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Established by Cyrus, the Founder of the Persian Empire.

The first posts are said to have originated in the regular couriers established by Cyrus the Great about 530 B. C., who erected post houses throughout the kingdom of Persia. Augustus was the first to introduce this institution among the Romans, 51 B. C., and he was imitated by Charlemagne about 800 A. D. Louis XI. was the first sovereign to establish post houses in France, owing to his eagerness for news, and they were also the first institutions of this nature in Europe. This was in 1470, or about 2,000 years after they were started in Persia.

In England in the reign of Edward IV. (1461) riders on post horses went stages of the distance of twenty miles from each other in order to procure the king the earliest intelligence of the events that passed in the course of the war that had arisen with the Scots. A proclamation was issued by Charles I. in 1631 that "whenever to this time there hath been no certain intercourse between the kingdoms of England and Scotland, the king now commands his postmaster of England for foreign parts to settle a running post or two between Edinburgh and London to get thither and come back again in six days."

READ THE NEWS.

A BRILLIANT FOP.

The Youthful Disraeli, Elegant and Eloquent.

AN INTELLECTUAL EXQUISITE.

His Airs and Graces, His Frills and Laces and His Dazzling Oratory in His Early Political Battles—A Pen Picture of His Remarkable Face.

Benjamin Disraeli's career in practical politics began with a series of reverses that might have discouraged a less persistent fighter. Five times the youthful novelist and versatile budding statesman attempted to break into parliament before he succeeded in winning an election, going down to defeat three times at Wycombe and once at Taunton.

In William Playfelle Monypenny's "Life of Benjamin Disraeli" the author declares that tales are still told in Wycombe of Disraeli's famous first speech from the portico of the Red Lion:

"The youthful orator was now at the height of his dandyism, and his curls and ruffles played no small part in the election. Standing on the top of the porch beside the figure of the lion, with his pale face set off by masses of jet black hair and his person plentifully adorned with lace and cambric, he must have seemed to the spectators better fitted for his role of fashionable novelist than for that of strenuous politician. Great, then, was their surprise when this 'popinjay,' as a hostile newspaper called him, began to pour forth a torrent of eloquence with tremendous energy of action and in a voice that carried far along the High street. He had an instinct for the dramatic effects which hold the attention of the mob. 'When the poll is declared I shall be there,' he exclaimed, according to a Wycombe tradition, pointing to the head of the lion, 'and my opponent will be there,' pointing to the tail. By the admission even of the opposite party the speech was a complete success, and his popularity with the crowd was thenceforth assured."

As to the young orator's appearance at Taunton. Mr. Monypenny gathers these comments of an eyewitness from an almost forgotten book of that time: "Never in my life had I been so struck by a face as I was by that of Disraeli. It was lividly pale, and from beneath two finely arched eyebrows blazed out a pair of intensely black eyes. I never have seen such orbs in mortal sockets either before or since. His physiognomy was strictly Jewish. Over a broad, high forehead were ringlets of coal black, glossy hair, which, combed away from his right temple, fell in luxuriant clusters or bunches over his left cheek and ear, which it entirely concealed from view.

"There was a sort of half smile, half sneer playing about his beautifully formed mouth, the upper lip of which was curved as we see it in the portraits of Byron. He was very showily attired in a dark bottle green frock coat, a waistcoat of the most extravagant pattern, the front of which was almost covered with glittering chains, and in fancy pattern pantaloons. He wore a plain black stock, but no collar was visible. Altogether he was the most intellectual looking exquisite I had ever seen.

"He commenced in a hesitating, lackadaisical tone of voice. He mimed his phrases in apparently the most affected manner and while he was speaking placed his hands in all imaginable positions, not because he felt awkward and did not know, like a booby in a drawing room, where to put them, but apparently for the purpose of exhibiting to the best advantage the glittering rings which decked his white and taper fingers. Now he would place his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat and spread out his fingers on its flashing surface; then one set of digits would be released and he would lean affectedly on the table, supporting himself with his right hand; anon he would push aside the curls from his forehead.

"But as he proceeded all traces of dandyism and affectation were lost. With a rapidity of utterance perfectly astonishing he referred to past events and indulged in anticipations of the future. The Whigs were, of course, the objects of his unsparing satire, and his eloquent denunciations of them were applauded to the echo. In all he said he proved himself to be the finished orator. Every period was rounded with the utmost elegance, and in his most daring flights, when one trembled lest he should fall from the giddy height to which he had attained, he so gracefully descended that every hearer was wrapped in admiring surprise. His voice, at first so fugal, gradually became full, musical and sonorous and with every varying sentiment was beautifully modulated. His arms no longer appeared to be exhibited for show, but he exemplified the eloquence of the hand. The dandy was transformed into the man of mind, the Mantelini looking personage into a practiced orator and finished elocutionist."

Her Declaration.

"Have you anything to declare?" asked the customs inspector.
"Yes," replied the lady who was returning from Europe. "I unhesitatingly declare that it is an outrage the way this government permits things to be muzzed up in one's trunk."—Chicago Record-Herald.

Let those who complain of having to work undertake to do nothing. If this does not convert them nothing will.

WHIPPED THE LEOPARD.

African Explorer Witnessed the Killing of the Big Cat by a Troop of Baboons.

A vivid pen picture of a fight between a leopard and a troop of baboons is given in a German paper by P. Ritter, a sportsman and explorer in German West Africa. Leopards have a particular liking for baboon flesh, which is often used as bait to trap them.

"One afternoon," the hunter relates, "I was resting on the shady side of a big rock which formed the bank of a small stream. On the opposite side a troop of baboons came down chattering toward the water, a large male going cautiously in front, glancing and scenting around for danger. I remained immobile.

"A deep grunt assured the herd that all was well, and down the steep slope they came, last of all a female with two young, which the mother tenderly helped over the rough places. Suddenly a big leopard shot out from behind a boulder and with one blow of his paw grabbed one of the young.

"The mother, with a roar of fury, threw herself upon the big cat. The others halted and with one accord clambered back to her assistance. The leopard had just settled the female and was about to make off with his prey when he found himself surrounded by the whole horde, which closed in upon him.

"He gave as good as he got, and two big baboons rolled down the slope apparently done for, but numbers told, and he was literally torn to pieces. It was a horribly fascinating sight, and I never regretted more having no camera with me than I did then."

THEY DIDN'T FIGHT.

It Was Only a Little Friendly Discussion That Excited Them.

Two Spaniards were conversing earnestly, then excitedly, at last angrily. The young American woman who passed them looked with frightened eyes toward her Spanish guide.

"What are they talking about, Senor Jose?" she asked timidly. "Do you think they will fight—or maybe kill?"
"Ah, no, Senorita Marie," replied Jose, smiling and showing his pretty teeth. "One man—that one, you see, senorita, with the long mustachios—he is saying, 'Me, I prefer much the collar button which is steel,' and the other one—look, senorita—he is running his fingers through his hair now and his sombrero has a gold cord—he is saying, 'Ah, no, senor, the button which is of gold—si, senor, that is the button for me.'"

"But as for myself, senorita, the bone collar button—that I prefer above all the others.

"Do I not speak with good sense, senorita? Listen. If the button is of steel it will cut, if it is of gold one cannot afford to lose it, but if it is of bone it does not cut, and if it goes what matter? I have a dozen at home in my little top drawer."

"You speak with great good sense, Don Jose, but tell me—were the men really angry?"

"Oh, not at all, senorita. It is only our southern way of being interested in what we discuss. If it had been two Germans, senorita, or maybe two Englishmen, you would never have noticed them."—Philadelphia Ledger.

Then They Talked in English.

A couple of Cleveland business men visited Mexico. In Mexico City their train was switched from one station to another. One of the Clevelanders went to the first station to make inquiries. Approaching a pair of dark visaged employees, he cudgeled his memory for the proper words from the phrase book.

"Donde esta?" he hesitatingly asked and paused.

The two dark visaged persons listened attentively.

"Gracias," stammered the Cleveland man. "Donde estan?"

Then one of the men looked at the other.

"Say, Bill," he growled, "what in merry blue blazes is this fellow talking about?"

And after that it was easy.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Donkey's Choice.

The vexed question of the future life of animals has troubled the Mohammedan, as it has other religions. The question, it seems, was considered by Allah a long time ago, and all the animals were asked if they wished to enter paradise. They at once said yes, except the donkeys. These were cautious and asked if little boys went to heaven. The answer being yes, they replied, "In that case we prefer to go to—the other place." S. H. Lender vouches for the fable in "The Desert Gateway."

Friendships.

There are three friendships which are advantageous and three which are injurious. Friendship with the upright, friendship with the sincere and friendship with the man of much information—these are advantageous. Friendship with the man of specious airs, friendship with the insinuatingly soft, friendship with the glib tongued—these are injurious.—Confucius.

Interested.

"What did the rhinoceros do when you fired at him?" asked the eager listener.
"He just stood still and watched me run."—Washington Star.

It is easier to enrich ourselves with a thousand virtues than to correct ourselves of a single fault.—Bruyere.

DO YOU NEED OVERALLS?

You Would Make Them Yourself if You Knew How Easy It Is—Here Are the Directions.

Many a man says that he would be glad to do chores about the house, to trim the grass or weed the garden if he had overalls.

The trouble is that when he wishes to wear overalls the stores are closed and he cannot buy them. I wonder that men do not make them for themselves.

To provide a pattern you must have an outline or perspective plan of your contour from the belt line down to the ankles. This may be obtained by sitting in wet clay and, on arising, pouring plaster of Paris in the impression. When this hardens lift the mold, lean it against the wall and obtain measurements with a tape-line. Another way is to dust talcum powder on the carpet until it is thickly coated. Then sit down on the talcum powder and carpet, thus removing the talcum from the floor where you have been. Then cut around the outlines of that impression with a sharp knife, remove the carpet so detached, and you have a pattern for one side of the overalls.

Purchase several yards of denim and cut it into the shape indicated by either pattern you have now obtained. Make two sets of these pieces and sew them edge to edge. Pockets may be made by cutting slits in the material and sewing empty salt sacks.—Wilbur D. Nesbit in Delineator.

ELECTRIC LIGHTS.

Their Use on an Important Scale Dates From 1876.

The first experimental philosopher to discover that electric light could be produced by a dry battery was Sir Humphry Davy, who in 1810 exhibited a light three inches long, between carbon points, before the Royal Society of London. But no commercial value was attached to the use of electricity as an illuminant until more than half a century later. The Centennial exhibition, held in Philadelphia in 1876, really marks the era of our present form of electric light, though electric lights had been in use abroad prior to that time. The exhibition of models and practical demonstrations of electric lights at Philadelphia in 1876 attracted the attention of scientists and capitalists in this country, and the first incandescent lamps and the first arc system were put to practical use in a small way in 1878. The Brush arc light gained favor in the beginning as the most adaptable for street lighting, and Cleveland, O., the home of Charles Francis Brush, the inventor, was the initial American city to adopt the arc system for street lighting. Since 1878 both the Brush arc system and the Edison incandescent system have developed.—Marc M. Reynolds in Moody's Magazine.

Halcyon Days.

"Alcyone, or Halcyon, the daughter of Aeolus, married Ceix," said the Latin professor. "Ceix was drowned, and Alcyone on learning of his fate threw herself into the sea. The gods were moved by the tragedy of the young lovers. They brought them back to life in the form of halcyons, or kingfishers, and they decreed that for the seven days of Dec. 22 to Dec. 29 the sea should remain calm while the sea birds built their nests upon it. Those seven days, the last of the year, are therefore called halcyon days—days of tranquillity, a kind of very late Indian summer. Here in America we have no real halcyon days, but the myth of Alcyone and Ceix comes from the Mediterranean, and in that blue and gold region it is a fact that the year is ushered out by a procession of still, mild, splendid days—silent and glittering days of halcyon weather."—Washington Post.

Lifting a Child.

"I wish," said the woman who has children of her own, "that women would understand the delicate mechanism of a child. How would they like a giant to come along and suddenly drag them from the ground by one arm, as I have seen so many people do to children? When you're lifting a child lift it evenly by both arms or from the waist. Don't yank it up by a grab at one wrist and then wonder why it cries. It makes me so angry I always want to pull the arm of that inconsiderate woman hard and see if she wouldn't cry too. It's a thing that mothers and aunts and sisters ought to learn."—Philadelphia Times.

His Expectations.

"Have you 'Great Expectations'?" asked the fluffy haired damsel as she entered the circulating library and cast her large, lustrous blue eyes upon the new assistant. And he, his mental equilibrium upset for the moment by her loveliness, stammered out:

"Well—er—no, miss. I can't say exactly that, but I believe I'm heir to my old aunt, who's got something just under a hundred pounds in the post-office savings bank."—London Telegraph.

Not Familiar With the Quotation.

"Ah, Mr. Blinks," said the fair one lightly, "I see you wear your heart upon your sleeve."
Mr. Blinks looked bewildered and hastily pulled down his cuffs.
"I guess maybe it was my red flannel underwear you noticed," he lamely remarked.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Always.

Agent—This speedometer will enable you to know how fast you are going. Otto Feend—I don't need one. My bank balance tells me just as well.—Puck.

MILITARY HAZING.

Carried to Brutal Extremes in German Army Schools.

CADETS MAIMED AND KILLED.

The Most Dangerous Punishment Meted Out to Erring Freshmen Is "the Gantlet of Fire," and the Most Repulsive Is "Bacon Swallowing."

Germany is, of all countries, the one in which the science of hazing in military schools has attained the greatest development. The army plays in the fatherland's life a part the importance of which can hardly be realized by an untraveled American. Military service is compulsory, and in time of peace 600,000 men are kept armed, uniformed and drilled. To command that huge contingent 80,000 commissioned officers are necessary.

This large officer corps has developed customs, ethics, even a morality, of its own. These customs and ethics are initiated at an early age by the boy who aspires to enjoy the veneration which German officers generally receive from the populace. Imitation in a young man usually means exaggeration, and some of the little military snobs are on their first day at school a joy to behold. Very soon, however, the precocious stiffness is taken out of them.

A harmless though repulsive form of hazing cadets whose appetite verges on gluttony is called "bacon swallowing." The plebes to be victimized are lined up on the grounds surrounded by a group of second year men. A slice of raw bacon is tied to a piece of string, and the plebe whose name is drawn first is made to swallow the unappetizing morsel. When the sickening sensation of the twine tickling his throat threatens to nauseate him the bacon is pulled out. The name of another unfortunate is drawn, and he is in turn obliged to swallow the bacon, the appearance of which has not been improved by the first man's chewing. On it goes along the line to the next man and up to the last one, and for days and days the sight of bacon, a staple article in German cuisine, will, if it does not spoil the healthy youngsters' appetites, at least remind them that undue haste in assimilating food lacks refinement.

After a few hours spent in "frog's squat" the most dignified and snobbish plebes assume the good natured and perfectly chummy attitude which means that they have been tamed. Swelled heads are quickly noted and their owners made to sit on the floor with their chins resting on their knees, and their ankles and wrists are bound together. A solid stick passed under the knee joints and forcing the forearm back prevents them from moving arms or legs, and they are left there facing one another in an unnatural, cramped and ridiculous position.

Other forms of hazing are the stomach dance, with or without obstacles; finding the keyhole, tossing in a blanket and star gazing. In the stomach dance the cadet is put flat on his stomach on a high table and four tormentors take him by the hands and feet and whirl him around on the table. In the case of serious offenses a few hard objects or "obstacles" are scattered over the table, making the "dance" rather painful.

Then comes finding the keyhole. The cadet stands in front of a locker and is blindfolded. He has to feel for the keyhole with his forefinger. Then another cadet places his head between the locker and bites the finger till its owner howls.

Star gazing consists in being made to watch the stars at night through a coat sleeve held like a telescope by two cadets. A third cadet then pours a glass of muddy water in at top of the sleeve.

When a cadet is guilty of behavior unbecoming to a gentleman, disgraces his class by some breach of etiquette or commits some petty theft he is generally sentenced by the "holy vehm," or "court of honor," to the rod. The penalty is applied ruthlessly, a gag being placed in the punished man's mouth to stifle his cries for help.

Of all the forms of hazing the most brutal perhaps is the "gantlet of fire." The freshman upon whom that punishment is to be visited is kept in a dark room astride a wooden chair, to which he is securely fastened. In the next room his tormentors are twisting newspapers into imitation torches, which at a given signal they light with matches. When the torches are burning brightly they form themselves in two lines; another signal is sounded, the door of the dark room is thrown open, and the freshman is ordered to ride between the lines, while he is mercilessly lashed with flaming brands.

However quickly he may run the gantlet, by the time he has reached the end of the blazing pathway his hair, his eyebrows and lashes have been singed to the skin, his eyelids are seared and swollen, his lips blistered, his uniform hopelessly damaged.

One of the surgeons in attendance covers up the sores with bandages and sends the singed plebe to the infirmary for a couple of days. The official report mentions the explosion of an alcohol lamp or some other accident of like nature.

Not infrequently those "boyish pranks" have a tragic ending. More than once cadets have been crippled for life, and there are two cases on record where death was the direct result of horseplay carried too far.—New York Tribune.

HE PUNISHED GRANT.

How the Tyrant Riding Master Punished Him For "Dismounting Without Leave."

While a student at West Point U. S. Grant excelled in mathematics and horsemanship. He jumped his horse over a bar five feet six inches high, which made a record for the academy and a close second to the highest jump ever recorded in America. He received little honor for some of his efforts, however, notably in the case recalled by Nicholas Smith in "Grant, the Man of Mystery." But perhaps the humor of it reconciled him.

The riding master was one Hershberger, "an amusing sort of tyrant," and on one occasion, whether seriously or as a joke, he determined to "take down" the young cadet.

At the exercise Grant was mounted on a powerful but vicious brute that the cadets fought shy of and was put at leaping the bar.

The bar was placed higher and higher as he came round the ring till it passed the record. The stubborn rider would not say "enough," but the horse was disposed to shy and refuse to make the leap.

Grant gritted his teeth and spurred at it, but just as the horse gathered for the spring his swelling body burst the girth, and the rider and saddle tumbled into the ring.

Half stunned, Grant gathered himself up from the dust only to hear the "strident, cynical voice" of Hershberger calling out:

"Cadet Grant, six demerits for dismounting without leave!"

BEAT HIM TO THE STATION.

The Message That Got There Before the Patrolman Did.

"When I was a patrolman," says a prominent detective, "there used to be a sergeant on the force who had it in for me. He reported me for various delinquencies, and—well, he's dead now, and I won't say anything against him. He got sick, and it was reported at the station that he wasn't expected to live. So the boss called me and told me to go around and see if I could do anything for the old fellow. I called at the house and asked if I could see him. They let me in. I tiptoed into the room where the sergeant was in bed and said, 'The lieutenant sent me around to see how you were getting along.'

"He spoke with difficulty, but I could make out what he said. 'Go back,' he grunted, 'and tell 'em that I'm getting along fine. The boys have fixed me up all right, and I don't need anything. I'm feeling better.'

"So I went back to the station. I was stopped a couple of times on my way and got in about half an hour later. Then I made my report. 'He says he's better and doesn't need anything,' says I. The lieutenant jumped up. 'Do you mean to say that you saw him?' says he. 'I did,' says I. 'And he told you he was all right?' 'Yes, sir.' 'You blamed liar!' shouts the lieutenant. 'I got a message ten minutes ago that he was dead!'

"And it was true. What do you think of that old scoundrel trying to get me in bad with his dying breath?"—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

A Picture of Night.

Along the high hedged lane John Strong swung, the June gloaming deepening into night. He loved to shove his face into the night. He gloried in the uncertainty of night, the indefiniteness of light, and his soul cried back a wild answer to the cry of the night hawk and the owl. Night is more primitive than day; night is more calamitous; night is a savage; night everywhere is the true aborigine. Day has taken on civilization. Night hurls the world back to the day of the war club, the flint arrowhead, the painted visage. John Strong loved the night with an almost malevolent love. In the night he could hear the Valkyries screaming, the witches riding their broomsticks, the ghouls scraping the mold from off the new buried coffin. John Strong swung along, his face set to meet oncoming night.—Adventure.

Where He Drew the Line.

Thomas was an old gamekeeper on Sir Greville's Scotch estate, says Sir William Kennedy in "Sport in the Navy." When he was sixty years old he contracted measles, and was very ill for a time. Sir Greville, with characteristic kindness, sent the old man some hot-house grapes and a pineapple. The next time the two met Sir Greville asked Thomas how he liked the fruit.

"Well, Sir Greville," answered the gamekeeper, "the plums was good, but I dinna think much of the turnip."

Ultior Motives.

"See, here," said the kind hearted lady, "I gave you a piece of pie two weeks ago, and you have been sending one or more of your friends here every day since."

"Youse do me a injustice, ma'am," replied the husky hobo. "Dem guys wot I sent wuz me enemies."—Chicago News.

Insult and Injury.

We are told that the invention of scissors dates back to the fourteenth century.

Just think of it! Dilliah must have cut Samson's hair with a knife.—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

The Bed.

The bed is a bundle of paradoxes. We go to it with reluctance, yet we quit it with regret. We make up our minds every night to leave it early, but we make up our bodies every morning to keep it late.—Colton.