

RETURN OF LOST RIVER.

Waters of Stream in England Flow Again After an Absence of Five Years.

The little Buckinghamshire village of Great Misenden, snugly lying amid the rich meadows and wood-covered hills of the Chilternas, is happy once more.

Five years ago, says the London Express, it was the scene of one of the most remarkable phenomena of nature, when the river Misbourne, which from time immemorial has coursed through its green fields, disappeared as completely as if it had been sucked up by the earth, leaving only a dry bed, a few hollows and a collection of smooth, round pebbles to show that it had ever existed.

And when it had gone there was no one of the inhabitants of that village but felt he had suffered a personal loss. No more could they stroll along its banks in the summer twilight and watch the clear, bubbling waters as they sped along, to join the Thames.

The disappearance of the river was only a sign of worse things to follow, and as the water sank lower and lower in the wells a great drought threatened the land and even forced cattle to be removed from the pasture and people to leave their houses.

Then last summer it began to rain. It rained almost every day. The rain seemed ceaseless.

Walking along the old river bank one day last autumn, a little jet of cold, clear water was seen spurting out from among some loose yellow gravel. A few days later more of these tiny jets appeared. They increased in number, until a deep pool was formed, and then a joyous day for the villagers of Great Misenden—the water started to trickle down its course, and grew in volume day by day until it had filled the old river bed to the brim.

Never were the waters of the Ganges more sincerely worshipped than that little river by the villagers who flocked to the sides at evening in quiet pilgrimage.

What made the Misbourne disappear in the first instance no one has ever been able to say. Some believe London's millions drained it dry, others point to the fact that a few years previously a railway disturbed the quiet of the countryside, and its thirsty engines drank up the sparkling waters from the ugly station pumps.

Once this river was full of trout and fish of many kinds, and no doubt on this account the good knight de Misenden selected its banks for the foundation of a monastery after he had been saved from a shipwreck many hundred years ago.

The abbey still exists, though little of the original building has escaped the restorer's hands while in its grounds is a deep water-filled hollow, where the monks of old obtained their Friday fish.

SAFEST MATERIALS.

LESSONS OF VALUE FROM THE BIG BALTIMORE FIRE.

Proper Construction of Great Buildings Ascertained by Committee of Experts—Facts for Builders.

One of the standing committees of the National Fire Protection Association devotes its attention to those features of construction which are best designed to check the progress of a conflagration. Immediately after the Baltimore disaster of February last, this committee entered upon an elaborate investigation of the damaged property, with a view to obtaining such fresh information as might be afforded thereby.

It was hoped that a report would be ready in the spring or early summer. For some reason its appearance was delayed much longer. The document was distributed only a few days ago. In spite of its tardiness the opinions therein embodied will prove of immense value to insurance men, architects, owners of large buildings and to those municipal officers who have occasion to study the essentials of fire resistant construction.

The committee was composed of 12 well-known experts, and in the performance of this special task had the assistance of four others. So authoritative an expression as that of these men has not appeared before in many years. Perhaps it is without precedent since the era of steel frame buildings opened.

The first topic treated in the "conclusion" of the committee is the necessity for suitably shielding the metal columns, floor beams and other steel and iron members of a modern structure. The committee affirms in positive terms that nothing serves so effectively as well-burned brick, laid in cement mortar. Hollow tile lack stability; they do not stay in place; they are also perceptibly affected by severe heat. Plaster blocks are pronounced inferior to terra cotta.

Hollow tile proved unsatisfactory for floor arches in Baltimore for a variety of reasons. Sometimes the arches had too wide a span to insure strength. Sometimes they were not properly overlaid with cement. Often the lower layer of the tile—technically known as the web—would break under intense heat and thus weaken the rest of the tile.

Almost invariably the lower flanges of the I-beams in the floors showed that they had been inadequately protected. One form of covering failed because it was held by exposed metal clips. Another proved defective because the skew-backs—projections from the adjacent arch tile—broke and released their burden. On the whole, for arch construction cement "seemed to stand up well," although it was not extensively used in Baltimore.

For exterior walls, those in front and rear, nothing has been found that is comparable with good brick. Stone suffers much more from fire. On the sides also the walls should be of brick and thick enough to stand alone if the adjoining buildings collapse. Even in partitions terra cotta, plaster blocks and metal lath proved unsatisfactory.

The committee qualified its disapproval by limiting the same to the present methods of employing these materials. The best type of partition tested in the Baltimore fire was one composed of five-inch tile, but the latter usually became loosened, and hence ceased to do much good. The significance of this part of the report is enhanced by an additional comment of the committee relative to the proper subdivision of large floor spaces, like those in a department store. It declares that without a sufficient number of interior barriers the contents of a "fire resistant" building are scarcely safer than in one of the most careless constructions.

In the formulation of its report the committee of the National Fire Protection Association has rendered an important service to the country.

The Wedding Ring Finger. The wedding ring was placed on the left hand, as nearest the heart, and on the fourth finger because that finger was supposed to have its own "private wire" (in the shape of a delicate nerve) to the heart. That finger, too, was called the medicine finger, and the belief was that by virtue of the little nerve it could detect a dangerous poison if simply inserted in the liquid. From that belief the idea that wedding rings—the rings worn on that finger—had special curative qualities had its rise. To this day wedding rings are rubbed over an obstinate sty on an eyelid.—London Chronicle.

May. "This," said the man with the blue nose and the red ears, pulling his collar closer about his ears, "is a regular May weather we are having, isn't it?" "May weather?" asked the man with the frosted fingers wramping his feet to get them warm. "May weather?" "Yes, it may snow and it may not." "From that instant things grew warmer in that neighborhood.—Chicago Tribune.

Insulting. Jinks—That man Hinks is an insulting pup. Spinks—What's the trouble? "Why I said to him: 'How much a man owes to his friends?'" "Yes?" "And he said: 'Yes—some do.' It wasn't so much what he said as the way he said it, and the way he looked at me, confounded him!—Cleveland Leader.

RAREST AMERICAN BOOK.

Not a Copy of New England Primer, First Edition, Known to Exist.

"I am often asked," said a New York bookseller, states the Boston Post, "which is the rarest American book. 'It is a puzzling question to answer, for a dozen different works might be named—for example, the folio edition of the Columbus letter, the only known copy of which is in the Lenox Library on Fifth avenue, or Bayard's 'Journal' (New York: William Bradford, 1838), the first book printed in this city, long supposed to be lost, but unearthed by an American girl in 1902 among Gov. Fletcher's papers in the archives of the public record office in London, where a unique copy had rested in obscurity since it was forwarded by the New York governor 211 years ago.

"To my mind, the rarest American book is the New England Primer, 'the little Bible of New England,' as it has been called, which is so rare that the earliest printed editions have vanished, no one knowing, indeed, when and where the first edition was actually issued.

"A few collectors think that the first edition was printed in Cambridge, Mass., in 1658, basing their belief on a statement made by Marmaduke Johnson, a printer in that town, who was summoned before the general court in Boston in September, 1658, to give an account of the books he had lately printed. In Johnson's answer to the council he stated that 'he had printed the Primer,' and this work may have been the long-lost first edition of the book. No copy, however, has ever been found.

"The late Paul Leicester Ford, who published in 1897 an authoritative account of the New England Primer, believed that the first edition was printed in Boston about 20 years later by Benjamin Harris, a Protestant publisher, who came from London to Boston about the year 1686, and there began to make and sell books.

"The value of copies bearing early dates is wonderfully high. In 1876, when little attention was paid to the book, the Lenox Library gave five dollars for a copy of the edition of 1727, the earliest known. Two years ago a firm of rare book dealers in this city gave \$2,500 for a copy of the edition of 1735, the second earliest known, selling it at a considerable advance on that sum to a private collector in Brooklyn."

ALPINE TOBOGGANING.

Lengthy Course Over Which Almost a Mile a Minute Has Been Made.

St. Moritz is one of the highest villages in the Engadine, having an altitude of about 4,000 feet, and is a great center of winter sports; it is consequently much frequented by English and other nationalities who enjoy the sports of skating, curling, tobogganing, skiing and bandy, which can here be obtained under the best conditions, says the Electric Review. Good tobogganing may be had in other places, but at St. Moritz it is carried to a fine art, and only an expert can expect to compete successfully on the renowned "Cresta" toboggan run, with its wonderful curves and banks. The name Cresta is derived from a small village of that name near the finish of the course.

The course is a little over three-quarters of a mile in length, with a difference of elevation, from start to finish, of about 600 feet, the gradient varies at different points, being most steep at the chert leap.

As only one toboggan can occupy the track at a time, the races are all decided by the time taken to complete the course. The record time from the start to the finish is at present 51-10 seconds, this entailing a speed of 60 miles an hour or more on the fastest parts. The curves of frozen snow are built up with high banks, accurately shaped, to allow the tobogganer to go around them at the greatest speed, the highest bank being about 25 feet in height. These different banks have well-known names, such as the Battledore and Shuttlecock, Scylla and Charbydis and Bulpet's Corner. The whole track is practically of ice, and after passing the finish it has for a short distance a steep upward gradient, the great momentum obtained carrying the tobogganer uphill.

The toboggans used are of the "skel-ton" pattern, with steel runners, the tobogganer lying in a prone position and steering with his feet, by means of spikes attached to the toes of his boots. The principal race run on the Cresta is the Grand National, which takes place at the end of February or beginning of March, and might be called the Derby of tobogganing, competitors coming from Davos and other places to take part in this contest.

Glass Workmanship. One of the greatest artistic marvels of the world is to be seen in the museum at Harvard university. This curiosity consists of hundreds of specimens of flowers and plants formed of glass, but with such exquisite fidelity to nature that they appear to be real, every tint and marking, every tiniest detail, being faithfully reproduced. They are made by a secret process, the art being a father and son in Germany, who, it is said, may let their secret die with them. As an instance of the wonderful workmanship, it may be mentioned that the very hairs which appear on the stems on certain plants are reproduced on the glass imitations.

A Tale with a Moral. Opportunity knocked at the man's door. But the man didn't hear it. He was too busy inside knocking his neighbors. Moral—It pays to flip occasionally on the anvil chorus.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

GREAT HORSE RANGE.

BIGGEST IN THE COUNTRY IN STATE OF WASHINGTON.

Eleven Thousand Improved Animals Roam the Immense Range and Require No Feeding.

Stretching for 200 miles on the north side of the Columbia river, from a point opposite The Dalles, Ore., away toward the Big Bend, in Washington, lies the largest exclusive horse range in the United States. In this great expanse of variegated hills, prairies and sand dunes, upland plateau and river bluffs, range the holdings of the Switzer, John and 'Jade' numbering 11,000 head of horses, says the Chicago Chronicle.

For the last 30 years this expanse of country has been the range of the Switzer, formerly William, John and Jade. In 1883 William died and the two other brothers continued in partnership for several years, when they divided, and each now conducts his own interests.

Jade Switzer lives at Expansion, Klickitat county, Wash., 12 miles below the town of Umatilla, on the north side of the Columbia. John Switzer lives on Switzer's Island, in the Columbia river, near the town of Umatilla. Jade Switzer owns 4,000 head of horses and John owns 7,000 head, the range for both these immense herds being in the territory from The Dalles to the Big Bend.

At the highest tide of the Switzer holdings, before William Switzer died, the brothers owned at one time 16,000 head of horses. This was said to be the largest herd of horses ever owned by one company in the United States. The Switzer brand, an "S" on the hip, was known from the Atlantic to the Pacific ocean, as they shipped and drove horses to every known market in the United States.

In the early history of the Switzer horse industry the holdings were cayuse—small, hardy, incorrigible, pinto and buckskin mustangs—the hardest brand of equines that ever trailed behind the cattle herds from the Pacific coast to Chyenne in the early days or that followed an Indian trail over the precipitous mountains of the inland empire.

But the cayuses are now entirely weeded out. The Switzer now 7,000 head of these mustangs to the Linnton cannery at the contract price of three dollars a head, delivered. Since that clean-up the class of horses raised on this immense range has been greatly improved. Large draught stallions have been crossed with the wry, nervous western mares, and the result is a grade of horses weighing from 1,000 to 1,200 pounds, that are fit for any ordinary service, and bring the highest price in every market. About 600 stallions are kept.

On this 200 miles of range 11,000 head of wild horses reign monarch of all they survey. The Columbia and Yakima rivers are their watering places, they run over parts of three large counties, and there are colts on the ranges two and three years old without brands, and that were perhaps never seen by one of the Switzer herders.

Round-up corral are built about ten miles apart over this great range, and the 50 men employed in the round-up gather and brand the colts in the fall. The two brothers own about 200 head of trained saddle horses—a large drove of horses in itself.

None of this great herd is ever fed a particle of feed during the winter season, the sandhills and rolling prairies affording sufficient nutritious feed the year round.

Settlers are crowding the vast range. Watering places are being fenced up, and slowly the great expanse is narrowing down, but there yet remains an empire in extent.

Horse stealing is more or less prevalent in the Switzer range, the very magnitude of the business making it impossible to guard against rascals from the outside, who slip in and appropriate what they can safely take away.

WAS SEVENTH IN STRENGTH.

Naval Rating of Japan Previous to the Opening of Hostilities with Russia.

On the eve of the war Japan's was the smallest of the seven leading navies of the world. The fleet of Russia, at that time, was inferior only to that of Great Britain and of France. During 1903, says Hosmer Whitfield, in Success Magazine, Russia spent on her fleet over \$55,000,000, while Japan for the whole of her navy expended only about \$11,000,000. Consequently Russia laid out in naval equipment nearly five times as much as Japan, whose naval fighting strength, at the beginning of hostilities, was only half that of Italy. Alexieff said: "The fleet of the island kingdom is only an exotic which we will cripple at the onset." In the anxiety to impress Asia with her might, Russia sent ponderous-looking men-of-war to the far east with too few mechanical ratings, and with seamen who, in a confession made to me by a Russian officer, were only "agricultural laborers," not only unused to sea life, but also unversed in even the simplest mechanical knowledge. It was in this condition that Japan found its enemy when it opened its attack.

Salaries of Pro-Consul. The highest figure paid for any pro-consul by England is \$100,000, which is the sum received by the viceroy of India. It seems a large sum, but it never really covers the expenses. The South African post pays \$55,000. The governor-general of Australia receives \$50,000, equal to the salary of the president of the United States. The same salary is paid to the governor general of Canada.

HE FOUND A COOL PLACE.

Diligent Search Revealed the Ideal Place for Ripening Off Green Bananas.

The man of the house brought home the other evening five dozen bananas which he had secured cheap as he passed by the hucksters on the street. They were a bit green, to be sure, but the huckster told him if he would put them in a cool, dark place they would ripen in time and taste exactly as if they had that moment come from Jamaica, relates the Baltimore News.

When the man reached home he looked for the cool, dark place. At first he thought he would put the fruit on top of the bookcase in a dark corner of the library and then he felt sure that his wife's eagle eye would detect a bit of the green protruding over the edge, and would have it out of there in an instant.

A handbox on the table attracted his attention. It contained his wife's best hat, just home from the milliner's, and without further ado, he took the be-feathered concoction from its nest and placed it on a marble figure standing near and dumped the bananas into the box. Then it occurred to him that his better half was sensitive about nothing so much as her best wear, and so he took out the fruit, replaced the hat and went into the kitchen to ask the advice of Bridget.

Bridget was not on hand. She had stepped out a moment to the back gate to talk to the vegetable man, who was fascinating, even though married, but the man's eye caught the gas stove and he felt that at last he had found the proper place for the ripening process. There was fire in the range, therefore the gas stove must be out of commission, and so he opened the oven door and popped in the bananas and went back into the library for a smoke.

It was two hours later, and his wife was still trying on her new hat and making her husband stop reading every five minutes to tell her whether he considered it more becoming than her green one, and if he didn't think it a little—just a little—too wide on the left side, when, in the midst of this pleasing occupation, the lady stopped short, suddenly, and sniffed suspiciously.

"If I weren't quite sure that my new hat was better than the old one in this house, I should say that Bridget was baking some at this moment," said she.

Her husband looked up with more animation than he had displayed in the matter of the hat.

"You don't use the gas stove now do you?" he asked interestedly.

"Certainly we do—for some things," she replied. "Are you sure you don't think the plumage would look better brought farther to ward the front?"

But she was speaking to empty air, for her better half had vanished kitchenward. When he came back his expression was downcast.

"Bridget is baking some bananas for you for a little surprise," said he. "She says they're very good with sugar and cinnamon."

And that is all of the story, except that that family had bananas for breakfast, lunch and dinner for a week thereafter, until Bridget got tired of the whole matter and gave the remnants to a poor family in the alley.

AN ORDER THAT SHOCKED.

Then He Regretted That He Had Not Taken the Beer He Wished For.

The water had shown me a table and before I had ordered he brought a woman about 40 and passed her across from me, relates a writer in the Kansas City Star. The car was swaying and bumping over a new piece of track, and the old lady seemed perturbed by the jarring and the noise. Her hair was nearly white, and it was waved over the temples. A little bonnet was held in place by broad silver ribbons, tied very carefully in a very regular bow under her right ear. A turn-down collar of white and a long, thin chain holding a pair of glasses were the only relief from the black silk frock. There she sat, the primest old lady I had ever seen away from a mubah sofa. There was even a trace of a pucker to her mouth, just to accentuate. Most apparently on her way to the Missionary society's district convention.

I had contemplated having a small bottle of ale with my roast beef, but I ordered milk instead. While I am a believer in personal liberty, I do not permit my theories to inflict themselves upon others. I ordered milk instead of beer, and the waiter spilled much of it on me and the table as the train swung around a sharp curve. The old lady noticed the mishap, but her face bore not a trace of slightest interest. With her bearing distance I would not have risked laughing at anything. In the cold, business-like voice of the class leader she ordered—I could have told what it would be before she said a word—she ordered two eggs boiled medium, dry toast and a pot of hot tea. "It must be hot," she said. "And waiter," she called, as he turned away, "before you bring the eggs I want a Scotch highball."

Punishment for Papa. Mrs. Bibman—When my husband came home last evening I saw that he'd been drinking and gave him a good scolding. Mrs. Wyse—Oh, dear! what did you do that for? When I discover that my husband has been drinking I say nothing, but give him the baby to hold. It is really pathetic to see how devoted he is to Bobby. My dear, you've got a good deal to learn about the management of husbands.—Boston Transcript.

COLOSSAL HOME FOR PAPER.

New York Times Building, Recently Completed, Tallest Structure in the City.

New York.—The New York Times is now published from its new building in Times square, a structure which has been referred to by experts as one of the notable architectural triumphs of the world. In recognition of this contribution to the architectural beauty of New York, the city government some time ago named the district from Forty-second street north for seven blocks along Broadway and Seventh avenue Times square, and the subway station in the basement of the building bears the same title.

In a special edition published January 1 to celebrate the occupancy of the building there was an elaborate description of its construction and equipment. Among the features mentioned in this edition is that the building is the city's tallest structure from base to top, being 31 stories, with an extreme height of 476 feet; that a new record in steel tonnage has been made in its construction as it contains a larger percentage of steel to cubical contents than any other office building, having at the same time the strongest and stiffest steel frame structure of similar dimensions ever erected.

The presses are located 55 feet below the level of the street, while the paper is written and set up from the fourteenth to twenty-fifth floors. The press plant has a capacity of 144,000 16-page papers every hour, and provision has been made to increase this capacity to 432,000 papers per hour.

PLAN ECONOMY IN NAVY.

Vessels to Be Placed in Reserve Until Need for Their Services Arises.

Washington.—The naval general staff proposes to put naval vessels in reserve for the purpose of economy. It has been discovered that the cost of keeping a battleship in commission amounts to more than \$1,000,000 a year, and it is realized that some provision must be made for maintaining two classes of ships in reserve.

During the next session of congress an appropriation bill probably will be requested for maintaining ships in ordinary under a system of serviceability that will permit use of the vessels without much delay.

One class will be kept at the dry yards under such conditions of readiness for duty at sea as will permit their departure from port within 24 hours. This can be accomplished by having the ships in the care of few officers and men, the engines turned over frequently and the equipment stored in accessible places alongside, when not actually on board.

Another class will be in less readiness for service, probably far enough removed from the condition of duty to require a week or more to send the vessel away from the yard.

ROMANCE AT WORLD'S FAIR.

Secretary of German Commission to Take Home French Bride He Met at Kaiser's Pavilion.

St. Louis, Mo.—Karl Gallenbeck, secretary of the imperial German commission to the world's fair, takes home with him a Parisian bride, whose acquaintance he made at the world's fair. The marriage will take place soon. The bride-to-be is Miss Alexandrine de Brandt, daughter of Franz de Brandt of Cologne, near Paris. The De Brandt family is of the Austrian nobility.

Miss de Brandt is a young cosmopolitan. She was born in Austria and educated in France, England and Vienna. She speaks English, French, German, Italian and Spanish. She came to America with friends of her father's family to see the world's fair. She wrote accounts of it for French journals and at times did interpreting for the German commission.

In "Das Deutsche Haus," strong reminder of pleasant days she had spent at Charlottenburg, she met Karl Gallenbeck. She corrected his English and helped him with difficult translations. While her tongue worked her brown eyes were not idle. The closing days of the fair brought a betrothal.

FIGHT BLAZE WITH MILK.

Lactical Fluid Used to Extinguish Flames Threatening a Philadelphia Dairyman's Home.

Philadelphia.—The dwelling of Christian F. Devold, of Roxborough, was badly damaged by fire the other day which broke out in a closet on the second floor and Samuel Moore, one of the inmates, was badly burned about the hands, face and body while attempting to extinguish the flames.

The members of the family, which, in addition to Devold, consisted of his wife, three children, and Samuel Moore, were sitting in the dining-room about nine o'clock in the evening when a policeman rushed into the house and informed them that there was a fire on the second floor.

Devold is engaged in the milk business, and there being no water handy, he, Mrs. Devold and Moore procured from the milk house several cans filled with the lactical fluid, and with this they fought the flames and prevented them from spreading until the firemen, in response to the alarm sent out by the policeman, reached the scene.

School for Servants. A school is to be started in Hamburg, Germany, for the training of domestic servants. It will be very practical and will not compete with the schools of domestic science, which are becoming popular among well-to-do families.