

THE HARDEST-WORKED WOMAN
In the Land Is the Mistress of the White House.

The author of a series of letters, giving "The Inner Experiences of a Cabinet Member's Wife," in the Ladies' Home Journal, gives some new and exceedingly frank glimpses of Washington official life. The letters are undated, therefore the administration cannot be identified. She says of a president's wife, in a letter to her sister, to whom all the misses are invited: "The worst of living in the white house is the lack of privacy and room. The first lady of the land is about the hardest-worked woman in America in many ways. The present lovely incumbent has more leisure than most of those who have occupied the place, because she knows no more about the domestic arrangements than if she lived in a hotel. Everything is turned over to a housekeeper, who does not even report to Mrs. President. The president's wife has not the luxuries nor convenience of ordinary rich people living in large cities. Her quarters are circumscribed, and she is besieged by reporters, especially during the first year, while the mere reading of her letters received every day is a heavy task, although she has a secretary to help her out. This Mrs. President does not even receive the reports of the head steward, the chief official servant of the household. It is said that he went to her not long ago to ask to her advice about getting rat poison to kill the numerous rats and mice occupants of the white house (he said in shame of the nation), and she told him his province was to keep everything disagreeable hidden from her—from rats to ghosts. That settled Mr. Steward."

WILD BIRDS SEEK FARMYARDS.

Turkeys in Virginia Roost with the Domestic Fowls.

Turkeys are so plentiful that it is nothing uncommon to hear of their coming to roost at farmhouses, along-side the domestic birds. Mr. P. M. Yeager, living at Traveler's Rest, W. Va., and 25 miles west of Monterey, has, according to the Richmond Dispatch, six wild ones running with his tame flock. These, however, have a little romance connected with them that does not often come into the life of a turkey.

One day last spring, Mr. Yeager and his daughter, Miss Pearl, went from their home to a "clubhouse" several miles distant and situated in the solitudes of Cheat mountain. Fishing down one of the mountain streams for trout, they unexpectedly flushed a covey of wild turkeys, consisting of the mother bird and a nest full of little fellows. The old one flew away to a safe distance, while the little ones, true to their nature, scrambled away and hid among the ferns. Six of them were made captives, and it was decided to take them home, but how was it to be done successfully? Miss Pearl dropped them into the spacious and mysterious depth of her bonnet and bore them in triumph to the farmyard, where they were again to see the light and make their future home. The tiny fellows took kindly to their new existence and soon made fast friends of new neighbors. Months have come and gone and they are now full-grown, noble fellows, fit to grace the table of a king.

THE CHINAMAN'S PIGTAIL.

It Is Often Cut Off by the Hoodlums of San Francisco.

Among the real injuries that can be offered to a Celestial is to cut off his hair, which he wears in a plait down his back and to which disrespectful western nomenclature has attached the name of pigtail, says the Washington Post. Sometimes the hoodlums in San Francisco and the Larksins in Sydney, N. S. W., in an overflow of animal spirit and in unresisted contempt of the heathen Chinee cut off the pigtail, and the unhappy victim of this outrage has to go like the messengers of David, who, being shorn by the Philistines, were told to tarry in Jericho till their beards did grow, and, as the old Hebrews did, dwell apart until the pigtail became observable.

It is reserved for the administration of the public works prison in Toronto to show consideration for the pigtail under circumstances not usually considered as sources of tenderness, and the Chinese who come there as convicts will hereafter retain their pigtails. In this country in state prisons the hair is cut close and no national custom will save it, though it be as sacred as a Chinaman's pigtail.

HAVE FAITH IN FETICHES.

Many Colored People Believe That Snake Skin Will Ward Off Evil.

Belief in the efficacy of fetiches is still prevalent among a certain class of colored people in this city, and probably no one has the superstition brought so forcibly to his attention as Head Keeper Manley, of the zoo, says the Philadelphia Record. Constant applications are made to him for materials for love charms by both sexes. Most often the request is for a little piece of snake skin, which, when powdered by a witch doctor and put in a locket, is to be suspended from the possessor's neck, is considered to be a sure winner of affections. To supply the demand a number of skins taken from the reptiles that die in captivity are always kept on hand. The soft breast feathers from the African gray parrots are saved for other wiccans, who prize them just as highly. Keeper Manley is called upon to supply fetiches to insure success in combat as well as in love. Several negro prize fighters well known in the local ring carry a little bunch of hair clippings from the tuft on the end of the old lion's tail. These bristles are thought to give the wearer unbounded courage and strength.

SIGHT OF CATERPILLARS.

An eminent French scientist says that caterpillars cannot see more than a centimeter, or two-fifths of an inch, in front of them.

LINEN MAKERS.

Ireland and Holland Have the Most Women Engaged in This Work.

Though Ireland to-day holds the first place, so far as America is concerned, in the manufacture of linens, Holland occupied that position everywhere in the past, and holds it to-day in many parts of Europe, says the Philadelphia Press. The very word Holland is employed to designate a fine linen cloth or a linen and cotton cloth, and has been used for this purpose from time immemorial. It is both glazed and unglazed, and used for wearing the household decoration. Flax grows well in that part of Europe, and the sunlight is said to be brighter and to have more power in bleaching in the low countries than elsewhere. The linen industry is carried on in Holland more by women than by men. In the fields there are almost as many female as male cultivators. In the harvesting there is an excess of women.

In the many processes, such as liming, bleaching and spinning, the women outnumber the men three to one. In the mills the women are in the majority. The men predominate when it comes to the making of damask and fancy designs. For at least four centuries it has been an honored custom in the Netherlands for young women to begin making their marriage portion in linen when mere girls. Some go so far as to start with the sowing of the seed; others begin with the spinning, while those better off buy the finished cloth. All do the cutting and sewing. A wedding outfit consists of petticoats, nightgowns and other underwear, several suits for summer wear, sheets, pillow cases, bolster cases, pillow shams, shirts for the husband-to-be and a number of rolls of the uncut material for the future emergency or use. Nearly every girl of marriage age has a stock of these goods ranging from a trunkful to three or four times that amount.

GOVERNMENT SALOONS.

Their Proceeds Pay for Public Improvements in Norway.

Winding away over the hills that overlook the beautiful Norwegian city of Bergen is a magnificent highway, bearing the curious appellation of the "Drink road," inquiry developing the information that it derives its name from the fact that it was constructed with a portion of the profits of the sale of liquor by the municipality, under a system inaugurated 13 years ago, and which has proved in every way so successful, both from a moral and pecuniary standpoint, that it has been adopted, with but three exceptions, in every city in Norway, says the Philadelphia Record.

Under this plan the municipal authorities, after deciding how many licenses are required, grant them, not to individuals, but to a stock company, which is not allowed to receive more than five per cent. on the capital invested, the remainder being appropriated by the city to schools, parks roads, hospitals and other public improvements. The liquors are carefully selected and inspected, and are always pure; the barkeepers and appointed by the government, and wear uniforms and numbers; the bars are plain rooms without seats; only a small quantity, not over six cents' worth, of liquor can be sold at one time to anyone; children are not allowed to act as messengers, and the saloons are under government control and the books always open to inspection.

The average profits are about 125 per cent., of which 120 goes to the city, and the sales have been reduced from 12,500,000 Norwegian quarts to 5,500,000, and the scheme is found to be more promotive of real temperance than iron-bound prohibition enactments.

QUARANTINED TOYS.

Made of Iron and Used by Children Who Have Contagious Diseases.

"Did you ever hear of a baby of toys?" asked the toy dealer of a customer, reports the Chicago Times-Herald. "Some mother probably originated the idea. It isn't a profitable arrangement for dealers, because one set of toys can be made to serve a neighborhood. When not in use they are quarantined.

"It's like this," continued the dealer, taking up an iron house, with a mechanical postman delivering the mail, "a child is taken ill in a neighborhood with scarlet fever and the house and family are at once isolated. The neighbors have great sympathy for the child's mother and they scheme together to send something that will help to amuse the little one when it is getting better. As you see, the toys are of iron, and are passed along with the request that each time they are used they shall be put into an oven and baked before they are returned. I have known one set of toys to go through an epidemic."

"Doesn't baking them destroy their usefulness?"

"It mects off a leg sometimes, but great care is taken in getting them for the purpose. We have to look out for them as a regular part of our trade. Queer? Yes, but there are lots of queer things in our line. This is only one of them."

Emperor's Two Sons.

A writer in the Pester Lloyd says that there are two souls animating the German emperor, which are struggling for the ascendancy. "One is the soul of his ancestor Frederick II., and is influenced by the entire history of his house. This soul had it alone inspired the emperor, would have made him a conservative, self-centered, religious and, on the whole, one-sided prince, regarding himself as summius episcopus of his country's church, as the absolute chief of so many legions, and also as the despotic master of men, like all Prussian kings before him." The other is the soul of a modern absolutist.

SIGHT OF CATERPILLARS.

A huge tree in Mexico.

A huge tree in Tule, in the state of Oaxaca, Mex., is 164 feet in circumference.

PREACHER AND FIGHTER.

California Divine Teaches a Notorious Bully a Sunday Lesson.

Rev. Stanley Wilson, of Ramona, Cal., is perhaps the only clergyman in the country who has a record of preaching a sermon and thrashing a bully all in the same Sunday forenoon, says the Chicago Chronicle. Mr. Wilson is an athletic young man, being considered the best boxer in the mountain region of his county, and in addition to riding the circuit embracing the various hamlets in the hills is editor of the Ramona Sentinel. He preached the other morning in the little Baptist church that stands among the pines of the hills back of Julian. After his sermon Mr. Wilson was accosted on the streets by Dave Putnam, a billy, who has been in many scrapes, who demanded a retraction of a certain item that lately appeared in the Ramona Sentinel reflecting on himself.

"Did you write that article about me?" asked Putnam.

"I am responsible for it, if I did not write it," replied the preacher.

"Well, if you are responsible for it, take that," said Putnam, striking at the eloquent young person.

The blow failed to land. The person sailed into the miner, and they clinched. Then the dust of the streets arose in a cloud. The miners gathered around and cheered the preacher to the echo. Within five minutes Putnam was knocked out and the preacher was calmly dusting off his plug hat.

Even before this occurred Mr. Wilson did not lack popularity, but since then his stock has gone up a hundred-fold. Putnam has been laughed out of the county.

ONE LIGHT THAT NEVER FAILS.

A Tiny Gas Jet Whose Flame Is Continuous Year In and Year Out.

Everyone must recognize the beauty and many advantages possessed by the electric light, but, perhaps, few have thought of the discomforts to which a large part of the population would be put if this most modern and perfect illuminant were to supersede all the older forms in use.

An excellent example of this is to be found in the large workroom of the reporters in the New York Sun office. In this room, says the paper, are scores of incandescent electric lamps, and no one lacks a light, but at an odd corner there is always burning one little gas jet, whose light is insignificant, but dearer to the men who work about it than all the electric lights in the room. Day and night, year in and year out, this gas jet burns with a flame not more than half an inch high, and quarter of an inch broad, and day and night it is the Mecca of every man who resorts to tobacco smoking to sooth his nerves or kill idle moments. Everybody knows where to find a light for cigar, pipe, or cigarette, but this was not true years ago when the electric lights took the place of the old gas jets which lit the room. With these open lights in profusion no one had ever found it necessary to keep a stock of matches at hand for starting a smoke. For many a day and night after the electric lights were established there were great hunts through the office for matches, and then finally it became the fixed custom to keep a gas light going at a corner near the sporting desk to accommodate the smokers.

HOW BISMARCK BECAME RICH.

German Writer Says the Chancellor Speculated on State Secrecy.

A pamphlet has recently appeared in Germany entitled "Bismarck and Bleichroeder." Its author, says London Truth, is a member of the old Junker party of the name of Diebat Dauer, and it professes to give some curious details in regard to the present fortune of the ex-chancellor and how it was acquired. After the German war of 1870 the prince received from the country two estates of no great value, which, coupled with his own paternal estate, brought him in a fair revenue. He then left Bleichroeder to look after his private monetary affairs, with the result that he now has a fortune amounting to 150,000,000 marks. This author estimates, can only have been made by stock exchange speculations, based on the knowledge that the prince derived from his position as head of the German government, and which he confided to Bleichroeder. That, with the care of empire on his shoulders, he left his monetary affairs in the hands of his banker is very possible, and equally possible is it that his banker did the best for his client. But I should require a good deal more evidence than is afforded in this pamphlet to believe that the prince speculated on state secrets in partnership with a Hebrew financier or that his fortune is now anything like 150,000,000 marks.

A MAN OF NERVE.

Stopped a Street Car to Prevent His Wife to Friend.

There are nervy men and nervy men. One nervy man was on a Pythian street car the other afternoon, says the New Orleans Times-Democrat. He was riding home with his wife. The car wasn't very crowded. When he reached the corner the conductor rang the bell. The car stopped, and he started out with his wife. On the way out saw a friend of his and halted midway down the aisle.

"Mr. Jones," said the nervy man, "this is my wife."

"I am glad to meet you, Mr. Jones," said the wife.

"I am charmed," said Mr. Jones.

Then everybody shook hands.

"Good-by, Jones," said the nervy man. "Good-by," said Jones.

Then the nervy man left the car, which had been standing still during the ceremony of introduction, expressions of delight and farewells.

"Well, I'll be darned," said the conductor, and the passengers who had been looking on wide-mouthed laughed.

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