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PARIS IN PERIL FROM A GREAT RIVER

NEW HOPE FROM THE WORLD'S DISASTER

UNLOOKED-FOR GOOD COMES OUT OF EVIL

Will the Rose Bloom on the Ashes of Babylon?

MESOPOTAMIA AND ITS FUTURE

The terrible effects of war have been dazing our eyes in Europe for five years, and will not pass away from our memories; but so strangely does good come sometimes from evil that there are parts where the war has brought blessings, and prepared the way for more.

It has been so in Mesopotamia if we think only of the natives of the land.

Think what Mesopotamia has been. In the far-off past it was the home of mighty empires; here were Babylon and Assyria, richly fertile lands, with large populations in stately cities and on prosperous plains.

But the war found this place a bare, parched, desolate land; its great waterways decayed; its productions scanty and precarious; its population reduced to two millions for the whole of the country. The Turk had almost ruined this birthplace of civilisation.

Desert Made to Blossom

Then to this ancient land of slow decay came the modern forces of Western civilisation, for the rivers Euphrates and Tigris were a part of the battle-ground on which the military might of European nations met in deadly strife.

The lust of ambition hurled Europe back into the fierce fighting mood of primitive man.

They carried the war into Mesopotamia, and, strange to tell, this land in which there was little to destroy was stirred with new life and hope.

The modern armies crossing the Mesopotamian plains had to be fed far from the sources of their food supply. Fleets had to be provided for the navigable rivers, railways for the deserts, and attempts had to be made by irrigation to revive the fertility of the land.

New Life for an Old Land

All these enterprises were carried through. New docks were built at Basra. The waterways were cleared and made more useful. Cultivation of the land was stimulated. Seed was found for the sower, and machinery to quicken his operations. The final result is that to ancient Mesopotamia has come the possibility, the hope, of a revival of prosperity great when compared with the dull stagnation that reigned before the war.

Of course, the native population is not capable of sustained effort on the new lines without direction and prompting by men of the West, but a brighter prospect has been opened out before the people of this historic land, and it is one of the compensations that lighten to some degree the gloom of the Great War.

Ploughmen of the Soil of Babylon

The soil of Mesopotamia, or ancient Babylon, hitherto ploughed like this, is now to be cultivated by scientific means, and it is hoped that this old land will reap a rich harvest of prosperity from the war

A LOST BIT OF HISTORY FOUND

Rubbish Heap of a Cathedral

An interesting discovery has been made at Winchester. In old places like cathedrals bits of history are often found in books thrown aside as rubbish.

The most unlikely books have more than once told us of things that happened centuries ago. The age of the poet Chaucer was corrected by the finding of a tailor's bill.

Now comes another discovery concerning old Isaak Walton, who wrote the quaint and charming book "The Compleat Angler." He was living at Winchester 236 years ago, in the house of his daughter's son, but nobody knew just where he lived in the town. It has been found out in a curious way.

Isaak's son-in-law, Dr. Hawkins, was prebendary of the cathedral, and lived in one of the cathedral houses where the tenants had to pay for repairs. Among a mass of rubbish an old account-book has been found, and it tells who paid for the repairs of each of the houses, and how much. So, as Isaak Walton lived with his son-in-law, we know which house he lived in.

Those who have charge of cathedrals, and all old houses, should learn from this that any rubbish heap in such a place may include a precious bit of history.

THE MAN WHO TAUGHT NELSON

How the Admiral Loved Him

No great Englishman was fonder of having his own way than brave Lord Nelson. He believed in himself.

Sometimes he did things which would have got him into trouble if he had not succeeded. Once he looked with his blind eye at a signal which would have cost him a victory if he had obeyed. He did not see it, but went on and won. So he was forgiven.

But no one honoured more deeply the man who taught him how to be a captain than this headstrong, confident Lord Nelson. His teacher's name was Locker—Captain Locker—and, recently, eighty letters written by the great admiral to his teacher, a captain, were sold by auction in London for £1000.

In one of the letters he said: "My only merit in my profession is being a good scholar. Our friendship will never end but with my life." He was grateful and modest towards his teacher, though he sometimes did not take much notice of admirals; and that gratitude shows that he had a loyal heart.

New Portrait of Dante

A new portrait of Dante, dating back to the 14th century, has just been discovered on a wall at Ravenna.

POOR MAN'S AMAZING MEMORY

Mind Which Works One Way

CASE PUZZLING THE DOCTORS

A case to puzzle the scientists is reported in the medical journals; the case of a poor man who is an imbecile yet possesses a marvellous, specialised memory. Sixty years of age, he has spent nearly the whole of his life in a Devonshire poor-law home for the insane. His walk and his talk all betray the incurable deficiency of his mind; in general talk he uses but few words, and repeats them again and again.

Yet this feeble, suffering brain has a faculty which must be almost unequalled. Many great men—Macaulay, for example—have had phenomenal memories. Macaulay could reel off by heart almost anything he had read, prose or verse. He, like other rivals in the same direction, had a magnificent brain, yet it is certain he could not have done what this poor man can do.

Mind's Tremendous Feat

If the number of any psalm be mentioned this man can at once recite the whole psalm. Given the number of a hymn, he can repeat all the verses. But, more wonderful still, if he be given a date in any year, he can tell the day of the week on which that date occurred.

Here is a poser for mind experts. This poor man's brain lacks all the qualities which make for sanity, save one. The faculty of memory may have been normal at the man's birth, and constant practice may have marvellously developed it. Whatever the explanation may be, the marvel is that a mind capable of such a tremendous feat did not grow into an organ of reason.

Perhaps primitive brains were of that kind, sense-organs capable of only single freakish lines of thought, and incapable of wide comprehension. Entire families of animals, greater than any now surviving, died for lack of adequate brains, and we may fancy that such brains were of one department, so to speak, capable of use in only one way, like that of this poor man in Devonshire.

THE EMPTY SHIP

A Sea Mystery Solved

The mystery of the British schooner Marion Douglas, which was found the other day floating off the Scilly Islands with no one on board, has been solved.

It seems that the ship had been so buffeted by storms that the crew were utterly exhausted, and were taken off by a steamer bound for America, which intended landing them at Queenstown.

Heavy weather prevented this, and the crew, after having crossed the Atlantic, have now been landed safely at Halifax, Nova Scotia.