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PENALIZED FOR MARRYING

MUCH is heard of the taxation of bachelors; but little is ever said of the communities wherein matrimony is deemed a punishable offense. Perhaps the most extraordinary ideas with reference to this subject may be said to be held at Oxford University in England. There, for instance, a fellow of All Souls College forfeits his fellowship, if when studying the classics, he should take unto himself a wife. In such event he must not only pay a penalty, but must also present his college with a memorial in the shape of a silver cup, with the further condition that on this cup shall be inscribed in Latin, "He backslid into matrimony."

There is an aristocratic club in London, the Bachelors' of Piccadilly, whereof the members who so far forget their loyalty to the club as to marry are actually expelled and ostracized. The only saving feature of such expulsion is that, by the payment of a fine of one hundred dollars, the offending one may retain an honorary membership; but, so far as active membership is concerned, he is strictly out of it for the rest of his life.

There is a similar organization in Germany, the Jungesellen Club. Whenever there comes to the officials of this club any intimation that a member contemplates matrimony, he is immediately summoned for trial in the club court, with the president as judge. The culprit is allowed to plead in extenuation of his offense, and upon his skill in presenting such plea depends the amount of his fine, which ranges from one hundred to one thousand dollars. The humorous feature of the fine consists in the application made. The money is devoted to a dinner, whereat all members appear in mourning attire. At the conclusion of the repast the president solemnly reads the sentence of expulsion, and the delinquent is led from the room amid the groans and lamentations of his erstwhile club fellows.

IRELAND'S BIG CAVERN

A FRENCHMAN made the first complete exploration of one of the largest caverns in the world, that at Mitchelstown, Ireland. The explorer was Martel, who is also famous for his discoveries in the caverns of France. The Mitchelstown cavern is formed in limestone, and is remarkable for the number and extent of its connected passages, which, when plotted on a chart, resemble the streets of a city. The length of the cave is about a mile and a quarter, and it contains some animal inhabitants, including a species of spider, which are peculiar to it and have their entire existence within its recesses.

TO A POET

TO learn poetry "for recreation" is doubtless a means of cultivating a knowledge of literature; but schoolboys sometimes regard the authors of poems learned as taskmasters and personal enemies. This view is amusingly expressed in a letter found among the papers of the venerable German poet Geibel. It was written to him by some schoolboys of Lubeck, and signed, "Karl Beckmann, II. Klasse."

After stating that two boys had been flogged because they could not learn Herr Geibel's "Hope of Spring," the letter reads: "We suppose that you did not think of such things when you wrote the poem. The Herr Lehrer says it is a very beautiful poem; but there are so many beautiful poems, and we are obliged to learn them. Therefore we beg and entreat you, esteemed Herr Geibel, make no more beautiful poems. And to make it worse we have to learn the biography of every poet, what year he was born in, and what year he died in. We write to you because you are the only poet still living, and we wish you a very long life."

USED TO THE CLIMATE

WHEN William Jennings Bryan returned to New York after his trip through South America, where he went to study the economies of the country, he was asked about every question in the reporter's repertory concerning his view of things political, to all of which the Colonel replied, without answering the question.

Then they asked him about Dr. Cook; what he thought of the spectacular manner in which he had discovered the pole.

"Well," said Mr. Bryan, "everywhere I went they said Dr. Cook had been in South America; and then they told me that Dr. Cook was a Democrat, and asked me if I thought he had discovered the North Pole. I told them I thought it more probable that a Democrat had discovered the North Pole than that a Republican had."

Asked what his particular reason for this opinion was, he replied:

"Well, simply because the Democrats have been out in the cold such a long time."



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