he should not run across streets and dodge cars and express wagons. If the crossing is too congested, he should bide his time and try a more untried fording place.

When the fat man wants to become lean according to Japanese principles, he should not entirely reverse the plan of getting fat, for he too, should sleep as much as possible on top of his blankets. Even in rigorous weather, he should try to make himself think he is warm. Cold is believed to quicken the circulation, and thus carry off the waste more readily. But the fat man should sleep as little as possible. If he can cut his hours of sleep from eight to six, or even five, he should make such a curtailment. When he exercises he should exert all the vigor he possesses. Should his wife desire to help him shrink, she should present him with bills, or announce occasions that she expects a visit from her mother. The fat man should not work, also, but with a slowly diminishing amount of food each day. Dry foods should be abandoned by the fat man wanting to shrink, just as they should be eaten in abundance by the man who wants more avoirdupois.

It follows, therefore, that according to these methods, either in Japan or America the lean man trying to get fat has a decided advantage over his rival who wants to get lean. If the methods they adopt prove successful, the lean man has certainly the easier victory. He has been making life calmly, enjoying his bed and board, and laughing at the jokes of his friends. The fat man, on the contrary, has been toiling away as he never could before, has fretted over new activities, has been routed out of bed when his stumber was deeper and more lifeless, and has hurried along the streets as if running to a fire, when his determination might have been the tax collector's.

On the other hand, if such methods fail, the fat man has had all his hard work and loss of sleep for nothing, while the lean man has been living in peace and comfort.

PERPETUAL LIGHT.

A Lamp Has Been Invented Which Absorbs Its Power from Radium.

If an active product of radium is shut up in a closed space with other substances and they are left together for a certain time, it will be found that such substances have acquired an activity analogous to that of radium itself, and the smaller the space in which they are shut up the greater the activity, states the Philadelphia Record.

For example, "Take two glass bulbs, connected by a horizontal tube. Into one of the bulbs pour a solution of chloride of radium. In the other phosphorescent sulphate of zinc. Close the bulbs completely, so as to exclude the air. When this combination is kept in the dark it will be found, sooner or later, that the sulphate of zinc has become luminous, as well as the glass in the apparatus. If the two bulbs are separated the sulphate of zinc will continue luminous for some time, perhaps for a month—but gradually becoming weaker. If the atmosphere within a few hours. By putting in a experiment into application the problem of what is called 'perpetual light' has been solved. Lamps of various forms and sizes are made, they look like petroleum lamps, in which the tube intended for the wick is filled with sulphate of zinc. The manufacturer, by means of a tube, communicates the luminous power furnished by an infinitesimal piece of radium, combined with sulphate of zinc, and for more than a month that lamp gives its light without the necessity of touching it. When the light wanes, the lamp is charged again at a very small cost, as the radium does not consume."

Returning the Favor. "And which do you favor, your father or your mother?" asked the visitor. "Ma," replied Bobby, "because she don't lick me. But I look more like pa, everybody says."—Cincinnati Times-Star.

Healthy Highlanders. The healthiest children in the world live in the Scotch highlands. Few ever shoes before they are 12 years old.

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