

DEVIL'S RIVER NEWS.

VOL 19

SONORA, SUTTON CO., TEXAS, SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27 1909.

NO. 956

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Devil's River News.

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SONORA, TEXAS. Feb. 27, 1909.

TRICK SHOOTING.

The Way Some of the Stage Feats Are Accomplished.

When a champion rifle shot fires blindfolded at a wedding ring or a penny held between his wife's thumb and finger or seated back to her shoots, by means of a mirror, at an apple upon her head or on a fork held in her teeth, the danger of using a bullet is obvious. None, of course, is needed. The explosion is enough. The apple is already prepared, having been cut into pieces and stuck together with an adhesive substance, and a thread with a knot at the end, pulled through it from the "wings," so that it flies to bits when the gun is fired, is "how it is done."

Generally the more dangerous a feat appears the more carefully is all danger guarded against. In the "William Tell" act the thread is often tied to the assistant's foot. When, again, the ash is shot off a cigar which the assistant is smoking a piece of wire is pushed by his tongue through a hollow passage in the cigar, thus thrusting off the ash at the moment of firing.

A favorite but simple trick is the shooting from some distance at an orange held in a lady's hand. Great applause is invariably forthcoming when the bullet drops out on her cutting open the fruit. It is inserted by hand earlier in the evening. Another popular trick is that of snuffing out lighted candles. Half a dozen are placed in front of a screen, in which as many small holes are bored, one against each candle wick. At the moment of firing a confederate behind the screen sharply blows out each candle with a pair of bellows.

In most instances where a ball or other object has to be broken on a living person's head blank cartridge is used and the effect produced by other means. A special wig with a spring concealed in it worked by a wire under the clothes is generally used, the confederate manipulating the spring simultaneously with the firing of the rifle. As the hair is of extremely thin glass, a mere touch suffices to shatter it.

In these exhibitions some of the rifle "experts" invite gentlemen from the audience to testify that the weapon is indeed loaded. The cartridge shown looks very well, but it is a shell of thin wax blackened to resemble a lead bullet. It would not hurt a fly.—London Tit-Bits.

Didn't Suit Washington.

Until the early part of the last century Milford, Conn., had a house in which Washington was said to have spent a night. It was in 1789, when Washington made a tour of New England. Tradition says that there were certain things about his stay at the Milford tavern which he did not enjoy. The supper set before him consisted of boiled meat and potatoes. He was not pleased with the meal and asked for a bowl of bread and milk. The landlord brought the new order and a broken pewter spoon with which to eat it.

"Have you no better spoons than this?" asked General Washington. "It's the best I have in the house, sir," replied the host. "Send me the servant," said his excellency. "Here's 2 shillings. Go to the minister's and borrow a silver spoon." Tradition does not add whether he got the spoon or not.—Exchange.

Caught.

In Philadelphia they tell a story of a man whose wife had arranged an "authors' evening" and persuaded her reluctant husband to remain at home and help her receive the fifty guests who were asked to participate in this intellectual feast. The first author was dull enough, but the second was worse. Moreover, the rooms were intolerably warm. So, on pretense of letting in some cool air, the unfortunate host escaped to the hall, where he found a servant comfortably asleep on the settee.

"Wake up!" sternly commanded the Philadelphian in the man's ear. "Wake up, I say! You must have been listening at the keyhole!"—Harper's Magazine.

How Seminoles Bury Their Dead.

Seminoles bury their dead on top of the ground after wrapping them in blankets, but always leave the top of the head exposed. They build a pen over the body and usually think it with earth. When his squaw dies the husband wears his shirt until it rots off, which is not strikingly distinctive. When the husband dies the squaw doesn't comb her hair for three months. Little reverence is shown for the dead. When Tom Tiger's grave was robbed and his bones taken for exhibition the outcry over the desecration was almost wholly a newspaper affair. The nearest settlers were unalarmed and the Indians indifferent.—Collier's Weekly.

ELECTRICITY.

Why It Is Difficult For the Layman to Understand What It Is.

"What is electricity?" is a favorite query with people who desire to "get a rise" out of a scientific man. And when he fails to answer it in the same simple fashion that he might treat the question "What is a biscuit?" the questioner cries out: "Aha! You profess to know all about electricity. Why, you can't even tell what it is!"

Now, to "tell what a thing is"—that is, to define it—is to state its relations with something more familiar. The particular familiar thing that the questioner is thinking of in this case is ordinary matter. Heat has been explained to him as a vibration of material particles. Light, he has been told, is a wave motion in the ether, and he understands the ether to be a kind of matter or a substance resembling matter in some particulars.

It is not to be denied that no such simple general relationship can be stated between electricity and matter. But, this being so, it would be just as correct to say that we do not know what matter is as that we do not know what electricity is. As a matter of fact, we do not know what matter is, and the latest plausible theory of it builds it up on an electric basis, so that on this theory the idea of electricity is more fundamental than that of matter. Unfortunately our senses have been evolved by contact with matter and are trained to detect only matter. Electricity they know only secondarily, through its action upon matter—the light or heat that it causes matter to give out, the attraction that it causes certain substances to exert, and so on. To the man in the street, therefore, matter is familiar, and he demands a statement of the latter in terms of the former, illogical though this may be. After the scientist has stated all this the reply comes back, "Yes, I understand all that, and it is most clear, I am sure, but tell me, then, what is electricity anyway?"

Another source of confusion to the lay mind is that scientific men do not always use the word "electricity" to mean the same thing. The engineer often employs it to express the thing that the theoretical electrician calls "electric energy."

To find the energy of electricity—that is, its ability to do work—the electrician multiplies the quantity of electricity by the potential or tension under which it exists. But to the engineer this product itself measures the thing that he calls "electricity."

The work that a pound of water may do by falling a foot is one foot pound. The water is the same after falling as before, though its energy is less. So to the electrician a quantity of electricity at 100 volts is precisely the same as at one volt, though the former is able to do a hundred times as much work.

This difference in meaning causes thousands of disputes among students. "Electricity is a form of energy," says one, "just like light or heat." "Oh, no!" is the reply. "It is not energy at all, though it may possess or convey energy." One disputant is talking about the electricity of the physical and the other about that of the engineer; hence their dispute is merely a matter of definition, though they do not know it. What wonder that some people are still content to regard the whole subject as a civilized Mumbo Jumbo?—St. Louis Republic.

A Disciplinarian.

Miss Hobson was most popular with the two young and unmarried members of Centerville's school board. They did not propose to have any change of teachers in district No. 3.

"Do you think Miss Hobson pays quite enough attention to discipline?" suggested one of the elderly married school committeemen one day.

"Discipline! Why, of course she pays a great deal of attention to it," asserted Ed Porter hastily. "We never had anybody else begin to pay as much," said Henry Lane. "Why, one afternoon I was in there at No. 3, and Miss Hobson spent the whole time—every minute of it—preserving order in that schoolroom."—Youth's Companion.

The Resemblance.

A promising young merchant recently presented his better half with a handsome piano lamp as a birthday gift. He was much flattered when she told him to give it his name until he asked her reasons for so peculiar a proceeding. "Well," said she, "you know, dear, it has a good deal of brass about it, it is handsome to look at, requires a good deal of attention, is remarkably brilliant, is sometimes unsteady on its legs, liable to explode when only half full, flares up occasionally, is always out at bedtime and is bound to smoke."—London Tit-Bits.

MOVING BIG TREES.

An Expensive Undertaking, Sometimes Requiring a Year.

Trees of a very great size can be moved successfully if time and money are of no account, but it is an expensive process and should be attempted only where immediate effect is wanted or in the case of a rare variety that requires to be removed and cannot be replaced.

To prepare a large tree for removal, says Horticulture, a deep trench should be dug around the tree from five to seven feet from the base of the tree and working under so as to cut off all the roots possible without disturbing the hole.

The ends of the roots should all be cut smooth and the trench filled up with a good compost of peat, rotten sods and manure and left for a year, when a second trench can be opened at the outside of the first and the tree carefully undermined with a pick, so as to remove the soil with as little injury to the young fibers as possible, and the tree carefully drawn over so as to cut whatever taproot may have been left.

If a supply of bass mats is at hand they can be carefully bound around the ball of earth, and if it is not too large it can be loaded on a drag and drawn to the place of planting, where the hole has been prepared beforehand.

If too large for a drag the ball of earth may be surrounded by boards or layers of hay and straw firmly bound with cords, a few boards passing underneath and the whole fastened to the stem, which should be well wrapped with hay or woolen material before any force for lifting is applied. It can then be raised with the use of a derrick on to a truck and taken to the desired place, lowered in the hole, the binding taken off, the roots carefully spread and the soil well worked in among them and well irrigated.

Large trees can also be transplanted by digging around them in winter and allowing the earth around them to be frozen solid, having the ground prepared previously and covered with coarse material to keep out the frost, and removing them on a sled to their destination.

The Nutmeg Tree.

The nutmeg is the kernel of the fruit of several species of trees growing wild in Asia, Africa and America. The cultivated nutmeg tree is from fifty to seventy-five feet high and produces fruit for sixty years. The fruit is of the size and appearance of a roundish pear, yellow in color. The fleshy part of the fruit is rather hard and resembles candied citron. Within is the nut, enveloped in the curious yellowish red aril known to us as mace. Up to 1796 the Dutch, being in possession of the islands producing the only valuable variety of the nutmeg, jealously tried to prevent the carrying of the tree or a living seed of it into any territory independent of Dutch rule.

His Latin Help.

There was a famous British officer, Lieutenant General Sir George Murray, who served in the expedition to Egypt. When before Alexandria, the troops having suffered severely from want of water, his literary requirements were of the greatest service, instructing him that Caesar's army had been in the same predicament. Referring to his "Caesar" (which he always carried in his portable library), he found his recollection right—that water had been obtained by the Romans from wells dug at a certain spot in the sands. A trial was immediately made, and the result was a copious supply. The British troops braced up and conquered Egypt.—New York Press.

She Felt For Him.

He had sat looking absentmindedly out of the train window for two hours, whistling the same tune and not on the key. The passengers had become well nigh distracted.

A well known actress sat behind the young man. Finally there came a moment when the whistler paused for breath, and in that moment the quick witted actress leaned over and said:

"I know just how it is. I never could whistle either."—Ladies' Home Journal.

An Old Story.

Once when Rudyard Kipling was a boy he ran out on the yardarm of a ship. "Mr. Kipling," yelled a sailor, "your boy is on a yardarm, and if he lets go he'll drown!" "Ah," responded Mr. Kipling, with a yawn, "but he won't let go!" This incident also happened to John Burns, Horace Walpole, Napoleon Bonaparte, Dick Turpin, Julius Caesar and the Kaid McTooki. Presently it will "happen" again.—London Answers.

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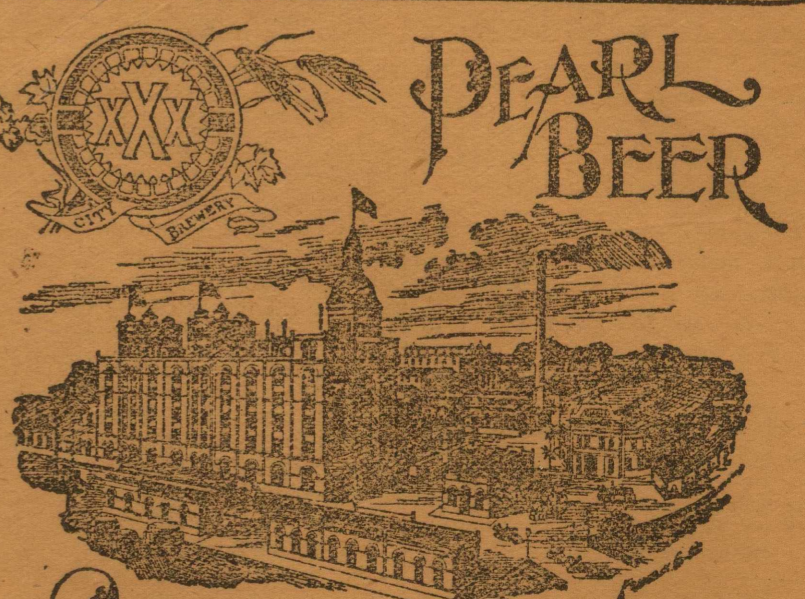
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