

THE AGES OF ANIMALS

Undoubtedly the longest lived animal on earth is the whale, its span of existence being estimated by Cuvier at 1000 years. The next largest animal, the elephant, will, under favorable conditions, live 400 years. When Alexander the Great conquered Porus, king of India, he took a great elephant that had fought gallantly for the defeated king, named him Ajax, dedicated him to the sun, placed upon him a metal band with the inscription, 'Alexander, the son of Jupiter, dedicated Ajax to the sun.' The elephant was found, alive, three hundred and fifty years later.

The average age of cats is fifteen years; of squirrels seven or eight years; of rabbits, seven; a bear rarely exceeds twenty years; a wolf, twenty; a fox, fourteen to sixteen. Lions are comparatively long-lived, instances having been recorded where they reached the age of seventy years. Pigs have been known to live to the age of twenty years, and horses to sixty, but the average age of the horse is twenty-five to thirty. Camels sometimes live to the age of one hundred, and stags are very long-lived, one having been taken by Charles VI. in the forest of Senlis which bore about its neck a collar on which was engraved, 'Caesar hoc mihi donavit.' Whether or not this stag had actually lived since the days of one of the Caesars, it is impossible to say, but the evidence seems good.

Eagles occasionally, and ravens frequently, reach the age of 100 years, and swans have been known to live 300 years. A tortoise has been known to live 107 years.

GERMAN PROVERBS

A dead dog has no teeth.
Nothing is more ridiculous than an old man in love.
Old age is not free from folly.
It is a worthless hen that lays for your neighbors.
Rumor is a great liar.
Trust not either a wind that is favorable or a ruler who laughs.
When wolf eats wolf there must be a famine in the forest.
He serves a bad master who serves the multitude.
Not years, but worries, make men old.
They who hunt with cats will catch mice.
Learn to endure if you wish to succeed.
There is no need to look back upon him who acts kindly.
No river is so deep as to have no bottom.
We cannot deceive an empty stomach.
Every dog is brave on its own doorstep.
Every fool makes a hundred others.
No one winces at another's pain.

IN COACHING DAYS

At a time when the travelling public has to resort to primitive kinds of conveyance, and is disposed to chafe under the slowness of transit, it is interesting to read how enthusiastically our forefathers spoke of the achievements of the old mail-coach. Just before the introduction of railways (says the *Yorkshire Observer*), some of the regular coaches were accomplishing long journeys at an average speed of ten miles an hour, an achievement that was considered little short of miraculous. 'The Edinburgh Mail,' says one writer, speaking of this marvel, 'runs the distance, 400 miles, in a little over 40 hours, and we may set our watches by it at any point of her journey. Stoppages included, this approaches 11 miles an hour, and much the greater part of it by lamplight. The Exeter day coach, the Herald, from the Saracen's Head, Snow Hill, runs over her ground, 173 miles, in 20 hours, an admirable performance, considering the natural unevenness of the country through which she has to pass.'

These speeds were maintained by a very perfect and expensive organisation. The greatest attention was paid to keeping the horses in first-rate condition.

It was the accepted rule that each fast coach should have a horse to every mile of ground it ran—reckoning one way, or, as it was termed, 'one side of the ground.' Thus, the distance from London to Shrewsbury being 158 miles, the number of horses kept for the Wonder coach was about 150. It may be readily understood from this that the coaching business requires a large amount of capital. Mr. Chaplin, who was the largest proprietor of coaches in England, had no less than 1300 horses at work in various coaches on various roads; and Messrs. Horne and Sherman, the next largest in London, had about 700 each.

IMPROVING SHAKESPEARE

A company playing 'Hamlet' was forced to find an actor to play the second grave-digger on account of the illness of the second comedian of the company. The only actor available was a variety performer who had no reverence for Shakespeare, and no respect for the traditions of the classic drama. The second grave-digger was a comedy part, and he knew that he could 'get away with it.'

When the first grave-digger threw off the waistcoat, revealing another underneath, the audience tittered. The removal of the second waistcoat brought a loud laugh, and the third produced a roar. The first grave-digger was delighted. He had never played to such an appreciative audience, and visions of good notices in the papers and a possible increase in salary began to loom up before his eyes. As he threw off the fourth waistcoat, he turned partially around, and the cause of the unusual hit was disclosed to him.

The second grave-digger, being accustomed to build laughs on lines and business of other actors, saw his opportunity and seized it. As fast as the first grave-digger would throw the waistcoats on the ground, the variety comedian would pick them up and put them on. The new business was much funnier to the audience than the old, with which it was thoroughly familiar.

Not content with having stolen the laughs from the regular comedian in his scene, the new man went further. When the first grave-digger said to him, 'Go, get thee to Vaughan; fetch me a stoup of liquor' (to which there is no reply in the text), the assistant sexton replied:

'Vaughan told me to tell you that you couldn't have any more liquor from him till you paid for the last you got.'

TO FIND THE NORTH

Of course you know that iron will sink in water, because it is so much heavier, but if it is very small and highly polished, as in the form of a new needle, you can lay it gently on the surface of a basin of water and it will float. If you will rub the needle with a toy magnet before placing it on the water, the needle will not only float, but will gradually work its way round until it lies due north and south. The north to which it points is the magnetic north, of course, and not the North Pole.

FAMILY FUN

A Tale of Letters.—Which letters are the hardest workers?—The bees (B's).

Which are the most extensive letters?—The Seas (C's).

Which letters are the most fond of comfort?—The Ease (E's).

Which letters have the most to say for themselves?—The I's.

Which are the noisiest letters?—The Jays (J's).

Which are the longest letters?—The Ells (L's).

Which are the poorest letters?—The Ows (O's).

Which letters are the greatest bores?—The Tease (T's).

Which are the wisest letters?—The Wise (Y's).