

THE WHITE ELEPHANT KEDAH.

White elephants have for many years been an object of veneration in Burma and Siam. The fortunate individual who found a white elephant in his possession sold it to the king of one of those countries, obtaining therefor, it is said, certain titles to nobility, exemption from taxation and from capital punishment and a sum of money determined, it is said, in some cases, as the amount of silver coin which he could push along a smooth surface with his little finger. The largest sum ever obtained, it is said, was won by a Chinaman, who assiduously practiced pushing weights, strengthening his hand so as to be able to push along the largest amount of silver possible. Some years ago a partially white elephant was in the Barnum & Bailey show, which animal perished in the Bridgeport fire. There has been recently imported into this city, by the firm of De Silva & Gaylord, a perfect example of the white elephant, an illustration of which we present to our readers.

The sacred beast is recognized by certain signs. In addition to the light color of his skin, he was required to have five white hoofs on each foot, he had to show a pink color about the ears, and the hair about the lip was required to be light in color, and the tail to have no tuft of hair upon its end. All these characteristics are shown by the example we illustrate, from a photograph taken by our artist in this city.

The animal was caught wild near Palembang, in Southeastern Sumatra, on June 17, 1895, and is supposed to be about eighteen months old. Its height is three feet nine inches and it weighs about five hundred pounds. The little creature is perfectly docile and content in its captivity and allows itself to be fondled and played with at liberty. It has been named Kedah. In Sumatra the value of the white elephant is not generally known, and the captors of this animal were not aware that they could have sold it to the King of Siam. Had it been found by those having knowledge of this fact, it would probably never have left the East. It is really the only elephant which truthfully can be called white ever brought to this country. Europe has never possessed one of any kind.

White elephants are now only to be seen within the inclosure of the King's palace at Bangkok, Siam. There are four there now, which animals, owing to the peculiar religious tenets of the Buddhists' faith, are absolutely unpurchasable. The doctrine of the transmigration of souls teaches that these animals are inhabited by the souls of Siamese kings.

The white elephant which was with the Barnum & Bailey show was procured with great difficulty by Mr. Gaylord, in Burma. The present animal of the Sumatran variety, an absolutely perfect example of the elephant albino, is one of the most interesting and curious zoological specimens ever brought to this country. The color is a very light gray, and the skin is peculiarly soft and delicate. About the end of the trunk and about the ears it runs into a light pink tint, and the hoofs are a beautiful cream white. The animal is a male, and is expected to attain a height of seven to eight feet.

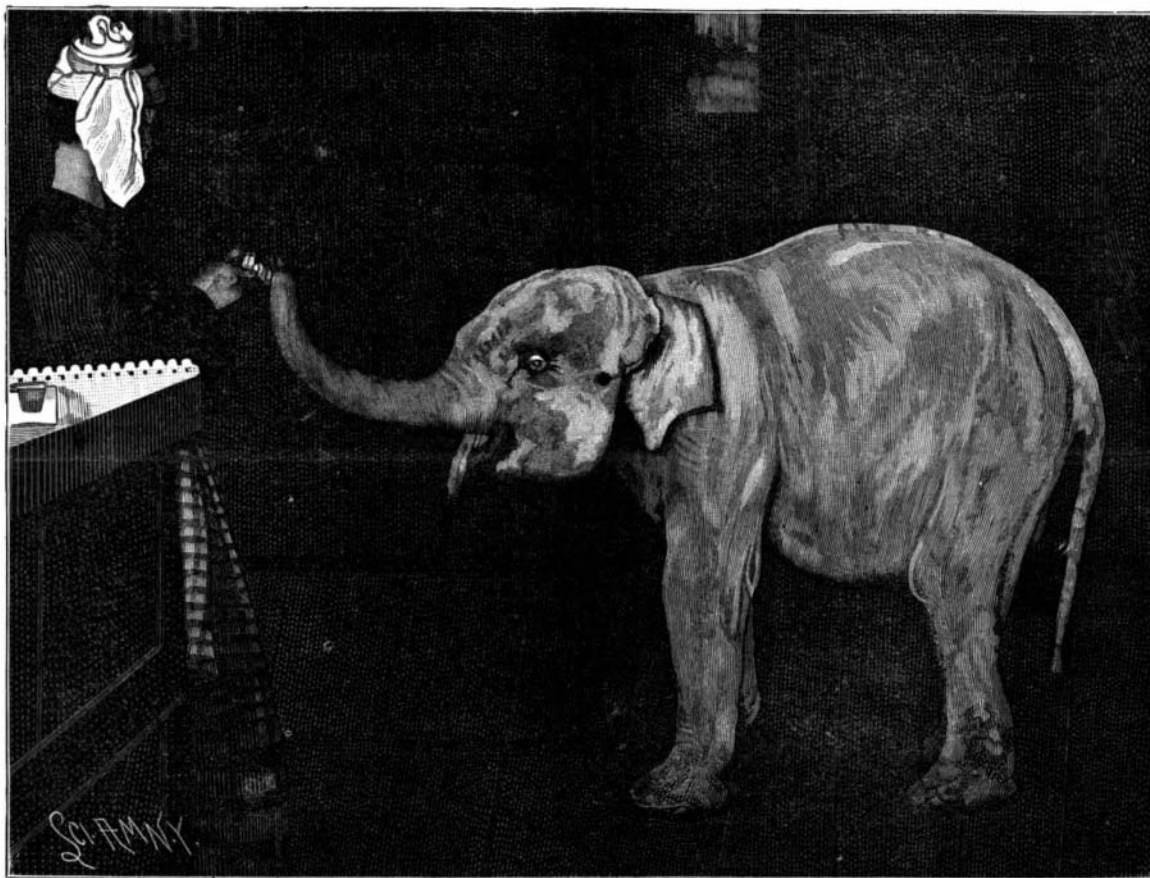
Its importer, Mr. J. B. Gaylord, has spent many years in collecting animals for exhibition, having in the course of his experience gone twenty-two times around the globe. He brought Kedah home by sea through the Suez Canal, the journey taking fifty days. Kedah arrived rather thin and worn after its trip, but is now in prime condition and bids fair to attain a good old age.

Good Advice to Young Women.

In a recent sermon to young women, the Rev. Dr. Talmage made the following sensible remarks:

"Make it a matter of religion to take care of your physical health. I do not wonder that the Greeks deified health and hailed Hygeia as a goddess. I rejoice that there have been so many modes of maintaining and restoring young womanly health invented in our time. They may have been known a long time back, but they have been popularized in our day—

lawn tennis, croquet and golf, and the bicycle. It always seemed strange and inscrutable that our human race should be so slow of locomotion, when creatures of less importance have powers of velocity, wing of bird or foot of antelope, leaving us far behind, and while it seems so important that we be in many places in a short while, we were weighed down with incapacities, and most men if they run a mile are exhausted or dead from exhaustion. It was left until the last decade of the nineteenth century to give the speed which we see whirling through all our cities and along the country roads, and with that speed comes health. The women of the next decade will be healthier than at any time since the world was created, while the invalidism which has so often characterized womanhood will pass over to manhood, which, by its posture on the wheel, is coming to curved spine and cramped chest, and a deformity from which another fifty years will not have power to make rescue. Young man, sit up straight when you ride. Darwin says the human race is descended from the monkey, but the bicycle will turn a hundred thousand men of the present generation in physical condition from man to monkey. For good womanhood, I thank God that this mode of recreation has been invented. Use it wisely, modestly, Christianly. No good woman needs to be told what attire is proper and what behavior is right. If anything be doubtful, reject it. A hoydenish, boisterous, masculine woman is the detestation of all, and every revolution of the wheel she rides is toward depreciation and downfall. Take care of your health, O woman; of your nerves, in not reading the

**THE WHITE ELEPHANT KEDAH.**

trash which makes up ninety-nine out of one hundred novels, or by eating too many cornucopias of confectionery. Take care of your eyes by not reading at hours when you ought to be sleeping. Take care of your ears by stopping them against the tides of gossip that surge through every neighborhood.

"Health! Only those know its value who have lost it. The earth is girdled with pain, and a vast proportion of it is the price paid for early recklessness. I close this, though, with the salutation in Macbeth:

"Now good digestion wait on appetite,
And health on both."

New Material for Spools.

Apropos of an article in a recent issue of the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN in regard to the thread spool industry, Mr. T. E. Kennedy, of Centerville, Louisiana, writes that there is a wood growing plentifully in that State which is peculiarly adapted to the manufacture of spools. The wood is known as tupelo gum. It does not split or check; it is light and a very fine uniform grain. It is not adapted to uses where it is to be made into objects of any size, as it is liable to warp. It will not readily burn, and is not durable when exposed to the elements.

In our article describing the Lovell adjustable handle bar, in the SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN of December 28, Fig. 2 of the illustrations, representing the bar as in use by a fast rider or racer, was referred to as No. 5. The latter in reality is an enlarged view of Fig. 2 and shows the mode of adjustment.

Millions for Chicago University.

Chicago University was on December 14 the recipient of another million dollar gift, the donor being Miss Helen Culver, of Chicago. The conditions of the gift are that it shall be devoted to the increase and spread of knowledge within the field of biological science.

It is provided that the donation shall develop the work now represented in the several biological departments of the university by the extension of their resources; that it shall be applied in part to an inland experimental station and to a marine biological laboratory, and that a portion of the instruction supported by the gift shall take the form of university extension lectures to be delivered at suitable points on the west side of Chicago, the lectures to be as free from technicalities as possible and the results of biological research. Especial attention is to be devoted to the advances of science in sanitation and hygiene.

One-half of the sum given may be used for the purpose of purchasing land and for the erection and equipment of buildings. The remainder is to be invested, the income therefrom constituting a fund for the support of research, instruction and publication.

According to the terms of Mr. Rockefeller's recent offer, he will also now add another million dollars to his former generous gifts.

Prevention of Influenza.

Dr. C. Graeser, of the German Hospital at Naples, points out* that the timely and continuous administration of quinine during influenza epidemics may undoubtedly prevent infection, and cites in support of this opinion—in

holding which he does not stand alone—his experiences with regard to a regiment of huzzars stationed at Bonn during the epidemic wave of 1889-90. He has previously published these facts, but again refers to them in consequence of an article which appeared this year in Paris medical journal, stating that experiments on rabbits showed quinine to be inactive against the infection of influenza. His facts are simply these: that for a period of twenty-two days he administered to each man of one of the squadrons of the regiment 0.5 gramme—i. e., about 8 grains—of quinine hydrochlorate, and that the numbers attacked by influenza in this squadron were far smaller than those who succumbed in each of the other squadrons, even in those occupying the same quarters. Thus, during this period there were attacked in the first squadron twenty-two men, in the second seven, in the third nineteen, in the

fourth forty-two, and in the fifth thirty-two. Now it was the second squadron that underwent the quinine treatment, and of the seven men attacked three fell ill on the first day of the trial, two on the third day, and one on the fourth and fifth days respectively. After that no cases arose in this squadron, although fresh attacks continued to occur in other detachments. Dr. Graeser is persuaded that this experimentum crucis justifies the conclusion that quinine has a specific action in influenza, and that when administered at the appropriate time and in sufficient dose it may prevent an attack in a person exposed to infection. Such an experience, he holds, is of more weight than any experimental results in animals.

Atomic Weight of Helium.

By heating in a hard glass tube a mixture of manganese carbonate, pulverized cleveite, and potassium pyrosulphate, and passing the resulting gas over hot copper oxide, phosphorus pentoxide, and powdered magnesium, N. A. Langlet has succeeded in obtaining helium perfectly free from nitrogen, argon, and hydrogen, when tested spectroscopically. This gas, when weighed in the usual manner, proves to be exactly twice as heavy as hydrogen, the usual standard, its density in relation to air being 0.139. Guided by purely physical considerations, the experimenter arrived at the conclusion that the molecule of helium, like that of argon and of mercury, contains only one atom. Hence the atomic weight must be taken as 4.

*Wiener Klinische Rundschau, 1895, No. 45.

†Revue de Medecine, 1895, No. 2.

Protecting the Hands in Photographic Manipulations.

The British Journal of Photography says: Metal seems to be gaining, rightly or wrongly, an unenviable character for the injurious action it is said to exercise on the hands of its users. But, be it ever so hurtful, is there any reason why it should be allowed to exert its ill effects? In the development of negatives, only the extreme tips of the forefingers and thumbs need be wet with the solution, and then only the front portion of them, where the skin is the thickest. In most instances, in handling injurious chemicals, it is only when they come in contact with the thinner portions of the skin—as on the back or between the fingers—that any harm results. However, India rubber finger stalls, costing but a few pence each, are to be had at all rubber shops, that will perfectly protect the fingers from all pernicious materials. They are much more extensively used by photographers, both professional and amateur, on the Continent than they are here. Being exceedingly thin, they are by no means uncomfortable to work in. It is curious to note the effect that different chemicals have on different persons.

An Artificial Ice Rink.

A new skating rink at One Hundred and Seventh Street and Lexington Avenue, New York City, was opened December 14.

The interior of the new palace is dazzling. Ceiling and walls are hung with artificial icicles, illuminated by 2,000 electric lamps of various colors. There are two galleries, large enough to seat 5,000 spectators. Eighteen hundred persons can find room on the ice surface at one time.

The pond is frozen artificially, the cold being produced through the evaporation of anhydrous ammonia in coils of hollow copper tubes. The heat is abstracted from a brine solution surrounding these coils, the freezing point of which solution is lower than that of the water in the skating pond. Long rows of tubes filled with this frigid brine and communicating with the freezing apparatus lie below the surface of the ice and prevent its softening.

THE PUNNETT COMPANION SIDE SEATED BICYCLE.

The bicycle has now reached a typical construction from which there seems to be slight tendency to deviate. Absolute novelties beyond the details are more and more rare. The companion side seated bicycle which we represent is, however, one of the novelties of the year. The tandem bicycle, which has met with considerable success where the desire is to have company on a ride, is more or less criticised on account of the position of the riders, one of whom must be behind the other. In the bicycle which we illustrate it is proposed to have the two riders seated side by side, as in the old-fashioned "sociable" tricycle, and yet to have the two riders carried by two wheels only. The two cuts are self-explanatory. The long axle of the rear wheel enables the use of two sprockets at its extremities so far apart as to permit of each one being acted upon through a separate pair of sprockets, each actuated by a separate rider. There is a triple head and a duplex frame, the latter carrying two saddles placed side by side at a proper distance apart for two riders to occupy also side by side.

It is said that a difference of 100 pounds weight in the two riders is not noticeable, and that a person who is ignorant of riding can be taken out on this wheel with perfect safety. The system of mounting is peculiar. For the first one who mounts, the wheel is inclined to one side and this rider takes his or her place on the lower saddle. The machine is then pulled back to an upright position, and the second rider mounts by the pedal, and so the start is made. The dismount is made in the same way, reversing, of course, the operations. The two saddle posts are connected, it will be observed, by a crossbar. At the center of the crossbar is a special socket. When a single person is riding the wheel the saddle is transferred to the central

position and the rider sitting there drives the machine by one of the right hand and one of the left hand sets of pedals. This, of course, produces considerable lost motion in the pedal action, but it at least is possible for a single rider to take care of and to drive the wheel to and from the place of appointment with his friend. It is not a wheel depending absolutely on the presence of two riders. The wheel shown in the illustrations is made by the Punnett Cycle Mfg. Co., Rochester, N. Y.

A HANDLE BAR BICYCLE BELL.

The illustration represents a bicycle bell attached to the outer end of one of the handles, without disfiguring it or offering any impediment to the free use



A SIMPLE AND CONVENIENT BICYCLE BELL.

of the handle bar, while it affords sufficient volume of sound for practical purposes. The improvement has been patented by I. N. Hopkins, of Lockport, N. Y., and is being introduced by the Bridgeport Gun Implement Company, of Bridgeport, Conn., and Nos. 313 and 315 Broadway, New York. It comprises a combined handle and alarm bell which may be placed on the handle bar instead of one of the ordinary handles, the bell being operated by the thumb of one hand. Secured to the outer end of the handle is a plate with projecting central post whose outer end supports the bell, whose external form is such as to conform to the curvature of the handle, the rim of the bell being near but not in contact with the handle.

On a lug on the post is a stud on which is pivoted the hub of a spring-pressed bell hammer, and a projecting tooth on the hub is engaged by a curved spring rod, forming an extension of a push rod extended

Do People Ever Forget Anything?

The brain of mankind has been defined as a kind of photographic cylinder, which retains impressions made upon it through the medium of the senses, particularly through the eyes and ears. If this be true, memory must depend for its intensity or retentive qualities upon the degree of observation with which the record is made.

Nor is this all. If memory's record is kept in the shape of indentations upon the folds of the brain matter, are they ever entirely effaced? In other words, do we really ever forget anything? May it not be that the inner depths of the brain memory have stored up recollections of things which are never again purposefully turned to, perhaps, but which instantly spring into being and flash through the mind whenever we hear or see something which recalls them?

There are several well known mental phenomena which strengthen this theory. We know that memory often brightens during the last moments of life, and there are cases on record where Germans, French, Spaniards and others, who, falling ill in this country years after having entirely forgotten their native languages, recovered and used them upon their death beds.

There is a theory that in all such cases the brain folds have relaxed, just as do the muscles and cords of the limbs and body, and that by so doing they expose the mind's monitor indentations (recollections), which were long since folded up and put away as material that could not be of any particular use.—Family Doctor.

Dehydrating Alcohol.

Recommended by H. Wislicenus and L. Kaufmann. The reagent used is amalgamated aluminum, which can be prepared in a few moments by treating aluminum filings, free from oil, with caustic soda solution until a brisk evolution of hydrogen is produced, then washing once superficially with water and allowing a half per cent solution of corrosive sublimate to act for one or two minutes upon the metal, which is still moist with weak alkali solution. The whole operation is rapidly repeated to remove a black scum which forms, and the product is quickly and thoroughly washed with water, alcohol and ether in succession, and is preserved, if necessary, under low boiling petroleum ether. Aluminum filings are on the market, at least in Germany, at a reasonable price. The amalgamation of this metal changes its chemical properties in a remarkable manner, so that it decomposes water violently, and it even becomes hot spontaneously from the action of the moisture of the air, with formation of white flakes of aluminum hydroxide. The reagent has no action upon alcohol and ether, but it reacts promptly with any water contained in them. The authors especially recommend the substance for use in organic chemistry as an entirely neutral reducing agent.—Berichte deutsch. chem. Ges., xxviii, 1323, June, 1895; H. L. W., Amer. Jour.

The Simplon Tunnel.

The convention between Italy and Switzerland for the construction of the Simplon Tunnel was signed a few days ago. The programme of works to be followed is that already begun by the Jura-Simplon Company, the Swiss Federal Council, and the Italian Government. Italy undertakes to construct approach lines from Domodossola to Isella, a distance of 10½ miles. The Italian Government itself does not grant any subvention, but will use its influence to induce the provinces and towns of northern Italy interested in the scheme to provide a sum of 4,000,000 francs. Italy will, however, grant for 99 years an annuity of



BICYCLE FOR TWO.

through a tubular casing in one side of the handle, and terminating in a thumb piece. By pressure upon the thumb piece the hammer is forced back against the resistance of its spring, and released to deliver its blow, the push rod being returned to its normal position by a coiled spring. This improved device is made to fit various sizes of handle bars.

3,000 francs per kilometer for the portion of line in Italian territory, which is calculated to be equivalent to a capital sum of 1,500,000 francs. Switzerland will have to provide a subvention of 15,000,000 francs, of which 4,500,000 francs will be found by the Confederation and 10,500,000 francs by the cantons and towns interested.