DENTON JOURNAL.

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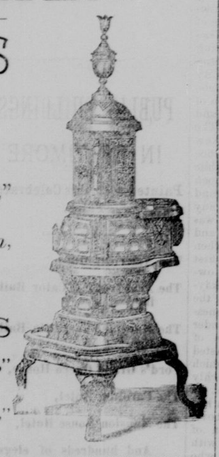

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THE ISLAND OF BIRDS.

Peculiarities of a Little Isle of Which Little Is Generally Known.

The Island of Birds—for such, it has been conjectured, is the meaning of the word "Foula"—is not so frequently visited by the tourist as it deserves to be. Situated at a distance of fifteen miles from the nearest part of the mainland of Shetland, its cloudlike form, which seems to float on the horizon, is visible from every hill top of any importance in the archipelago.

The eye of the observer of the picturesque, as it glides along the distant prospect, is caught by the fine bold peaks of Foula, and returns again and again from its general survey to gaze fondly on that island as the finest feature of the scene. Nor is it only at a distance that it looks grand.

The cliffs on the west side, which are beaten by waves which have rolled without a check all the way from Greenland, are the loftiest in the British Isles. The highest hill is the Sneuk, which has an altitude of over thirteen hundred feet above the sea. Another peak, almost as high, confronts the ocean as a stupendous precipice from summit to base. These crags are the homes of innumerable sea fowl, the norie or sea parrot and the kittiwake being most abundant.

On the east side the rocks are comparatively low, but not uninteresting. On the north there are some remarkable stacks, or isolated rocks, one of them being pierced by a lofty Gothic archway, and another surmounted by a ruin. The hollow center of the island affords peat, and the grassy slopes at the back of the cliffs afford good pasturage for cattle and sheep and a number of handsome ponies.

The population numbers 270, and, with the exception of three families, is engaged in crofting and fishing. The Foulaese are masters of many trades. They make their own turning lathes and spinning wheels. Some can repair clocks and watches; all can make and cobble shoes. A few are weavers and tailors, as well as dyers. Every man is a mason. The women clip, and, I am afraid, sometimes roo or pluck the sheep. They spin the wool and knit excellent stockings and sailors' frocks or jerseys. I believe if a Foulaman were to be placed naked on a desert coast with nothing in his possession but a clasp knife he would not only contrive to find food for his support, but in a short time would, by his unaided efforts, be provided with clothes, with a house having a clock on the walls and with a boat and fishing tackle.

When they go to sea they never use the language that is employed on shore, but a jargon sacred to the occasion. A woman they call "cloven foode" or "hemelte," a parson is an "upstander," and the church is a "bone house," and so on.

To use a land word in a boat is certain to frighten away the fish. A copper coin is nailed on every keel to prevent the "brigdy" (which is the Danish name for the basking shark) from sucking the boat to the bottom. A worsted thread having nine knots on it is tied around a joint when it is sprained.

Sick cows are cured by drawing a tom cat by the tail over their backs. If a minister or a person with flat feet crosses the path of a man going out fishing no fish will be got. To accidentally wet the feet when stepping into the boat is a favorable sign. A cat should never be mentioned when a man is bating his line.

A rusty nail from a coffin will cure the toothache if used as a toothpick, and a sip of water from an old kneepan is a sovereign remedy for some disorders. To catch a halibut for bait the fishermen put nine pieces of peat into a kettle above the fire before proceeding to sea.

A hen should be set when the tide is flowing, and an egg should be placed among the seed corn before it is sown. When a sheep is being slaughtered indoors no woman should pass between it and the fire. Stacks should be built and the ground dug according to the apparent course of the sun. Boats always take a turn sunward before going to sea.—London World.

The Barber Shops of Europe.

The comparison between the barber shop of America and the barber shop of Europe is the comparison between a palace and a hovel. Luxury in a barber shop across the water, even in Paris, is an unknown quantity. The American barber aims to make his shop as attractive, his chairs as luxurious and comfortable as possible. In decorations and fitting up generally many shops in America are exceedingly artistic. In Europe things are different. An American visiting Paris or London, on placing himself in the hands of a native barber, will at once sigh for the land of his birth, and would even enjoy the gossip of his American barber.

In the provincial towns and cities of Germany a barber is an institution. He is a dignitary to some extent. The head barber never shaves a man. He hires assistants to do that. He must be a surgeon and a dentist. He pulls teeth, cups and leeches, cuts off a leg or arm if necessary, but he never draws a razor across a customer's face. The head barber's assistants start out with their shaving outfits early in the morning and do the shaving right at the homes of customers, who make a contract for a year to be shaved so many times a week for so much—generally about $10 is the price. Customers must be at home when the barber calls or they will not be shaved until the next trip. There are very few shops and very poor ones in Germany. The European on visiting America is astounded at the luxury, the artistic arrangement and general elegance of the American barber shop.—George Werner in Globe-Democrat.

Washing Stone Fronts.

An entirely new industry has been established in this city of late. It owes its existence wholly to Pittsburg's new atmosphere, and is based on the fact that the Iron City's buildings can be scoured and made clean. On a Fourth avenue building in process of remodeling hangs this sign: "Blank & Blank, Brick and Stone Cleaners." The upper stories of the building referred to have been built of nice, new, cream colored stone. These, resting upon the old, smoke stained stones, gave the front a bizarre and incongruous appearance. But the "brick and stone cleaner's" services were called in, and lo! the entire front now wears the appearance of newness. The smoked stone put off its grimy discolorations. The building's old facade was scrubbed with honest soap and water, and now harmonizes with the newer portion. "Stone Fronts Washed" is the announcement that must greet the eye hereabouts, along with "Washing and Ironing" and similar legends. The unlaundered building in this city must perforce stand among its fellows as would a dirty faced boy in a Sunday school full of cleanly lads and lasses.—Pittsburg

A Bread Winning Artistic Taste.

"Yes, my profession in this city is a new one—not an original idea strictly with me, for in New York there are several ladies in the high social life there who, with limited means, do just as I am doing." The woman was speaking to a St. Louis Globe-Democrat reporter. She continued: "You see I have naturally the head and taste of an artist, not practically, but theoretically. I was accustomed to wealth, and my artistic taste was heightened by European travel and observation to the greatest point of culture. When reverses came the idea was suggested to me to utilize this gift, and my profession is now an open secret here to all the wealthy people and those of less means who have the house decorating propensities.

"When a house is built the owner sends for me to arrange the interior. I select the furniture, the draperies, the bric-a-brac, in fact everything pertaining to the decorative part of the home. It very often happens that the owners with plenty of money to spend are absolutely divested of any ideas. So they place everything in my hands. Then, again, there are people only comfortably enough situated to allow a certain amount to be used for the ornamentation of their home. I conform to both of these styles, very judiciously, of course. I select the ceiling and wall designs, then the gas or electric jets.

"After the solid portion comes the movable, the rugs, skins, draperies and articles of virtu. I buy and arrange everything with my own hands. It is a work of fancy, but I do not limit my charges, and I have a good income from my arduous art work. There is scarcely a handsome or artistic home in this city which is not the result in interior loveliness of my skill. Of course it is sub rosa. I simply sell my taste and talent and to the master or mistress falls all the credit of the accomplished beauty."

The Tramp to His Pard.

There is residing in the suburbs a gentleman who is the owner of a very large amount of real estate, but who is one of the most negligent of persons in regard to dress, his clothing being almost invariably of the shabbiest description. This negligence is an eccentricity, and is not due to penuriousness, for he is generous and of a warm and genial nature. Not many days ago a tramp called at his house during the owner's absence, and, as it was the noon hour, the latter's wife, a very sympathetic and kind hearted woman, gave the nomad a good dinner. Having finished the meal and thanked the giver of the same, the tramp started off; but just as he got to the gate he met the owner of the premises, and judging by his dress that they were of the same fraternity, the wanderer said:

"Look here, pard, it's a little rough for two o' us to work the same house durin' the same hour. Jist try some other place this time, for yender's too good a woman to have to feed the both o' us today."—Boston Budget.

Trouble During a Thunderstorm—Messages Not Easily Disciphered.

"And you imagine we fellows have a slick time of it, eh?" said an operator at the Western Union Telegraph office. "Well, you are away off. An operator's life, especially this sort of weather, isn't altogether a pleasant one, when he has got to use a fan with one hand and a pen with the other."

"How many words do operators usually write a minute?"

"An expert operator has to write on an average from thirty to forty-five words, and sometimes more, according to the ability of the transmitter at the other end of the wire. If the sender is a first class man he can make it very uncomfortable for the receiving operator by sending so fast that he won't have time to dip his pen in the ink bottle, not if it were buttoned to his bosom. Then in a thunder storm the lightning interferes a good deal with the operator's transmitting. The receiving operator, if his ability allows it, can readily get along by guessing, but he has to be very careful, or any mistake that he may make will cause his salary to be somewhat diminished at the end of the month on account of having to pay the cost of the message, or a few hundred dollars more. No, sir, an operator's life is not one of pleasure, as is the general impression. It's one of continual worry, and is strictly business."

"How do operators usually learn the business?"

"A first class operator frequently starts out as 'messenger,' and through his own perseverance gradually learns the 'ropes,' and, if he is ambitious enough, he finally becomes an operator. He may not then be fully up to the standard. He's got to become accustomed to different styles of messages, such as 'social business' and 'cipher.' Any first class operator can sit down and write cipher after cipher, with the experience he has had with this economic and costly style of telegraphing. For instance, in an everyday style like this: 'How melons ripe enough to pluck?' or 'Cotton's easier, market steadier, cotton coming in lively,' is all easy enough, but when the messages get this way: 'Somnambulistic echu, buy hundred bales middling,' and it is mixed at the other end to read, 'Summon an ambulance, try hounded pills, middling, etc.,' or 'send me firfziz tollar, I vas ousgaspeilt,' it's not quite so easy. The operator looks at such a message, turns it different ways, and either carries it back for 'reconstruction,' or lets it go as written. Then again, 'I wasn't yez coom right doon on the wire' no doubt means, wants him to reply by wire. When he gets such a message the operator is in another 'pickle' what to do.

"In 'cipher' and 'cables,' though, such risks cannot be taken, as it might involve thousands of dollars, and as the operator's finances are nominal, he cannot take the risk.

"There are also stock quotations that are important, oftentimes more so than the cipher messages. A quotation comes along. The merchant does not intend to invest until he is certain that the quotation has been correctly received. An operator or the telegraph company cannot always be held responsible for misspelled or badly written messages."

"How should a message be written to insure prompt dispatch and quick delivery?"

"It should first be plainly written, every word and figure spelled out. Paper is plentiful and can be generously utilized for this important purpose."—New York Graphic.

Silk from Wild Worms.

A curious method of silk manufacture is said to exist in the Chinese province of Kwangtung, where are found wild silk worms feeding on the camphor tree. The full grown caterpillar is cut open and the silk is taken out in a form resembling catgut, subjected to a hardening process, and made into fish lines.—Arkansaw

TOADS IN HISTORY.

Legends, Traditions and Proverbs About the Hopping Creature.

The old Persians made the toad the symbol and pet of Ahriman, the foe of light, and declared that his Charlester, or attendant demons, took that form when they persecuted Ormuzd, says The St. James Gazette. Among the Tyrolese it is a type of envy, whence the problem, "Envious as a toad." In the Middle Ages, among artists and in many church legends, it appears as greed or avarice; there is even to this day, in some mysterious place on the right bank of the Rhine, between Laufenberg and Binzgan, a pile of coals on which sits a toad. That is to say, coals they seem to the world; but the pile is all pure gold, and the toad is a devil who guards it, and he who knows how can pronounce a spell which shall ban the grim guardian.

And there is a story told by Monzel ("Christliche Symbolik," volume one, page 500) that long ago there lived in Cologne a wicked miser, who, when old, repented and wished to leave his money to the poor. But when he opened his great iron chest he found that every coin in it had turned to a horrible toad with sharp teeth. This story being told to his confessor, the priest saw in it the divine retribution, and told him that God would have none of his money—nay, that it would go hard with him to save his soul. And he, being willing to do anything to be free from sin, was locked up in the chest, with the toads, and lo! the next day when it was opened the creatures had eaten him up. Only his clean picked bones remained.

But in the Tyrol it is believed that the toads are themselves poor sinners, undergoing penace as Heetschen or Hoppinen—as they are locally called—for deeds done in human form. Therefore they are regarded with pity and sympathy by all good Christians. And it is well known that in the Church of St. Michael, in Schwatz, on the evening before the great festivals, but when no one is present, the immense toad comes crawling before the altar, where it kneels and prays, weeping bitterly. The general belief is that toads are, for the most part, people who made vows to go on pilgrimages and died with the vows unfulfilled. So the poor creatures go hopping astray, bewildered and perplexed, striving to find their way to shrines which have perchance long since ceased to exist.

Once there was a toad who took seven years to go from Lelfers to Weissenstein; and when the creature reached the church it suddenly changed to a resplendent white dove, which, flying up to heaven, vanished before the eyes of a large company there assembled, who bore witness to the miracle. And one day, as a wagoner was going from Innsbruck to Seefeld, as he paused by the wayside a toad came hopping up and seemed desirous of getting into the wagon, which he, being a benevolent man, helped it to do, and gave it a place on the seat beside him.

There it sat like any other respectable passenger until they came to the side path which led to the church of Seefeld, when, wonderful to relate, the toad suddenly turned to a maiden of angelic beauty clad in white, who, thanking the wagoner for his kindness to her when she was but a poor reptile, told him she had once been a young lady who had vowed a pilgrimage to the church of Seefeld. But, as heedless maidens often do, she had put it off from time to time till she died. But now, by his help, her soul was saved. And, saying this, she, too, winged her way "to the joyous realms where the pure dwellers are."

In common with the frog the toad is an emblem of productiveness and raks among creatures which are types of erotic passion. I have in my possession a necklace of rudely made silver toads of Arab workmanship, intended to be worn by women who wish to become mothers. Therefore the creature, in the old world as well as in the new, appears as being earnestly seeking the companionship of men.

A Clever Woman.

Once, while traveling in the west, she was obliged to take a seat in one crowded car, while her friends entered the next.

Her neighbor in the seat was a disagreeable looking fellow, whose features showed an alarming amount of low cunning, promising actual knavery. In spite of the Englishwoman's distrust of him she fell asleep and was awakened by feeling her companion withdrawing his hand from her pocket.

Her first impulse was to raise an alarm; her second, to ascertain the extent of her loss. It proved that the thief had only succeeded in taking her baggage checks, and as his ticket was marked "Chicago" the lady resolved to wait until they reached that place, also her destination.

The train ran into the station at Chicago, the pickpocket made his way to the door, and the lady walked beside him. A baggage express messenger was passing by the car and the lady stopped him.

"This gentleman has the checks for my baggage," she said, pointing to the thief.

The messenger turned to the man, who, astonished at the suddenness with which the tables had been turned, hastily produced the checks and disappeared in the crowd.—An Englishwoman in America.

Belgium a Model Among Nations.

In the remarkable results it has reached Belgium is an excellent example of what courage and perseverance can accomplish in the face of very discouraging circumstances—verily a model of thrift and industry that might be profitably followed by the other European countries, even the largest. Nowhere else on the continent are the benefits derivable from industrial development and close attention to business, joined to steady conduct and economical habits, so conspicuous as in this little kingdom. It is a lesson given to the world at large.

One of the most irritating of the recent idiocies of tourists is the fashion of leaving cards at the tombs of distinguished people. The bust of Longfellow in Westminster Abbey is constantly surrounded by these inappropriate bits of pasteboard, and the grave of "H. H." is said to be literally covered with the visiting cards left by tourists who climbed the lonely mountain near Colorado Springs to visit the last resting place of the poet and novelist. Nothing but an abundance of the most egregious vanity and absolute lack of taste could prompt an action so idiotic as the following of this absurd custom.—Boston Courier.

Railroads of Indian Territory.

There are 20,000 Cherokees, 5,000 Choctaws, 5,000 Chickasaws, and from 2,000 to 3,000 Seminoles in the territory. The Creeks number 8,000 to 10,000 souls, but it is thought about half of these are negroes. Owing to prejudice among the Cherokees and Choctaws there are fewer negroes in those nations. The territory has more railroads than any who have not studied the subject would believe. The Atchison, Topeka and Santa Fe route runs a line from Arkansas City to Gainesville straight through the middle of the territory. The Missouri, Kansas and Texas, part of Gould's Missouri Pacific line, runs through the northeast corner, through the Cherokee, Creek, Choctaw, and part of the Chickasaw nations. There is a fifty mile bit of road from Fort Smith, Ark., to Moskogee, in the Creek nation, entirely traversing the Cherokee country. The Atlantic and Pacific road has got the right of way, and has made its survey straight across the territory. A branch of the Rock Island system crosses the territory, and a branch of the Southern Kansas route runs across the northeast corner. Diagonally across the state is projected the Dennison and Wachita Valley road, part of the 'Frisco system.—New York Sun.

The History of One.

"Five or six years ago that woman was a great belle," said my neighbor, as the door closed on the shocking example of resurfacing.

"She came here for the first time the morning after the great ——— ball. She looked tired, and I didn't wonder. My brother, who was out late the night before, told me that he heard a gentleman call her by name as he handed her into a carriage after a little supper at the close of an evening at the theatre. It was midnight and she was just going home to dress for the ball. You can guess the pace she was keeping. She bought nothing but a little violet powder to whiten the great dark circles under her eyes. Next season she was a regular customer for rose leaf wafers of one kind and another to rub a little bloom on her cheeks. After that it was paint, and now look at her. Sometimes her face breaks out in blotches and she has terrible work to cure them."—Eliza Putnam Heaton.

Ruined by the Musk Rats.

Every old East Indian officer knows that when a musk rat runs over the bottles in your cellar you might as well throw the contents away. They will have the smell and the taste of the musk, and nothing that you can do will cure it. I know it is a story that you won't believe, because you haven't seen it yourself, but you can cork a bottle of ale, say, as securely as you like, seal it and put it away, and if the rats get a chance to play about it you will find it wholly undrinkable. I don't know how the smell gets into the liquor, but there it is. I have seen bottles washed and scrubbed and rubbed with sand, then opened and found to be ruined. There is no animal that the old school Indian will kill with such a thorough consciousness of doing a good work as the rat.—Chicago News.

Melloni's Ruling Passion.

"I was born at Parma, and when I got a holiday used to go into the country the night before and go to bed early, so as to get up before the dawn. Then I used to steal silently out of the house and run, with bounding heart, till I got to the top of a little hill, where I used to set myself so as to look toward the east." There, he tells us, he used, in the stillness of nature, to wait the rising sun, and feel his attention rapt, less with the glorious spectacle of the morning light itself than with the sense of the mysterious heat which accompanied its beams and brought something more necessary to our life and that of all nature than the light itself.

The idea that not only mankind, but nature, would perish though the light continued, if this was divorced from heat, made a profound impression, he tells us, on his childish mind. The statement that such an idea could enter with dominating force into the mind of a child will perhaps seem improbable to most. It will, however, be comprehensible enough to some here, I have no doubt.—Professor S. P. Langley in Popular Science Monthly.

A Tale with a Moral.

There is a certain plumber whose domicile is on East Eighteenth street. He is a genius in his way. He was recently called in to locate a supposed leak in the drain pipes of a fourteen-story apartment house not far from his place of business. After a day's cogitation and sundry profitless soundings and sniffings he finally hit upon a plan to save the owner from selling the building to pay his bill. Mr. Snipe went to a druggist and bought 10 cents' worth of fluid extract of valerian—commonly called catnip. Then he took the elevator to the top floor and poured the contents of his little bottle of valerian diluted with water down the drain. Half an hour later he took a cat and visited each floor in turn. The cat exhibited no emotion until a room in the seventh story was reached. Then with a bound it sprang from the plumber's arms and began to paw the wall, mewing loudly. A hole was made in the wall and there, sure enough, was the leak. Moral: Keep a cat instead of a plumber. It costs less.—New York Star.

He Claimed His Snake.

"Look out, there is a big snake on the sidewalk there!" exclaimed a colored woman. This attracted the attention of two colored men, one of whom stopped his dray, took a plank, and went for the snake with a vengeance. Every time he would hit the snake it would wriggle and twist, as if bent on getting out of the reach of the blows of the drayman's plank. Directly a little boy came along, Donegan Towers, and said, "That's my snake," and he picked up the toy serpent and carried it into the house, while the drayman took the "broad grins," crawled back on his dray and drove off, muttering, "No wonder Mudder Eve was deceived by de snakes; I'se deceived myself." The negro woman looked at the little boy bearing off the snake in his arms, and astonishingly articulated, "Well, I do declare! Who would a thought it?"—Marietta Journal.

Blue Lines Bad for the Eyes.

For some time past the school authorities have recognized the injurious effect on the vision of the use of writing paper ruled with blue lines. The grand-ducal school committee at Mayence is the first in Germany that has taken positive steps in banishing this paper from the public schools. From and after the 1st of January no ruled paper is to be allowed with lines other than black.—Paris American Register.

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