

WINTER FLOWER HUNTING.

One of the Most Delightful Pleasures of the Changing Seasons.

It would be well for one who has never studied vegetation in winter to begin his cold-weather rambles in November. At that season, writes Frank French, in "A Winter Bouquet," in Century, in sheltered places an occasional leaf will cling to the stem, furnishing the key to identification, if he does not readily recognize his companions of the summer. He will find the witch hazel, latest flower of the year, flaunting its belated blossoms in freakish abundance among its sear and yellow leaves. While its mimic artillery bombards the surrounding thickets with polished seeds, the fruitage of a year ago.

He will find the stone walls decked with clustered whorls of the long, fuzzy seed tails of wild clematis. Astors will hold up their puffballs of downy seeds by the roadside, inviting the wind to waft them to fresh fields and pastures new. The goldenrod will be shorn of her hoyden of yellow tresses, and will stand chastened and penitent in tassels and fringes of gray, exhibiting throughout the winter a quality of beauty which she did not possess before.

Even after the blizzards of February have howled over the marshes he will find them fringed with sedges and studded with cattails, still proudly erect, as without exaggeration six out of ten letters sent to all the post-offices in the gay city are love messages.

It is extraordinary how many kisses the postmen carry! It is a kind of modern torture of Tantalus for them. In France, where breach-of-promise cases are almost unknown, people have not the same opportunities of amusing themselves over love misadventures read in court and printed in the newspapers, as often happens here. But a compensation may be found in the "Petite Correspondence" of certain French journals.

The lines printed there are sometimes extraordinary, and it is easy to divine what exciting love adventures or passionate dramas lurk behind these public love communications. This example will prove that I do not exaggerate. The following lines appeared in a Parisian paper, and I translate them literally:

FRENCHMAN'S LOVE-LETTER

Example of this Ardent Epistle Written by the Sighing Swain.

Frenchmen are generally held to be—I cannot say perfect lovers, as Mr. Sutor understands them—but skillful lovers, writes M. Tessier, in the London Daily Mail.

Now everybody knows that letters play a great part in love-making, and that more than one woman has been captivated by the poetic and romantic writing of the man she loved.

An amorous Frenchman, writing to Suzanne, for instance, will begin his letter with "Ma petite Suzanne chérie," or "Ma mignonne adorée." "Mon petit chat" (cat here has not the same sense as the English "cat"), or "My sugary Suzanne." "Rat poulet" (chicken), "canard" (duck), but never "goose," are the pet names usually employed.

At the end of his letter, in which he has sworn to love her and be faithful to her forever, or has threatened to commit suicide by drinking a mortal mixture of peppermint and water, the amorous Frenchman will "embrace" Suzanne "with all the strength of his soul," or "devour her with kisses," or send her "a thousand caresses from her wicked X—," and poor Suzanne will immediately answer and yield, because she will be afraid of being the cause of a suicide, and above all, because she finds that after all he is a nice fellow.

Ah, if we were allowed to have a look into the letters addressed "poste restante" in Paris, we should be edified, as without exaggeration six out of ten letters sent to all the post-offices in the gay city are love messages.

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"I suffer too much. I adore you, and I cannot think you love another man. Your letter gave me confidence in our future happiness. I am mad! I shall love you forever! If you are happy, forget me; but I shall always be yours if you are in trouble. Despairing kiss from your slave, X."

RETURN OF HATCHERY FISH

Marked Salmon Betaken in the Columbia River After Four Years.

"What is believed to be the best evidence of the efficiency of artificial propagation of salmon that has ever been secured was recently obtained by Fish Commissioner Kershaw relative to the operation of the hatcheries on the Columbia river," said Deputy Fish Commissioner Perry Baker recently, according to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. "Mr. Kershaw received tails and fins of 100 salmon from a single trap owner on the Columbia river that were plainly marked hatchery fish.

"When the hatcheries were placed in operation on the Columbia river a system of marking was adopted for the purpose of ascertaining if any of the salmon turned out of the river returned to their native spawning grounds, and in what length of time.

"The marked fins and tails received by Mr. Kershaw were found to be salmon that were turned out of the Kalama and Chinook hatcheries four years ago. The spawn of these fish was taken in 1900 and the young salmon turned out in 1901. The fish were marked in a manner that leaves no doubt of this fact. The small bones in the fins were cut down and a hole punched in the tail. The cutting of the bones in the fin is just the same as a man losing a part of his finger—it never grows out again.

"The Columbia river was practically depleted when the artificial propagation of salmon was commenced on that stream, and the past several years has demonstrated that it has been restocked by some means.

"While only a part of the fish were marked when released from the hatcheries, the fact that one trap owner on the river found at least 100 of these salmon during the past season is conclusive evidence that artificial propagation is the only solution of the problem to prevent the depletion of the salmon fisheries.

"Mr. Kershaw asked a number of the Columbia river cannerymen and trap operators to watch for the marked salmon, but during the rush of the season it was apparently overlooked, as only one response has been received.

"The experience with the sockeye salmon that are being conducted at the Bellingham station will be continued all winter and a large number of sockeye salmon placed in the Nooksack and Skagit rivers.

"An air pump has just been installed in connection with the miniature hatchery and the aquarium. It has been found that in order to make a success of hatching salmon and to keep them alive running water is essential. The air pump keeps the water in the aquariums bubbling all the time as it runs through the tanks and off into the waste."

Not Star Spangled.

Tar and feathers is not a peculiarly American institution, as has been supposed. It was Richard the Lion Hearted who first proclaimed this punishment. It was when he was setting out for the third crusade that he gave warning that "a robber who shall be convicted of theft shall have his head cropped after the fashion of a champion and boiling pitch shall be poured thereon and the feathers of a cushion shall be shaken out on him, so that he shall be known." At the first landing he was to be set ashore, no matter where the ship might land, and the absence of a rail was doubtless due to a lack of that sort of fence. Perhaps the western continent may still lay claim to that sort of punishment, but the tar and feathers are no longer our own.

Ugly Deer in Vermont.

It is seriously affirmed that farmers in the northern part of Rutland county would like permission to kill a big, ugly deer that would weigh dressed 300 pounds and has immense horns. This terror of the woods, they say, chases men to cover, will not yield the right of way when he meets teams in the road, and in devious ways makes himself decidedly unpleasant. He recently paid a visit to a Castleton farmer and, when ordered away, refused to leave, although seven other deer that were with him turned and fled when the farmer and his dog went out. The big deer, however, was in no humor for debate, and promptly chased the collie into the barn.—St. Albans Messenger.

Greedy Seagulls.

A Nanaimo fisherman had a unique experience with a flock of seagulls several evenings ago. He reached Nanaimo in an open boat containing two tons of herring. While uptown the seagull's took possession of the boat. On his return all but 60 flew away. This number had so gorged themselves with herring that they could not fly, but hopped about in a state of helplessness. The fisherman finally climbed into the boat and lifted them overboard. They were able to swim with an effort, and most of them went ashore to recover from the effects of their feast. Tacoma Ledger.

HONOR OF THE CHOCTAWS

Whole Nation Is Shocked by a Breach of Faith on the Part of One.

The Choctaw Indians term themselves a nation rather than a tribe, and just now the nation feels deeply distressed by the fact that one of its members has broken faith. He had made a promise and failed to keep it. Because of this the nation deems itself dishonored.

The Choctaws are red men. In the lofty character of their code and the rigid adherence to its unwritten provisions they rise above any body of white men in the world. The Choctaw gives his spoken pledge and no bond is asked. If charged with crime or under conviction, he goes his way until the appointed time, and then he comes unsought and unattended to face trial or death. That such should be his conduct is accepted by his fellows as mere matter of course.

A few years ago Walla Tenaka, a full-blood Choctaw, by profession a ball player, was found guilty of murder and sentenced to be shot. Between the day of sentence and the day of execution intervened the baseball season. The doomed prisoner was turned loose without any formality of bail, instructed when to return and be executed. He played ball as if no unusual condition existed and upon the arrival of the fatal day was on hand and faced the rifles without flinching. The incident was considered remarkable by all but the Choctaws themselves. According to their lights no other outcome was possible.

The Choctaw whose faithlessness has hurt the pride of his people is charged with homicide and he had been released on his own recognizance. There was no doubt that he would return for trial, but he failed to return and later was captured and brought back. He can expect little sympathy from the Indians, for he has shattered a tradition dear to them.

Is it possible that the Choctaw is becoming too civilized? If he is to be regarded in the future as no more honest than the paleface, the change must be deplored. When a white man is charged with serious offense he must remain in prison or give substantial bail. For him to give this and then vanish, not to show himself again, is an uncommon procedure. To trust a white murderer at large on the theory that he would voluntarily walk to execution would be a piece of folly. The Indian, stoical, untaught in any academic school of conduct, lacking the advantage of generations trained in morals, yet can give a lesson to those who should be his superiors.

Bad News.

First Hobo—"Ere's a nice go!" Second Hobo—"Wot's up now?" This year's champagne vintage is a failure.—Punch.

CZAR MADE A COCKTAIL.

New York Doctor Taught Him the Trick and He Was an Apt Pupil.

"The present czar of Russia learned the art of making an American cocktail from an American physician," said a man in an uptown saloon where he was sipping the old-fashioned tiple. "I have that from the physician himself," relates the New York Sun.

"Not only that, but I sipped a cocktail made from the same formula, out of a handsomely carved cup which bore an inscription from the donor, who at the time was czarvitch, and which had contained the stirrup cup drunk at the last meeting between the Russian heir apparent and the American doctor.

"The doctor was a few years ago practicing in a city in western New York. He was once an attaché of the Russian court and had some appointment, I have forgotten what, later on.

"One evening, when he had been called to see the czarvitch, the talk ran to American drinks. The new doctor carried his own stock of American liquors. He spoke of the American cocktail which at that time, was the most called for mixed drink at the bar.

"The czarvitch was amused at the name. He thought it was a joke. The Yankee doctor assured him it was not.

"The czarvitch said he would like to try the drink. The doctor brought in his ingredients and prepared a cocktail in the presence of the czarvitch, who was intensely interested. When he had tasted it he went into ecstasies and called for more.

"After he had sampled several cocktails he prepared to make the mixture himself, and learned with much more ease than he has learned some other things since.

"When the American doctor was leaving St. Petersburg the czarvitch had ascended the throne. The physician asked leave to pay his respects and was accorded an audience.

"The emperor reminded him that he was an expert in mixing the American tiple, and thereupon they repaired to a private room where the czar of all the Russias produced some American whisky and the ingredients to work out a cocktail. The czar mixed drinks for the two like a regular barkeep and enjoyed it.

"The czar assured the doctor that it was the greatest bracer he ever took. But then, you know, royalty lays on its praise and compliments with a trowel. However, the doctor was probably the only American who ever had the ruler of Russia mix and give him a cocktail."

RAPID GROWTH OF ANTLERS

Those of Wapiti Become Wonderful Structure in Four Months' Time.

About the end of the winter—that is, in mid-March—the antlers of the year before break off flush with their base an inch or more above the skull; usually they are found close together, showing that they fell nearly at the same time, writes Ernest Thompson Seton, in Scribner's Magazine.

At first, the place of each antler is a broad, raw spot. In a few days it shows a thick rounded pad of blood-gorged skin. This swells rapidly and in a fortnight the great bulbous fuzzy horn beginning has shot up to a height of several inches. At exactly the right time, place and in ure the right direction a bump comes forth to be the foundation of the brow tine.

In a few more days the bez tine is projected by the invisible architect. In a month the structure is nearly a foot high and all enveloped in a turgid mass of feverish, throbbing blood vessels—the scaffolding and workmen of this surprising structure. Night and day the work is pushed with astounding speed, and in four months this skyscraper is finished—a wonderful structure, indeed, for a score of nature's forces have toiled, a myriad of invisible workmen have done their part and an edifice that according to ordinary rules should have taken a lifetime is here rushed through in a summer and in absolute silence.

August sees the building done, but it is still cluttered with scaffolding. The supplies of blood at the base are reduced and finally discontinued. The antler is no longer in vital touch with the animal; it begins to die. The sensitiveness leaves each part, the velvet covering soon dries, cracks and peels, and the stag assists the process of clearing off the skin by scraping his horns on the brushwood. September sees him fully armed in his spears of dead bone, strong in his glorying in his weapons and his strength, and ready to battle with all comers.

One of the New Year Failures.

Ardley Keap—We might as well dissolve partnership and go out of business. For the last year we have had to live on faith and mustard, and I'm tired of it.

Solon Boddey—So am I. The trouble is that you've been furnishing the faith and I've had to contribute the mustard.—Chicago Tribune.

FAMILY FORTUNES.

IMMENSE WEALTH OF SOME AMERICAN MILLIONAIRES.

Crosses of Old with All His Vaunted Wealth Was Poor by Comparison with Modern Capitalists.

"The great fortunes that have sprung up so amazingly in this country during recent decades to-day, in the opinion of many serious thinkers, constitute a menace to our national well-being, says Cleveland Moffett, in writing of "The Shameful Misuse of Wealth," in Success Magazine. Without these great fortunes there would be no reign of luxury in America, no flaunting of feasts and follies, no riot of extravagance; with them we may expect all the evils that have in previous civilizations attended upon enormous riches. And many of these evils, as we have already seen, are actually with us.

It is admitted that we are the richest people the world to-day—the richest people the world has ever seen. The vaunted wealth of Croesus is estimated at only \$8,000,000, but there are 70 American estates that average \$25,000,000 each. As showing the rapid growth of individual fortunes in this country, there is interest in a list of rich men—printed in 1855—according to which New York city at that time boasted only 29 millionaires. And a pamphlet published some years earlier says that in 1845 Philadelphia could show only ten estates valued at a million or more, the richest being that of Stephen Girard, which reached \$7,000,000. In contrast to which in 1892 there were over 200 millionaires in Philadelphia.

As to New York city, the number of its millionaires, according to best information, is over 2,000, while the number of millionaires in the United States is at least 5,000, or half the total number in the world. There is one family alone, at the head of which stands the richest and most powerful man in the world, John D. Rockefeller, and the wealth of this family is estimated at a thousand million dollars, a sum so huge that the human mind quite fails to grasp it, a sum so huge that if at the birth of Christ Mr. Rockefeller had begun making a dollar a minute and had let these dollars accumulate day and night for all these centuries, he would not yet, in 1906, have amassed a thousand million dollars. And if Mr. Rockefeller should to-day turn this wealth into gold coin and take it out of the country, say into Canada, he would carry across the border three times as much gold as would then remain in the United States. Nor would he carry it himself, for the weight of it would be 1,750 tons. And if he loaded it on the backs of porters, each man bearing his own weight in solid gold (say 150 pounds) it would require 23,000 men to move it. And if they walked ten feet apart the line of them would reach 44 miles and would occupy 15 hours in passing a given point. None of which takes any account of the daily interest on this fortune, which interest, if paid in gold, would require the strength of seven men to carry it, for it would weigh a thousand pounds. Such are the riches of a single family!

IN THE LEGAL FIRMAMENT.

A Rising Star That Was Going to Dazzle Some of the Slow Movers.

The Chicago drummer who was arrested for assaulting the landlord of a South Dakota hotel found that there was only one lawyer in the village and that he had already been retained by the plaintiff. In this emergency, he retained the Cleveland Plain Dealer, he demurred to being tried, as he was not lawyer enough to plead his own case, but the justice of the peace calmly replied:

"This court will see that you have all your rights. Anybody seen Jim Peters around here?"

"He's out doors," answered some one.

"Then call him in."

Jim turned out to be a long and lathy farmer's hired man, and not at all bright looking, and as he entered the room his honor queried:

"Jim, which end of the cow gets up first?"

"The hinder end, sir."

"And a horse?"

"The fronter end."

"All right. This drummer has given Joe Harris a black eye and wants a lawyer to prove that Joe ran ag in the door casing and blacked it himself. I'll appoint you as his counsel."

"But I'm no lawyer."

"But you've got common sense, and you've just proved, and that's better yet. Go right ahead."

Jim went ahead, and in ten minutes he had the other side so tangled up that his honor laid his spectacles aside and said:

"No use to go any further. There may have been a row, and probably there was a row, but Jim is getting ready to prove that the landlord was out in the barn and the drummer across the street and there's no use taking up the time of this court. I'll divide the costs and the parties had better shake hands, while as for Jim Peters, he's a rising star that will continue to rise until it won't be considered no crime around here to jump another man's claim and steal his wife along with it."

In Dead Earnest.

A traveling man received the following telegram from his wife:

"Twins arrived to-night. More by mail."

He went at once to the nearest office and sent the following reply:

"I leave for home to-night. If more come by mail send to dead letter office."

—Lippincott's Magazine.

DECLINE OF GREAT RIVER.

Water Level of the Niger, in Africa, Is Slowly and Steadily Sinking.

The Niger is the third largest river in Africa and one of the great rivers of the world. If a channel as long as the Niger were to be cut across our continent in the latitude of New York it would make an island of the northern part of North America. But the Niger is now showing more evidences of the desiccation that is gradually spreading over large parts of Africa than any other large river, for it is the run off for the waters of a great part of the western Sudan, where the decline in rainfall has been uncommonly marked for a considerable period.

The British have made several futile attempts in the last two years to reach Jebba from the Niger mouth with their steamer Nupe. Ten years ago this point, where the railroad from Lagos is to cross the Niger, was accessible at all stages of water to light draft steamers. At Timbuktu, some 1,200 miles up the river, the French report that the water level is slowly but steadily sinking. This is very apparent among the islands that divide the Niger into many channels from 100 to 300 miles above Timbuktu. As long as we have had knowledge of these islands some of them have been completely covered at high water so that the native inhabitants have been compelled to make an annual journey on the mainland till the fall of the floods. Not a single island is now abandoned, for none of them is covered even when the flood is unusually high.

The French officers Touste, Hourst and Fourneau proved the possibility of carrying supplies from the mouth of the Niger to the upper river in spite of the long stretch of rapids about 500 miles above the delta. Hundreds of tons of freight have thus been distributed from the ocean among the French posts in the western Sudan, and as late as last year some supplies were still forwarded by this route, but this highway to Inner Africa, hailed as a great discovery when the French declared its practicability, has been abandoned this year. The water is so low in the rapids that no boat can get over the rocks.

Fortunately for the French they have completed their railroad from the Senegal river to the upper Niger, giving a new inlet to their Sudanese possessions. But geographers are wondering how long the drying up of Africa is to continue. It has been marked within the last ten years by the disappearance of Lake Ngami in the south, and the diminution of Lake Chad, 2,400 miles further north, to a fourth of its former size, and there are as yet no signs that the great decrease in rainfall is merely a temporary phenomenon.

WOMEN'S NEW EMPLOYMENT

Hired to Run Elevators in Buildings Devoted to Female Interests.

Women always seem to be able to establish some new kind of work. Now Boston has in several buildings devoted to women's interests, or largely patronized by women, girls employed to run the elevators. The idea was introduced by the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, and the Young Women's Christian association soon followed.

"Except for one janitor," said the superintendent of the latter institution, "we are all women around here, and to have two or three boys about to run the elevator was an unmitigated nuisance. So we discharged the boys and hired the girls. Since then we have been much more comfortable." The New England hospital for women in Roxbury has also introduced elevator girls, and some of the millinery and women's furnishing goods stores in Boston are taking up the idea.

The girls are all doing the work to the complete satisfaction of their employers and have at the same time suggested a solution for the perplexing question of what to do with a girl who has to earn money at an early age. She can run an elevator until she is old enough or has acquired the necessary training for something better. Formerly she might have been a cash girl, but now various mechanical devices are taking the place of the cash girl and leaving her without employment. Several of the girls employed as elevator girls in the buildings just mentioned are studying for better positions and one is glad to earn three dollars a week while her eyes are recovering from the strain of her high school course.

To run an elevator is not difficult work, but requires careful attention to business. For this reason, according to the testimony of their employers, girls do it better than boys. They are more conscientious and trustworthy. The girls seem to enjoy the work, and though the hours are long the work is not tiring. At the Young Women's Christian association the elevator girl goes on duty at seven o'clock and works till 12. Then she has two hours' rest. In the afternoon she works from two o'clock until five, when she has an intermission of half an hour, resuming work at 5:30 o'clock and continuing till seven.

The Statue of the Pilgrims.

On Plymouth hill stands the imposing statue of the Pilgrims. Its base is granite and supports a seated figure at each of the four corners, with eyes searching the surrounding country, while a woman's figure crowns the top. On the pedestal is inscribed the name of every man, woman and child that came over in the Mayflower.—Nicholas.