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METAL PENS.

One of Ancient Roman Make Has the Distinctive Slit.

Some curious one has collected a mass of interesting facts concerning metallic pens. Some of these references run back as far as the fourteenth and even the thirteenth century, and, curiously enough, in the case of the manuscript of Robert d'Artois, the forger scribe, is said to have used a bronze pen in order to disguise his writing and make his deception more safe. A Roman metal pen is said to have been found at Aosta, not a mere stylus, but a bronze pen slit, and there is some evidence of a pen or reed of bronze nearly as early as the invention of printing in the fifteenth century. More than a hundred years ago some steel pens were made in Birmingham for Dr. Priestly, and some of these placed into the hands of Sir Josiah Mason in his early days with Mr. Harrison, but all seem to have been lost. The first pen of metal of a definite date, beyond all question, is one in a Dutch patent book of 1717. At about the same time a polite ode of Pope's refers to a "steel and golden pen," but these were evidently luxuries only, and it was not until about the end of the first quarter of the last century that metallic pens became more generally in use. In the "Local Notes and Queries" in the Birmingham Weekly Post definite evidence has been given of steel pens as early as 1806 and more commonly in 1817, but it was about 1823 and 1824 that the great revolution came by which pens were made by a cheaper process—the hand screw press which pierced the pens from steel rolled into tube fashion and the slit formed the slit, but these required considerable labor to shape them into pen form. The use of the screw press belongs to the period of John Mitchell, Joseph Gillot and Josiah Mason, but on a careful review of the facts it seems to be clear that John Mitchell has the best claim to be considered as the original introducer of press made pens.—Buffalo Times.

PITH AND POINT.

Being worthless pays no dividends.
Keeping a diary is nearly as hard work as keeping a dairy.
Being favorably impressed is the cheapest way we know of being a good fellow.
Nothing makes us quite so mad as to have people say, "What made you do it?"
It is terribly hard to impress people with the importance of aiding in a good cause.
Every one realizes when he goes to a photographer's that he is not looking his prettiest.
It is all right to do things for your town, but first do things for your home and family.
We are all pretty easily pleased when we consider that three or four times a day we see exactly how we look in the looking glass.—A. Chilson Globe.

Antiquity of Cheating.

False weights were found in the ruins of the oldest city that has yet been exhumed. And false weights will probably be consumed when the earth drops into the sun and the heavens are rolled together like a scroll. Ancient records and ancient statute books are full of evidence that every modern practical device down to adulterations and crooked scales was familiar to our ancestors of the plateau of Iran before the migrations. Vice is the old inhabitant; virtue is the newcomer, the immigrant, received with reluctance and compelled to fight for every inch of ground he gains.—Reader Magazine.

A Great Lack of Love.

There is a pleasant story being told just now of an Irish priest who, taking leave of his congregation, gave his reasons for going: "First, you do not love me, for you have contributed nothing to my support; second, you do not love each other, for I have not celebrated a marriage since I arrived; third, the good God does not love you, for he has not taken one of you to himself; I have not had a single funeral."—London Telegraph.

Why She Loved Her.

Mrs. Cummins—So you love your grandmamma, do you, Gracie? And why do you love her? Gracie—Because she used to punish mamma when mamma was a little girl. I hope she used to spank mamma as hard as mamma spanks me.—Boston Transcript.

The Flight of Birds.

One of the few men to recover sight after being blind from the birth of recollection was reported to have wondered at nothing so much as the flight of the birds. "Why do not people make more fuss about them?" he said.—London Outlook.

Faulty Theory.

One de Smythe—Those new boots of yours squeak awfully. Perhaps they're not paid for yet. Johnny—That's all nonsense. If there is anything in that, why don't they coat and vest and my trousers and my hat squeak too?

WHAT TOTEMISM IS.

Light on an Interesting and Little Understood Subject.

It is interesting to note that totemism is found not only in Alaska, but among the North American Indians, the aborigines of Australia, the Hottentots of Africa and even the hill tribes of India. Totems are also common among the Samoans.

Broadly the totem is the badge of a clan or tribe, but it signifies a great deal more than mere political or social alliance. It is not only a tribal emblem, but also a family sign; not merely a symbol of nationality, but also an expression of religion; not simply a bond of union among primitive people, but also a regulator of the marriage laws and of other social institutions. A totem has been defined as "a class of material objects which a savage regards with superstitious respect, believing that there exists between him and every member of the class an intimate and special relation."

Among the Ojibway Indians there are no fewer than twenty-three different totems. Nine of these are quadrupeds, marking out the wolf, the bear, the beaver and other clans, eight are birds, five are fishes and one is the snake.

Some extraordinary superstitions regarding totems prevail in Samoa. Thus it is believed that if a turtle man eats of a turtle he will grow very ill, and the voice of the turtle will be heard in his inside saying: "He ate me. I am killing him." If a banana man uses a banana leaf for a cap he becomes bald. If a butterfly man catches a butterfly it strikes him dead. If a fowl man eats a fowl delirium and death results, and so on, all going to show that the totem has something of the quality of a fetish as well as the significance of a family emblem.

Regarding totemism, it is to be noted that the relation of mutual help and protection includes also the totem itself—that is to say, if a man takes care of his totem he expects the totem to return the compliment. If the totem is a dangerous animal it must not hurt his clansmen. The scorpion men of Senegambia declare that the most deadly scorpions will run over their bodies without hurting them. There is a snake clan in Australia which holds to a similar belief. Among the crocodile clan of the Bechuanas if a man is bitten by a crocodile or even has water splashed on him by one he is expelled from the clan as one esteemed unworthy by the totem.—Housekeeper.

SOME SUPERSTITIONS.

If you want a cat to stay at your home, rub its paw on the stove.

To keep a new dog, measure his tail with a cornstalk and bury the latter under the front step.

If you sing in bed you will cry next day. If you sing before breakfast you will cry before night.

A family must never move except in the light or increase of the moon. This will secure prosperity and increase of possessions.

If a woman is making soap and a man stirs it, all will be well and the soap will be fine, but if a woman comes the soap will spoil in the making.

Looking at a new moon for the first time through obstructions, as through a trefoil, foretells misfortune during that moon. To see it over the right shoulder and in a clear space brings good luck.

When Lightning Kills.

"As a rule," says a meteorological expert, "those killed by lightning maintain an appearance of life, staying in the attitude which they had when struck." An English minister named Butler witnessed the following: In the town of Everdon ten harvesters had sought refuge under a hedge during a storm. Lightning struck and killed four, who were left as if petrified. One was found holding in his fingers the snuff which he was about to take. Another had a little dead dog on his knees and had one hand on the animal's head, while holding in the other hand some bread with which he had been feeding it. A third was sitting with his eyes open and his head turned toward the storm.—Chicago Tribune.

A Translator's Blunder.

Jacob Boehme, the "mystic shoemaker," once wrote a pamphlet which he called "Reflections on the Treatise of Isaiah Stiefel." One of Boehme's biographers had never heard of that theologian. But he knew enough German to be aware that "Stiefel" meant "boot," and he was further misled by the fact that Boehme was a cobbler as well as a philosopher, so he made a brilliant shot and spoke of the pamphlet in question as Boehme's "Reflections on the Boots of Isaiah." In this guise it passed into several catalogues.

A Good Thing to Know.

A writer, discussing the lost art of early rising, says, "The proper time to rise is when sleep ends." That's a good thing to learn. Do you know, if we hadn't seen that in a paper we should have gone on believing that the proper time to rise was when you were right in the midst of your soundest sleep. What a blessed thing it is for this blind old world that there are some men in it who know nearly everything!

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