

MULES MAKE HISTORY.

Funny incidents of Campaigning with the "Destructive But Indestructible Beasts of Burden."

The ear of the army mule is a guide post in history. For the last 40 years there has been scarcely a battle in which it has not had a part.

When the cost of war comes to be reckoned in terms of bloodshed, suffering and loss of life, then and not till then the patient, steady, venerable, trundled and often misunderstood army mule will receive his deserts.

The history of the mule goes back into antiquity. The inhabitants of Mysia and Paphlagonia appear to have been the first breeders, and the animals were in great favor with the early Greeks and Romans.

Age can scarcely bar them, for a mule is in its prime when between 30 and 40 years of age. Aristotle placed their term of life at 80 years, and among the frontiersmen of the west there is a belief that they are immortal.

Mules require but three or four hours sleep in the 24, are sure-footed, sober, patient. The trait for which they have been most denominated, and which has passed into the English language as a superlative measurement in the case of man—their obstinacy—constitutes their greatest virtue on long marches.

INK BOTTLE ENIGMA.

One That Was Used to Work the First Past-the-Post Scheme in Pool Rooms.

"If poolrooms were run now as they were 50 years ago the bank rolls would not last long enough to talk about," said an old-time follower of the races the other day.

"In those days," he continued, "there was no such thing as the 'dope,' and you would have to wait three days before you could find out the name of the jockey who rode the horse you had bet on. No weights or jockeys were given in the poolroom reports. The names of the horses were posted on the board with the price quoted opposite the name. The rooms had no special views as they do now, and all the information was carried to the room by messenger boys. What I started to tell you was the first time I ever heard of 'first past the post.' It was worked in a very clever manner for several weeks. The only room in Cincinnati in those days was run by 'Doc' Hickey, on Vine street, opposite the Arcade. When the betting came in a regular message was made out and given to a messenger to carry to Hickey's, at the telegraph office on the corner nearly opposite the room. The result and everything also was carried by messenger. Several of the telegraph operators planned to beat one race a day. A race in which there were five or six starters was picked out. Each horse was given a number and the conspirators worked from the operating room. One man was planted in front of the poolroom, and he was to be signalled from the window, but how to do it without attracting attention puzzled the operators. Now it happened that the ink bottles were always kept on the window sill, and it was decided to use them as a means of signaling. Six bottles were placed on the sill, and if horse No. 5 won the operator would step to the window and take up one bottle, which left five, and the man with money would step in and bet on horse No. 5. If there was a winner three bottles were taken away. The man had plenty of time to place the wager. Everything went well for a long time, but one of the boys told the good thing to a friend and he told somebody else, and the result was that in a few days a wire was run into the room and the first past the post was over."—Cincinnati Enquirer.

WOOD PROTECTING STEEL.

The steel of overhead bridges is best protected, according to the latest scientific explanation, by a wood ceiling, as paint does not prevent the locomotive gases from seriously affecting the metal in a few years.—Cincinnati Enquirer.

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PITH AND POINT.

Visitor—"Have you ever seen the sea serpent?" Boatman—"No, sir; I'm a temperance man."—Punch.

One loses his breath by running, and catches it quickest by standing still.—Elliott's Magazine.

Ethel—"Mamma, aren't those soldiers delicate?" Mamma—"Delicate, indeed! No, dear." Ethel—"Then why do so many of them have nurses with them?"—Sketchy Bits.

Hattie—"So you really think George is in love with you?" Edith—"Oh, I am sure of it. You should hear some of the mean things he says about you and the rest of the girls in our set."—Boston Transcript.

Visitor—"What was the matter with the man they just brought in?" Doctor—"Stuck his head through a pane of glass." Visitor—"How did he look?" Doctor—"His face wore an injured expression."—Baltimore News.

Deacon Sainly (to wife, as congregation assembles)—"Where is Mrs. Fashuns this morning? She is usually among the early comers." Mrs. Sainly—"She will be late to-day. I saw her buying a new hat last week."—Baltimore American.

"One word, Emilie! Would you mind if I tell you that I love you to distraction, that I can't live without you and that I'll kill myself if you refuse to listen to me?" "Yes, I should mind, for I can never care for you!" "Then I won't say it!"—Lustige Blaetter.

She—"To think that you once declared that you would love me as long as you lived! And now, hardly a year married, and you care nothing at all about me!" He—"But you see when I told you I would love you as long as I lived I wasn't feeling very well, and I really didn't think I would live long."—Boston Transcript.

BOERS GOING TO WAR.

Affecting Scenes Were Enacted When the Men Left Pretoria for the Front.

Last Sunday night I found myself slowly crawling toward the front from Pretoria in a commandeered train crammed full of armed Boers and their horses, says a correspondent of the Chronicle. I had rushed from the Cape to quiet little Bloemfontein, the center of one of the best administered states in the world, where the heads of the nation, in the intervals of discussing war, proudly showed me their pianos, their little gardens, little libraries of English books, little museums of African beasts and Greek coins, and all their other evidences of advancing culture. Then, on to Pretoria, the same kind of town, on a larger and richer scale—trim bungalow houses, for the most part, spread out among gardens full of roses, honeysuckles and syringas.

But at the station all day and night the scene was not idyllic. Every hour train after train moved away—stores and firewood in front, horses next, and luggage vans for the men behind. The parting must be imagined. They are bad enough to witness when our own soldiers go to the front. But these men are not soldiers at all. Each of them came direct from his home in the town or on some isolated farm. They rode up, dressed just in their ordinary clothes, but for the slung musser and the full cartridge belt over the shoulder or round the waist. Except for a few gunners, there is no uniform in the Boer army.

Even the officers can hardly be distinguished from ordinary farmers. The only thing that could be called uniform is the broad-rimmed hat of gray and brown. But all Boers wear it. It is generally very stained and dirty and invariably a rusty crape band is wound about the crown. For the Boers, like the English poorer classes, has large quantities of relations and one of them is always dying.

By the courtesy of the Pretorian government I had secured room in the guard's van for myself and companion, who was equally anxious to cross the Natal frontier before the firing began, and that was expected at every moment. In the van with us were about a score of farmers from Middleburg way, their contingent occupying four trains with about 800 men and horses. For the most part they were fine tall men, with shaggy light beards, reminding one of Yorkshire farmers, but rougher and not so well dressed. Most of them could speak English and many had Scotch or English relatives. They lay on the floor or sat on the edge of the van, talking quietly and smoking enormous pipes.

All deeply regretted the war, regretted the farm left behind just when spring and rain are coming and were full of foreboding for the women and children left at the mercy of the Kaffirs. There was no excitement or shouting or bravado of any kind. So we traveled into the night, the monotony only broken by one violent collision which shook us all flat on the floor, while arms and stores fell crashing upon us. In the silent pause which followed, while we wondered if we were dead, I could hear the Kaffirs chattering in their mud huts close by and in the distance a cornet was playing "Home, Sweet Home," with variations.—London Chronicle.

A TALE OF CHIVALRY.

Sir Laurence on his mailed steed rode up to the great gate of the castle and hit it a resounding thwack with the bit of his sword.

"What, ho, within there," he shouted.

"What, ho, without there," came the answering cry.

"I want to come in," thundered the knight.

"Well, you can't do it now," called the same voice, "we've just opened a sack pot."—Detroit Free Press.

HANDLING FERRETS.

A Professor of Rat-Catching Tells About the Things They Do with the Animals.

"Weasels and ferrets," said a professional rat-catcher, trained to the business, are larger than the weasels, that is all. After I am through with rat-catching I use my ferrets to hunt rabbits out of brush piles, hay and straw-stacks, which is a profitable business when rabbits are plenty. What you call rabbits we in England call hares.

"When a man once starts in as a professional rat-catcher and gets to understand training working ferrets, there is such an attraction in the trade that he never willingly gives it up. It's a profitable business, without too much competition."

"Do the ferrets ever bite you?" "It's a very careless and awkward man that gets bitten by a trained ferret. When one is bitten by an enraged ferret the bite is of a very severe character, painful and slow to heal."

As the rat-catcher talked, a six-months-old ferret, his fiery little eyes gleaming like living gems, was crawling over his lap and trying to get in under his coat. "This fellow," said the rat-catcher, "is as gentle as a kitten, and likes to have his back rubbed and caressed as well as any cat you ever saw. When the ferret bites a rat's neck he knows exactly what he is doing, and his front teeth, cutting like razors, go right through the jugular.

"In the course, we generally muzzle them when we send them in after rabbits. If their teeth were at liberty they would kill the first rat or rabbit they met and would remain in the hole sucking its blood. When we put a ferret into a house after rats we stop up all holes at the outside of the house except one or two. Over these we place bags, and the ferrets, driving the same before them, run the rats into the bags. We keep the ferret without his ordinary meals before using him, and this makes him keener in his chase.

"It's mighty easy to spoil a ferret. After a young ferret has been badly bitten by a rat, as sometimes happens, you can't get him to go into a hole muzzled. But when a ferret is full-grown and has the skill and courage that he should have, he is a holy terror to rats, and is a valuable animal. I would not sell a well-trained ferret for \$50. Such a ferret I should be willing to put in a pit with 50 rats and he could in a short time kill every one of them. Rats are great fighters when they are cornered, but no other animal of the same size has as much courage as a ferret or weasel.

In England the largest ferrets are called polecat ferrets, and are a cross of the two animals, which are much alike. In this country, the word polecat is applied to the skunk, an entirely different animal. The word polecat is supposed to be an abbreviation of Polish cat, and the animal abounds all over Europe. The mink is much like the weasel, except that it is larger, and many depredations that are attributed to the weasel are committed by the mink. All these animals prowl by night, and they frequently go many miles in search of food, even coming into towns and the suburbs of cities."

Audubon, who was a close student of nature, was delighted with the weasel, or American ferret. Its long, flexible body, its extraordinary length of neck, the closeness of its fur, its keenness of scent, its wonderful agility and quickness of movement all excited his admiration.

An American writer says: "The common weasel has sometimes been caught and carried off by large hawks and owls. Sorry is the experience of the captor in such cases. He has caught a turtle. The captive will bite into the sides of the enemy, so that both will be wounded and the weasel comparatively unharmed. The weasel's courage in defending itself when attacked by birds of prey is universally admitted; nor is it deficient in fierce opposition to dogs, and even men, when its nest is invaded by either. It usually kills for food, biting through the head into the brain with such expertness that its victim can scarcely utter a cry of pain. It usually eats the brain first; then the rest of the body follows. In pursuing mice, rats and moles, it follows them into their runs or holes. A weasel's proximity to a poultry yard is not to be desired. But in barns, hayricks and grain stacks it is decidedly advantageous, as it will exterminate or drive away rats and mice."

The weasel's characteristics are noted in two American sayings: "Catch a weasel asleep" and "Sooner trust a weasel with eggs." Stories are told that a weasel will watch a hen on the nest for an hour, waiting for a freshly-laid egg.—Indianapolis News.

Warmth of Birds' Blood. The blood of birds offers some data for thought not found in the blood of any other class of animals. The blood corpuscles are shaped differently, being oval, instead of round; but this is not the difference to which I refer. Birds' blood is several degrees warmer than that of other animals. To man such a temperature of the blood as birds possess would be a fever. This high temperature causes molecular changes in the tissues and brain to take place more rapidly, which would cause the consumption of more food, and brain activity would be more intense, so that for the same amount of work a smaller brain would meet all the requirements, which at a lower temperature would require one of greater size.—Phrenological Journal.

ACCOMPLISHED.

He—Miss Daintee is a very accomplished girl.

She—Why, she never was known to say anything but "yes" or "no" when spoken to!

"Yes; but she can eat lettuce without looking as though she were ramming wadding into an old musket."—Puck.

SEEK BETTER PISTOL.

Experiments Being Made to Produce Army Sidearm.

An Automatic Hand Machine Gun Is the Weapon Desired—Tests Being Made at Springfield (Mass.) Armory.

An important test of pistols is in progress at the Springfield, Mass., armory. The objects of these tests is to secure an improved sidearm for the army, and it is the aim of the ordnance department to obtain pistols which will not be open to the objections which prevail regarding the present army revolver. It is desired to do away with the present revolver feature of the pistol mechanism and to find a pistol which will in effect be an automatic hand machine gun.

There are several other defects in the revolver now used. Upon the discharge of the cartridge the quantity of gas generated necessarily escapes through the space between the cylinder and the barrel, thus obtaining for the ammunition less velocity than the cartridge is capable of giving under better circumstances. The insertion of cartridges upon the revolver cylinder is obviously slow, as in the piece now used each cartridge has to be placed separately. As far back as seven years ago a pack was produced which enabled the full revolver charge to be placed in the Smith & Wesson cylinder simultaneously, but this device was found impracticable for several reasons, one of the defects being that the round form of the package made it cumbersome.

Before the tests now in progress are completed the ordnance officers will have examined the German army pistol and the Malicher pistol, all of which are magazine arms, in competitive comparison with the Colt and Smith & Wesson revolvers. The several types of automatic mechanisms for small arms are represented in the mauser, Bergmann and Malicher pistols. It is said the escape of gas through the parts for the operation of the automatic mechanisms in these pieces is neither as great nor as fatal to the efficiency of the discharge as the loss of gas through the space between the cylinder and barrel of the revolver. Another advantageous feature of the automatic pistol is that the magazine can be filled speedily with one operation, the cartridges being held together by a clip in a manner resembling the assembled charges for the navy type of the Lee rifle.

BIG FINANCIAL GROWTH.

New York State Bank Superintendent Reports Banks as Having Gained Over \$50,000,000 in Resources.

The New York state bank superintendent reports that during the last fiscal year the banks of deposit and discount under his supervision gained over \$50,000,000 in resources, or more than 15 per cent. The gain in their actual condition has doubtless been even greater than is suggested by these figures.

Eight new trust companies were organized, and at least five others were in course of organization when the year closed. The combined capital and paid-in surplus of these 13 corporations approximates \$22,000,000. The 52 companies reporting had resources aggregating \$72,000,000, or \$1,200,000 more than was reported by the 49 companies in business at the beginning of the calendar year. Nothing like this development has ever before been known.

The total resources of banks of deposit and discount were \$72,983,538; of savings banks, \$968,978,147; of trust companies, \$722,356,523; of safe deposit companies, \$5,303,234; of foreign mortgage companies, \$12,710,773; building and loan associations, \$64,346,636; total, \$2,146,983,861. Compared with the previous year this is a gain of \$322,434,231.

The superintendent recommends legislation which will protect the public from private bankers like the Franklin syndicate, of Brooklyn, which promised the impossible rate of interest of 520 per cent.

The scandals in building and loan association affairs have been in part the culmination of reckless improvident management, says the superintendent.

NEW GERMAN CODE.

Will Make Matters Particularly Difficult for Americans Who Intend to Marry in the Empire.

With the beginning of the year a new civil code went into effect in Germany, and it makes things particularly difficult for Americans who intend to marry in the empire. The new law requires certain documents, which must be produced before the marriage can be legally contracted. They are: "First—Proof that the applicant is a citizen of the United States. Second—A certificate by the proper authorities of his native or home state to the effect that the authorities know of no just cause or impediment why the marriage should not take place, this certificate to be verified by the German ambassador or a German consul in the United States. Third—A certificate of birth, which must be verified by the German ambassador or a German consul in the United States. Fourth—Should there be any consanguinity or affinity between the applicant and his intended wife proofs must be furnished that in the applicant's home state such consanguinity or affinity forms no impediment to the marriage. Fifth—If the applicant has been married before the decree relating to the dissolution of the marriage must be produced, after having been verified by a consular officer.

BREAD BAKING IN FRANCE.

In France the bread is baked in rolls about the size of a man's arm and four feet long.

OPOSED BY NAVY.

Suggestion to Create Two Grades of Vice Admirals Meets with General and Strong Objections.

There is general opposition throughout the navy to the creation of two grades of vice admiral. This opinion was expressed to the president at the conference held with the Santiago captains in regard to the suitable reward which should go to the officers of the North Atlantic fleet. It is hardly likely the president will recommend congress to provide for two such grades, which is out of all proportion to the requirements of the service, and would furnish three high grades beyond any in the military service.

In the conference there was little offered of personal character, and the discussion was on the broad lines of the needs of the service rather than on whether Sampson or Schley was entitled to the glory of the Santiago victory. The creation of the grade of vice admiral will be used as an argument for the revival of the grade of lieutenant general in the army, and it is said that one of the first actions of Gen. Miles' friends in the senate will be the introduction of a measure which will have the effect of creating the new grade for him.

It is by no means certain, however, that Miles will secure the place. There is abundant opposition to him still in the war department, and the withdrawal of Alger does not appear to have altered the conditions which prevailed under the latter's administration. Miles' recommendations are unheeded and his communications are practically ignored.

It took three weeks of time and the personal offices of a prominent army officer to secure Secretary Root's attention to a letter which Miles had written to the war department concerning the detail of a line major to his regiment in the Philippines.

CHARGES STORAGE ON A LEG.

A Druggist of Concord, N. H., Presents a Peculiar Bill Against a Rich Man's Estate.

The executors of the eccentric millionaire, John H. Pierson, of Concord, N. H., the contest over whose will has just been settled, have been called upon to pay many peculiar claims from creditors. One of these was for storing an amputated leg of Mr. Pierson. Eleven years ago Mr. Pierson had to have one of his legs amputated. He decided to keep the leg and have it buried with him. He accordingly handed it over to a Concord druggist with orders to preserve it and produce it for burial at the proper time. This the druggist did. One of the bills presented to the executors is for "the storage and care of John H. Pierson's amputated leg," the charge being \$5.450, or about one dollar a day, not including Sundays.

A NEW SEARCH LIGHT.

Fire Engine Equipped to Render Aid to Firemen in Locating the Seat of a Fire.

A new searchlight fire engine, built on plans suggested by Fire Chief Croker, of New York, was received from Elmira the other day. This is the first of the kind ever constructed. Its purpose is to aid the firemen by enabling them to locate at once the seat of a fire, instead of groping about in darkness.

The engine is supplied with a projector that makes it possible to cover a large area with light at short range. The lamps give an arc of 6,000 candle power.

The engine complete weighs 6,500 pounds, and will be drawn by two horses. It is expected the new engine will be a great aid to firemen in locating blazes at night.

EVA ROACH ASLEEP AGAIN.

Montreal Girl Falls Into Another Trance—Has Remained Unconscious Since Christmas.

Eva Roach, of Montreal, Que., is sound asleep again. She achieved a great deal of unworldly notoriety by falling asleep Christmas eve a year ago. Although skilled doctors tried in many ways to arouse her from her trance, she remained unconscious for 38 days. She fell asleep this time Christmas eve and has not yet been aroused. Now, as a year ago, a needle can be plunged into the girl's body without arousing her. If her head is touched, however, she reverts that action at once. She throws back her head, moves her body, and her hands clutch and twist violently.

HUMILIATING THE HORSE.

It seems as if the limit of humiliation has come at last to the horse. He has been used as a beast of profitless burden, cut up into sausage meat and otherwise abused in the flesh, and now doctors are making a drunkard of him, says the San Francisco Call, in order that with his virus they may destroy drunkenness in that unreliable animal, man.

Single Women vs. Married Ones. The single working girls of Boston are organizing against married women who work in restaurants and big stores for pin money. The girls think that women who have husbands to support them ought to stay at home and not interfere with others who are compelled to work for their living.

About Time He Swore Off.

A Cleveland man secured his fifth divorce a few days ago, but in justice to him it should be added, says the Chicago Times-Herald, that he swore off at the beginning of the year.

Tilled by Old Methods.

The soil of Egypt at the present day is tilled by exactly the same kind of plow that was used 5,000 years ago.

FIRM HAND IN GUAM.

Efforts of Gov. Leary to Improve Conditions in the Island.

Realizing the Demoralization and Crime Due to Drink He Prohibits Its Import or Sale Except by Special License.

Capt. Peter Leary, U. S. A., stationed at Fort McHenry, has captured a letter from his brother, Capt. Richard P. Leary, governor of Guam, in the Ladrone Islands, which contained a number of interesting documents pertaining to the affairs of the new possessions of the United States. The first Thanksgiving proclamation ever seen by the inhabitants of Guam was issued by Gov. Leary.

Gov. Leary has already caused slavery to be abolished in the islands, compelling a number of friars to leave the place, and has amended the marriage laws in regard to polygamy. One of his recent orders states that it is prohibited to import or sell intoxicating liquors in the island except by a special license issued by the government, and that violation of the order will be punished by a fine of \$100 or imprisonment for 30 days, or by both. For a second offense all of the offender's goods may be confiscated. "Drunkenness," says the order, "is the chief source of all crime and trouble in this island, and must and shall cease."

Capt. Leary states that he is making every effort to teach the natives to be self-supporting. An order issued to further this idea follows:

"Until otherwise ordered, the exportation of hogs, cattle, fowl, eggs, rice, corn and sweet potatoes from this island is hereby forbidden. Articles of food may be delivered to vessels in sufficient quantities for the subsistence of those on board during their stay in port and their passage to the next port of destination. The delivery of such articles of food to ships is prohibited without a government license."

In consequence of the liability of riots the following order was issued:

"Public celebration of the feast days of the patron saints of villages will not be permitted. The church and its members may celebrate their feast days within the walls of the church, chapel or private residences in accordance with the regulations for the maintenance of public peace, and unless otherwise ordered, the only public holidays recognized will be Sunday and the holidays authorized by the United States statute laws, and by proclamations of his excellency, the president of the United States."

NEW PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Probable That Present Session of Congress Will Provide for the Erection of a Large Number.

It is believed a number of public buildings will be authorized at this session of congress. As yet no programme has been mapped out, but it is the opinion of members of the committee that something in this direction will be done. The increase in the price of building materials has interfered seriously with the plans of the committee, and it was thought nothing could be done except to provide increased appropriations for the structures already authorized. The increase in prices is about 25 per cent, and the supervising architect is now at work preparing data to show exactly how much money will be required to make up for this increase.

Chairman Cannon, of the appropriations committee; representative Mercer, chairman of the public buildings and grounds committee of the house, and Senator Fairbanks, of the upper branch of congress, will have a conference with the treasury officials in regard to this matter. It all probably will be mapped out, and it will be known approximately how many buildings will be authorized, if it is decided to appropriate for any at all.

Already about 100 bills providing for new public buildings have been introduced, and great pressure is being brought to bear upon the members of the committees to take some action. It is not believed this pressure can be resisted successfully, and if the bars are once let down a large number of buildings will be authorized, and in this way the surplus in the treasury, which is growing every day and has already given the administration some concern, will be disposed of in a manner satisfactory to the people.

DORMANT GEYSERS IN ACTION.

Queer Happenings in California Due to the Recent Earthquake Shocks There.

Reports received at San Diego, Cal., from the back country show that the recent earthquake was the cause of a number of strange happenings. The mud volcanoes on the desert near the Colorado river have become active after a long rest and are now spouting mud again. The natural gas wells near Yuma are also in working order since the heavy quake. They have been lighted and the glare at night can be seen for many miles. A correspondent from Moosa writes that a number of fissures were made in the ground at that place 20 or more feet in length.

Water Cycles.

A Canadian has designed a water cycle which offers little resistance to the water, the floats which support the propelling mechanism being composed of two long cylinders of small diameter, with the ends brought to a point to decrease the resistance.

Output of California Oranges.

It is probable that Southern California will ship out 15,000 carloads of oranges this season.