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**MAIL POUCHES.**  
 They Cost From a Few Cents to Thousands of Dollars Each.  
 There have been twenty-eight different kinds of mail bags in service, and they range in cost from 25 cents to \$2,500 each. There are mail pouches for almost every conceivable use, and you can ship almost anything that comes within the postal regulations with a minimum of loss and leakage, says Harper's Weekly. Probably the most peculiar mail bag in the one arranged for carrying bees. Sending bees by mail was a difficult operation before the "bee bag" was adopted. Usually the bees arrived at their destination dead or so exhausted that they were of little use. Now these little honey makers can be shipped by mail several thousand miles in the "bee bag" without suffering and can obtain air and a good supply of food during their transit.

Mail bags are made of various materials. The cheapest are of cotton and the most costly of leather. Those used on fast express are reinforced with metal so that they can be swung from fast moving trains without damage. Even then these bags, or "catcher pouches," do not last much more than a year and a half, while some of the cotton bags used for the work will remain in service upward of ten years.

In parts of the west, where the mail must be carried for many miles on horseback, special pouches are in use for slinging over the animal's flanks. In the far from north special bags are made for sled transportation, and in the cities a bag in use for pneumatic tube service is made of a composition called "leatheroid." The ordinary cotton mail bags are woven so closely that they are practically waterproof, and in the worse there are sixteen stripes of blue. Each country marks its own mail pouches in some individual way, so that if one gets lost in a far country its ownership can be readily detected.

Nearly 60,000,000 mail bags are used each year by the whole country, and as they are being worn out all the time the supply has to be kept up. There are mail bag hospitals, where tens of thousands of them go every week. One such mail bag hospital repairs upward of 5,000 a day. These crippled bags are in all sorts of dilapidated conditions. A railroad wreck may injure several hundreds or thousands, and these must all go to the hospital before entering active life again. Christmas is responsible for such damage to the mail bags, owing to the hard service they get, and immediately after the mid-winter holiday season several hundred thousand bags go to the hospital.

Mail bags are the most traveled of all articles in use today. They are constantly moving, and it would be impossible to estimate the number of miles a bag ten years old has traveled.

Up to Henry.  
 "You talked in your sleep last night, Henry."  
 "Did I, my dear? Wh-what did I say?"  
 "Henry, you are leading a double life!"  
 "No, dear, don't—don't say that. I think I must have been having a bad dream if I said anything that seemed to indicate!"  
 "A bad dream! I should think you were having a bad dream. You kept yelling 'Robber! Robber!' 'Kill him! Kill him!' and a lot of other things that were just as absurd. I want you to confess now—fully and freely—and I promise you that if it is anything a good woman should forgive I will forgive you."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Made Napoleon Walk.  
 On the day when the courier brought news of the signature of the peace of Amiens, Talleyrand thrust the impudently awaited document in his pocket, went to the emperor and engaged him in current affairs. When these were all disposed of he said: "Now I have good news for you, Bonaparte."  
 "And you could not tell me this immediately?" exclaimed the astonished Napoleon.  
 "Certainly not, for then you would have been to nothing else."

Not Surprised.  
 "Funny thing about Bolivar," said Wiggin.  
 "What's that?" asked Bjones.  
 "Why, they operated on him for appendicitis the other day, and, by gosh, when they came to look there wasn't anything there," said Wiggin.  
 "Well, I'm not surprised," said Bjones; "I never could see anything in Bolivar myself."—Harper's Weekly.

Modern Childhood.  
 Grandmother—And now would you like me to tell you a story, dear?  
 Advanced Child—Oh, no, granny; not a story, please! They're so stodgy and unconvincing and as out of date as tunes in music. We should much prefer an impressionist word picture or a subtle character sketch.—London Punch.

Funny, but Not Humorous.  
 "Who says there are no women here?"  
 "I don't know. Why?"  
 "My typewriter spells as funny as Artemus Ward in his palmy days."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The Advertisement.  
 "John, whatever induced you to buy a house in this furnace region?"  
 "One of the best real estate men in the business."—Litt.

If the thief gets opportunity to think himself honest.—Gleaner.

**TESTING AN EGG.**  
 Many Ways to Detect Staleness Besides Smell and Taste.  
 It does not require a very characteristic taste to detect an old egg from a new one, says a correspondent of the New York Sun. The farmer has a nasty flavor that the latter never has, and the mustiness may range from a slight taint to a very pronounced one. It is always noticeable in stale eggs.  
 If any one wishes to verify the judgment of his palate, the following tests may be used:  
 1.—It is almost impossible to peel the shell from a fresh hard boiled egg without having some of the white come away with it.  
 2.—A stale egg cannot be beaten to a froth.  
 3.—When a fresh egg is broken into a dish the yolk stands up and the white does not spread, whereas in a stale egg the yolk lies flat and the white seems watery.  
 4.—The shell of an egg after a certain length of time loses its chalky appearance and becomes shiny.  
 5.—The air space in the large end of a newly laid egg is about half an inch in diameter, and as the egg ages this space grows larger. In storage eggs it sometimes extends to one-fourth the length. An expert can very closely approximate the age of an egg by examining this space. This is known as candling and is done by holding the egg in a beam of light. A simpler test is to hard boil the egg and notice the relative size of the space.

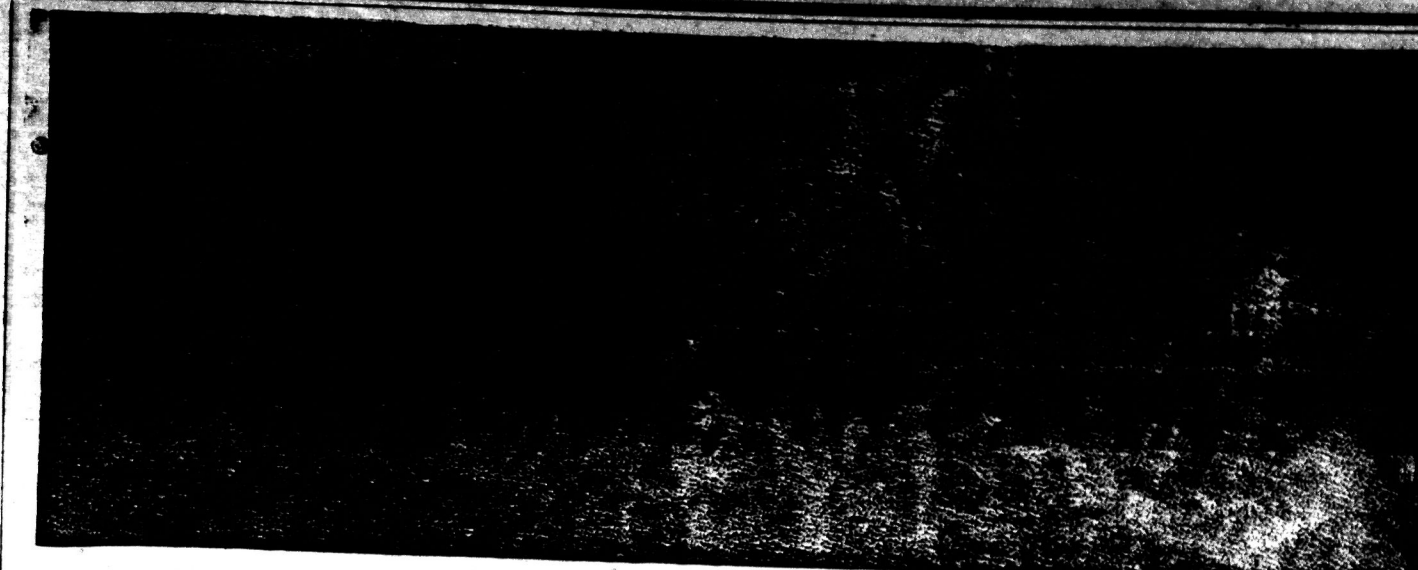
**THEIR AWFUL SECRET.**  
 It Caused the Real Estate Agent to Change His Mind.  
 When the family who admitted that they were moving because the tenants at the old address made their lives miserable confided to the renting agent that they had one peculiarity which they wished him not to mention to their neighbors in his building the agent got uneasy and executed a mental quickstep trying to devise some way to break the news. But aloud he said very courteously:  
 "I shall be glad to oblige you if I can. What is it you wish me to keep a secret?"  
 "The fact that we pay our rent promptly on the 1st of every month," said the head of the family. "That was something that nobody else in the other house did, and the agent as an incentive to quick action on their part published the news of our promptness. The only action it stirred their into was persecution of us, and they carried that to such extremes that we had to move. If you will kindly refrain from using us as a club to which your delinquents into obedience we will appreciate it."  
 The agent resolved not to cancel the lease, but at the same time he relinquished a hastily conceived plan for procuring prompt remittance.—New York Times.

That Yankee Dodge.  
 The description of the first operation under ether in Europe as given by Dr. F. Williams Cook in the University College Hospital Magazine is reproduced in the London Lancet, and the scene is referred to as the "most dramatic ever enacted in which medical men grouped the stage." The operation was performed by Robert Liston on Dec. 21, 1846. "At 2:15 Liston entered, that magnificent figure of a man six feet two inches in height, and says, 'We are going to try a Yankee dodge today, gentlemen, for making men insensible,' as Liston introduced ether to a London hospital. The subject was a man, thirty-six years old, whose thigh was amputated. The operation was successful, and Liston uttered the epigram, 'This Yankee dodge, gentlemen, beats mesmerism holier.'"  
 Marvels of India.  
 What a wonderful country is India! There is only one India. Its marvels are its own. There is the plague, the black death. India invented it. The car of Juggernaut was also India's invention. So was the suttee, and with in the time of men still living 800 widows willingly, and in fact joyfully burned themselves to death on the bodies of their dead husbands in a single year. And 800 would do it this year if the British government would let them. Famine belongs especially to India. India has 2,000,000 gods and worships them all. On top of all this she is the mother and home of that wonder of wonders, caste, and also that mystery of mysteries, the Satanic Brotherhood of the Thug-Churchman.

Setting Her Right.  
 The pretty and petulant wife of a congressman stood for a moment before the window of the receiving teller in a Washington bank, then tapped the window with her parasol, exclaiming:  
 "Why don't you pay attention to me?"  
 "We pay nothing here, madam," was the reply. "Please go to the next window."—Denver Republican.

Those Useless Questions.  
 "How did you get the bruised face?"  
 "It was caused by the hatrack last night."  
 "Accidentally?"  
 "No; I think it attracted me purposely."—Kansas City Journal.

Biblical References.  
 "And who," asked the Sunday school teacher—"who was it that said, 'O king, live forever!'"  
 "All the life insurance agents," suggested the small boy whose father was an attorney.—Judge.



**HEATING WATER.**  
 A simple and easily-made vessel for heating water is shown in the accompanying drawing. (See Fig. 1.) A coil is made of one-inch pipe with the ends fastened in the barrel and made water-tight. A small fire built under the coil will heat the water rapidly and will keep it in circulation; thus keeping all the water heated.  
 For this purpose it is wise to use a length of malleable iron gas-pipe, because it is easily bent into the required coil. This is done by taking a log or fence-post about the size of the coil and bending the pipe around it. This method prevents the pipe

**PROTECTING CONCRETE IN POSITION.**  
 After the concrete has been placed in "forms" it should be protected so as to keep the heat in as long as possible. This is more essential in this structure than in massive walls and foundations; for the latter will hold their own heat longer on account of their thickness.  
 Wooden "forms" are non-conductors and will retain the heat in the concrete up to a certain point, but the concrete should be protected on top by a covering of canvas or heavy paper, with a layer of tan or twelve inches of manure on top of this. Straw will also answer the purpose. If manure is used, care should be taken to prevent it from coming in contact with the concrete, as it will discolor it, and possibly even seep through sufficiently to weaken the structure.  
 Most farmers, however, possess large boiling kettles, used during butchering time, or for making soft soap, etc. One of these will do equally well.

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**PREPARATION OF MATERIALS.**  
 Concrete will, on its own account, develop a certain amount of heat in the "setting" process. But in cold weather, some outside assistance, in the form of artificial heat, is necessary. The best way to develop this artificial heat is to warm the materials before mixing. This shortens the time that it takes the concrete to "set" and lengthens the time necessary to bring it to the freezing point. Bear in mind that the less water used, the quicker the concrete "sets." Therefore, it is advisable to use as little water as possible in the mixing during cold weather.  
 Sand and stone may be very easily heated by making use of two pieces of stove pipe, one piece for the sand and the other for the stone. The pipes are laid on the ground in such a position as to allow the wind to make a good draft. The fire is then built in one end. The flames pass through, heating the whole pipe, and as fresh fuel is added, the cinders are pushed along the pipe and gradually work out at the other end. The sand and stone should be piled on top of the stove

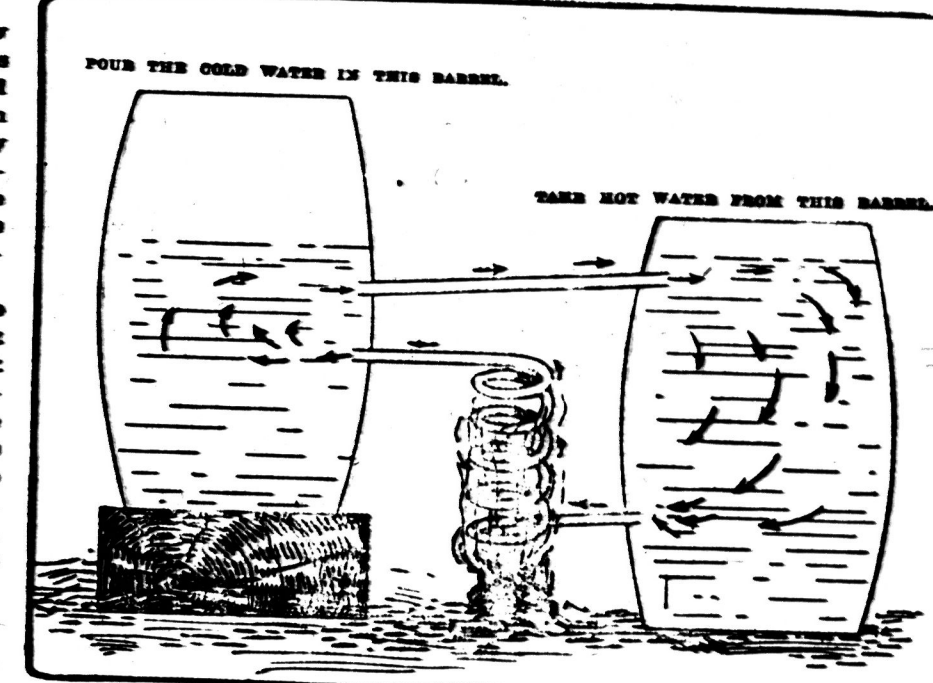


FIG. 1. SHOWING TWO-BARREL METHOD OF HEATING WATER.



FIG. 2. SHOWING SIMPLE METHOD OF HEATING WATER.

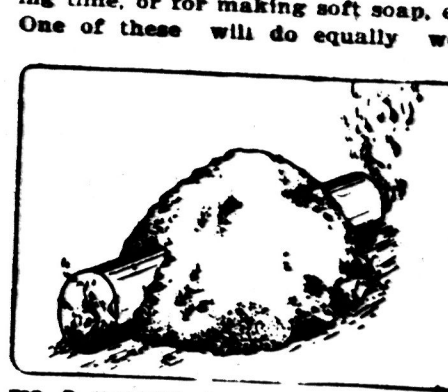


FIG. 3. SHOWING HOW MATERIALS MAY BE HEATED BY MEANS OF A PIPE IN AN OLD STOVE-PIPE.

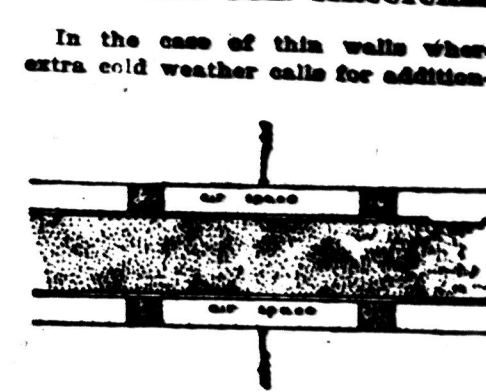


FIG. 4. PAPER TACKED TO WOODEN SUPPORTS TO PROTECT CONCRETE FROM FROST.

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